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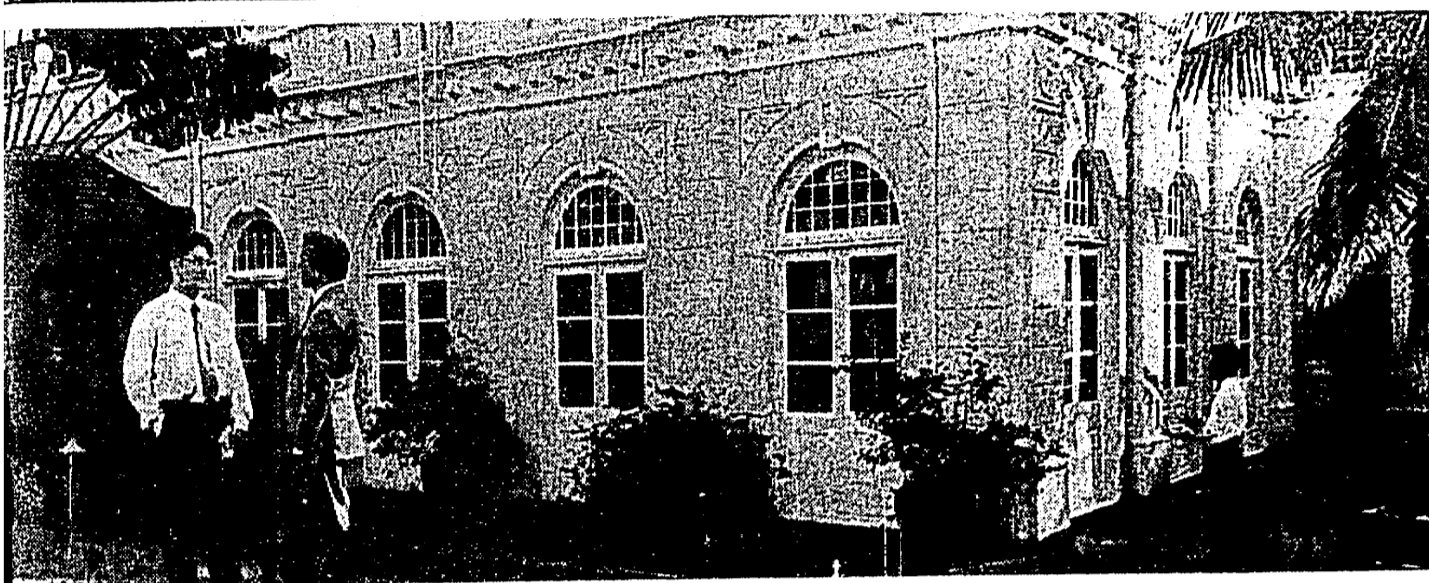
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MUSINGS

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The Conference Centre of the Taj Samudra, Colombo, is the main block of the old Colombo Club, which Government insisted Taj retain as a heritage building.

Let's look again at Government Estate

(By The Editor)

The Tamil Nadu Government plans to build a new legislature. And we are looking forward to the splendid building. But surely it can't be on The Government Ground as has been speculated? These grounds are military property — and we can't quite see the military giving up its Parade Ground, though it has permitted Fairlands to stage fairs from time to time and even put up a couple of semi-permanent structures. Whatever the military's views on the subject, Madras Musings can't quite see the wisdom of reducing the size of another 'lung' in the City with a building fit for a State Legislature and attendant offices.

On the other hand, with all the haste in Government Estate being built in such a haphazard manner, why doesn't Government take a second look

- at the Estate and draw up a Master Plan which would include the following:
 - New Legislature building.
 - Restoration of Government House as the Chief Minister's Office.
 - Restoration of Rajaji (Banqueting) Hall as a venue for major Government functions.
 - Development of other buildings in the complex as Legislature Offices.
 - Restoration of the present legislators' hostels in harmony with the rest of the complex.
 - Landscaping of the entire area with parks and gardens.

Such an integrated complex would indeed be a showpiece the City could be proud of.

But if a legislative presence in such a sylvan surroundings away from the public gaze does not appeal to Govern-

ment, we commend an idea we've floated before, namely, turn Government Estate into a permanent trade fair site and renovate Government House and Rajaji Hall, the former to serve as Secretariat, luxury restaurant and kitchens, the latter to serve as the main Conference Hall of the exhibition facility. Our picture above is published to emphasise this concept.

The picture is of the old Colombo Club, across the road from Galle Face, Colombo's Marina. When the Government took over the property, it converted it into the offices and public restaurant of the Hotel Training School, which functioned on the campus of the erstwhile Colombo Club. When the Taj Group subsequently took over these grounds and the adjoining Army rugby grounds, one of the conditions of the land transfer was that the main building of the old Colombo Club should be retained as it was, as it was a heritage building. And what the picture shows is what the Taj has done to the building: It has spruced it up and made it a splendid conference centre that can be easily divided into smaller conference rooms. This old building lends lustre, if anything, to the new Taj Samudra which came up behind it.

This idea of a hotel school, conference hall and luxury accommodation has also been mooted before in these columns for the conservation and restoration of Government House, Rajaji Hall and Government Estate. We'll gladly accept any of these suggestions, but, sadly, Government Estate tends to remain a neglected, forgotten bit of Government property. It's time to remember it — and the state a once-splendid estate is now in.

TAILPIECE: In the event of any of these suggestions being considered, what happens to the Director-General of Police, now comfortably ensconced in the splendour of Government House? We have our ideas on that too, but let's wait till his own offices are out of court.

New rice hybrid, a TNAU first

(by Meera Iyer)

Scientists at the School of Genetics, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, have released, after 15 years of research, India's first rice hybrid, MGR I. The hybrid, named after former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M G Ramachandran, has met with an enthusiastic response from farmers, for it has a yield of 6,000 kg/hectare (ha), against the average 5,000 kg/ha of other varieties.

The seed requirement is also lower; MGR I requires 20 kg of seed/ha, while others require at least 50 kg, all of which translates into more money. "Farmers can make an extra profit of about Rs. 2500 in every hectare of MGR I," says M Rangaswamy, Director, School of Genetics, TNAU, and the moving spirit behind the hybrid. It is also moderately resistant

to the sheath rot and brown spot diseases that afflict paddy.

"A 3-line breeding system, with A, B and R lines, has been used to develop the hybrid," explains Rangaswamy. The seeds produced by the crossing give a hybrid variety with high vigour or yield. But Rangaswamy cautions that farmers cannot follow the normal practice of saving some of the seed for the next crop, because this will cause the hybrid vigour to be lost.

The hybrid seeds can also be produced by the farmers themselves in their fields. "This can be easily done by alternating eight rows of the A line with two rows of the R line," says Rangaswamy. "Natural cross-pollination between the two gives rise to MGR I seeds from the A-line females."

MGR I, released during the 1994 kharif season, is one of the more successful rice hybrids developed under

(Continued on P3)



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A little more history lost

Yet another historic building is brought down by the wreckers' hammers. These were the third offices of the Madras Times and were situated at what used to be 8 Popham's Broadway. The paper occupied these premises from 1901 to 1909, when it moved to Mount Road and the paper and press that had been owned by the Gantzes, Father and Son, became Associated Printers when it merged with the Madras Mail. The Madras Times was founded in 1859 and predated The Mail. It was perhaps the first British-owned English newspaper to become partly Indian owned and adopt a more liberal policy. In recent years, the building was owned by the Union Bank of India which, like most Government organisations, sees greater history in building new than restoring the old.

(Photographs and text by RAJIND N. CHRISTY)

'Leather Land', NOT 'Leather Blitz', boom

From all accounts, the Indian Trade Promotion Organisation's 10th India International Leather Fair (IILF) was a great success. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands that there were 60,000 business visitors to the Fair, 6000 of them from abroad. And nearly Rs. 400 cr of business was transacted, half of it in exports and Rs. 25 cr in local sales.

Though the majority of the visitors to the Fair were satisfied with the results and the arrangements and, to an organisation, were certain of coming back next year, there were, nevertheless, several who left disappointed. Many were NOT among the 463 exhibitors (including 193 from abroad) who got stalls; there just was not enough space around Rajaji Hall for more stalls, despite 1000 sq m increase in floor space. Others felt that the facilities needed to be improved. A saddened ITPO official told *MMM* that "We could really sell Madras as a December-February destination if only we could develop a permanent fair site like Pragati Maidan here. 'Leather Land', automobile components, textiles, granite could all be major fairs at a time when Madras is also culturally alive". Sadly, Government's priorities appear to be the film and TV world and not trade fairs. Ever since *Madras Musings* began four years ago, it's been crying itself hoarse about the need for a permanent trade fair site. But the State's done nothing about it.

Meanwhile, the Council for Leather Exports (CLE), instead of looking into ways and means of developing a permanent trade fair site for itself — which others can also use — has chosen to launch a million dollar 'Leather Blitz' in the U.S. to open up that market to the Indian leather industry. The internationally known New York consultancy firm McKinsey & Co were chosen to do the job. But with the results of the \$300,000

blitz in 1994 not anything to write home about, several Indian leather exporters have withdrawn from the 'Leather Blitz' programme, *MMM* hears. This could be one reason why the amount paid to McKinsey's for 1995 is down to \$200,000. Nevertheless, *MMM* is told, the CLE is confident the McKinsey's will come up with the right marketing and promotional strategies to break into the lucrative American market. If that happens, we'll perhaps hear more American than Italian and English at 'Leather Land' — if it continues to make Madras its fairground.

Inaugural meet

The Man From Madras Musings learns that the Madras Medical Mission's Institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases hopes to inaugurate its state-of-the-art hospital in Mogappair (West Anna Nagar) in December with one of the biggest medical conferences ever to be held in India. The conference on cardiovascular diseases will be held at the hospital itself (a plan that itself is an indicator of the hospital's facilities) and several well-known international names are expected to participate via satellite link. Two renowned 'heart' names, Christian Barnard and Denton Cooley, might even attend in person, *MMM* understands.

The Madras Institute, headed by Dr K M Cherian, has had a splendid record all these years it has been operating out of Vijaya Hospital. Among its many introductions, the latest, 'the heart laser', offers new hope to many patients who, for one medical reason or another, could not undergo conventional open-heart surgery. The procedure, first introduced in the US three years ago, has been described as follows:

Heart attacks happen when the heart muscle is starved of oxygen-carrying blood that flows through the coronary arteries. The trans-myocardial revascularisation (TMR) procedure increases the deficient blood supply to the heart, using carbon dioxide laser beams.

Under general anaesthesia, the heart is exposed through an incision on the left of the chest wall. The laser enters through the left ventricle and a series of 1 mm holes are drilled at the rate of one channel every 50 milliseconds (0.05 second). These new channels carry blood with its life-giving oxygen into the heart, bypassing the blocked arteries. The laser vaporises the myocardial tissue and natural

biological phenomena keep the channels permanently open. ●

The procedure requires a high degree of skill and patience, Dr Cherian told an interviewer recently. This is because the Rs. 1.5 lakh operation involves the following procedure, he said: "The surgeon should be able to do a good thoracotomy, expose the heart, fire the laser, stay there and see that the vessels don't bleed."

Once the Madras Medical Mission's institute moves into its own premises, it expects to do 20 TMRs a month, *MMM* learns.

Bharati in English

Theatre Director Mithran Devanesan is always looking for an Indian play — and a challenge. *The Man From Madras Musings* suggests he looks at *Fire in the Soul* by Gopi Krishnan Kottoor. Whatever

view headlined "Convincing Portrayal" unless the facts have been got right.

In brief

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* recently came across a review by Harry Miller in *The Times (London) Higher Education Supplement* and in it he found this rather charming little story. *MMM* relays it in Harry's words:

Recently this reviewer, who lives in Madras ... received a panicky phone call from a stranger who said his verandah was swarming with leeches and that he was terrified for the safety of his children. I reassured the caller that the creatures he had seen were not leeches — there are none on the hot dry plains of India, only in the damp and hilly forests — and told him they must be slugs. I also assured

diture. The institutions set a target of Rs. 100 cr in five years, but by the end of 1994 had already collected Rs. 20 cr, giving them the confidence that they will not only exceed their targets but will also have no need to adversely affect their standards of excellence by penny-pinching. IIS, Bangalore, led the fund-raising effort, collecting Rs. 3 crore. But *The Man From Madras Musings* was saddened to see that the poorest efforts were from IIT, Madras (Rs. 1.73 cr) and IIM, Bangalore (Rs. 30 lakhs). Southern donors, it would seem, are not as generous as those in other parts of the country.

★ With Binny's teaming up with a Bombay property developer, it was inevitable that property development would figure in its plans, considering the vast properties it owns. But *The Man From Madras Musings*, was surprised to find that one of the Binny properties to be developed is in Armenian Street. *MMM* trusts that the development will not affect Binny's headquarters building, which would figure on any heritage building list — if only Madras had such a list. In the absence of such a list in the City, Binny's — with its illustrious history — might show the way by declaring its Armenian Street building a heritage building and ensuring its restoration.

Another area being developed and which causes *MMM* some concern is the Panagal Park area. A massive shopping complex and car park are being planned by the MMDA UNDER the park, an idea *MMM* welcomes. But *MMM* also hopes the project will ensure that the trees in the 60-year-old park, some of them dating to its first years, are not cut down but are integrated in the park development once landscaping above ground is taken up.

Business briefs

★ MRL's Cauvery Basin Refinery, the 13th in the country, has gone on stream at Pannagudi. Now it is planning to set up two export-oriented refineries, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns. One, in collaboration with Indian Oil, is to be set up near Nagapattinam, the other, with Texan collaboration, is planned for the Karaikal enclave.

★ Newest bank in town is the Centurion Bank. Its first Madras branch opened in the second week of March. Centurion Bank, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns, is a venture of 20th Century Leasing and the Keppel Bank of Singapore.

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* is happy to find that the Madras Export Processing Zone has registered an impressive 21 per cent growth in exports. The MEPZ has 67 units today and companies like Hindustan Lever, Crompton Greaves etc. have shown interest in joint ventures and in setting up industrial units here. The maximum contribution to MEPZ's bright picture comes from the garment industry, whose export figures are the highest, at Rs. 96.06 crore. To the MEPZ, which had exports worth only Rs. 0.5 crore in 1986, this is tremendous progress, *MMM* feels, and expects it to reach the export target of Rs. 270 crore it has set itself for the current year.

★ Last April, Government asked the five IITs, the three IIMs and the IIS, Bangalore, to raise a corpus fund to meet their expenses. The institutions set a target of Rs. 100 cr in five years, but by the end of 1994 had already collected Rs. 20 cr, giving them the confidence that they will not only exceed their targets but will also have no need to adversely affect their standards of excellence by penny-pinching. IIS, Bangalore, led the fund-raising effort, collecting Rs. 3 crore. But *The Man From Madras Musings* was saddened to see that the poorest efforts were from IIT, Madras (Rs. 1.73 cr) and IIM, Bangalore (Rs. 30 lakhs). Southern donors, it would seem, are not as generous as those in other parts of the country.

Let them live!

by Soma Wadhwa

emature deaths inflicted upon female children, hours after their are sanctioned by tradition in parts of Tamil Nadu, according to study conducted by Prof Tharabai the Madurai Kamaraj University. practice is openly admitted by the communities. Amongst the back-Kallar of Usilampatti block ofurai and the relatively well-off ala Gounders and Vanniya of District, a baby's right to live inues to be determined by its.

Dr Tharabai's study reveals that female infanticide remains unabated — a decade after the rampant practice in the Usilampatti area was brought to public notice. Further, she observes that the practice is leading to drought-prone neighbourhoods, such as Nilakottai.

The disclosure that female infanticide has shown no sign of declining in a state where its woman Chief Minister is revered as the presiding deity, only underscores the tragedy of

being born a girl in 'this country,' observes Kalpana Mehta of the Delhi-based women's organisation, Saheli.

According to Subhadra Butalia of Kamika, an organisation that has been fighting for gender equality for the past two decades, the dowry system that has come to acquire such a stranglehold over society has made a girl an embarrassment to be jettisoned at the earliest. "Finally, however, both female infanticide and dowry are consequences of the pathetic economic conditions and illiteracy amongst village women," she adds.

Having a similar perception of the situation, the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW), working towards the eradication of this evil in Tamil Nadu, has devised many programmes to educate women and provide them with job opportunities. This year alone, the Council has sponsored the education of 210 girls, supervised three study centres for girls, trained 110 girls in the skill of tailoring and assisted 215 women for income-generation programmes. "The best and the only way to counter the brutal practice of infanticide is to let women learn and work. The moment they become a part of the poverty alleviation machinery in their families, they'll be able to say an assertive 'no' to seeing their daughters killed. What's more, they'll be heard," attitudes have to change — things will improve only when a man feels ashamed of killing his daughter and not merely threatened by the legal consequences if he murders her," she adds.

In agreement, Kusum Kumar of the Indian Law Institute says that issues such as female infanticide belong more in the domain of private conscience than of public policy. "Morality cannot be legislated upon. The efficacy of law is dependent on people's involvement," she elaborates.

During a study she conducted on female foeticide in India, as a director member of the International Association of Bio-Ethics, Kusum Kumar discover-

ed several people staunchly in favour of selective foeticide on the basis of gender. "They argued that a government that could not provide for the girl child had no business insisting that she be born," she recalls. Further, she says, many a member of the so-called intelligentsia felt that having a female foetus aborted was much better than giving birth to three or four daughters in the hope of having a son.

"People in cities who think little of female foeticide are not very different from those in the villages who kill the baby girl after she is born — the latter simply do not have enough money to

But how many listen among some communities in Tamil Nadu?

kill her in the womb," Kusum Kumar anguishes.

Every year, about 50,000 female foetuses are aborted in the country. It's anybody's guess as to how many are killed hours after birth, because such cases, if detected at all, are mostly registered under a common head of murder. (ICCW, in its latest report on its 'Mother and Child Welfare Project at Usilampatti', claims to have 'saved' 330 baby girls.)

"It'll take a long time before there is a marked decline in these disgusting figures due to an attitudinal change. So some snappy solutions are required to save the lives that might not be allowed to last till such a revolution occurs. And organisations such as ours might be able to help," asserts Aruna Kumar of Palna, a Delhi-based adoption agency. The fact that over 80 per cent of the

The two faces of the Indian girl-child



The ICCW already seems to have taken the cue — it has set up several 'Reception Centres' for abandoned baby girls in the Usilampatti area. "Remember, but for the presence of these centres, none of these girls would be alive. Today, many of them have found loving homes", says Anuradha Bajaj.

In the current circumstances, adoption agencies might just be the only viable answer to female infanticide. As an expert puts it succinctly: "We are merely five years away from the 21st century. Let us at least be modern enough to abandon the baby girl and not kill her any more." (From *The Times of India*, New Delhi — NEXUS)

New rice hybrid

(Continued from P 1)

the Hyderabad-based Directorate of Rice Research's project for the Development and Use of Hybrid Rice, sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.

Experts say the Indian rice hybrids are more impressive than those of China, a major rice producer, which has only one male sterile line for its entire hybrid rice programme, whereas Indian has five. This, they say, would

give much greater safeguards against pests and diseases.

NOTE: A male sterile plant is a self-pollinating plant (in which both the male and female organs rest in the same flower) whose pollens, the male part, have been removed. This turns the plant into a female which can then be fertilised with the pollens of another strain whose traits are desired in the hybrid. (CSE/Down to Earth Features)

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Bombay saves its past to build a future

(From a PTI Report)

the sleepless St Joseph's Church, the only one of its kind in Bombay, designed to rest at ground level about a plinth but 'comes alive' when windows are fully open. Used as a place of worship and school, this example of Regency architecture now remains an anchorage of nostalgia in what is said to be the cess of cultural evolution.

"In this process of evolution, we our identity in a sense of historic continuity," says Dr Sadashiv Rakeshkar, director of the Prince of Wales Museum, built in the Indo style in 1914.

The church and the museum are among the 600-plus structures listed by state government for conservation in Bombay, where antiquity and eternity go hand-in-hand. Some other buildings listed for preservation are the Elphinstone College, American Express Bank, Bombay High Court, Victoria Terminus and the General Post Office. The classification of listed buildings, conservation areas, artefacts, structures

or precincts are based on aesthetics, architectural, historical or cultural value, period, association with persons, personalities or events, unique value or distinctive features and include vistas of natural or scenic beauty.

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

"Preservation rightfully is a community concern," feels Mariam Dossal, Professor of History at Bombay University.

"There are ideas, objects and monuments which are identified with world heritage. In the same way, there are objects and ideas that are endearing to a group, a community, whose aspirations are woven around these."

She says it is important to preserve the small Koli Village and the East Indian settlements.

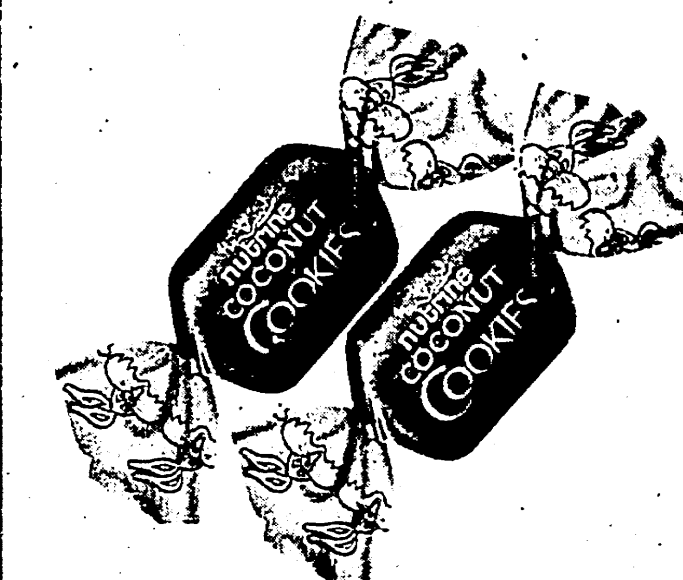
"The task of heritage preservation has to be reviewed in the context of the society that we live in," says Dr Gorakshkar.

Quoting Mark Bablan, he says historical and cultural heritage should be the subject of conservation measures or of cultural tourism, but it must also constitute a 'capital' for the benefit of the population concerned, not only in terms of employment and income but in terms of memory and identity.

Historically speaking, heritage anticipates a settlement pattern around which civilisation grows. All other things happen around it, thus making it necessary to protect built-up heritage as a symbol of identity and also of progress ... One must know the past in order to build a future that is neither an illusion nor a constraint ... it is this past that we need to save for the future.



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A 'how to' guide to Madras

With the discovery of potential bestsellers like *Dakshin*, the cookery book, and the *Udir* Mice stories in South India, many blue-chip publishers are nosing around Madras to pick up other would-be winners. Their latest find is this guide book on *How to do things the Madras way*. As Penguin, HarperCollins and others vied for publishing rights, the author managed a sneak preview of the book for *Madras Musings*. Here are some extracts.

How to paint roads

It is now well known that the artists who created the frescoes at Ajanta and Ellora all originally hailed from Madras, or Chennai as she was known

Road-Painting is all set to give a fillip to the recession in the paint sector...

How to sweep roads

Madras has the best-swept roads in the world. The secret is that Madras has unearthed the magic formula that makes sweepers sweep best. Sweepers sweep best at midday when road temperatures are at their highest, thanks to all the radiated heat, automobile fumes and so on. There is also a theory that dust and dirt simply vapourise at that temperature.

Work appreciation is another catalyst. Sweepers sweep best when there are enough people to see them sweep. The squealing brakes of every motorist grinding to a halt lest he bumps

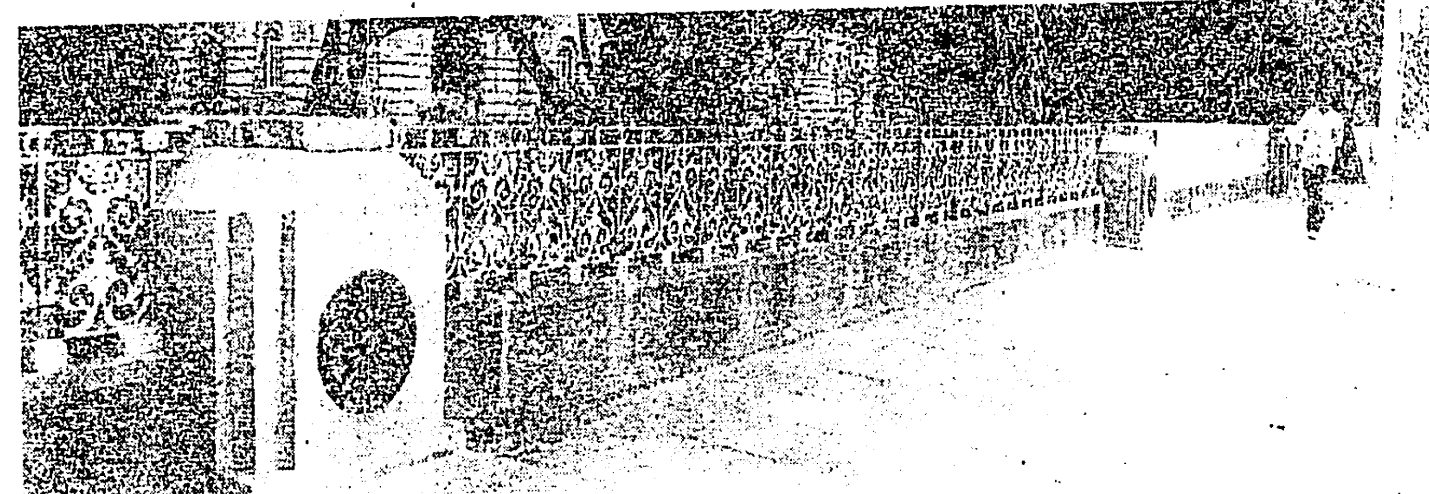
into the posterior of the sweeper at work in front, certainly makes the sweeper feel good. Road-users also learn to respect the job of road-sweeping. All this would be simply lost if you did something dumb like sweeping the roads between 6 and 8 a.m. when all is quiet and cool.

How to lay roads

Roads are best laid just before the monsoon; ideally, they should be just three-quarter done by then. To Madras's credit, she manages to do so year after year. Road works are started around September and move on into October. Just as tarring is halfway through, the Northeast Monsoon comes across for an inspection. A good Madras road would, at this point, float off in its entirety or, at least, in parts. Come December and you begin the patch-work.

A vital point to remember is to liaise well with the Telephones Department. The idea is that they should be able to begin their digging for cable-laying as soon as you finish with the road-laying. Recent studies have shown that phone cables work significantly better if they are laid by digging up newly-laid road.

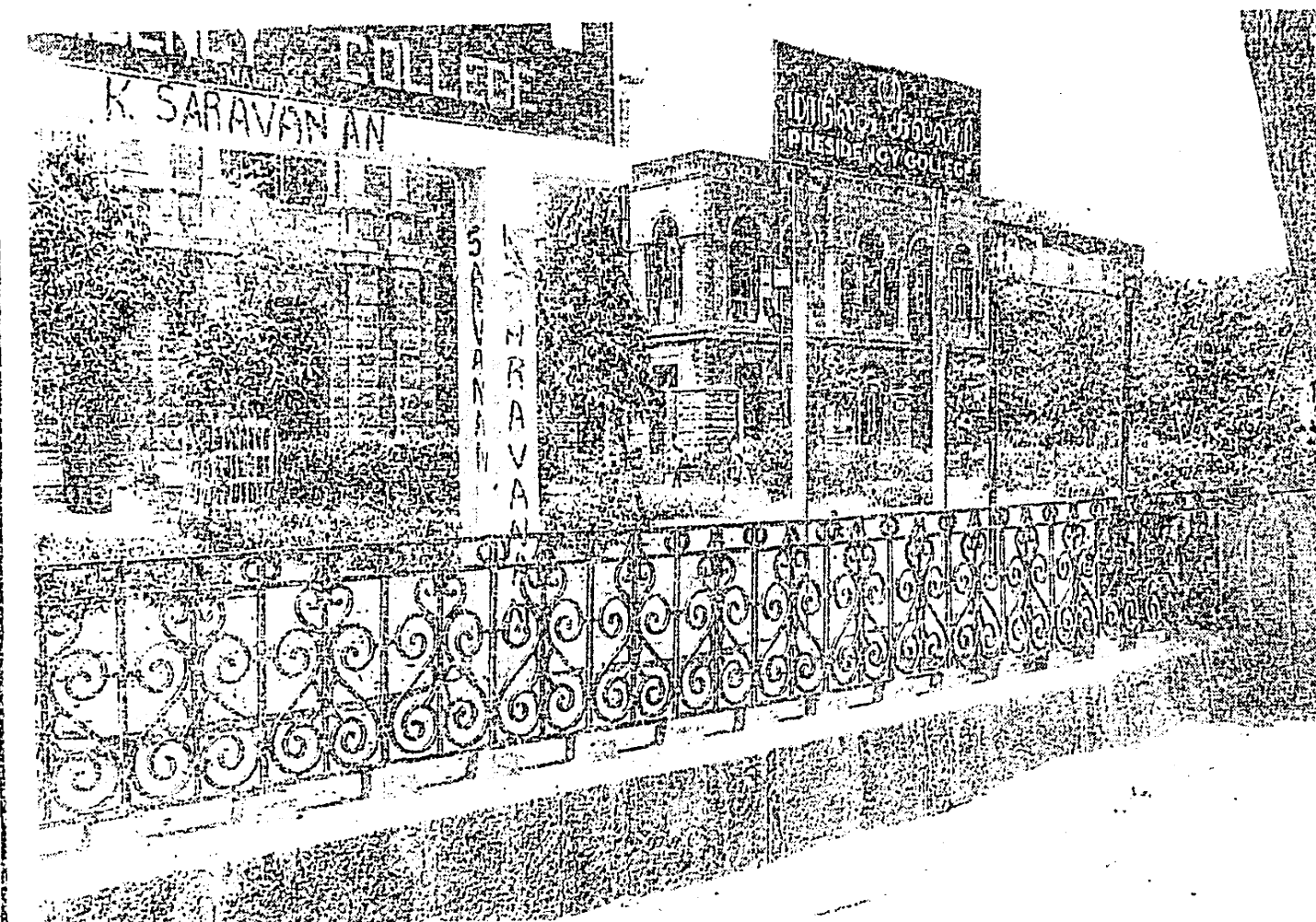
We also encourage audience participation. The wet paint is so laid on that oncoming vehicle tyres take most of it home — a memento of the Street Arts of Madras. There is no faster and better way to use up paint. Madras's



Once the entire stretch of buildings along the Marina was uniformly graced by the ornate wrought-iron railings seen in a part of our OLD. These low railings, decades old, were located atop a lower granite wall. Each stretch of them was separated from the next by a granite 'pillar' decorated with a cast iron 'flower' the NEW. Presidency College has made some attempt to duplicate the OLD and the new railings echo the in design and elegance. It is only to be hoped that they too will be silver-painted as in the past — or, at least, painted in a shade that reflects the institution's present taste.

Elsewhere on the Marina, the replacements of the OLD range from... & THE OLD... with an institution like the University not only blocking the entrance of a part of its campus (near the SBI branch) and making the area look like a prison block but also demonstrating its inability to make two stretches of wall look alike. Elsewhere, cast iron decorations are missing, stretches have been walked in and railings of different designs and walls of various heights have made the land side of the Marina lose a character the uniform railings and walls of old had given it. Isn't it time, that as part of Vision 2020, the railings introduced by Presidency College are introduced all along the Marina and the old low walls and pillars given a new lease of life?

(Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)



How to maintain beaches

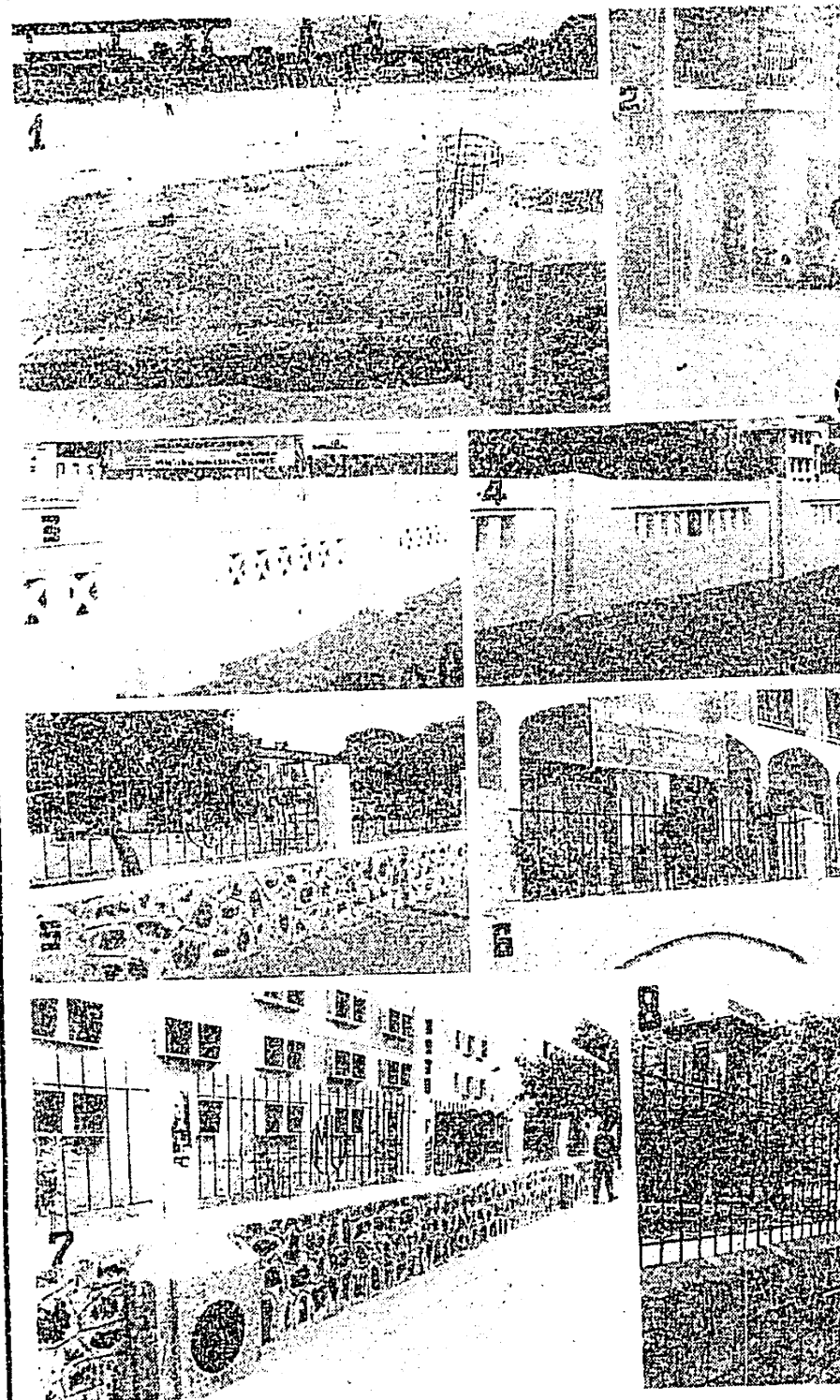
All beaches were meant to be graveyards, to bury or cremate people in and to put up concrete monuments in *memoriam*, as we have so beautifully done on the Marina. No self-respecting beach should be a mere sandy waste.

Here at the Marina we have neatly cemented it all up, put up lawns, made roads and pavements... Of course, many people still have this primitive habit of simply sitting on the sands munching peanuts, or making sand castles, or just wading in the sea. But to a great extent, we have managed to stem such regressive tendencies; we have taught our citizens, instead, to admire and appreciate the statues of great leaders; to pay their respects at the beach *samadhis* of the great ones. The Marina is a living testimony to this ode to the dead.

How to preserve historic buildings

"Keep up with the times," is our motto. So we ring out the old and ring in the new. Saracenic and Gothic architecture have no business to be around in the 21st-Century. Architecture should reflect the times, like our LIC building or the new Reservation Counter building at Madras Central Station. Fort St. George is actually an embarrassment. But by the year 2000, we may have come out with some plans for that.

The Nazis were fools to have allowed all that Parisian architecture to remain. Had we been there, the old palace of Versailles might have been replaced by a sleek new skyscraper. Just you wait DGP office, just you wait!



A selection of other replacements for the OLD railings on the Marina: 1) 'toothless' gap at the Presidency College cricket ground; 2) High walls, new railings and 'imitation integration' at the Metrowater offices; 3) & 4) Low walls in different modes at Queen Mary's College and Lady Willington Training College; 5) Pointed railings and an 'unfinished' look for the walls at the Bharat Scouts' Wensley Park; 6) More fiercely pointed railings but more 'artistic' walls at the Directorate of Cooperatives; 7) & 8) Protective javelins at the University; 9) 'unfinished' look for the walls being at the Postgraduate Hostel and the more 'finished' look at the 1930s block whose gate has truly been blocked in with this creation, and to the 'prison camp' look.

(Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)

'English... it is world!'

Much has been spoken and written about the greatest thing the British left behind — their language. And much effort has gone into trying to make it seem an alien tongue. But not only has the language taken root in the country, it has continued to attract people from different walks of life. The latest to join the English handwagon are a group of drivers and conductors of PTC/DATC who took a course in English-speaking at Stella Maris College.

The concept, however, is not new to the College or the PTC. Back in 1965, a similar course was conducted for conductors by the NSS Wing of the College, at the request of PTC. It remained more a social service activity of the NSS wing until the mid-Seventies when it suddenly stopped. After a decade or so, interest in the course was shown again by PTC and, this time, the Department of English offered to run it.

This English-teaching course became a part of the Department's post-graduate syllabus and the final year M.A. students who handled the classes were marked on the basis of their teaching, the scores going towards their final marks. "The entire course was handled by the students, with teachers only supervising and offering incidental help," Seetha Srinivasan, Head of Stella's English Department told me.

The PTC issued a circular earlier this year calling for interested candidates

among its employees. Drivers were also included this time. Interviews were conducted to find out the aptitude of the candidates and also if they could attend classes regularly. "The response was overwhelming," PTC General Manager Narayanan told me. Care was also taken to ensure the candidates were really interested in English and

mind, as far as the 'students' are concerned, the one and only thing they now see in the course is learning English and nothing more.

The qualifications of the latest batch of 'students' ranged from SSLC to P.G. degrees, though the latter were few. But the English language background of all was rather similar. Most of those whom I spoke to said they could read English upto a reasonable level. It was only speaking English which was a problem. And it was speech which became the focus of the course.

The Department used what is called the communicative approach in teaching, with the emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy. The 'students' were encouraged to speak freely on a particular subject and were rarely interrupted while speaking, lest their thought flow was cut off. It was only after they finished that minor grammatical errors were pointed out. It was practice in speaking which was insisted on, never mind the tense, verbs or clauses.

The lesson units, which had been prepared by the college girls, were formulated with the specific aim of aiding fluency. Subjects commonly talked about, such as politics, social problems like crime etc., the evils of smoking etc. were chosen. I found the class with 'politics' as the subject generating the most animated discussion, with every one of the 'students' joining in — and all in English, at that.

by R. JAISRI

that they did not plan to use the classes as a ruse to stay away from duty, Narayanan added.

But why should conductors learn English, I wondered, to which PTC Managing Director Sharma offered the explanation, "We are keen on the general good behaviour of our staff towards passengers. When the course was first started, we had requested the College to provide them some grounding in courtesy, polite speech etc. We found it worked". A fact which was confirmed by Seetha Srinivasan, who relates how, at the start of the course, students would abruptly interrupt a teacher to ask a question, but in time they learnt to say, "excuse me". From teaching courtesy and politeness, the course slowly evolved into English-teaching, when the 'students' felt English would help them. Whatever other purposes the PTC may have in

Gain some, lose some

Be it a political crisis, policy announcement/amendment or an economic transition, the stock markets of the country are the first to react. No sooner had the budgetary pronouncements for 1995-96 been made, than the index at the MSE, which rose to 317 in the pre-budget session, staged a fall to 301.7. Not because the marketmen were dissatisfied with the budget on the whole but due to the lack of market-related pronouncements and certain market-related expectations getting belied.

In market circles, there were expectations from the budget: a legislation for the setting up of a Central Depository and the abolition of the tax on dividends. While the Finance Minister promised that the former would materialise in the course of the year, the latter did not happen.

One issue, however, which has ruffled many feathers is the announcement that, for the purpose of calculation of capital gains, the value of bonus shares will be taken as nil. In spite of an initial resentment, many have now grudgingly conceded that the move indeed allows for greater flexibility of operations and tax management. (Refer to *Bull's Eye's* Budget Special to find out how it works.)

After the introduction of proportionate allotment for primary issues, Mutual Funds have emerged as a good investment proposition. Now the budget has it that if the aggregate amount of income payable under each scheme exceeds Rs. 10,000 a year, the tax will be deducted at source. Many of our schemes have been growth-oriented for which, generally, no dividends are paid. Though investors of income

schemes will be affected, very few will come under the above Rs. 10,000 bracket.

There have been accusations from some quarters that Dr Manmohan Singh has not reduced corporate taxes; however, the Finance Minister's stance is clear — you can't have the cake and eat it too: across the board reductions

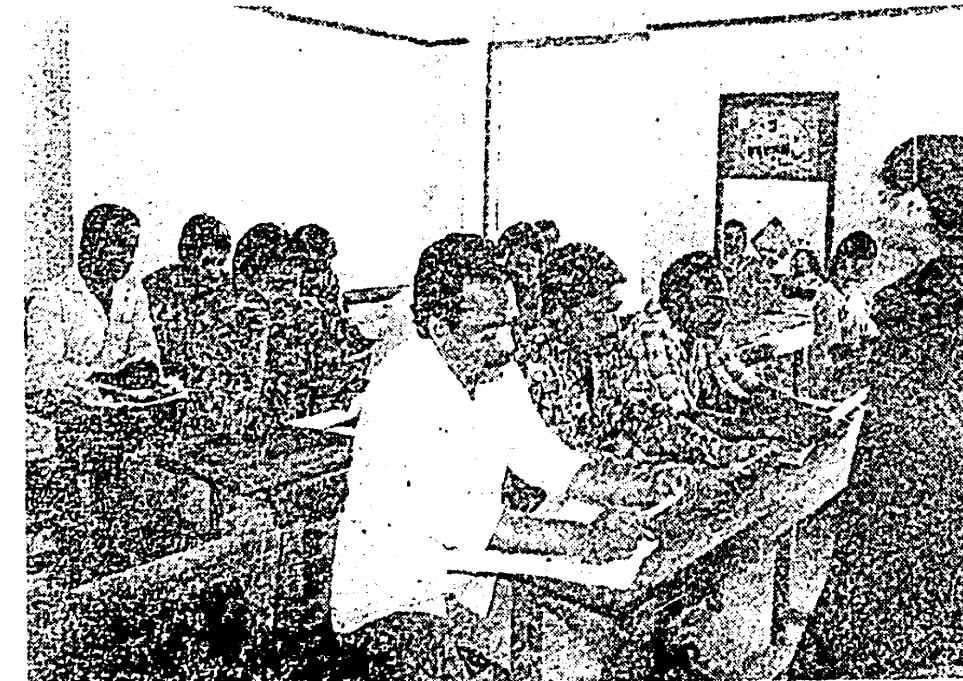
• BULL'S EYE

in duties as well as reduction in direct taxes. Reduction in excise and import duties on various items are on the whole expected to give a fillip to the industrial sector. And software, textiles, automobiles, auto ancillaries and construction, apart from, of course, infrastructure, are identified as the most promising bets for the coming year. Export-oriented units are recognised as high growth units.

We anticipate the market to remain dull for the next six months after which,

the BSE sensx could get up to 3800 points and move further up to 5800. For now, we recommend Amtrex, Rubifila and SCUF.

Amtrex Appliances (CMP. Rs. 41.50): This company is one of the fastest growing companies in split air-conditioners. With increasing demand for computers and other sophisticated equipment, the usage of air-conditioners is also expected to rise. Also, last year's budget narrowed the gap in prices between the organised and the unorganised sector by passing on the excise cut to the consumers. This year, it reduced it further to 40% from 65%, by which Amtrex will benefit. Amtrex announced excellent results for the first half of the current year, which reflected an increase of 60% and 82% in sales and PAT respectively over the previous year's first half. For 1995-96, the equity will increase to Rs. 9.50 (due to second conversion of FCDs at Rs. 25 premium in September, 1995) but the EPS is unlikely to come down. We estimate Rs. 75 for this share for 1995-96 results. Buy at current levels. (Continued on P7)



A Stella Maris English-language teacher with her class of PTC/DATC students. (Photo by V S RAGHAVAN)

The first ten or fifteen minutes of each class was devoted to reading sessions — where every student was made to read a passage. The difficult words were marked by the 'students' — to be explained by the girls later. Once the meanings were explained, the 'students' were asked to make sentences on their own. Then came the question-and-answer discussion session based on the passage and subjects related to what had been discussed in the passage. Each class had only five or six 'students', so ample attention could be devoted to each 'student'. As Seetha Srinivasan laughs, "There were more 'teachers' than 'students'." The handsome student-teacher ratio was one of the important features that made the course a successful one, she feels.

Towards the end of the latest course, the views of the 'students' of the course only further demonstrated their enthusiasm. "English very important today and future," one conductor said and added, "Am I talking correct?" "Well, almost," I assured him. "I feel very nice talking in English to my neighbours," said a driver. Others have admitted their children in English medium schools and are hoping this course would help them help their children with their English.

There were also 'students' who were studying further (P.G. degrees etc.) through correspondence courses, and who felt a knowledge of English would make them do better. The most unexpected answer was from a conductor who said he was getting married soon and wanted to learn English before that. Perhaps the language of love is English! Everyone had somehow got it into their heads that Shakespeare was a name to reckon with in English. At the first chance, they would frame a sentence with his name.

Elaborating on the effects they were making to improve the language skills they had acquired in the course, many of them said they were now trying to read English newspapers. But they had to add, "We also read the Tamil paper side by side, for two reasons. One is to check if we have understood the English correctly and the other is to get the news correctly". All of them wanted to make sure that the news they got, and its accuracy,

did not suffer because they did not know English well enough as yet. This urge to be right and accurate extended to their speaking English also, as almost all of them wanted to know if I had any tips to offer on speaking correct English. And yes, they were glad that an 'English paper' was writing about the course.

Surely, these were not the grouchy men you see in buses with no change and many harsh words, I thought. And the girls of Stella who taught them felt that teaching them was not a problem at all. As both sides were equally interested in what they were doing, it was as much fun as it was a serious effort in teaching, felt the girls. For all the girls, it was the first time they were on the other side of the fence — teaching — and that too trying to get across ideas to 'students' with a totally different background. But after a few classes, said the Stella girls, it was very easy communicating with the 'students', as they picked up language skills very fast.

Proof of what the course was able to achieve was evident in the valedictory function, where some of the conductors shared their experiences during the course. One of the conductors, Chandrasekaran, gave an almost ten-minute-long speech on what he had gained from the course. He not only offered suggestions to PTC, but also raised quite a few points. As Narayanan later quipped, "They have not only learnt to speak English, they have learnt to make demands in English, too."

The speech was in English and Chandrasekaran had no paper for reference. "We didn't prepare them," assured the 'teachers' of Stella Maris. Then came a short talk on learning English at Stella. Half a dozen conductors participated in this 'dialogue session', which was more an exchange of ideas on learning than on learning English.

Skit or no skit, the importance the conductors attached to the knowledge of English was obvious from the answer to the very same question I had asked the PTC officials at the start: "Why should they learn English? Won't Tamil do?" The best answer I got was from a conductor who said, "English is now not one country's language. It is world. All should know it".

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We look forward to its enactment and implementation

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NOTABLE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Baker, Wayne E.
Networking Smart: How to Build Relationships for Personal and Organizational Success. McGraw-Hill, Inc. c1994. (658.45 BAK)

Environmental TQM.
Edited by John T. Willig. McGraw-Hill, Inc. c1994. (363.7 ENV)

Finney, Robert G.
The Powerful Budgeting for Better Planning and Management. AMACOM, c1993. (658.154 FIN)

Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century.
Edited by Janne E. Nolan. The Brookings Institution. c1994 (327.1 GLO)

Our Changing Cities.
Edited by John Fraser Hart. The Johns Hopkins University Press. c1994. (307.76 OUR)

Public Management: The State of the Art.
Edited by Barry Bozeman. Jossey-Bass Publishers, c1993. (350 PUB)

Public Values in Constitutional Law.
Edited by Stephen E. Gottlieb. The University of Michigan Press, c1993 (342.73 PUB)

Thompson, Henry.
International Economics: A Microeconomic Approach. Longman Publishing Group, c1993 (337 THO)

Shaping the future in a woman's way

In a city known for its dedicated women activists and a progressive attitude towards women's issues — Tamil Nadu is the first State to pass in its legislature a 15-point programme for women and children — it seemed more than apt that, for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the University Women's Association, the theme for debate and discussion would be 'Women's Future World Future'.

Although women continue to be the poorest of the poor in the world, despite 60 per cent of girl children being denied the right to education and even to life, and with crimes and violence against women on the rise in every part

• by
PUSHPA CHARI

of the world, our century has nevertheless seen tremendous strides in the empowerment of women. The universal right to vote, the right to hold property in her own right, ever-increasing numbers of women taking to higher education and storming professional bastions hitherto held exclusively by men — and now a reservation policy in favour of women which will see large numbers of women politicians in India by year-end — those are some of the steps which have put women in decision- and policy-making positions as never before. Today, therefore, from the local to the global, women's quests and perspectives, their work, views and processes as well as the policies, laws and institutions which strengthen them, have become the foci of great power and influence. Yet, as Devaki Jain put it in her keynote address: "How do we use this power, how do we put it to the most effective use? And what fruit can women's leadership bear which distinguishes it from men's (leadership)

and which commends it as something special?"

The two-hour long speeches-cum-discussion session with Ms Devaki Jain, Dr Nanditha Krishna, Dr Yashoda Shanmugasundaram and Dr Vineela Hoon on the podium and a lively participative audience, was all about women power — and what it could and should do for World Future. It brought in many strands of women's perceptions, from women's particular strengths, her invaluable contribution to society, from the importance of family planning to family relations, from the stranglehold of poverty and exploitation to "How we rich urban elite women do not even stand by our own maidservants!" To what use women can put their hard-won powers, what their leadership can wrest from a "Man's world", and what this special leadership could mean for the world's future was what the symposium was all about.

Citing examples of Chipko campaigns against attack in Andhra and alcoholism in Manipur, in which women's concerted fearlessness and altruism came to the fore, Devaki Jain suggested that women could make excellent leaders since they are altruistic and caring of others. "Avoiding conflict, pre-empting injustice, strong when it comes to basic needs of the family, learning through doing, consulting, sharing, caring, undoing hierarchies and rebuilding informality..." Since there will be one million more women politicians in the coming year, Devaki Jain suggested that women should have a solid political phalanx, where they could unite to achieve desired changes through a women's bloc.

Dr Nanditha Krishna lauded the special relationship of Indian women

had through the ages with the trees and herbs. Among the policy changes she suggested were a change in the ownership of land to women in women-headed families and a concerted effort to transfer technology for restoring degraded land. She also suggested that the traditional knowledge and practices of rural women be incorporated in developmental programmes and the introduction of Joint Forest Management in all the states with at least 30 per cent representation of women in all Forest Committees.

Dr Shanmugasundaram pointed out that seventy per cent of the GNP was produced by the informal sector, a large part of which comprises women who work longer and are paid less. Low economic status of women is a global phenomenon, and Dr Shanmugasundaram pointed out that any policy of employment of women should include human resource development, employment and legal rights for women. A pertinent point brought out by her was the great importance of the household sector where most women perform. Many of the services provided by the housewife (take just the lunch box!) have market value, and housewives therefore do contribute to the economy.

Dr Vineela Hoon, speaking on the "Gender Sensitive Human Development Index", asked for a 'gender neutral' approach: She referred to the Human Development Index of a country which can conceal the fact that different groups within the country have different levels of development — men and women, for instance. Any developmental programme, she said, should be suitable for women, be beneficial for them and involve their participation. The impact of women's management on family, village affairs etc. is more beneficial both at the micro and macro level.

With active participation from an informed and vibrant audience, much valuable information and many suggestions were thrown up, all of which seemed to have a certain uniformity vis-a-vis a woman's perceptions: that women have a very close link with the environment and should be consulted on all matters pertaining to environmental management; that women as

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight March 1-15)

- Who won Grammys for best rock performance (male) and best pop performance (female) at this year's awards on March 1st?
- Who won the inaugural BSI World Masters Cricket Cup at Bombay recently?
- Who is the author of the book Perils of Democracy released by the Prime Minister on March 3rd?
- Which elusive sub-atomic particle was reported finally discovered at the Fermi Lab in USA recently?
- Where was the World Summit on Social Development held?
- Which champion horse won the Classic Indian Turf Invitation Cup, the blue riband of the Indian racing calendar, at Calcutta on March 5th?
- Name the computer virus which struck hard disks all round the world leading to valuable loss of data on March 6th, the birthday of the person after whom it is named.
- Who are the winners of this year's prestigious B.D. Goenka Award for excellence in journalism?
- Two controversial films were cleared for screening after certain censor alterations, with one being released in the South. Name the films.
- Where in the State did a gruesome road accident occur on March 12th invol-

Legislative propriety

Having been hostile to each other for so long, the Governor's presence to address the Tamil Nadu Assembly provided a sensitive situation for both Dr Channa Reddi and Chief Minister Jayalalitha. But legislative propriety prevailed, though both avoided eye-contact.

Dr Reddi, who had in the past been critical of the law and order situation, poured lavish praise on their "perfect maintenance" and criticised the Centre for not providing the funds asked for to modernise the Police force.

Loyal and appreciative noises and thumping of desks from the Treasury benches at every mention of the words "honourable Chief Minister" by the Governor, more of it when he uttered her name, marked the

One such moment was the Congress (I)'s jibes against the Government's lame excuses for the inordinate delay in holding local body elections. S.R. Balasubramaniam and Kumari Anandam, both from Congress (I), and DMK's A. Selvaraj pointed out that the Madras Corporation would shortly complete 25 years without a Mayor. A spirited defence followed, with the Chief Minister, the Local Administration Minister T.M. Selva-ganapathy and the Health Minister S. Muthuswamy, interrupting the members and pointing out the Government was ready to conduct the polls by June next.

The debate again proved that the LTTE is a convenient cudgel the AIADMK, the Congress (I) and the DMK wield at times to

THE VIEW FROM FORT ST. GEORGE

progress of his 29-page address. A lighter moment was provided when a routine but inadvertent thumping of desks followed the mention of the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, making Chief Minister Jayalalitha break into a smile!

It was an alert and determined Opposition the Chief Minister and her team faced in the House, but the accusations and jibes fell on stony ground, with the Chief Minister and her Ministers interrupting the members during their speeches, to set right the situation, without waiting for the reply to the debate on the last day. In fact, one of the complaints from the Opposition was that the interruptions disturbed the trend of their speeches. Nevertheless, the Opposition had the satisfaction of wounding the pride of the other side, on one of two occasions.

attack others and each other. This time it was the turn of Law Minister K.A. Krishnaswamy to launch an attack on the Congress (I) by accusing its leaders of "killing a great leader like Rajiv Gandhi" for political gains. The Congress (I) members were livid and S. Peter Alphonse Congress-I wanted the Minister's remarks to be expunged. The Speaker not relenting, the Congress (I) members walked out. Health Minister Muthuswamy pointed out that all Tamil Nadu parties had supported LTTE. But the AIADMK had turned hostile to it, when it found it was harming the country's interests.

A suo moto statement from the Chief Minister clarified Government's stand that there was no question of any understanding with the LTTE, a charge heard in the wake of some militants' escape recently from the Madras Central Prison. Jail breaks had been there during previous regimes too, she said. Could the Centre be accused of any collusion with smuggler Charles Sobhraj who had escaped from Delhi's Tihar Jail in 1986?

During another intervention, Chief Minister Jayalalitha said the Centre was favouring capitalists under the new economic policy, leaving the States to look after the poor. They should be the joint responsibility of both. Another complaint of hers was that the Centre was ignoring her appeals to locate heavy industries here. At the same time, she denied the Opposition leader's charge that she was using all opportunities to hit at the Centre. It was Balasubramaniam who had no good word for her government.

Time and again, Ms Jayalalitha and her Ministers proved they were equal to the occasion in meeting criticisms. The Congress (I) found itself in an embarrassing position when it referred to repeated thefts in a particular temple. In Thiruvattar, the Backward Classes Minister K. Lawrence said, a local Congress (I) functionary was the first accused. The person was arrested, released on bail and later accommodated in the MILAS' Hostel by Congress (I) members.

R.K.K.

(Answers on p. 8)

Sponsorship makes music

The occasion was the intended visit of a leading Hindustani instrumentalist to Madras a couple of months ago. At least two sabhas had planned concerts by him on consecutive days. Of them, the more dynamic of the two had arranged for an airline to fly the artist free of cost from Calcutta to Madras and on to Bombay afterwards. Secretary of the Sabha had also booked a five-star hotel to put up the musician — again free of cost. And the concerts had been sponsored by Madras-based companies.

The sponsors and the hotel asked a few complimentary tickets with a view to passing them on to their important clients. While Sabha No. 1 did graciously, Sabha No. 2 flatly refused. "If the hotel manager or sponsor's representatives come to my door and request me personally, I may consider the request," was the gruff response of the Secretary of the Sabha. This incident is narrated to emphasise the number of persons and agencies involved in the successful launch of a musical event. It also highlights the varying attitudes of sabhas towards men and matters. These men are by and large tireless champions of Carnatic music, to whose propagation they give unstintingly of time and energy. Without their

efforts, the music could not have reached its present state of development. For decades, sabhas have been the bulwark of Carnatic music, responsible for spotting and nurturing talent. Naturally, the secretaries of these sabhas have grown in stature and influence over the years, inherently capable of making or breaking careers. Successful kutcheries in the elite sabhas are often

are a few companies which see value in lasting involvement in promoting the arts. In Madras, some of the prominent sponsors are Indian Bank, Shriram Chits, Ashok Leyland Finance, Sterling Holiday Resorts, India Cements, Chemplast and Coimbatore Lakshmi Investment and Finance. The TVS group have been long-time patrons of music, as seen in their support of

• BY V. RAMNARAYAN

the launching pad from which many a vidwan has taken off.

Sabhas have traditionally been financed with the subscriptions collected from the members. With the proliferation of these institutions, they have been forced to peg the annual subscription low, often as little as Rs. 150-200 per couple. A wide network has led to dwindling audiences at individual sabhas and reduced collections, thereby increasing the dependence on other sources of revenue. The main source now is sponsorship.

While the majority of sponsorship efforts are the consequence of ad hoc attempts at corporate promotion or are the results of the demands on decision-makers by friends and associates, there

Music Academy and other organisations as well as sponsorship of concerts and festivals. Instances of adopting a particular musician are also not unknown — T N Seshnagapalan, for example, was once known to be promoted by a business group. In recent times, Citibank and Standard Chartered Bank have entered the scene.

It has become increasingly evident to anyone who cares for classical music that the sabha system is no longer a viable proposition unless propped up by corporate sponsors. None but the oldest, most prosperous sabhas have the financial muscle to go on organising concerts through the year. Given the limited potential of subscriptions by members, the sabhas have necessarily to look to the leading business houses for help.

While some companies pay the artists directly, most sponsors deal with the organisers, leaving the distribution of expenses to the latter. The situation is ripe for misunderstandings and accusations. Today's young vidwans are not afraid to express suspicions that sabhas pocket the major share of the sponsorship money, remunerating the artists less than adequately. The sabha secretaries, however, maintain the money mobilised is barely sufficient to cover costs. According to them, the situation in the South is hardly comparable to that in the North, where musicians command much higher fees and where revenues are much higher too.

Signs of rebellion surfaced recently in Madras with a number of young artists boycotting premier sabhas during the December '94 festival. The provocation was the refusal on the part of the organising committee to give the young artists the senior or appropriate

Shaping the future

(Continued from P6)

mothers are caring and nurturing — traits which they use to fight any battle to ensure peace for the survival of their families; that their managerial abilities as home-makers could be utilised successfully in many other managerial areas; that an educated woman creates an educated family — and an educated society. And also, when men claim that they protect women, they are only protecting them against other men!

The 20th Century has 'empowered' women in many areas. Hopefully, in the next century, women will use their powers to act and perform (at the very least as equal partners with men) in shaping World Future. Dare one hope that they will shape it with more caring, compassion and commitment than men?

S.M.



Beauty-hiding hoardings

Sponsorship is what the Arts need in India. But the more discreet and sophisticated it is, the better it would be. Certainly, institutions like the Music Academy need funds to continue the splendid work they are doing. But it would be nice if they did not have to hide their architectural beauty from the public behind huge and loud hoardings. Surely an institution devoted to the Arts like the Music Academy should lead the way in demonstrating that it won't let Art be smothered by commerce... in this picture, its handsome TTK Auditorium lost behind hoardings. In fact, the splendour of many a handsome historical building in Madras is now being hidden from public view by hoardings. If ever we get a Heritage Act, the need to ensure public visibility of the buildings and a ban on delating them with hoardings must be included in the legislation.

— THE EDITOR

(Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN)

slot based on their standing. The young artists also refused permission for their concerts to be recorded. Attendance

was thin where the 'box-office' draws were not featured and radio broadcasts of the concerts were conspicuous by their absence for the first time in several years. Some veteran sabha officials have reportedly sworn not to offer concert opportunities to young talent

as a reaction to the rebel vidwans' stand.

Genuine lovers of music, perturbed by the trend of events, are keeping their fingers crossed, hoping the present impasse will be resolved to the benefit of all concerned, leading to a viable, vibrant system of co-operation and endeavour.

Gain some, lose some

(Continued from P5)

Rubfila International (CMP: Rs. 21): Rubfila, promoted by Uniphonix Corporation Bhd of Malaysia and KSIDC, had set up a project for the manufacture of Heat Resistant Latex Rubber Thread in technical collaboration with Rubfil Sdn Bhd, Malaysia, the subsidiary company of the main promoter and the world's third largest producers of HRLRT. The HRLRT will be marketed both in India and abroad under brand name 'Rubfil'. In order to tackle the problem of soaring latex prices, the company is setting up its own latex concentrating unit. It proposes to invest Rs. 1.80 cr, which will add Rs. 1.20 cr every year to its profit as well as ensure quality raw material. The turnover and PAT for March 96 are expected at Rs. 29.08 cr and Rs. 7.16 cr. The equity capital is Rs. 29.04 cr. The prices, after making an all-time new low at Rs. 17, have rallied to almost retrace the previous move. Buy with a stop loss at Rs. 15.

Shriram City Union Finance (CMP: Rs. 26): Shriram City Union Finance (SCUF), promoted by the well-known Shriram Group and Integrated Group of Companies of Madras, concentrates mainly on hire-purchase and leasing of vehicles, unlike other finance companies which put their foot into a wide spectrum. It has achieved all-round growth in all the areas of its operations during the last seven-year period. It has been maintaining a consistent dividend payout and has paid a higher dividend of 25% for the past four consecutive years. For the half year ended December 1994, SCUF earned a profit of Rs. 1.97 cr. The EPS improved from Rs. 4.89 to Rs. 6.55 annualised. The second half is expected to be even better. The management is confident of surpassing the Rs. 3.41 cr net profit projected at the time of the public issue. Buy.

K. Gopalakrishnan

• Our series on Madras schools has been held over this fortnight due to pressure on space

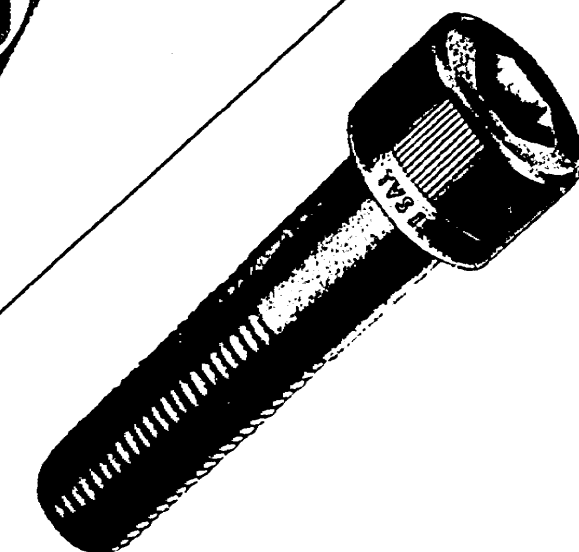


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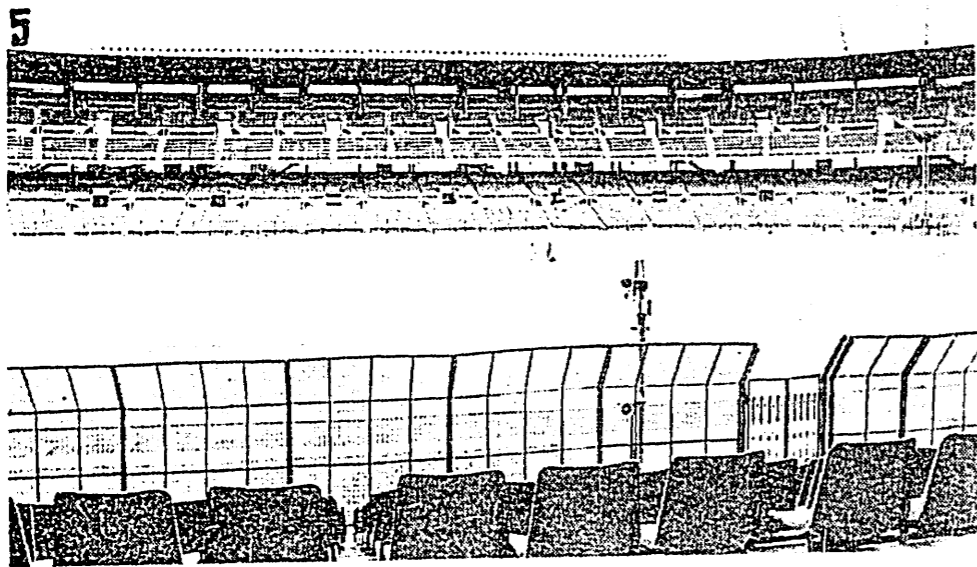
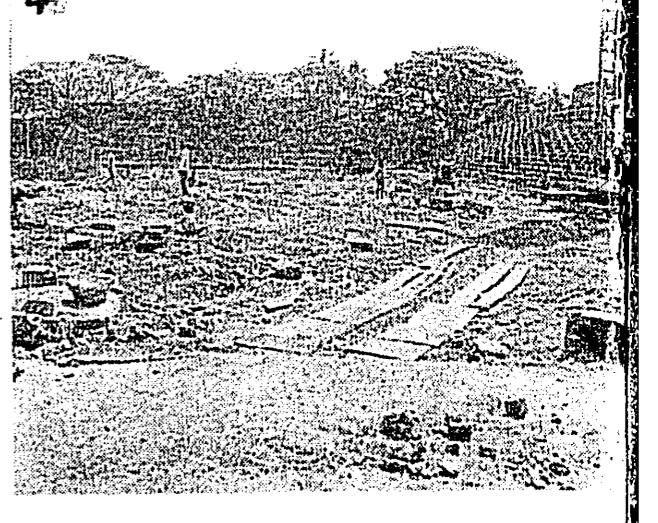
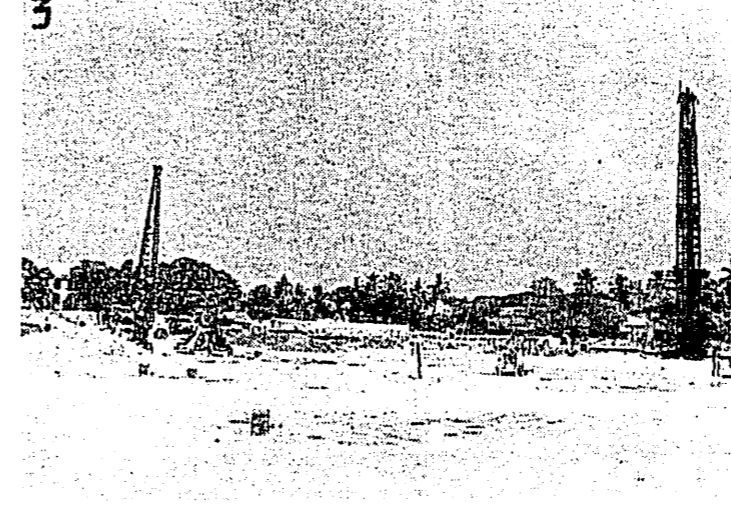
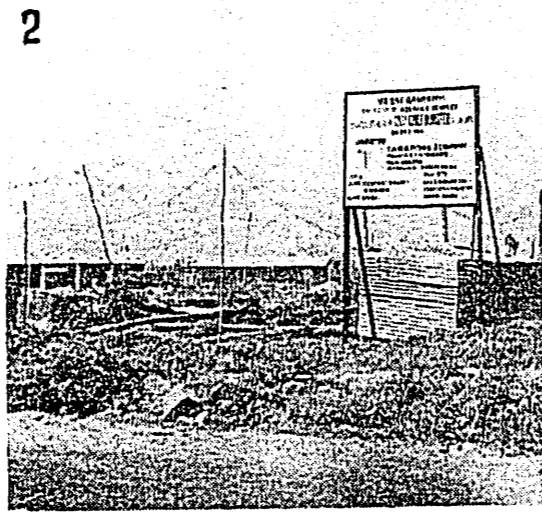
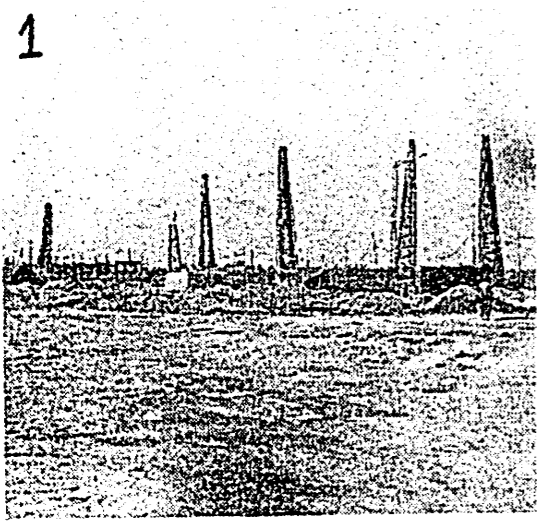
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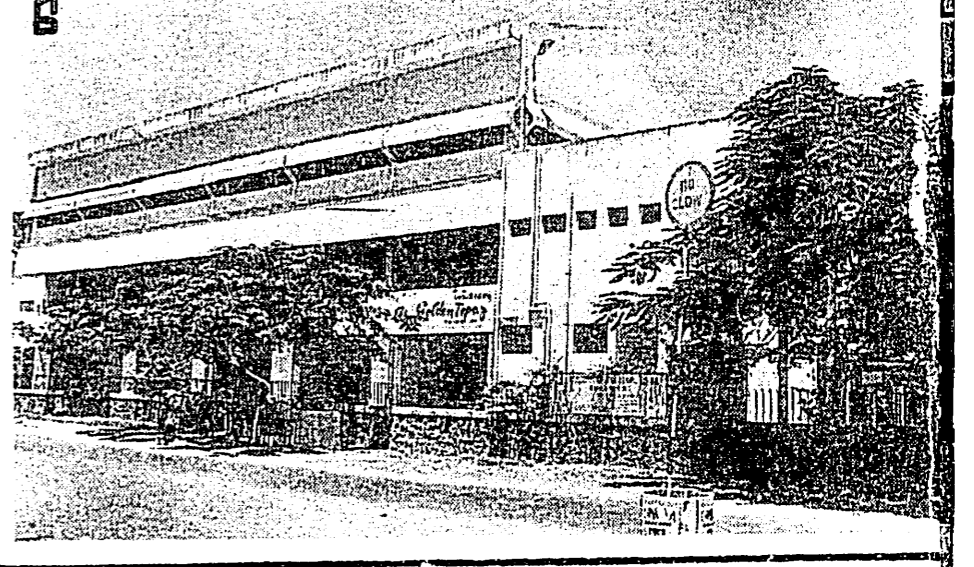
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• 1) Busy cranes at the SAF Games Village, Koyambedu; 2) Work gets underway at the Aquatics Complex in Velachery; 3) A start is made on the Tennis Stadium at the Nungambakkam Recreation Centre; 4) Getting Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium, Egmore, ready for Astroturf and hockey; 5) The splendid Nehru Stadium all ready for football, athletics and the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the SAF Games, scheduled for the last fortnight in December; 5) The Jayalalitha Indoor Basketball Stadium in Kilpauk, one of the best in the country. V S RAGHAVAN, who took these pictures, says, "The work is as frantic as it was when the Nehru Stadium was being got ready a couple of years ago. At this pace, all facilities for the SAF Games will very likely be ready for October trials."



250 days to SAF Games

There's just about 250 days to go for the South Asian Federation Games, less than nine months before Juan Antonio Samaranch, President, International Olympic Committee, and Sheikh Ahmad, President of the Olympic Council of Asia, take their places on the dais with the other dignitaries at the inaugural ceremony at the Nehru Stadium. That stadium is now acknowledged as one of the best in the country, but will the rest of the infrastructure be ready by then?

likely to be ready by Games' time, though there might be minor hiccups due to hasty construction. With the Nehru Stadium providing fine facilities for football and athletics, the Jayalalitha Indoor Basketball stadium already functional and offering excellent conditions for basketball and volleyball, and the Madras Rifle Range only in need of jazzing up, that's about sixty per cent of the facilities in place.

But what about the rest? Work has just started on the swimming complex

That leaves kabbadi. But whether the four teams necessary for an event to be staged will enter, could well depend on Pakistan who might insist that its participation in kabbadi will depend on squash being offered it. If such a *quid pro quo* is agreed on, then venues will have to be looked for, for both. A kabbadi ground might not be difficult to find, but the Madras Cricket Club's excellent squash facility might not be adequate for an international event, looked at from the point of view of the spectators, especially if the Pakistan stars participate.

The two new officials appointed to the post of Secretary, Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, and Director for the SAF Games, Mohan Pyare and R K Sharma, not only start from scratch just nine months before the Games, but they are bound to find even greater pressure put on them to have everything ready by October, before the Monsoon. *The Corner Flag* doesn't envy them their task and wishes them well.

Meanwhile, one last question remains. Has the search for sponsorship begun? Or is the Tamil Nadu Government underwriting the entire Games?

• THE CORNER FLAG

Work has just started at the Games Village on the Ring Road in Koyambedu, but it is proceeding at a frantic pace. The location for the Village is a splendid one and flat-buyers after the Games will find themselves with some good buys.

Work has also commenced on the tennis stadium at the Nungambakkam Recreation Centre and on the preparation of the Radhakrishnan Stadium for a synthetic pitch for hockey. The Village and these stadia are certainly

in Velachery. A modern indoor stadium in People's Park is expected to take care of most of the rest of the events planned, but work on it has not started, with litigation over land acquisition holding up progress. Once that hurdle is overcome, it will need a superhuman effort, like L & T put into getting the Nehru Stadium ready a couple of years ago, to get this facility completed. The indoor stadium will stage boxing, wrestling and weightlifting.

Naturalists' Corner



Romulus Whittaker's Nilgiri Tahr family appears to be advocating a two plus two norm, but if that was maintained it would seriously affect an already depleting tahr population. (Photograph courtesy: Madras Naturalists' Society).

ANSWERS

1. Bruce Springsteen and Sheryl Crow respectively; 2. The West Indies, beating India in the final; 3. The former Tamil Nadu Governor and the present Governor of Maharashtra, Dr. P.C. Alexander; 4. The 'Top' quark; 5. Copenhagen, Denmark; 6. *Elusive Pimpernel* (Aslam Khader up); 7. The famous painter, Michelangelo; 8. The TV team of Prannoy Roy-Vinod Dua, and Jehan Daruwalla, the editor of *Bombay Samachar*; 9. Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* and Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen*; 10. Sendhamangalam, Near Sriperumbudur; 11. Doordarshan India, the international channel of DD, was launched; 12. Rs. 40,000; 13. Baichung Bhutia; 14. ING; 15. It traces the route taken and places visited by Adi Shankar on his journey from Kaladi to Kashmir; 16. India TV; 17. Lala Amarnath; 18. Manohar Joshi of Shiv Sena, Kesubhai Patel of BJP and J.B. Patnaik of Congress (I); 19. The blazing fire at an ONGC well was finally extinguished; 20. Limba Ram.

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With our next issue, the issue of April 16th, *Madras Musings* enters its fifth year of publication. They have been four eventful years, focussing on the conservation and preservation of the historical in Madras, on developing a cleaner, more environmentally friendly Madras, on making Madras a better place to live in and on providing recognition to achievers in Madras and Tamil Nadu who are little noticed elsewhere. Truly can it be said of *Madras Musings* that it cares for Madras and the citizens of the city.

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