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On left, in picture above, a part of Chepauk Palace, including its main entrance, both of which are not usually seen. (Photo: V.S. RAGHAVAN)

# Will Madras also seek UK help for face lift?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Richard Needham-led 'Concorde Mission' has returned to Britain after a flying week-long whirl through the metros of India, convinced that Indo-British links can be forged stronger than ever before. Whereas response to the mission was low key in Madras, Calcutta went overboard and received an almost equally enthusiastic reciprocation from the visitors.

Besides trade, commerce and industry, Calcutta also rapturously welcomed the British offer to help with a facelift for the heritage structures of the Raj. This was a proposed Indo-British project that Trade Minister Needham spoke about wherever he went, but Calcutta alone appears to have jumped at the offer. In Madras, which threatens such buildings as the DGP's office, there was hardly even mention of the subject.

Perhaps the following reports from Calcutta might inspire the Tamil Nadu authorities to take up with the British a similar scheme for Madras, the city that begat Calcutta. Such restoration could go a long way towards making Madras look a more gracious city than all the modern highrise the authorities are committing themselves to.

In Calcutta, the area around New Market, once the main entertainment centre of the city, will be the first part of the city to be taken up for the

refurbishing and preservation project, aided by British and Indian finance.

A concept plan for the area, drawn up by local organisations, is being reviewed by a British firm, Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners Limited, who are the consultants to the entire scheme, which has been named the 'Image Centre' project under the Indo-British Partnership.

The proposal aims to recreate the old flavour of the New Market area which the well-to-do used to frequent for shopping and to visit the 'picture houses', operas and stage shows.

It is this flavour which the 'Image Centre' scheme seeks to capture wherever it is sought. The scheme is an effort to restore colonial structures and cultural relics as well as to give the city a facelift. "If Calcutta is to be projected as the new industrial capital of South-east Asia, its ambience must needs be improved," feels the West Bengal Government.

Apart from the emphasis on the New Market area, the British Council Division in Calcutta has also shortlisted structures to be restored, including St James' Church, the old mint, which is the only specimen of Doric architecture in the city, the Town Hall, a host of other buildings in the old township of Shyambazar and north Park Street, and buildings in the B.B.D. Bag area, including Writers' Building. (Continued on P3)

## Another cry for conservation...

(By The Editor)

This is a view of Chepauk Palace we have not seen in decades. Sheds and sheds had hidden the Khalsa Mahal and the main entrance from public view and only by clearing them has enabled this glimpse of forgotten front view of the Palace.

Chepauk Palace, when it was built in 1688, probably by Paul Benfield, was the primary building south of the Fort and up San Thomé for almost a hundred years. When the other buildings were raised to the level of the beach and Marina was developed, the Palace became part of the faded Madras skyline. The thoughtless construction of Ezhilagam obscured it from beach view and later construction and wild growth in its grounds hid most of the rest of the Palace's facade, leaving only the rear view to be seen round the Wallajah Road.

The Palace is, without doubt, the earliest Indo-Saracenic construction. What Mant, Scholm, Irwin, Stephens and Jacob,

among others, built was developed on these foundations, very probably laid by Benfield, who had struck it rich by building much of the Fort and the City's walls and freely lent what he'd earned to Nawab Wallajah of the Carnatic. The Nawab's debts is another story, but his palace is very much part of India's architectural history which culminated in the work of Lutyens and Baker in New Delhi.

If any building in India cries for restoration and conservation it is Chepauk Palace. Would it be too much to hope that the clearing that has helped to bring back at least A PORTION of forgotten view is a beginning to a conservation end? Unfortunately, it is more likely to be clearing to develop highrise that will kill this view once and for ever more.

Look, on the other hand, what they are doing in Calcutta. The announcement below announces with pride RESTORATION of the handsome State Bank of India building

in Calcutta. Can we look forward to restoration of the even handsomer and older State Bank main branch building on North Beach Road and the Classically styled Mount Road branch? The main branch building, once regional headquarters of both the Bank and its predecessor, the Imperial Bank, was built as the headquarters of the pioneering Bank of Madras by Namburumal Chetty to the design of Henry Irwin in 1896-1898. A splendid Indo-Saracenic, it had the most magnificent interiors which now cry for restoration. The Mount Road branch, on the other hand, is one of the few old buildings left in the Classical style, a style architects and building owners are rushing to IMITATE these days to judge by our picture last fortnight.

We live in hope... that restoration of the two State Bank buildings, Chepauk Palace AND Police Headquarters will set a lead that will make conservation respectable in Madras: Could we expect the Government and the State Bank of India to make these examples possible?

...& one that's been answered

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# Trying to get our books abroad

When the Chemical and Allied Products Export Council's (CAPEXIL's) southern region recently hosted a seminar to get Madras printers, publishers and booksellers to export more and to offer them advice on how to capture a chunk of that large worldwide market, *The Man From Madras Musings*, who was present in many roles, found one thing particularly intriguing. And that was the glossy folder about CAPEXIL distributed to the participants. In it, 'Books, publications and job printing' was low man on the lengthy list of products CAPEXIL tends to. In fact, condoms, crushed bones and rocks were all way above it in the list!

Now this may just reflect the low level of export — Rs. 70 cr last year or the target of near Rs. 90 cr this year, both not very much in the context of Indian exports. But it may also be based on the Council's perception of the product — and MMM is fully aware how low a status printing and publishing

have in India despite all our protestations that Indians hold education and the written word in high esteem and almost sacred. Those who speak loudest about the poor quality of our books or the modestly average standards of Indian printing are those who seldom buy books but who also, when they think of buying the occasional Indian book, crib loudest about its price. And that attitude is not very different when it comes to printing — few realising that good printing costs money.

One of those printing/book components that costs an enormous amount is paper — and while it cannot be imported, its export is freely encouraged, not only leading to perpetual shortages at home but also galloping prices. In this context, *The Man From Madras Musings* was even more intrigued to find on the CAPEXIL list that another item whose export it promotes is 'paper and board'. On the one hand, those at the seminar were crying loud about paper shortages and paper prices while on the other the organisation urging them to export was encouraging paper shortages by also promoting paper exports! How ironical can you get, MMM wondered.

Before talking about improving quality of editing, layout, illustrations, printing, binding and marketing and promotion for export, MMM would think it might be advisable for CAPEXIL, the Indian Booksellers' and Publishers' Federation and the All India Master Printer's Federation to get together and launch an effort not only to educate all in the industry but also to make the public and Government aware of reasons for the high cost of printed products. One of which is PAPER! Of course, *The Man From Madras Musings* can see CAPEXIL shrugging itself out of this, saying it has nothing to do with the local market, but it might do well to remember that it is only if a local quality base is built that we can develop on it for export.

## Binding woes

Pointing to how poorly job printing exports were doing — only Rs. 12 cr last year out of Rs. 70 cr, and way behind the other two classifications in the category, books and periodicals — and also emphasising a major reason for fighting shy of Indian books, speaker after speaker at the CAPEXIL seminar described the poor quality of Indian binding, which MMM knows to be a truly undeveloped cottage industry.

Urging the improvement of quality, particularly in binding, if exports are to be increased, two speakers related rather telling

anecdotes. Sukumar Das, Chairman of the panel and representative of India's leading book exporters, UBS, recalled how a shipment of books produced in Calcutta were shipped to Odessa in the USSR days. Out of the blue came the fax that a woman Customs Inspector in the Russian port had fainted on opening one of the boxes of the consignment, overcome by the terrible odour, and that as a result the books would not be allowed in. By the time UBS had carried out local inquiries and the UBS man flew out to Odessa, the odour had almost vanished and the books

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

were allowed in. But the glue used for the binding of those books and their despatch in an undried, moist condition had cost the exporter a pretty penny, and a loss of many man-hours, besides making the Russians suspicious of Indian quality.

The other tale was closer home. Once upon a time, *The Man From Madras Musings* remembers, the Amalgamations Group had snake-catchers on its rolls in its sylvan industrial campus, *Huzur Gardens*, in Sembiam. Now, MMM was surprised to hear, one of the Group's company's has rat-catchers on its rolls, or, at least, offers Rs. 25 for every rat killed in its warehouse! No, Higginbotham's is not fighting the plague. But, Chief Executive Chandrashekar, who is also President of the Madras Booksellers' and Publishers' Association, related that it is trying to protect its INDIAN books. Apparently the rats relish Indian bindings, leading to an enormous loss of stock every year, but shun imported books!

What are printers going to do about this? MMM has, for long, suggested that the major printers get together and establish a modern bindery in Madras on a cooperative basis. But who's listening?

## An eye-opener

What an eye-opening experience it was to push through closed doors and stroll around a recent photographic exhibition at the Lalit Kala Akademi. *The Man From Madras Musings* was thrilled to find that black and white photography not only survives in India, but the best print quality is still available from the hands of a few. Veteran photographer T S Nagarajan's 'Behind Closed Doors' also had many of the younger crowd in a large audience at the opening marvelling that black-and-white seemed so much more expressive than colour. Nagarajan himself pointed out that colour 'exaggerates' and if you want pictures 'for the record' there is nothing like black and white.

The exhibition featured over sixty photographs of the interiors of homes, stately and otherwise, which were "turn-of-the-century" but were still lived in to some extent. Turn-of-the-century was, strictly speaking, not quite accurate; there were a few homes going back over 400 years and many more in the intervening period between then and the dawn of the 20th Century. But what was remarkable about them all was not so much the homes, many of them truly splendid and all a heartfelt cry for conservation, but the

way Nagarajan had captured them.

All were shot in AVAILABLE light and all were shot on 35 mm film, Nagarajan announced. Yet not only were contrasts splendid but every detail had been captured and had not fuzed eyes in enormous prints, MMM noticed. The secret is in the printing, explains Nagarajan. Some of the pictures take up to half an hour to print, and others had to be printed a couple of times to get them right, MMM learned. But whatever the time put into the whole exercise, that it has been a labour of love

for Nagarajan, and his wife and helpmate Meenakshi, is obvious, seeing the splendour covering the rather drab walls of the LKA.

Some of Nagarajan's best photographs are of the old Portuguese-influenced homes of Goa. MMM's own favourite is of the hall in one of these homes with four Portuguese Colonial rattan chairs dominating the scene, their intricate carving a feast for the eye. Nagarajan has covered most of the States of India, but still has two or three left and much of the Northeast. When that's complete, there's a book, he promises, and it will be one that will gain much from "the copious notes I have gathered at every home". That's a book to wait for; it'll also be one of the most splendid Indian architectural records ever, and an ode to conservation.

Nagarajan, recalling his beginnings at the inauguration, thanked R K Narayan for pushing him out of Mysore and encouraging him to make photography his life's vocation. Narayan had demonstrated his affection for Nagarajan by turning up for the inauguration, one of his very, very rare public excursions. Narayan arrived on the arm of Susan Ram, who is working on his biography. It'll be a two-part book; the first part being till he became a well-known author, the second about Narayan the writer. Will that second part coincide with a 'Narayan for the Nobel Prize' movement, *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders. Certainly MMM has in the past few months heard several voices suggesting that such a move should get underway.

## In brief

\* A model school is to open shortly on the Anna University campus, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears. The Anna Gem Science School, on whose founding Gem Granites, that leading exporter of granite, and Anna University are teaming, will be a school with a difference. Though all the academic necessities of a school from KG to Higher Secondary will be offered, its main thrust will be to encourage students to freely explore any scientific field they are interested in. To this end, Anna University will throw open its laboratory facilities to these students, no matter what their age. Indeed, this will be a unique institution and MMM looks forward to the day when products of the school will make major contributions to scientific advancement in India.

\* Another new route being taken in school education is being pioneered by the State Bank

Officers' Association School and Junior College in Anna Nagar. The School plans to offer from next year a vocational course at the Plus Two level on Commercial Service in the Railways. The Railway Recruitment Board has chosen SBOA as the only school in the South with which to work on this course which guarantees employment to successful students as Commercial Clerks and Ticket Collectors in the Railway Service. Those students who have passed Standard X with 50 per cent and better, who pass a medical test and who get through an admission exam will be eligible for selection to the course based on their merit ranking in the entrance test. While *The Man From Madras Musings* welcomes this Railways' initiative, he needs must point out that in the case of insurance being offered as a vocational course, not many of the insurance companies have been prepared to select for employment many of the successful candidates.

\* Not strictly Madras, but *The Man From Madras Musings* hears there was a participant from Madras and he's also seen a couple of advertisements locally calling for Madras boys and girls to participate in the next round of modelling contests being organised by Maureen Wadia's magazine *Gladrags*. SO this piece. Maureen Wadia, who brought to life the advertising for husband Nusti's Bombay Dyeing, has just successfully organised what she called the Manhunt Contest and what others have called the Jock Contest, the first male 'beauty' contest in India. Thirty men in the 19-24 age group paraded on the Bombay ramp in first, suits, then, jeans and shirts and, finally, in high-cut trunks. As Shobe Dè described it, "The 10 finalists strutted their stuff, oiled, gelled and dripping wet for extra effect..." There was an interview round, to judge 'intelligence', and at the end of it all, 6' 4" Rajat Bedi, an unknown from a middle class background, walked away with the Mahindra Jeep and other prizes. Soon he'll be competing in Australia as India's representative in the Worldwide Manhunt contest. Will he follow Sushmita, Aiswarya and the other Indian girl who finished runner-up in Miss International or something like that, making 1995 the year of Indian Beauty? MMM is glad we are winning at something else other than cricket!

\* Global Trust Bank's first branch in Tamil Nadu and the second in the country has just opened in Madras. The next Tamil Nadu branch will be in Coimbatore. Work on the fully computerised office in Coimbatore is well under way and the branch is expected to open for business by 'Pongal', *The Man From Madras Musings* learns.

\* When the doors for private telecom services open, Tamil Nadu based SPIC will be one of the companies offering basic telephone services in the State, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns. The company has reportedly tied up with a British partner towards this end and proposals are being worked out.

MMM

# The I.A.S.

## The Myth and the Reality

As we keep edging towards the 21st Century, the men in whose hands the reins of the country's administration seem to be moving further and further away from their duties and responsibilities and, yes, the scene of action too. Indeed, the collective perception of the IAS has taken a negative in recent years and the service itself looks incapable of rising to the occasion and regaining its lost glory.

What are the reasons then for the gradual, qualitative decline of the IAS, once a most sought-after service and now reduced to nothing more than an inglorious heap of glamorous men, who have mastered the art of "ruling by serving and not living by ruling"? For one, unlike their more revered predecessors from the Indian Civil Service, most of whom had the stamps of Oxford and Cambridge, the IAS officers no longer are the "men on the spot", showing as they do a marked inclination to serve in the districts and preferring instead to be ensconced within the cosier confines of highrise buildings and boardrooms. For another, politics of convenience has, willy-nilly, replaced the politics of commitment.

Speaking about the myth and reality of the IAS at a meeting organised by the Association of British Council scholars in Madras, P M Bellappa, who had a 35-year stint in the service, admitted that IAS officers were no longer "angels in white". There were, he said, referring to the 20-year period after Independence, when there existed a wonderful relationship between the committed bureaucrats and the refreshingly straightforward politicians. But, very soon, the IAS surrendered their esteem, shine and cutting edge to their political bosses and began getting buffeted around.

Obviously, the fact that these political bosses did not, even in one's wildest imagination, as much as resemble the outline leaders who had campaigned for India's independence, made the inevitable progression (regression!) all that much easier.

Reviewing the 120-odd years of the civil service in India, which Bellappa divided into four periods: 1875-1920 — a period of consolidation, 1920-47 — a period of experimenting with democracy, 1947-67 — a period of comparative stability, and 1967-94 — a period of turbulence),

it is clear, said Bellappa, that the IAS did not inherit the mantle of the IAS, it only took charge of the baggage, as it were. The ICS officers had inspired everybody with their enthusiasm and concern — this was woefully lacking in the IAS.

However it is not fair to look at the IAS with squinted eyes, Bellappa pointed out. Unlike the ICS, which

## by Sashi Nair

grew into a well-knit and well-oiled force over a period of 200 years, the IAS is, relatively speaking, still in its infancy. Again, the ICS comprised of a band of only 150 men (devoted as they were to their service) at its peak, whereas the IAS is about 5000-strong.

Bellappa was quite matter-of-fact and down-to-earth. If the audience had been looking forward to a speech laced with gossip, it could only have been somewhat disappointed. All the same, he did make specific references which pointed to the malaise within the service.

## Don Quixote spirit

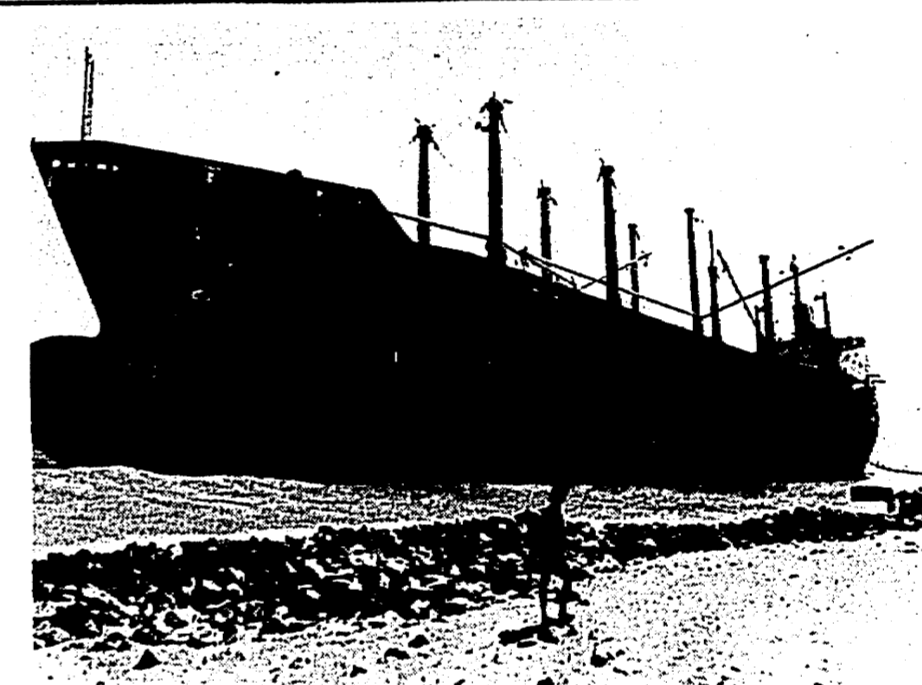
In MM November 1, the picture of Veeram pipes trying to stop the advancing waves presents a sorry spectacle. Sea wave erosion is a mammoth as well as a perpetual problem and it should be tackled on a long-range plan.

Many years ago, the coast line from Royapuram (Clive's Battery) to Kasimode was considered erosive and the authorities stemmed the waves by dumping huge granite boulders along the coast. It formed a formidable wall of rubble about ten metres broad and ten metres high. Wherever the boulders sank due to wave action, fresh rocks were thrown in to fill the depression. This massive barrier did its job so well that permanent structures sprang up close to the wall. A major portion of stones quarried in the hills of Pallavaram was used for this purpose.

The Veeram pipes could have been put to better purpose. With a little reinforcement and modification, they could have taken the place of drinking water tanks that dot the streets of Madras. The paint inside these steel tanks peel off and the rust which appears reacts with the chemicals added to purify the water. This health hazard could be avoided by using these pipes as storage tanks. They will look elegant, will not leak and are sturdier than the plastic tanks used in some locations.

Lack of political support, little freedom and an effort by the government to reduce the authority of the service all played their parts. Training programmes were not seriously undertaken (Bellappa himself was called for a training programme at the lag end of his career), merit was given short shrift and there simply was no successor-shaping exercise at all. In a recent survey conducted among 30 IAS officers, 18, according to Bellappa, showed a strong disinclination to accept postings connected with village development programmes. With the present string of IAS officers spending very little time in the districts, the ideals left behind by the ICS have long died a natural death.

Ultimately, it is attitude that has to change. Not of the IAS probationers and middle-level officers alone, but of the government too, just as a company functions better when its managers and supervisors are allowed a free hand in their respective areas, political leaders must realise that it is better they keep out of bureaucratic corridors. Only then, feels Bellappa, will dignity return to the Indian civil services.



The Sagar still lies stranded off Tiruvottriyur beach. It is left there, will it solve the problem of sea erosion on the nearby stretch? (Picture taken on December 10th by V.S. RAGHAVAN)

## OUR READER'S WRITE

The use of Veeram pipes to halt the angry waves of a turbulent sea is preposterous. I thought Don Quixote was dead long ago, but his spirit seems to hover over the authorities who handle problems in Tamil Nadu.

M Sethuraman  
8 Second Cross Road  
Mahalakshmi Nagar  
Madras 600 088.

## Let's plant trees

Let me congratulate you on your excellent paper. I have been a regular reader of it, from the time *MM* was introduced as a free mailer. After a break of four months, I laid hands on your paper, to sadly notice my favourite column, 'One Man's

Madras' by Harry Miller did not feature (MM October 16). Indeed, there was another piece by the said writer. I would appreciate it if the column is re-introduced. Secondly, I would like to bring to the notice of the Madras Corporation a point of distress. It is quite a nice event to have such good monsoons, even a cyclone to lessen the water scarcity, despite the inconvenience of water-logged roads. But in the not so distant future, in a matter of 5-6 months, Madras will again enter its 'Summer' season. It will, however, be minus the hundreds of trees that were uprooted during the cyclone, making the city that much hotter. The Corporation should immediately start planting trees so that at least in the summer of 1996, 'Chennaiवासि' will get some respite from the heat.

If not the Corporation, why not Ennore? Vani  
83 Elaimann Colony  
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## Tough Times. Tougher Diesels...

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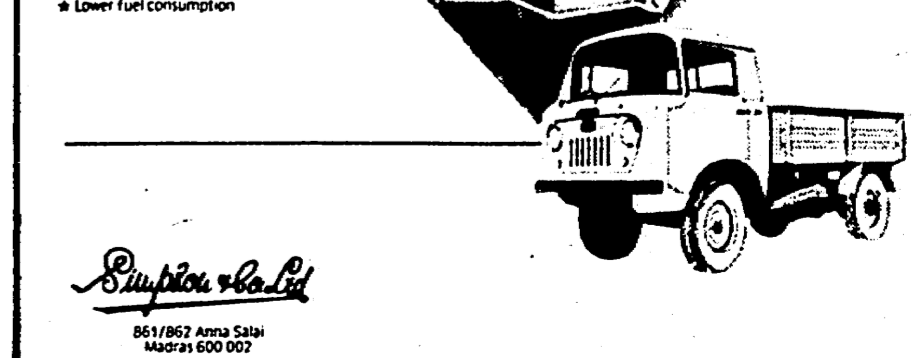
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### TRANSLATION

Translation: Indian/Foreign Languages. Tel: 569481.

British Council Library, Madras (Telephone: 8525002)

A Select List of Recent Additions

Author	Title
BARKER, F	The culture of violence
BARSOUX, J	Funny business
BEGG, D	Economics. 4th ed.
BODI	Advocacy
BOSWORTH-DAVIES, R	Money laundering
BUXTON, T (ed.)	Britain's economic performance
FRIEDMAN, D	Inheritance
GRAINGER, P	Managing information
GREEN, E (ed.)	Gender by design
JONES, S	The language of genes
McMANUS, A	They said I was dead
ROSE, H	Love, Power and Knowledge
TESTER, K	Media, Culture and Morality
WILLIAMS, A P O	The competitive consultants
FICTION	
McGRATH, P	Dr Haggard's disease
VINE, B	No night is too long
DUNANT, S	Fallands

## Will Madras seek UK help?

(Continued from P 1)

Speaking in Calcutta, Needham said: "We want to do something about the fine heritage buildings in the city, which need cleaning up and illumination. We have done it in Belfast in Ireland." He added that lighting up the imposing structures after restoration would transform the city without really costing much. Likely to be resuscitated are railway termini, churches, government houses, bridges, statues, monuments, clubs and bungalows.

The funding for such an effort is yet to be worked out, but it is clear that it would have to be a joint effort of the industry and the governments of both countries, he indicated.

A pamphlet titled *British Period Buildings*, to promote the idea, says that structures "from the neo classical through Gothic, Victorian to the splendid palaces — many of which are eloquent testimony to Indo-British heritage — are today in a shabby state.

"Neglect and decay may cause irreparable damage to this unique and distinct inheritance which may be lost forever."

The exercise, which would be taken up under the Indo-British Partnership, would capture its essence and embody its spirit, says the pamphlet, adding that completion of the project in 1997 would be an ideal gift for the 50th anniversary of India's independence.

We wish our readers  
A Merry Christmas

# The Season's Madras's own

**M**argazhi is here and the city's halls are throbbing with another season of music and dance. *Margazhi* is said to be the pre-dawn hour in God's day, a time for meditation, worship and for showing off talent. If Navaratri was the time to put craft and decorative skills on display, *Margazhi* is the time to give the vocal cords free rein.

All the Ayyappa and other pujas, with loudspeakers to help, wake up the neighbourhoods in the pre-dawn hour. The temples have their *bhajan* groups singing in the streets. And in front of every home, the women draw their best *kolam* on the doorsteps.

*Margazhi* is indeed the time to listen to music and least on dance in Madras. If music and dance were the vehicles of worship, the connoisseurs of today worship music and dance during the Madras Season.

Many questions are asked about 'The Season'. Should we have so much music and dance in a span of two weeks? Why do we have the same artistes over and over again? Can we not have something new? Why do we have only Classical music and dance? Why not 'new dance'? Why not popular art? Why cater to a small population? It is like the Navaratri Gollu tradition where, annually, you dust the dolls given to you by your mother, whose mother had received them from hers, add your own new collection to theirs and display them lovingly with a little additional decoration. Similarly, Madras needs must show its talent in traditional music and dance during 'The Season' and offer a little time for some of the others. 'The Season' is Madras's own *Gollu* display of the fine arts. And this Season has much on display.



Indrani Rehman in her prime

TVG's Akademi of Indian Music & Arts and the Mylapore Fine Arts Club have been the earliest to get started, on December 10th. Kalakshetra, on

the other hand, begins its festival at the end of the month, on the 28th. The main Sabhas have inaugurations every day till the 22nd (leaving out Sunday 11th).

## A SPECIAL SPREAD

During the three weeks in between, you can listen to music, watch dance or hear an expert talk about music and dance every hour of the day.

The Narada Gana Sabha's popular *bhajans* programmes will not feature Guru Haridoss Giri this year. He attracted crowds like a rock star. From the 23rd till January 1st you can go every morning at 7.30 to see the phenomenon of his posthumous pull.

The senior and 'star' musicians have the 5-7.30 p.m. slot at the Narada Gana Sabha and 6.45 to 9.15 p.m. slot at the Music Academy, as usual. But though the last concerts of the day are generally of higher quality, the younger musicians giving of their best at the afternoon concerts are a treat to hear everywhere.

The Music Academy has the best selection in music this year, with the Hindustani touch added by the golden voice of Pandit Jasraj and the L. Subramanian and Vishwa Mohan Bhatt instrumental duet.

The Krishna Gana Sabha has the best of dance with some very good music too, but the music here sometimes gets disturbed by the noises outside. For dance lovers, Krishna Gana Sabha's Nityakala conference will be a great attraction. This year it is being convened by dancer V P Dhananjayan. He is known for his fearless utterances as much as for his meticulous organisation. He has streamlined the organisation and also has brought about a registration system etc. Indrani Rehman inaugurates the Nityakala conference. This charming woman was India's first beauty queen. A dancer of great merit and a person with a golden heart, she has, over the years, helped many a star dancer of today find her feet on the stage.

Each Sabha confers a special title every year on a person of eminence in the field. Bharathi Shivaji, the Mohini Attam dancer, has been awarded the title of Nriyachoodamani by the

Krishna Gana Sabha. She is a charming to watch. The Music Academy has conferred the title Sangeetha Kalanidhi on the *mriddhavan* T K Murthy. Interestingly, Isai Peraringnar title has been given to Dr Padma Subramanian by the Isai Sangham. Yet the Sangham once rejected Padma's research, there had been controversy over a statement that Bharatha's *Natyasastra* was written in the Kashmir region that all art in India had derived from it. I was at a meeting when she walked out, unable to bear the on her at the Sangham. But that in days long past. Padma persists

by  
**V.R. Devika**

her research and stood by what she said. She has continued to give as much importance to Sanskrit as to Tamil. She has insisted that higher learning in two languages is a 'must' for a scholar interested in Indian aesthetics. The belated recognition and definite acknowledgement of Padma's scholarship and perseverance are perhaps the most significant happenings of the Season.

The discerning music and dance lovers of Madras and the regular visitors for 'The Season' from all parts of the world know exactly what to do and whom to listen to. But there are many people in Madras who do not seem to know or care about the offerings 'The Season' brings. A few couples visiting Madras early in December said the staff at a five-star hotel could not tell them anything about 'The Season' and they had to go from pillar to post before they found out what the programmes were. Madras needs a little guide book to inform visitors about 'The Season' who's who and what is what.

## ...FOR THE MADRAS MUSIC SEASON



'Veena specialist and tutor' C D Sambandam (Photo: S Anwar)

## The patience of the player and the repairer

An integral part of the cultural ethos of the South, especially Tamil Nadu, is the *veena*. If *nadaswaram* and *Bharatha Natyam* were nurtured in the temples, the *veena* flourished under royal patronage. Despite its seemingly beyond-the-common-man image, there are more *veenas* in the city than you would think. And they have, over the years, kept C D Sambandam, 'Veena specialist and tutor', according to his visiting card, busy. He is the only person in the city who can play as well as repair a *veena*.

Sambandam's father Duraiswami was a *veena* repairer of repute. He had picked up the skills of *veena* repair from Guruswami Achari, who was the technician for that legend, 'Veena' Dhanammal. Sambandam, after some primary education, turned to his father's work as he had literally grown-up with it. 'Veena playing and repair work ran in our blood,' says Sambandam. However, Sambandam did not totally forget study. He was proficient in Tamil, but he had a passion for English, especially after listening to speeches of people like Nehru. So he engaged a private tutor and learnt English. What he did just because the language fascinated him, helps him now in his business.

Sambandam started his business, in Triplicane. He has been working in this shop for more than twenty years now. Even as he was learning *veena* repair from his father, he decided that he wanted to learn to play the *veena* too. He started learning under Krishnaswami Naidu and continued under Ramanujiah, both of whom were well-known *veena* artists. Later, he studied with Pichumani Iyer and K P Sivanandam. Most of the people who used to play the *veena* in the old days were also well versed in its technical aspects, recalls Sambandam. But, he

adds, in time, the roles of the performer and technician somehow got separated, "except in the case of exceptions like me". Unlike other instruments, there are different types of *veenas* made in different parts of the South. There is the Thanjavur *veena*, Mysore *veena*, Thiruvananthapuram *veena* and the Andhra *veena*, also known as the Bobbili *veena*. Sambandam considers the Thanjavur *veena* the best. "Veenas from each region have their own specialities. For example, the Thiruvananthapuram *veena* has very good woodwork, but it is the Thanjavur *veena* which combines the best of everything. The *ekanda veena*, made out of a single piece of wood, is one more type. It is not only the best in terms of *nadam* (sound), but is also considered auspicious even when merely kept in the house and not used," says Sambandam.

The trunk of the jackfruit tree is best for making *veenas*. Right from the stage of carving the wood, it is work for someone skillful, says Sambandam. The wooden plate placed on the *kodam* is one of the most important aspects, as it contributes to the *nadam* of the *veena*. Once the wooden portion of the *veena* is ready, the *melam* and frets have to be fixed. Setting the distance between the frets, the depth to when the wax is set (the curved shape that is) etc. call for tremendous patience. "But it is not as difficult as it seems," suggests Sambandam. "Anyone who wants to learn the technical aspects can do so in three or four years just by observing the work being done. Anyway, it does not require physical exertion, it is more of a skill."

Though Sambandam used to make *veenas* from the very first stage, i.e. starting from the trunk, it got to be a costly affair, which he as a single person

Behind the scenes of success

The city has begun to vibrate once again to the notes of music that make what has come to be known as 'The Season'. The spotlight may be on the musicians and the dancers, but there are ever so many people who work behind the scenes to make 'The Season' a success. Recently I met a couple of such persons who ensure the success of those in the limelight.

R JAISRI

could not manage. So, today, most of his work is repairing damaged *veenas* and, of course, redoing the *melam*. Apart from this, he also takes *veena* tuitions on Sundays.

If *veena* repair is a good commercial proposition and is also easy, why hasn't anyone learnt from him? "Well," smiles Sambandam, "It is a question of patience, which nobody has these days. To redo the *melam* of a *veena*, for example, it can easily take upto one week. Even the minimum time can be three days, if no other work is done except on that one *veena*. In those three days, more money can be made outside, people think," feels Sambandam. He hasn't even been able to get a proper assistant to work for him except his friend Manavalan who does some outdoor work for him. But he is content doing it all on his own, especially as "I am well known in my field," he beams with satisfaction.

What Sambandam really feels sad about is that the *veena* is not very well known outside the country. The *sitar*, on the other hand, was popularised abroad by Pandit Ravishankar, Sambandam points out. But even within India, why don't many people opt for the *veena*? "It is not that people don't opt for the *veena*," he feels. "It is just that they give up in course of time. Other instruments are difficult for beginners, but as they become familiar, they are easy to handle. The *veena* is just the opposite. And so, after four or five years, the players give up."

Recalling the past, Sambandam recounts that "the *veena* was the king among instruments". In ancient times, the *veena* and its allied forms, such as the *yazh* etc., used to be played only before select audiences. Now, with the mike and sound systems, it is reaching more popular audiences. The result is that more and more people are buying *veenas* — just to keep them at home, not even playing them, says Sambandam. This has meant a boom in business for him. He recalls the situation years ago when selling even a couple of *veenas* a month used to be difficult. It's different now.

Since he has neither apprentices nor children to pick up his skills, it may well be the end of the one-man show when he retires from business. But till then, he remains in his tiny shop in the midst of all those *veenas*, laying the foundations for the soft notes of music that emerge from the *veena* strings on concert stages. His only wish now is to have the *arangeltram* of one of his own students, which he hopes will materialise in a couple of years.



C Varadan, ensuring sruti in mridangams (Photo: S Anwar)

## Growing up with repairing mridangams

Child prodigies and early starters are not exclusive to the world of performing musicians. C Varadan, a *mridangam* repairer, started when he was a boy of eleven, and now helps almost everyone who plays the *mridangam* in the city — and that, of course, includes most of the leading *vidwans* of today, like Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Vellore Ramabhadran, Tiruchi Sankaran, Tiruvur Bhaktavatsalam and others.

Born in Kammarapalayam village, near Tiruvallur, Varadan came to Madras as a boy of five, to live with his uncle Venkatesan, a *mridangam* repairer. Even as a schoolboy, Varadan found himself attracted by his uncle's work. When he used to come home for lunch, he would spend the hour watching his uncle at work, often missing the meal. Soon, his interest in repairing *mridangams* overtook his interest in studies and he began helping his uncle full time. Venkatesan, on his part, taught Varadan the work, established his business links and also gave him his daughter in marriage. Varadan has continued from where his uncle left off.

When the *kattai* is ready, the two-side portions, called the *toppi* and *valandarai*, are fixed and held in place by strips of animal skin. The black portion on the *valandarai* is made by mixing cooked rice with a black powder obtained from a stone called *kittankal*. These stones are pounded and sieved finely for a powder which is mixed with rice for the *saadham*. It is the *saadham* which determines the *sruti* of the *mridangam*, according to Varadan and, so, the correct quantity and application of the *saadham* is one of the finer aspects of *mridangam* work.

*Mridangam* repair work has many such fine aspects which call for Varadan's personal attention at every stage, which is why his shop is almost a one-man show, except for the casual labour he uses. And, as Varadan says, no *mridangam* will accept the instrument if he is not in the shop to deliver it personally. "Even if I leave a message with the boys in the shop to give the instrument, no *mridangam* will take unless I give it a final check in my presence," his pride as he says is reflecting the confidence *mridangams* have in him.

Varadan shares a warm relationship with the *vidwans*, for many of whom, he is almost like a family member. They invite him to their homes during festivals, give him gifts and help him financially.

Has there been any instance of an instrument he has worked on letting down a *vidvan* during a concert? "Never," Varadan proudly declares and adds, "I never give the *mridangams* a chance to complain. And I ensure this by trying to observe how the instrument sounds during a concert". To this end, he goes to as many concerts as possible, listens to the *mridangam*, and assesses it so that by the time the *mridangam* comes the next morning to his shop, Varadan has already decided what needs or need not be done to make the instrument better.

Listening to so much music all these years, hasn't he picked up playing the *mridangam*? Not really, he says. "I can only tap the instrument roughly, that too to check the *sruti*. Moreover, since

(Continued on P7)

## THE OLD...

Another OLD and NEW on a different tack — and with a plea in mind. When that great Armenian benefactor of Madras, Coja Petrus

built the Marmalong Bridge pro bono publico in 1726, his contribution was commemorated in Latin, Persian and Armenian in a granite plaque. And that plaque has remained in place through all the changes in form that bridge over the Adyar has undergone, and it still remains, rather well-preserved, at the north end of the Maraimalai Adigalar Bridge.

Quite different has been the case of the plaque of the 1800s that once adorned the Anderson Bridge, across the Cooum, connecting Pantheon Road with Anderson's Gardens. When the NEW was opened a couple of years ago and new railings built, the commemorative plaque dating the bridge, which was at the spot marked 'X', was done away with.

Our plea is that this bit of 'vandalism' is not repeated when the NEW Binny Bridge is completed. The bridge is now open to traffic and two plaques commemorating the 'Commander in Chief's Bridge, 1825' are on the old wall where marked. When new railings to match those in the bottom left-hand corner on the right are installed, it is hoped that the two plaques nearly 175-years-old will find a place at the bridge's ends, instead of getting lost or destroyed as in the Anderson Bridge case. (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN).

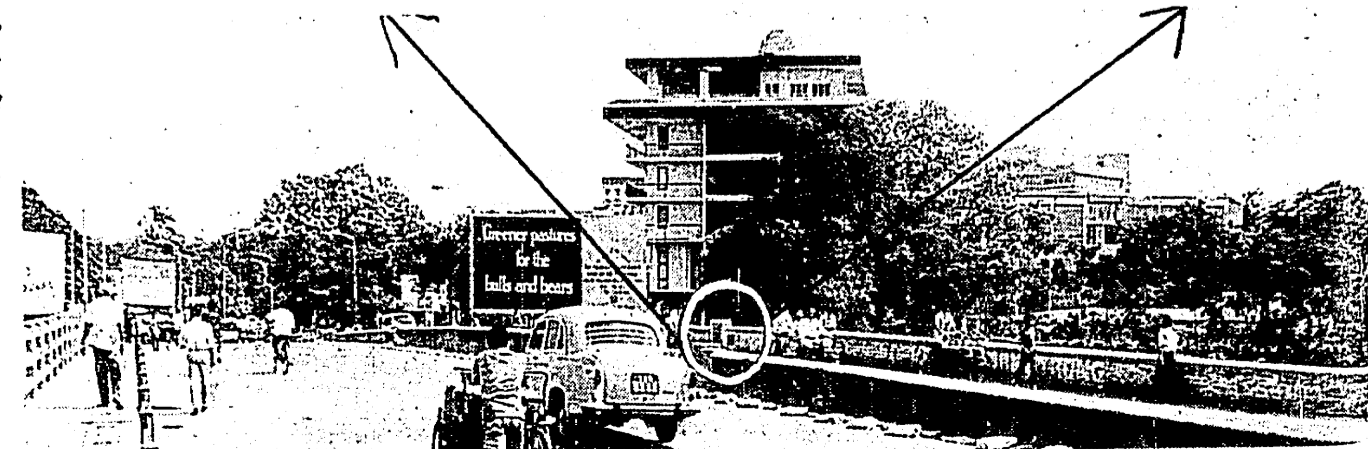
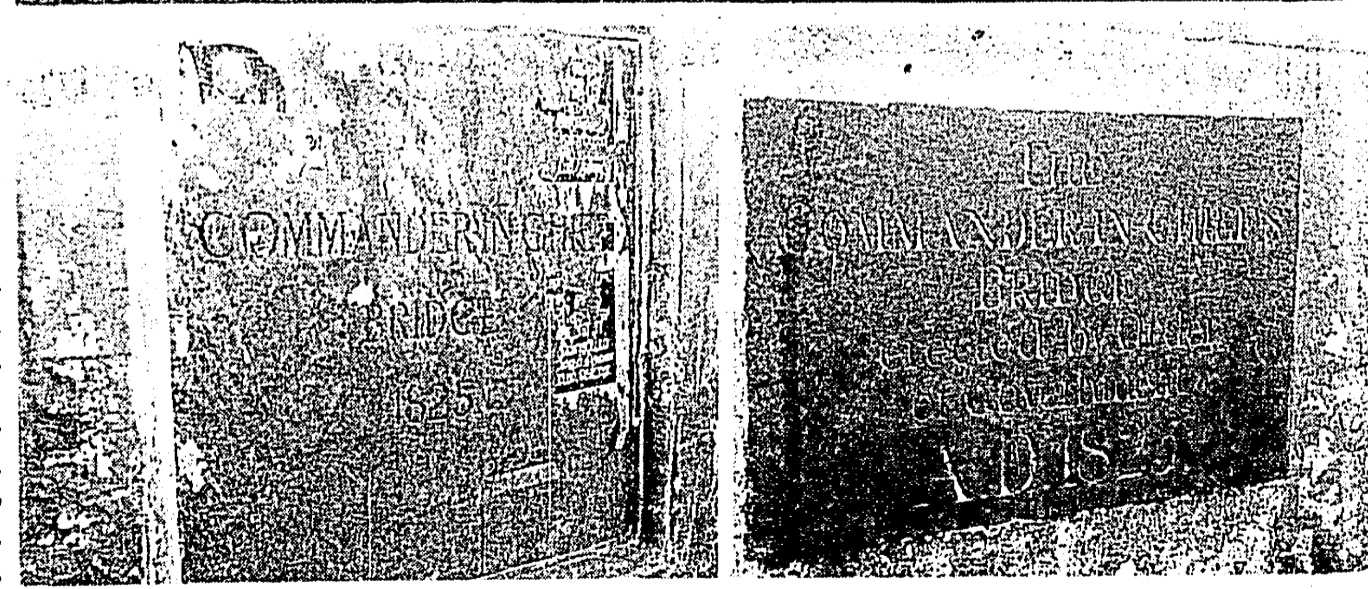
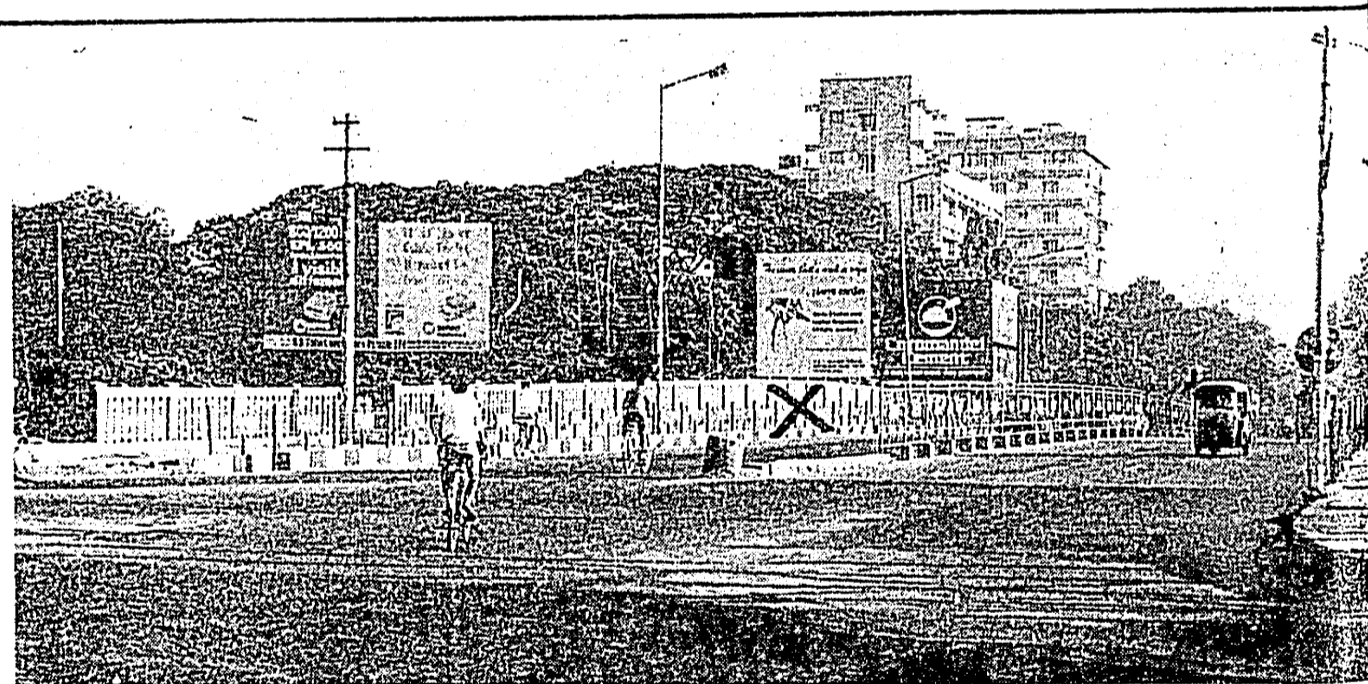
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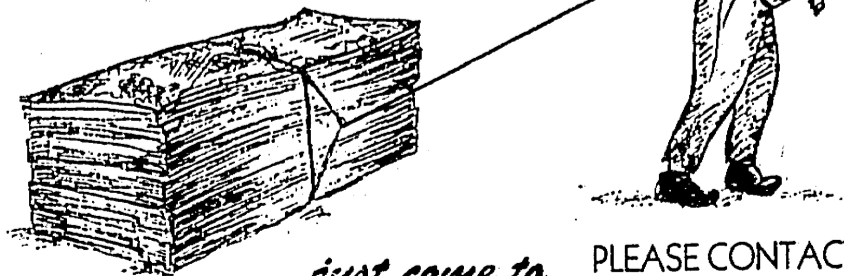
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● Bull's Eye and The (T.N.) Hit Parade are on page 7



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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.

# The first girls' school

Monahan Girls' School, Royapettah, was formally founded in 1851 by Methodist missionaries, to help the poor and needy in the neighbourhood. But from as early as 1848, about 150 girls used to come daily to the mission bungalow, where Mrs. Roberts, the missionary's wife, taught them to read and write.

The school, which started with one building comprising of a central hall and a few classrooms, was the first girls' school in the Presidency and had its first-ever Government inspection in 1856. There was even at the time a school library, for which the girls paid a subscription for each book borrowed. After the inspection, the Government made a grant of Rs. 300, the amount contributed by the girls.

For 14 years, the school was run voluntarily by the missionaries' wives. In 1877, during The Great Famine, the school became a children's home and



Monahan Girls' School's main building

did much to relieve the suffering around.

In 1891, the school was recognised as a high school. It was known as the Wesleyan Mission School and the Methodist Mission School till 1950. During the centenary celebrations, the school was named after the Rev. C. H. Monahan, the chairman of the Methodist Mission.

A new building, consisting of a dormitory on the first floor and a few classrooms, was inaugurated around 1925 by Viscountess Goschen, the then Governor's wife. A small but beautiful chapel was built in 1935 for the girls, replacing the old kitchen which was till then the only possible place that could be spared for worship. The chapel now stands in a beautiful garden maintained by the students.

In 1980, the school was upgraded as a higher secondary school. A nursery

block was built in 1985. The Monahan Computer Centre opened in 1988.

There are now about 1500 students and 55 teachers. There are seven old students among the teachers, one of them the headmistress. There had been a time when spinsters alone were recruited for the faculty, but no longer. The academic performance of the school has been fairly good and a few students enter professional colleges every year.

Home science, Needlework, Gardening and Secretarial practice are all taught here, preparing the girls to run happier homes.

The school plans to demolish the main building shortly and build a new building with an auditorium within the campus.

Text and Photographs  
RAJIND N CHRISTY

## Dates For Your Diary

**December:** 'Artist of the Month' — S Anwar, a diploma holder in photography from Loyola Institute of Visual Communication, who is now a freelance photo-journalist specialising in dance and theatre photography. (Max Mueller Bhavan).

**Till December 20:** Postcards from God — Drawings by Imtiaz Dharker, poet and artist. This exhibition is a follow-up of the recent release of her second book, *Postcards from God*. At The Gallery, 7, Wallace Garden 3rd Street.

**Till December 24:** Sri Krishna Gana Sabha's 14th Annual Natya Kala Conference. The conference subject this year is 'Evolutionary and Innovative Changes in Bharatha Natyam'. Govardhan Panchal, Indrani Rehman, Premalatha Sharma, 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. On 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's sabhas and artists and the audience on 'Problems and Solutions'. The seminar will start at 8.30 a.m. with Rajashani folk dances by Nishitha Sareen of Jaipur (at Gana Vihar, 8 Griffith Road, T Nagar).

**December 21:** Spiritualism and Materialism (A New Acropolis Conference)

**December 28:** Reincarnation and Evolution Knowledge for Human Excellence (Another New Acropolis Conference) Lectures at 7.00 p.m. on each day at New Acropolis Cultural Institution, 16 Second Main Road, Kottur Gardens, Kotturpuram.

**Till Dec. 31:** An exhibition of water colour paintings by Badri Narayan, whose work is rich with the folk-wisdom of the *jatalakas*, the hidden meaning of fables and parables. Also on display will be his Ganeshas, warmly and cheerfully created in his inimitable style (at the Sakshi Gallery, Madras-6, 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. daily except Sundays).

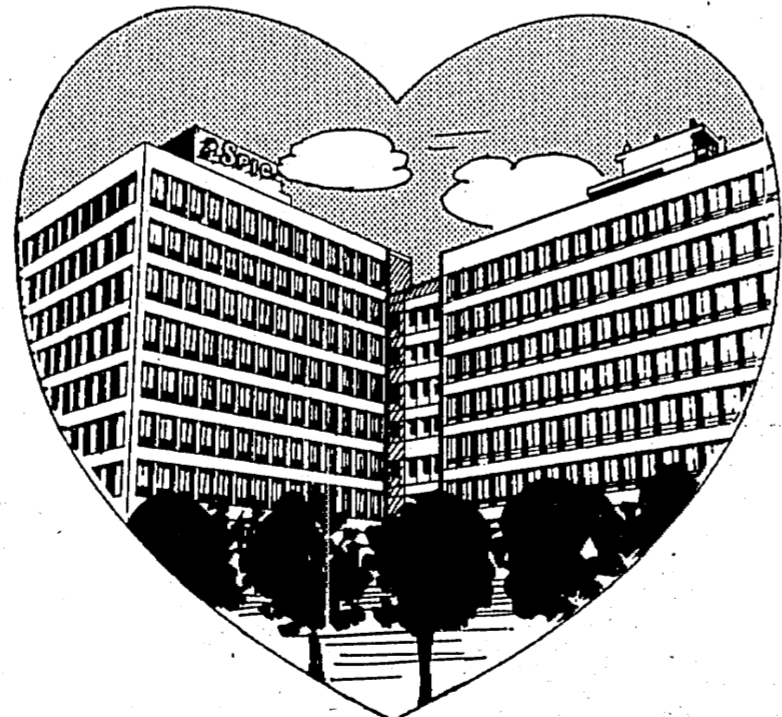
## Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight November 16-30.)

- Which Central Government undertaking in Madhya Pradesh has decided to set up a sewage water re-cycling plant with the expertise of two Madras corporate houses, MRL and MFL?
- Which Union Minister became the first in independent India to become an honorary ADC to the-President of India?
- What invention in Tamil by Rao Sahib M. Srinivasa Rao that has proved invaluable to scribes celebrated its centenary recently?
- Which two Union Ministers were censured by the Election Commission for violating the moral code of conduct in connection with their assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka?
- The highest monetary award in literature in India, the Saraswathi Samman for 1994, has been conferred on...?
- Who retained the senior National women's hockey title for the 13th time at Chandigarh recently?
- To mark what occasion did Zubin Mehta conduct the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in New Delhi on November 27th?
- Name the noted Marathi film-maker, and winner of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 1992, who passed away recently.
- Simple! Who is the Miss World?
- Who is the new Chief of Army?
- Cricket entered a new era in the between Western Australia and Queensland, at Perth on November 24th, two innovations. What innovations?
- In Jon Bon Jovi's recently released bestselling Christmas album, 'What comes home for Christmas', who is his ex-girlfriend in the video?
- Which Union Minister was awarded E 60,000 as damages in a defamation suit against the journal *Communications International*?
- Who won the Man-of-the-match award in the recently concluded Bombay Test between West Indies and India which the latter won?
- Where did a stampede claim 113 lives on November 23rd, thus sparking nationwide concern?
- Name the eminent educationist, economist and institution builder, passed away on November 21st.
- Name the alumnus and ex-faculty member of Loyola College, Madras, who was listed as one of the 'Ten Central Bank Chiefs' by the *Global Finance* magazine.
- Which Tamil Nadu city has the second highest inflation rate amongst 'million' cities in the country, next to Bombay?
- Which city in South Asia has the highest number of churches (140) as of 1994?
- What international award did the old P. Ramesh of Madras win recently?

(Answers on P. 8)

## SPIC The Corporate Star in Madras



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# Playing one's best cards

to me that the statement, 'to quick be to borrow and slow pay, their credit is naught, so they are so gay', requires serious re-consideration, looking at the pace at which the credit card business is growing. It is banks and companies in the card business that are falling over each other to woo potential customers and to replace existing ones. With the ongoing liberalisation process, banking sector has and the rising income of the middle class, credit card-issuing companies have never had it so good.

### • BULL'S EYE

though Mastercard and Visa are non-proprietary cards. It is also vital that these entities provide excellent communication facilities for the MEs and customers. Gizmos like voice phones, Point of Sales (PoS) Terminals, formatted talax etc are used for this very purpose. Banks also bank on blitz to push their products. Indian banks which had so far laboured under various constraints — like lack of autonomy and budgetary limitations — are now, in order to face competition, thinking of setting up autonomous bodies for credit card operations. The Bank of Baroda is soon to float a subsidiary, Bobcards Limited.

The result of all these developments has been an enviable 50 per cent growth in the business. From three lakh cards in 1990, there are eight lakh cards in circulation today. With card pilferage virtually nil, the MEs and companies alike cashing in on the in-

creasing business and the cardholders themselves hooked to the concept, there seems to be no looking back for the plastic card business. Going by the alluring facilities promised by card issuers to their members and the increasing applicability of cards (Citibank has recently announced that its cards can be used for payment in the primary and secondary markets too), the 'buy now, pay later' concept doesn't seem to be a bad bargain at all.

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## THE (TAMIL NADU) HIT PARADE



EDITOR'S NOTE: Few remember that the Ruias (Shashi and Ravi) of the ESSAR Group are Madras-born, Madras-bred and Madras-initiated into business. Their father, Nandakumar Ruia, was running "a modest offshore trading company" in Madras till his sudden death in 1969. Shashi had just then joined the business after completing a Commerce degree and Ravi left engineering college to join him. Of their Madras background, the brothers, who speak Tamil more fluently than their mother tongue and who find it "more comfortable working with somebody who speaks the language", say, "We have made the best of our background: The entrepreneurship of a Marwari and the work culture of a South Indian. The South Indian Marwari is a deadly creature."

The Ruias, who were much involved with iron ore exports in Madras and harbour expansion contracts, are now beginning to move back into Tamil Nadu after years of growing into the billionaire class in Western India. They have acquired a substantial stake in the Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank. The Bank, which has 134 branches in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere, has almost Rs. 39 cr reserves. Rs. 788 cr in deposits and Rs. 432 cr in advances. The Ruias have also moved into South India Shipping and are talking to Sterling Computers about cellular phones.

## Always Ship-shape

What's luck got to do with it? Plenty. Ask the superstitious SHASHIKANT RUIA who believes that thirteen is his winning streak for the past twenty years. Shashikant and younger brother Ravikant inherited a small iron-ore export business on their father's death and have transformed it into an integrated empire whose scale and reach make its origins seem unbelievable: from a turnover of rupees three crores in 1975 to rupees one thousand crore in 1993. Their success is the stuff of corporate fairy-tales. Much of it can be ascribed to their being at the right place at the right moment and not shying away from seizing every available opportunity with both hands.

The brothers Ruia have in the past publicly acknowledged their admiration for Dhirubhai Ambani and consciously patterned themselves in the Ambani mould. It is no coincidence, then, that Essar's growth, like that of Reliance, has been meteor-like. Their willingness to wend their way through public sector corporations and bureaucracy won them both lucrative contracts, for Essar Shipping, and friends in high places. Now Shashikant is quickly learning to play by the new rules of the game which has turned more open, more competitive. They, like the Ambanis, are talking in terms of global scale and reach, getting into sectors like oil and gas, newly opened to private enterprise. Shashikant's son Prashant is already hands-on at Essar. And the brothers are a picture of togetherness, working out of a large corner office which they share at all times.

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

## MANAALI RAMAN...



'Let's decide... heads we clear the road, tails we think about it some more...'

IN MAD, MAD MADRAS

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## Awards aplenty, plans a few

On the eve of the Indian Olympic Association's general body meeting, held for the first time in Madras, over Rs. 10 lakh were distributed, again for the first time, to the medal winners at the last South Asian Federation Games.

Meanwhile, another SAF Games is around the corner, so to speak, scheduled to be held in Madras next December. And the question being asked is whether the infrastructure will be got ready by that time. This infrastructure includes the astroturf pitch at the Mayor Radhakrishnan hockey stadium in Egmore, for which the Tamil Nadu Government has sanctioned Rs. 2.8 crores.

It was announced at the IOA meeting that the Sports Authority of Tamil Nadu would, before December-end 1994, present to the State Government and the IOA the final details of its preparations for the biggest-ever sports meet to be held in Madras. All city fans hope that the Sports Authority will not keep any of its plans in cold storage and will also keep the public informed through the Press of the progress its schemes are making.

At the well-attended IOA meeting, everyone congratulated Sivanthi Adityan, the quiet, soft-spoken, unassuming newspaper magnate and IOA President, for the doctorate conferred on him recently by the Madurai-Kamaraj University and for his unanimous re-election as Vice-President of the Olympic Council of Asia. Adityan has a full bag of work ahead of him to ensure the SAF Games of 1996 are conducted successfully in his home city.

FOOTNOTE: A surprising note was struck at the IOA meeting when one of its Vice-Presidents lauded India's medals tally at the Hiroshima Asian Games last October as the country's best-ever Asiad haul! The truth was that the second biggest squad after the Chinese contingent could collect no more than four golds, and finished way behind China and four other nations in the medals tally. Worse, the past record, which had seen better days than four golds, had apparently already been forgotten!

— JAICI

## Will Madras get better place in Classics ahead?

Never before had a Guindy Classic meeting presented such a colourful scene as the one *The Hindu* provided for the running of the Classic it sponsored, the South India 1000 Guineas, on December 4th last. Huge, brightly-painted banners of *The Hindu* and its allied publications, *Business Line*, *Sportstar* and *Frontline*, put up at all vantage points, transformed the Guindy Classic scene as never before. Understandably, the scene came in for universal appreciation.

But Guindy is not the Guindy of yesteryears. The current season's average size of the jackpot pool tells its own tale of the fall in its popularity. It has not yet crossed even the Rs one lakh mark. Fortunately for the country's oldest turf, *The Hindu* South India 1000 Guineas pulled the eight-meeting-old season's biggest crowd to suggest, as it were, that Guindy was on its way to regaining some of its popularity. Whatever may be the shape of things to come, the first Classic provided a finish worthy of the occasion, even though the first two prizes went to outstation challengers.

This was no surprise, as in a field of eight, there were as many as five

outstation challengers, most of them with an impressive record. The three local contenders all ran in the colours of the country's leading owner, M.A.M. Ramaswamy. But none of the trio came into the public reckoning. Nearly all the money was on the Bangalore-based pair of Maribella and Fascinating Picture, the latter, oddly enough, donning the colours of the well-known Madras owners Mrs V.G. Saravanan and V.S. Dhanasekhar. The

by  
**AJAX**

pair started joint 5-2 favourites, with Cape Storm, another challenger from Bangalore, coming next in public support at 7-2.

Well as Cape Storm and Maribella took the first and second places, respectively, and vindicated the public support they enjoyed, it was the third-placed Moonlight Quest who stole the thunder and made the so-called experts, none of whom had credited her with even an outside chance, look small.

M.A.M. Ramaswamy's Robert Foley trained filly, twice winner at Mysore and winner of her lone previous Guindy start, was the least fancied runner at the surprisingly long odds of 20-1. Never before had a Classic runner started at such long odds and yet finished a fighting third as Moonlight Quest did.

Champion Foley was obviously not without hope. This was clear from the way Sharp Lady set the pace for stable mate Moonlight Quest. When eventually Moonlight Quest went ahead midway up the straight, she made even punter rub his eyes. But she could not stave off the challenge of the Bangalore pair with hardly 200 metres out. It now only remains to be seen if Foley has any runner to avert a Madras blank in the rest of the Classics, for all of which formidable contingents are expected from both Bangalore and Hyderabad.

A Madras Classic blank can only lower the status of the ancient Guindy turf, and all city turfites will hope that the Guindy champion's stable will avert it.

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MUSINGS

## A disappointing comeback

Ace high jumper Nallusamy Annavi, now on the comeback trail, won the Best Athlete's Prize at the 36th Southern Railway Inter-Divisional Athletic Championships held at the Nehru Stadium recently. The Tamil Nadu athlete, who set ablaze the national high jump pits in the Eighties, is now back in action after a knee operation.

Plagued by knee injuries for the last three years, Annavi, during this period, did not live up to the promise showed by him earlier, when, despite the nagging injury, he cleared 2.16 m in the 1993 Nationals. But in the local championship, he was more confident about his knee strength. "The doctor told me I am 100 per cent fit," he announced. But why is he unable to go beyond 2.16 metres?

"What is the motivation for me to go on improving?" he counters. And continues, "National champions should be sent to participate in a few international meets. Competing with superior athletes will spur us to improve. In the absence of such policies, we are happy with performances which assure us the national title".

### ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The Bank Note Press in Dewas, which prints India's currency; 2. K.P. Singh Deo; 3. Tamil shorthand; 4. Sitaram Kesri and Kalpanath Rai; 5. Dr. Harbhajan Singh, the noted Punjabi poet; 6. Railways; 7. The 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi; 8. B.L. Pendharkar; 9. Aiswarya Rai; 10. Gen. S. Roy Chowdhry; 11. A first class match under lights and use of yellow balls; 12. Supermodel Cindy Crawford; 13. The Minister of State for Communications, Sukh Ram; 14. Javagal Srinath; 15. Nagpur; 16. Dr. Malcom S. Adiseshiah; 17. C. Rangarajan; 18. Coimbatore; 19. Madras; 20. He won the first prize in the junior category for his 'Holo Minerva - 3 in 1 3D image creator' in a 'design idea' competition organised by Sony in 44 countries.

The two-time SAF Games gold medalist points out, "India always has a good chance of winning silver or bronze in Asian track and field events. But it seems the authorities want only

by Venkatachari Jagannathan

gold". And P S Bindu, the national women's champion, cites as a case in point the qualifying standard laid down by the IOA for the recent Asiad. "The bronze medal in the Games was won by a jumper who cleared 1.83m,

whereas the IOA's qualifying mark was 1.90 m!" "The qualifying standards should be set keeping in mind the current scenario in the field and not the previous Games' records," Annavi urged.

The other problem which Indian jumpers face is the non-availability of landing beds. As a result, it is difficult for them to start practising or switch to the Fosbury Flop style from the traditional straddle style. Fortunately for Annavi, the Tiruchi Rotary Circle sponsored a bed at a cost of Rs. 35,000. Practising daily in Tiruchi, Annavi has now switched to the Fosbury Flop, but it did not seem to help at the Indian Railway Meet held in Madras early in

December. Could his motivation be decreasing further? Or was there any other reason for his very poor 1.90 m effort? Certainly no comeback sign!

## Catching them young

The Volley Ball Federation of India, in order to catch players young, decided to conduct an Under-12 Nationals for the first time this year. But many of the players in the championship held in Madras recently seemed to be over 12. The authorities, however, did not enforce the rules strictly, as they felt it would defeat the main purpose of the tournament.

The VHF intends to hold this tournament every year, henceforth, and has, therefore, made it obligatory on the part of the State that is hosting the Senior Nationals to conduct the Mini Nationals also. Madras hosts the Nationals this year.

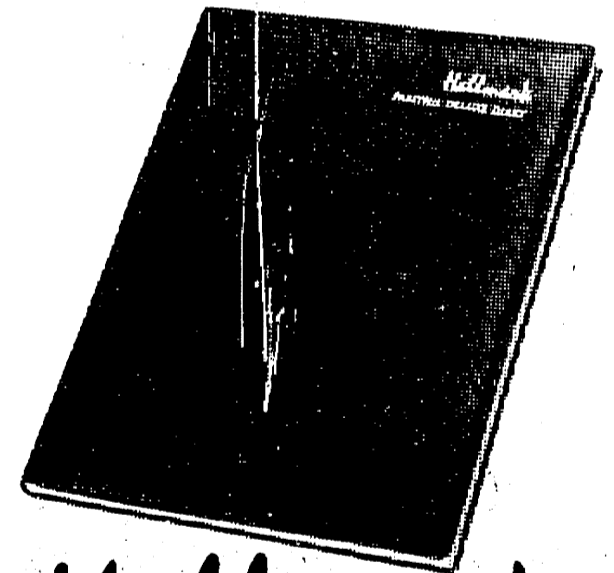
K Murugan, Secretary-General, Volley Ball Federation of India, told *Madras Musings* that he would like to hold the Senior Nationals indoors. But with only two satisfactory indoor stadiums in the city, he was sceptical about the possibilities of conducting all the matches indoors.

Twentyfive teams participated in the RBF Nidhi-sponsored mini national championship, 14 in the boys' section, 11 in the girls'. Tamil Nadu had mixed luck in the tournament. Its boys won the Under-12 title, whereas the girls' team — the defending champions — lost in the finals. Though the Tamil Nadu teams were assembled at the last minute, resulting in lack of practice, they won all their matches till the finals comfortably. There, the boys were given a fight by Uttar Pradesh, but the girls were surprisingly routed by Andhra Pradesh.

Notable amongst the Tamil Nadu boys was their captain, Jabat Ebenezer, who excelled in spiking as well as in setting up the ball. Jabat Ebenezer, who is also in the State's under-14 team, is a player to watch for the future, provided he is groomed properly.

V.J.

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