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## MADRAS

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## MUSINGS

Vol. VI No. 8

FREE ISSUE

Aug. 1 — 15, 1996

A letter to  
the C.M.

Dear Chief Minister,

May I bring the following facts to your kind attention?

Before the British there was no Madras. Or Madrapatnam or Madarasapatnam or Madrasapatnam. But neither was there Chennapatnam, Chinnapatnam, or Chinnakuppam, leave alone Chennai! I have not been able to trace either name to before 1639 and would be very glad to correct all my books if the sources for a prior Chennai can be cited.

As far as I have been able to discover in the India Office Library, London, and the Tamil Nadu Archives, there are half a dozen reasons cited for the name Madras, none of them definitive. As for Chennapatnam, it occurs only once and as part of an alleged request that the new settlement Francis Day and Andrew Cogan were creating be named after Chennappa Nayak. This followed the grant to the East India Company of the barren strip of no man's sand, on which Fort St George was to come up, by Damarla Venkatappa Nayak,

the 'governor' appointed for this region by the Rajah of Chandragiri, the last holder of waning Vijayanagar 'power'. Venkatappa of Wandiwash and Ayyappa of Poonamallee, who negotiated the grant, wanted the new settlement to be named after their father Chennappa. As things turned out, the British named their settlement Madrasapatnam and the Indian settlers of 'Black Town', mostly

ALSO SEE  
PAGE 2

Telugus, named their town Chennapatnam in deference to the wishes of the Telugu Nayaks.

What existed before Madras in this region were the ancient towns of Mylapore, Tiruvanniyur, Tiruvottriyur, Ezhambur etc, all of them now absorbed by the Madras that grew out of Fort St George. To have re-

named Madras as Mylapore, after the great port of the Pallavas from whence went the culture of this part of the world to the lands of the east, I would have understood. But Chennai is beyond me, even if it is in everyday use in official Tamil. In fact, ever since I can remember, in the deep south and other rural areas of Tamizhakam, Madras has always been 'Pattinam' till official Tamil changed it. In those circumstances, why not even 'Pattinam'?

More realistically, if resurrection of Tamil glory is the reason for the proposed name change, may I suggest that the Honourable Chief Minister go all the way and move the capital — founded by foreign influences — to Madurai or Thanjavur or somewhere in between like Tiruchchirappalli in the heartland of Tamizhakam? Such a move would not only give Tamil Nadu a capital with a Tamil name in the heart of the Tamil land, but also locate it in a more central place for everyone in the State and, simultaneously, decongest Madras, a

*Madras by any  
other name...*

From Peking to Beijing  
Pondicherry to Poovai  
Or the latest Bombay to Mumbai  
Now Madras will be Chennai  
But this city by any other name  
Will remain just the same

The Cooum stagnates with effluent  
Drains remain blocked, water full of pollution  
Roads potholed, telephones with cross-connections  
Traffic uncontrolled, disorder beyond redemption  
Madras by any other name  
Will remain inefficiently the same

Rubbish and rubble spill out of tenements  
Hawkers and tradesmen squat on the pavements  
Cyclists and two-wheelers interweave suicidally  
Bullock carts and lorries ply indiscriminately  
Madras by any other name  
Will remain chaotically the same

Autos hold the public to ransom  
PTC/DAT conductors load their buses to fulsome  
Police turn a blind eye to traffic violations  
Public servants eagerly wait for DA and donations  
Madras by any other name  
Will remain deplorably the same

Alas the Madras species will become extinct  
Famous Madras Coffee will be tastelessly indistinct  
Even Madras Eye will need redefinition  
Bleeding Madras will fade into humdrum existence  
Madras by any other name  
Will colourlessly remain the same

Padmini Natarajan

town founded for crass trade and commerce. *Madras Musings* and I would wholeheartedly support such a move of leaving Madras to the industrialists, businessmen, traders and Chetties for whom it was founded.

Leaving it not only to the commercial world, who enabled it to gain an international renown, but also leaving it as Madras would be to leave a memorial to the immense contribution the Madras of yesterday has made to the India of today. That contribution has ranged from governance, record-keeping, education, engineering, medicine, surveying, soldiering and a whole heap of other disciplines to establishing regional politics and the calls for Home Rule, Swaraj and federal government! All these evolved in Madras and not in Chennai — and that is worth commemorating by leaving the city where it all happened with the name with which it made its contribution.

One final word. Apart from the validity or not of the changed name, if your reason,

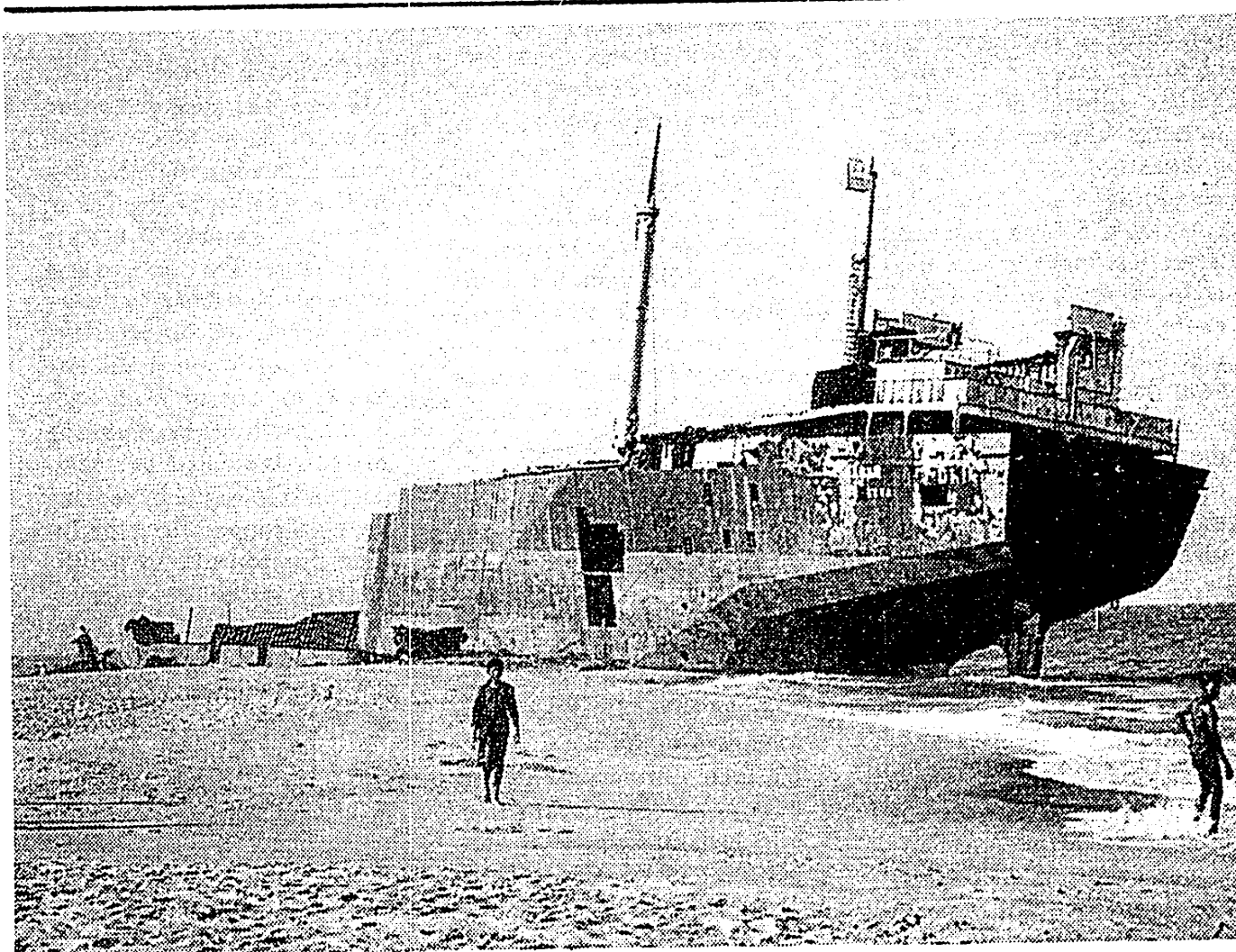
Sir, for making this change is, as reported, because Madras is of alleged foreign origin, I hope we are not going to see changes in engineering, medical, computer, management and other educational syllabi and practices, not to mention electoral, legislative and administrative conventions, almost all of which are relics of foreign influence. I hope we will continue to welcome foreign influences like Ford and Hyundai and Pilkington. And I hope that we will not go around changing such historic names as the Madras Regiment, the first regiment of the Indian Army, the Corporation of Madras (the first municipality east of Suez), the Madras Cricket Club... and, of course, of more recent vintage, *Madras Musings*.

I would be delighted to discuss this with you further, Sir, if you so wish and give me the opportunity to meet you for the purpose.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

S. Muthiah

Editor, *Madras Musings*,  
and a citizen of Madras.

Bit by bit the salvagers are chipping away at the Bangladesh ship Sagar which was beached by monsoon winds in 1994 and, soon, what is left will vanish too. Meanwhile, the beach here is a picnic-spot for sightseers and they even have a makeshift swimming pool formed by the sand and the left end of the ship. (Photograph and text by RAJIND CHRISTY.)



# Madraspatnam or Chennapatnam?

The Man From Madras Musings has nothing against going back to roots. Provided they are indeed roots. Despite the inconveniences it causes, MMM has nothing against Cawnpore becoming Kanpur, Poona becoming Pune, Trivandrum becoming Thiruvananthapuram or Tanjore becoming Thanjavur. And that is because these were all ancient towns whose names had been anglicised and an attempt was being made in the present to go back to their historic names.

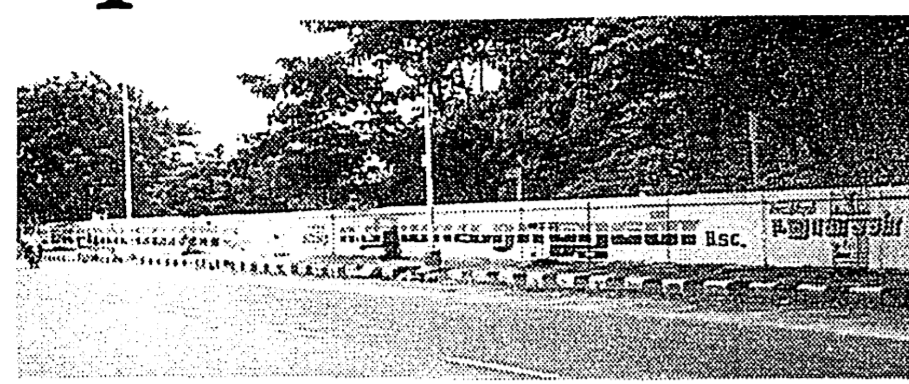
This is not the case with Madras. Before 1639 there existed no Madras on the Coromandel. Nor did there exist Chennai! How then can we "go back to" the use of Chennai when both were contemporary, one being used by the Telugus who settled by the newborn Madras and the other by those who created Madras and its Indian town?

MMM hopes the records will be looked into before a final decision is taken on re-naming Madras. He doesn't think any reference to Chennapatnam or Madraspatnam will be found in records predating 1639, but long may the search go on.

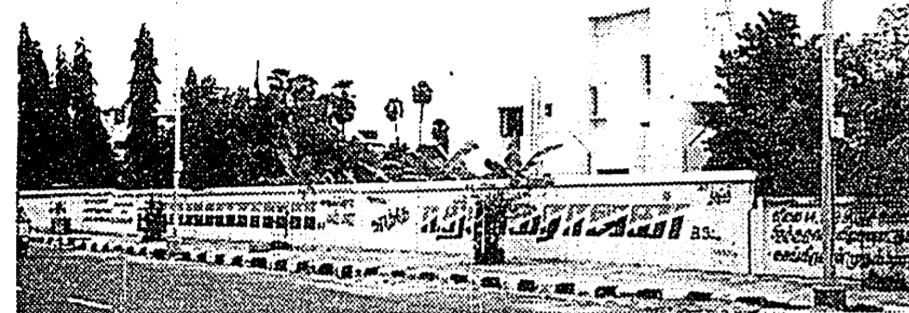
In this connection, MMM also hopes that the Government will consider another aspect of this question. The largest number of atlases produced the world over are in English. And all of them use an internationally accepted variant of the names of towns and geographic features rather than the local names. For instance, Moskva is Moscow, Praha is Prague and Roma is Rome — even in Tamil. In these circumstances, is it too much to ask for Madras to continue in English and the world's other languages and Chennai to remain in Tamil usage and officialdom, where it has long found a place. In other words, let's maintain the status quo, suggests *The Man From Madras Musings*.

## A spirited call

A megalopolis by any name will always be a disaster. With rapid urbanisation leading to greater consumerism, Man is hurtling towards self-destruction long before the second big bang overtakes the Earth. This was the theme of 'Baptism in Spirit', a bubbly talk by effervescent R Natarajan, now retired from the IAS for some time, at a recent Madras Book Club meeting. A member who had received the notice with only mention of the title and nothing stated about the content of the talk had wanted to know some days before the talk whether he could expect to be baptised in spirits on this occasion of high spirits, but in not coming to find out he missed out on a champagne presentation on the need for Man to pay greater attention to the environment than to consumer wants, to agriculture and agricultural industry and the infrastructure for them than to creating megalopolises dedicated to consumerism and the



Filling the walls TMC style... outside the Central Leather Research Institute's Kendriya Vidyalaya... and outside the home of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras on the Anna University campus. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



means to meeting the consequent wants.

This is an increasingly heard theme these days in a world being shaken by environmental degradation, but what was special on this occasion was its lively, laugh-a-minute, quote-a-second presentation. With quotes and thoughts from the Upanishads to Cambridge, from the Lake Poets to Groucho Marx, Natarajan held a most unlikely audience in thrall. In the process he had *The Man From Madras Musings* wondering how many IAS officers today could put on such a performance reflecting such erudition. Certainly none educated in Tamil Nadu, MMM is inclined to think. Speaking on the need for improvement in the quality of education and a greater focus on environmental issues being introduced in the syllabus rather than going on with the current narrow, job-oriented focus on technology, and numbers, Natarajan mentioned in passing that, in his batch, 13 out of 29 were from Madras. Was there even one in the recent batch of 150, he wondered. That's the pass we have come to, MMM commiserated with him.

A new look in education, a revival of the reading habit, closer attention to agriculture, and putting greater distance between the citizen and consumerism are the needs of today, Natarajan felt, as they would enable Man to survive longer than what he seems to be headed towards. It was Groucho Marx, he recalled, who was most grateful for the influence of television in his life; "it drove me from the drawing room to the library!" And hope!

## Three-party state?

Long gone are the days when *The Man From Madras Musings* had a political focus, even if it was only as a fellow-traveller. But when C Subramaniam once again said what needed to be said about Tamil Nadu politics, MMM not only cannot ignore these perceptions but must also recognise the opportunity it has given him to talk about what is strictly a non-political, or, perhaps, an all-party issue.

At the First State Conference of the Tamilnadu

processed in a bid to bring down the numbers outside. MMM hears that by the end of August things will be back to normal and you should be able to walk into the Consulate-General during the hours indicated.

While that is heartening news, MMM is still a little concerned about what is meant by what was described to him in a casual conversation as "back to normal". Even in the days of normalcy, MMM had always noticed long queues — maybe not quite the recent mobs — outside the Consulate-General. And doing away with such queues once and for all should be the aim. And that is what the suggestion — which could be much-refined — MMM offered last fortnight was intended to achieve.

Incidentally, MMM knows of several cases that have, on their own, gone the postal route and received their visas without any hassle. Though it did take from a few days to a few weeks. But it did demonstrate the system is workable. And if it is, MMM is sure it will do away with the ugly crowds on Mount Road that have the same attitudes and expressions as outside a ration shop.

## In brief

★ The lady driver was complaining the other day. In Jayalalitha's day, the battalions of policemen all along her route kept us waiting for hours; now, at the busiest

turned to Madras, where he discovered politics and the Janata Party, on whose behalf he unsuccessfully contested at the last elections. Now he's given up on the Party and has returned to his first love, the Sir William Jones Institute of Indological Studies he had founded shortly after retirement. Under its auspices he has founded the Madras Literary Club which holds its first meeting in the first week of August. Why a Literary Club? And Sundaram answers, "It is in and through literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its universal and sometimes timeless expression. Nothing more is needed to overcome the so-called modern man's or modernist's snobbishness in a fully changing world being brought about by the 'Information Technology Revolution'." And then he quotes Sir William, "The race of man, to advance whose manly happiness is our duty and will of course be our endeavour, cannot long be happy without virtue, nor actively virtuous without freedom, nor securely free without rational knowledge." MMM will buy that, but why Tang Chinese Poetry to start it all off, he wonders.

★ The Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry has elected its first woman vice-president in its 160-years history and two years from now Mallika Srinivasan will become its first woman president. She follows in the footsteps of her grandfather, S Anantharamakrishnan, and father, A Sivasailam. *The Man From Madras Musings* recalls that a few years ago this Wharton Business School graduate became the first woman to head the Madras Management Association. The Chief Minister was present at the Annual General Meeting at which she was elected and the incoming MCCCI president, N Srinivasan, noted that the Chamber was seeing a Chief Minister in person at one of its meetings "after five years".

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* has received more news of Nimi McConigley, once of Madras and the first Indian woman in the US to become a member of a State Legislature. She is locked in a nine-way Republican primary race which, on August 20th, will nominate one candidate to run for one of Wyoming's Senate seats. MMM hears she recently launched her campaign in California by seeking financial support from the Indian community in neighbouring states too, because Wyoming is predominantly white and has a very small minority population. Confident of Wyoming's voters who elected her to the State Legislature, McConigley seeks Indian-American funding on the grounds that, if she is elected, Indian-Americans will have a voice in the U.S. Senate.

MMM

# A tale of tired tyres

"When did you last look at your tyres?"

My interrogator was a short, stocky, tough-looking gentleman, a motor-car engineer recently out from England as a technical consultant to one of those innumerable new automobile manufacturing concerns that are popping up everywhere.

"Why, what's wrong with my tyres?" I asked. "Bald. That's what's wrong with them. Bald as the top of your head."

I raised an anxious hand. Only too well I knew what he meant.

"Yes, but..."

"No buts about it. Know what you'd get for that in the Yu Kay?"

"No, I..."

"One bald tyre, licence endorsed. Two bald tyres, licence endorsed twice. Three bald tyres, licence endorsed three times. Then they take it away from you for good, you're up before the Beak", and if he's had a rough morning with the wife, or his indigestion's playing him up again, you get a heavy fine and thirty days without the option... And no more driving for you again, ever."

I changed my glasses and with some creaking of old bones knelt on the rough gravel to inspect my tyres. Admittedly it was some time since I had been so close to them. These days I tend to leave such chores to others, and, at best, my interest in motor-cars begins only when they won't go.

"They don't wait until they're bald like that neither," my tormentor continued relentlessly. "Got a little thing they 'av, the Police, and if the tread's gone down below the limit anywhere on the tyre, you've 'ad it. They endorse your licence. Once for one bald tyre, twice for two bald tyres...."

"Yes, yes, we've been over that before. But does it matter? I mean here in Madras, not in the Yu Kay? I drive very slowly and carefully, it's only ten minutes from my house to my office and I seldom go anywhere else."

"Just ten minutes, eh!" I withered in his scorn like a drying leaf. "Know how many people you could kill in that time with bald tyres? Especially if the roads are wet or icy?"

"Icy! In Madras?"

"Well, wet then, anyway."

He glanced contemptuously around our arid streets. "It does

**One Man's  
Madras —  
HARRY  
MILLER'S**

rain here sometimes, I suppose, though I admit it doesn't look like it at the moment."

He scowled again and I winced as he dealt my precious old car an idle, derisive kick. From somewhere beneath came a crunching, crackling clatter, as of rusted metals finally capitulating.

So the next day, after miserably examining the dismal, dwindling digits of my latest bank statement, I had to send out for a new set of tyres, and a pretty penny they cost me, too. But anyway, now I can drive around the City with a clearer conscience and confidence, comforting myself that I am unlikely get my licence endorsed once, twice, or three times, nor suffer the calamity of thirty days without the option, let alone killing people wholesale when the roads are wet or icy.

Someone bought my bald old tyres without hesitation, though I could not imagine what use they would be to any-

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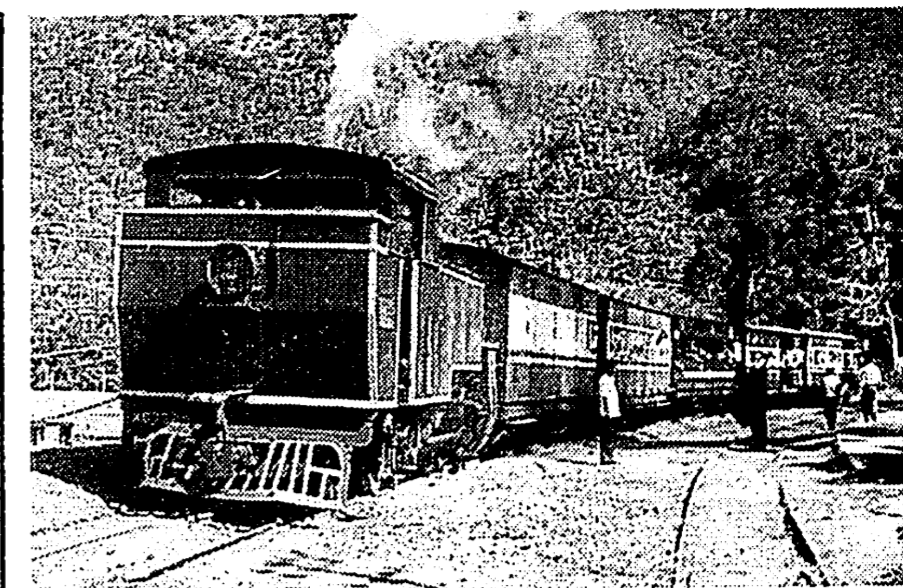
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Now that's one of the last steam engines in South India ... NOT the engine (diesel) we published in the July 1st issue of Madras Musings. This one too serves the Nilgiris hill railway. (Photo courtesy Southern Railways.)

OUR  
READERS  
WRITE

## Diesel not steam.

The top photograph published alongside the article "Swiss offer new life to Nilgiris Railways" (MM, July 1st) is that of a diesel engine and not of a steam engine as stated in the caption.

S. Sridhar,  
Chief Public Relations Officer,  
Southern Railway  
Madras 600 003

## E.C. English?

Since *Madras Musings* found the *Financial Times* piece on teaching English worthy of space, I wonder if you would be interested in the following, which I owe to my neighbour, Scott McNeil, though where he got it from I don't know.

Having chosen English as the preferred language of the European Union, the European Parliament has commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communication between Government departments.

European officials have often

pointed out that English spelling is unnecessarily difficult: for example cough, plough, through, thorough (Fowler gives NINE different pronunciations of "...ough"! — H.M.).

In the first years, for example, the committee would suggest using 's' instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants in all sites would resieve this news with joy. Then the hard 'c' could be replaced by 'k' since both letters are pronounced alike. Not only would this clear up konfusion in the minds of clerical workers, but typewriters could be made with one less letter.

There would be growing enthusiasm when, in the second year, it was a-nounced that the troublesome 'ph' would henceforth be written 'f'. This would make words like 'fotograf' twenty per cent shorter in print.

In the third year, publik akseptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible. Governments would encourage the removal of double letters which have always been a deterrent to akurate spelling.

We would al agree that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the langwidge is disgraful. Therefore we kould drop thes and kontinu to read and writ as tho nothing had hapend. By this tim it would be four years sins the skem began and peopl would be reseptiv to steps sutsh as

# A golden jubilee sans glitter

The Golden Jubilee of Vivekananda College was celebrated on June 23rd in a quiet, simple style, with Ministerial presence conspicuous by its absence. There were no officials even from the State De-

partment of Education. No one seemed to miss them.

The tone for the function was set by the devotional songs sung by Rajkumar Bharathi, grandson of the poet Bharathi. The monks of the Ramakrishna Order addressed the gathering of faculty members, students and invitees. They highlighted the "man-making, character-building" role of education.

Secular education for purposes of earning one's bread and moral and spiritual education should be synthesised.

Vivekananda College was started in 1946 with the avowed object of recognising and encouraging merit. Within the frame of the policy laid down by the Government, the College is striving to fulfil Vivekananda's concept of education. It was heartening to see the retired faculty members, of-fice staff and past members of the Management Committee honoured on the occasion. They belong to the age group 58 - past eighty. It was really a homecoming for them.

S. Jagadisan

replacing 'th' with 'z'. Perhaps zen ze funktion of 'w' kould be taken on by 'v' vish is, after al, half a 'w'. Shortly after zis, ze unnecessary 'o' kould be dropd from verds containing 'ou'. Similar arguments vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of letters.

Kontinuing zis proses yer after yer, ve vud eventuli have a reli sensibl riten styl. After twenty yers zer vud be no mor troubles, difikultis and evrivum vud fin ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze dremms of ze Government vud have kum tru."

Footnote: Meanwhile, here are a couple of other aspects of English usage. There was a wonderful story on the front page of a Madras paper the other day in which someone deplored putting the last coffin in the nail, and talked of rainwater being let into the rivers "for onward transmission" to the sea! And more recently, the city's two leading English dailies referred to a man being attacked and his palms being chopped off! The attacker must have been a first-rate surgeon!!

Harry Miller

3A Sayananarayana Ave.  
Boat Club Raod,  
Madras-600 028.

## Cannas, please

Once upon a time there were beds of canna all along the Marina beach. Packed thickly in rectangular beds, the tall lush leaves topped by bright red, yellow and speckled flowers were a pleasure to behold. Now they have been replaced by tiny pale periwinkles that go unnoticed. Could the right person in charge take note, make a decision and put the cannas back where they belong?

I wonder...

Usha Kris

5 Beach Road  
Kalakshetra Colony  
Madras 600 090

## As in the past

MMM gives the news that the MKarunanidhi Government has restored reservation in Universities for genuine Sri Lankan refugees.

In the Thirties and Forties it was quite common to see students from Sri Lanka near Ceylon in Madras colleges, especially in Women's Christian College and Madras Christian College, Tambaram. My brother tells me that pants worn by Sri Lankan students had a flair or were wider than those worn here, a forerunner, maybe, of the bell-bottoms which were adapted from sailors years later. In QMC we had quite a few students whose parents worked in Ceylon.

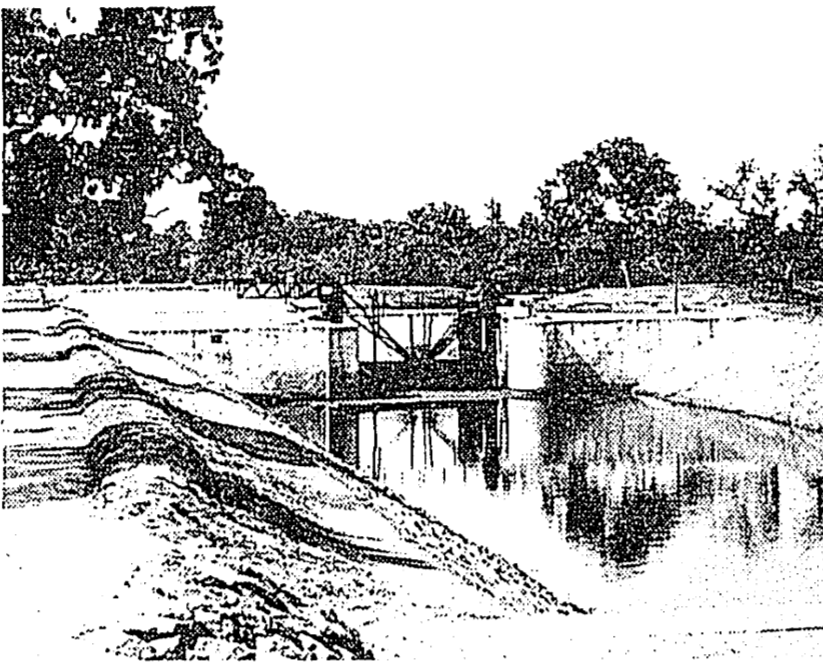
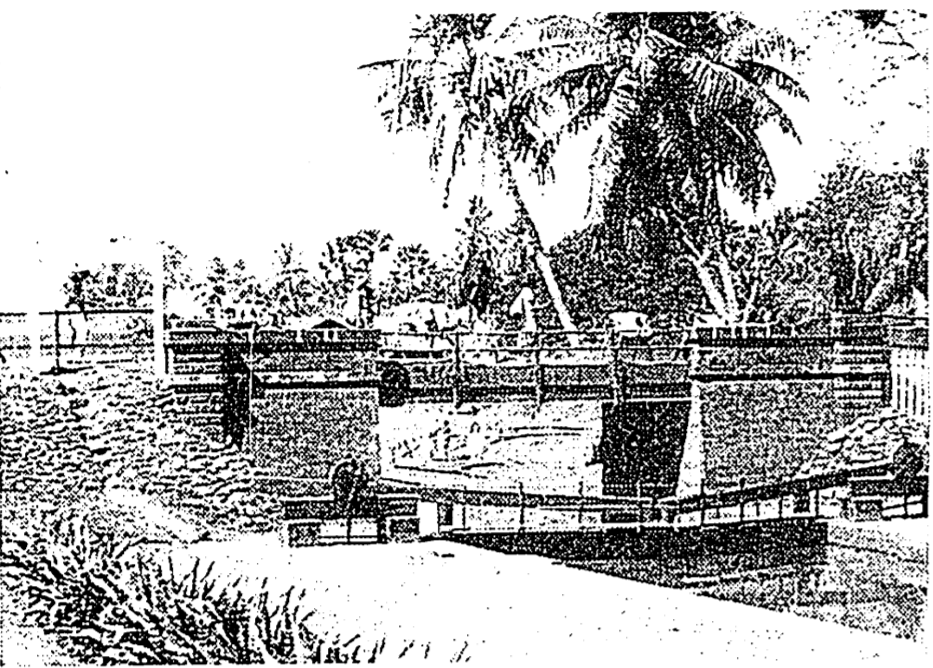
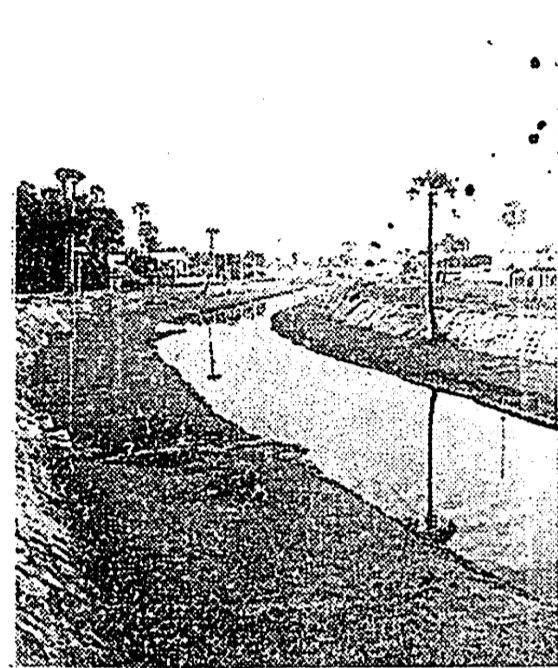
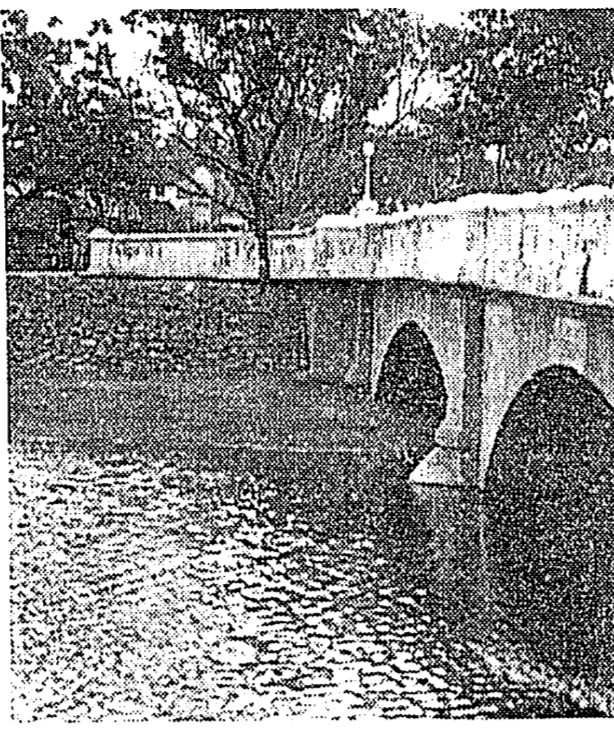
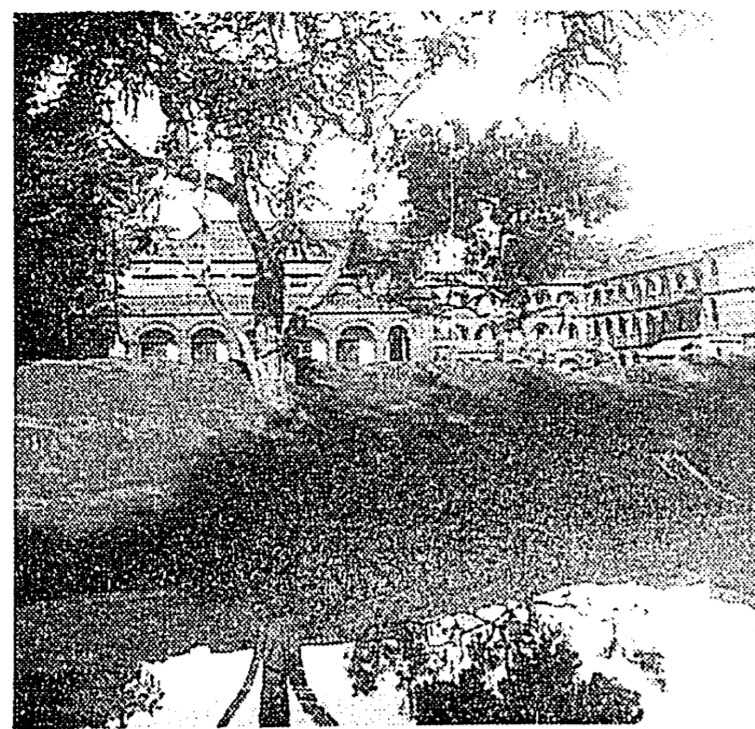
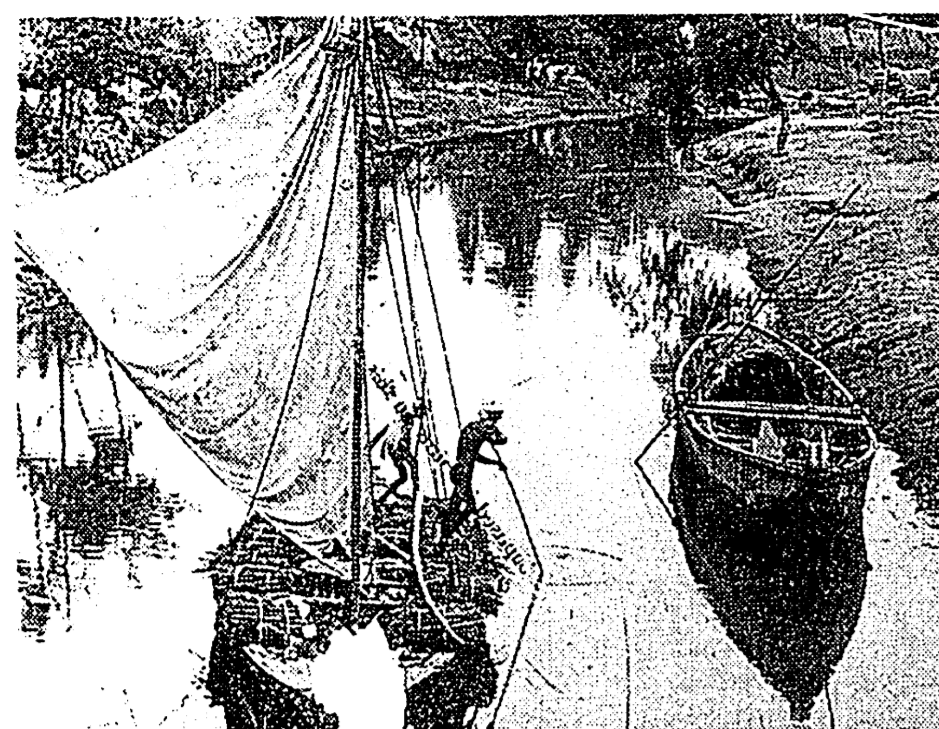
Many Indians held very lucrative jobs in Ceylon. The South Indian Railway gave free passes to its officers and their families to go to Ceylon. We, unfortunately, never made use of this, keeping on postponing the trip; meanwhile, the passes were abolished. I have always regretted the fact I missed an opportunity to see Sri Lanka. My father tried his hand at teaching in Trinity College, Kandy, but that was before I was born!

Now we hear of only bloodshed and hostility.

Anna Varki

Central St  
Kilpauk Garden Colony  
Madras 600 010





Madras Musings learns that there is a rethinking in official circles and that the City's waterways — the Adyar, the Coom, the Otteri Nallah and the Buckingham Canal — may yet get a new, free-flowing lease of life. Why, there's even talk of a Madras (or should it be Chennai!) Waterways Authority!

If these plans come through, the Buckingham Canal — built in the late 1870s in the City to link the two halves of the 650 km. long canal stretching from Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh to Markanam in Tamil Nadu — will look like these several photographs in the OLD taken by M K Rangaswamy Iyer in the 1940s and photographers of The Hindu some years later. Note the boats plying in the Canal (in the northern part of the City), the clear waters by Victoria Hostel, Chepauk, and Harris Bridge, Pudupet, and the several locks. What a contrast these pictures are to the NEW — the clogged, utterly still cesspool that the Canal has become! The Canal, as it is seen in V S RAGHAVAN's photograph, is an utter disgrace and a shame on the fair name of the City, whatever be that name!

THE OLD...

...& THE NEW



cane to using by-products effectively (molasses for distillery units and bagasse as a source of alternate energy). It is for such reasons that here (unlike in other sectors) the introduction of foreign brands by marauding MNCs is not viewed as a very serious threat. The enormity of India's drinking market presents such an attractive picture to distillery units that they can definitely expect to see their future become fizzically fit.

Also with attractive futures are:

**Bimetal Bearings (CMP: Rs 395.00):** The benefits of the boom in the user industry, automobiles, is well reflected in the year ended March 1996 results of Bimetal Bearings Ltd (BBL), of the Amalgamations Group. BBL is engaged in the manufacture of thin-

walled bearings, thrust washers, bushings etc. It has achieved a sales of Rs 63.3 cr, a 23 per cent increase over previous year. It has proposed a dividend of 50% as against 45% in the last year. EPS has grown from Rs 21.36 to Rs 25.39 on the unchanged equity of Rs 3.83 cr. The company undertook expansion of its capacity from 1.36 cr nos to 1.81 cr nos in 1995, and the full benefits are reflected in the 1995-96 results. It is now in the process of making large diameter bearings for engine and locomotive applications. With additional contribution from this line, we expect BBL to post an EPS of Rs 28.55 for 1996-97.

The counter witnessed wide fluctuations before publication of results due to the expectation of a bonus issue. But as no bonus was declared, a correction was effected. Investors can pick up this share for medium- to long-term investment.

**Shanti Gears (CMP: Rs 215.00):** Shanti Gears Limited (SGL) manufactures standard gears and custom-built ones which find applications in industrial machines, heavy engineering plants, textile machinery etc. Having been in existence for over two decades, its products have a well-established brand name and ready acceptability. Its clientele include BHEL, RIL, TISCO, L&T, Railways, Defence and others. Hence, its growth is not dependent on any particular industry. SGL is in the process of increasing its gear and foundry capacities for forging and heat treatment. The expansion programme is to be carried out in phases, and will be financed through internal accruals and debts.

The results for 1995-96 have been very encouraging. SGL has registered a jump of over 30% in turnover and its net profit has gone

(Continued on Page 6)

## New wines in newer bottles

When the talk in the markets veer around to the state of the Distillery Industry in India, observers usually point to the case history of Tamil Nadu, which at best looks like a patchwork quilt made by an indifferent mind and, worse yet, done so in fits and bursts. The State, in fact, enjoys the dubious distinction of leading the country in alcohol consumption.

The concomitant connotations are naturally many and far-reaching. In this article we will pay but passing attention to the social aspects concerning the various brews and concentrate on the state of the Distillery Industry and investment opportunities, if any.

Many a State Government — liquor being a State subject — has found itself declaring Prohibition first and then rescinding it, after finding the loss of revenues too great a burden. Tamil Nadu's repeal of dry laws came about because the annual loss of over Rs 400 cr was too much of a strain. Andhra Pradesh is seeing about Rs 300 cr vanish down the Exchequer's drain and Haryana, the latest 'dry' state, is reportedly revamping its tax and levy systems in an effort to replace the Rs 500 cr it is losing. Worse yet, the powers-that-be are unable to earn a paltry rupee from the bootleggers who fill the vacuum.

Revenue streams are not the only things blocked by the imposition of Prohibition. Other legislative measures fight for honours too and some are even proud to be termed draconian. No type or kind of product advertisements are allowed in the print or electronic media. Other laws restrict marketing and distribution rights to Government bodies, with obvious detrimental results on profit margins.

In such a litany of authoritarian woes, what is most striking (and ironic) is the cash cow image the industry has amidst governmental bodies. Taxes, excise duties, bonding levies etc. force the selling price to double or triple and, sometimes, increase even more. But despite its striking resemblance to the proverbial curate's egg, the Distillery Industry is doing far better than can be expected.

Largely using molasses as the main raw material, manufacturers in India have discovered the enormous benefits that exist in having integrated units. Activities thus range from cultivating and crushing



## A place for Madras in two French books

The Alliance Francaise's book festival, aimed at, according to its Director, Eric Echenoz, "upholding literary traditions, encouraging reading habits among the young and the old and leading them towards a wider literary awakening", will be celebrated in October this year with its theme being 'Imagination'. Last year's theme was 'Exchange' and translation was the focus. Two books held a primary place in last year's translation venture and in a literary journal, *Literary Exchange*, published by the Alliance Francaise recently.

In the journal are excerpts from the two books which

were published in France in 1995. *Madras Musings* is pleased to publish, this fortnight and next, excerpts from those excerpts.

JEAN ECHENOZ and FLORENCE DELAY, two contemporary French novelists, who "entered into the thick of Madras life" in December 1994, are the authors of the books. Their two-month "adventure" in the city made a strong impact on them. Memories of the vivid impressions they gathered of "the many-hued aspects of life in Madras" are reflected in their recently released books, *La Fin des Temps Ordinaires* (*The End of Ordinary Times*)

by Florence Delay, published by Gallimard Editions, and *Les Grandes Blondes* (*The Tall Blondes*) by Jean Echenoz, published by Minit Editions.

Gallimard, a renowned publishing house in France, recently entered their 100th year. They have published some of France's much-celebrated writers like Gide, Sartre, St. Exupery, Malraux, Camus, Flaubert and Proust. Interested also in the literature of the world, their 'Du Monde Entier' publishes in French the works of writers from every country. Under their collection 'Connaissance de l'Orient' they have published, in

French, poems and stories of Rabindranath Tagore, like *Gitanjali* and *Mashi*, epics of the Tamil Sangam, notably *Silapathikaram* and *Manimekalai*, and Sanskrit works such as the *Panchatantra*. Florence Delay has, with Gallimard, brought out five novels and eight other literary works, besides translating for them from the Spanish to the French.

Minit are of more recent origin and are involved especially in the *nouveaux romans francais* (the modern French novel). This publishing house, founded during World War II, has published Claude Simon,

who won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Since his first novel, *Le Meridien de Greenwich*, in 1979, Jean Echenoz has been well-received by the French literary public and made inroads into the rest of Europe, with his books being translated into English, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish and Dutch, not to mention even being translated in Japanese and Hebrew. *Cherokee*, which brought him the 'Prix Medicis' in France, was a best-seller in English. It is a novel with the suspense elements of a thriller, reminiscent of Graham Greene.

[From *The Tall Blondes* (*Les Grandes Blondes*) by Jean Echenoz (Editions de Minit, 1995) — as translated by Vidya Natarajan, Mathangi Subramaniam, Shailaja Mani and Hema Parthasarathy.]

Once Rachel had spoken to her about a small South Indian city, where life seemed smooth, in a calm guesthouse, frequented in a genteel English manner. Gloire had noted the address. Through the reception, she got a seat reserved in the air-conditioned compartment of the next South-bound train.

She left the following morning. A small, calm city in these parts of the world, is, of course, a million fevered inhabitants. The cosmopolitan club was an old institution in the diplomatic quarter, in the outskirts of the city proper. Its main entrance was next to the Burmese Consulate and, right at the rear, a back gate opened on to the junction of Cenotaph and Archbishop Vincent Roads, overlooking a posh, residential area of huge, white bungalows, surrounded by gardens and enclosed by walls. There, Gloire could think she was safe.

This cosmopolitan club, an enormous, low building, comprised a huge hall and many salons—restaurant, smoking-room, card-room, billiards-room and ball-room, a bar, another bar and a third bar. The roof-terrace was covered by a dodecagonal bell-turret, topped by a conical urn. Official photographs of the Queen and more recent ones of the Prince of Wales adorned the hall which extended to the steps of the entrance and further to the light coloured awning beneath which huge Ambassadors, powerful Hindustani cars, disgorged hour after hour, fasting members of the club, then tucked them in, dead drunk, a litre or two later. A fresh water pool to the left, a library full of worn-out books to the right. Further on, an isolated building, two floors of rooms and suites, serviced by a rosewood lift.

Gloire stayed there, not far from the second entrance, with an unrestricted view of the Cenotaph Road. It was a silky silence, even if a faint, monotonous, uninterrupted hum came from the areas bustling with life, as sharp as a pricking conscience, which served to underline the silence.

The establishment was a combination of luxury hotel, family boarding house and sanatorium. Nothing had changed since the English days—the bars were mahogany, the candelabra copper, the dinner sets silver, the tennis courts red clay and the bearers in white. From the restaurant could be seen, beyond a long and vast terrace similar to the upper deck of a steamer, fifteen steps leading to a garden of peepal and margosa trees,

and giant crows which swooped down to grab them. Nine times out of ten, the bandicoots beat a retreat, cowed down by the arrogant crows, stronger and better organised in the sky below circling eagles. Gloire then rested a while in her room, seeing nothing before her but two short, pink lizards, fixed and immobile on the wall. She tried only once to catch one of them.

A number of autorickshaws were parked permanently in front of the entrance, ready to offer transport to the inmates of the club. Gloire took the first of these covered yellow scooters on elementary suspensions—three-wheeled, seating two at the back and having a meter which did not work—and went into the city. She lingered in textile shops, temples and massage parlours, daily showing her hands to specialists, who treated the surface or below the skin, that is, palmists and manicurists alternately.

The local people looked at her with some curiosity, unaccustomed to seeing tall blondes—there aren't many in these regions... She spent her afternoons on a deck chair by the pool, when not walking around the garden, stopping sometimes in front of the generator near the pond where hundreds of frogs all the time quietly snapped up any insect below a certain size.

In the evenings, Gloire dined alone in the restaurant, with a book on her table, eating her food absently. She then went to bed early, in front of the television and watched a Tamil film not very difficult to understand. Sometimes, having muted the sound, she took up one of the books borrowed

from the library—generally encyclopaedic works, travelogues, books on natural life, books on customs and traditions, special treatises published by Thacker, Spink & Co., (Calcutta) such as *Unimportant Animals* or *Dogs for Hot Climates*. Gloire read all this methodically, neither skipping nor retaining a single line. Then, she fell asleep, even though it was not always easy; soon it even became difficult to sleep...

The following week, Gloire's insomnia became more pronounced. Every night it corroded her sleeping hours by a few more minutes divided equally between morning and night. Each day Gloire woke up feeling more tired than the day before.

At the bar of the club she had finally met a few Europeans, some residents and others just passing through, mostly British subjects representing their firms. There was an insurance agent for the Crown Jew-

els, a representative of a perfume company, an engineer specialised in brakes—a little used device in these latitudes where the horn is a preferred substitute and which therefore has a huge market potential.

But she did not stay long at the bar. Every evening so as to put off her futile attempts at sleeping, Gloire would stop in front of the little pond near the entrance. Here she would listen to the chorus of the frogs who, at the end of the day spent in catching as many animalcules as possible, had now settled down contentedly to digest their meal. For their concert they had divided themselves into three parts—the first producing tiny bird-like sounds, the second imitating a police siren and the third tapping out the Morse Code. A frenzied incessant choir in perfect harmony, with the Morse and the police sirens providing the octave and the continuous low of a generator standing in for both the bass and the diapason. From the branches of the raintree, over and above this batrachian choir, a winged soloist occasionally threw in a brief and melodious counterpoint, a riff in treble. Gloire would listen for a quarter of an hour then go back to her room for the night.

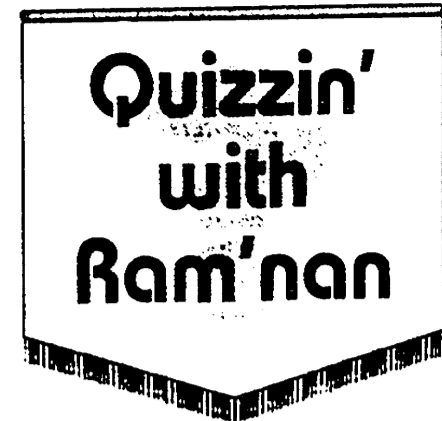
Even so, she was invited and at times she accepted. On Tuesdays the British organised parties where everyone danced the cake-walk on the terrace, in bermudas and Adidas, sweating amongst the tables laden with bottles. One evening, and just that once, Gloire was to let herself go and down five or six glasses in a row.

And she returned from the club totally drunk. It took her a ridiculously long time to find first her key, then the lock and, once inside, the switch of the night-lamp. In the semi-darkness she imagined she saw a small oblong figure lying across the bed and she uttered a small cry...

The next morning... she went out as she did each morning, to see the city. Among all the rickshaws parked at the gate of the club, she had chosen one which was better main-

(Continued on Page 7)





(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight July 1st to 15th. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Madras past and present.)

- In which country was the world's first law allowing voluntary Euthanasia brought into effect on July 1st?
- Kulbhushan Nath Pandit, a Bollywood thespian for nearly five decades and fabled for his dialogue delivery, passed away on July 3rd. How was he better known?
- July 7th saw the centenary of an historic event which occurred at the Watson's Hotel in Bombay. What event?
- Name the prominent Janata Dal MP from Pibhit who was expelled from the party on July 5th for remarks against the UF government.
- Name the two Indians honoured with the prestigious Magsaysay Award this year.
- Who broke a 109-year record to become the youngest-ever champion at Wimbledon? She won the ladies' doubles crown at the age of 15 years 282 days?
- Which film made movie history by grossing a record \$100 million in just seven days?
- Why has former Colorado governor Richard Lamon come into the political news?
- Who was adjudged 'Man of the Series' in the recently concluded India-England Test cricket series?
- July 11th was observed worldwide as...?
- Who retained the FIDE world chess championship in Elista on July 12th?
- The death recently of Sankaranurthy Muttukaran of Tiruvavur brought to an end a thousand-year-old music tradition. What instrument did he play?
- The UN Press Office in New York is marketing bottled garlic powder. After which world luminary is it named?
- SEBI and the Registrar of Companies recently hauled up an industrial giant for controversial switching of shares. Name the corporate house.
- How much will Prince Charles pay Diana as part of the divorce settlement?

- Who is the new Police Commissioner of Greater Madras?
- A Kasi Viswanathar temple near T'Nagar is located on a sacred spot called Mahavilva Kshetra. What is the contracted name of the place generally used?
- What was the National Art Gallery, on Pantheon Road, home to and named before 1951?
- What public office has been housed in an exotically named garden house called Grassmere since 1909?
- Set in the High Court eastern wall is a plaque commemorating the shelling of Madras by a German cruiser on 22.11.1914. Name the vessel.

(Answers on p.7)

# Ford's to help with hospital?

Mahindra-Ford's may well participate financially in a Rs.20 crore, 600-bed hospital at Maraimalainagar that is being promoted by the Madras-based SRM Group which has interests in educational institutions and hotels. According to sources in the Group, talks are also going on with other industrial groups, like SPIC, for financial participation in the project.

On the educational front, the SRM group had tied up with Rijkshoge School, Ijsselland, The Netherlands, for academic exchange programmes. In terms of the MOU signed recently, SRM would send a batch of 15 students each year to Holland from the fields of Management, Architecture, Nutrition, and Dietetics for a 7-month study period towards a Master's degree. The students will have to bear their air fare and boarding-and-lodging expenses in Holland (where they are likely to be subsidised by the Dutch school). There will be no charge for tuition and course material.

The Dutch school would, in turn, send four students to SRM institutions every year to complete their project work here.

SRM also recently signed an agreement with Tata Information Systems Ltd and IBM, Austin, Texas, to start an Integrated Electronics Competence Centre — the first of its kind in the country. The Centre, to upgrade computer engineering instruction, has several pieces of hi-tech equipment received from IBM as part of the arrangement.

## COOKING with Chandra

Somehow it has never gained popularity, despite its versatility. The ridge gourd (*peerkanakai*) chutney and *kuzhambu* are time-tested recipes, but do try the innovative soup. And did you know you can make bread with ridge gourd?

### RIDGE GOURD BREAD

- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups peeled and grated ridge gourd
- 3 eggs, well-beaten
- 3 tsp vanilla essence
- 3 tsp cinnamon powder
- 1 tsp soda bicarb
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

### Method

Sieve the flour and combine all the ingredients. Mix well and pour into a greased and floured loaf pan or 9-inch cake tin and bake in a moderate oven for an hour.

Serve hot or cold.

**Southern conservatism**  
Why are the scrips of Southern Indian based companies not actively traded in the bourses like those of companies with similar operations in the North/West? Why is there not much information available about the companies located in this part of the country? Why are they reluctant to share information about their operations with others? What are the costs of such conservatism? These were some of the questions which were discussed on the occasion of the release of the second edition of *The South Side Story*, a directory of 514 southern companies.

## Venkatachari Jagannathan looks at THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE

Speaking at the function, R Sankaran, Chairman, Ind Global Shares and Securities Ltd, publishers of the directory, said, "Investors haven't understood the Southern companies in the proper perspective, as the latter are not sharing information about their operations". Maintaining such secrecy is one of the major reasons for lack of equity research being done on the Southern companies and lack of trading of their shares on the exchange, he contended. Absence of adequate information about the Southern corporates makes the investors seek alternate investment avenues, like the unincorporated finance companies, which, in turn, hampers the growth of the organised corporate sector, he pointed out.

### RIDGE GOURD PORITHA KUZHAMBU

- 1/2 cup redgram dhal, pressure-cooked and set aside
- 2 cups peeled and chopped ridge gourd
- 2 or 3 tomatoes, chopped fine
- 1 1/2 tsp sambhar powder
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp rice flour
- Salt to taste

### Ground paste

- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp peppercorns
- 1 tsp blackgram dhal
- 1/2 tsp asafoetida powder

### For tempering

- 2 tsp ghee
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 red chilli, halved
- A few curry leaves

### Method

Fry all the ingredients for the paste in a teaspoon of oil. Add two tablespoons grated coconut and grind to a fine paste with a little water. Extract milk from the remaining grated coconut. Set aside.

Dissolve the rice flour in half-cup water. Set aside. Cook the chopped ridge gourd in sufficient water, adding chopped tomatoes, *sambhar* powder, salt and turmeric powder till the vegetables are done.

Add the paste, dissolved rice flour and the cooked dhal. Simmer till everything blends.

Echoing these sentiments, Raj Kumar, Regional Director, SEBI, remarked, "Disclosures made by the South-based companies are inadequate for any meaningful equity research".

While the first edition of the directory was issued free, the publishers have priced the second one. Another notable feature of the new edition is the inclusion of top finance companies.

### Sriperumbudur it is

Hyundai are going to put down roots in Sriperumbudur, as predicted by *Madras Musings* over the past few weeks. The Hyundai Motor Co

of South Korea signed a MoU with the Tamil Nadu Government to set up its passenger car manufacturing plant near Sriperumbudur on July 18th.

The plant at Irungattukottai will have an initial investment of about Rs.2,400 crore. The first car is scheduled to roll out in mid-1998 and the capacity in the first phase will be about 1,00,000 cars a year. The company plans to invest another Rs.1,400 crore in the expansion when the total capacity is expected to reach 2,00,000 vehicles a year.

Hyundai's fully-owned subsidiary in India, the Hyundai Motor India Ltd, is registered in Madras.

The Company plans to manufacture the 1,300 cc and 1,500 cc versions of its popular

Heat ghee and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add to the *kuzhambu*. Just before serving add the coconut milk. Serve hot with rice.

### RIDGE GOURD CHUTNEY

- 1 1/2 tbs oil
- 2 medium-sized ridge gourds, peeled and grated
- 2 or 3 red chillies
- 1 green chilli
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped fine
- 2 tbs redgram dhal
- 1 tbs blackgram dhal
- 2 tbs coriander leaves
- Salt to taste

### Method

Fry the grated ridge gourd, chopped tomato and green chilli in one tablespoon oil. Add the coriander leaves and liquidise without adding water. Set aside.

In the remaining oil fry the redgram dhal, blackgram dhal, red chillies and asafoetida powder. Powder fine.

Blend with the vegetable paste in a liquidiser, adding salt. Serve with hot rice.

### RIDGE GOURD SOUP

- 1/2 kg ridge gourd, peeled and chopped fine
- 3 or 4 ripe tomatoes, blanched and chopped fine
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 tbs chopped coriander for garnishing

Model Accent, according to sources. An 800 cc car that is being developed may also be launched in India.

The Tamil Nadu Government will offer Hyundai about 225 acres right away and acquire the remaining 425 acres required as early as possible for the project. Hyundai will get the same financial concessions that have been granted to other mega projects entailing investments of Rs.1,500 crore and more in Tamil Nadu.

The Hyundai site is about 20 km from the nearest railway track. The Korean car manufacturer would like a Sriperumbudur-Madras rail link to be developed, and the Tamil Nadu Government has promised to approach the Centre on this. Direct employment of 3000 persons and indirect employment of 30,000 is envisaged.

### Major glass plants?

Pilkington of the UK, the glass manufacturer, is expected to sign an MoU with the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) to set up a Rs.550-crore float glass manufacturing plant near Singaperumalcoil, close to Maraimalai. TIDCO is expected to take an 11 per cent equity stake in the project.

Saint-Gobain of France is looking at a similar project to be located at Sriperumbudur. The Rs.550 crore plant targeted for 1998 will have a capacity of 500 tonnes a day. The decision to come to Tamil Nadu might depend on whether there will be a partner from the state, preferably TIDCO

### Method

Add three cups of water to the chopped tomatoes and ridge gourd and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer till the vegetables are tender. Set aside.

Blend the grated coconut with one cup warm water in a liquidiser. Strain and squeeze out the milk. Set aside.

Set aside half a cup of the cooked vegetables for garnishing and liquidise the rest. Pass through a sieve.

Reheat the soup adding salt and pepper. Just before serving, add the vegetables, coconut milk and garnish. Serve hot.

— Chandra Padmanabhan

### NEW WINES...

(Continued from Page 4) up by over 65%. The future looks definitely bright. The turnover and PAT are expected to be around Rs 53 cr and Rs 8 cr respectively, for 1996-97. This would translate into an EPS of over Rs 20 and result in a price of around Rs 320 for the 1996-97 results.

The scrip is currently reacting from the May 1996 peak of Rs 237.50. The scrip could face resistance between Rs 250 and Rs 260 while support is likely to emerge in the band between Rs 200 and Rs 185. The price has pierced the short- and medium-term averages from above, indicating possibility of reaction in prices. The share can be picked up at lower levels.

K Gopalakrishnan

# Art with child-like quality

Children and the child-like quality seem to be in focus these days. Walk into Max Mueller Bhavan, you see the paintings by children on the wall leading to its premises and now there is also a big mask to greet you. Shilpi Rajan's sculptures on the lawns are also full of a child-like quality.

Rajan has found a physical channel in the sculptures in which to give his energies a course to flow through. His sculptures bear testimony to his loneliness, yet are not melancholic. They do not show anger at the world. Alone and silent,



Rajan worked with hammer and chisel in the forests in Kerala, giving shape to the roots and trees stumps he found around him. There is a mixture of iconography and petroglyph in his work. The viewer's overall impression is of a mass of life reflecting the wonder of life. Ironically, the pain or whatever anguish there may be in the sculptures is obliterated by the display which has a child-like disarray about it. The faces carved in twisted wood seem to be in meditation, in strange adoration of the world.

Although untrained, and working with the most basic equipment, Rajan has learnt to work with his materials and not against them. By allowing the contours of the wood to delineate features and seems to represent feelings, he has permitted the material to speak directly and the forms to break free. The soft material has lost none of its brutal immediacy and reminds you of the folk forms of rural India which have never hidden anything from the public eye or from children, never treating them as a separate part of society.

Traditionally, children in India are witnesses as well as subjects of a wide variety of performance types, virtually from the moment they are born. From birth, they witness rituals, plays and actions of all kinds. Children are typically an integral part of all performances in India as well as of any craft.

Asma Menon, whose work is at the Easel Gallery, also has so much of the child in her art. She started painting and draw-

ing the Max Mueller Bhavan (which was then in the same compound) to have a longer chat over a cup of coffee. Those happy, relaxed hours hid the serious worker who churned out so much significant work.

If Rajan's is naive art, Asma's is raw vision. Like many artists of today, these two are desperately seeking to free themselves from the burden of the inherited European tradition in modern art in India. Tribal and folk art are no longer dirty words and have begun to exert a liberating effect. In folk and tribal art, as in children's art, everything is permitted, everything is possible.

There are innumerable possibilities of cultural expression existing in the rural arts and in children's art, outside the accepted cultural avenues. This is what I found while working with children of different abilities, financial groupings and classifications of schools, school dropouts and child workers during Aayana '96. There were theatre persons who differed with the children with the aim of not putting on a sophisticated show, but to share a shared experience. (The entry ticket — Rs 10 — was mainly for the sharing of expenses.) All of us came away the better for the experience and the discovery of the child's view of the world.

haustive section on regional films.

**Travels Through Sacred India** (Indus; Rs 195) by Roger Housden is a guide with a difference. The book introduces readers to the leading saints, sages and gurus and the complex and diverse religious rituals and traditions. The book also includes a gazetteer of all the sacred places and a directory of the ashrams across the country.

Another travel book, *Desert Places* (Viking; Rs 500) by Robyn Davidson, is an honest account of the author's arduous journey across Rajasthan and Gujarat with the Rabari tribe. The book gives an insight into the life and folklore of the last nomads of India.

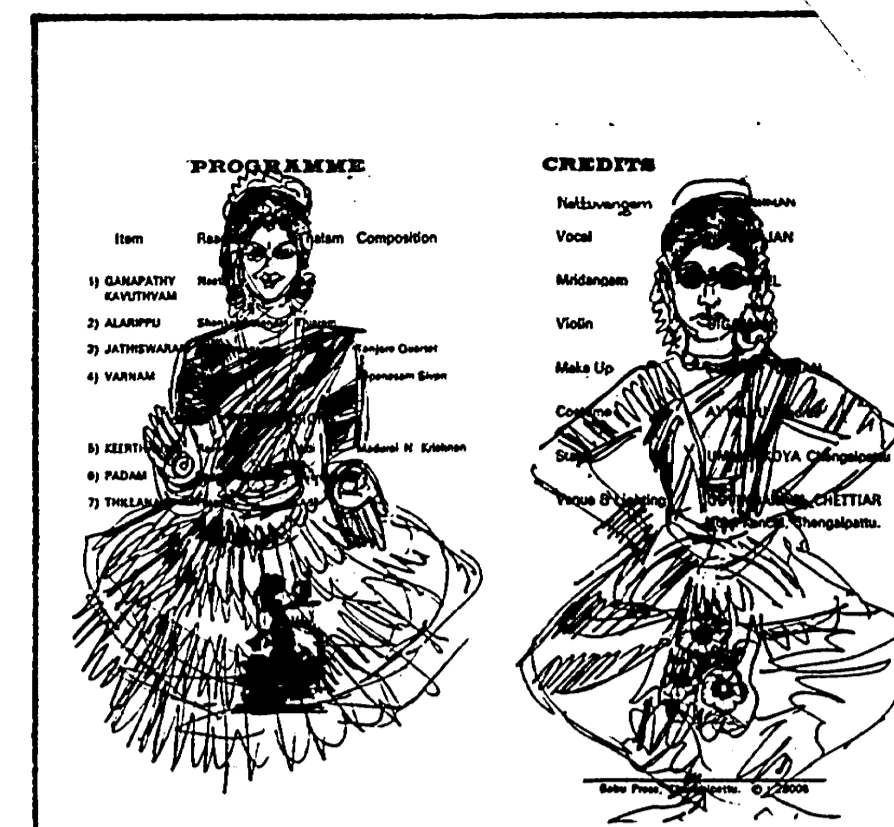
## A Club in Madras

(Continued from Page 5)

tained than the others, apparently the object of the driver's whole-hearted attention. It was decorated with burning cones of camphor and there was a small altar with flowers and statuette on the dash-board, about which were attached a few prints of various deities. Painted on the vehicle, near the reflectors, a pair of heavily made-up eyes squinted at the official slogan promoting family-planning. On the inside, under the chattered-like collapsible roof, on either side of the back seat, were two por-

traits of a man, probably an actor or a politician, more likely both at the same time.

As for the driver, he was a friendly, round-faced young man called Sanjeev, wearing denim shirt and trousers and a faded piece of pink cotton around his neck. On the first trip, Sanjeev had expressed his willingness to work exclusively for Gloire, if she so desired. His hair was closely cropped except for a longer lock on the occiput, a lock which was supposed to save him from hell, were he to go down there. He



## The dancer & the doodler

*Madras Musings'* story on 'Bharata Natyam—Non-stop for 72 hours and world record' (MM, June 16) made me wonder whether there was someone in the audience there recording it in the same talented manner as I saw someone do at a recent arangegram in Chengalpattu.

While Karthika Kumari danced for three gruelling hours on a hot and humid evening, under the powerful glare of numerous arc lamps, local lawyer M B Sundararajan doodled away on programme after programme, capturing the best of the movements of the Bharata Natyam dancer. I later learned he did this at all programmes he attended.

An enthusiastic amateur artist, MBS is also a classical dance fan and was responsible for bringing A Lakshman's 'Sarasalaya' to Chengalpattu. Teenager Karthika is one of this school's brightest students.

Film actress Revathi (Menon), who was the chief guest, was delighted to autograph one of his sketches for MBS at the end of the programme. Here are a couple of other sketches he did on the occasion.

Subbu

Topping the charts in popular fiction is Jeffrey Archer's *The Fourth Estate* (Harper Collins; \$2.50). Inspired by the lives of media barons Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell, Archer weaves an engrossing tale of their battle to control the world's biggest newspaper empire.

A new genre of sentimental fiction seems to be catching on — romance after 40. Nicholas Evans' *The Horse Whisperer* (Corgi; Rs 175) is the love story of a New York editor and a 'whisperer' with the power to heal horses. Just as *The Bridges of Madison County* inspired Clint Eastwood to film it, this book has caught the attention of Robert Redford, who is reported to have paid a million dollars for the film rights.

The world of medicine is the background for Erich Segal's *Prizes* (Bantam; Rs 180). It is about the world's most brilliant doctors and scientists and their desperate and ruthless struggle to bag the most coveted and ultimate prize of them all — the Nobel.

And lastly a *desi* thriller that starts off in the outskirts of Madras. Shashi Warriar's *Night of the Krati* (Penguin; Rs 150) is about Kashmiri militants hijacking the Shatabdi Express. Lt Col Rajan Menon leads a team of crack commandos to the rescue of the passengers, but he soon suspects this is the opening gambit of a larger conspiracy devised by a terrorist mastermind.

— Savitha Padmanabhan

## Answers to Quiz

1. Australia; 2. Rajkumar; 3. The screening of the first 'movies' in the country; 4. Maneka Gandhi; 5. T.N. Seshan and Pandurang Shastri Athavale; 6. Martina Hingis of Switzerland; 7. Independence Day; 8. He is to be the third candidate in the U.S. Presidential elections; 9. Saurav Ganguly; 10. World Population Day; 11. Anatoly Karpov; 12. The *Kuda Muzha*, a five-faced *vadhya*; 13. The U.N. Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali; 14. Reliance Industries; 15. \$ 26 million.

16. V.K. Rajagopalan; 17. Mambalam; 18. The Victoria Technical Institute (the building was designed by Henry Irwin); 19. The Tamil Nadu Archives; 20. Emden.

(Next fortnight an excerpt from Florence Delay's *La Fin des Temps Ordinaires*.)



# A storm-tossed team looks to this year

It was a cricket team formed by, for and of members of the fisher community in Triplicane in 1973. Having weathered several storms since then, the team is now very much part of the city's competitive cricket set-up.

Seen against the backdrop of its humble origins, its lack of proper playing kit and the absence of a godfather to foot its bills—until the last two seasons, when it got some of all this—the team's achievements, of winning the STCGIL and the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial trophies and also of becoming the first private club in recent years to enter the elite first division dominated by corporate-sponsored teams, are something for the record book.

But, today, the fishermen's team called the Appaiah Chetty Cricket Club is in troubled waters. The team which beat star-studded sides like India Cements and Jolly Rovers in the 1994-95 season has been relegated to the second division after the 1995-1996 season.

Contributing to this relegation has been the departure of several of its players, who now play for major teams as a consequence of the employment op-

portunities that came their way on account of their cricketing prowess. They include, among others, K Saravanan (IOB), T Sathyamurthy and T Karunamurthy (India Cements) in the first division, and R Vinayagamurthy (TNEB), R Kalaimani, Ashok Kumar, M Vijayakumar,

by  
**Venkatachari Jagannathan**

A Varadarajan, all Madras Port Trust, in the second division.

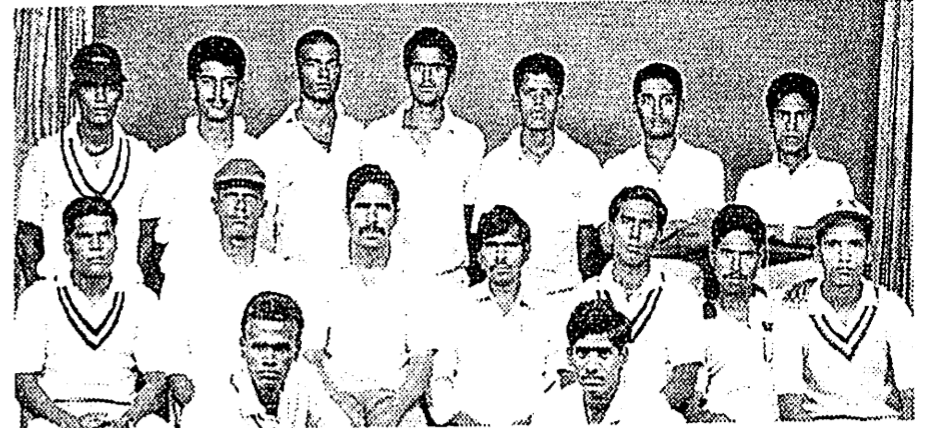
Appaiah Chetty, with these losses, has had to spread its net and the Club, which used to be anchored entirely by players from the fishing community, a few of whom regularly went out fishing, last year had on its three fishermen players. The majority of the side were players from the districts. In fact, even the captain, Jaffer Ashique Ali, a Ranji player, belonged to Erode.

Says R Thalaisyanaam (61), Secretary and founder of the team, "We were not able to coordinate the players for practice sessions, since many of them were from the districts". As a result, the team lacked much-needed understanding in the

field, seen by the bad running between the wickets. Further, the team's poor fielding aggravated its woes. But Thalaisyanaam, whose sons Karunamurthy, a Ranji opener, and Sathyamurthy are among those who now play for rival teams, is not worried much. "We will top the second division this year and regain our place in the first division," he is confident.

Thalaisyanaam recalled the circumstances which prompted him to start the team. According to him, the city's English dailies blamed the fishing community for selling Test match tickets in the black in 1972 when the West Indies toured India. "It was Sriraman, the then TNCA Secretary, who came to our defence by stating that even amongst our community there were good cricketers. That prompted me to think about a cricket team by, for and of the fishermen".

Initially named the Gandhiji Sports Club and, later, the Netaji Sports Club, the name was then changed to Appaiah Chetty, honouring a Congress worker who had done much for the uplift of the fisher community. With missionary zeal Thalaisyanaam developed the team, contributing his entire



The Appaiah Chetty Cricket Club in its early days when it fought its way into the first division. Seated second from left is Selvam, then founder Thalaisyanaam and coach Chandran. The three together made it the formidable team it became.






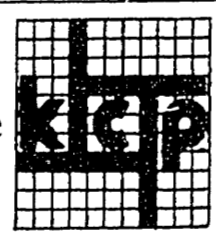




salary to its development. His family didn't count on his income, as his three brothers supported the joint family. "Even my wife didn't bother about my contribution, since she was convinced that my salary was being spent for a good cause". As a matter of fact, Mrs Thalaisyanaam's commitment towards the team was so great that she used to cook lunch for the entire team and bring it to the ground before the first ball was bowled!

The team slowly made headway under the able leadership of S Selvam, Southern Railways, and fast bowler Muthukrishnan, a police constable. "It was due to Selvam we entered the third division," remembers Thalaisyanaam. But in the eighties, differences between him and Selvam resulted in a team split. Adding to the confusion was Appaiah Chetty's son filing a suit claiming ownership of the team. With the mediation efforts of the TNCA succeeding, the storm blew over, but the team had slipped back to the fourth division.

Refuting allegations that his team used intimidatory tactics on the field against umpires and opponents, Thalaisyanaam says, "People weren't able to stomach the ascendancy of a fishermen's team and floated these rumours. Ask them to cite a specific incident or a complaint". A TNCA official said that there had been no complaint lodged against the Appaiah Chetty team either by the umpires or the rival teams.

Things have turned for the better with some sponsorship by Ashok Kumbhat. The team now gets Rs. 62,000 towards kit and equipment, but nothing to meet the players' expenses, like lunch during the match. While looking forward to the situation improving, Thalaisyanaam is nevertheless a happy man today, as his team has been instrumental in getting good employment for at least 20 persons from his community. Meanwhile, he is busy re-building the team, by scouting for players from his community, so that Appaiah Chetty can regain its place in the first division.

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