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IV. No. 13

Oct. 16 — 31, 1994

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Family planning time for crocs!

Special Correspondent)
The problem of plenty at the Madras Crocodile Bank of Romulus Whitaker and his wife Zia. What started as a game for resuscitating a dying species has reached saturation point. So that, last year, around 5,000 crocodiles were not allowed to hatch and, day after day, the males and females are kept apart to prevent breeding. With 10 crocodiles in a pit, there just isn't room for many crocodiles at the Bank. One has to find a way out of the

overcrowding unless Government does a rethink.

The Madras Crocodile Bank was started in 1976 with just 25 crocodiles — muggers (marsh crocodiles), gharials, and salt water crocodiles — when they were an endangered species. Eighteen years later, the breeding programme has a crocodile population of over 10,000 including alligators, Morelet's crocodiles, Siamese crocodiles, Nile crocodiles, African Dwarf crocodiles etc., but mainly muggers, salt water crocodiles and gharials. With no one wanting animals meant to restock the country's rivers and lakes. Considering that, on an average, every female lays thirty eggs a year for forty years ensures that the Whitakers have an unmanageable programme on their hands. To add to that, in 16 other zoos and 17 breeding stations across the country, saturation point has been reached.

It is against this background that the suggestion has been made, with Whitaker endorsing it, that crocodiles bred in captivity could be commercially exploited for their leather and meat. Crocodile skin fetches \$20 a square foot in the international market and crocodile meat, rich in proteins and low in cholesterol, is a delicacy in the diet-conscious West. A single crocodile can generate upto to Rs. 10,000, it has been estimated. As for labour for such a commercial venture, it is readily available in this part of the country at a low cost. The Irulas, the tribal snake-catchers of the South, have one of the lowest per capita incomes. Even if each

Irula family rears a couple of crocodiles, it can make a decent living.

A stage has now been reached where the economics of plenty has to be given as much thought as saving a dying breed at the Crocodile Bank. Preventing the eggs from hatching is, in the first place, a waste of good money. But then there's also the expense with no return. For the croco-



Is there any more space for a few new crocs? No wonder the Madras Crocodile Bank is practising family planning!
(Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN)

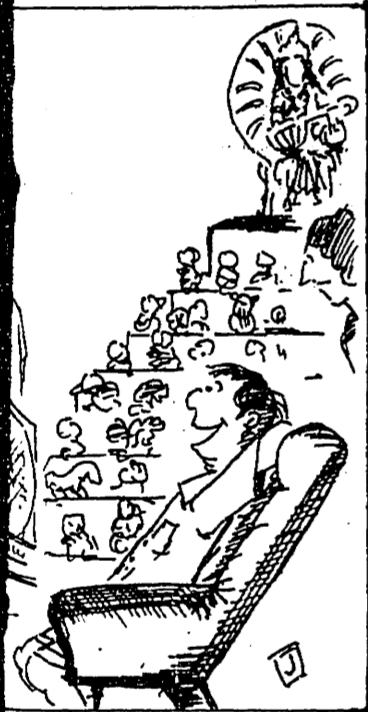
crocodiles alone, three tonnes of beef bones and fish have to be provided every

week. And there are staff salaries and other expenses. With gate collections of around Rs. 9 lakh a year, the only income, there's hardly any money for research.

It is here that the leather trade could step in to find a way out for the crocodile surplus and generate revenue. Countries like China, U.S., Australia and Zimbabwe are already into commercial farming of crocodiles. In Thailand, Vietnam and New Guinea, the rural population has been involved in a big way in crocodile farming.

Commercial farming is objected to in India on ethical and philosophic grounds. Thou shalt not kill, is the biggest argument. But those in favour of commercialisation say that once a species can be bred in captivity, it ceases to be 'endangered'. Also, nobody seems to want the crocodiles that have been bred, they have found. Farmers and forest tribals object to the release of the crocodiles in their waters, as they would then have to compete with them
(Continued on P4)

NAALI RAMAN...



"No homework, no tuition, no...! Ha! What a day!"

MAD, MAD MADRAS



The Madras Law College team that investigated the working conditions in the tanneries of Nagalkeni. Seated (l to r): V Anantha Natarajan, G Shanthy Meenakshi, N S Padmaja and T R Shantini. Standing (l to r): V Haribabu, M Hidayathulla Khan, C Ganesh, K Kumaran and C K Chandrasekaran.

Plight of tannery workers earns Madras 2nd Prize

(By V. Jagannathan)

More than 2,000 workers employed in the tannery units in Nagalkeni, 23 km from the city and 2.5 kms from Chromepet, risk their lives daily to earn Rs.8 and two cups of tea a day. Along the Thiruneermalai High Road in the Pammal Panchayat, untreated tannery effluents are found on either side of the road in many places. These flow from the tanneries where these workers toil.

To get around the law, the owners of these tanneries started their businesses stating that they intended TRADING in tanned skin. Then they built ramshackle sheds and started tanning work. Most of these units lack even basic amenities like drinking water and toilets. They do not provide protective gear, like gloves, rubber boots, masks etc., to even workers handling hazardous chemicals and who work in the midst of unbearable stench. Every worker here is at risk.

The plight of women workers is worse. The law has banned employment of women in certain jobs in

tannery units. To circumvent the law, the women workers, including many pregnant women, are engaged on a casual basis.

With agricultural land turning fallow and the water being contaminated due to seepage of the untreated effluents, the people of Nagalkeni do not have any other option except to work in these makeshift tanneries.

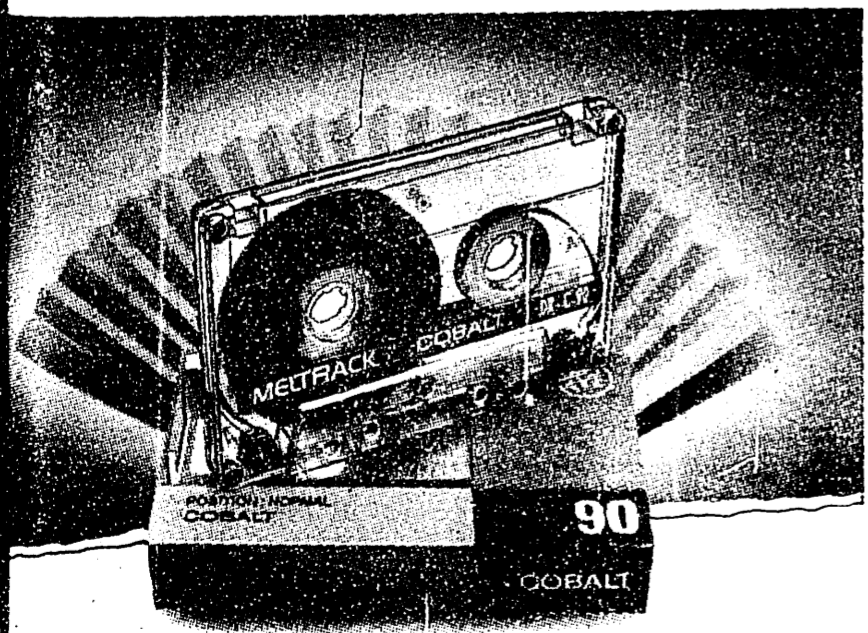
These charges have been made by a nine-person student-team of Madras Law College, whose study 'Tannery Workers At Nagalkeni and Their Right to Work', won the second prize for their project study at the recent All-India Competition on 'Community-Based Law Reforms: Proposals for the Promotion of Social Values in Law and Advocacy'.

The competition organised by the National Law School of India, Bangalore, attracted eight teams. The students of the host school submitted a curious study paper: 'Prostitutes — Their Right to Work'. Apparently it did

not go down too well with the jury, who nominated Colombo University, Sri Lanka, as the first prize winners. The Sri Lankan students won the prize for their project study 'Internally Disabled Workers — Refugees' — a topic on which a conference had been held at Colombo University shortly before the Bangalore competition.

Says K Kumaran of the Madras team, "The right to work not only means the right to employment, but also the right to work in a safe environment for just wages". His team investigated these aspects in Nagalkeni over the last 1½ years.

Apart from suggesting amendments to various labour laws and stringent implementation of the existing provisions, the Madras students have recommended setting up a 'Green Court' to prosecute environment polluters. "The expenses of the court can be met by levying a cess on hazardous industries," recommends Kumaran.



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What's TED really all about?

TED's such a nice-sounding, cuddly-feeling name. And *The Man From Madras Musings* learnt that it was an acronym for a most worthy cause, 'Teaching English to the Disadvantaged'. That's a cause many institutions, including Governments, would cuddle up to, *MMM* is sure — provided everyone concerned was quite clear in their mind what some of the jargon trotted out at a recent workshop, organised by the British Council, really meant.

The workshop, to judge from the bits and pieces of it that *The Man From Madras Musings* saw and heard about, was a first class effort, notable particularly for the enthusiastic participation in it by ALL the delegates. Certainly the action plans presented by the participants were worthwhile endeavours that *MMM* will closely follow in their implementation. No better example of the enthusiasm of the delegates was the enactment of one action plan in which Dr Manmatha Kundu, who works with the Orissa tribals, brilliantly portrayed a tribal boy eager to learn from a schoolmarm what she had to offer him and his fellows by way of English-training. An Australian spoke to him about acorns, a Sri Lankan Tamil tried to explain acorns to him and one who'd been through the workshop succeeded in communicating with him through tamarind seeds.

This little play with a tribal youth in the starring role and the comments Henry Thiagarajan of the Dalit Christian movement (*MMM* had thought caste had long been taken out of Christianity, but apparently it's still alive, well and flourishing!) however got *The Man From Madras Musings* feeling that words like 'empowerment' and 'disadvantaged' were not being considered in the proper context and that any such misunderstanding could well give TED a negative image in the eyes of the powers-that-be.

Those two words

A word or two about those two words. Getting tribal, backward class and poor CHILDREN to learn English is NOT going to EMPOWER them in any way. If they are going to make their voices heard, it will only be in the regional languages of their states. And it is in the teaching of each of those languages, in making each language a means of COMMUNICATION and UNDERSTANDING of what's going on around them, that schools throughout India are woefully lacking. As the Oriya tribal boy said, "I don't want textbooks, reading books, workbooks, notebooks. I want to know and understand and be able to speak my thoughts". And that, more than anything else, is what is needed in every school in the country teaching in the regional languages — more often than not by rote. NO, EMPOWERMENT is not what TED is all about, in *MMM's* view.

Nor is it about the DISADVANTAGED. The moment the word is used, up jumps the Oriya tribal, the Dalit Christian and the do-gooding Australian working in the slums of Madras. To *The Man From Madras Musings*, the disadvantaged in India in the context of this most worthy programme, TED, is EVERY child studying in the regional language medium in ANY school, be it urban, rural or the back of beyond. And the first target group among those disadvantaged should be the 'ADVANTAGED' — deliberately put within quotes. The 'advantaged' are those 40 or 50 per cent in every college today whom Dr Rajan of MGR University referred to in his Inaugural Address, those whom he had seen finding it difficult to keep up with medical education, whom *MMM* has found finding it hard to keep pace with engineering, public relations and journalism instruction. They are the 'advantaged' because they

are the small percentage who have been able to make it to college, but they are the disadvantaged because, knowing only their mother tongue, they are unable to keep pace with instruction in English which has, fortunately or unfortunately, become the *lingua franca* of the world and OUR language of higher education.

In an India opening up, in an India enabling more and more job opportunities for the educated, for most of the opportunities in multinational organisations, the graduates or the technically qualified who can communicate in English are the young men and women who are going to have the edge at all levels. In an India spreading itself out to welcome the world, administrators, clerks, supervisors, stenographers, telephone

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

operators, high-tech machine operators are all going to benefit from a working knowledge of the English of everyday communication and the unembarrassed WILLINGNESS to use it like that performing Oriya tribal.

Greater emphasis

And that's what Robert Bellarmine and his dedicated team should be laying greater emphasis on, thinking in terms of a major contribution to the future of India. Ways and means of teaching English to EVERYONE, not merely the disadvantaged learning in the regional language medium, teaching an English to all of them that will enable them to COMMUNICATE and teaching them to communicate in it should be the long-term aim of the team, in *MMM's* view. But in the short-term, *The Man From Madras Musings* is convinced, the need is to work out a programme that will enable volunteers in the 9th to 12th to study EFEC — English for Effective Communication — and then encourage making Higher EFEC compulsory in all colleges for those deficient in English. Side by side with this, there is a need for English Communication classes to be commenced by such organisations as the British Council, US Educational Foundation or USIS, the Association of British Council Scholars, the Indo-American Association and others, instead of leaving it to fly-by-night organisations which only kill the language and ruin the student.

To return to the workshop, amongst the five very well-thought-out, well-worked-out action plans presented, only one tackled the reality of tertiary education in the country. But even that one emphasised the book approach rather than the communication approach. *The Man From Madras Musings* learnt his English by speaking it in a school environment where English was the language of communication and by being encouraged to read it in a library full of the Scarlet Pimpernel, The Saint, Bulldog Drummond, Norman Conquest, sundry 'comics', Henty's heroes out of history and Lamb's tales. No wonder *MMM's* grammar can, at

times, be ghastly. But he commiserates all right, he's told.

TAILPIECE: It struck *The Man From Madras Musings* as remarkable the amount of jargon that was used in a language workshop. Perhaps it had something to do with the large number of those with doctorates present, but it would help communication considerably if they came out of the clouds of academe and emulated the little Oriya tribal boy with the grey beard.

The Hindu's concerns

The chief sponsor of the TED workshop was *The Hindu*. And it has been doing several good deeds like this to get English teaching more focussed. The cause of TED — or should it be EFEC? — will, *MMM's* sure,

continue to benefit in the future from *The Hindu's* helping hand.

The Man From Madras Musings is also delighted to hear that *The Hindu's* spirit has not been dampened by the standard of the vast majority of the plays it received for last year's play-writing contest. There were some murmurs after the finals that the sponsors were discouraged by the quality. But *MMM* is glad to hear that *The Hindu* has pressed on regardless this year too — and it won't be long (March?) before Madras sees the best of the second edition of the India-written-plays-in-English contest.

To further enhance its image, *The Hindu* has launched an advertising campaign about itself. Hoardings all over the city proclaim that the paper gives you "24 pages in the main section at no extra price". And the advertisements claim that it offers "3 FULL (MMM's emphasis) pages devoted to regional and local news with greater emphasis on the districts". While the former is a valid claim, the latter is something that *The Man From Madras Musings* views as dubious. With three pages amounting to only one page of information, advertising and notices taking the rest of the space, *MMM* wonders whether there's only a pageful of events occurring in the city, districts and region!

This sudden desire to shout about itself from the rooftops, however, is what intrigues many. Could it have anything to do with the talk about *The Times of India* being launched in Madras before long? *MMM* had predicted this a few weeks ago, but he never expected *The Hindu* to show such concern over a challenge by *The Times of India*. After all, how could anyone in Tamil Nadu do without the local advertising and *The Hindu's* Classifieds and Notices?!

Incidentally, one of the cleverest advertisements *The Man From Madras Musings* has seen in many a day is one for *The Hindu* in a professional magazine (see facing page). With that kind of growth, surely *The Times of India* is no challenge, unless one business house has suddenly woken up to the fact that another newspaper is also now being run as a BUSINESS.

start with.....

secondary capital decongest Madras

Miller, in *MM* Sept. 16, talked about the capital and reminded me that he had decided "definitely" to do so, when the late MGR was Minister. Seeing that Madras is now more congested, why don't you consider modifying the concept and developing a secondary capital in the Tiruchi/Tanjore region, the centre of areas apart from Madras. The unplanned growth of Madras has resulted in colossal amounts of

OUR READERS WRITE

money having to be spent to revamp the existing sewage system in the city and it will be another four years or so to cover the extended areas of Madras. The sewage system which originally existed was planned for single houses,

but with blocks of flats coming up all over, the problem has worsened.

The scarcity of water in Madras is well-known and though various schemes to bring water to the city are under implementation, it is necessary that the present population level in the Madras area be at least frozen, if not brought down, if groundwater levels are not to go down further.

Traffic on the roads has increased considerably. And with users lacking road sense, the situation has only worsened, despite the efforts of the traffic police.

The Port of Madras has developed considerably, but here too congestion exists and ships have to remain in the roadstead awaiting berths. A major port can be developed at Nagapattinam, even though it does not have a natural harbour. This will certainly ease the existing congestion in Madras and serve the southern hinterland.

Tiruchi airport should be developed. And why not through private enterprise, as in Ernakulam?

The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board functions from Madras and the accent is only on augmenting and upgrading power supply for Madras. This is necessary. But what of the rest of Tamil Nadu?

The existing trend of rural people flocking to the city needs to be arrested. I for one agree with Harry Miller that urbanisation is "bloody wicked and shameful". Industries should be developed in areas well away from Madras.

Thus, there is a good case for locating a secondary capital in a central place in Tamil Nadu. Shifting of the capital at one stroke is not suggested. The infrastructure that is necessary for a capital exists in Madras and rebuilding similar facilities in another place will involve enormous costs. However, a part of the Government administration — the Department of Education, Public Works, Health Services, Transport, Agriculture, Rural Development etc — could be moved from the seat of the Government.

If a part of the Government administrative set-up moves from Madras, it will certainly ensure better facilities for the public elsewhere and decongest Madras.

What is required is the 'will' for a change and the late MGR certainly appears to have been a visionary in this matter. No one in the Administrative Service looking at this matter dispassionately will see it any differently. Let there be a start with a secondary capital. And then, who knows, the capital may be shifted from Madras in time — "definitely"!

Cdr. L N C Jesudason I.N. (Retd.)
Madras 600 040.

From VPH to CCC

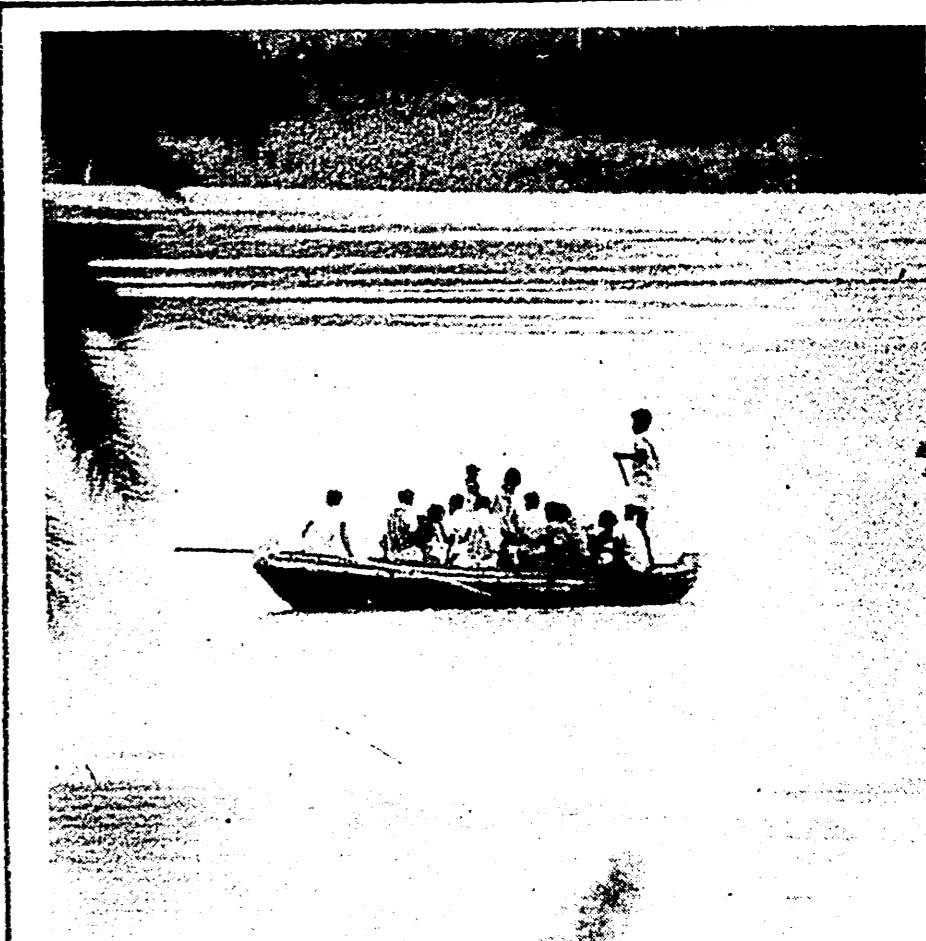
Re your write-up in *MM* Sept. 1, I suggest that on renovation 'VPH' can be christened 'City Cultural Centre' (CCC). A monumental structure on renovation must be admirably maintained without the least lapse.

Krishnamurthy
76 First Main Road
Sri Iyyappa Nagar
Madras 600 111.

Our Rs and Ns

Madras Musings is scintillating as usual. I am glad Sri P K Srinivasan, the dedicated mathematician in the true Ramanujan tradition, was able to get a fascinating letter of the genius addressed to Prof. Ganapathy, noted Professor of Mathematics at Presidency College then.

The enquiry about a particular "person in Saidapet or Triplicane" must be about Professor PATRACHARIAR, the famous Professor of Mathematics of Kumbakonam College who later became Principal (if I remember correct) of the same college.



Crossing the Adyar — by ferry!

Before the ill-fated Veeranam Pipeline, and long before the new bridge across the Adyar River, now joining Nandanam with Kotturpuram, the only way to cross the river without strenuous, lengthy detours via the Elphinstone Bridge or the Maraimalai Adigalar (formerly Marmalal) bridge higher up, was by boat — the little ferry seen here in my 1967 photograph.

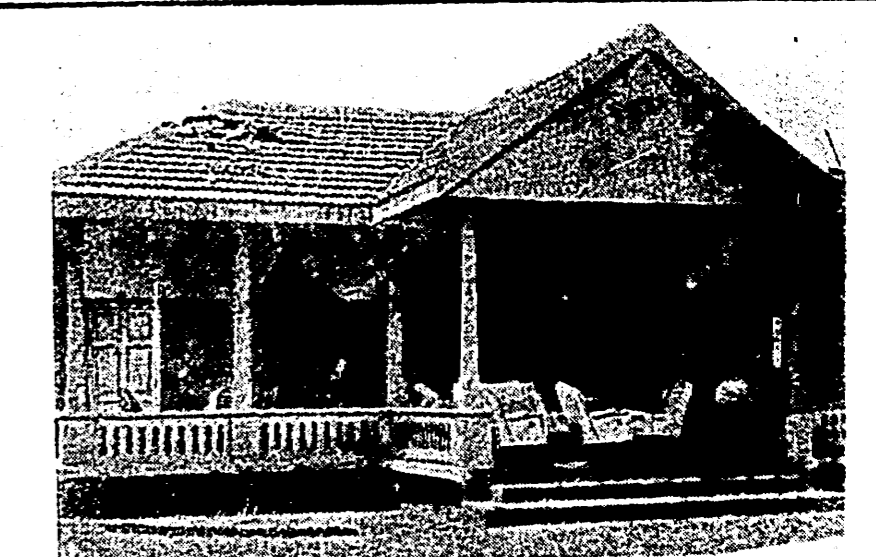
If you go to the end of Boat Club Road you will, expectedly, come to the Boat Club, and beside the Boat Club entrance you will find metal gates below which a gentle slope leads down to the edge of the river. That's where the ferry started and the point from where this photograph (using a 300 mm telephoto lens) was taken. I am indebted to Ganesan, one of the oldest members of the Madras Club staff, for the information that the ferry charged five paise a head, but that there were also monthly season tickets! In those days, even that small amount was too much for some, and it was not an uncommon sight to see gentlemen divest themselves of their *vershties*, which they

wrapped round their heads to support sundry packages and other belongings, and wade across, stepping with infinite caution on what must even in those days have been a very slimy, muddy bottom, the water often up to their chins.

When the Veeranam Pipeline crossing of the river was constructed, people living in Kotturpuram found it more convenient to walk across on the narrow ledges on either side of those huge and useless concrete pipes. The Corporation stepped in and provided safety rails after several had fallen off and drowned in the water below.

The ferry vanished when the pipeline appeared and, today, the wide, modern bridge is preferred to the "pipeline." One factor appears unchanged: everyone gets across as quickly as they can to avoid being poisoned by the hydrogen sulphide and other lethal gases rising from the noxious waters of what was once a beautiful, lively river, rich with birdlife, fish, tinselled dragonflies and rare aquatic plants.

HARRY MILLER



The damaged roof of the Madras Sailing Club after the bombardment of Madras Harbour by the German cruiser *Linden* on September 22, 1914. (Photograph by R V Solomon for Somerset Playne's *Southern India* — 1915).

where, perhaps, Ramanujan studied in his time.

The spelling is Patrachariar, not Patnachariar as used by you.

K Venkatasubramaniam
2 Judge Jumbulingam Road
Madras 600 004.

I doubt if George V ever heard of Madras — there were two generations in between.

Harry Miller
Madras 600 028.

Who was the Royal?

I don't know where your contributor Joseph Fernandez found evidence of the Yacht Club's connection with George V, but he's in the wrong in stating that George V was responsible for its 'Royal' designation.

This came about when Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, sailed at the Club during the royal visit in 1961. Prince Philip was a keen yachtsman, presumably liked what he found and saw at the Madras Yacht Club and, thereafter, bestowed that honour.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We look forward to hearing from the Royal Madras Yacht Club on this issue, now that Joseph Fernandez has gone abroad. But meanwhile, two points. George V visited Madras as the Prince of Wales — and it was after him that George Town was named. And it never was the Madras Yacht Club. It was always the Madras Sailing Club as this 1914 picture, copied from Somerset Playne's *Southern India* shows. This picture was taken immediately after the *Emden* had shelled Madras harbour and hit the clubhouse, amongst other buildings (see reference *MM* Sept. 16). And incidentally, can a Prince Consort confer the honour 'Royal'?

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Recent Additions

Author	Title
BLASHFORD-SNELL, J	Something Lost Behind the Ranges
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DENNY, F	Speak for Yourself
FOSTER, R F	Paddy & Mr Punch
GOLD, J R (ed.)	Place Promotion
HAMMER, M	Reengineering the Corporation
HUGHES, M	No Cake, No Jam
NASH, C	World Postmodern Fiction
PARSONS, N	The Use of Microphones. 4th ed.
SAGAR, K (ed.)	The Challenge of Ted Hughes
SCANNELL, V	Collected Poems 1950-1993
SCHOUB, B D	AIDS & HIV in Perspective
SHREEVE, C	Problem Periods
SINCLAIR, I	Q Basic
TRAPP, R	My Biggest Mistake
TRENCH, R	London under London
WATKINS, D	Urban Permaculture
WISKER, G	It's my Party

THE (TAMIL NADU) HIT PARADE



Skilful Negotiator

Political savvy is Annamalai Chidambaram Muthiah's forte. Not a bad skill to possess, especially if you're operating in a state like Tamil Nadu where the chief ministers tend to be patrons of all they survey. Muthiah inherited the art of gamesmanship from his father M A Chidambaram, the son of a wealthy aristocrat, Sir Annamalai Chettiar, the Raja of Chettinad. Connections in the right places, coupled with a willingness to take risks, enabled this southern group to build considerably upon its base business of trading, shipping and stevedoring. The group's flagship company, the fertiliser giant, Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation Ltd, is a joint sector venture co-promoted with the state government. So are a handful of others. After the setting-up years, Muthiah has been quietly working to increase his holding in these companies.

The bespectacled, unflappable tycoon, with his appetite for acquisitions, has always been somewhat of an enigma to his southern brethren, as well as the media, which he assiduously shuns. His oft-quoted statement, "Politics is like fire, I don't get too close to it or stay far from it", gives a glimpse of his method of working. In the past, Muthiah got singled when the DMK government was in power and erstwhile chief minister, M Karunanidhi, indulged in heavy-handed tactics.

An engineer as well as a management graduate from the University of Detroit, Muthiah's early training was in the family-owned Automobile Products of India, the country's first manufacturer of scooters. Many years later, Muthiah put his money, some say foolishly, into the ailing Standard Motor Products, an LCV maker, but failed to revive it beyond a brief sputter.

Sport is his second love, indulged in the privacy of his home, where he maintains a swimming pool and tennis court. Muthiah's only son, Ashwin, with an American MBA, is the future face of this clan.

(Sketch by DHIR, text by NAAZHEEN KARMALI — From: THE HIT PARADE — Symbols of Indian Industry. Published by Banyan Books, New Delhi.)

Family planning for crocs

(Continued from P 1) for the already scarce fish. In the past 17 years, only 6000 crocodiles bred in India have been released in the wild all over the country. As for fears of poaching of the reptile in the wild, it can be checked with Government

effort, as is done in the case of other animals. Will Government have second thoughts on this problem before it is too late and make the crocodile a foreign exchange earner? Or will the problem of plenty suffocate the breeders?

Repelling takeovers

Developed countries have seen corporate takeovers a dime a dozen in various avatars for various motives. Reportedly, Japanese companies operating in the USA have frequently indulged in acquisitions to halt the erosion of their competitive advantage consequent to the rise of the Yen against the US dollar.

The recent globalisation and liberalisation spree in India has resulted in lowering the drawbridge to transnationals and the overall consequence has been that Indian business houses have been jolted into facing a few hard facts, and there has been a stampede of mergers and acquisitions.

Indian corporate laws and wealth taxes had, until a few years ago, effectively prevented capital formation. Consequently, Indian promoters are unable to bring in funds now to ensure controlling interest. Today, with the post-liberalisation era drawing in profit-driven FIs (who were once invisible safety nets) and with amendments in the MRTP and FERA, Indian

companies are ripe for the picking by transnational conglomerates.

In any business combination, be it through takeover (hostile or otherwise) or joint venture, interests of different parties, viz the shareholders, creditors, employees, consumers and the economy, are involved. The employees and shareholders might be lured by the

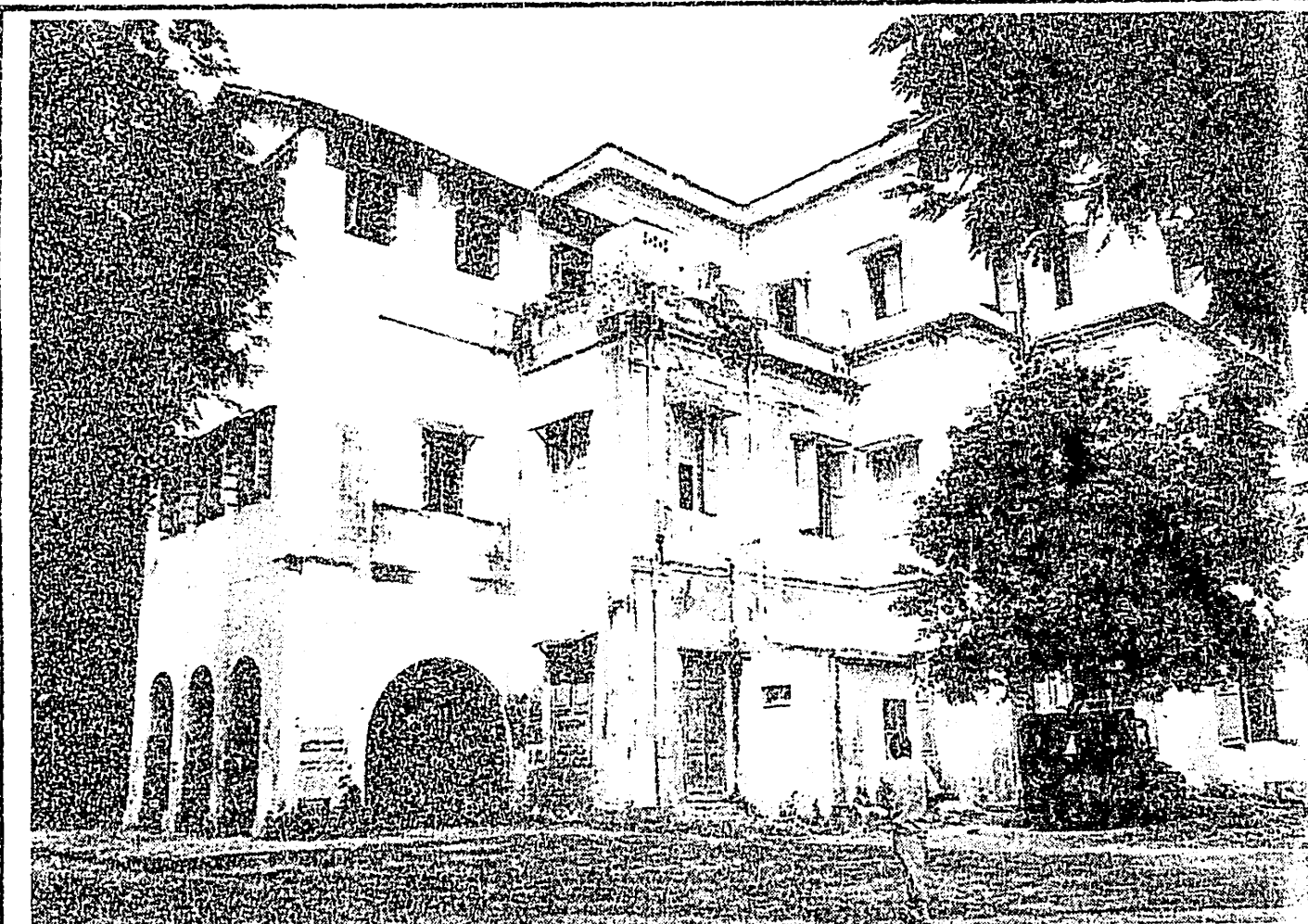
BULL'S EYE

prospects of better returns in the short-term. Even consumers may enjoy lower prices to begin with. But these alone cannot be justifications, for the MNCs may not necessarily nurture paternal loyalties towards an Indian company taken over by them. They might plan a closure of the plant here and import from their homeland products to dump in India, with the erstwhile Indian competitors in their hands!! Would this ultimately help the Indian economy and the consumers? This gives food for thought.

Currently, to dissuade the corporate raider, the target company has to register a transfer on any grounds given under section 223 Securities Contracts (Regulation) 1956. Also, if any person acquires shares of a company which is more than 5 per cent of the stock, the stock exchange authorities will now have to be informed and purchases within two days. Further, a person holding less than 10 per cent of the voting stock will not be able to acquire fresh scrips which might dilute his voting strength to 10 per cent more without giving prior notice to the Stock Exchange.

While these provisions of law can, no doubt, spurn hostile takeovers, how do you tackle the TNCs who are exterminating the Indian brands? After all, they have all the pushover away Indian brands from the soil, cut off Indian brands' access to the international market and tampered with our distribution system. The

(Continued on P 2)



Living styles have certainly changed over the years, as the city grew and became more crowded. Once, garden houses, like THE OLD this fortnight, with even bigger gardens were commonplace in Madras. This two-story Minor Bungalow, on Mount Road, Teyyanampet, was once big enough to house Newington College, where the sons of the rajahs and zamindars of the South were taught by the de la Hays. When Mrs de la Hay taught the

THE OLD... a few extracurricular activities as well, it led to murder — and the trial of the killers of de la Hay was a cause célèbre around the turn of the century. ... & THE NEW... Where princelings once walked and played, the Director of Medical Services holds court in dilapidated, but tree-shaded, surroundings.

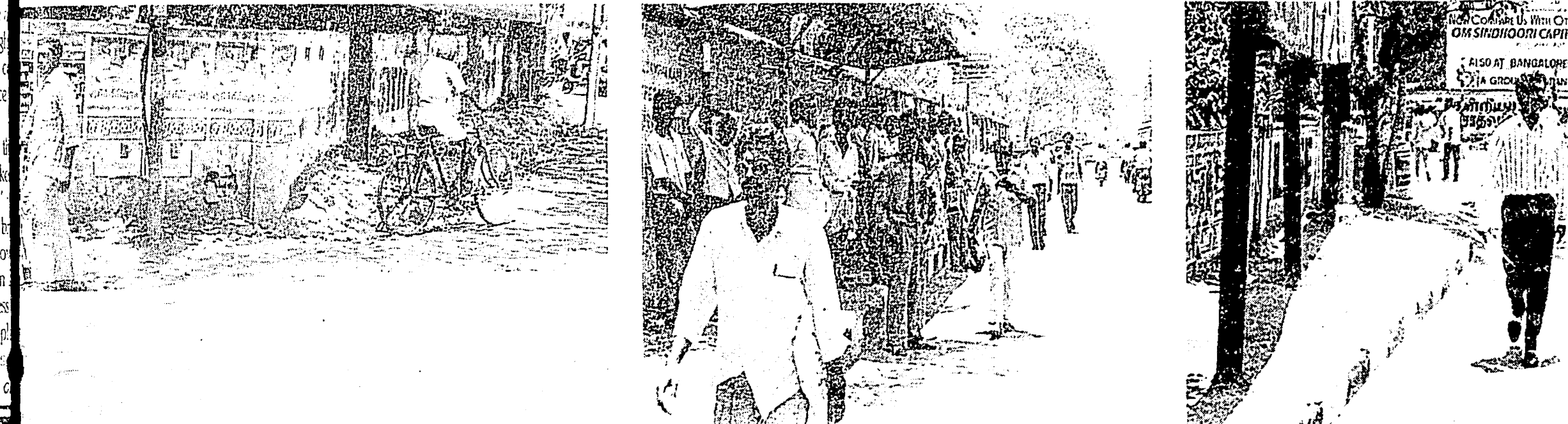
In much of Madras's garden house area, highrise has now come up. But once in a while something different is attempted, like these elegant, up-market 'row houses' in Abhiramapuram that are our NEW. 'Row houses' have not proved very popular in Madras, builders say, but it is more likely that highrise is a better investment for them. In some parts of India, like Ahmadabad, in particular, and in Pune, not only are 'row houses' popular but they are also architectural features of the city. Will Madras follow suit?



Here's one face of Madras



row, left to right: • There's no easy maintenance. But the slabs have been stolen for the steel they contain! Sealed sections with periodic access points would be better. • It seems like you should NOT use pavements. This opening is barely 3 feet wide — and nicely obstructed. Below, left to right: • Zebra crossing to nowhere — at one of the busiest and most dangerous junctions in Madras, Sterling Road. • This photo was taken at a slack hour. Yet notice the number of commuters filling the narrow pavement, forcing pedestrians on to the road. • Indiscriminate placing of hoardings, dustbins and trees on already inadequate pavements force pedestrians out into the murderous traffic. Where does that leave the handicapped? The young tree in the picture is a "Kaselia"; in a few years, its trunk will be at least 5 feet across! (Photographs by the author).



Score 4-nil!

— And no hope for the handicapped

or perhaps a shopping mall. For a walk... I wonder if we are in for such advanced versions of the simplest pleasure in life.

• This feature and the pictures accompanying it were given to Madras Musings some months ago by SIMEON MASCARENHAS, shortly before he went abroad. Things might have improved on these stretches since then, but we nevertheless publish the material because much of Madras still looks like this.

— THE EDITOR

All over the city, much has been done by way of improvements to roads, installation of street lamps and a somewhat improved traffic control system. That motorists choose to be uncontrollable, selfish and downright rude is another matter. But the pedestrian, who probably contributes more to keeping the wheels of Madras turning than anyone else in terms of work and sweat (pardon the pun), has been left out in the cold — or, should I say, in the road?

Agonisingly familiar are the sights of old women, bent double, trying to negotiate a vicious stretch of pavement: or a cripple forced to walk or ride his/her tricycle in traffic that thinks it is fun to 'race' them. Each one for himself and God for us all, it seems, but even God doesn't seem to look too kindly upon these unfortunates. That's because He's given the government more than enough power and resources to do so.

and maximise productivity. And could we PLEASE have pavements sloping gently downwards or up at gates and driveways? Stepping on and off them only drives pedestrians into the road. The waiting crowds cannot possibly be expected to leave enough room for pedestrians on already narrow pavements. In many instances, bus stops are next to schools or other institutions that have vast areas of land — acres of it. A little understanding on the part of these citizens, and a little tact and firmness by the government, could go a long way towards easing one of our city's problems. But no — schools

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THE OTHER FACE, NEXT FORTNIGHT

• 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.

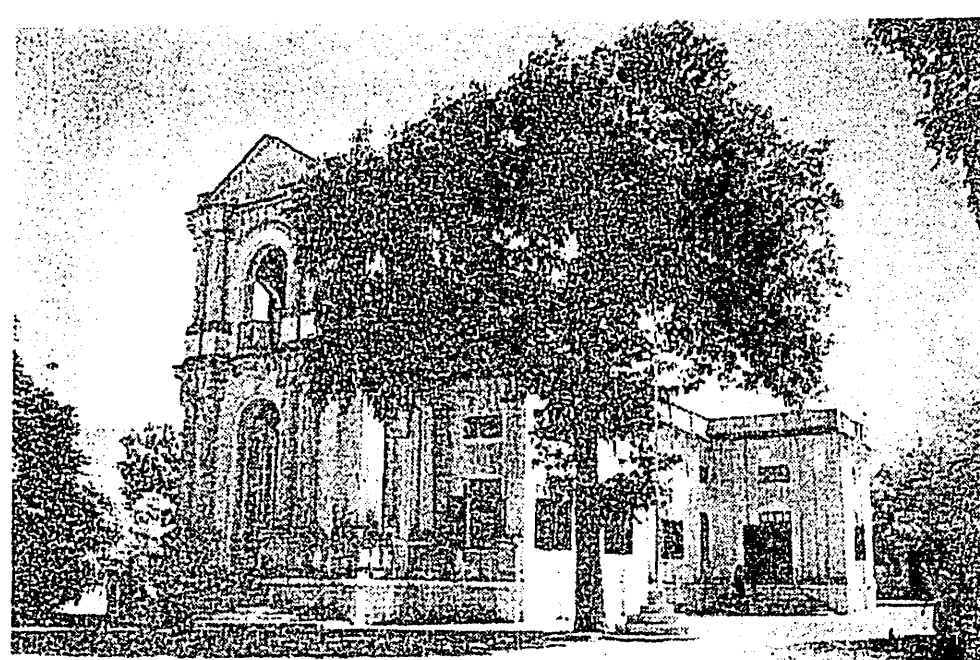
A wick burning bright in North Madras

A wick burning bright and providing the light of education in North Madras is Northwick — 146-year-old Northwick Girls' Higher Secondary School.

The Rev. John Anderson of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission founded the school early in 1847, with five Hindu girls who became Christians and were rendered homeless. The boarding for these girls was the nucleus from which Northwick grew. Mrs Anderson was its first Headmistress.

Till 1889, the school was housed in College House, Esplanade, a part of Madras Christian College and School. It was shifted that year to the present spacious site in Royapuram.

One of the important facilities in the school is the training department. Like the school, it grew from comparatively small beginnings. In 1887, a class was



The Ebenezer Church

started with four students and it has continued to grow in status and strength.

In 1891, Northwick was recognised by the Government as a high school. In 1897, collegiate classes for the F.A. were started. F.A. classes, L.T. classes and Elementary Grade Training were conducted along with the high school till 1915.

Two important events in the history of the school took place in the first week of August 1915 — the opening of new extensions by the Governor, Lord Pentland, and the dedication of the prayer hall. The prayer hall was named Ebenezer and dedicated on August 7, 1915 by Dr Skinner, the Principal of Madras Christian College. The church, a building architecturally striking, had an imposing front door made of teak. The initials of Miss Smart and Miss Stephen were cut in brass and fixed in the centre of the door, but these have now been replaced. The prayer hall was built with funds "from Indian well-wishers and the self-sacrificing labour of Miss Stephen and Miss Smart" who spent over 25 years in Madras, most of it at Northwick.

The F.A. classes at Northwick were shifted to the Women's Christian College, which was started in 1916. In 1922, when Gnanodaya Training School was started, the Elementary Training Section became part of it. And the Secondary Grade Training and L.T. joined St. Christopher's Training College.

During World War II, the campus was taken over by the military and was a camp. The school was shifted to Chengalpatlu temporarily during this period.

In 1978, the school became a Higher Secondary School and in 1980 a Nursery School was started. In 1987 computer courses were started. In 1989, five classrooms and the laboratory were demolished and a block with four classrooms was built. The new block was named Greenfield, after the last foreign missionary principal (1922-1946). The hostel block, 'The Grace Home', was built in 1972 to accommodate 50 students. It is named after a former Headmistress, Miss Annai Grace Idiculla (1946 to 1971).

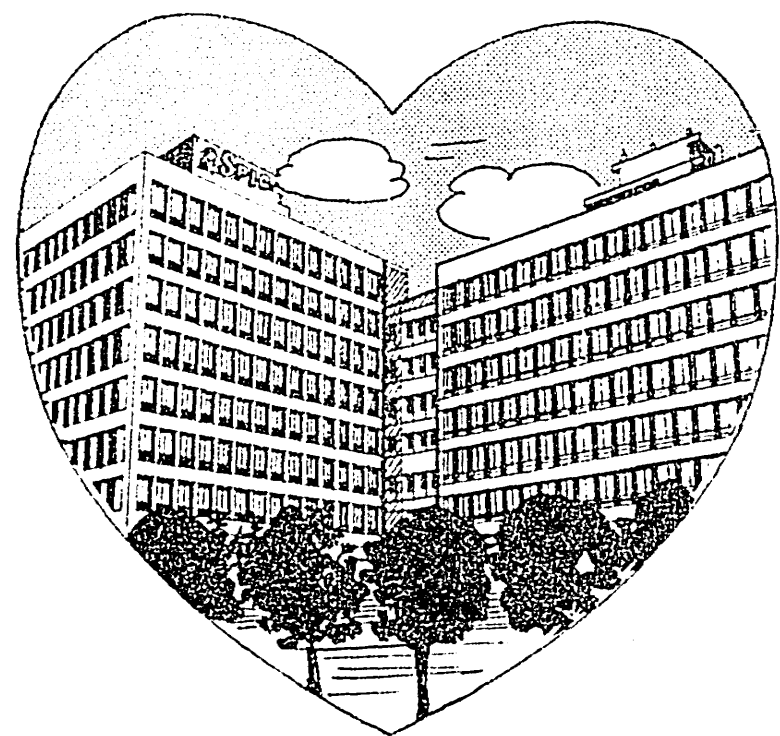
The present strength of the school is 2100 students in the main school and the English-medium nursery school. There are 50 teachers in the mainstream and 15 teachers in the nursery school. Nine old students are teachers and the Principal, Sheila Samuel, is also an old student.

Photographs and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY



The Northwick Girls' School, Royapuram.

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PROFAD

A great loss to classical dance

While classical art is, by definition, respectful of tradition, it is also daring, ambitious and as restless as the culture from which it springs. Dance honours its past by periodically re-inventing it and continues to find beauty in the struggle for the narration. Bharatha Natyam, a part of the ritual of worship in temples, was banished to the background as an art not understood by the sober and formal English-educated and the British. Since then, it has worked its way up the ladder of acceptability and become the proud possession of the educated middle class.

The community of Isai Vellalars have preserved the dance form through times of trial and, later, with the help

V.R. Devika

of new-found patronage, ensured the art shone brightly. One bright Nattuvanar, born in a traditional family of *nagaswaram* *vidwans* and who, after polishing his traditional training, imparted it to young and bright dancers like Anuradha Jagannathan, Priyadarshini Govind and Shrinidhi Rangarajan, was Swamimalai S.K. Rajarathinam. The soft-spoken *guru* of some of the best-known dancers of today (including Malavika Sarukkai), Rajarathinam had evolved a unique methodology of teaching. He also sang melodiously and did *nattuvangam* with aplomb. Madras will surely miss this link with tradition who passed away recently.

Rajarathinam should have received many awards, for it always seemed he was being considered for one. But, sadly, consideration never became reality. Muthusamy Pillai and S.K. Rajarathinam were two teachers who easily transcended their traditional training and burnished their craft till it gleamed. That we have lost the two

in quick succession is a sad thing for the dance scene.

Radha and Vidya

Rajarathinam gave a new twist to the Vazhuvoor style of Bharatha Natyam made famous by Vaidyanathan Ramiah Pillai. K.J. Sarasa took another fascinating direction by getting the scholarly and vibrancy and verve added to the sobriety. Radha, sister of the late Kamala, who brought Bharatha Natyam to the doors of hundreds of middle class homes, has, too, maintained the conservativeness of Vazhuvoor style. Her teaching is charming and friendly, her dancing with seeming ease.

Radha and her students had a triumphant tour of U.S.A. with dance-drama *Jaya Jaya Devam* among them. Vidya Radhakrishnan gave a Bharatha Natyam performance at the Bharath Kalachar recently. Radha danced with quiet concentration and sweet beauty that had a sculptural quality to it. But while dancing *varnam*, Vidya did not change expression much.

Manavi chekora ra is a *varnam* that builds emotional layer by layer and, thus, peels away to delve more deeply into layers of meaning, with each increasing in intensity until the appeal becomes a desperate cry. Dance is an observation of life. A dancer cannot stand in isolation. Dance cannot be merely beauty. Bharatha Natyam is an art form that has stylised intense feelings and a beautifully carved, intricate framework to these moods. It should work on the text and finish with understanding if her dance is to be something to the viewer.

QUIZ on Page 10

Tough Times, Tougher Diesels

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has no Indian political memoir stirred as much controversy, or otherwise, as R Venkataraman's *The Presidential Years*. Venkataraman's account of his years as President of India has been reviewed in the leading news-magazines, with almost everyone who is anyone, passing an opinion, agreeing with or opposing former President's views. The Madras Book Club, dormant for the last fifteen months, stirred itself again by getting the scholarly and vibrant S Gopal, historian and author, to speak about political history and this book in particular and draw everyone's attention with a fully critical examination of both. Gopal did not mince words when he said that Venkataraman had done an injustice to himself (for a man

of his calibre), possibly relying too much on, and ill-advised by, his 'backroom boys', hardly pausing to wonder whether, 'Will I be able to come (unscathed) out of this?' Although criticism of Venkataraman's book has been totally baseless, according to

by Sashi Nair

Gopal, the former President appeared (through the pages of his book, at least) to have had pronounced leanings towards the Congress government, and turned out to be an intriguing politician in *Rashtrotapathi Bhavan*, quite unlike the goody-goody person he was made out of.



N. Day in St Mary's in the Fort

On October 23rd, there is to be a joyous celebration of United Nations Day in St Mary's in the Fort, the Governor's Church and the Church of the First (Protestant) Congregation in Madras. Its hallowed precincts will reverberate to song and music during the 9 a.m. service on that day and will be hoisted the special UN banner shown in S ANWAR's photograph as well as other applique work banners. The special banner, which features the UN emblem and figures dancing in the national costumes of the UN member-countries, was made by women and children of many homes now in Madras, led by the indefatigable Issy Sanderson, seen in the picture just below the lampshade.

As part of the celebrations, children dressed in national costume will take part in a dance symbolising people of all nations coming together in spirit of harmony and understanding for peace. There will be readings in different languages of prayers and one of the poems of Mahatma Gandhi. Children from St. George's School, who form the choir at St. Mary's, will also take part.

Despite not having its own pastor at present, St. Mary's has a small, lively, committed congregation, many of whom are directly involved in work in the community. On October 23rd, they make "a joyful noise unto the Lord and world peace" in a historical Church. Also being celebrated on that day is the 314th anniversary of the Church.

Dates For Your Diary

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

October 21: 'Life in London' — four sketches by Rakesh Sahgal. Sahgal takes an incisive but light-hearted look at the British way of life. From East London to West London, flowersellers, street performers, Whitehall to Kensington Palace, Petticoat Market to bridges... they are all captured in his skilful style. Sahgal underwent a painting course in cartooning at St. Martin's School of Art in London in 1986. His work has appeared in many international exhibitions, including *Punch*. In India,

he has contributed regular cartoon strips to the *Indian Express* and the *Economic Times*. This exhibition features over fifty sketches in colour which were done during his stay in London. (10.00 a.m. — 7.00 p.m. British Council).

October 25: 'Artistic Ambassadors Trio' — Music recital by Sharon Beckendorf Searies (soprano), Catherine Bringerore (piano) and Mark Gilgallon (baritone). At the British Council auditorium (7.00 p.m.). The concert is jointly presented by the USIS and the Br. Council.

The Artistic Ambassador programme was launched by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in April 1983. The programme was conceived, as a way to use the wealth of often undiscovered musical talent in the United States to enhance USIA's mission of creating cross-cultural understanding.

Gopal's remarks, as well as his replies to several questions from the audience, made it clear that *The Presidential Years* contained many loose ends. For example, who was the mysterious ex-MP who had offered Venkataraman the Prime Ministership after Rajiv's demise? Why has the Bofors issue not been touched upon at all? Especially when, as President, Venkataraman must have had an umpire's view of the proceedings, so to speak. And what about the Indian misadventure in Sri Lanka?

At a functional level too, the former President's actions left much to be desired. Where was the reason to refer back to the Home Ministry a mercy petition, when the President himself could have exercised his discretion? Not granting clemency to Beant Singh, in spite of adequate evidence warranting consideration of a mercy plea, was a dark blot on Venkataraman's Presidency, felt Gopal.

A rather telling point Gopal made was that no letter or official correspondence is quoted in the book. This, he felt, might be one reason for critics to take what has been said with a pinch of salt. The overall impression, then, is one of a deflated and diminished image of the author.

Fueled by controversy, *The Presidential Years* has sold. After all, people always like to know the inside story, which is what a political memoir is invariably all about. And which is why publishers scramble for publishing rights, realising that there is a huge



Unique honour

(By A Staff Reporter)

In what is very likely a unique occurrence, Gayatri (Grace) Krishnaswami, Cultural Affairs Officer of the British Council Division of the British Deputy High Commission, Madras, joins her husband K Krishnaswami as an Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). This honour recognises her outstanding services to Indo-British cultural exchanges in South India. Krishnaswami received his award earlier this year for the 30 years he spent in charge of administration at the British Council, Madras.

Grace Krishnaswami has worked for the British Council, Madras, for over 30 years, the last 12 as Cultural Affairs Officer, during which she has taken British Council programmes in the arts to every corner of South India, from Thiruvananthapuram to Vishakhapatnam, from Mysore to Madurai. She has also assisted Indian artists to establish contacts in Britain, thereby promoting a wider appreciation of India's cultural heritage beyond these shores.

The Krishnaswamis will receive their decorations at a formal Investiture Ceremony to be held on October 21st when the British High Commissioner to India visits Madras.

market for such memoirs. But a memoir is often a self-serving effort. Written far from the seat of power, when memory fades and imagination flourishes, a memoir is not taken very seriously by the historian, Gopal added.

There was hardly a sound as coffee and biscuits were passed around — whether it was Venkataraman's book or Gopal's skill in effortlessly wending his way through the noticeably frayed edges of the former President's work, it was difficult to tell. The answer, perhaps, lay in a question asked by a member just before the curtain came

down on a pleasant evening. 'Should I read the book?'

The Madras Book Club has no formal membership and, refreshingly, no Presidents or Secretaries. The meetings, which have always been informal, provide a forum for book-lovers and those who enjoy reading to meet and exchange ideas, resembling in some ways the Coffee House in Calcutta's crowded College Street, although with a different ambience, and without the satchel bags, *kurtas* and *pyjamas* and cigarette butts, of course. If you want to attend future meetings, write to Madras Book Club, 67-A Orms Road, Kilpauk, Madras 600 010.

Quizzin' with Ramanan

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

1. Skycell and Mobile Telecom Limited have been given licences to introduce what 'status symbol' in Madras by next year?
2. Three-year old Afiah helped Apollo Hospital of Madras achieve a rare distinction in Indian medical history. What?
3. Where was the Phase I of ELCOT electronic city inaugurated on Sept. 18th?
4. Name the flamboyant and talented tennis player who died tragically of carbon monoxide poisoning on Sept. 19th.
5. Name the latest country where the US Marines landed to restore democracy.
6. Simple! Where was an outbreak of plague in the country recently?
7. Jaafar Abdul Rahman was installed king of an Asian country (on a rotation basis) on Sept. 22nd. Name the country.
8. Whom did Grandmasters Viswanathan Anand and Gata Kamsky defeat at Linares, to set up a final clash in the PCA's Intel world chess championship candidates series?
9. Where was a chimp-sized creature's fossil, the earliest known link connecting humans and their ape ancestors, found recently?
10. Who retained their title at the recently concluded Buchi Babu cricket tourney in Madras?
11. Name the ferry which sank in the Baltic Sea with more than 800 people on board, one of the worst maritime disasters ever.
12. Which popular entertainment complex in Madras ceased to function from Sept. 30th?

13. Name the popular Tamil comedian who passed away on Sept. 28th.
14. For the first time in Indian sporting history, an Indian corporate house will sponsor a foreign team, the WI cricket squad. Who are the sponsors?
15. September 27th was celebrated worldwide as...?

16. Who refused to accept the Vice Chancellor's post of Madras University within hours of being so chosen by the Tamil Nadu Governor?
17. Who made a 'long march' from Kanniyakumari to Madras to realise 'Anna's ideals'?
18. Where is a new police academy due to come up in the city?
19. Which veteran freedom fighter and Gandhian has been named recipient of the prestigious Jammalal Bajaj Award for 1994 for his outstanding contribution in the field of constructive work?
20. Only for the second time has an Indian been elected to the chairmanship of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors. Who?

(Answers p. 8)

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Champions again — despite the odds

After a gap of three years, the Tamil Nadu women's cricket team has won the South Zone Championship. The host team was the pre-tournament favourite in the four-team round robin league and did not disappoint its supporters, winning all its fixtures quite comfortably.

Speaking about her team's victory, Tamil Nadu's skipper and India cap Sudha Shah said, "Fine performances by S Hemamalini and Elizabeth Mathew with the bat and good bowling by Lissy and Jayalakshmi Menon helped us to win comfortably". But the match against the title holders, Andhra Pradesh, provided several anxious moments. "In the last five overs we needed 25 runs and six runs from the last over. Somehow we weathered the storm and won with a ball to spare," she recounted.

Throughout the tournament, the Tamil Nadu girls were under severe psychological pressure, particularly Sudha Shah. Mrs Meena, Sudha's

mother and one of the persons responsible for developing women's cricket in the State, was battling for her life in a city hospital when the Tamil Nadu girls took on the Andhra team. "My mother's condition weighed on me and I was in no mood to play the match, but she insisted I play." And Sudha went on to play a major part in the victory. But, sadly, a few days later Mrs Meena lost her battle.

Women's cricket in the state started in 1973 with a few clubs, like Skylarks and Gandhinagar Club, and a couple of college teams playing each other. Initially, people were sceptical about women playing serious cricket. "You will get dark standing under the sun for hours and there is also the risk of injury, which will hamper the chances of marriage," warned Visalakshmi Nedu-nchezhian when she was approached to head the State Association. Sudha recalls.

When the Australian women's team toured India in 1974, the sport

got a big boost. "Thereafter, till 1986, there was much competition. But after that, matches became rare and the interest in women's cricket began to wane," narrates Sudha Shah. During those initial days, the State team was a formidable one and figured thrice in the National finals. But the lack of matches after 1986 prevented the grooming of young players. This, coupled with the retirement of several players, saw the Tamil Nadu women's team slide.

Part of the reason for waning interest was that the girls from the State who were selected for the national side got a raw deal from the selectors. In two decades of women's cricket in the country, only three players from Tamil Nadu — Sudha Shah, Fouzia Khaleeli and Susan — made it to the national team. Sumathi and Suguna were once included in the Indian 14 but did not play in any matches. Sudha's case stands out as the classic example of Tamil Nadu being at the receiving end.



Tamil Nadu and South Zone captain
Sudha Shah
(Photograph by V S RAGAVAN)

In 1975, when the Australians toured India, Sudha was named the Captain of the Indian team. But due to regional pressures, the series saw three captains for the Indian team and Sudha was allowed to lead only in the Delhi Test. Then, in 1978, on the eve of the World Cup tournament, Sudha was again introduced as the captain of the Indian team to some presspersons. But when the team was finally announced, she was not even in the playing eleven!

More recently, in 1992, when experienced players from the South Zone, like Shanta, Sudha and Sumathi, were performing better than their younger team-mates, they were dropped as 'handicaps', their age cited as the reason. Today, except for the redoubtable Sudha and Sumathi, all other senior players of the State team have hung up their boots.

After playing 33 tests and several one-dayers for the country, Sudha is still going strong. What is her prescription for Tamil Nadu's ailing women's cricket? "More cricket for the girls," she says. "The future lies in the schools. Here, girls learn the rudiments of the game only after entering college." Only when schoolgirls are encouraged to play the game will women's cricket in the State blossom, she feels. And adds, "favouritism and nepotism do not help. Imagine a girl being selected for her college just because she has long plaits!" laughs Sudha. Then, seriously,

"At the expense of a girl who played for the State. No wonder the University team got knocked out in the first round in the inter-university matches!"

Adds Sumathi, "We should start league matches, so that Tamil Nadu girls get more match practice. Only the girls in the north. Only the merit replace favouritism."

Lack of funds is the main reason for the Association not promoting sport vigorously or providing facilities for the players. Not many are willing to sponsor women's matches. "The State Association's poor finances can't afford to ground for practice," points Sumathi. Even the TNCA as Tamil Nadu Women's Cricket Association to pay for using its nets? "they help their sister association giving it free?" wonders Sumathi. The association hopes the Chief Minister help them out of their predicament.

Fortunately, the bleak situation the last couple of years is changing. The inter-collegiate tournament has found some sponsors. The TNWCA has a busy schedule ahead this year. It will be hosting a match against Australia in November. It also plans to conduct a South Zone league for juniors.

In the final analysis, it is evident women's cricket in the State has a way to go despite being one of the forerunners in the country. The winning combination in the form of Hemamalini, Elizabeth Mathew and Jayalakshmi Menon supported by experienced Sudha and Sumathi only Sudha and Sumathi are paid by their employers, Canara Bank. Come for practice every afternoon would benefit considerably, Association officials. But despite handicaps the Association forward to a better showing at national level this year.

Repelling takeovers

(Continued from P4)

seems to lie in North Block expressing tacit support to home-grown industries.

As of now, the Government has allowed TNCs to have 51 per cent equity stake in 35 priority sectors. In the other sectors, at least, it should ensure that the Indian camp is first exposed to stupendous internal competition. Thence, after say two years, when the Indian companies have geared themselves up intensively, the wooing of the leviathan TNCs can begin.

Our recommendations this fortnight are:

Garden Silk (CMP Rs. 100.00): This company has announced encouraging results for the year ended June 1994. The company exceeded its target for 1993-94 — PAT was Rs. 29.51 cr as against the estimated Rs. 24 cr. It has declared a dividend of 32% on the equity enhanced by the GDR issue. For 1994-95, its PFY plant is estimated to add Rs. 100 cr to turnover. The projections for 1994-95 show a turnover of Rs. 354 cr and a PAT of

Rs. 38.40 cr, which appear feasible. This yields an EPS of Rs. 10.65 and supports a price of Rs. 150 for this share.

Tanfac Industries (CMP Rs. 85.00): Jointly run by TIDCO and the Aditya Birla Group, this company is engaged in the manufacture of aluminium fluoride, sulphuric acid and anhydrous hydrofluoric acid. The company has obtained ISO 9000 certification in April 1994. Exports are expected to grow sizeably in 1995-96, as the company will cater to European, West Asian and Southeast Asian countries. The future prospects are good, as Hindalco is expanding its capacity by 40,000 tpa by March 1995. Also, Nalco is implementing expansion of its smelting capacity. The share is a good buy for long-term gains for a target of Rs. 135.

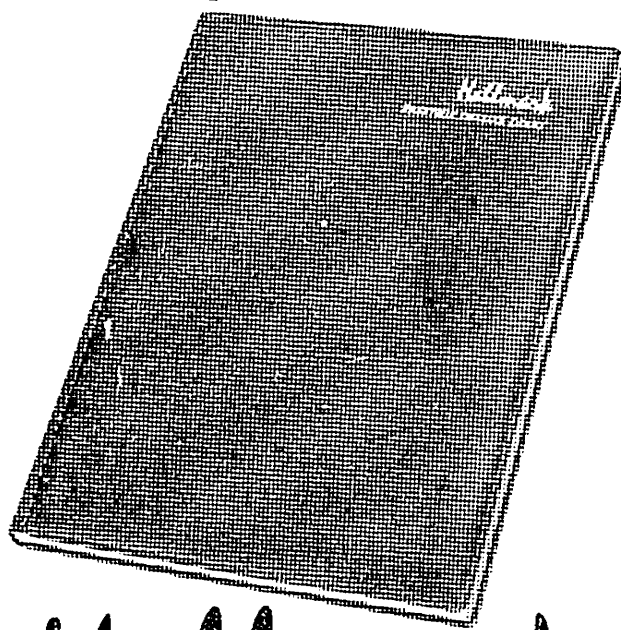
American Dry Fruits (CMP Rs. 70.00): This Gujarat-based company has set up a plant to produce 12,600 tpa of canned and bottled processed vegetable fruits and foods. Exports contribute to 80% of its production and go to the UK, USA, Europe and West Germany under the brands 'Asoka', 'Camel' and 'Aeroplane'. The Indian brand 'Mothers Recipe', which was launched in Maharashtra with much fanfare, is to hit Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa and Delhi. The company has declared much better results for 1993-94 than what was projected during the public issue. They have declared a dividend of 10% in the first year of operations. For 1994-95, it is expected to achieve a turnover of Rs. 50 cr and a PAT of Rs. 3.50 cr, yielding an EPS of Rs. 6.70 and supporting a price of Rs. 100. Buy with a stoploss at Rs. 65.

K. Gopalakrishnan

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Cellular phone; 2. His operation made Apollo the first hospital to complete 10,000 open heart surgeries in a decade; 3. Sholingnallur; 4. Vitas Gerulaitis; 5. Haiti; 6. Surat; 7. Malaysia; 8. Michael Adams and Nigel Short, respectively; 9. Ethiopia; 10. MAC-TNCA XI; 11. Estonia; 12. The Veecumsee Complex housing the Saffire, Emerald and Blue Diamond theatres; 13. K.A. 'Danaal' Thangavelu; 14. The Ispat Group; 15. World Tourism Day; 16. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; 17. The MDMK leader, V. Gopalsami; 18. Avadi; 19. L.N. Gopalswami; 20. R. Chidambaram, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India.

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