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ADDISON
METAL CUTTING TOOLS

A meeting that appealed for...

A future for our past

INTACH's 3-point appeal

(By A Staff Reporter)

INTACH, Tamil Nadu Chapter, appealing to the State Government and the public to ensure that buildings and environs that have come down through generations are protected and passed on to posterity in a good state of preservation, has stressed the urgent need for

— A Heritage Act for Tamil Nadu,
— Conservation of the Marina, and
— The preservation of the DGP's building.

In its appeal it has stated that the immense pressure on land and resources have brought about the destruction of many priceless buildings and built environs and have resulted in the loss of traditional building methods and skills. The existing infrastructure and supporting legislation are all directed towards new development in both planning and construction. These laws are inadequate to protect the vast cultural heritage of this country. A new, urgent and alternative approach is required to ensure that what is left of this valuable inheritance is not lost forever. This approach will acknowledge conservation as an integral part and not contradictory to development, INTACH has said.

A recognition of the need to protect and conserve heritage buildings and environs must be the aim and thrust of a Heritage Act, INTACH states. Such an Act will ensure that

— listed buildings cannot be demolished, altered in external features or left to wanton decay;
— physical intervention to the interior and interior structures may be permitted but will be monitored; and
— areas declared as Heritage Zones will have special development rules to regulate development and protect their character. Provision of incentives in the form of reduced tax or monetary help,

(Continued on P3)

(By A Special Correspondent)

There is hope for conservation and heritage in Tamil Nadu to judge by the crowd that turned out to hear and support the pleas made by the speakers at a recent INTACH-organised meeting. Legislation to protect the future of Tamil Nadu's past, conservation of the Marina and revocation of the decision to demolish the DGP building were the substance of the petition (see box) made to the Chief Minister by the large gathering in a display of unanimity with the speakers.

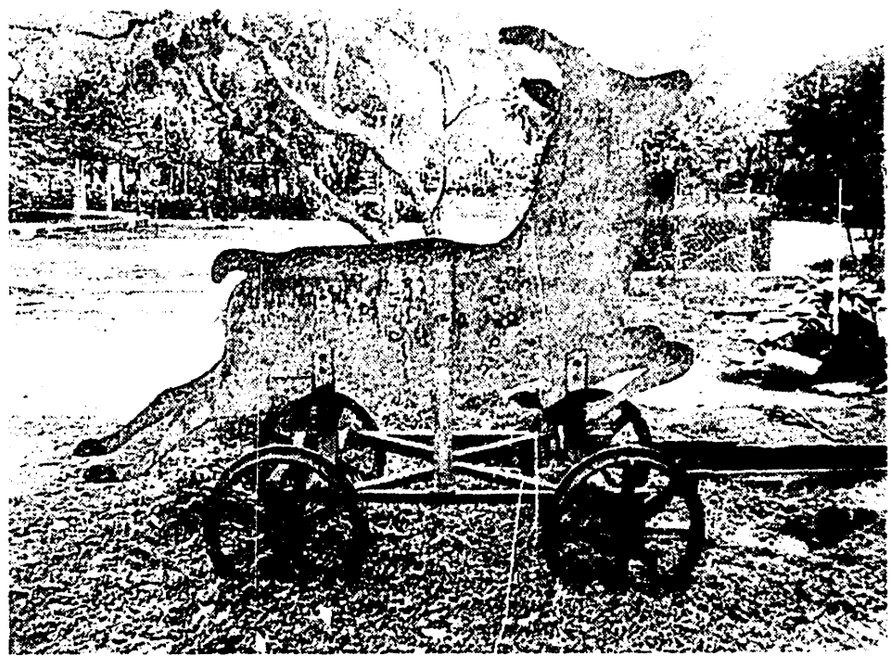
With little progress on the promised Heritage Act, with the State Government's determination to go ahead with a new Police Headquarters, ten storeys high on the Marina, with the DGP planning to move temporarily to refurbished *Government House* (since accomplished) and with the tenders finalised for the wrecking of the existing DGP building, INTACH, Tamil Nadu Chapter, hastened to organise this public meeting. But when even the pleas made at it failed, and the wreckers were told to prepare for work, INTACH had no other recourse but to seek Court intervention. A temporary stay was obtained and by the time these lines appear a final decision may have been made on INTACH's petition. But whatever that decision, INTACH's meeting — and its coverage, especially in the Tamil Press! — has raised a new consciousness among the public on the need to preserve the City's past.

That past, it was pointed out at the meeting, did not involve ONLY historic buildings 100 years old and more. Newer buildings of historicity, historic urban areas with lifestyles of their own, waterbodies and forest and parkland all needed to be conserved. But conservation by itself was not enough; the preserved areas and restored buildings should be put to a use that will ensure their maintenance.

Four major roads, it was suggested, should be studied and considered for conservation They were North and South Beach Roads, Mount Road and Poonamallee High Road.

The need for community involvement in heritage preservation, the need for industrial and commercial participation in such activities, the need to educate the public on conservation and the need to offer tax and other benefits to owners of property of heritage value were all pointed out at the meeting. An ideal Government response to this would be Government agreeing to stay the demolition of the DGP building and offering to discuss the future of the building and a Heritage Act for the State with the speakers at INTACH's meeting.

The speakers were Martand Singh, of the INTACH national secretariat, Suresh Krishna, former Sheriff of Madras and a spokesman for Industry, M Anandhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of Anna University, P T Kristinan, architect, and S Muthiah, author specialising in Madras history. Martand Singh could be represented by the convenors of the meeting: Deborah Thiyagarajan, Convenor, INTACH, Tamil Nadu Chapter, and Tara Murali and Sujatha Shankar, both architects.



A Relic from the Raj

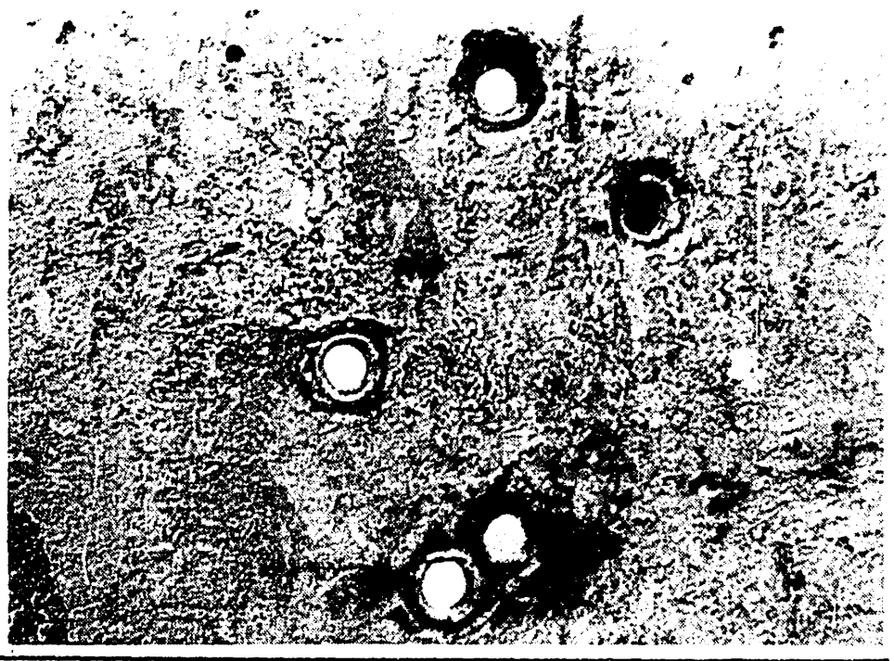
This silhouette of a deer in flight was used for target practice by British army officers stationed in Madras during pre-World War II days. The relic is now parked near the Ranger's office at Children's Park, Guindy.

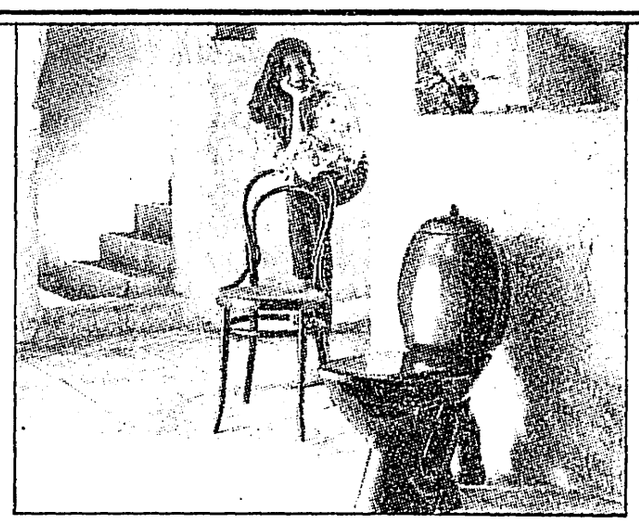
The five foot high deer has been cut from a ¼" steel plate and is mounted on railway wheels. Tracks on which the deer 'ran' were laid out through a patch of the Guindy forest, not far from Raj Bhavan. The steel deer was pulled on its tracks by sepoys from a safe distance and gunners blazed away at the moving target. This was simulating actual hunting conditions, as the deer appeared and disappeared in the bushes as it was winched past. The deer is pock-marked by bullets bouncing off its steel hide, while big game express bullets drilled right through!

Shikar was fashionable in those days and army officers honed their marksmanship skills on a target like this on weekends at Guindy. The expertise gained must have helped them to eventually wipe out half the wildlife in our jungles.

The relic now stands rusting, a grim gravestone complete with bullet holes, an epitaph in memory of all the animals which fell to bullets from the 'sportsmen' of yore.

V.S. Raghavan





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MADRAS MUSINGS
We wish our readers A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

Restoring Main Street, preserving heritage

Anna Salai, Mount Road ... call it what you will, but it IS Main Street, Madras. For years *The Man From Madras Musings* has felt it should be one of the five stretches in the city that needed to be restored and conserved much like what they were like 50-100 years ago. And here comes McDuffie Nichols from Washington D C saying that's exactly what Main Street, U.S.A. had been doing during its ten years of existence.

The five roads *MMM* would like to get Nichols to get his hands on are: Mount Road to Eldams Road and including Wallajah Road; South Beach Road to Foreshore Estate; North Beach Road to Royapuram Railway Station; Poonamallee High Road to St. George's School; and stretches of NSC Bose Road and Perambur High Road. And just to get an idea of what a Main Street programme can do, just look at what's been done to Higginbotham's, Saraswathi Musical Stores and the old shop next to it. Higginbotham's now gleams as in its heyday, the music shop is a smart and sprightly Dasa upmarket-*dosai* restaurant and its neighbour is fast developing as an even smarter restaurant, Annalakshmi, yet another creation of the *swamiji* who has taken Coimbatore and Singapore by storm. Here is conservation at its finest and models for all the other establishments on the roads mentioned.

Said Nichols at lectures and press conferences, "Architectural preservation is not a luxury but a civic responsibility". Promoting the physical improvement of buildings and open spaces in commercial districts, the National Main Street Centre of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, U.S.A. looks at such architectural preservation as being community-oriented and strives for a partnership between the government and the private sector.

Main Street, U.S.A.'s task is, however, easier than in Madras, for instance, *MMM* would venture. In the U.S. there are National heritage lists, State heritage lists and Municipal heritage lists. Together with enforceable legislation and a whole bag of benefits for property-owners, there is a compulsion to conserve, preserve and restore. When will we get all that in Madras, *MMM* wonders.

Policeman's pride

An articulate policeman, a well-read policeman, a policeman-economist, a cultured policeman, a sensitive policeman, a policeman-as-artist, a policeman who enjoyed critical appraisal. My God, thought *The Man From Madras Musings*, there's still hope for the DGP Building! Sadly, Mohan Menon, seconded to the Cabinet Secretariat, has no say in THAT matter that's recently been exciting several Madras minds.

Instead, what Menon had to offer Madras — or, at least, the Madras Book Club — was readings from his book of poetry, *August Haze* (and that's 'aUGUST'!) which he describes as "poems of a placid realm". There was, however, little placid in many of the poems, to judge from what Professor C T Indra of Madras University read during her rather overlong but well-argued analysis. Much here was the poetry of despair, but there was also the poetry of a man fighting proud of the country he lived in and served. Would there were more like him was *MMM's* reaction on SEEING three of his other poems.

Unity, Pride and *Victory* were the three he had worked with a music director to set to song and produce as colourful video shorts. *MMM* had thought patriotic pride had long vanished, but Menon's videos were all about 'proud to be an Indian', 'proud to be part of a united country', 'proud to be a part of a country united in achieving success'. The music and the singer were sweet on even *MMM's* tone-deaf ears, the visuals were colourful and lively ... the only pity was all that pride expressed in poetry did not come across clearly, the words lost in the music and the singing. Running subtitles would appear to be called for ... and then there'd perhaps be many more who'd appreciate policeman as poet.

Menon's videos, gifted to Doordarshan, have already been seen by Delhi audiences. With gifts of tape to Madras Doordarshan, audiences here can expect to see Menon's message shortly. It's a message, he says, he wants to reach beyond those small coteries who come for poetry readings. That, he explained, was why he took the pop and video route for poetry. But, wonders *MMM*, are his poems of despair, then, to be only for the small reading circles?

Economy's best

The Taj group may have walked away with the top awards at the Hotel and Food Services India's third industry awards function, but a feather in Madras's cap was the award given to The Residency, T'Nagar's own. Builder Appaswamy's hotel was named the Best Economy Hotel in India in 1994. And *The Man From Madras Musings* gladly attests to the fact.

Not only are its rooms comfortable and clean, and service willing and enthusiastic, but its party rooms are excellent and Chin Chin must be one of the best Chinese restaurants in town. With its upmarket ambience and facilities, The Residency is exactly what an Economy Hotel should be and is exactly the type of hotel India needs more of. *MMM* looks forward to others following where The Residency leads.

MMM's only regret is that The Residency's achievement was announced locally not only in an individualised manner but appeared very like one of those conventional congratulatory messages that greet Ph.Ds., chairmen-elect and travellers-returned!

Madras figured no place else in the awards, but *MMM* noted that two from the Welcomgroup Park Sheraton and Towers (Pity the Adayar has been dropped from the name in the attempt to go luxury!) were very much in the running. Suresh Kumar was one of the nominees for General Manager of the Year and Aleyamma George was one of the nominees for the Best Housekeeper of the Year.

Damania was selected Best Airline of the Year for the second year running and Lufthansa was chosen the best international airline.

In brief

★ The Editor didn't throw it away. Instead, he passed it on to *The Man From Madras Musings*, the envelope on which had been typed "Don't just throw it away. It is worth reading. And sincerely sent." Neither Editor nor *MMM* doubts the sincerity of Swami Devananda Saraswati of the Shri Vaishnavi Shrine in Avadi, but we wonder why he felt that he had to ASSURE us that two tracts sponsored by 'The Hindu Businessmen's Association of Northern California, U.S.A.,' and a Xerox of an article by David Frawley *aka* Vamadeva Shastri that had appeared in the *Organiser* were "worth reading". For the record, *MMM* did the Swami the courtesy of skimming through the material and was delighted to find one phrase: "love mankind". *MMM* presumes 'mankind' refers to ALL mankind, regardless of colour, class, caste, faith or faithlessness.

★ *The Hindu's* Advertising Department which prides itself on its insistence on the accuracy (not to mention the Victorianly moral demeanour) of the advertising it will accept, published a caution notice the other day which, *The Man From Madras Musings* feels, should have merited a little more caution. Remfry & Sagar, New Delhi Attorneys-at-Law, announced that their clients, Four Seasons Hotels (Barbados) Ltd, had offices at "Suite 201/202, Chancery House, High Street, Bridgetown, Barbados, United States of America". Undoubtedly, *MMM* feels, the Indian cricket team would these days be wishing that Barbados was indeed a part of a country like the US where they don't play cricket. But INDEPENDENT Barbados must undoubtedly have other ideas about learned lawyers handing them over to another country. As for *The Hindu, MMM* rather thinks it's entirely due to the way Geography and History are being downgraded in India.

★ And to think that a scholar like Malcolm S Adiseshiah was remembered on December 20th by institutions of scholarship such as Anna University, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Madras University, Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education and State Resource Centre and Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology in these words: IN MEMORIUM! May he Rest In Peace even after that, the scholar who remembered his Latin to the last.

★ It was only on December 1st that *The Man From Madras Musings* had written that one way India could get together with British educational facilities was through working out a franchised relationship. No sooner said that done. *MMM* hears that the Kothari Agricultural Management Centre, Coonoor (remember that the Kotharis have long been in tea-planting?) is talking to the Royal Agricultural College, Gloucestershire, UK, for its students to get the College's degrees simultaneously with the Centre's diplomas. The Centre, part of the D C Kothari group, at present offers post-graduate diplomas in tea and coffee plantation management after 8-month courses. The RAC might want to make that 10-month courses, with wider and more intensive study of other aspects of agriculture and management, *MMM* feels, before agreeing to a M.Sc., M.Ag. or M.B.A. being granted. But the negotiations are a sign of the way education may go in India before long.

Business briefs

★ Sterling Resorts'-Maxworths' greening projects now include golf courses. They're now setting up a massive 450-acre complex just outside Delhi — where there's space aplenty — and are planning to get a US organisation, Edaw, to run it. The complex will have an 18-hole course and two nine-hole courses, a club and time-share as well as ownership cottages. To meet the Professional Golfers' Association requirements, in order to become a part of the international circuit, a golf instruction academy will also be established in the complex, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands.

★ A case of too many cooks would appear to be the case of the South Asian Financial Exchange (SAFE) which never really took off, feels *The Man From Madras Musings*. Floated by Crimson Investments, which included almost the entire Madras industrial leadership teaming up in the venture, Crimson did keep out of the red and achieved high ratings, but did not make the headway expected of it. When the promoters began to feel that it might do better in the hands of just ONE group — especially with almost all the members of Crimson having their own financial organisations — the promoters of SAFE went about it methodically. They invited bids, received over 30, whittled it down to seven and then shortlisted three. PL Finance finally wound up with SAFE.

★ A contrast to the smooth SAFE transition is the case of the Tamil Nadu Mercantile Bank takeover by ESSAR. While everything about the sale seems completely overboard, a communal twist is being given to the whole exercise, with a community organisation organising a *dharna* against "institutions in the north, out to capture this bank". Forgetting for the moment that ESSAR's roots are in the South and that almost all its senior staff are also from the South, forgetting for the moment that the North is investing more in the South than the South itself and that Tamil Nadu Government itself is wooing this northern investment, *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders when we in this part of the world are ever going to forget the North-South divide and the communal twists in even business transactions.

★ Manali may be the pride of Madras, the heart of its industrial 'belt', but what *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard recently about it is rather disquieting. Manali is one of the fourteen areas listed by the Central Pollution Control Board as needing immediate improvement of environmental quality. Twentytwo critically polluted areas were identified and fourteen of them have been given specific action plans by the for Board immediate remedial action. Sharing this dubious honour with Manali is North Arcot District.

MMM

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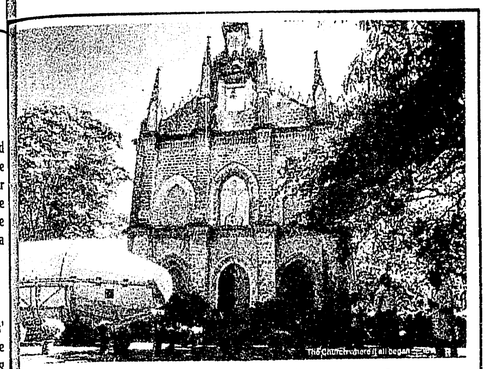
A Select List of Recent Additions

Author	*Title*
ARMSTRONG, M	Performance management
BECKER, E W	Microalage: Biotechnology and microbiology
BENNETT, R	The Kogan Page guide to effective management
FRIEDMAN, D	Inheritance: A psychological history of the Royal family
GRAINGER, P	Management resources
HENDERSON, N	Mandarin: The diaries of an ambassador
HOVEL, A	How to cope with difficult people
HUTCHINSON, A	Algorithmic learning
McMICHAEL, A J	Planetary overload
NORGAARD, R B	Development betrayed
PHILLIPS, C I	Ophthalmology
RICH, B	Mortgaging the earth
TOOLEY, M	Servicing the personal computer
ROWELL, D C	Soil methods and applications
FICTION	
CARR, P	We'll meet again
CHADWICK, E	Children of destiny
MANTEL, H	A change of climate



Heritage in the Space Age

Scientists are not particulary known for their interest in conservation. But perhaps it was because it was the cultured Vikram Sarabhai who launched India's space programme in: 1963 that the scientists in Thumba have ever since shown an enviable interest in conservation and heritage and have created "a church where Space is worshipped". What they have developed near Thiruvananthapuram should serve as a model for governments and conservationists throughout the country.

Business India writes, *"... the Indian space programme actually started... in a church and the adjoining bishop's house. The premises were graciously offered to the cause by the local Christian community at Thumba, near Trivandrum. The scientists led by Dr Vikram Sarabhai worked in the bishop's house and the metre-long sounding rockets were assembled in the anteroom of the church and fired from a launch pad on the beach.*

"... Today the church with a history dating back to 1544 AD has thousands of youthful 'worshippers' visiting every day."

The church and bishop's house set in a sylvan setting have been turned into the most comprehensive record of the first steps India took in Space. It is both a well-maintained museum as well as a commemoration of India's Space programme. Would that others elsewhere remembered the past and the country's heritage in the same manner, in the very places where the beginnings were.

— THE EDITOR

OUR READERS WRITE

Cricket the villain

'Jaici' writes 'When do we stop being "also rans?" (in *MM* November 1,) commenting on our poor performance in the 12th Asian Games in Hiroshima, comparing India with Qatar (with its population of Tambaram or Chingelput). But 'Jaici' never bothers to find out the reason for our underdevelopment in sports. The answer is CRICKET! Yes! No other country hellbent on this nonsense sport, has ever excelled in any other sport. Even in the latest Asian Games, all countries (not only China alone) which bagged medals never cared to play cricket. Only when India gets (sports) independence from cricket will she become a developed country in sports.

C T Vairavan
10 Jagadambal Colony
Madras 600 014.

Photographic change

You have evinced surprise at the low cost for developing a film roll in the Sixties (*MM* Dec. 1). The cost of everything in those days was ridiculously low when compared to present-day prices. Photo goods are no exception. At that time, a roll of 20 size film cost Rs. 4, developing it 75p. and each print 50p. The studio billed me Rs. 5 for developing a roll as I was a regular customer. We lamented that these prices were very high, as in the Fifties we had paid Rs. 2 per roll, developing 25p and each print 25p, a hike of more than 100%!

In those days, most amateurs developed and printed their pictures themselves, in improvised dark rooms. They sold photo chemicals too. From these, solutions were prepared for developing, printing and fixing.

The amateur usually owned a compact folding camera which could be easily carried about. The lucky ones sported a twin lens Rolleiflex. A press photographer lugged a bulky camera which used cut films to cover functions. He also armed himself with a supply of magnesium-filled flash bulbs which could be fired only once. So after each shot he loaded a new film and filted a new bulb. These bulbs were unpredictable. Occasionally one would explode, driving the security personnel into tantrums!

The era of black and white photography slowly drew to a close. Already 35 mm colour film cameras and electronic flash units had appeared on the horizon. In due course they dominated the field, relegating b & w photography to the pages of history.

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'Make Bombay Fort a heritage precinct'

(By Narendra Panjwani of *The Times of India*, Bombay)

Urban heritage conservation has finally come of age in Bombay, judging from a pathbreaking study of the Fort by a group of young city architects led by Rahul Mehrotra and Sandhya Savant of the Urban Design Research Institute.

The study reveals that this historic quarter is still the best equipped to enable Bombay to become "tomorrow's Hong Kong or Shanghai", which future Richard Needham, who led the recent British delegation to the city, predicted. British companies would also be willing to sponsor the refurbishing of the precinct's landmark buildings, Needham had added. Mehrotra, however, hopes that Bombay's own companies and public authorities will lead the way.

The Fort precinct, as defined by the study, is 258 hectares in extent and stretches from Apollo Bunder, Horniman's Circle and Ballard Estate along the city's southeastern edge to V T Station, Crawford Market and Churchgate station in the northwest. Nariman Point, Mantralaya and Marine Drive are its neighbours, but not a part of it.

Its continued vitality, says Mehrotra, stems precisely from its 19th Century Victorian architecture and the way its component spaces complement each other to make the precinct not only the city's but the country's financial and corporate capital.

Some of the highlights of these area are:

Government institutions: The Government occupies almost 1/5th of the precinct. The Navy and the Bombay Port Trust occupy the eastern waterfront. Other important public buildings are the GPO, the Central and Western Railway headquarters and terminii and the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

The High Court, the University, the old Secretariat are all set along the Oval Maidan on the precinct's western edge. In the core of the precinct are located the Reserve Bank of India and the Mint — thus reinforcing the historicity of this area as the financial centre.

Commercial institutions: Financial institutions in the form of bank headquarters (both private and public), insurance companies and the Bombay Stock Exchange are located on Dalal Street, which was the city's earliest trading site. In the area around the stock exchange, the older residential buildings have all got converted to office spaces.

The nearby Ballard Estate continues to house corporate headquarters. This is one of the earliest planned commercial zones created to decongest the precinct's old core.

Offices along the Horniman Circle and the Pherozeshah Mehta Road nearby are largely owned by a wide variety of leading insurance companies and banks.

Traditional Indian quarter: Adjoining P M Road is Bora Bazaar, also known as Bazaargate, which follows a pattern of mixed landuse with commerce on the groundfloor and homes above.

Cultural & educational institutions: The Kalaghoda area emerges as the precinct's cultural node, with the Museum, Max Mueller Bhavan, the Jehangir Art Gallery, Elphinstone College, the University, the David Sassoon library, the magnificently curved Institute of Science, the C J Hall, St Anne's and Campion Schools, the Bombay Natural History Society, and the Regal cinema clustered around it within walking distance.

Another educational node further down D N Road is near the V T Station comprising Xavier's complex, Anjuman Islam School, and the Board of Technical Education.

• Another in our series on how Indian cities are beginning to look at their heritage

In between these two nodes, along the Azad Maidan, there is a cluster of famous schools like Cathedral, J B Petit and Alexandria Girls School. A number of libraries are also interspersed within the precinct. The foremost, of course, is the Asiatic, a landmark.

Social institutions: Hospitals, fire brigade stations, gymkhanas, hotels, restaurants and open spaces are well interspersed within the precinct. The fire brigade is appropriately located in the Bora Bazaar area, once the site of many fires.

Sandhya Savant points out that the proportion of open, green space to built space is the highest in the Fort precinct. "It occupies nearly 16 per cent of the area, which comes to 96 acres, and compares favourably with its counterparts in London and New York."

Another equally important, if somewhat intangible part of infrastructure, says Mehrotra, is the city's image — which is a result of its architectural history. "The town's development after the unwalling of the fort in 1865 can be easily seen as organised building with consistent setbacks... on the western edge of D N Road, formal public buildings set in distinct compounds stand in sharp contrast to the organic pattern along the eastern edge... Along D N Road, the arcade emerges as a unifying element along either side of the street... P M Road, which was created as a link to Ballard Estate, stands out as a planned spine uniformly lined with large footprint buildings designed in the Art Deco style... Or take the link between Churchgate station and the Town Hall... Horniman Circle stands out as a planned formal gesture on this link, and so on."

The burden of the book's argument is that the entire Fort area needs to be declared a 'Heritage Precinct', because conservation cannot be viably practised at the level of individual buildings. This has been shown to be the case with successful conservation policies in historic cities the world over.

The authors also stress that declaring the Fort as a heritage precinct would greatly boost tourism: "The tourist will then have another place to go to apart from Elephanta and the museum."

The book's publication is sponsored by Max Mueller Bhavan.

INTACH's 3-point appeal

(Continued from P 1)

to preserve listed buildings and buildings in a heritage zone, is recommended by INTACH.

Urging that a Heritage Act for Tamil Nadu be passed at the earliest, the appeal adds:

- **Under the provisions of this Act, a multi-disciplinary technical committee should be formed to evaluate and approve potential listed buildings and environs;**
- **The Ancient Monuments' Preservation Act, Government of Tamil Nadu, should be reactivated;**
- **The conservation regulations should be incorporated into the development control rules of the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority and Town and Country Planning Act for Tamil Nadu; and**
- **There should be no easy way for an individual OR the government to bypass or override these rules.**

Referring to the Marina, the appeal points out that Madras cannot be imagined without the Marina and its skyline. Subtlety of form and the human scale are the two main visual factors contributing to the elegance of the buildings along the Marina, it points out. And adds, the majority of the buildings, being institutional in function, have moderate use intensities and thus add to the charm of the place.

A visual continuity and functional harmony connect all the buildings along this stretch. It is this unity of form, character and function of the buildings and spaces along the stretch that should be preserved, enhanced and passed on to future generations, INTACH states.

Requesting Government to revoke the decision to demolish the DGP building and construct a ten-storeyed building in its place, the appeal points out that the demolition will result in the loss of a well-known landmark of the city, ruin the ambience and character of the Marina and deprive the city of one more of the few heritage buildings remaining.

The construction of a ten-storeyed building will violate existing building rules, set an undesirable precedent which will pose a threat to other heritage buildings, threaten the Marina, the only large lung space left in the city, and be a contradiction to the humane scale of the buildings on the Marina, INTACH states. And it concludes by hoping wisdom will heed its appeal.

Best copy available.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Work on Dhir's* The Hit Parade, *published earlier this year by* Business India's *Banyan Book, New Delhi, had begun long before a young Tamil Nadu businessman had burst on the national scene. Within six months he had become a major entrepreneur who would certainly have found a place in Dhir's work if only he had emerged earlier.* Business India *recognised his meteoric rise late last November and it is only meet that we conclude this series, 'The (Tamil Nadu) Hit Parade', with this profile of the "enigmatic takeover tycoon".*

THE (TAMIL NADU) HIT PARADE

The Takeover Doctor

(By A Staff Writer)

One unit that P Rajarathinam, the Coimbatore industrialist who has been taking over sick units and nursing them to health, shied away from is A C Muthiah's now-closed Standard Motors. Despite his candidly acknowledged closeness to the State Government, Rajarathinam, who shot into the limelight with the takeover of companies like Tungabhadra Sugar (now, as Deve Sugars, flagship of the P Rajarathinam Associates group), Raunaq Singh's Apollo Tubes, Kovai Annapoorna Foods, Madras Motor Finance Guarantee Group (which runs the Triveni Academy on an 800-acre complex and also manages 15 other companies), the Benares State Bank, Rajadhiraj Industries in Madhya Pradesh and Garware Paints, wants nothing to do with Tamil Nadu's only car and van unit.

"It is not a crime," Rajarathinam frankly says of his political connections He is community kin of Tamil Nadu Cabinet Minister Sengottaiyan and is related to former DMK Minister Kannappan. But the relationship stops there, he claims. Rajarathinam is not just close to politicians but goes one step further in criticising corporate houses who 'think they are maharajas' and don't keep in touch with the political world. "Industrialists have a right to be close to politicians and ministers to discuss their business problems and speed up work. What's wrong with that?" he disarmingly asked one interviewer. And talking to another he added, "I am as close to politicians as any industrialist is. So why pick on me? But if there is one politician to whom I am indebted, it is Manmohan Singh. But for his liberalisation sweep, I would have remained a medium-scale industrialist in the suburbs of Coimbatore".

Rajarathinam, an applied science graduate, and a group of 20-odd friends, the Young Entrepreneurs Society, were running 50-60 small-scale units in and around Coimbatore, each of which they had taken over when sick and turned around. Rajarathinam, the major shareholder in the group, then focussed their attention on bigger sick units that could be taken over inexpensively — and the rest is now legend. They first bought, from former Hindi star Mumtaz and her South African husband, Tungabhadra Sugars. A sick unit with Rs. 8 crore accumulated losses, they got it for Rs. 1 crore in 1990. Today, the company has recovered and is the base for taking over other sick units. The Benares State Bank was taken over from the heir of the erstwhile Raja, who sold his stake to Rajarathinam for Rs. 40 crore. Kovai Annapoorna Foods followed, after doing badly by offering vegetarian and non-vegetarian food under the same name. PRA plans to keep Annapoorna vegetarian — as it is in Coimbatore, where it first made its name many years ago — and develop a new name for its non-vegetarian fast food outlets. Rajarathinam's ambition is to make *idli* a household term worldwide and a fast food in the Macdonald's mould. Apollo Tubes next allotted PRA Rs. 1.1 crore equity on a preferential basis and the MMFG group invited him to restructure the organisation financially. The 'long-term vision' of Rajarathinam is said to have particularly pleased MMFG. Garware Paints is the latest company he has now moved into, taking PRA investment in these businesses and smaller ones upto about Rs. 100 crore between January '92 and November '94.

The short, plump, 34-year-old Rajarathinam's forté is not merely taking over sick units and nursing them to become profit-making ones. He has original plans too. He is planning to establish a satellite network for India and China on the lines of Star TV, build a five-star hotel (Siruwani) in Coimbatore, set up a greenfield cement plant in Rajasthan and sell the *idli* concept to a Rs. 2,000 crore world market that, according to him, is just waiting to swallow all those *idlis*. This, in the context of foreign food chains coming to India and in the light of the fact that his own units would quite naturally not be allowed to go sick.

Meanwhile, sick units are lining up to be taken over by PRA. A Rajarathinam associate says they get several offers a day; "some days we even get about 50 proposals"! Some of the companies Rajarathinam, who calls himself the *Kartha* of PRA, is looking at are Vijay Mallya's Best & Crompton, the Dhanalakshmi Mills, Coimbatore, and the Rs. 20 cr Tan Glass in Gummidipoondi which was promoted in 1989 to manufacture glass beer and pharmaceutical bottles and has still to go into production.

Rajarathinam takes over only those companies where capacity utilisation is very poor and where there is scope for improvement via induction of finance. In none of the takeovers has Rajarathinam bought out the existing promoters. He agrees to infuse fresh funds into the company — to be converted into equity. This automatically ensures that he turns into a majority stakeholder. Much of his acquisitions have been funded by corporate associates. "We raise funds from them," explained Rajarathinam to *Business India*. "In the case of Apollo Tubes, PR Associates includes ESSAR Gujarat," he expounded.

Meanwhile, ***Madras Musings*** wonders how far he is going and how big he'll grow doctoring sick units he takes over.

ANOTHER SPECIAL SPREAD... ...FOR THE CITY'S MUSIC SEASON

Cameras spoilers, reviews 'priced'!

The two leading English dailies in Madras, *The Hindu* and the *Indian Express*, have devoted more space than they ever have for the City's cultural Season this year. The *Indian Express* came out with a colour supplement on the award winners and a concert guide, but gave stepmotherly treatment to dance in it. All this space obviously has much to do with growing advertising support for The Season.

Subbudu, the controversial critic, has been flown down to Madras this year too, but unlike other years, he has a full page in the *Express* EVERY day — and that too in colour; Subbudu is, perhaps, the only critic who has made it to the 'star' stage. His comments are as amusing as ever, but the older he gets, the more focus he puts on the anatomy of the dancer. While his music criticism is sublime, he has a weakness for the dancers rather than the dance, talking about the "palm-grip waist" of one dancer and the "Ayyangar-like face" of another. "Pretty and sumptuous girls", he calls a group of dancers.

It was Subbudu who had suggested that Doordarshan recordings should be allowed by the *sabhas* during The Season, but we in the audience suffered a great deal an account of the line of cameras in front of the audience when Mavin Koo danced at the inauguration of the Margazhi festival at Bharath Kalachar. All the TV companies were

A Bannada vesha in Yakshagana.
(Photo by V.A.K. Ranga Rao)

present to cover the grand inaugural function that had Sivaji Ganesan as Chief Guest and they got a wonderful Bharatha Natyam programme, unlike any seen anywhere else, for free.

Mavin must have spent a lot of money to come to Madras from Kuala Lumpur for just this one performance. He has to pay to rehearse, to learn

● by V.R. DEVIKA

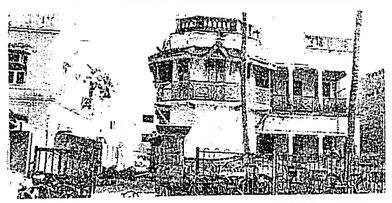
items and to record the music of his items. All of us in the audience had spent time, energy and money to get there to see this energetic dancer perform live. But our view was entirely blocked by the TV cameras which relentlessly whirred while cruel lights focussed on the young dancer's face and often on the audience when he was performing a particularly interesting passage. He should have just stopped dancing and asked the cameras to leave. Why should the artist and audience suffer for the sake of some companies and a lazy TV audien And what about copyright?

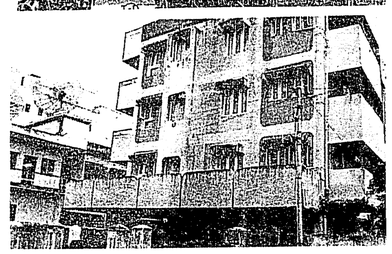
Critics accused

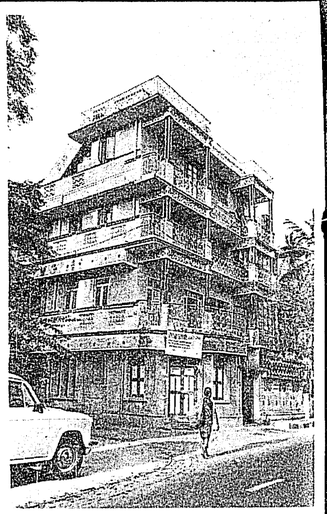
Thank God for the season, when can sit and listen to music and dance of high quality just for the pleasure of it. But there are parents have spent an incredible amount money to get a young dancer on stage during The Season and they no effort to get a good review also. mother of a young dancer who kept inviting me for her daughte performance wanted to give me som thing in an envelope "for conveyance When annoyedly refused, she quite taken aback: "Why, the critic the such-and-such a daily asked us transport money. And I'm told so-a so writes only if made the chief gues

Dance critics in Madras are, unf tunately, getting this reputation. Th are mostly freelancers and so, ervedly or not, the more opportuni to review, the happier they are. W the profusion of young dancers town, they not only have all opportunities, but they also pampered a lot and so have compulsion or interest in reviewin dance programme objectively. Pu cations must ensure their critics are

(Continued on







THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

Just on one short stretch of road, Lloyd's Road between Royapettah Bazaar Road and Royapettah High Road, there is a variety of architecture that is unbelievable, says photographer V S RAGHAVAN. *And as though to emphasise his point, he produced this series of OLD and NEW photographs that show the architectural progression on this road over the last 75 years.*

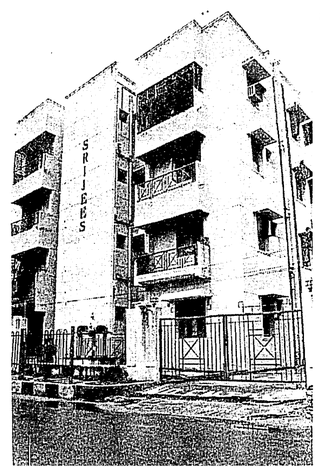
Picture 1 *is of one of the oldest houses standing on the stretch and reflects the Mylapore architecture favoured between the Wars: pillared verandahs with ornate railings, balustraded terraces (*motta maadis*), tiled eaves and a gable with monkey-top over a door.*

Picture 2 *is one of the early apartment blocks in Madras. Note the ornate metal railings and the decorated walls that enclose the terrace and the corridors on each floor.*

Picture 3 *is of an apartment block built some time after the building in Picture 2 and shows a rather stark building with no architectural flourishes.*

And **Picture 4** *is of a new apartment block with a few architectural flourishes.*

Here is a stretch of road that would benefit from protection, for here there is a record of architectural and urban developmental progression in the city. And it makes a fascinating OLD and NEW.



No garlands for tambura player

But the musicians can't do without him

Tuning in to the *tambura* to set the *sruti* (harmony) is what musicians are doing during the Madras Music Season, and have been doing over the years. Even though it is the main artists who are the focus of attention at a concert, it is the *tambura* which is the most important instrument, as it is the thread on which the concert runs. Though the *tambura* is continuously heard, the person who provides the *tambura* accompaniment is hardly ever seen.

One such *tambura* player is Venkataraman, who, in course of time, has been so identified with the instrument that it has become part of his name.

Tambura Venkataraman's father, Sundaresa Iyer, was an eminent music critic in his day, and so it was natural that Venkataraman would incline towards music. But his becoming a *tambura* artist was mere chance. He was a schoolboy of 16 when he, one day, went to a harmonium concert in a temple near his village, Umayalpuram. When Subramania Dikshithar's *tambura* player failed to turn up for the concert, Venkataraman was asked to fill the gap. When the concert went off well, Venkataraman was asked to come for the concert the next day too. Before he knew it, he was accompanying artists in concerts all over the South. For over 25 years now, Venkataraman has kept many a music concert going with the steady vibrations of his *tambura* strings.

Providing *tambura* accompaniment is not the only thing Venkataraman devoted his time to. He was a physical education teacher in P.S. High School. But concerts occupied most of his evenings. And, as he says, "I have been able to listen to a lot of good music over the years. That itself has made me very happy with my profession". Being in such close contact with music has helped Venkataraman enrich his repertoire. There have been instances when he, on stage, helped artists remember words or lines they'd forgotten.

Once, Venkataraman had taken lessons in playing the *mridangam*. But family circumstances prevented him from continuing with them. His son, Kalyanaraman, however, is a trained mridangist. But two other sons and two daughters have preferred their father's profession and are now busy *tambura* artists.

A *tambura* artist is busy almost throughout December - January, says Venkataraman. During the, 1993

● by R. Jaisri

music season, Venkataraman had 150 concerts! And in Madras, during most of the rest of the year, there are so many concerts that Venkataraman is beginning to feel the necessity to restrict his engagements.

Having been in the field for so long, Venkataraman has been able to help young artists considerably. Some of today's leading performers, like Mandolin U P Raju and the Priya Sisters, were introduced by him. He has also helped handicapped musicians, like Krishnamurthi, the singer who has neither hands nor legs. This generous quality of his was particularly mentioned by several speakers during a function arranged to felicitate him on his completing 25 years in the music field.

The one thing that's really new that has happened during those years has been the electronic *sruti* box. The increasing presence of the 'box' on stage is, however, no threat to the *tambura*, feels Venkataraman. Being electricity-dependent, it is affected by voltage fluctuations, in turn affecting the *sruti*, points out Venkataraman.

All musicians also have the *tambura* to be doubly sure of the *sruti*, Venkataraman relates. Some musicians in the North even have two *tamburas* at times. There was a time when musicians used to bring their own *tamburas* and Venkataraman had only to get on stage and accompany them. But times changed. There were times when he carried the *tambura* on a bicycle; now he has a collection of half a dozen *tamburas* for different *srutis*.

Tamburas in the South are made in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. But it is the Thanjavur *tambura* which is the best, in Venkataraman's view.

The first function of the *tambura* is to help the musician adhere to the *sruti*. But if the musician goes off the *sruti*, the *tambura* sound should be soft so that the artist's defect is not highlighted. Again, during the *thani* — the percussion solo during the concert — the *tambura* should be soft. Needless to add, of course, the person who plays the *tambura* should know to adjust the *sruti*. But for all this, providing the *tambura* accompaniment is not a very difficult task except for the fact that the *tambura* artist never gets a break during a concert and if he or she has two or three concerts a day, it means the physical discomfort of sitting continuously for almost half the day.

What is the recognition and credit a *tambura* artist gets? Nothing, Venkataraman regrets. Their names are not even mentioned during the programme. When the main artists are garlanded, the *tambura* artist is ignored. The payment for a *tambura* artist is, however, quite reasonable now, says Venkataraman, who recalls when his concert fee was one rupee. Recollecting his first two concerts, he relates how the most thrilling thing about them was that the remuneration was five rupees! In recent times, he recalls a concert when Veena E Gayatri paid him Rs. 200 — a big fee for a *tambura* artist.

Today, Venkataraman is a contented man, having a made a mark for himself. Making a name with a frontline instrument or with your voice is only to be expected by one who is talented. But to make a name with a behind-the-stage instrument is something special. Venkataraman's done just that.

Cameras & critics

(Continued from P4)

well to cover their transport and other costs and still leave them a sum worthy of a knowledgeable review.

Leela Venkatraman, who is another who has come from Delhi for The Season, is the most objective critic in recent times and her voice should be heard more. She brings a rare sensitivity and maturity to her writing and does not choose programmes with other considerations in mind. We need critics like her to raise the quality of reviews.

Our own preferred

The Madras audience seems to prefer its own artists during The Season. An artist from outside, unless a super-star, hardly fills a couple of rows. At Bharath Kalachar, which is generally overflowing, there were no more than ten people for the Odissi and Chau dances of Ileana Citaristi, a proficient dancer born in Italy and who has made India her home for more than 15 years. Even Prathibha Prahlad, who has made a name for herself for her bold expositions of sensual pieces, did not get a crowd. Raghunath Mannet, Sangeetha and Vasanthi, three hard-working and vibrant dancers, whose choreography was quitch imaginative had only a small crowd at the Krishna Gana Sabha.

The rough and the smooth...

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. For years, the resilience and tenacity exhibited by Indian gems and jewellery exports, in the face of global uncertainties and domestic disturbances, has been singularly impressive. Be it recession in its main markets, USA and Japan, blasts in its nerve centre, Bombay, or the Ayodhya crisis, the industry has not only remained unruffled but also exceeded exports targets. In 1992-93 it notched up a figure of $ 3.272 billion simply by its exporters astutely shifting their attention to smaller and cheaper diamonds, which was in line with the consumer slant, and attracting consignments from abroad like bees to a honey-pot.

This show of courage is also attributable to the support given by the Diamond Trading Company (DTC), part of De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, which controls around 80 per cent of world production of roughs (uncut diamonds). DTC identifies 'sight holders' around the world based on their track record and financial strength and reduces or hikes its sights (diamond auctions) to them, according to the demand and supply conditions prevailing in the market. India has 44 sight-holders out of 160 throughout the world.

However, in spite of the export turnover rising, the industry has been experiencing falling realisations and profit margins, thanks to competition in small diamonds from China and Sri Lanka, which also enjoy India's niche: cheap labour. Gold, especially after the repeal of the Gold Control Act in 1992, has become an attractive proposition. Moreover, India contributes less than one per cent of the world's $ 40 billion/year jewellery market. Therefore, Indian diamantaires are increasingly turning to diamond-studded jewellery for better value addition and margins.

Though the gems and jewellery industry is the second largest foreign exchange earner of the country, it is not without rough edges. The industry is working capital-intensive and, with banks reluctant to lend to it, the industry has to rely on internally generated funds for financing. The exporters also suffer from the perennial problem of over-stocking, as exports move slower than production. With the RBI not prepared to finance inventory levels of more than three months, stocks have often to be disposed of at unprofitable levels. The quality and design of the diamonds also leave a lot to be desired.

Nevertheless, with more and more agencies like the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) and the World Gold Council touting its cause and assisting it and the Government itself formulating friendlier policies, the Indian gems and jewellery industry is in for dazzling times ahead.

This fortnight, our first recommendations for 1995, are companies of promise:

Alsa Construction and Housing (CMP: Rs. 34.00): Alsa has built up a reputation for quality construction and timely delivery schedules. It has residential projects at various sites in Madras, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram and Ooty and has also secured a prestigious contract worth Rs. 8 cr from IRCON to build an overhead station building for the Mass Rapid Transport System, Madras. For the six months ended September 1994 it achieved a sales of Rs. 10.34 cr and PAT of Rs. 1.20 cr, which almost equal the whole-year projection of Rs. 1.26 cr. The estimated EPS of Rs. 5.06 for 1994-95 would support Rs. 60. Buy with a stop loss at Rs. 35.

Su-Raj Diamonds (India) (CMP: Rs. 105.00): Su-Raj Diamonds (India) Ltd, a market leader has been paying uninterrupted dividends right from inception in 1986. A pioneer in the organised processing of diamonds in India, and the fifth largest forex earner, SDIL has its manufacturing unit at SEEPZ, Bombay. It came out with a rights issue in October 1994 to finance its projects coming up in Madras, Bangalore and Jodhpur. This was preceded by a 1 : 1 bonus in July 1994 and a public issue in September 1994, when sales was up at Rs. 215.88 cr and net profit at Rs. 17.92 cr. The company has traditionally doubled its turnover in the second half of the year, the festive season. A turnover of Rs. 570 cr is projected for 1994-95, giving an EPS of Rs. 12.6 and supporting Rs. 190. Buy for good long-term gains.

Shrenuj and Company (CMP Rs. 87.50): Shrenuj was among the earliest to go public in this industry. The floating stock with the public is just 26% of its Rs. 8.6 cr equity and is highly fancied in the stock markets. The results for the six months ended September 1994 show a sales of Rs. 52.4 cr and a PAT of Rs. 4.35 cr. Shrenuj is planning a private placement of Rs. 30 to 35 cr of equity with the FIIs. With a reserve four times the equity, the company is a good bonus candidate. An EPS of Rs. 11.5 is projected on the share capital before bonus and the private placement. This should support Rs. 130. Buy for good medium- and long-term gains.

K. Gopalakrishnan

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NOTABLE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Carus, W. Seth
Cruise Missile Proliferation in the 1990s.
Center for Strategic and International Studies. c1992. (358.1 CAR)

Corporate Environmentalism in a Global Economy: Societal Values in International Technology Transfer.
Edited by Halina Szejnwald Brown, *et al.*
Quorum Books. c1993. (658.4 COR)

The Environment in Question: Ethics and Global Issues.
Edited by David E. Cooper & Joy A. Palmer.
Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc. c1992. (179.1 ENV)

Gossop, Michael
Living with Drugs. 3rd ed.
Ashgate Publishing Company. c1993. (362.29 GOS)

Pinson, Linda
The Woman Entrepreneur: 33 Personal Stories of Success.
Upstart Publishing Company. c1992. (658.42 PIN)

Rosenau, Milton
Managing the Development of New Products: Achieving Speed and Quality Simultaneously Through Multifunctional Teamwork.
Van Nostrand Reinhold. c1993. (658.575 ROS)

Shiba, Shoji
A New American TQM: Four Practical Revolutions in Management.
Productivity Press, Center for Quality Management. c1993. (658.562 SHI)

Showalter, Elaine
Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing.
Oxford University Press. c1991. (810.9 SHO)

In search of maintenance

To drive home some points on women and their legal rights, Bagirathi Narayanan and Prabha Sridevan, advocates of the Madras High Court, recently read three role plays at the British Council and asked the audience to express their views and pronounce judgement in each case.

The two advocates pointed out that "legislation, as it exists on paper, is not shockingly gender biased", but "the area where women are least empowered seems to be legal rights, because there are greater forces at work to neutralise or even nullify these rights".

Bagirathi and Prabha chose three cases from the field of maintenance law as they felt that these "would illustrate most clearly the problems faced by women litigants". All the examples were adapted from actual cases.

Case 1

A couple who have filed for divorce are deadlocked on maintenance payable by the husband to the wife and their only child. The husband produces his salary certificate and offers 15 per cent of his salary, *i.e.* Rs. 1500 a month, towards maintenance. The wife argues that Rs. 1500 together with her earnings is not sufficient to provide for her and the child. She shows a statement of expenditure to the Judge that reveals that she requires at least Rs. 4000 a month from her husband. He is not willing to pay Rs. 4000, but is willing to look after the child if his wife cannot afford to do so. She will hear none of that.

Audience

– It is very rare for a man to produce his salary certificate in such cases.
– Rs. 1500 would be "like a windfall", for the woman is working and that automatically disqualifies her from maintenance (that is why many a woman in a similar situation is afraid to take a job).
– The wife of a man drawing Rs. 10,000 salary is used to a certain standard of living and must be provided for (in Maharashtra, the background of both parties is taken into account).
– The woman is talking about ground reality, so Rs. 4000 should be granted.
– In practice, maintenance is often casually discontinued by the man, therefore maintenance should be deducted **at source**. This would stop a man from re-marrying.

Case 2

A woman marries a man not knowing that he already has a wife. The marriage is not registered and the only witnesses to the ceremony are **his** friends, who, needless to say, won't tell the truth, being instructed by the man. When the woman realises that she has been cheated, and, worse, that the man has stopped caring for her and their children, she seeks maintenance, but has no concrete proof to show that she was indeed treated as his wife. Her lawyer advises her to build up evidence by getting her children to write to their father, addressing him as 'Appa', asking money for their ill mother, and to preserve any reply or money order. The lawyer also advocates that she has a photo taken of him with her and the children if, by chance, he visits Madras. She is also to obtain all details of his activities/properties in Chidambaram. The woman is not educated and seems absolutely helpless.

Audience

– A blood test would be an effective way to decide paternity, but since it is not very accurate, the DNA method would be more fruitful (but who should bear the cost?).
– Registration of marriages should be facilitated and people bombarded with the message that a marriage **not registered** is illegal.
– The two women in cases such as this see themselves as **enemies** and do not desire to come together for the common cause of punishing their spouse.

Case 3

A small-time movieactress is asked to pay maintenance to her husband who is of able body, but is unemployed. The case is adjudged in favour of the man in the Family, High and Supreme Courts. The actress questions the law, which she feels does not consider "criminal laziness" an offence. Moreover, when she is barely making a living, how is she to pay Rs. 2000 to her husband: Under the Hindu Marriage Act, the wife has to maintain an unemployed husband on an application for divorce by the latter.

Audience

– The courts should have gone into the specifics of whether the husband was unemployable, before taking action.
– How far can we take gender equality? What if the situation was reversed?

There were no clear-cut answers in all three cases. But the problems faced by women in maintenance litigation came out clearly in the presentations.

● by LAKSHMI NAGAPPAN

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight December 1-15)

1. Who is to be next Foreign Secretary of India?
2. If you are a general visitor to the General Hospital in Madras, what is the fee you will have to pay, effective 16.12.94, for a visitor's ticket?
3. Which Tamil author and for which work of his has the Sahitya Akademi award for 1994 been given?
4. Whose autobiography released on December 15th is entitled *Long Walk to Freedom*?
5. Ending a protracted defamation battle in English courts, over a statement made in 1983, a prominent NRI industrialist paid £20,000 as damages to the eminent lawyer, Ram Jethmalani. Who is the industrialist?
6. According to rankings on sales basis, which is the only Indian company in *Asiaweek's* 'Top 100'?
7. Which Indian woman weightlifter became the first to win two gold medals in the World Championships?
8. Which minister quit the Union Cab on December 14th amidst controv over the sugar scam?
9. Which popular sportsman is the Sheriff of Bombay?
10. Which Tamil film luminary will in gurate the 26th International Festival of India in January next Bombay?
11. Who was the former Deputy Spe of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Asse who hanged himself recently?
12. Name the five channels wi swimming prodigy Kutraleeswa crossed this year to emulate Mihir S long-standing feat.
13. Name the former Madras cric turned motor race driver who has offered a contract on a prestig Formula 1 team.
14. Which temple in the city had its *kalasam* stolen on December 7th
15. Who is the new world champio field hockey and what was In position in the championship?
16. According to a listing by *Fo* magazine, who were the top ea in sport in 1994?
17. Who is the recipient of the Jnanapith Award announced recen
18. A unique decoration, the handk of the wife of the Indian ambass to Sweden, won the top prize in first-ever world championship decorations of this kind. What wa creation?
19. Why has 'Pleasant Stay' h Kodaikanal, been in the eye of co versy recently?
20. Who are the newly-elected CM Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka?

(Answers on p 8)

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.

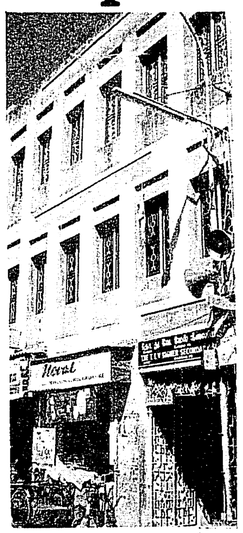
Tamil beginning in Sowcarpet

The Thondaimandalam Thruva Vellalar School was founded in 1854 by eminent philanthropists of the Vellala community to propagate Tamil. It was called the Iyatamil Padagasalai at the time. The school, started as a night school, served to spread Hindu philosophical ideas and conduct classes in Tamil Literature.

When Pariapakkam Muthusamy Mudaliar was President of the Executive Committee of the school, he brought about changes to suit the need of the time and introduced classes in the Tamil, Telugu and English languages. The school became known as the Anglo-Vernacular Institution.

As the school grew, it was upgraded as a lower secondary school and, then, in 1910 as a high school. When economic conditions after World War I proved depressing, admissions fell alarmingly and the school became a middle school, but by 1922 conditions had improved and the school was once again raised to a high school.

The school now grew from strength to strength but after Independence was unable to meet the requirements of the locality due to a lack of accommodation. Dr M G Gurusamy Mudaliar, who was the chairman of the management committee, at this stage donated a large sum of money which resulted in the establishment in 1951 of a new school in Amman Koil Street, just west of the northern stretch of Popham's Broadway, in Kondithope. The school is named after him, but retains the T T V initials in its name.



The TTV Higher Secondary School in Sowcarpet.

The Anglo-Vernacular's name was changed to Thondaimandalam Thruva Vellalar School in 1889. The school, now in a busy commercial area, has been at its present location, 97 Mint Street, Madras-79 — Sowcarpet — ever since its founding. The Murugan Temple within its premises goes back to the school's first days; classes start daily only after prayers in the temple.

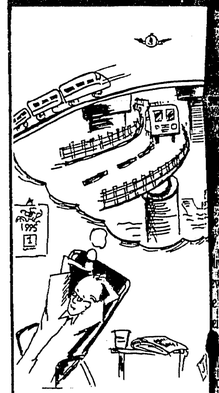
The headmaster of the school is D. Thiruchitrambalam and he is assisted by 34 teachers. There are about 900 students from all communities. The school now offers instruction only in Tamil and Arts subjects.

The school has good athletics and football teams. It also has many welfare schemes for the benefit of students. The school has a Manavar Mani award for students who excel in all areas of school activity. The school celebrates Founder's Day every January 4th.

The strong Parent-Teachers Association would like the English medium introduced and courses started in Science. The school is managed by a trust, which plans to meet these requests.

Photograph and text by
RAJIND N CHRISTY

MANAALI RAMAN...



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From Blueprints to landmarks

Turtles are forever

st the good news. The plight of the Olive Ridley turtle was recently ght poignantly alive by a heartming musical extravaganza, *Olive*, ented by an enthusiastic group of ateurs at the Music Academy. Theirs the kind of enthusiasm that used generated by youthful participants g M R A performances in the early And it comes as a surprise to find enthusiasm alive and well today. It's all the more remarkable in the sent context, when we realise that Wavefront Witnesses, as the group itself, has been motivated by an listic zeal that goes beyond its bers. They have focussed attention the least likely of candidates for a scal, an ancient, marine reptile, own as the Olive Ridley, whose claim to fame, possibly, is that it oses to travel hundreds of miles in sea, so as to lay its eggs on the ymandel Coast during the winter son. What's more, they have made ter of it. No one who sits through two-and-a-half hour drama of the ggles, the trials and triumphs, the edy and the romance of this turtle can escape being moved by the t of the Olive Ridley, which is on endangered list.

The story begins with a heroic ge, as the mother turtle leaves her g hatchlings on the seashore and s back to the sea. The entire life e of the Olive Ridley unfolds in and dance sequences that gray revolve around the fate of the principal turtles, named Olive and er. It ends with a dramatic finale: bloody dismemberment of Oliver he fisherfolk on the beach, while ive watches how each one of her wly hatched 'children' fall prey to dogs of the rich, who have built ir beach houses on the shore and pped them with strong lights that use the hatchlings into going the ng way.

John Mathew, the director, who mposed the original score with more two dozen lyrics, is obviously a ismatic personality to be able to ite so much genuine enthusiasm m his young cast of singers, dancers d actors. He received excellent support from co-directors Freddy Koikaran and Shalini Kovoor, who also took the lead roles, and choregrapher Jeffery Vardon, an inspired dancer, whose talents need to be recognised beyond Madras.

Equally striking was the set designed by Mithran Devanesan and the dramatic light effects by Gopi. It must be borne in mind that this was a low budget production with mega showbiz aspirations. Devanesan's set was alive with the spirit of the sea, as it stretched up on a sloping platform that had been painted green, with coral clinging to its edges, where it met the stage proper, while in the horizon, it merged with the sky, stretched and painted a deep blue that gradually faded into white. The sky panels consisted of long vertical strips of what seemed a shimmering material, that took on the colours of the sea during a storm, or in an underwater scene, or in the softness of a moonlit night. After the interval there was a magical moment that focussed on three ships, with gently waving sails, that appeared on the horizon, while the gauzy panels became transparent with strong back-lighting. Even the ships were masterpieces of minimalist art, as they consisted of cleverly draped panels of plain cloth, held up by the cross-bow of a 'mast' that could, in turn, be held up by invisible hands from the back, when needed. The costumes made by Genesis were unisex suits in turtle green, with a turtleback imprint.

Now for the bad news. Despite its transparently good intentions, *Olive* was also a glutinous pastiche of various Western models, which, to be fair, have been invoked in the notes. Fewer songs, less sanctimonious statements, more humour, tighter direction, would have gone a long way in reducing the Parents' Day-in-Upper KG atmosphere. Perhaps the directors should also consider revising the script to clarify the gender problems that they seemed to have in making 'Olive the silly, wingeing 'little woman' only so as to give pompous Oliver a dominant male role. It's bad enough to have to accept turtles behaving like human beings, without imposing all the tedious sexual and emotional stereotypes that go with conventional human behaviour. At such moments, this reviewer felt rebellious enough to want to say, "Soup! Soup! Give me beautiful turtle soup!"

● by GEETA DOCTOR

A Poet's Plea

(By A Special Correspondent)

I've grown feeble.
Do not bother me with questions.
My heart that hangs on a thread
Will fall and explode any moment.
The Asoka garden isn't something dead in the past.
This very house
is an Asoka garden made specially for me.
But my captor
is not Ravana, but Rama himself. That moment when I happened to see
Rama change into Ravana
turning his back on me, changing his mask,
My heart shuddered.
Who will come now to rescue this Sita?
How long will these Asoka trees last?

This poignant plea recently appeared in *The Independent*, London, which has been publishing poems by those worldwide who are currently penalised for their writings or their political activities. The poet's name? Selvanithy (Selvi) Thiagarajah, who was a drama student at the University of Jaffna in 1991 when she suddenly vanished.

***Madras Musings* had written some weeks ago that this women's rights campaigner and editor of a feminist magazine had been awarded the 1994 Poetry International Award, following on her receiving the American PEN Centre's Freedom-to-Write Award. But she has been able to receive neither award. She is being held by the Tigers of Eelam, for reasons unknown, and all international pleas for her release have gone unheeded.**

In there anyone in Tamil Nadu who will hear her heart-rending plea and negotiate her release? If nothing else, talent needs to be heard.

Spoken and printed devilry in English

The English language has been the delight of a great many and the despair of an equal number, including ordinary beings like you and me.

Voltaire learnt English during his three years of forced exile in England. He was flummoxed by 'ague' having two syllables but 'plague' having only one. So, he consigned one half of English to 'ague' and the other half to 'plague.' But he mastered the English language all the same and made French literature the richer for it.

Most of us do not take the study of the language seriously. We just nibble and graze at the fringe and take undue liberties with English. We get carried away by high sounding phrases and tend to mix the sublime with the ridiculous.

An Indian student concluded his story with the sentence, "The hand that rocked the cradle, kicked the bucket," and created a comic combination of good English with slang.

I have a neighbour who speaks only in English. In a straight contest with Mrs. Malaprop, she will win hands down. She rides the 'pavilion' behind her husband on his scooter and wears 'mesmerised' sarees. She feels 'ravished' before every meal and goes into 'convulsions' on hearing a good joke.

A novice may feel intimidated by English at the outset and with good cause too. It bewilders him to learn that he can run away from danger, run a race, make runs in cricket, have the colour of his shirt run, suffer from a running nose in addition to being threatened with a run on his bank! He may cut an apple, feel cut up, cut a ridiculous figure and yet not cut any ice!

● by ANAMIKA

The female of the peacock is peahen but cockroach does not have a henroach! The past tense of spin is spun but if any one thought grun was the past tense of grin, he is sure to evoke the grins of the knowing few!

A very timid and slow worker was nicknamed 'Dragon' by his Indian employers as he dragged on with any job entrusted to him.

An uncle of mine who was employed in an English firm used to come out with very strange forms of the feminine gender, like 'governess' for the wife of the governor etc. He once requested his English boss for another rise in his salary. The boss protested, but my uncle persisted and begged, "Sir, you do not know the number of mouths that I have to feed on my meagre salary!" The boss relented and asked him for the number of members of his family. Uncle replied, "Sir, there are five adults and four adultresses besides ten children who depend upon me for support"! The Englishman laughed, "Well, adulteresses are certainly expensive to maintain and you are granted another rise in your salary as a special case!"

It is not enough to be guarded about the spoken word alone. Devils lurk behind presses and typewriters waiting to trip you up. The omission of a single letter will do it. It cost a reporter his job, when he wrote 'immoral' for 'immortal' while reporting on the sermon of a well-known parson.

When Lord Curzon was scheduled to visit a nunnery in Simla, he received a written complaint about the nuns in Simla violating their 'cows'. It elicited the comment from Lord Curzon, "This certainly calls for a Papal Bull!"

On one occasion, an entire bunch of monographs on a noted politician had to be withdrawn hurriedly when a letter was missing in a crucial word. The concluding sentence of the monograph was to have read, "He was very interested in Public Affairs." But it had the letter 'L' missing!

A wrongly spelt name would have spelt a lot of trouble for the organiser of a joint Writers Workshop production had this not come to light before the final printing. The name of the producer 'Jayanthi Bhide' was spelt as 'Giant Bidet'! A sign above a bakery read, 'We are the best loafers in the country'! Another one in front of a tailor's shop read, "Cut bodies our speciality"!

A STEP in the right direction

Who is the Sheriff and what are his duties? Why are aerosol cans and generators said to be harmful? Find what happened in a Japanese age where people suffered from ing fish that was loaded with ercury. Visit the airport and request airport manager to allow you on the apron when an aircraft is taking or landing. Visit a leading shrimp porter and find out what standards must comply with in order to export product to the US or Japan.

Get the connections? Well, as elated as they might seem, these estions and directions form part of vironment education exercises in a rkbook the Student Exnora Programme (STEP) for Environment ucation has developed. The effort is signed to let the students **learn by ing.** The exercises in the book have e completed by each of the 1200 8th Standard students from 40 schools in the city who are involved in this two-year programme.

The scheme, a novel one, helps students move from the humdrum atmosphere of the classroom into another world. Although it has just started, the programme is likely to prove that subjects such as testing of water, garbage disposal, the working of a sewage treatment plant etc, can be made easy-to-learn and fun, too, for students.

Prepared by R Ravikumar, who has been working with the International Maritime Organisation on coastal environment, the workbook comprises seven modules dealing with environment-related issues — solid waste management, transport-air-water-noise pollution, standards for potable water etc. To enable the students to know their surroundings better, they are asked to draw maps showing their daily routes to school, and individual landmarks in the vicinity like parks, open spaces, post offices, bus terminus, hospitals etc.

Keeping the map of Madras (which appears on the back cover of the workbook) as a guide, students have to fill in the names of the various places on an outline map that is also provided. On the Madras Road Map, they have to locate their residences and schools and mark the various areas administered by the Corporation. Visits to the Cooum and Adyar rivers, the Buckingham Canal, the King Institute (where water is tested) and Metrowater are part of the curriculum.

● by Sashi Nair

Towards the end of the two-year exercise, each student has to take up a project, individually and also as part of a group, to improve the environment — it could be designing a simple system of waste disposal or organising a local awareness campaign about caring for the environment etc.

The belief that schools can play a leading role to help develop the right attitudes in children is what prompted Radha Raju, Senator, Exnora International, to form its student wing. Coming forward to help the STEP venture were TTK Pharma Limited (Printing Division), which printed the workbook and supplied the maps, and Funskool India Limited, which provided the attractive folder for the book.

If pursued with the vigour with which it has been launched, STEP will indeed be a step in the right direction.

(Continued on P8)

Cricketing silences

(By The Corner Flag)

This is, strictly speaking, neither Madras nor Tamil Nadu oriented. But considering the enthusiasm of both for the game, and the amount of space the main dailies in the State give the sport, it seems pertinent to make a couple of points that these publications and the fans are rather silent about.

FIRST, we BLEW the opportunity of winning the Nagpur Test and the recently concluded series with the West Indies by NOT TRYING to win that match. We blew it by not going for the runs in the second innings and giving us more time to make an attempt at winning the game. Prabhakar and Mongia were deservedly punished for not attempting to win a one-day match and for, instead, playing patacake with bat and ball. Was the batting of Tendulkar (whose capabilities are often seen and raved over every time) and Siddhu any different on the penultimate day? Yet no one has said a word about them or sought their punishment! And then again, the shots Tendulkar and Azhar played in the second innings in Chandigarh were as irresponsible as they come. But why haven't they been taken to task as Kapil Dev once was? There seems to be a curious double standard at work here.

SECOND, isn't it time we stopped celebrating and raving over home wins on wickets specially tailored to our strengths? Unable to win on a NEUTRAL wickets like Chandigarh's, a wicket that gave everyone an equal chance, what chance have we ANYWHERE overseas? Perhaps it's time we woke up to the fact that our cricket standards — AND our tennis — with which our newspapers fill reams of space to the virtual exclusion of other sport, are no better than any other sport we compete in. Perhaps the only difference is that we stand a chance of winning at cricket in favourable home conditions.

Meanwhile, in the Third Test, the West Indies, faced with almost exactly the same situation India faced in the Second Test, demonstrated once again that, when the chips are down, they are able to raise their game several notches, whereas we have demonstrated that in the same circumstances we don't have what it takes. It's time we woke up to that reality.

P.S. The Indian Press had little to say when weightlifter Malleswari won silver at the World Championships. They had less to say when she was awarded the gold after the Chinese winner had been disqualified for testing positive for drugs. For the record, it should be mentioned this winner was virtually ignored while a loser, cricket, filled columns of prime space on the same day. The Indian hockey team was not expected to do much at the Asiad and less at the World Championships, yet when it won silver in Hiroshima and moved from 12th to 10th to 5th in the world, every critic who committed the team to nothingness was faulting it for not winning gold and not getting into the semi-finals. *The Corner Flag* would like to see the day when losing Indian cricket teams are castigated in the same language Indian losers in other sports are taken to task.

English devilry

(Continued from P7)

I got into a lot of trouble with a famous Indologist by trusting my secretary with the job of sending him a 'Thank you' note on my behalf for his having given me his fascinating work on Indian Folk Tales. Instead of, "I found your tales of Ind gripping," the treacherous typewriter had spelt out, "I found you tales of Wind griping"! 'Before these musings begin to cause gripe, let me wind up and leave the Malaprops and devils in peace.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Salman Haider; 2. Rs. 2 for two hours; 3. Poneelan, for *Pudhiya Dharisanangal*; 4. Dr. Nelson Mandela; 5. Swraj Paul; 6. IOC, in 95th place; 7. K. Malleswari of A.P.; 8. A.K. Antony; 9. Sunil Gavaskar; 10. 'Sivaji' Ganesan; 11. N. Ganapati; 12. The Palk Straits, English Channel, Rottnest Channel, Straits of Messina and a major waterway off the Italian coast; 13. Akbar Ebrahim; 14. Parthasarathy Temple, Triplicane; 15. Pakistan. India finished fifth; 16. Michael Jordan ($30 million) and Steffi Graf ($8 million), amongst men and women respectively; 17. U.R. Ananthamurthy; 18. The most magnificent Christmas tree; 19. It had allegedly flaunted construction rules by building unauthorised floors at an eco-sensitive spot in Kodai, and government, using special powers, had quashed a petition against such construction and granted it exemption under Developmental Control Rules; 20. N.T. Rama Rao and Deve Gowda, respectively.

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There's money for winners

• by The Corner Flag

Who said there's only money in cricket and tennis in India? And that in no other sport is there the financial encouragement to encourage participation in it? *The Corner Flag* was rather pleasantly surprised to find recently that if a sportsperson does well for India, the rewards are by no means small. Indeed, they are worthy incentives. If only some advertising endorsements came the way of these champions, they'd, in fact, do as well as tennis players and cricketers.

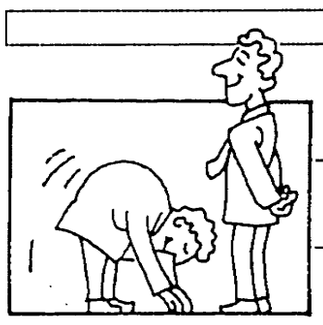
How many cricketers or tennis players have this past year picked up the Rs. 9.5 lakhs won by weightlifter Kunjarani Devi, the Rs. 4.2 lakhs earned by marksman Jaspal Rana or even the Rs. 1.1 lakh gained by Madras's own Roopa Unnikrishnan, perhaps India's best markswoman today? These were the rewards for their medal-winning performances at the Commonwealth and Asian Games in 1994. And they clearly indicate that Government's policy is "Do well and we'll reward you". If only sponsors and advertisers would step in to help these champions, they'd do even better financially — and the medals tally may even be better.

Other Tamil Nadu based medal-winners rewarded were; Shiny Wilson Rs. 87,500 and G V Dhanalakshmi Rs. 37,500 (both athletics); Mohammed Riaz Rs. 23,000 (hockey); each kabbadi team member Rs. 30,000 and there were three from Tamil Nadu; and Adhisekharan Rs. 1 lakh and Chandrasekharan and V Murugesan Rs. 75,000 each (weightlifting).

Awards of over Rs. 1 lakh each were made to: Ashok Pandit Rs. 1.08 lakh and Mansher Singh Rs. 1 lakh (shooting); Leander Paes Rs. 1 lakhs and Gaurav Natekar Rs. 1 lakh (tennis); and C D R Motivala P Garg Rs. 4.12 lakh each S Kudrol and S Patil Rs. 2.25 l each (yachting).

With most of these sportspers being taken care of under vari Government sports programmes with jobs that are sinecures, whet in the public and private sector, the monetary awards that await th for good performances, *The Co Flag* is afraid that he can't agree w the view that India's poor performan in sport are due to lack of rewar Perhaps sports apart from tennis cricket lack glamour and advertis income — and those are areas to looked into — but for the poor perf mances of India's sportspersons, oth reasons would have to be looked i than job security, monetary rewar and the peripherals of glamour a advertising incomes.

Only the toughest survive

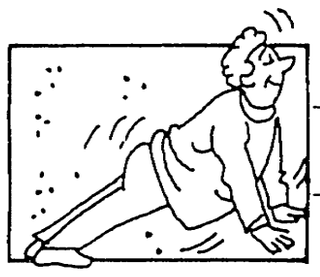


Touch your toes ten times...
Don't forget your boss's feet.

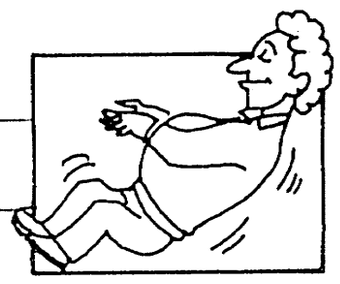
Stretch up and reach with your arms...
the sky's the limit for ambition.

Take a deep, deep breath...
business problems may soon leave you gasping.

Exhale slowly and easily...
nobody likes an earful of hot air.

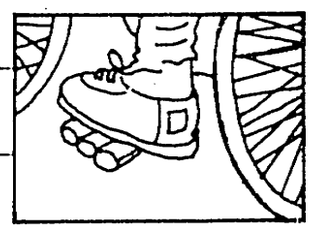


Do a dozen push ups...
sharpens elbows to nudge out the competition.

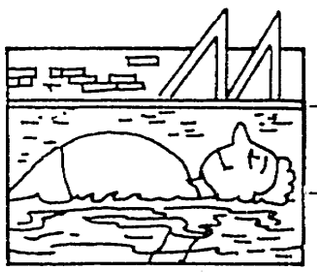


Try sit-ups to trim your tummy...
easier than trimming those expense account lunches.

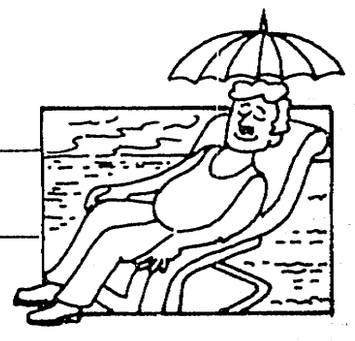
Run a mile a day...
jog those business worries away.



Cycle to build up your leg muscles...
recycle profits to build up your business.



Swim a hundred laps a day...
keep those business sharks at bay.



Relax and wind down the body clock...
if all this exertion hasn't broken it down already.

Courtesy: GESCO NEWS

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