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Vol. IV. No. 16

Dec. 1 — 15, 1994

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Loyola man one of the best

RBI head honoured internationally

(By A Special Correspondent)

Dr Chakravarthi Rangarajan, the Reserve Bank of India Governor, has been listed among the 'Ten Best Central Bank Chiefs' in the world by the *Global Finance Magazine*. Rangarajan studied and taught at Loyola College before going on to become a major figure in the world of international economics and finance.

Received almost simultaneously with this information is the news that his boss, Dr Manmohan Singh, has been named the 'Best Finance Minister' in the world by another journal, *EuroMoney*.

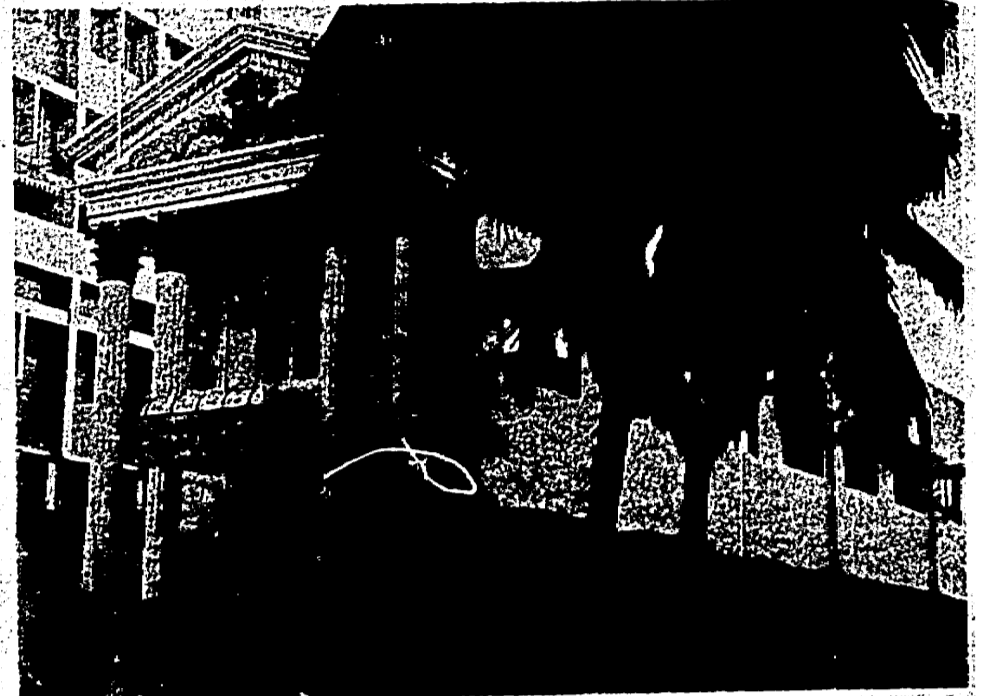
In listing Rangarajan among the best, *Global Finance* has commended his efforts to develop a government bond market and build up the central bank's market operations. Other achievements of his noted have been his resolve to fight inflation, ensure credit to make full convertibility possible and his credit policy.

Little noticed locally have been some of the ex-academic's more tangible achievements. He personally ploughed through stacks of files and computed Rs. 145 crore as penalties foreign banks would have to pay as a consequence of the Great Stock Scam. Fears that they would not pay, or that

foreign capital would flee the country have proved unfounded; Rs. 123 crore have been collected till date and foreign investors and bankers have shown the highest regard for the principled banking official. He also played a significant role in formulating the Eighth Five-Year Plan. And instead of strangling farmers' credit, he safeguarded it by giving Rs. 1500 crore to NABARD to channel to the agricultural sector.

Rangarajan, who got his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and who taught at the University's famed Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, is a renowned economist who has written several books. His main areas of interest are monetary economy, financial institutions, economic planning and industrial economy. All come under his purview at the RBI and the Planning Commission.

The banker, who works a punishing 9.30 to 8.30 day, now has his biggest challenge before him. How will he handle the country's burgeoning foreign exchange reserves of \$20 billion to ensure that they not only grow but bring in the best returns? Will he prove as shrewd an investor as he has proved economy developer? The coming year will provide the answer.



We've had this building on Sullivan's Road before. But then it was still to be finished and appeared a mystery. Now we know it's a medical centre associated with a major private hospital. The Classical front gives this medical institution a rather overly imperial look, but what strikes most people with an interest in architecture, buildings and style is the tendency in many a modern building - as in this case - to pay greater attention to the front of the building and forget the rest. In this instance, the sides are almost clinically bare and quite a contrast to the royal entrance. Can't we build to a 'totality'?
(Photograph: V S RAGHAVAN)

TN inflation keeping pace with nation's average

(By a Staff Reporter)

National inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (Base: 82-100), averaged 10.9 per cent for the 'million' cities for the year ended August 1994. Judged against this, Madras is just a little higher (11.2%) but Coimbatore is the second HIGHEST (12.6%), trailing only Bombay's 13.8%. On the low side is Madurai (9.8%), but it is considerably higher than the lowest, Vishakhapatnam (6.4%).

Inflation in other South Indian 'million' cities was as follows: Hyderabad 9.2% and Bangalore 10.0% Kochi was not compiled by the Labour Bureau, Shimla.

Overall, inflation in Tamil Nadu would appear to be keeping pace with the national average. What then is the State government doing to bring it down?

Temples help with identity creation in the U.S.A.

(By A Staff Reporter)

A book on the temples of George Town is under research. Its author-to-be is Dr Joanne Waghorne of the University of North Carolina, who's been visiting Madras since 1968 and has just had released a book on Pudukkottai and the religious influences in the only princely state in the old Madras Presidency. Another book she and her photographer-husband Dick are working on is on the Hindu temples of America — and those temples were the subject of her recent talk to the Madras Book Club.

Speaking of those temples, she said that besides the big ones built by the well-known *shapathis* from Tamil Nadu, there were several Hindu temples in small town America. And all these temples were serving the purpose of helping Hindu Indians in the US to establish an identity in a country where the tradition of church- and synagogue-going on a regular day is still very much alive. And so, Sunday is when Hindu families 'conform' by regularly visiting temples as a group.

These temples operate on two levels, like most other American religious institutions. One one level, there is the area for worship, usually frequented by the elders in the family. And on the other level, there are the facilities for 'Sunday School', music and dance instruction, sports and library facilities, which are frequented by the young.

But more than the religious role the temples play in the lives of the older Indian-Americans, they are an attempt by the older generation to keep the younger generation closer to roots, felt Dr Waghorne.

Further 'Americansation' of the temples described by Dr Waghorne is

the considerable role women play (in preparing *prasadam* etc), and in the elections for church management, in the congregation voting even on the placement of the ikons, in making a business of running the temple and in following American legal requirements which, for instance, insist on doors opening outwards and not inwards.

Softly, softly with this record

(By A Staff Reporter)

Madras has the highest number of churches among all the cities in South Asia. In 1981, there were 593 churches, in 1989, 714 and in 1994, 1400. The Church Growth Association in India (CGAI) states that it hopes there'll be 7000 churches in Madras by the year 2000!

The growth rate of churches certainly seems higher than even the city population's growth rate, leave alone that of the Christian population.

The CGAI also reports that though there are around 2000 slums in Madras city, with some Christian activity in some of them, the churches are few in these slums and "there is no remarkable church planting" in these areas. Does the CGAI hope to plant its next 5600 churches here?

A little LESS ambition would appear to be warranted in times when religion is an abrasive issue.



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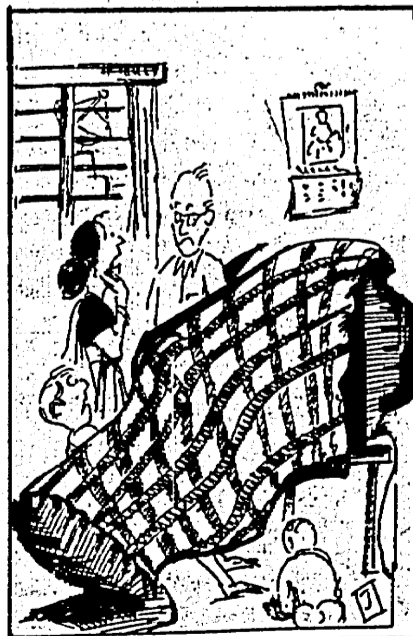
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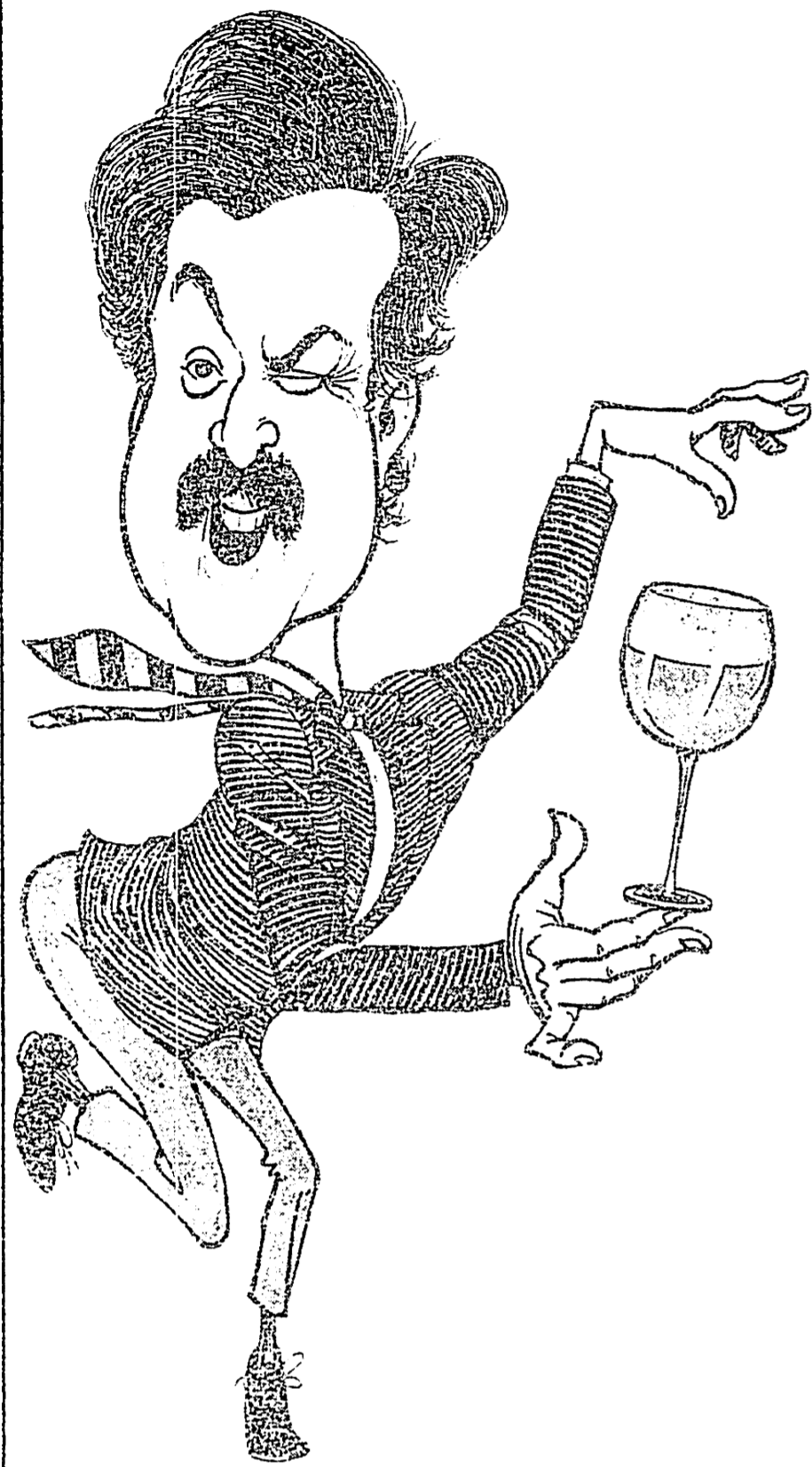
MANALI RAMAN...



"He is SO worried about the impact of TV programmes on children!"

IN MAD, MAD MADRAS

THE (TAMIL NADU) HIT PARADE



EDITOR'S NOTE: I later Mallya's questions with Mallya were close. The vintage Mallya company, M. D. Mallya, was one of the early winners in the crown. Another old Mallya commercial name, used in the 1950s, was later a question. And Vijay Mallya has a home now in Bangalore, Madras.

The Great Gambler

Exactly ten years ago, when his father Vittal Mallya died, VIJAY MALLYA, then twenty-nine, was pushed headlong into taking charge of a rupees two hundred and fifty crore group whose main business was liquor. Unlike his father, who consistently maintained a low-key profile, Vijay is all front-page bluster and anything he does is considered newsworthy; whether it is a race-track feat of one of his prized horses, his passion for vintage cars or a genuine business breakthrough.

Vijay spent most of the Eighties on a diversification binge into unfamiliar territories like fertilisers, electronics and engineering, which got the group leveraged to the hilt and, eventually, in the throes of a severe cash crunch. In the liberalised Nineties, when liquor is no longer considered a bad thing, Vijay is gradually divesting and zooming in on the business he knows best — booze.

His conspicuous lifestyle has earned him as many detractors as friends. As he jets around in his personal Gulfstream between Bangalore, UB's domestic headquarters, and Dubai, head office of his international operations, Mallya is one of the handful of Indian businessmen with an international game-plan and presence. He owns Berger-Jenson and Nicholson and has recently bought into an English brewery. 'Happy hours' in his peripatetic existence are those he spends at his stud farm in Kunigal near Bangalore.

(Special to DHIR text by NAZHIN KARMAI - From THE HIT PARADE - Spectacles of Indian Industry, Published by Banyan Books, New Delhi.)

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Regulating takeovers The power of the sea

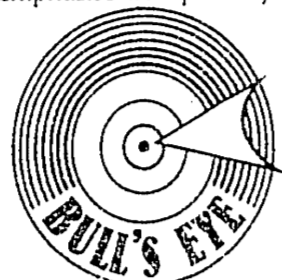
The Finance Ministry's recent announcement of a new set of regulations for acquisition of companies is another step in the ongoing reform process. Besides providing for greater transparency, the regulations also empower SEBI to regulate take-overs. SEBI can issue directives or initiate criminal prosecution under Sec. 24 of the SEBI Act. The Centre expects the latest set of norms to promote the orderly functioning of the stock market and to foster the protection of the investors.

The regulations provide trigger-points for disclosure. Any acquirer holding more than five per cent of the shares in a company must disclose his aggregate holding to both the company and the Exchanges where the company is listed. Those with more than ten per cent have to make half-yearly disclosures to the stock exchanges. Such disclosures are expected to ensure greater transparency in share acquisition and reveal the possibility of a change in management.

The norms have dealt with three sets of takeovers, categorising them as negotiated, open market and bail-out takeovers. Apart from providing trigger

points for each category, the regulations also insist, in the first two cases, that anybody acquiring ten per cent must announce publicly that he will acquire another twenty per cent. The minimum price he has to pay has also been stipulated in both cases.

Takeovers, in general, have the salutary effect of restricting the incumbent management from playing fast and loose with the stockholder's money. Therefore, the new regulations, which emphasise transparency in this



regard and empower SEBI, are a welcome move. But while stating that an acquirer must add another twenty per cent to his holdings, it has ignored the position of a genuine investor who has bought his stake in open market operations. Also ignored are Leveraged Buy-outs, when the incumbent management is the acquirer. Conditions which constitute hostile takeovers have also not been specified.

These regulations have to be dealt with further definitions. The above-mentioned factors have to be addressed and the role of financial institutions, which have decisive say in a target company, stated in uncertain terms. With the Centre avowed intention to complete the reform process, we can definitely expect further regulations which will increase the transparency of stock market operations and protect the investor public. Meanwhile, our recommendations for this fortnight are:

Sree Rayalaseema Alkalies (CPL Rs 53.75): This company is the first in India to manufacture Caustic Soda using bipolar membrane technology. The merchant vessel, the m.v. Sagar, which is blown ashore 'light-ship' (i.e. with cargo or ballast aboard) just north of Madras harbour. This writer told the company afterwards that unless the ship was hauled off into deep water within a day or two it would be too late. The sand would build up around the ship just as it did with the old *Stamatis*, which was blown ashore in the cyclone of 1967, permanently binding her to the shore.

(Continued on p. 10)



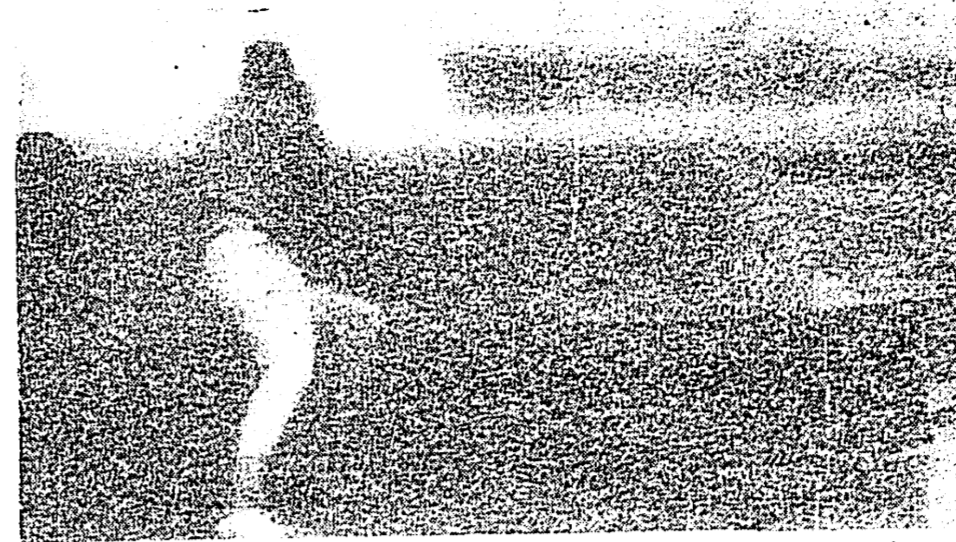
Our OLD and NEW this fortnight are again something out of the ordinary. They are both taken from Robert Dulau's book, The town... the house... their spirit, by Robert Dulau that has been published by the Institut Francaise de Pondichery. The OLD shows Rue Montorsier in the ville noire (Black Town) and the architect-author asks us to note "the series of traditional Tamil houses with their tinnais open to the street". The NEW is of a street in the ville blanche (White Town) Rue Bazar St Laurent, with the sea in the background. These and the scores of other pictures in the volume are by Anup Dave.

THE OLD...

But while Dulau's book is a pleasure to peruse, rich as it is in pictures, maps and line illustrations, Pondichery still awaits a book that will narrate its romance, history and heritages. Dulau's eloquence, available in French, English and Tamil editions from the Institut, is reserved for town-planning, street formations and house construction, all preoccupations of the professional architect no matter that, in this instance, he has had for years a passionate love affair with Pondichery.



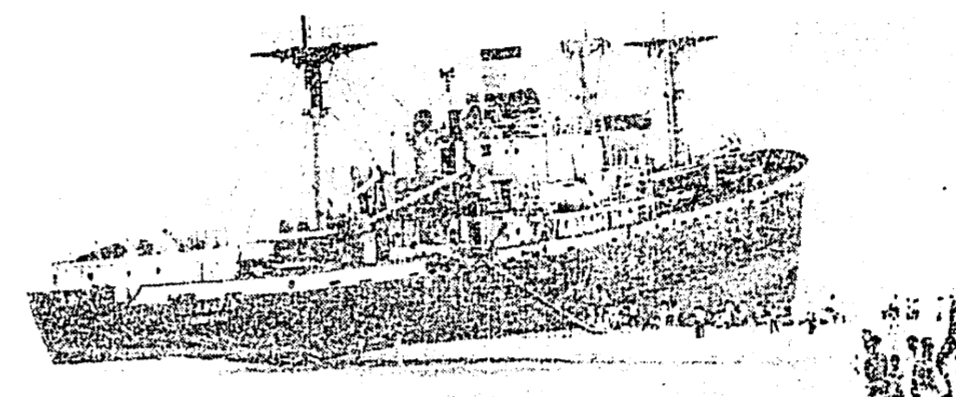
The Madras Musings of November 1 were a number of photographs showing how the sea is dangerously closing the coast line and even the road to Ennore, north of Madras. Readers may wonder why the sea has attacked this stretch of coast which it had previously ignored. Turn to any engraving or water colour of the Fort in the 18th Century, and it will be clear that in those days the sea was within a few meters of the fort's walls.



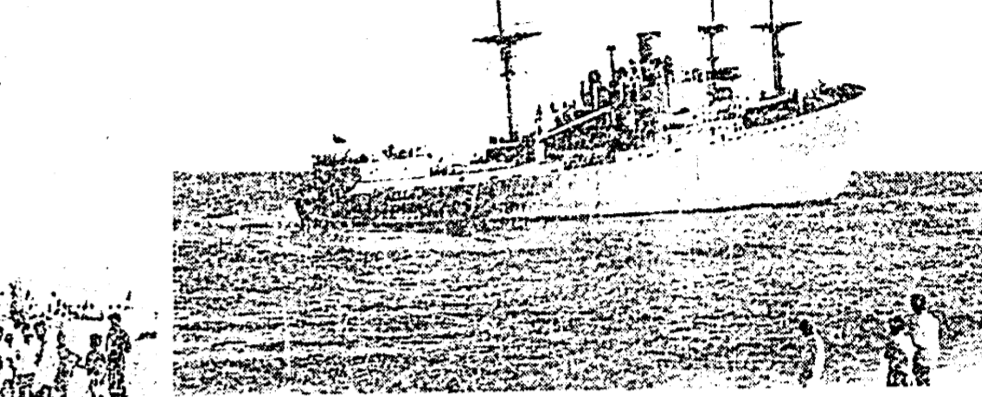
The two dramatic photographs above show the author photographing the *Stamatis* as she was actually coming ashore in the teeth of the 1967 cyclone. The poor quality of the photographs (taken by an accompanying colleague) is 'due to heavy rain, lashing seawater and sand blasting the camera lens', writes the author. Of his picture below, left, he says: "The *Stamatis* went aground on sand several hundred metres from the water's edge, yet, as the picture shows, a peninsula of sand had built up within weeks, enabling people to walk right out to her on dry land. M. SETHURAMAN's picture below, right, shows the *Stamatis* in the shallows immediately after the 1967 storm.



up within weeks, enabling people to walk right out to her on dry land. M. SETHURAMAN's picture below, right, shows the *Stamatis* in the shallows immediately after the 1967 storm.



The wreck within a month or two, so that people could walk out to her without so much as getting their feet wet. But when the vessel was ultimately broken up, and its obstacle to the inexorable oceanic current removed, the peninsula of sand quickly vanished too, and the shoreline was restored to the original boundary, where it is today. Similarly, if Madras Harbour were suddenly to vanish, Fort St. George would rapidly find itself within a few meters of the surf, as it used to be. Indeed, if we are to believe scientists who gloomily predict a rise of the world ocean levels by two or three meters due to global warming, it almost certainly will disappear, along with much of coastal Tamil Nadu, not to mention the Lakshwadeep and the Maldivic islands, none of which are more than three meters above sea level.



down considerably, and that is when it deposits so much sand, but its patient, dedicated movement is also deflected seawards, where it meets and is deflected back again by the major, parent part of it, which has been there, still moving slowly northwards, all the time. But now this new twist in its unyielding course is turned savagely landwards, as though vengeful of Man's trivial interference, and attacks the northerly coast as though to take back what it has lost to us. Hence last month's picture of that beautiful little temple, now tumbled into the surf, and the administration's pathetic efforts to halt further maritime revenge by rows of massive tetrapods and giant concrete pipes -- meant to carry water, not to halt it.

Those of us who, like this writer, have grown up with and alongside the sea, and often upon it, quickly learn to respect the might of our planet's oceans, and know the unimaginable power of its vengeance against those who seek to deprive it of its own.

But our sand-dropping scenario does not end there. Major oceanic dynamics cannot so easily be denied by the puny works of Mankind. When that mighty movement of water meets the outer harbour walls, it does not stop abruptly and permanently. It slows

Ships ashore!

Ships being grounded on the coast of Madras are not rare events if you consider an average of one grounding per decade.

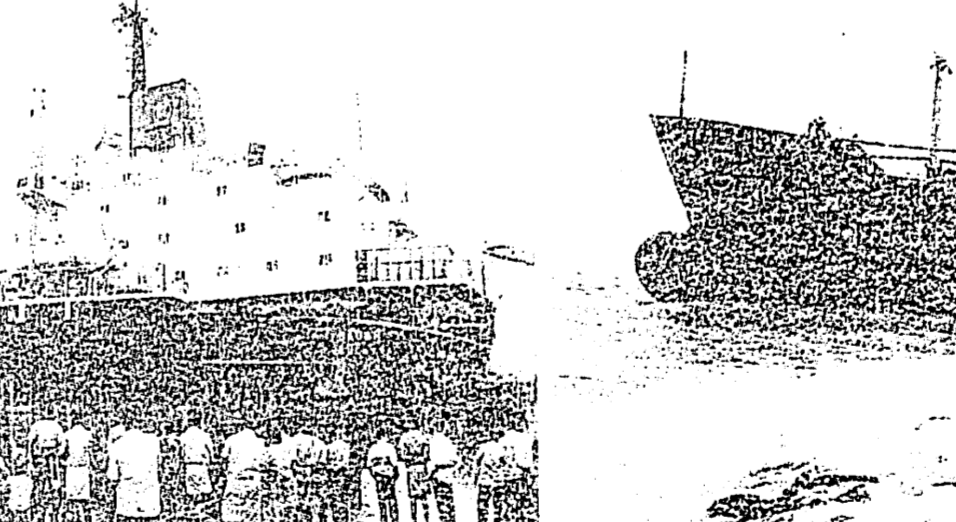
The first ship I remember being grounded was opposite Royapuram Railway terminus. It was the *Clan Morrison*, a cargo steamer, way back in 1933 or '34. At that time, there was no ore loading quay there. From the road you could just step into the sea. A barrier of granite boulders prevented the sea from reaching the road. But, during stormy weather, the angry waves sometimes washed the road that skirted the sea and prevented road traffic.

The *Clan Morrison* was reclaimed and was in service until World War II when it was sunk by Japanese naval action. In November 1966, a Greek ship the *s.s Stamatis* got stuck off Marina beach, opposite Senate House.

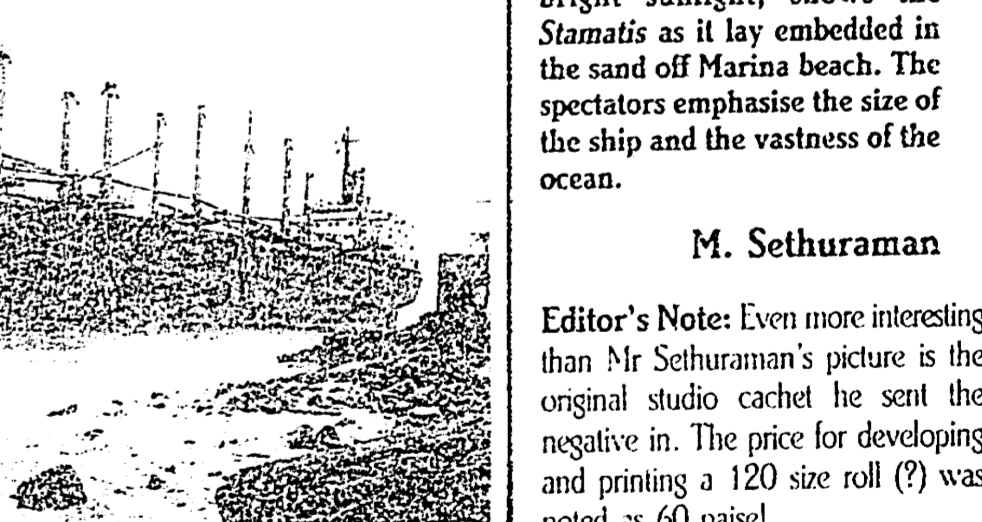
As the ship had lodged in a popular spot on the beach, separated from land only by about a hundred metres of sea, people thronged to see the spectacle. As the ship had sunk very deep, the idea of refloating it was abandoned. Some entrepreneurs toyed with the novel idea of running a restaurant aboard. When it was pointed out that keeping a grounded vessel ship-shape was much costlier than a floating one, the idea was given up.

The *Stamatis* stood there in a sorry state for many years, until it was sold as junk. The wreckers came and dismantled all the superstructures, to be sold as scrap. Parts of the hull which could not be extricated were left to rot in the sea. My picture, taken on 14.1.67 at about 3 p.m. in bright sunlight, shows the *Stamatis* as it lay embedded in the sand off Marina beach. The spectators emphasise the size of the ship and the vastness of the ocean.

Editor's Note: Even more interesting than Mr Sethuraman's picture is the original studio cachet he sent the negative in. The price for developing and printing a 120 size roll (?) was noted as 60 paise!



V.S. RAGHAVAN'S pictures show the fate of the *Stamatis* wait the *Sagar* or will it be saved?



coast after the 1994 storm. These pictures were taken two weeks after the cyclone that just missed Madras, but was still powerful enough to drive the *Sagar* ashore. Does the fate of the *Stamatis* wait the *Sagar* or will it be saved?

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NOTABLE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Aldridge, John W. <i>Classics & Contemporaries.</i> University of Missouri Press. c1992. (810.9 ALD)	Hiltz, Starr Roxanne. <i>The Network Nation: Human Communication via Computer.</i> The MIT Press. c1993. (004.6 HIL)
Edward, Richard. <i>Rights at Work: Employment Relations in the Post-Union Era.</i> The Brookings Institution. c1993. (331.011 EDW)	How to Run a Small Business. (Seventh edition) J.K. Lasser Institute. McGraw-Hill, Inc., c1994. (658.022 HOW)
Frederick, Howard H. <i>Global Communication & International Relations.</i> Wadsworth Publishing Company. c1993. (327.17 FRE)	Morgan, Gareth. <i>Imaginization: The Art of Creative Management.</i> SAGE Publications. c1993. (658 MOR)
Global Accord: <i>Environmental Challenges and International Responses.</i> Edited by Nazli Choucri. The MIT Press, c1993. (363.70526 GLO)	Segal, Howard P. <i>Future Imperfect: The Mixed Blessings of Technology in America.</i> The University of Massachusetts Press. c1994. (303.483 SEG)

MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

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ACCOMMODATION

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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.

Where a Nobel Laureate got started

The Hindu Higher Secondary School, Triplicane, dates back to the time of the East India Company. It has, for long, been a centre of culture and learning and a pioneer in cooperation and social work.

The school was started by the residents of the locality in 1852 as the Dravida Patasala for Tamil boys and the Hindu Andhra Balura Patasala for Telugu boys. Both schools were managed separately. The Tamil school strength was initially 18 boys and it offered subjects like Kural Naidatham, Nanool, Kandjagai and Nigandoo. English was taught only to whoever desired it. The students were promoted on the basis of annual examinations conducted by outside examiners appointed by the School Committee.

The committees of management comprised of members who subscribed every month. Defaulting members were sent 'gentle' reminders and, if they continued to be in due, were removed from the Committee. The Committee selected the best teachers, but could not pay them adequately because of its poor income!

The Tamil school got financial help from the Government and from the Pachaiyappa's charities. With both schools functioning well and public interest in them considerable, they were amalgamated in 1858 as the Triplicane Andhra Dravida Balura Patasala. In 1864, the Balika Patasala was opened for girls.

By the end of 1868, all was not well with the schools. Their strengths had fallen and the teachers had not been paid. At this stage, M A Singara-charian joined the schools' committee. He discharged all the liabilities of the schools out of his own pocket and was reimbursed subsequently only when funds permitted. This kept the schools going and the untiring efforts thereafter of Singara-charian, who was member secretary for 38 years, enabled a first class high school to be developed.

In keeping with the requirements of the time, the school began improving its instruction in English. In 1870, Matriculation classes were started. And on a suggestion by the Director of

Public Instruction, the school's name was changed to Triplicane Anglo-Vernacular High School. Even today, old stalwarts refer to the school by this name.

From the beginning, the Tamil school was located in Big Street, Triplicane, in rented premises. In 1876, there was insufficient accommodation, and the primary department had to be shifted to another rented building. About this time, the management of the school was handed over to the Maharaja of Vizianagaram and he managed



The main school building of Hindu Triplicane.

from the school got into Presidency College with ease.

To find a solution to the accommodation problem, adjoining sites were bought and a government grant was sanctioned to erect a new building. This red building, of striking architecture, was opened in 1897 by the then Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Havelock, and is still a landmark in the area. The name of the school was also changed to Hindu High School. When the school was upgraded as a higher secondary school in 1978, it simultaneously celebrated its 125th year. Today, the school offers education in English, Tamil and Telugu.

Big Street, Triplicane, is a densely populated area of commercial establishments. And, amidst them, are the school's buildings, situated on both sides of Big Street. The present strength of the school is about 2800 and there are about 95 teachers. The present Headmaster, S K Seshan, is an old student of the school, like a few other teachers. The school's academic performance has been good. So has been its sports record, particularly in cricket and swimming.

The school has produced a host of luminaries in several fields, but it is particularly proud of the distinction of having helped to produce a Nobel Laureate. Dr S. Chandrasekhar was a student of the school from 1921 to 1925.

The school is today managed by the Hindu Educational Organisation, Triplicane. It avails Government aid and meets extra expenditure from its own funds. And strives to live by its motto, 'Service to Humanity'.

Text and Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY

The Hindu Triplicane's building across the street from the main building.

it till his death. After his death, the school was managed by a few public-spirited persons in Triplicane who kept

the school going with the help of donations. Eventually, it was taken over by the Government and developed into a higher secondary and a training school of the Lady Willingdon Training College, Triplicane.

The school had to compete, at great disadvantage, with the high school of Presidency College. The school turned the corner only when the high school department was abolished at Presidency. Despite all its financial problems, one encouragement was that students

Regulating takeovers

(Continued from P4)

to quote at around Rs 85 then. Buy with a stop loss at Rs 45.

Deccan Granites (CMP: Rs 51.00): This Hyderabad-based company has been promoted by Sri Utham Kumar and associates as a 100 per cent EOU for the manufacture of polished granite building panels and tiles. It exports to the US, Canada, Germany, Japan, Hong Kong etc. The company completed its expansion plan, which increased its capacity to 1,38,000 sq m/a from 34,390 sq m/a, in January 1994. For the half year ended September

1994, it reported a 120 per cent increase in sales at Rs 10.50 cr over the previous year. Also, its net profit more than doubled. We estimate an EPS of Rs 6 for 1994-95. The current market price discounts the expected EPS only 8.60 times. A price of Rs 80 is likely by the 1994-95 results.

T.V.S. Electronics (CMP: Rs 70.00): This computer peripherals manufacturer has announced good results for the year ending May 1994. It is now planning to issue 32 lakh FCDs of Rs 60 each on preferential basis, aggregating Rs 19.20 cr to the promoter company (Sundaram Clayton). The FCDs will be converted into one share at Rs 50 premium at the end of 18 months

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN) questions are from the fortnightly November 1-15)

1. Who is the new Formula 1 racing champion of the world?
2. Which six Indian airlines were given 'scheduled status' by the Civil Aviation Ministry on November 1st?
3. 'Sensei' laid down his arms after 2 years of service to India on November 2nd. Who is 'Sensei'?
4. Name the Tamil daily which supports the freedom movement in a big way and which was relaunched on November 3rd?
5. After whom, as a mark of honour, the famous Globe Theatre in London West End been renamed?
6. In a unique incident, a daughter of President, appointed her mother as Prime Minister. In which country?
7. Which famous industrialist recently took over as the chairman of Air India and Indian Airlines?
8. Where in Tamil Nadu is South East Asia's tallest TV tower coming up?
9. What does the 'Pilot Project Scheme' launched by the Madras HC deal with?
10. What serious faux pas did the BBC's Celexa television information service commit on November 11th which it had to apologise for?
11. Hell's Angels, a British TV documentary, accuses a prominent Indian association with right-wing dictatorial, fraudulent businessmen and has started quite a debate. Who is this?
12. Name the Kannada literary award was the first Kannada literature award the Jnanpith Award and who won it recently?
13. To seek a 15-year moratorium on cutting of which species of tree, the State was a bill passed in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on November 8th?
14. Who are the new national lawn tennis champions?
15. Who is going to sponsor the Cricket World Cup to be held in the Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 1996?
16. Who became the oldest heavy weight champion of the world at the age of 45 by regaining the title he lost twenty years ago to Muhammad Ali?
17. According to confirmed diagnosis, former US President, Ronald Reagan is suffering from...?
18. Why was the godman Sri Premananda of Pudukkottai in the news of a controversy recently?
19. What unique distinction does the library in Madras hold?
20. Who was voted 'Player of the Series' in the recently concluded triangular cricket series?

(Answers on P. 8)

K. Gopalakrishnan

International design prize for Madras schoolboy

Ramesh, a 16-year-old Plus One student of Sankara Vidyalaya, Chennai, has won the first prize in an international design idea competition. His suggestions for the home of the future. His prize was won in the Junior category of the competition organised by the International. His design is called 'Holo Minerva' - 3-in-1 3-D image creator.

The competition is conducted to get the best ideas for domestic entertainment from the best minds all over the world. The ideas must be based on modern technology. Forty-four countries took part in this year's competition in two categories, Junior and Open. Entries were first shortlisted and candidates were selected from these. Of these, more than 300 were from India. First, national level winners for each category were chosen and from these, the international winners were named. Ramesh topped the national and international levels. He won the national prize was a 14" colour television set, the international prize won him \$ 6,000, a trophy and certificates, all presented to him in Chennai.

Ramesh's 'Holo Minerva' can convert traditional 2D images from photographs and monitors into true-to-life 3D images. A cylindrical dome-shaped photographic image creator with sophisticated laser optics is used for this. The image creator has other applications too. When connected to a computer, it can be used for various

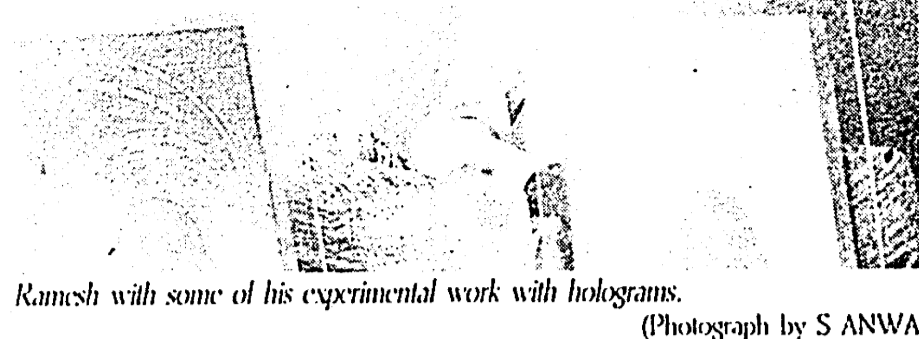
purposes such as designing, engineering and cartography. By adding the third dimension, it makes video and computer games more challenging and interesting. It can also be attached to a television set to make the pictures realistic. And it can be attached to a video telephone so that speakers at both ends can see each other and have the feel of a real conversation.

This 3-in-1 3-D image creator with multi-applications is entirely the product of Ramesh's reading in his school library. Ramesh, his parents told *Madras Musings*, has had a special interest in drawing from his K.G. days. His class teacher at the time, who noticed his interest, urged his mother to allow him to pursue his talent and also provide the necessary materials, like crayons and pencils. And his parents have followed that advice ever since.

Ramesh spoke of how he has always been fascinated by different kinds of designs and how he used to try them out whenever he had the time. As his mother says, and he smilingly agrees, he used to spend more time on drawing than on anything else. Drawing not merely technical designs, but anything that could be represented visually was, and still is, a favourite activity of his.

by R. Jaisri

Neither are cacti, he adds; the humidity does not favour them. On the other hand, hibiscus, naughty boys, acalyphas and lantanas bloom well. And brinjals, ladies' fingers, most types of keera, drumstick and asparagus can be cultivated with success. The mango finds in Madras weather a friend, but not all varieties thrive, cautions Ravindran. The Rumanis, however, flourishes in Madras, he says. Medicinal herbs, like *aakashavali*, employed for curing eye problems, and the red and black bead *pillyarkannu*, which is a good remedy for the common cold, flourish in Madras. And crops of economic importance, like rice, ragi and groundnut, can be easily raised — if you have the space! None of those plants are unique to the city and its surrounds alone, points out Ravindran. But they will flourish in Madras's climate — and he hopes that such exhibitions as his will kindle enough interest to get people to nurture more of this flora in Madras.



Ramesh with some of his experimental work with holograms. (Photograph by S ANWAR)

What grows best here?

What's the flora that grows best in Madras and in the surrounding areas of Chengalpattu District? I sought the answers at O T Ravindran's recent exhibition, 'Flora Madras', and 'between the covers of the revised version of botanist P V Mayuranathan's *Flora of Madras City and its Immediate Neighbourhood*, released on the occasion of the exhibition.

In the wet tropical moderate bioclimate of the Madras area, the characteristic flora is the thorny scrub jungle seen in Guindy and Tambaram. Madras seems to have been a marshy place, says Ravindran referring to old paintings of the area. The trees which thrived in these conditions were wild date, tamarind, neem and pungham. Many of the trees that grow in Madras today were introduced by the British or are from foreign soil, according to Ravindran. Those that do well here are the 'state tree' — the palmyra — the raintree, banyan, Arjuna, Asoka and Persian lilac. Teak, however, is not suited to Madras. Ravindran says.

As for his family, the Unnikrishnans, what they have offered him is constant support and encouragement to the extent of letting him do whatever he wants, whenever he wants. His father works in the Amrutanan factory and his mother is a housewife. He has a collegegoing sister and a schoolgoing brother. His achievement is a family first. Incidentally, the second prize in the junior category has also been won by an Indian — a boy from Bangalore — and the second place in the Open category has also been bagged by an Indian. But Madras has the gold medallist.

The Missing Act

I've been reading all those reviews that have lavished fulsome praise on what can best be described as 'a variety entertainment' by the British team, The Kosh. My own view of the hour-long show was, "Gosh, what Bosh, what Tosh!". Far removed from the fun and gaiety of the traditional British music hall performance, it not only seemed abruptly abbreviated to me amongst many others, but it also often left many of us uninitiated wondering what it was all about and trying to decide when to clap, when to boo and when to peep!



But a bigger mystery was what happened to the "act" pictured above, which is what highlighted ALL the publicity about the show everywhere in India. How come it went missing in Madras? Now if this had been commercial advertising... S.M.

December 4th: Reflections, an inaugural exhibition featuring the works of leading artists in Madras. At the new gallery, The Essel, Kaveri Complex, 6 & 104 Nungambakkam High Road.

December 17-24: Sri Krishna Gana Sabha's 14th annual Natya Kala Conference. The conference subject this year is 'Evolutionary and Innovative Changes in Bharatha Nattiyam'. Govardhan Panchal, Indrani Rehman, Premalatha Shanma, S Sarada and several others will participate in this lecture-demonstration-cum-seminar. Most of the classical styles of dance will be presented by the respective experts from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon. There is also a special workshop on *abhinaya padams* being conducted by Nirmala Ramachandran.

December 24th: NRI dancers will discuss their problems and advantages in teaching and keeping interest going among both Indian and Western children. There will also be a dialogue between the representatives of the city *sabhas* and artists and the audience on 'Problems and Solutions'. The seminar will start at 8.30 a.m. with Rajasthani folk dances by Nishitha Sareen of Jaipur (at Gana Vihar, 8 Griffith Road, T Nagar).

Dates For Your Diary

of Indian Philosophy at the Departments of Oriental Studies and South Asia Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, since 1982. He was educated in Germany and has written several books and Monographs on Indian philosophy.

December 15-17: Seminar-cum-Exhibition: 'Use of Solar Energy: Latest Technologies from Germany and India'. Topics: 1st day, Photovoltaics; 2nd day, Solar Thermal; and 3rd day: Newly devised solar appliances. (10.00 a.m. — 5.00 p.m. at Max Mueller Bhavan. By invitation.)

December 18: Biederermann and die Brandstifter (The Fire-Raisers) by Max Frisch (in German). This well known play written in 1958 deals with the problems of the upright citizen and his obligations towards the state. At another level, it exposes the naivete of the individual and his failure to recognise danger in his very own home. Biederermann, an upright citizen who claims to be conscious of right and wrong, fails to see through a couple

of Wilhelm Halbfass has been Professor

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• by Derek J Van Der Laan

Peddalling to a new dawn

Sixtyfive million bicycle users in India — predominantly vendors, milkmen, vegetable sellers, *balloonwallahs*, bangle sellers, ice cream units, knife sharpeners, calendar sellers — depend on it for transportation, but more importantly to carry equipment with which they earn their livelihood.

Government, however, does not acknowledge bicycles as indispensable or an integral part of the socioeconomic life. It puts most of the money available into building more roads, flyovers etc., prioritising the private car and forgetting the needs of the mammoth army of bicyclists. Pedal-pushers get little space on roads and no facilities. Architects and planners design neighbourhoods and buildings with no thought given to the friendly two-wheeler.

Only in a few cities is the bicycle on the government agenda. Pune, which is, ironically, one of biggest production homes of India's motorised two-wheelers, is one of them. Bicycles rank second among the modes of transport in the city and get as much attention.

Despite this lack of attention, there is no escaping the fact that the bicycle is important and will be more so in India's future. Income is the most important parameter that determines the choice of vehicle for transport. As soon as a person or a family manages to organise enough money, a motor vehicle — a scooter or a car — is, according to popular opinion, the family's aim. A close look at facts, however, reveals that when people move from subsistence income to low-income, it is the bicycle that is considered important, to get to work, to go to school and to visit friends. The enormous number of people in the low income group who do not possess any means of transportation at present will certainly buy bicycles as soon as they can afford them.

Today, in India, the bicycle is put to many ingenious uses. Almost all bicycles on the road have been adapted to the particular needs of their owners: hooks added here and there, clasps fitted to keep the goods steady, the front hook for a lantern converted to a luggage carrier. The bicycle, then becomes a cheap workhorse.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Michael Schumacher of Germany;
2. East West, Damania, Jet, NEPC, Archana and Modiluft;
3. The incomparable Kapil Dev;
4. *Swadesamitran*;
5. The thespian Sir John Gielgud;
6. Sri Lanka — President Chandrika Kumaratunga swore in her mother, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, as PM;
7. Russi Modi, the former chief of TISCO;
8. Rameswaram;
9. It is a scheme to clear all cases that have been pending for more than two years in eight district courts;
10. It reported that the 94-year-old Queen Mother of the U.K. had died. A rehearsal script for the actual event was accidentally telecast;
11. Mother Teresa;
12. Dr. Kuppali Venkatappa Puttappa (Kuvempu);
13. Rosewood trees;
14. Mahesh Bhupathy and Nirupama Vaidyanathan;
15. The tobacco giant, ITC Limited;
16. George Foreman;
17. The incurable brain disorder, Alzheimer's Disease;
18. He has been charged with immoral activities in his *ashram* and for allegedly having links with the LTTE;
19. It has the largest circulation of books amongst all such libraries;
20. Sachin Tendulkar

A way for us?

This piece is, strictly speaking, not ABOUT Madras, but it is definitely one FOR Madras. Despite the efficient transport system that the city boasts, the fact is that its buses are 100% overcrowded, i.e. two people in the space available for one person (according to MMDA studies). Besides this, Madras has the dubious distinction of being the fourth noisiest city in the world and has alarmingly high rates of air pollution. Encouraging a means of transport other than a motorised one, could provide an answer to the city's problems.

Countries like China (where executives are reported to travel by bicycle) and Holland, which came up with a Bicycle Master Plan in 1991, have shown how this two-wheeler can be integrated into traffic planning. Extending these examples, any city with traffic problems can make use of the bicycle in a big way. It's a way Madras might like to consider.

Policymakers in India choose to ignore this reality. Moreover, they seem to be totally unaware that the bicycle is part of the solution for India's

transportation and air quality problems. According to Central Road Research Institute in Delhi, motor vehicle emissions account for more than 50 per cent of the total pollutants in major cities. Local bus transport and auto rickshaws are undoubtedly important, but they belch toxic gases. The bicycle, in a scenario like this, can plug the gaps in the public transport systems and help to clear the grey pall of smoke that hangs threateningly over every Indian city.

A lot of money is put into roads and car parking areas in the cities to stimulate economic growth. A part of this money could be well used to

encourage bicycle use in the country, which will in turn create a lot of jobs.

Already, thousands have set up small businesses along the roads to provide all kinds of services to bicyclists. More employment is foreseen when the bicycle makes impeccable sense.

For state agencies, road safety factors for cyclists should be the most important issue. Part of the transportation budgets should be invested in bicycle networks and other facilities. For longer distances than muscles will accept, the combination of the bicycle and public transport is a good option. A system of fast bus lanes linked with bike shelter facilities is the need of the hour.

A bicycle revolution like that in Holland in the '70s, where the bicycle secured a high place on the agendas of a lot of Dutch cities and villages, can be initiated. The movement in Holland was supported by a wide range of people: people who just wanted a bicycle and were hornet mad at the supremacy of cars and others who were

plumb scared about the safety of children.

In Holland today, the combination of bike-plus-public transport for has become very popular. And to prepare for the changes in patterns, the Dutch government up with the Bicycle Master Plan 1991 as an integral part of its long general traffic and transport plan.

Indian policymakers should follow in their footsteps. Further, the bicycle industry, maturing and moving its way out of state-determined production targets, can play an important role in putting the bicycle back on the transport agenda.

For non-governmental organisations, especially those committed to clean air, the promotion of bicycles should become an important issue. An awareness campaign highlighting merits of a bicycle policy as one of realistic answers to the commuting environmental problems of the nation should be initiated as soon as possible. — (CSE/Down To Earth Features).

Record winnings, but poorest jackpots

M.A.M. Ramaswamy, who is poised to complete his double century of Classics winners, and his trainer, Robert Foley, who last season set a world record by leading in over a century of winners, have begun the new Madras racing season at Guindy on a record-shattering note. Never before in the history of the Indian turf has a trainer so dominated the start of a season as Foley has done by saddling as many as 20 winners at the first four meetings. Beginning with a treble, he led in five winners each at the second and third fixtures and made a clean sweep of the fourth day's seven-event card for an Indian record of 20 winners in 26 races.

As many as 19 winners of Foley's tally, which included a clean sweep of the first four races for maiden two-year-olds, donned Ramaswamy's famed gold and brown belt jersey. Figures are

got available, but it is a safe guess that Ramaswamy, with as many as 19 firsts, made a record haul of the first four days' prize money. Every maidens' race has, for instance, a winner's purse of Rs 50,000.

by
AJAX

The domination of Foley's stable has, however, led to another record, one of dubious worth. It is the slump in the jackpot returns. Such is the popular support Foley's stable enjoys that the majority of its runners start money-back favourites, and vindicate their public support as well. As a result, the jackpot dividends have taken an unprecedented nosedive. At the second meeting, for instance, the five-in-a-row investment paid out a beggarly Rs. 46 on as many as 454 tickets, the Indian turf's smallest-ever jackpot dividend and biggest-ever number of winning tickets!

Such is the bloodline of Foley's Classic contenders, all bred at the ever-

growing Chettinad stud farm, it was no surprise if the champion makes a clean sweep of the forthcoming Classics as well, beginning with *The Hind South India 1000 Guineas* on December 4th. But it remains to be seen if MAM and his trainer will lead the distinction of leading in the winners of the inaugural 1,400 m McDowell Million for three-year-olds, the richest race of the season, scheduled to be run on Saturday, January 12.

Entries for the terms race, which record Rs. 9,50,000 added money, a trophy worth Rs. 50,000, to be presented by the U.B. Group, Bangalore, close on December 15th is too early to hazard a guess on the final line-up. But, according to information available at Guindy at the time of writing, juveniles from Bangalore champion Rashid Byram, stable and Hyderabad champion J.S. Dhariwal's stable, and even from Western India, will be there to challenge the might of what is certainly be a formidable squad from Foley's stable.

Dubious records at playless Test!

The Tamil Nadu Women's Cricket Association must have regretted having accepted the Women's Cricket Association of India's offer to stage the first of the three Tests between India and Australia in Madras in the middle of November. The TNWCA should have known better, for Madras is invariably in the grip of the monsoon in November. As it was, rain played havoc with the four-day Test, which the TNWCA conducted at the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's Chidambaram Stadium.

Only a little over three hours' play was possible on the first two days, and the last two days' play was washed out. Chepauk had never before hosted such a wet Test. Its blank days must have made the TNWCA burn its fingers despite the sponsorship it managed to secure from a handful of sports-minded business establishments.

Mainly because of the weather, the women's Test emerged as the first international to be played before empty stands

at the ancient Chepauk ground, nay, in the whole of India. It was not the only dubious record the rain-hit Test produced. Trailing 0-3 in the Pepsi five-match one-day series, the Australians, who lost the toss and were put in, managed to make only 63 for four in the 3½ hours' play possible, which was the slowest-ever crawl in Test history!

The wet Test will also be remembered for the wrecking of a cricket tradition. The tourists played in shorts! It was the first time in India, at any rate, that cricketers, men or women, donned shorts instead of the customary pants.

The little cricket the Test produced emphasised the fact that Indian girls could take on any national squad. They did not have a chance to display their batting talent. But the tourists' sorry crawl underscored the authority the Indian bowlers and fielders held. They are certain to boost the stock of Indian cricket when India hosts the World Cup in 1996.

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