

WE CARE FOR MADRAS

MADRAS

MUSINGS

This journal is supported by the following organisations as a public service

Amalgamations
Ashok Leyland Ltd
A V Thomas & Co
Bank of Madras
India Cements
The KCP Ltd.

This journal is supported by the following organisations as a public service

Murugappa Group
Ponds (India) Ltd.
Rane (Madras) Ltd
Sanmar Group
S.P.I.C.
Sundram Fasteners

Vol. VI No. 2

FREE ISSUE

May 1 — 15, 1996

Madras First?

Getting a team together the challenge

(By The Editor)

First there was London First, an initiative by leaders of the London business community to work with civic organisations to get a better London.

The British Council helped export the idea to India and Bombay First was launched in January 1994. *Madras Musings*, in its February 1st and 16th issues this year, described what Bombay First was, but it is worth recalling here what S M Datta, the President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC & I), said on the occasion of the Chamber launching this private initiative.

The move is aimed at making the city one of the best in the world and a better place to visit, live, work and invest in, said Datta. Bombay First's objectives, he went on to explain, would be to "sponsor, promote, finance and support policy initiatives for the betterment of the metropolis and the welfare of its inhabitants". Bombay First, he added, would depend mainly on the business community for "its resources and motivation", but would "work in very close partnership" with the Central, State and Local Governments and the voluntary sector.

The BCC & I, which promoted Bombay First, also promoted the Bombay City Policy Research Foundation, a charitable trust, to fund Bombay First. The funding would be used to develop policy initiatives for the improvement of infrastructure and management, and conduct research on both macro and micro planning for the City, Datta stated.

Madras Musings draws the attention of its readers to the Bombay First initiative because there is in the present sponsorship of *Madras Musings* the seeds for a Madras First initiative.

The Association of British Council Scholars' President, D

K Oza, the former IAS man and Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram University, and the British Council have been making some attempts to get some sort of such initiative started. The MMDA has some ideas of its own under the Sustainable Cities project awarded to Madras by UNCHS. And Government must have its own ideas. *Madras Musings* feels none of these will get off the ground unless Commerce and Industry

(Continued on P6)



'Forest' — For how much longer?

Where do you find date palms in such profusion in the heart of Madras? And scrub jungle too? In Guindy National Park, of course. But this is a picture of a still more central park. And the granite poles in the centre of the picture show that the threat to its vegetation has begun. How long more will this park remain 'virgin' woodland? Turn to page 5 for some 'answers'

Madras dominates leather exports

(By A Staff Reporter)

A feature of India's record leather exports of a little short of Rs. 5000 crore (\$1560 million appx.) in 1994-95 was the splendid performance by Madras exporters. At the Council of Leather Exports' Awards function, the major share of the awards went to

Madras companies. And the kind of numbers these companies attained in export value were far ahead of those from any other part of India. Indeed, here was confirmation again that Madras was the 'Leather Capital of India', Kanpur's and Calcutta's days

now past.

The single most impressive performance by a Madras company was by Farida Shoes Limited, whose exports of leather footwear topped the Rs. 35 crore mark. Another impressive performance was by Chevro Leather Manufacturers

who exported Rs. 20-30 crore worth of footwear components and Rs. 20-30 crore worth finished leather. Presidency Kid Leather was only a little behind Chevro in total exports, exporting Rs. 5-10 crore footwear components and over Rs. 30 crore finished leather.

Other major Madras players were Vantage Leathers India Limited (Rs. 20-30 crore of leather garments), A V Thomas Leather & Allied Products Limited (over Rs. 15 crore leather goods), R S L Industries Limited (over Rs. 15 crore leather goods) and India Shoes (Rs. 10-20 cr leather footwear).

Chevro also received a special award for receiving royalty from Spain for its brand 'Chevro' and for the colour 'toffee' developed by it being included in the Mod Europe '96 Collection. Chevro, headed by Imthiaz Pasha, has put up 11 projects in 12 years and its 1400-person team now produces annually 12 million sq ft of goat leather, 2 million sq ft of cow leather, 1.5 million pairs of shoes and uppers and 30,000 pieces of garments. The company exports to 30 countries.

Now, it's the Italians!

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Rs. 700 crore Maharashtra-based Greaves Ltd, part of the Thapar Group, plans to invest Rs. 30 crore in its Ranipet plant (acquired from Enfield Ltd about five years ago) to manufacture tractors in collaboration with Same, Italy. The company will also put up a tractor engine manufacturing plant in Ranipet with a similar outlay and a buy-back arrangement with Same. The majority stake in the new joint venture company, Same-Greaves Ltd, will be held by the Italian company.

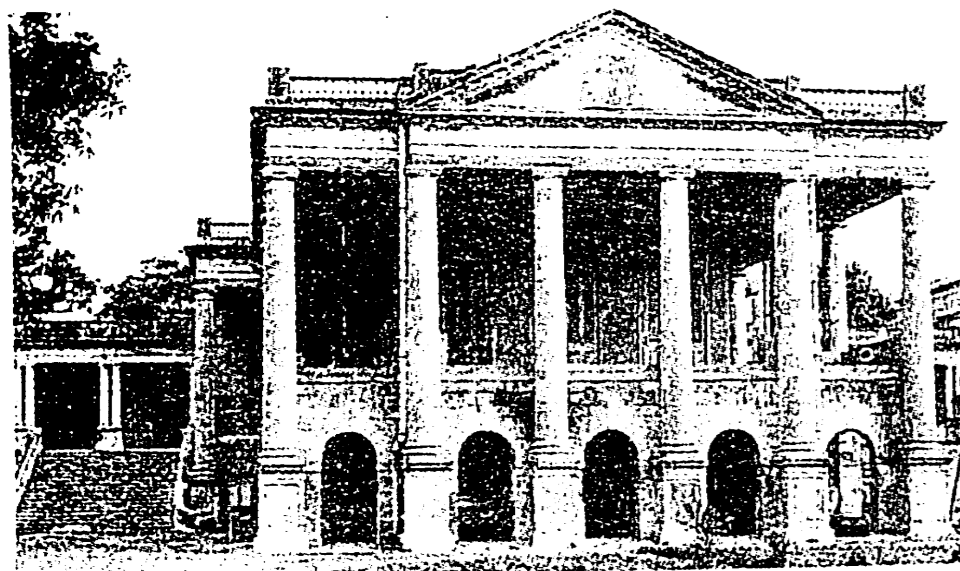
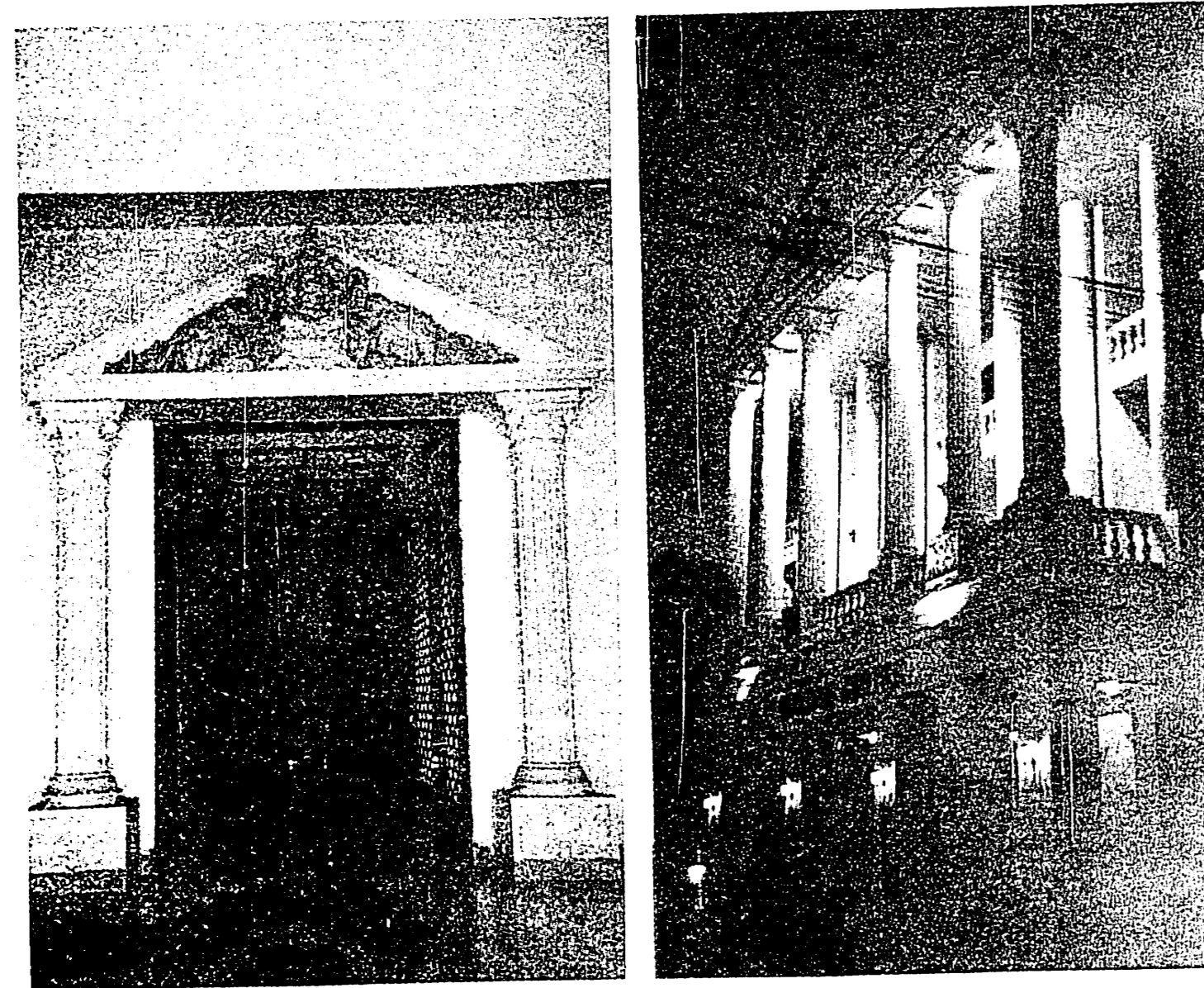
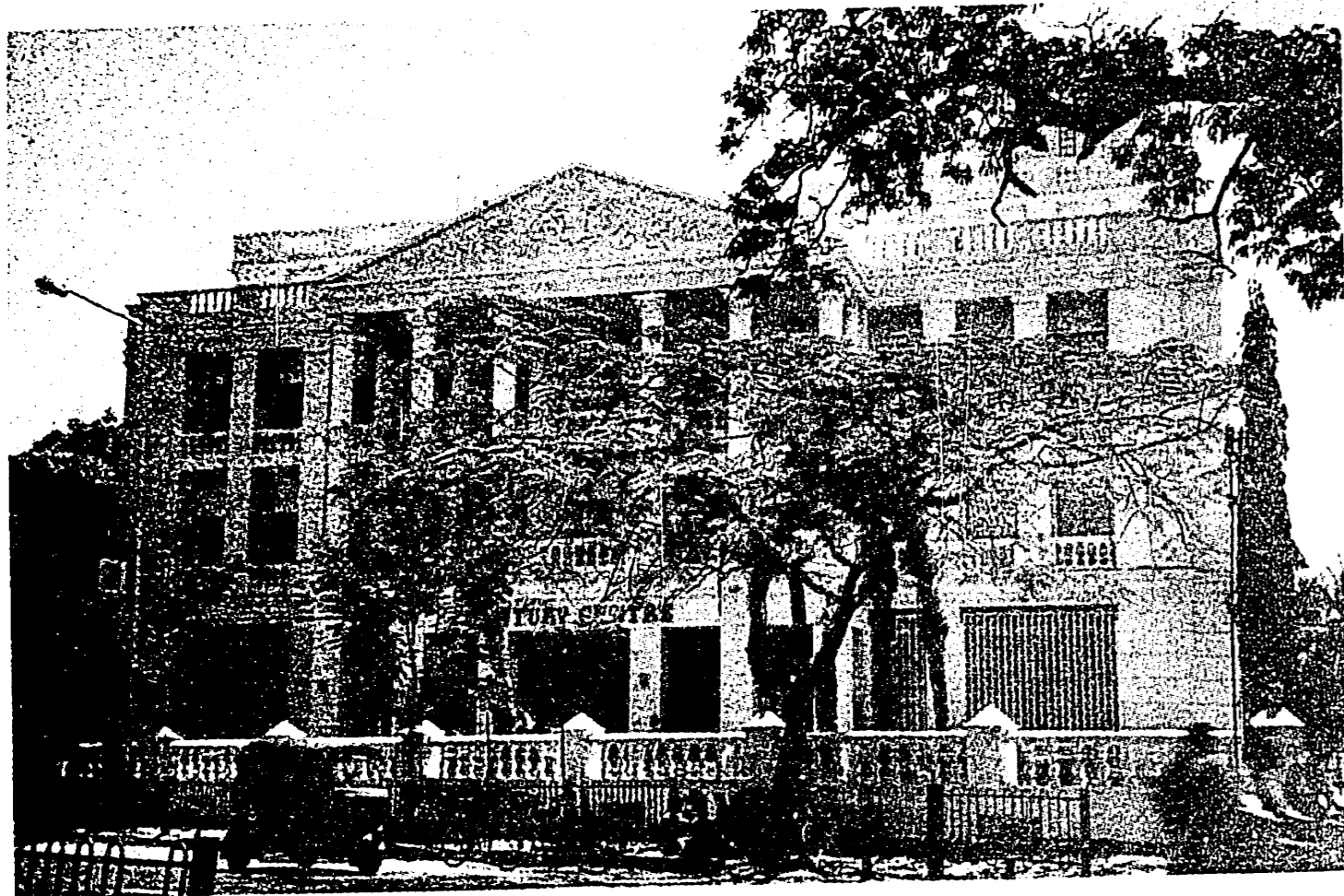
The company would initially start manufacture of 12,000

tractors and 15,000 tractor engines a year, 15 months from now, the difference being bought back by the Italian collaborator under the joint venture agreement. Though Greavesowns extensive land in Baramati, near Pune, where it has housed its autorickshaw plant, the presence of major auto ancillaries in Tamil Nadu has made the joint venture select Tamil Nadu, said Ravi Chopra, Vice President.

Another new venture planned by the company is the manufacture of a 4-stroke petrol autorickshaw, following its successful diesel version, to take

on the industry major Bajaj Auto. According to Chopra, the petrol three-wheeler would meet the emission norms prescribed by Government. Production will commence at the company's Baramati facility within 18 months. Greaves recently introduced a diesel pick-up van and a delivery van.

"Entry into vehicle manufacturing is a logical forward integration step for us, as the company has all these years been the largest producer of internal combustion engines and gear transmission lines in the country," explained Chopra.



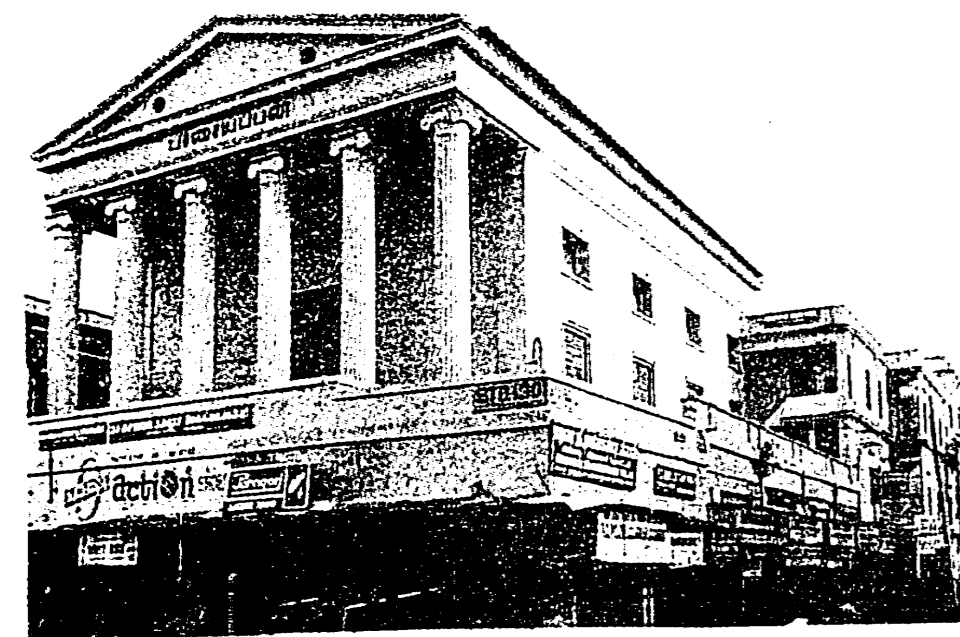
THE NEW... ... & THE OLD

An old house, a landmark on TTK Road which was much photographed by an American architecture student Michael Inman some years back, came down about 18 months ago to make way for THE NEW. That old building was a typical art deco building strongly influenced by Indian ornamentation — a style of building favoured in late 19th Century, early 20th Century Myslapore. What's taken its place, Century Centre, harks back to an even earlier age when the Regency style was favoured for both public and private construction.

With a built-up area of 5000 sq ft on each of its three floors and in its basement, Century Centre is a handsome building reflecting the architecture of the Raj. Curiously, its main entrance inside is dominated by Gajalakshmi, who, if we are not mistaken, was a feature of the old building too!

The huge pediment with decorated bas relief scrollwork, the fluted Corinthian pillars (the acanthus leaves on the capitals slightly altered) and the balustrades of Century Centre, are all a throwback to the early 19th Century East India Company era, before Chisholm and Irwin made Indo-Saracenic respectable. And so, Century Centre is a faithful reflection of the buildings seen in our OLD this fortnight.

The first of the OLD is the handsome original building of the Madras Club, now a shell in the Indian Express Estate and awaiting settlement of all litigation to, perhaps, be restored



Scrip-tease by Sensex

There's an unexpected rally in the stock markets over the past few weeks. Brokers and analysts had been bracing themselves for the subdued, and, needless to say, unprofitable trend to continue until the next Budget presentation. Expectations centered on the next Government continuing with the liberalisation of the economy. Even the spurt in the Sensex during early February was considered to be an aberration rather than a harbinger of better times. But with the FII's turning the heat on, a sustained rally ensued and



everybody has apparently jumped onto the bandwagon. The fortnight ending April 24th alone saw the Sensex jumping 400 points to reach an 18-month high at 3869.

BSE's trading volume on the 24th touched Rs. 550 cr, another record high, as the Sensex gained over 1000 points over the last three months. Heavy trading is gradually becoming the norm at all major stock exchanges (SEs). The Indian marketmen, who had settled themselves to spend the run-up to the elections glued to reports on the elections rather than on the market, have benefitted from the FII's. More than Rs 4173 cr has been pumped in by foreign investors in the first four months of the current year. And the buying which has been the heaviest in April looked set to cross

as a heritage hotel. Built by developing a garden house taken over in 1832, it was around 1850 that the building took its existing form. A magnificent ballroom and smoking room and its huge portico are features of this Pantheon-styled building that's still as solid as solid can be.

Of the same era, opening its doors in 1850, is the second of our OLD this fortnight, Pachaiyappa's Hall, modelled on the Athenian Temple of Theseus and favouring tall Doric columns. A building under threat, it survives precariously but solidly on N S C Bose Road, dominating the Flower Bazar scene.

The third of our OLD is of late 19th Century, early 20th Century vintage. Now known as Kushaldas Gardens, it was the Maharajah of Travancore's Madras Palace (Note the elephant crest on the pediment).

As in the OLD, the NEW! Pediments, Greek-style pillars, balustrades, Indian architecture hasn't moved very far, has it? (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY except those of the Madras Club and Kushaldas Gardens, which are by SUSHEELA NAIR.)

Rs 1566 cr by the month-end. Some experts attribute this 'bull run' to FII's pushing up the prices to escape at still higher levels. The yo-yo action in Reliance is being explained as being the direct result of its GDR prices quoting higher than the domestic equity's. It would therefore make sense for foreign investors to buy in India and sell abroad. However, there are better and fundamentally stronger reasons for this rally, reasons which reveal foreign investors having more confidence in the sustenance of democracy in India — more than their Indian counterparts themselves! It thus shows a series of favourable factors being capitalised upon at a most opportune time.

The possible factors are:

- The recently published Economic and Social Survey of Asia and Pacific predicts Indian growth (5.7 per cent in 1995) in the next two years to be ahead of the rest of South Asia (at 6.3 and 6.5 per cent).
- Upgrading of Indian weightage in the Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Index from 6 per cent to 7.2 per cent.
- Entry of another 45 FII operators into the country.
- Diversion of funds from the high-priced capital markets of the West to the lower-priced Indian market.
- The possibility of one of the major political parties forming a stable Government, with or without a coalition, at the Centre and, thus, continuing the liberalised economic policies.
- And, finally, the strength of the Indian democracy, which is the world's largest and where still the ballot rules and not the bullet.

Major sellers like the UTI, IDBI, etc. are slowing down, anticipating better margins. With frenzied activity continuing in blue chips like TELCO, ACC, RIL, unsatiated investors are moving over to midcap stocks and the market could touch yet another peak. What is of major import is the possibility of the Sensex crossing the all-too-important 4000 mark. While its ebbs and flows point against this vital barrier being breached in the immediate future, a concatenation of factors, like reduced Government expenditure and benefits from the latest credit policy, could see an easing of the liquidity crunch. If such a bountiful event were to take place, the market could literally zoom upwards, bringing relief to the beleaguered investors.

K. Gopalakrishnan

Election musings *

Madras Musings is apolitical.

Politics comes way down in our priorities, below history, economics, literature, medicine, humour, shopping-info, the arts, sports ... say, just above the obituary column! And yet, when the election winds blow, even MM must look at politics.

First of all, let us record our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Mr Seshan for sparing us those horrendous cut-outs. Thank you, Sir, for saving our Madras skyline from cut-outs. The noise-pollution levels were also much less this time around. The credit for all this must go to the C.E.C. and his mates. So good a job have they done that this scribe and many others feel that if it is a 'Hung Parliament' that we get, till next elections, may be our CEC should run the country. Since he has managed to clean up to a great extent the Augean Stables of our elections, may be he will be able to do something about that Mega-Augean stable that is Government! May be we should give him a chance! Pipe dreams, did you say? Well, there is no law against dreaming, is there?

In Madras they say the winds are blowing against the ruling party. Those who are pro-ruling party point out all the good done for the city — the roads are in much better shape, better lit than ever, and even storm-water drains are being put in. Why, even Fords are coming in! But those against say that the hundred-crore-wedding wiped out all the good that was done, if any was done, that is. And after five years of recurrent traffic-blockades, all two-, three- and four-wheeler users have one suggestion — the next C.M. should be housed in Fort St George itself, so that the roads of Madras are free once more for her citizens. All Z category politicians of Madras may be housed in a special barricaded fortress — say, as safe as Central Jail. All put together in one place, they will save the nation a lot of money too; no more petrol-guzzling motorcades and less Black Cats to feed.

No one can deny that our leaders provide us endless amusement, entertainment and food for lampooning. We are all indebted to them for providing a lighter side to life. And despite them, India moves on; that is the greatness and resilience of our country. Indeed, the greatest achievement of Narasimha Rao is that "he did nothing to disturb" the country's slow day-to-day progress. In obstetrics, it is said, masterly inactivity and watchful expectancy are the qualities that make an ideal obstetrician. You see, nature does the job during delivery! Likewise, India runs herself; the Prime Minister's job is like that of an obstetrician and the role has suited Rao to a T.

No one knows who is going to win this time. Not even the astrologers! Hedging your bets on any one? I know I am looking forward to seeing Prannoy Roy's post-voting pre-reults analysis. Until then, adieu!

Be that as it may, let us citizens of Madras put forward a people's manifesto for the respectful consideration of Tweedle? who comes to power.

1. The Chief Minister (C.M.) should be accessible

to the public. As in, say, neighbouring Kerala, it should be possible for any citizen to fix an appointment and see any minister or the C.M.

2. The C.M. should constitute a sounding-board, cutting across party lines and consisting of leaders in the fields of education, medicine, law, the media, architecture, history, engineering, electronics and the corporate world, who should be consulted before deciding matters of civic importance. The C.M. should meet this body at least once a month. As the members of this board will not be dependent on Government for their subsistence, they should be able to voice their opinion fearlessly. The protection of historical monuments and the heritage of Tamil Nadu in general will be specially looked into by this board. Such a think-tank will be an asset to any C.M. as a source of ideas and as a source of feedback.

3. No renaming of roads, projects or places after living political figures. Names are of historic value. Why tamper with history? Let posterity judge us; let them decide to name things after us if they so desire.

4. No statues of living political leaders to be put up in public places at public cost. Let them earn their positions in our hearts through sacrifice and service.

No one can deny that our leaders provide us endless amusement, entertainment and food for lampooning. We are all indebted to them for providing a lighter side to life. And despite them, India moves on; that is the greatness and resilience of our country. Indeed, the greatest achievement of Narasimha Rao is that "he did nothing to disturb" the country's slow day-to-day progress. In obstetrics, it is said, masterly inactivity and watchful expectancy are the qualities that make an ideal obstetrician. You see, nature does the job during delivery! Likewise, India runs herself; the Prime Minister's job is like that of an obstetrician and the role has suited Rao to a T.

No one knows who is going to win this time. Not even the astrologers! Hedging your bets on any one? I know I am looking forward to seeing Prannoy Roy's post-voting pre-reults analysis. Until then, adieu!

— Hiramalini Seshadri
*This article was written a week before polling began.

• ELECTION SIDELIGHTS

Singing the voters awake

In the hour of political jingles, Tamil Nadu makes its own rules. Hit songs of the likes of A R Rahman and Ilayaraja can be recorded for a mere Rs. 37, the only difference being that the singers are local partywallahs and the lyrics range from the adulatory to the defamatory.

Each political party in Tamil Nadu was ready with cassettes on songs to its glory months in advance of the election. All the major parties, the AIADMK, DMK and the Congress(I) have their own singers.

When the Congress office in Madras burned after the tie-up with the AIADMK, 56-year-old Kesavan, a staunch Congressman, was there belting out a number portraying Prime Minister Narasimha Rao as a hapless victim. 'Tape' Chinnappa adds: "The minute I heard the Congress was in trouble, I came all the way from Madurai to sing and cheer the crowd."

A 'political' singer gets between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 from partymen, some of whom break into a dance in accompaniment. During the elections, a singer can make a neat Rs. 2000 a day. After the elections, he gets back to being a small-time entertainer at village weddings and other functions. Others turn into roadside minstrels.

Says Ponnuswamy, who is singing for the DMK's campaign: "I am neutral as far

as parties are concerned and have been a singer for 15 years. I just sing the lyrics any party gives me. This time I am singing for the DMK."

Each party also has its own lyricists. The Tamil new-wave poet, Valampuri John, writes lyrics for the Congress(I). An out-of-work music director, Shankar, now pens and conducts his troupe in his village for the AIADMK. And thanks to Rajnikant, the DMK has roped in the popular Tamil film director, Deva, who has rendered hit songs for the actor's last three films.

While the AIADMK has songs from MGR's films, the DMK-Tamil Maanila Congress combine woos voters with the latest Rajnikant numbers.

In a state where reel-life heroes have a larger-than-life image, political rallies and meetings are no fun without film music. But with the Election Commission playing spoilsport and banning music on loudspeakers after midnight, these live programmes are the only way to keep the starry-eyed voter glued to the meeting venue.

— Sudha G Tilak

A matter of symbolism

The Diarist writes:

"For political parties the symbol is often the substance. The Congress (T) had asked for a symbol featuring a woman whose resemblance to

one Indira Gandhi was not too difficult to gauge. The EC okayed the symbol, but changed the physiognomy. V Gopalaswamy of the MDMK, the breakaway group from the DMK, was as miffed as N D Tiwari with the E.C. He had asked for a bicycle as his election symbol, but was given the humble umbrella. Little did Gopalaswamy know how the Indian summer and Tamil habits would happily conspire to make his election symbol the most potent in Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil Nadu, summer is when every Tamil, irrespective of his favourite filmstar, sorry, ideology, carries a broly. Gopalaswamy's election workers realised this was publicity worth its spread in gold. And free too. All DMK cadres had to do was to stress *ad nauseam* that the umbrella, that great protector against the elements, means the MDMK.

Proof of success has come from an infuriated DMK leadership, which has banned party workers from using umbrellas while campaigning, never mind the heat. More telling, a man attending an AIADMK rally was roughed up by the cops who thought he was an MDMK fifth columnist. All the poor soul had done was to open and shut his broly a few times. (Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: No comment. This is the silly season for stories!



From the fringes... to the centre

All the building betwixt and between the date palms and other vegetation — especially the Metro's elevation, on right — provide a better clue to what park this is. It's Government Estate, here photographed from Adam's Road (Swami Sivananda Salai).

The entire estate — a huge lung in the City, which could have been developed as a trade exhibition centre, retaining the natural ambience, is now being earmarked for highrise accommodation for MLAs, quarters for Government staff and even shops, Madras Musings understands. Surely development on more environmentally friendly grounds needs to be looked at! Surely this beautiful park-complex needs to be restored to its former sylvan scene!

Madras Musings hopes the new Government and its planners will take a second look at the plans for Government Estate and, treating it as a heritage complex, discuss those plans with environmentalists and conservationists. If only we had a Heritage Council, life would have been simpler! (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Holding a mirror to society

He was a pioneer of South Indian Cinema, whose ability to scout talent was as legendary as his organisational and managerial skills. He made several memorable Tamil movies like *Balayogini*, and *Thyagabhoomi*, but he also made the first Hindi film in Madras. He was a committed filmmaker who realised that cinema was a powerful medium which could be used as a tool of social protest to bring about changes in social awareness. Making films that held a mirror to society, Subramaniam attained fame as a writer, producer, director and studio owner.

Krishnaswami Subramaniam, a lawyer-turned-filmmaker was from Papanasam, a small town in the Thanjavur District. His father was a successful lawyer in the temple-town of Kumbakonam and, sticking to the tradition prevailing in most South Indian Brahmin families, Subramaniam too studied law and became a lawyer. He married into a wealthy lawyer's family in Nagapattinam. His wife Meenakshi had a flair for classical Carnatic music. She sang well and could compose music too. In later years, she was the music composer for some of her husband's films.

Subramaniam practised law for a short while, but his mind was not on it. He was drawn to the new medium of cinema, then silent, yet eloquent. He joined another pioneer, R. Padmanabhan of Sivaganga, and they worked in Madras on silent films. Padmanabhan brought from Bombay another greater pioneer of Indian cinema, sadly forgotten today, Raja Sandow.

Sandow, though a 'Madras' (he was P.K. Nagalingam of Pudukkottai), had never worked in his home state, but he was a big name in Bombay. Though he had won fame as a silent film action hero, he was well aware of the potential of the medium and its sociological uses. When he came to Madras to direct his first silent film, *Anathai Penn* (1930), Subramaniam worked with him, learning the ropes of film-making. Raja Sandow made several more silent films in Madras, and Subramaniam worked on all them, biding his time till he could launch out as an independent film-maker.

M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, the first super star of South Indian cinema, was then a top-flight stage star. When movies began to talk in Tamil, with *Kalidas* in 1931, Bhagavathar decided to produce a film, based on one of his stage hits. The same idea occurred to a wealthy Nattukkottai Chettiar businessman interested in movies, Al. Rm. Alagappa Chettiar, and his friend S.M. Lakshmana-

nan Chettiar, an enterprising businessman, pioneer dealer of motor cars in Chettinad, and a 'drama contractor'. Popularly known as 'Lena', he rose to become a successful film producer and, during the 1940's-50's he was a force in Madras in social and business circles. Lena knew Bhagavathar well and persuaded him to drop his plans and work for Alagappa Chettiar. When Bhagavathar was in Karaikudi staging *Pavalakodi*, Lena invited K. Subramaniam to come from Madras and see the play. When the two Chettiars and Subramaniam saw *Pavalakodi*

bestowed movie stardom on them. The debutant film-maker too attracted attention.

Pavalakodi featured fifty songs and this was advertised with pride. The composer was another legend of South Indian cinema, Papanasam Sivan (MM, March 16, '96)

Subramaniam next went to Calcutta to make *Bhaktha Kuchela* and *Naveena Sarangadhara* (1936). In *Bhaktha Kuchela* he introduced something new which created a sensation. S D Subbulakshmi played an unusual double role, that of Susheela, Kuchela's wife, and also of Lord Krishna. A



K. Subramaniam, Pioneering Film-Maker

(Photo Courtesy: RAGAMI)

a two-in-one film, *Kausalya Parinayam* and *Mr Ammanji*. During the Thirties, the practice was to club two or three films and release them as a single package. Invariably a comedy short was part of the package and Subramaniam used it with success. He built a studio in the heart of Madras — Motion Pictures Producers' Combines (MPPC) — which was for some years a beehive of activity. (MPPC Studio later became Gemini Studio and created film history under S S Vasani. This great venue of classical picture-making vanished some years ago, much to the regret of many, and today the hallowed site is a concrete jungle.)

Subramaniam brought-down several Bengali technicians to settle in Madras and work for him. Thus, he helped the growth of cinema in Madras. Noted cinematographers Sailen Bose and Kamal Ghosh, audiographer Jyotish Sinha, and the famed make-up wizard Haripadachandra (Hari Babu) were some of those whose contribution to South Indian cinema has been immense and memorable.

(To be continued next fortnight)

They made OUR Madras A walk down Memory Lane with RANDOR GUY

together, they decided to picture it using the same theatre troupe. Thus began the illustrious career of K Subramaniam.

Pavalakodi (1934) was produced in Madras at Meenakshi Cinetone (now Satya Studio). Directed by Subramaniam, Bhagavathar and the popular stage actress of the day, S D Subbulakshmi, played the lead roles. Attractive and talented SDS could act, sing and dance. (Soon she married her director.) MKT-SDS were a popular pair on stage and the success of their first film

woman performing both female and male roles in a movie was daring to say the least, and helped make the film a success. In *Naveena Sarangadhara*, a song rendered by Bhagavathar, 'Sivaperuman Kirupai Vendum' became a super hit and is one of the immortal melodies of Tamil cinema.

In 1937 Subramaniam turned producer with SDS and others and promoted the Madras United Artistes' Corporation (MUAC), a famous name in South Indian film history. Ever an innovator, he made MUAC's first production

From the South to the North — with love

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Banyan, a home for mentally ill destitute women, started by two young women who gave up high profile jobs to help the unfortunate, has just restored to their families in North India four women who had been found wandering in Madras.

When *Madras Musings* drew attention to The Banyan, it was the first City publication to do so (MM, September 16, 1994). The Banyan has spread wide since then, with the help of various public personalities and institutions. Now it would seem that its spread has taken in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Recently, The Banyan restored 40-year-old Ramkumari to her home in Pratapgarh District, U.P., 26-year-old Ganga of Delhi to a family in Delhi who have 'adopted' her, and 35-year-old Meera and 38-year-old Gyan Bai to their

kin in Madhya Pradesh. All of them are schizophrenics who had wandered far from home.

Ramkumari, whose schizophrenia was diagnosed eight years ago, was treated at an Institute of Mental Health in U.P. for two years and released as improved. She went back to her village but was found missing after a flood and was

presumed dead. In fact, she had wandered far... Bombay and Calcutta are in her memory... before finding herself in Madras. Local Good Samaritans led her to The Banyan. And persistent inquiries made by personnel of The Banyan enabled her to be united with her family — on the day her eldest daughter was getting married!

MADRAS FIRST

(Continued from P 1)

organisations. But whoever takes the lead, it needs to be sooner than later if Madras is to be saved from gridlock.

The challenge is for all concerned to get together and support such a private initiative and work with it as a team. Are the governmental and non-governmental organisations of Madras up to the challenge of backing as a team a commercial and industrial leadership committed to a better Madras?

The ananda of Arangham

A moist afternoon in Mylapore, an intense rehearsal session concluded... perspiration steaming without, teeming unrest within... probing questions, self-doubt... my views on dance, presentation, performance, choreography, artistic freedom and choice... words stumbling over one another in an incoherent stream. Listening patiently was my guru Madurai N. Krishnan and renowned dancer Sudharani Raghupathy.

When words had been exhausted, it was clear that what I needed to do was crystallise my strong stirrings under an umbrella that would allow my experiences in dance and media, as well as the influences of my work in India and America, to find a voice. The name for this fledgling organisation, I said, needed to be one word — simple to utter by international tongues — and it had to be Tamil. It was then that Sudharani suggested the name ARANGHAM. It was perfect! Denoting a performance space, it resonated with my ideas of creating lively interactions with the plastic, visual and performing arts.

And so it was, on the verandah of Sudharani's graceful home in Madras, that the Arangham Trust was born. To her I owe a debt of gratitude for encouraging me to publish 'Narthaki', the directory of classical Indian dance, and for goading me to fine-tune my concept and choreography in *Paanchajanyam*, my first full-length ballet based on the

crafts, free outdoor performances, cuisine and a range of educational programmes. This is the first time that there is a focus on the South in London and Gayathri Krishnaswamy, who is coordinating the festival

for the World Circuit Arts of UK, is enthusiastic about how many parts of London will have the South Indian look. Anne Hunt and Laura Lang have travelled in South India during the past year witnessing many performances. They finally chose Somu Rao and his colleagues from Thanjavur for the *poikkal kudirai* performance, which will be the feature of the grand opening at Covent Garden. *Poikkal kudirai* is a spectacle that was encouraged by the Maratha kings in their processions and has various acrobatic and entertaining aspects to it.

Somu Rao is a traditional *poikkal kudirai* artist struggling to make ends meet. He is the best artist we have and is greatly skilled on his stilts. He makes his own horses with *papier mache* and decorates them aesthetically. He has trained his wife and daughter and dances with them. Somu Rao went to Russia for the Festival of India there and is really excited about going to London with the family.

The Bharata Naryam performance will be by the sprightly Alarmel Valli, and Carnatic music will be by U Srinivas on his mandolin. There will be an extraordinary double bill by vocalist Balamurali Krishna and Chitraveena Ravikiran in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank. Both child prodigies have grown up to be very strongly individualistic and mature artists. It should be an interesting contrast, one older and adventurous, the other younger and more traditional, both brilliant.

There will also be an exhibition of film posters from Madras and TWO film poster painters from Chandra Arts in Madras are going to London to paint some hoardings on the South Bank itself!

Tamil literary epic *Divya Prabandham*.

All the projects initiated through Arangham have begun with an idea, a feeling or a gut instinct. Casual meetings with artistes have become full-fledged performances: an informal chat over a cup of coffee with an impresario resulted in a wildly applauded American dance tour; the reuniting with an old friend from New York culminated in an all-woman's dance festival... A blend of feeling and flexibility, passion and planning, imagination and discipline is what has shaped the Arangham Trust.

In the four years of our presence in the artscape of Madras, sculptors, poets, painters, writers, musicians,



Anita Ratnam of the Arangham Trust.

theatre and film directors, actors, photographers, videographers and graphic designers from across India and abroad have entered our arangham (arena). Though dance-led, Arangham Trust has attempted to create dynamic relations with other art forms. In today's dialogue of contemporary movement, we have recognised the vital need for a holistic approach to the arts. From 'Narthaki' to 'Purush' it has been four intensely creative years and in the future we hope the ananda (joy) that has propelled Arangham will remain the mainstay of our artistic personality.

Anita Ratnam
(Founder/Director, writing in the annual report of ARANGHAM)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Nobel Laureate Lech Walesa of Poland; 2. V. Abdulla; 3. The New Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi; 4. Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka; 5. Ron Brown; 6. Mad Cow disease; 7. Because of the unusually large number of candidates, 1033; 8. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka; 9. Phoolan Devi; 10. Bill Clinton; 11. Youngest to pilot an aircraft cross-U.S.; 12. M. Karunanidhi; 13. Thomas Enqvist; 14. Hindustan Lever Limited; 15. The new emission norms;

— V R Devika

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period April 1 to 15.)

1. The former President of an European country returned to his old job of electrician because he needed the \$ 120 that came as pay. Who?
2. Which Madras-based translator was awarded the third 'Yatra Award' recently?
3. The world's biggest bank made its debut on April 2nd in Japan. Name it.
4. Which cavalier batsman smashed a world record century in one-day internationals in only 48 balls?
5. Name the high profile U.S. Commerce Secretary killed in an air crash.
6. As a fallout of the disease Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Britain's business revenue has been heavily hit in the EU. How is the disease better known?
7. Why was the assembly elections in the Modakurichi constituency in Periyar District put off?
8. The Premier of which neighbouring country had her civil rights restored after nearly two decades?
9. The U.P. Government created a record of sorts by providing 'X' category security to an individual with a big criminal record. Who?
10. A powerful President of a country is to play a cameo in *A Child's Wish* in which he meets a child with terminal cancer desiring to see him. Who?
11. Jessica Dubroff's attempt to set a new record led to her death, thus causing dismay worldwide. What record did the seven-year-old plan to set?
12. Which political leader of Tamil Nadu was honoured to mark the Golden Jubilee of his entry into tinseltown?
13. Who won the singles title in the inaugural ATP Tour tennis event, the Indian Open in New Delhi, recently?
14. According to a recent report, which company was the highest advertising spender in 1995 (spending Rs 109.81 crore)?
15. Two of the more popular motorbikes, Yamaha RX 100 and KB 100, had to be withdrawn because of a new rule which came into effect from April 1st. What rule?

(Answers on p. 7)

There's money in the fish tank

"Watching them relieves my mental tension and soothes my frazzled nerves," feels S Sumathi, a housewife. "It is the only silent way of having pets," advises Dimi Isaac, an ornamental fish consultant. "Unlike dogs and cats, these pets are not messy nor costly to maintain. Moreover, you do not get emotionally attached to them. If one of them dies, you throw it out of the window and replace it with another," says a

course, cost extra. Many families are beginning to take this hobby seriously and spend quite a lot on it. There are serious hobbyists who have erected a biologically balanced tub spending thousands of rupees! There are special table top models which can be erected at a cost ranging from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 35,000!

Except for changing the water in the tank, not much labour is involved in this hobby. Even the feed for the fish does

country. If the farming is done on scientific lines, this turnover could double in five years, feels MPEDA. This is supported by the fact that more than 100 small traders have opened shops in Madras in the last two years.

Almost all the inland sales in this largely unorganised trade are in the four metropolitan cities till now. The MPEDA puts the number of full-time farmers at 200 and part-time farmers at 1500 in the country. In Madras alone there are only 30 full-time farmers.

Starting its operations with a modest investment of Rs. 3 lakh in 1987, SIA expanded its business with terms loans from TDICI and Bank of Baroda. Today, its annual turnover is Rs. 60 lakh, inclusive of export earnings to the tune of Rs. 7 lakh. And business is growing at 15% every year.

The world trade in ornamental fish is estimated at 4.5 billion US dollars. The USA alone imports 500 million dollars worth of tropical fish every year, as eight per cent of its 86 million homes have fish tubs! In the case of UK, Belgium and Italy the percentage of tanks in homes is even higher. Japan, China, Australia and



Dimitri Isaac, an aquarium consultant, with the aquarium he installed at the Apollo Cancer Hospital. (Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN.)

South Africa are other countries where the hobby is popular.

Today, 80 per cent of the world's demand is met by breeders in Southeast Asia from countries like Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan and Indonesia. "Ornamental fish farming is a cottage industry there and government incentives for mass breeding have enabled them to become world leaders," says Subramaniam.

India, with its large numbers of rivers, lakes and ponds and its favourable climate, is ideally suited to become a major player in the world. Its rivers and lakes are virtual goldmines for ornamental fish. Many of the Indian species, like catfish, dwarf and giant gourami, and barbs are popular abroad and command a good premium. Apart from the freshwater fish, marine ornamental fish are also available in abundance in coastal regions. Most of the species found in Indian waters meet the criteria to be accepted

as pets, namely:

- Attractive colour;
- Adaptability to living in confinement;
- Peaceful nature; and
- Adaptability to consuming varieties of food.

Another advantage of tropical fish farming, as compared to shrimp farming, is that vast tracts of land are not needed and environmental degradation does not result. "With just ten lakh rupees, you can put up a ten-acre farm with the latest technology," says Subramaniam. According to an MPEDA project estimate, a profit of Rs. 10 lakh can be earned on an investment of Rs. 30 lakh. And if done on a mass-scale, the revenue would treble.

Apart from the lack of awareness about the export potential, the main problems for a breeder in India are the lack of an uninterrupted supply of good water and the feed for the fish.

• by Venkatachari Jagannathan

hobbyist. Says S Vasanth, "Initially there was some opposition from the family, but later, when the fish began to reproduce and multiply the whole family got deeply interested!"

The hobby of having ornamental fish as pets is fast becoming popular in India. In fact, designing an aquarium to add beauty to a plush interior has become the 'in' thing for many a modern day architect.

You need only Rs. 150-200 to get an adequate glass tank for the fish and a couple of exotic fish to start with. Additional accessories, like illuminators, colour chips and motor, of

not cost more than Rs. 30-50 a month.

On the commercial front, trading in ornamental/tropical fish is big business now. Tropical fish farming has a good export potential. "Whether it is inland or export, the prospects for the business are good, since every room in a home can sport a tub," says M Subramaniam, Public Relations Officer, Southern India Aquarists (SIA).

According to the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), the retail/wholesale turnover of the trade in these fish in Madras alone is around Rs. 1.5 crore a year and it is around Rs. 10 crore in the

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:

READY FOR THE
EXPANDING HORIZONS OF THE
AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY



Amalgamations Group

In every vital area of national life



Ashok Leyland

GLOBAL STANDARDS. GLOBAL MARKETS



HINDUJA
GROUP

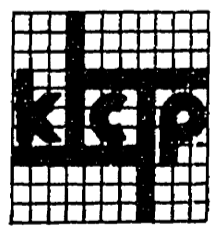
A V Thomas & Co

Bank of Madura Ltd.
Banking by Design

INDIA CEMENTS LTD.

Manufacturers of
Sankar Cement
and
Coromandel Cement

The **Deep** Group



Dr. P.V. Cheriaan Crescent
Madras - 600 105 Tel: 8270687
Manufacture of Heavy Industrial
Machinery & Cement - Design,
Manufacture, Supply & Erection of
Complete Cement & Sugar Plants.

NO MORE BATHROOMS

ONLY
GLAMOURROOMS

by
Parryware

EID Parry (India) Limited,
Ceramics Division,
Dare House, Madras-600 001



No one treats your skin
like Pond's

Rane

32, Cathedral Road, Madras - 600 86.

Steering gears - Manual & Power
Steering linkages & Ball joints
Brake Linings & Clutch products
Engine Valves & Valve guides
Camshafts & Tappets

THE **SANMAR** GROUP

8, Cathedral Road, Madras 86.

- Chemicals • Thermoplastics
- Engineering • Electronics
- Shipping • Textiles
- Property Development
- Footwear & Exports
- Financial Services

SPIC

Group of Companies

- Agribusiness • Chemicals &
Petrochemicals • Pharmaceuticals
- Services

Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation Limited,
97, Mount Road, Guindy, Madras - 600 032.
Ph: 2350245; Telex: 041-8921 & 8908; Fax: 2352163



**Sundram Fasteners
Limited**