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MADRAS

MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

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A blight on the State

— Bonded labour

(By A Staff Reporter)

A Supreme Court panel has found that there are over 10 lakh bonded labourers in Tamil Nadu, spread over 23 districts. The Commission also confirmed that Tamil Nadu is the "largest supplier of bonded labour to other states".

According to the panel's findings, bonded labour work in over 20 occupations in the informal sector in the State. While the State's matchbox and *beedi* units show a high incidence of bonded labour, especially of women, child labour also abounds in these cottage industries.

Other occupations, such as agriculture, plantations, fishing and rice mills, and factories which require fine and skilled labour, like gem-cutting and silk weaving, show a high rate of bonded labour.

To discuss the possibilities of tackling the problem of bonded labour in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, a national convention on bonded labour and human rights was recently held in Madras. Con-

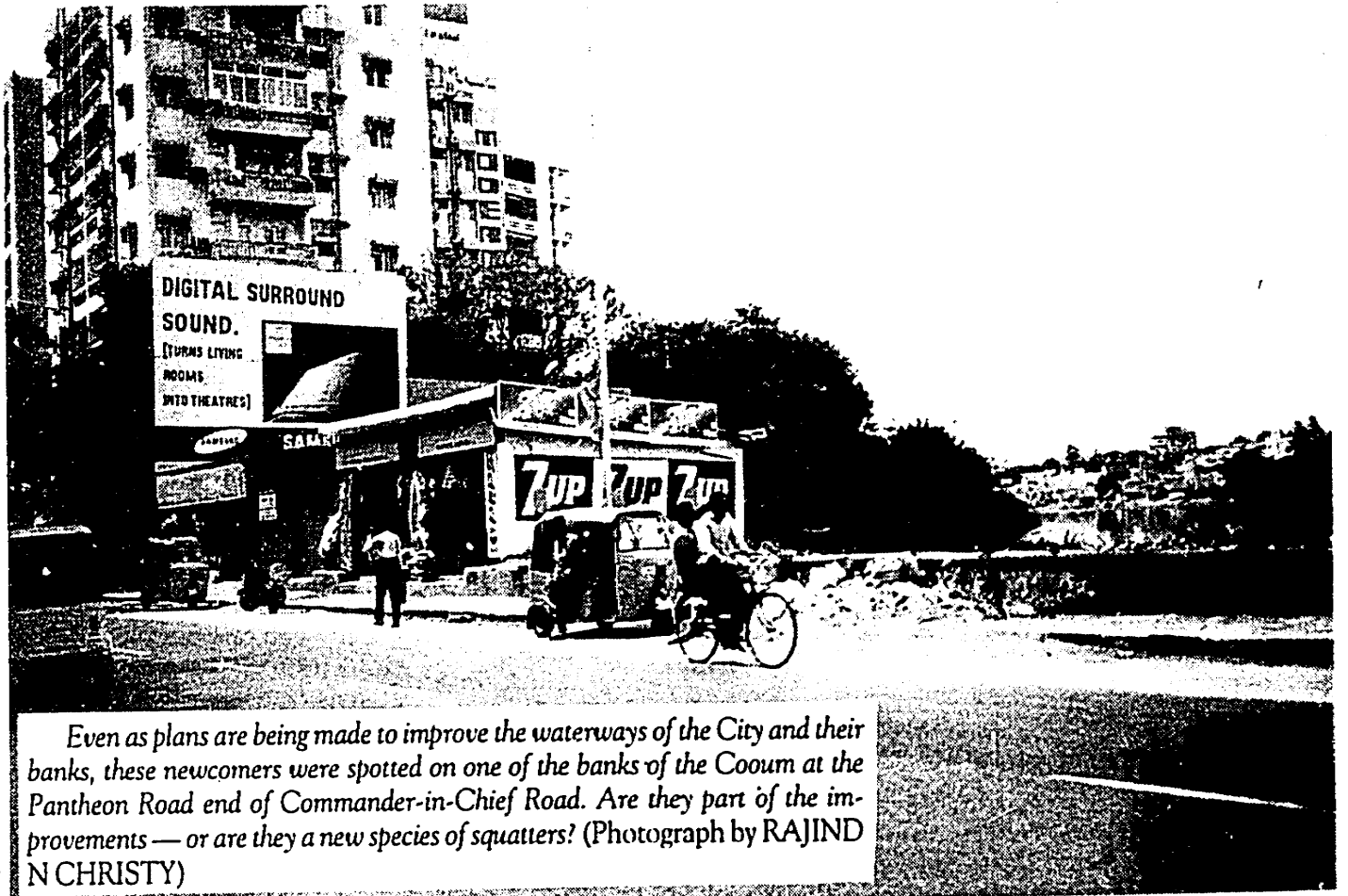
siderable attention was paid to child labour.

It is ironical that the State, which ranks high in health care facilities and educational opportunities, has not been able "to reduce the social deprivation for children, rendering them vulnerable to the lifelong trap of child labour".

While Tamil Nadu ranks second only to Kerala among the most advanced States in primary education, an estimated 3.1 million children in the 5-14 age group are dropouts and many of them join the workforce.

Apart from the explosives and tobacco belt, comprising Tirunelveli-Kattabomman, Kamarajar, Dindigul-Anna and VOC Districts, where the match and *beedi* manufacturing units are located, the main pockets of child labour identified in Tamil Nadu are North Arcot Ambedkar (tanneries), Tiruchchirappalli and Pudukkottai (synthetic gem-cutting), Tiruppur and Avinashi blocks

(Continued on Page 5)



Even as plans are being made to improve the waterways of the City and their banks, these newcomers were spotted on one of the banks of the Cooum at the Pantheon Road end of Commander-in-Chief Road. Are they part of the improvements — or are they a new species of squatters? (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY)

The waterways of Madras

A glimmer of hope

(By A Staff Reporter)

After several extensive studies, reports are now available on all aspects of the waterways problems of Madras. These cover the functioning of the sewerage system and overflows into the waterways, the storm water drainage system, the solid wastes disposal system, the disposal of hazardous wastes, lowcost sanitation for unsewered areas and the dredging and maintenance of the channels.

Whether in response to these recommendations or the urgings of several NGOs over the past three years, there is at last some glimmer of activity. It is reported that the Public Works Department (PWD) will take up the desilting of a 4 km stretch of the Buckingham Canal, between the Madras University and Luz corner.

The Rs.2 crore desilting operation will involve dredging of silt upto an average depth of 3 metres. An estimated 1.10 lakh cubic metres of sludge and

silt will be removed to the San Thomé dumping yard of the Madras Corporation.

The work is expected to be completed in two months, before the onset of the Northeast monsoon. During the work, the encroachments on the Canal banks will also be removed.

The urgency in this instance is due to the inundation of many areas in the city, particularly Mylapore, during the recent cyclonic storm, when the flow into the Canals was hampered due to the work on the MRTS project.

A decision to desilt all the waterways — Otteri Nullah, Buckingham Canal, Cooum and Adyar — and restore them to the original bed level has also been taken. Metrowater has agreed to stop the discharge of sullage into the waterways and make alternative arrangements.

As indicated in our 'Old and New' last fortnight, it would seem that Government is keen that the Canal and the Cooum are made navigable again. Already the PWD has sent a proposal to the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA) for improvement of the Cooum banks. The Cooum improvement scheme, estimated to cost about Rs. 130 crore, will be part of the Third Madras Water Supply and Sanitation Project. The World Bank will be approached for the purpose.

SCHOOLS FOR CHILD LABOUR

(By A Staff Reporter)

Forty special schools have been set up under the Union Government's scheme to eradicate child labour in the hosiery town of Tirupur. Twelve such schools have been established in Avinashi Panchayat Union, 12 in Tirupur Panchayat Union, nine in Tirupur Municipality and seven in Palladam Panchayat Union.

The Government has allotted a grant of Rs. 20 lakhs under the National Child Labour Programme for successful implementation of the scheme.

A comprehensive education programme had been chalked out by the Child Labour Abolition Support Society (Kovai CLASS) formed for this. To

begin with, non-formal education using play methods of teaching would be imparted to children admitted in these schools after working hours. These children would be provided with free uniforms and their evening meal.

In course of time, economic activity related to hosiery would be selected for the group, to supplement the loss of income to their families. The district administration has also sought support of hosiery manufacturers, like the Tirupur Exporters Association (TEA) and the Southern India Hosiery Manufacturers Association (SIHMA), to put an end to child labour recruitment in the knitwear industry.

The mothers of these child labourers have been brought together in small self-help groups comprising 15-25 members. These members have been encouraged to save small amounts regularly. A grant equal to this amount is to be disbursed by the Society to the group.

The purpose of forming the mothers' groups is to enlist their support for successful implementation of the programme. The project also envisages that the mothers will be the catalysts of change. Financially successful mothers' groups would help complete the process of total abolition of child labour from their communities, it has been stated.

A survey conducted by the district administration reveals that 9,249 children are full-timers and 874 part-time workers out of the 1.21 lakh children population and about 15,904 are neither employed nor attend school. More such schools would be set up to accommodate child labourers who have not enrolled so far.

The knitwear industry in Tirupur is one of the 100 industries identified where exploitation of child labour is reported. The district collectors all over the country, who are in charge of this special education scheme, were invited for a discussion with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao last year to formulate the programme.

The public relations of Russi Mody

For years *The Man From Madras Musings* had thought that that tall, slim, elegant batsman, Russi Mody, who scored that unforgettable double century against the Australian Servicemen at Chepauk in 1945, and the Tata wizard, now heading Air India and Indian Airlines, were one and the same person. With the difference in spelling of the names not striking him, MMM had thought the latter was only a broader, greyer version of the former, the good life having overtaken the sportsman. When MMM caught up with the truth, the mental image persisted of a tall person rather more broadly and roundly built than most. But what a shock it was the other day to see the former TISCO head in person for the first time; he was positively pixieish in looks and build, even if rounder than most of the species. No wonder his PUCKISH sense of humour, which had the public relations managers of the public sector and their guests laughing almost non-stop!

He related tales from the school of hard knocks and he related tales out of school. He remembered TISCO's foray into exhibitions, when they exhibited only steel, and the day he told his PR men to change it all around and put a human face to their displays. The next exhibition had TISCO's schools, hospitals, sport and an array of other do-gooding activities. When he walked into the preview, he was aghast: There was no steel. "My God," he said, "Do you know we also make steel!" And with his second "My God!" there came the thought and the instructions to put up a banner saying "We also make steel". Taking off from here, to tell tales out of school with reference to his successors, he had a punning session thereafter! The story, however, reminded MMM of the charming way SAIL has been going about using the same concept in an advertising campaign that's proved a hit. You know the one with the baby's diapers slipping, the housewife's keys showing...

Later, when asked about his views on the public relations of Deve Gowda and Narasimha Rao, he said he hadn't caught up with the new Prime Minister's style, but the old's public relations were excellent: "He never said a word!" Mody chuckled.

What's the hurry?
What's the unseemly hurry on the part of Doordarshan and such programmers as Prannoy Roy to change Madras to 'Chennai', *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders. They almost seem to be treating the name-change like a 'scoop' they don't usually get.

As far as MMM knows, there is a laid-down protocol for changing the names of places. And this includes references to the Centre and further references from there to the Surveyor General of India before permission trickles back and the change is gazetted and made official. A single reference in a Budget speech is only a statement of intent and not a *fait accompli*: That will happen only in a few months' time if Government proceeds formally with what it has stated is its intent.

What substance?
With such stories and a host of one-liners Mody kept his audience delighted, with few realising that he was doing what might be described as a "snow job" on them. Having stated that public relations was the job of everyone in an organisation, but most importantly of the Chief Executive, he proceeded to entertain his audience and gain its goodwill in a superb exercise in human relations. But at the end of it all, where was the substance?

Talking of public sector disinvestment, he said such disinvestment was not necessary to achieve better efficien-

cies and greater profits; what was needed was greater freedom from politicians and civil servants, enabling managers to act as professionals. Fine, but he rather missed the point in the Manmohanomics' call for disinvestment; the Government was not worrying about public sector profitability, what it really wanted was cash to fill its empty coffers, MMM would be inclined to think.

Later, he announced as important discoveries the six primary needs of his two airlines; a smiling ticketing staff, a smiling check-in staff, punctual flights, smiling in-flight attendants, good food and clean toilets on board. Now he's got committees looking into how to achieve this. MMM wonders how a committee is going to get people to not only smile but help with an ENTHUSIASMATIC willingness. It might be able to do something about food and punctuality — providing it turns schedules upside down during Delhi winters — but how is it to go about potty-training people used to the vast open spaces? Be that as it may, MMM agrees that if the committees can come up with the answers, it would be a public relations coup for the two national airlines. Something to look forward to.

All these perceptions and the generous bonhomie he exhibited — except when it came to cameramen whom he found a nuisance to be verbally swatted away — had the public sector public relations men gathering around him as enthusiastic worshippers, but whether their new Forum discovered anything fresh about the "Relevance of Public Relations in Indian Public Sector in the Gopal Context" MMM is rather doubtful.

TAILPIECE: At a recent lecture, MMM heard one more

reason retailed for the name Madras. Narrated a former civil servant, "When Francis Day was taken by Beri Thimappa to one of the fishing *kuppams* on that strip of sand granted to them, Thimappa said 'All of them here are mad!' At the next *kupam* he said, 'All of them here are rascals!' And so Day got his brain-wave!"

'Camp' surrounds!

It was a *tour de force*, the performance of Irene Khan, chief representative in India of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, when she spoke at the University of Madras recently at the invitation of the Department of South and Southeast Asia Studies. It was not only the most fluent presentation *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard in years but when it came to answering the score and more of questions the flow did not ebb one bit. Not even the slightly American accented, schoolgirl voice detracted one bit from this professionally smooth presentation of such a volume of in-

formation. In fact, the whole performance had MMM wondering whether the two ladies vying for power in Bangladesh might not have another contender to face before long; indeed, Bangladesh is fortunate to have such talented women.

Such glamour too! A slip of a woman, almost girlish in looks, attractive sharp features haloed by carefully tousled short hair, she sailed into one of the halls in the University in a lilac Dhaka cotton with not a crease or pleat out of place. And watching her come in, MMM couldn't help but think how out of place this glamour was in the dilapidated surroundings Madras University offered her. Much-travelled to refugee camps around the world, Khan took it in her stride, but MMM felt ashamed of the facilities one of the leading universities in the country proffered an eminent visitor. Apart from dilapidated, dirty, cobwebbed surroundings, more befitting an ill-kept refugee camp, classroom-halls like these also have a major problem with acoustics. How the students manage, MMM does not know. But he only hopes that before long the University will have at least a couple of small airconditioned halls with proper speaking systems for visiting dignitaries invited to speak in this institution MMM once thought of as hallowed.

Speaking to Khan on a later occasion, MMM noted a suggestion by her that might well be considered by the Union and State Governments: with the UNHCR working in Sri Lanka, it would be able to more convincingly persuade the 50,000 plus Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu to think of going back home. But UNHCR teams were not al-

lowed to go into the camps in the State. MMM is rather inclined to buy her arguments on this and wonders whether the Governments concerned might not do some second thinking. As for the estimated 20,000 or so refugees who are better off and who have slipped into the mainstream of life in the State, no one seems to have an answer to their problems, not even Khan.

★ Thapar DuPont, still facing problems with local environmentalists in Gummidiipoondi, has been pressing ahead with its plans to set up one of the most modern factories in India and the safest. *The Man from Madras Musings* learns that this factory will also be set in the greenest surroundings possible, the landscaping to make this a reality to be of international standards. Responsible for the greening will be Sekar James, a former Tamil Nadu agricultural officer now into landscaping. With Fisherman's Cove and Titan behind him, Thapar DuPont will be still better, MMM hears. James is also into designing swimming pools — as well as supplying collapsible synthetic swimming pools from Australia for those having little space for the real thing. Will Thapar DuPont have these too on campus?

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

In brief

★ With everyone in political circles talking about former President R. Venkataraman's residential accommodation, he is fed up with the subject and is all set to move to Delhi, *The Man from Madras Musings* understands. Former Presidents are entitled to free furnished Government accommodation with water and electricity, even if they own houses. And I don't own a house, the former President has stated. But the political voices won't hush, so he'll be off to Delhi as soon as the Union Government can find him suitable accommodation.

★ Tall — 6' 5", he says, but looks 7' — bearded and with a

preference for Delhi's informal Indian-style clothes — the kurta and pajama — is Bruce Hoffman who has taken charge as Director of the American International School, Madras. A teacher on a Navajo Reservation for 12 years and a principal of a school in Miami, he turned east in 1994 and arrived in Delhi to take over as Business Manager of the huge American Embassy School. Hoffman, who sees himself as accountant, business manager, principal and music teacher among other things, would like to make the International School, Madras, now 120-strong and working out of a split campus, as large and as impressive as the Delhi institution, *The Man from Madras Musings* is told. Meanwhile he's looking for teachers among the local expats; his wife Peggy has already joined three other Americans on the staff.

★ Vineeta Hoon, a social scientist now with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, has always had a fancy for the High Himalaya, *The Man from Madras Musings* has long known. But how high MMM's only discovered recently. Project director, researcher, technologist and teacher, she has also run hotels in Nepal and served as Field Operations Manager in one there. In a recent talk, she went beyond all this and showed in a magnificent set of slides where she has been spending time every year, during the past few years. Living with the nomadic Bhotiyas in the Kumaon Himalaya, wandering with them into the High Himalaya in Summer, crossing with them to trade in Chinese Tibet, studying the effects of 'modern civilisation' on them,

— MMM

Madras First

Read your writings on 'Heritage'. Along with heritage preservation, I would consider it equally important that we arrest the further deterioration of the City which is taking place every day. In this, ONLY INDUSTRIALISTS can take decisive action. The MMDA will do nothing nor the Pollution Control Board, nor the Water Board, nor the Sewerage Board, nor the Corporation. We should not live in a Fool's Paradise. The failure of the Maraimalinagar Township is a pointer to the ways of bungling and bureaucratic organisation.

The formation of the five working groups by MMDA is eyewash; we will have five reports after five years which will collect dust for fifty years. To say that 'citizens' must take the initiative is plain rubbish. The 'citizens' are marginalised by those rulers who treat them as dirt.

Industrialists must realise that they have social responsibilities and social commitment. That is what seems to have happened in Bombay, through sheer necessity. In Madras I tried to explain to some people that "a good city is good for business and a bad city is bad for business". It is up to the industrialists to think about this problem of the quality of life in Madras city. Would they consider Madras First?

D.K. Oza
1, First Cross Street,
Indira Nagar,
Madras 600 020.



retrograde step and everyone in the city of Madras and elsewhere must prevail on Chief Minister Karunanidhi to drop the idea forthwith. Madras has a historical background and the term 'Madras', has acquired special significance and respect everywhere as describing highly cultured and intelligent people.

It is not necessary that everything should be changed to show your love for the Tamil language. The Chief Minister himself told the State Assembly, while discussing the correct Tamil word for 'bicycle', that certain names which are commonly and popularly used, though from different languages, should not be changed. He cited the example of his party's symbol, *Udaya Sooryan*, though the words are of Sanskrit origin. Similarly his name, Karunanidhi, is also of Sanskrit origin. I do not think that he would like his name changed to 'Aadharu Selvam'. Such translation will sound as odd as 'Madras' will sound after its change to 'Chennai'.

Let the citizens of Madras rise to request preservation of the great name 'Madras'.

Lakshmi Narain
11, Kandappa Achari Street,
Purasawalkam,
Madras 600 007.

Burying history

Skrishnan, in his provocatively readable column in the *The Hindu*, described the shock he experienced when he learnt of the proposed name change from Madras to Chennai. Many people will share his feeling of hurt.

Name-changes, common in the post-war world, were excusable in the excitement of newly-got independence, but after the euphoria has gone, surely such exercise is wasteful and cruel.

We are advised that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat its errors. But what happens when history itself gets buried beyond sight as happens when names are changed? By all means honour our heroes by building new roads, new terminals, bridges and culverts or even a second capital. That would make sense, but not changing names such as Bombay to Mumbai or Madras to Chennai. It's a sacrilege, but then people are now so resigned to the shenanigans of politicians, that they are too tired to raise their voices in protest. In a democracy, don't people have to be consulted through a referendum, opinion survey, or whatever, when a drastic step such as the change in the name of a city is taken?

Old-timers will recollect how delighted Pakistan was when India came to be known also as Bharat in the Indian Constitution. It was a question of grapes being sour, and the Pakistani English press made it a point for some time not to use the term India, referring to us always as Bharat in the hopes it would stick. They were disappointed, thanks to the wisdom of Nehru and others, when we decided to carry on with the name of the subcontinent, India.

Jaiboy Joseph
2 Second Avenue
Harrington Road
Madras 600 031.

Preserve 'Madras'

The proposal of the Tamil Nadu Government to change the name 'Madras' into 'Chennai' is a

G Satish

7, Palat Madhavan Road,
Mahalingapuram,
Madras 600 034.

Waste water problem

Off the Vidyodaya Colony main road are four lanes. In each one of them two or more multi-storied buildings are coming up or have already come up. One of the buildings is six stories and will have 60 flats!

Can anyone conceive how the residents will discharge their used waters! The existing drainage will have to carry this massive load. Have either Metrowater or the residents bestowed any thought to this problem which is to be found in many other parts of Madras as well?

The remedy is either to ban multistoried buildings or take up on war footing supplementary drainage throughout the city.

Who is going to take concrete steps to solve this citywide problem?

M S S Raghavan
7 Prakasam 1st Lane
Off Vidyodaya 1st Cross St.
T Nagar, Madras 600 017.

Clarifications

The footnote in Harry Miller's letter last fortnight was an Editor's Footnote and should have appeared below Harry Miller's name and NOT above it. The lapse is regretted.

— The Editor

* * *

I wish to clarify that the Denver Mayor and the municipality were responsible for the Madras Park costing about \$250,000 (Mahatma in Denver' in MM, July 16).

The brass statue of Mahatma Gandhi cost Rs.6,000 (a concession given by Professor Gopal of the College of Arts and Crafts, Madras, to the Indo-American Association). It was shipped by air to Denver for Rs.10,000.

Dolly Simon
Hony. Secretary
Indo-American Assn., Madras
10, Nandanam Main Road,
Nandanam Extension
Madras 600 035.

Day-dreaming on August 15th

They Had a Dream

They walked this hoary land
Like Colossus, with visions
Of an unshackled glorious nation
Marching in progress towards greatness.
THEY HAD A DREAM.

Truth, Ahimsa and amity,
A Ram Rajya of glory was the vision.
Now violence stalks corridors of power
With lies, scams and corruption rampant.
MAHATMA GANDHI HAD A DREAM.

A proud modern industrialised Democracy,
Cultured, with art, literature and smiling children.
Now flourishes yellow journalism and a society
Filthy rich with bonded labour and child exploitation.
CHACHA NEHRU HAD A DREAM.

With steely strength he talked unity
And nationalism without boundaries
The nation now is divided into linguistic regions
With unsharable basics of water and electricity.
SARDAR PATEL HAD A DREAM.

He carved Constitutional revolution for upliftment
Of the poorest and most suppressed.
The reality is uneducated, ignorant masses
Exploited by casteism and vote bank politics.
DR. AMBEDKAR HAD A DREAM.

After five decades of Independence we have
A nation of crime and bullet-riddled carcasses.
Fed on rape, violence and media extravaganzas,
In what field have we shown excellence?
WHO IS THERE TO DREAM?

P.S.
With a different vision, but rooted in Reality
He rejected License Permit Raj and Socialism
And fought vociferously against nuclear proliferation.
Critics then but vindicated today,
RAJAJI DID NOT DREAM.

PADMNI NATARAJAN

Spontaneous repartée enlivens House

Chief Minister Karunanidhi's eloquence was one of the highlights of the recent Assembly debate on the Governor's Address. The Chief Minister, with his ability for spontaneous repartee, gave little room for the few AIADMK members to manoeuvre the debate in their favour. At one time, when former Minister, and AIADMK group leader, S Thiruvankarasu commented that "God alone can save the people", the Chief Minister shot back, "Idhu engayo ketta kural mathirirukku" (a voice heard somewhere before). The reference was to superstar Rajnikanth's remark against the then ruling AIADMK, to warn the people that it should not come back.

There was much Jayalalitha- and AIADMK-baiting, which seemed to indicate that her unpopularity is her greatest asset at present. With everyday mention of her name in connection with some scandal or other, her unseen presence was very much in the House.

Education Minister Anbazhagan said a probe had begun into the previous Govern-

ment's 'Operation Blackboard' scheme, involving pay-offs to some *benami* cooperative societies. "Education is in a total mess due to the irregularities in the past five years," he added. The Chief Minister said it was the Centre's responsibility to unearth the (alleged) ill-gotten wealth of the former ruling party members. It was pointed

The View from Fort St. George
by R.K.K.

out that action would be taken against officials too, who had identified themselves with the then ruling party and aided the members in their misdeeds.

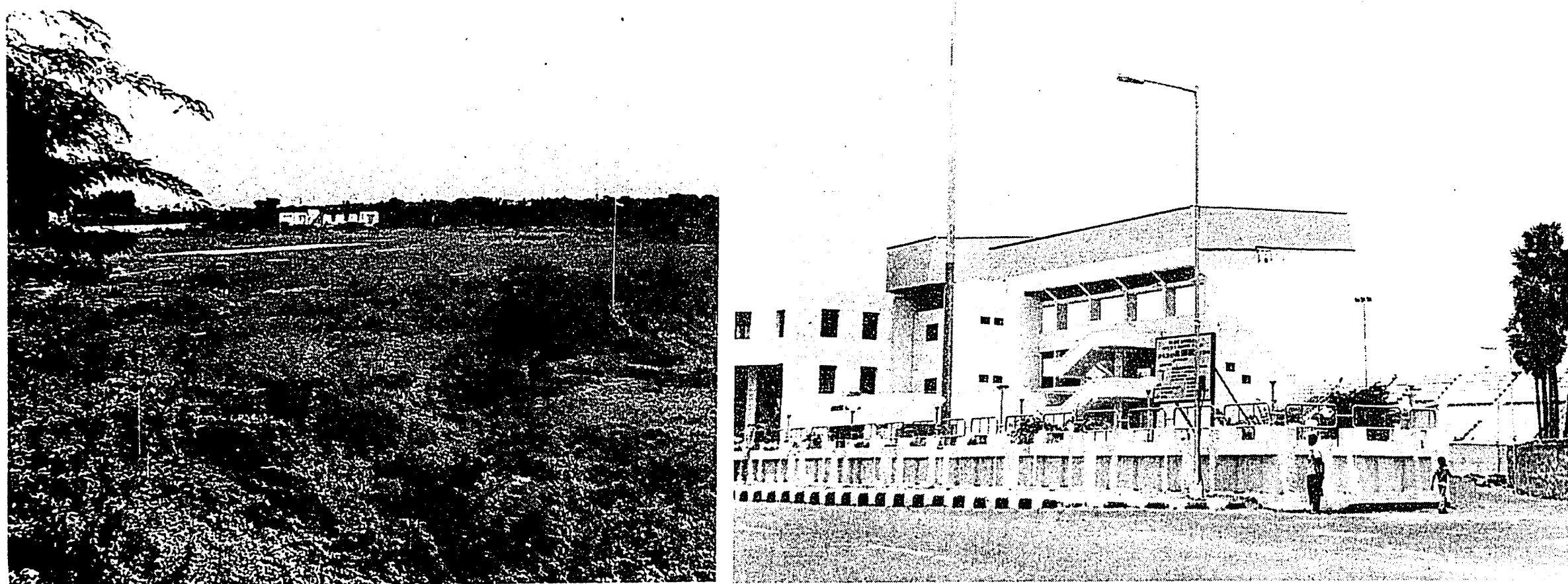
Irked by the references every day to the alleged misdeeds of the former Chief Minister, AIADMK leader Thiruvankarasu suggested that a whole day be set apart for the ruling party and Tanil Mania Congress to vent their feelings, so that more time could thereafter be spent on solving people's problems. Minister Anbazhagan said one day would not be enough to discuss

the malpractices indulged in by her and her party. AIADMK's Tamarikani asked the ruling party members not to assume the role of judges. Speaker Palanivel Rajan explained that the matter was not yet *sub judice* and he therefore had no right to advise members on what they should speak.

Through a resolution, the Government decided to revive the Legislative Council. The Chief Minister rose in stature when he pulled up a DMK member who was trying to explain why the Legislative Council was dissolved by MGR. MGR was not alive and he should not be maligned even indirectly, and that too while sitting under the portraits of the great leaders on the Assembly walls, the Chief Minister stated. CPI(M)'s D Mani, expressing the Opposition's point of view, bluntly said the Council would be an unnecessary burden.

Riding another hobby horse of the DMK, Chief Minister Karunanidhi sought to erase the name of 'Madras' from the world map and insert 'Chennai' instead, thereby conceding the point raised by the Telugus decades ago during the State reorganisation days; that the

(Continued on Page 4)



Capping Nidhis

Investors in Tamil Nadu must view the 15% cap put by RBI, on interests offered by Nidhi companies, with a measure of satisfaction. On the face of it, it may seem strange that in an era of deregulation, any move towards regulating a sector should be welcomed. But the Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) sector, especially some segments in it like the Benefit Funds and Nidhis, has seen some extraordinary developments.

Tamil Nadu and Kerala, in particular, have seen a mushrooming of the latter sort of corporate bodies, each one offering interest rates more outrageous than its predecessor. It had reached such levels that the interest rates had clearly reached impracticable levels. Legal loopholes were cleverly used with the end result being suffering and misery for investors.

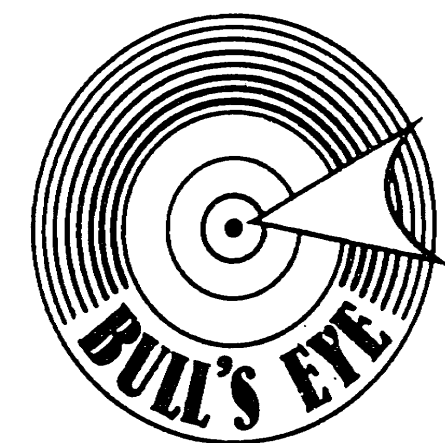
The calendar year 1995, which saw the capital markets at a low ebb, proved beneficial for Nidhi companies in particular. Badly affected investors sought to recoup their losses by trying to earn the (fantastically) high rates of interest offered by Nidhis.

The original concept of the Nidhi is laudable, being as it is a financial cooperative society. Membership can be attained with a one-rupee fee and the company could accept deposits only from such depositors/shareholders. Loans could be offered only to these members, against security like jewellery and land.

Seen as a healthy way to channelise funds from local communities into the system, this sector was generally out of the authorities' purview. But in an unscrupulous bid to cash in on the deregulated state of affairs, promoters went on a rampage. Soon, we were seeing unincorporated finance firms, Benefit Funds, Nidhi companies etc. at every turn. Their advertisements, which screamed at us, were actually inexplicable. Nidhis can accept deposits only from their shareholders, thus obviating any

A feather in RBI's cap

need for advertising. That is one of the main reasons why the latest ban on advertisements is welcome, closing, as it does, a large loophole. Also, the 15% cap on interest rates now equates these companies with other NBFCs. This step now allows for more control on the part of the RBI.



But what about investors? Genuine Nidhis will obviously (or should) respond by doling out higher dividends to their shareholders. This is why the current outcry by Nidhis seems more like the tears of a crocodile than of genuine pain.

However, this step by the RBI should be actively followed up. Only then would the NBFC sector be genuinely incorporated into the total system and only then will the funds flow into developmental activities. Otherwise, the hard-earned savings of investors and pensioners will be largely misused (as at present) to fuel illegal activities that hinder and hurt the country's growth.

* * *

Here are this fortnight's pick:

Orchid Chemicals (CMP: Rs 115): The scrip is currently close to its resistance and, hence, may be considered for investment at lower levels around Rs 100-103. It also happens to be a good share to trade with, as it has a large equity base and market fancy. The Madras-based bulk drug manufacturer, with a high profile product range of Cephalosporins, looks attractive even at Rs 110.

Rs 80 cr. As part of this programme, it commissioned two new plants: A 100% EOU of 20,000 tpa at Avadi and a 15,000 tpa unit at Pune for the manufacture of tubes for the automotive and engineering sector. The investment was funded through the issue of a \$50 million GDRs in May 1994. For 1995-96, it achieved an EPS of Rs 11.35 and with the benefits of the investment programme accruing we anticipate an EPS of Rs 17.34 for 1996-97. The company's equity capital was enhanced during 1994-95, following a bonus issue (1:3) as well as the issue of 18 lakh equity shares at Rs 212 per share to the promoters. TT's current GDR rate of Rs 121, though quoting at a discount of 48.5% to the offer price of Rs 275, is higher than the domestic price. The distribution policy of the company has been satisfactory, with a consistent dividend record and two bonuses during the past one-and-a-half decades. The share price saw an uptrend and touched a high of Rs 200 during the non-delivery period last year. TT at present has a discounting of 8.8 times and, given its good future prospects, the P/E should only improve.

The next price rise will be triggered by the September results. The scrip has anticipated the results by two months and has begun its upward movement.

For September 1996-97, a turnover and PAT of Rs 86 cr and Rs 11.45 cr, which would mean an annualised EPS of Rs 13.20 supporting a price of Rs 150.00, is estimated. There is also the possibility of a tax burden on this zero tax firm under new Government proposals. Discounting all this, a market price of Rs. 130 is possible.

Tube Investments (TI) (CMP: Rs 100): This share is recommended for investment buying as it is close to its year's low. Buying can be considered when clear signs of buying interest emerges.

This Murugappa group company, with about 20% market share in the Indian bicycle market, is all set to post a sound performance for the current fiscal year. TI undertook a major expansion-cum-modernisation programme costing

THE OLD...

...& THE NEW

On the facing page, several questions are raised about India's repeated failures at the Olympics in particular and sport in general. The answers are not exactly new, but over the years they have awaited both government and private commitment and involvement. The lack of both has led to today's sorry state of affairs.

Our OLD and NEW this fortnight are a pointer to how such failure comes about. The OLD shows the Gandhinagar Cricket Club's grounds, now overgrown by scrub jungle. This was once a famous cricket club in the City and had an enviable record in the game. Its ground was well-kept and, when not used for cricket, was the scene of much training activity in other sports. Today, internal bickering that has led to worse has caused the grounds to be locked in and run to seed. The neighbouring Gandhinagar (social) Club, with its new highrise in place, is prepared to lend a helping hand, but there seems to be no one around willing to grasp it. And so the city is deprived of yet another sports facility.

The NEW is of another sports facility the sportspeople of the City are unable to use. The splendid international standard Aquatic Complex in Velachery stands forlorn and deserted because Government won't open it up or give it to the State Swimming Association. For lack of an international training swimming facility, champion Nisha Millet was forced to move to Bangalore; others who cannot make such a move are unable to improve because they do not have an international class pool to train in Madras.

The lack of such facilities or their neglect and the refusal to open them up to sportspeople for training if the facilities indeed exist are one of the major reasons for the poor performances of our sportspeople. (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN).

A negative feature is that the share is sparsely traded on the bourses and even the present decline from higher levels has been attended by thin volumes. Of late, however, interest seems to be picking up at these lower levels.

K. Gopalakrishnan

SPONTANEOUS REPARTÉE

(Continued from Page 3)

original name 'Chennai' itself denoted that Madras should go to Andhra Pradesh. It was the astute argument of Rajaji that Chennai was only a small portion of the sprawling city and that, as such, Madras should be with Tamil Nadu. It was also Rajaji's point that the 'u' in Tamil Nadu could have been omitted. The then Chief Minister, Annadurai, conceded the point but said Rajaji's advice had come a bit late. Has harm been done? Many hope that the statesmanship of the Chief Minister would "set right the situation".

Other points included:

- The Government urging the Centre to confer classical language status to Tamil.

- Minister K N Nehru saying the Government was losing a huge amount because of the existence of nearly 20 lakh ration cards.

- The Chief Minister turning down a suggestion from a DMK member to make Tiruchengode headquarters of the new Rajaji District, saying it was only proper that Namakkal should be chosen, as the district was being named after Rajaji.

- The Chief Minister saying the Government would not tolerate attacks on media persons while they were doing their normal duties.

- The Government expressing the view that the Governor should be Chancellor of the Universities in the State, and not the Chief Minister. Hence the bill making the Chief Minister Chancellor, introduced during the previous regime, would be withdrawn.

- Mrs Anne D'Monte (Nominated) pleading that Anglo-Indians be listed as a Backward Community and that all concessions be extended to them.

- Following a request from several members, led by the DMK's M K Stalin, the Chief Minister announcing that free bus travel facilities would be permitted for students upto the Plus Two level.

Should we participate in the Olympics or not?

PRIZE AND PREJUDICE

Every four years, while the world celebrates the Olympic games, India agonises over its humiliation before the international community. What 930 million people and not a single medal, how utterly shameful, goes the refrain. Even if you tot up all those medals won by the hockey team and some stray individuals over the years, it still adds up to the worst 'per capita' record in the world. Pathetic.

Most of our cynics have a straightforward and decisive solution to this national disgrace: let us not participate. Why waste taxpayers' money to send athletes who are only going to make fools of themselves, they ask. The more reasonable suggest a 10-year moratorium — how this will help is not exactly clear except that it appears to be a mean between getting routinely humiliated and not participating at all.

There is also, of course, what may be termed the bleedin' heart constituency which says: there, there, the important thing is to participate, not win, and to play fair and fight well.

Perhaps we need to view our Olympic performance with some perspective. Point number one is that we have exaggerated expectations from our hockey team. We do not expect it to win the World Cup every four years, do we? That tournament, the premier one concerning what is purportedly our national game, scarcely creates a ripple. But come the Olympics — because we have no realistic medal chance in any other sport — we burden the hockey team with our every expectation and mock and criticise it when it fails.

The fact is that our hockey team is about as good or as bad as our cricket team: in the top eight of the world. Just like the cricket team, at its best it is a potential semi-finalist; at its worst, number eight. Once in a lifetime, when the stars are right, it can become world champion as it did in 1975 and the cricket team did in 1983...

Forget, to use the Indian sportswriter's favourite cliché, the hockey team's past glories. Today's reality is that new rules and techniques have overtaken us. Indeed, the fact that the hockey team is still among the top eight is a greater achievement than the cricket team's, given that more countries play hockey and, in India, there is less money and investment in it.

The point of this comparison is that while we do also place heavy expectations on our cricket team and tend to pelt it with bottles and other projectiles should it lose a World Cup semi-final, we have not yet called for its withdrawal from international competition or even sought a short moratorium on its participation. Why single out our hockey Olympians?

Ah, one can sense the cynics' triumphant parry: but what about those horsemen finishing last, weightlifters coming second last, boxers lasting only a few seconds and athletes ending up nowhere? Oh yes, and those rather too quickly eliminated shooters and archers, table tennis and badminton players, swimmers and wrestlers? Point taken.

Certainly, for any international event — why only a showpiece like the Olympic games — only those with a realistic chance of performing with honour should be sent. Note, we do not say only those with a realistic chance of winning a medal. For if that was the international credo, the Olympics would be just about one-twentieth their current scale with perhaps only the Americans and Europeans participating. If only potential medal winners were to contest, there would be an exclusive tournament for the world's sportspeople. But the Olympics, the coming together of the global community, would not exist.

India, given its present sporting standards, is best served by sending a very small contingent comprising those with some chance of winning a medal, youngsters who could benefit from the exposure and select others who could exit with honour if not medals.

The trick, of course, is to correctly identify the medal hopeful, deserving youngster and creditable participant.

A selection policy based on a judicious assessment of current form, past record, future potential and, most of all, big occasion temperament would automatically address these riddles.

Many who would agree with the above formulation add a Manmohanian caveat: the government — that is, the taxpayer — should not pay for our sportspeople's indulgences. The Indian Olympic Association or the concerned sports

federation or the individual sportsperson should find its or his own sponsors and, in general, private industry and the media between them should fund and develop sport...

Indeed, in an era of market oriented economics, the government should be concentrating its resources on what is known as the social sector — health, education, civic services. Surely, an integral part of any such government programme should be to provide infrastructure for sport and encourage participation in it.

To be fair, the Indian government has in recent years used the public sector to provide jobs to talented sportspeople. And, post-Manmohan Singh, both multinational corporations and television channels have pumped money into Indian sport, particularly cricket, hockey and football, either directly by sponsoring teams or indirectly by buying rights from the governing bodies. It might be worth waiting a few years to judge the impact before calling for India's exile from the international sporting arena.

All the while, let us remember that we are Indians. We are by nature and culture, upbringing and psyche, fatalistic, unambitious, unproductive and passive. As a nation, we are survivors rather than achievers, other-worldly rather than temporal. Playing to win is an alien, Western concept. Carl Lewis might win nine medals, but to what end? If Pargat Singh does his duty and plays his best, he at least will attain nirvana.

Which all adds up to the following: let us invest in sport, let us send small dignified teams, let us not place an unfair burden of expectation on them. (Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta)

Constructive corporate involvement essential in ...

Going for gold

The Olympic Games have managed to steer clear of a corporate tag. It's heartening, considering that most other global tournaments are now branded with a corporate label and in time get associated with the name rather than the sport...

But the Games need the corporates and so do the athletes. There are no two opinions on this. In most countries sportspeople (in various disciplines) are 'adopted' by corporates who meet their needs for funds, training and exposure abroad...

The Indian situation is a little different. With cricket having the largest following, until now most corporates have been content involving themselves with that sport...

This time around, the Olympics have managed to grab the attention of local corporates, but in a very limited way, with most of the advertising coming from multinationals — especially those that have global interests or are related to the event through their parent companies overseas.

But the question is — should such events serve merely as a promotion plank or should companies play a more pro-active role? The answer — with the Indian performance being what it is, can you blame the sponsors?

When the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) invited a group of industrialists a few months ago to debate whether corporates should play a bigger role, all of them agreed that industry should do much more than just ride on the Olympic wave. The 'Vision 2020' plan was aimed at getting industry to invest in sport and the target — 20 medals in the Olympics by the year 2020.

To start with, seven sporting events were identified on the basis of a study on the Indians' suitability to, and past performance in, certain sports —

wrestling, archery and shooting, weightlifting, football, hockey, boxing and middle distance running. Corporates were then urged to adopt sportspeople for these categories and provide for their training, employment, infrastructure and travel abroad to international meets.

Since then little has happened. Only a handful of companies have taken any further steps...

At present, the corporates' involvement with the sport is only to the extent of using promising athletes to advertise a brand or a product. So while Jaspal Rana promotes JCT, Dhanraj Pillay wears Reebok... But Pillay is but one of a team of sixteen.

"In India, where even corporates have a hard time finding funds, there is a problem finding talent and there is something lacking in the attitudes towards sports in the country — among the general public and the sportsmen," says Rajiv Chandra of Motorola, one of the big sponsors of the Games...

It is also quite natural for companies to look forward to some long-term gains from such spending. And adds a CII official, "The real difficulty has been changing the ways of the various sports federations who fear they will be sidelined if industry comes in". Among the Indian companies, the Tatas, SAIL, the Mahindras and ITC have been traditional sponsors of sporting events and sportsmen. This time Blue Star, Godrej, Hero Motors have all jumped on to the Olympics bandwagon.

This may be a good beginning as far as corporates' involvement in the Olympics goes. If industry now gets involved in a bigger way, Vision 2020 might well be within reach. (Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta)

C N Praveena

A BLIGHT ON THE STATE

(Continued from Page 1)

in Coimbatore (hosiery), Chengai-Anna, North Arcot Ambedkar and Thanjavur (silk handlooms), Salem, Chengai-Anna, Madurai and Periyar (cotton handlooms and powerlooms) and Salem (ornamental silverware).

The beedi and match/fireworks industry employs 2.5 lakh and 75,000 children respectively, followed by the cotton handlooms and powerlooms industry which employs nearly 50,000 children. The

other major employers of child labour are silk handlooms (45,000), hosiery (30,000), tanneries (20,000), silverware (10,000) and synthetic gem-cutting and polishing (9,500).

Girl children account for nearly 95 per cent of the children in beedi manufacturing, and 55 per cent of those involved in manufacturing beedis and fireworks are girls. The tanneries sector mainly employs boys.

According to the estimates, boys account for 3.5 per cent of

the total male working force in the State, while seven per cent of the total female workforce is drawn from girls. While five per cent of the total workforce of the state are drawn from children, nearly 20 per cent of the child workers are employed as cultivators, 45 per cent as agricultural labourers, while the rest are in the non-farm sector.

These statistics are from a report prepared by the Save the Children Fund, a UK-funded NGO.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE

Increasing industry-educational linkages

The successful development of software for the wireless local loop (WLL) by IIT, Madras, for Analog Devices Inc, should provide the necessary impetus for increasing interaction between industry and educational institutions. Already a few Madras-based companies, like SPIC, TVS, Ashok Leyland, the Murugappa Group and India Pistons, have established strong relationships with several education/national research institutions. More will undoubtedly follow.

In the past, industry and educational institutes functioned in isolated compartments, each complaining about the other. While the former complained of outdated course curricula, which had no practical relevance on the shop floor, the latter cried for additional funds from industry to carry out the needed modifications.

Industry officials have always maintained that the scientists in national research laboratories do not visualise the commercial viability of an innovation, their knowledge of market economies being poor. "They are not able to correlate the product developed, with its price, quality and its marketability," states Dr. M D Nair, Vice President, SPIC Pharmaceuticals. "That requires the engineering, financial and marketing acumen available with the corporates."

Given the fact that a market-oriented economy needs market-oriented education systems and research activities, it

is a welcome sign that private sector companies — the ultimate users of a large number of the graduates produced by the institutions — have started taking an interest in establishing useful interaction with universities. For instance, SPIC has a long-standing relationship with Anna University, apart from the CLRI, University of Madras, and IISc, Bangalore. Ashok Leyland has entered into an MOU with BITS, Pilani, for the conduct of educational programmes for its

As a consequence, the Company, which is banking on the sale of the land for its revival, plans to approach ICICI, the coordinating agency for its lending institutions, to accord sanction for its rehabilitation package.

Earlier, reversing his stand, Vijay Mallya, Chairman, injected Rs.5 crore into the Company and agreed to put in another Rs.15 crore as promoter's contribution. The State Government's letter has now

• by Venkatachari Jagannathan

executives, leading to an engineering degree. India Pistons has SRM College of Engineering providing training for its unskilled workers. TVS has a quality institute in Anna University, the Murugappa Group is supporting its Ceramics course, and, at the same University, the printing technology course has been working closely for several years now with major printing presses in Tamil Nadu.

Living in hope

The Tamil Nadu Government has agreed, in principle, to exempt from the Urban Land Ceiling Act the 52-ground plot in Chittaranjan Road owned by Best & Crompton Engineering Ltd (B&C).

come in handy for the Company in defending the winding-up petition filed by some suppliers to recover Rs.2.5 crore dues. And the labour union has agreed to need-based rationalisation of the Company's work force. With all this helpful activity, a ray of hope has begun to flicker in the 120-year-old Company.

According to K V R Balakrishnan, Wholetime Director, B & C, "winding up of the Company will not help anyone, as not even 25% of the creditors will get their dues". The Company owes about Rs.110 crore. It aims to mobilise Rs.40 crore through the sale of the land and Rs.10 crore by divesting its entire (60%) holding in Beacon Weir Ltd in favour of its foreign collaborator, Weir

Ltd, UK. In its revival package, the Company has also asked waiver of interest on its loans/debentures and rescheduling of the principal.

But the sanction from ICICI is going to take some time, as Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (ILFS), one of the debenture holders which had been agreeable to the package initially, has now gone back on its word. ILFS, which holds Rs.1.5 crore debentures in B & C, on which Rs.1 crore is overdue as interest, is now demanding full settlement of its dues before B & C disposes of its 52-ground plot, on which ILFS has second charge.

The position is interestingly poised now with the decision left to ICICI.

For Mallya, B&C might be a better bet, with the power sector now flush with investment. Liquor faces an uncertain future, with several States dry and fierce competition in the rest.

At present, B&C's three foreign joint ventures have an order book position of Rs.650 crore, of which 45% will be its share. Balakrishnan says Rs.6 crore will accrue to the Company every year. In India, B&C is teaming with other companies, like SPIC, and doing subcontracting work, which earns over Rs.5 crore a month. The Company is hoping for a Rs.225 crore Syrian order for which SPIC has bid.

Fry all the ingredients, except the ginger. Grind to a fine paste. Fill the quartered brinjals with the stuffing. Set aside.

Heat 1½ tablespoons oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add the stuffed brinjals, turmeric powder, salt and a little water. Cover and simmer till the brinjals are tender. Remove the lid and fry for a few more minutes without stirring too much.

Take care not to break the brinjals.

Serve hot.

BEGUM BHAJA

2 large, purple variety brinjals
Chilli powder and salt to taste
Oil for deep frying

Method

Cut the brinjals into ¼" slices. Deep fry in hot oil till golden. Sprinkle with salt and chilli powder.

Serve immediately.

VANGI BHAT

1 cup good quality rice, cooked and cooled on a platter
½ kg brinjals, cut into ½" pieces
Marble-sized tamarind
¼ cup halved cashewnuts
2 tbs ghee
½ tsp turmeric powder
Salt to taste

Method

Quarter the brinjals without cutting them through.

COOKING with Chandra

You don't have to make boring curries with the common-or-garden brinjal. There's *gojju* and the golden-fried *bhaja*. The *vangi bhat* and stuffed brinjal curry are also highly recommended.

STUFFED BRINJAL CURRY

6 medium-sized brinjals
1½ tsp turmeric powder
Salt to taste

For the stuffing

2 tsp oil
6 red chillies
1 tsp fenugreek seeds
2 tbs blackgram dhal
½" piece ginger.

For the tempering

1½ tbs oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
½ tsp asafoetida powder
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

Method

Quarter the brinjals without cutting them through.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period July 16 to 31. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Madras past and present.)

1. Who has been chosen for the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadhbhavana Award for 1995?

2. The century's last 'Nabakalevar' rath yatra was held in Puri on July 17th. What is 'Nabakalevar'?

3. With which South Korean automobile giant was an MoU signed by the Tamil Nadu Government on July 18th?

4. Name the airline whose passenger flight crashed off the coast of New York killing nearly 230 people.

5. According to the Tamil Nadu Government, what cost Rs 21.23 crore during the five-year term of Chief Minister Jayalalitha?

6. Paul Tibbets Jr. was recently inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in the U.S. Why is he famous?

7. Recently, the Queen broke a 39-year-old tradition by taking away an exclusive right from the BBC. What right?

8. Who, according to *Forbes*, is the richest man in India, having a net worth of \$ 2.1 billion (Rs. 7350 crore)?

9. Agarwal Sushama Narayandas received her doctorate at the recent convocation of IIT, Madras. In what way was that a first?

10. On July 26th, the Lok Sabha saw a new record when members debated over an issue for 19 hours continuously. What issue?

11. Who were crowned the fastest male and female athletes of the Centennial Olympic Games?

12. Name the chairman of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Board and former Home Minister who quit the party he helped found.

13. Name the veteran freedom fighter who shot to fame in the Quit India movement and who passed away recently.

14. Who is the DGP of Tamil Nadu?

15. Who won his fourth consecutive long jump gold at the Atlanta Games, to equal the most number of Olympic golds?

* * *

16. A 4 km-long stretch of waterway is to be desilted at a cost of Rs 3.9 crore. Which?

17. While presenting the State budget on July 17th, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister announced that an important change would be brought in Madras. What?

18. The first edifice in Madras to be constructed entirely of stone is situated on what was once Esplanade Road. What is it?

19. Which hotel in the city first concocted the popular dish 'Chicken 65'?

20. It was built in 1851 as a Masonic temple and home of the Lodge of Perfect Unanimity. Its proposed demolition was recently stayed amidst some furor. Name the building.

(Answers on p.7)

Give the children a chance

"Why should they go to school?" asked a journalist, obviously enjoying his role of instigator and investigator. We met in the office of the Indian Council for Child Welfare and he wanted to know why children should not be left alone. Working somewhere or a life on the streets, he felt, was much better than going to school, which is certain drudgery for the child. The mean streets offer much more in terms of learning about life than schools ever can, he was convinced.

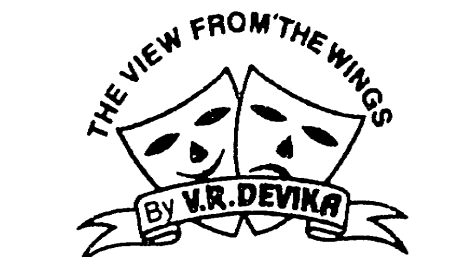
He had come to the ICCW office after reading newspaper reports about some working children having been admitted to schools by the organisation.

Why can't you leave them alone, he asked. And I retorted, "What would you do if you had a three-year old child? Would you admit the child to school or not?" He threw up his hands and replied, "I would appeal to God to look after my child". But the fact is that he and millions of other parents would think of school from the minute the child was born. They are happier sending the child to playschool, then on to preschool and then to nursery. Children are starting school earlier and earlier these days. Try getting admission for L.K.G in any school, and you will almost certainly be told that there is no vacancy as the children from pre-school were due for promotion to the class. The journalist suggested that we should look the other way when we go to a petrol bunk or

a garage or a 'hotel' and see small children working there.

Our responsibility

But do we as a society have a responsibility for these children? Do we not retire our senior citizens and feel that their offspring should be responsible for them? Similarly, should not society treat all children as equal and give them the childhood that it considers is nor-



mal, however unsuitable it may be?

These questions were asked at a seminar on 'The voices of children', organised by UNICEF in Bangalore recently. NGOs working with children had come from all parts of India. It was announced that there would be a massive children's rally in September in Calcutta on the rights of the child and the voices of children. All the NGOs who attended the seminar have started working with different kinds of children and

Toiling in cold, wet London

My trip to London in May happily coincided with the Festival of India's South, arranged in coordination with World Circuit Arts. This conveniently brought me into the core group from the Madras Craft Foundation who had been invited to present a variety of crafts from South India. It all sounded like great fun — whiling away a few days in Covent Garden in the May sunshine. That was, until we found ourselves in the piazza at the crossroads of Covent Garden with the wind and rain lashing around us. The thunder accompanied the Theyyambika drummers of Kerala and the performing artists from South India who bravely kept to their schedule, despite the bitterly cold and wet weather.

Our makeshift stall consisted of four iron tables set in a small square, with just enough space in the aisle for two people to stand side by side. Not back to back, and certainly not enough room for a chair. It was quite the contrary to what we had envisaged back in the planning stages in Madras. "Oh, we'll get some students to work on the stall," Visalakshi had blithely said. We were quickly in for another think when we discovered that London students expect to be paid by the hour! So the four of us from the

storage for the night. We did find some willing young men to help bring the boxes down. Mercifully, too — as between the four of us, two had had backs and none of us was capable of really carrying the heavy cartons. We ruefully pined for the staff we had left back in Madras! It was quite the most exhausting work we had done in a long while!

After the fair I have developed a great sympathy for shopkeepers having to deal with browsers. They pick, look, discard, move on. All of us frantically appealed to anyone who

are preparing a document about what the children think about their own lives. ICCW of Madras is working with girl children in preparing this document of children's feelings which will eventually go to the U.N. The U.N. has a charter on the rights of the child, but can a child exercise these rights?

Child prisoners

The middle class children with educated parents with great ambitions for them are, in my opinion, the most underprivileged children in India! They drink and eat what their parents tell them, they are escorted to their schools after gulping down food, and they are prisoners in their schools. Back home, they have to quickly rush to their Bharata Natyam classes or tennis or swimming or whatever and the parents expect them to do extremely well in each of these areas too. But then, schooling is the only childhood the modern-day child knows.

If not learning something there, the child at least meets children of its age group. Working children deserve to be away from the work area of adults and with other children



The lavni dance, a part of the South Zone Cultural Festival recently held at the Gandhi Mandapam.

for an hour or two, without having the burden of earning a livelihood.

If we care for these children, more and more non-formal education centres must come up which will provide them a fun-oriented discipline of learning and a skill training. This is very important, notwithstanding the scoffing journalist who thinks working children are a part of society's ills, just like any other evil.

Beautiful venue

The South Zone Cultural Centre recently held a folk and classical dance festival at the Gandhi Mandapam on Sardar Patel Road. They wanted to hold it at a proscenium theatre because of a

lack of patronage last time. But luckily they changed the venue back to Gandhi Mandapam. The memorial to Gandhi is a beautiful venue and must be used more often for performances. It gives the ambience of open air space and is reminiscent of a temple with its ornate pillars.

Except for the unimaginative person in charge of decor, who hangs large plastic flowers on the granite pillars and spoils their beauty, the venue is really one that Madras must cultivate. Just a screen of green palm weaves and a few strings of jasmine flowers would make the place come alive. And folk forms of India need that kind of an ambience for performances.

ventured near our stall to please come and look and buy some of the wonderful artefacts from India's South. We were truly the real South, as the other stallkeepers had more of what you find in the North Indian States, and they had only come from as far away as Tooting and Victoria!

Admittedly, we did have some very good sales. The many items of small, beautifully handcrafted ware, from lovely lacquer bowls to toy trains and crawling caterpillars, were a

geared to the Western market. We did not sell out, but again Gita had ensured that we did not have to bring the goods home again. She had arranged with Joss Graham of Oriental Arts in Victoria to take and sell whatever was left over.

This visit also gave us the opportunity to showcase 'Dakshinachitra'. Not satisfied with four days on our feet, Debbie and I took to the London streets calling on the tour guide operators to promote Dakshinachitra. We found it easy when we met people who knew Madras and the South. But for those who had not ventured South, the response was lacklustre. I followed up on a number of operators by telephone. I had a speel prepared and launched into my promotional chat only to find that I should be speaking to another person in another department but he was out to lunch. One man listened very intently and then said, "We don't come to Madras — we only go to Goa — but I shall certainly remember this telephone call and how lovely it was listening to you". All that, but still no sale.

Happily our days in the Piazza brought better results. The low price of the goods made them doubly attractive. But the competition was fierce. To compete in the highly sophisticated world of Covent Garden, crafts demand design

• by Maureen Hudson-Murari



August 19-24 : An art exhibition titled 'Four Visions Madras'. The artists are Muralidharan, Gopinath, C. Douglas, and Rm. Palaniappan. This collection of Contemporary Indian Art is stated to be among the best of the work being produced in Madras at present.

August 21 : Sharada, of Kalakshetra, will speak on "Some Theosophists I have Known" (Theosophical Society). 7.00 p.m.

August 25 : Guitar Concert by The Madras Guitar Society (Museum Theatre). 6.30 p.m.

August 30 : Dance-Drama by the students of Kalakshetra (at Kalakshetra). 6.00 p.m.

August 31 : Sudha Raghunathan sings (at Krishna Gana Sabha). 6.00 p.m.

Chitra Visweswaran presents a dance-drama (at Kalakshetra). 6.30 p.m.

Local talent in a Madras Musical Association concert (at Museum Theatre). 6.30 p.m.

— Chandra Padmanabhan

(From *The End of Ordinary Times (La Fin des Temps Ordinaires)* by FLORENCE DELAY. Editions Gallimard, Paris. Translated by LAJWANTI)

(Luc, 10 years, is the godson and nephew of Louis Labarthe)

Madame Fauré handed over a small present for Luc, to celebrate his recovery... With her permission, Labarthe took out of the envelope a religious picture, a chromo representing the Virgin holding Infant Jesus in her arms. The veil covering her head was a bright blue, the upper part of her dress (for it was a half-length portrait) a bright red and the gold border of the veil and the dress at the neckline and the cuffs was a bright gold. It even looked as if she and the child were wearing lipstick. Yet, with her longdrawn eyes like those in a Siennese painting, half-closed, and her round face barely marred by a slight tightening of her chin as if she were holding back tears, she was deeply touching. Her tender, contemplative look fixed on a Friday which was alarmingly near, the Friday on which she would lose him. She held her son as she would a treasure, whilst he calmly blessed those who looked at him. Embarrassed, Labarthe turned the picture around and found these words written on the

SPORT ON PAGE 5

THOMAS OF THE MOUNTS

back in a running-hand that looked like grass:-

To Luc Labarthe

This picture can be seen in a chapel in Madras atop Big Mount.

Legend says that it is one of the seven portraits of the Virgin painted by Luke the evangelist and that the apostle

Thomas took it with him everywhere on his travels

L.F.

* * *

... By piecing together information gathered from hearsay, the tale can be easily reconstructed.

When Jesus decided to raise Lazarus from the dead, Thomas, who was also known as Didymus the Twin, was there, and said to the others, "Let us also go. We shall die with Him." His first reaction was clearly curiosity. Let us go and see. His master was going to do the impossible (for Lazarus had been dead for four days), and he wanted to see...

When Jesus in his turn died and was resurrected and appeared that very evening in the midst of his disciples in the house that they had carefully bolted, fearing the Romans and the Jews, Thomas was not with

them. So he found it hard to believe them when they swore that they had seen their Lord in the flesh. "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails," he declared, "and thrust my hand into his side, no, I will not believe."

● This is an excerpt from the second of two books published in France in 1995 with some Madras backgrounds. This excerpt, referring to the Legend of Thomas, is apt on the occasion of the present cathedral-church in SanThomé celebrating its centenary. The first excerpt appeared last fortnight.

Eight days later, Jesus came into the same house with all doors bolted for the same reason. He came back specially to ask Thomas to reach there his finger, reach there his hand and thrust it into his side, and finally become a believer. It was then that He pronounced his famous words: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Deeply ashamed and moved by this revelation, Thomas could only utter these few words: "My Lord and my God."

This is why the name of Thomas is synonymous with incredulity and pragmatism, since he doubted what he had

not experienced with his senses. Nonetheless, he certainly said, "My Lord and my God" which is displayed in very large lettering — MY LORD AND MY GOD — in Madras, on Little Mount, where the apostle spent the last years of his life in a cave. Till one day a Brahmin, angered by his preaching of the Good News,

thrust a spear into his side. Suffering from the very wound that he had inflicted on Christ by doubting His wound, Thomas had just enough strength in him to walk upto Big Mount, to breathe his last under a picture of the Virgin ... According to legend, this picture had been painted by Saint Luke.

Some people maintain that while Thomas did convert the Medes, the Parthians and the Persians, he neither crossed the Indus nor evangelised India. Let us say then that it was Didymus the Twin who followed the merchant Habban, envoy of the Parthian king, and settled in Kerala in 52 A.D. and there he converted a number of Hindus and Jews and founded at least seven churches. After which he reached the Coromandel coast and settled in Mylapore ...

He took to preaching on the beach along the Bay of Bengal. The second longest beach in the world. On finishing he would hasten back to the cave on Little Mount where he had running water (the spring flows even today), the company of peacocks and a small vine brought from Ceylon by angels, so that he could prepare wine for his Mass. During the monsoons of 1349, the Franciscan Father Giovanni de Marignolli came there on a pilgrimage and could not believe his eyes when he saw a vine growing in such an isolated place—the only vine in Tamil Nadu. — (Courtesy: *Literary Exchange, Alliance Francaise, Madras*)











ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The late Hiteshwar Saikia; 2. A new image was installed by transferring the spirit of the three gods from the old idols; 3. Hyundai; 4. TWA; 5. Providing security to her; 6. He was the pilot of the aircraft which dropped the first A-Bomb on Hiroshima; 7. Exclusive rights to her annual Christmas broadcast; 8. Kumaramangalam Birla; 9. The first blind woman to get a Doctorate in Science in the country; 10. The Railway Budget; 11. Donovan Bailey (Canada) and Gail Devers (U.S.); 12. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed; 13. Aruna Asaf Ali; 14. K.K. Rajasekaran Nair; 15. Carl Lewis.

* * *

16. Buckingham Canal; 17. The name of the metropolis is to be changed to Chennai; 18. The YMCA; 19. Buhari's; 20. The DGP's offices (Police headquarters).

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