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MADRAS

MUSINGS

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WELCOME, Your Worship

(By The Editor)

By the time these words are read, Chennai will have its first Mayor since December 1, 1973. And the City's First Citizen will not only be the first to enjoy a five-year term but will also have the mandate of the people, being the first to be elected by the City's citizens. *Madras Musings* warmly welcomes the Worshipful Mayor and his Council and looks forward to five years of progress that will result in a better Chennai. May your deliberations from October 25, 1996 be meaningful and fruitful ones.

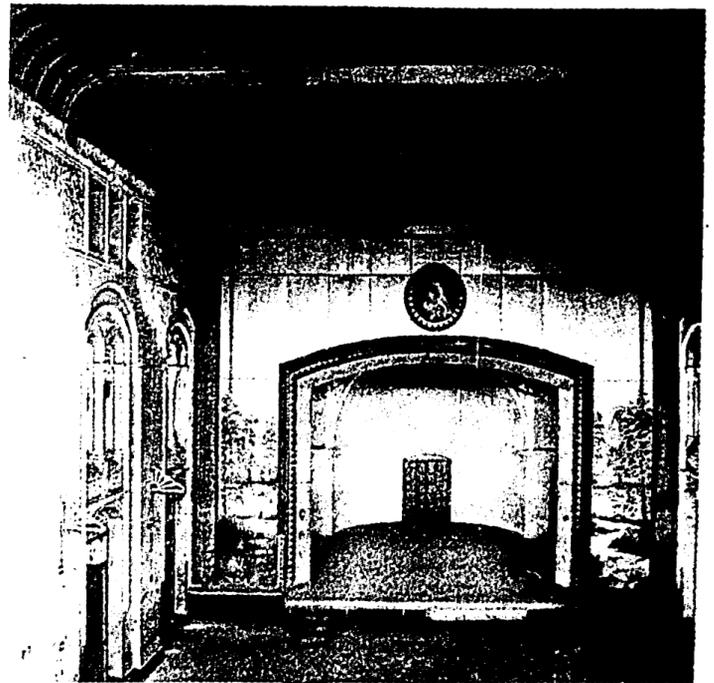
The Corporation of Madras (and we believe that name can only be changed by the Corporation Council in session and not by Government fiat) is an honoured name in civic history, worldwide. One of the oldest municipalities in the world, the Corporation of Madras (established in 1688) is the oldest in the Commonwealth outside Britain. It also predates American municipalities and most civic governments in Europe. Such a hallowed name deserves to survive as a reminder of others following where Madras led. May we dare to hope that Your Worship and your Council will see honour in this name and in the Corporation's ancient title which the founding charter gave it?

Whatever comes of this suggestion of ours, there are several actions that the Mayor needs to initiate immediately if we are to see a better Chennai in the next few years. And the first of these is to get back the powers the Corporation has lost since the Seventies to organisations like the MMDA, Metro-water (which also tends to Sewerage), the Tamil Nadu Housing Board, the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance and Improvement Board and several government corporations established to deal with welfare and urban development matters. While awaiting return to its portals of these traditional powers, the Mayor and his Council need to

address their attention to the improvement of the following:

- Slums and alleviation of poverty. In this regard, the Corporation can exceed its brief and work with NGOs to improve the quality of life in slums till a permanent solution is found to the mushrooming of slums and the proliferation of street people.
- Roads and bridges. Widening them where necessary, offering wider pavements and ensuring pedestrians use the pavements. In this connection, there is need for the Corporation and the City Police to work more closely together. The ideal solution however might be the American and British one, where the local police are part of the City's services. But if that is to take time, why not recruit a Municipal police service that will handle traffic, keep the pavements clear, look after

(Continued on Page 2)



A theatre in waiting... with one of the City's finest stages. If only it is restored to its once and former glory! Here's an easily achievable first task for the new Mayor. (See page 2). (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)



What's wrong with ICE?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Examination results often bring surprises. A student considered first class may flunk and a student who attends classes by proxy may wind up being top of the class. That is what is called the vagaries of University examinations. But can there be greater vagaries than those found in the results of the exams of the Institute of Correspondence Education (ICE) of the University of Madras?!

Students who have scored 85-90% in Plus Two and who joined ICE after vain attempts to get admission in colleges, find themselves failing in subjects in which they were well equipped to score 80-100%! A student whose class average was over 80%, wound up in the exam with less than a quarter of that! These are students who attend institutions where they are coached by an experienced faculty, are

drilled in the subjects, tested periodically and appear for the exams with self-confidence after thorough preparation. Yet, students with poor performances in the Plus Two and mediocre performances at the same coaching centres come up with 80-90% scores!

Much of this sorry state of affairs has to do with the utter indifference of the professors valuing the papers. More concerned with the rupees they get for each book assessed, they don't care to go through the answer books as thoroughly as they ought to, taking advantage of the fact that there is no proper provision for revaluation of ICE answer books. Only students of the third year of regular colleges have the privilege of having their answer books shown to them on payment of a pre-

scribed fee. Why is this privilege denied ICE students?

Madras Musings understands that several students of ICE are considering going to court and requesting "the Judge to order the answer books to be assessed by competent professors in his chambers." The tale of woe of ICE students does not end with this. They allege that mass copying is common, with invigilators allowing students to consult their friends, refer to notes and books, exchange answer books — all for a consideration, of course! The students also complain of the lack of concern for them shown by the authorities. Students living in Tambaram and Chromepet are allotted centres in Avadi, and those in Ambattur and Anna Nagar at Chromepet! Is a student in a state to take an exam after such travelling travail, they ask.

Musings and the post

We received several letters and telephone calls from readers during the period July 16-September 16 informing us of the non-delivery of *Madras Musings*. This was the peak period for the posting and delivery of annual reports — and, sadly, *Madras Musings* does not have the clout of the companies which ensure that the Post Office delivers their reports on a priority basis. But we really can't see why the Post Office can't deliver the missing copies of *Madras Musings* even a bit late! Even now, for instance!

Complaints to the Post Office brought a standard letter from the Manager, Madras Customer CARE Centre (emphasis ours), who started with a formal disclaimer referring to the "alleged non-delivery" (now there's the legal touch for you!) and added "the place where the missing has occurred (sic) could not be found out". However, he promised, "a watch will be kept at the post offices to ensure prompt despatch/delivery in future".

Informally, *Madras Musings* was told that if copies were not received by readers, they should get in touch with their LOCAL post offices.

A more positive note on the Post Office has, however, been struck by reader R.A. Padmanabhan from Lakshmi-puram, Chennai 41. Referring to the torn address-wrapper he received his copy in, he thanks the post office for "tying a *poonool* (sacred thread) round *Madras Musings* and the torn wrapper to keep both together and ensure safe delivery". We hope that the same care will be taken with every copy of *Madras Musings* RIGHT ROUND THE YEAR.

— The Editor

A theatre in waiting — for plays

The Chief Minister recently called for stage plays to be brought centre-stage in Chennai once again. Recalling the days of Nawab Rajamanickam, N.S. Krishnan, the TKS Brothers and others, he appealed to playwrights, producers and players to make Tamil plays great once more.

The *Man From Madras Musings* is convinced that the best way to make this happen is to provide them a stage. And there is a famous old stage only awaiting revival to give the theatre world this opportunity. MMM refers to the 109-year-old Victoria Public Hall, later known as the Town Hall, near Ripon Building.

There was a proposal to revive this scene of numerous plays, pantomimes, public meetings, speeches, balls and parties a few years ago. But with the abolition of the office of Sheriff, who chaired the Trust, these plans have been pigeonholed once again and even the small area restored is back in a state of neglect.

With the Corporation having a role to play in this Trust, and with a new Mayor in place after over two decades, MMM urges him to convene a meeting of the trustees and explore ways and means of reviving the Town Hall and making the Chief Minister's dream a reality in these hallowed premises. MMM hears that there might be some British institutional funding possible for a venture like this; there is one such project going on in Delhi at the moment with such assistance. MMM hopes the Mayor will pick up this cue and take it from there.

There is much else too that the Mayor needs to revive in the immediate area around his office. Will My Lady's Garden see once again teas for the eminent in the City? Will New Moore Market be occupied and bring back the ethos of Old Moore Market? Will the SLAA Grounds become a major sports complex again? Your Worship, all these are in your immediate beat, so to speak. May we expect their revival at the earliest?

Sad happening

The *Man From Madras Musings* is saddened by the happenings in the Madras Chamber of Commerce as a result of its choice of an Alternate President for AssoCham. MMM is saddened by the fact that many on both sides of the divide are those who had joined hands to keep *Madras Musings* afloat. MMM is saddened by the fact that while they had teamed to support a journal committed to the preservation of tradition and heritage, they have divided as a consequence of one group ignoring the precedents of tradition.

MMM has long found the ignoring of tradition and the cry for meritocracy fraught with danger. He has seen it several times in professional associations and clubs he has

been involved with and found that the winner in such circumstances, no matter how brilliant and meritorious, had got there by a ganging up of several members who had political cards to play or personal interests at stake or who were interested in entirely changing the outlook of the organisation — eventually resulting, in many cases, in a return to the traditional. Not that any of this may be the case in the present instance, but the decision to ignore tradition and the choice of the nominee does seem cloaked in confusion and mystery. In a situation like this, surely a reference to the elders of the Chamber was warranted, particularly if it would have helped to solve an embarrassing situation for all. Was the rush really necessary?

On the other hand, resignation from the Chamber is no answer to the problem — and is another aspect of tradition flouted. MMM has always found that tackling issues from within is much the wiser course and inevitably brings peace without too much unhappiness. In this context, Sankar of Sanmar Group's reference to M.V. Arunachalam's long-held views, at the Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan's condolence meeting for M.V., are particularly pertinent. MV, Sankar stated, had always believed that the *Berugappa Group* should belong to all three major chambers — AssoCham, FICCI and CII — because enabling the same view to be heard THREE times made the voice all the louder and stronger.

Perhaps that is the view that is needed to be heard now and peace sought from within. Not puerile statements like what does it matter if 15 resign out of 500 or tradition is meant to be broken or that those who've resigned have their own Chamber! Those making such statements should not forget that AssoCham is the first of the Chambers in India and it was those connected with the firms that have now resigned who pioneered the way and laid the foundation for the enlarged membership of today, even if they did it in a more relaxed body in quieter times.

MMM is confident the current differences of opinion can be resolved amicably if there is some give and take on both sides. MMM looks forward to that happening sooner rather than later.

Train service

The Shatabdi to Bangalore and back is a most convenient train, especially if you have only a lunch meeting. But even otherwise, it's a nice train to take to Bangalore or Mysore. But it's nowhere near the standard of the Shatabdi from Delhi to Agra and back — or points further. The *Man From Madras Musings* constantly wonders why we must have two standards in this country — one for 'export' use and one for 'domestic' use.

The Delhi-Agra Shatabdi is definitely aimed at the foreign traveller or Agra-holidaying Indian. The Chennai-Bangalore-Mysore Shatabdi is strictly *Jamath*: the grey-uniformed staff are a sad contrast to the white-uniformed 'butler' types in the North, the food is of poor quality compared to the Northern *pulao*s and chicken curries, and the trains and seats look scruffy compared to their northern counterparts.

Now if you haven't seen the northern counterparts, the local Shatabdi might seem like paradise compared with other trains in the South. But still, why is there such a difference in standards between the Shatabdi going one way and the one returning. On a recent trip to Bangalore, MMM had a very pleasant journey, being served breakfast, a sumptuous

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

midmorning snack and a good lunch, with several offers of titbits in between by a concerned staff. The train was clean, the seats comfortable, the run smooth and MMM got a lot of work done in the well-lit atmosphere. On the way back, the seats were dilapidated, the train was dirty, the lights too dim to work in or read, and the service indifferent. Tea was a farce and dinner a mess. And there was not an announcement of any sort — whereas there had been several on the way to Bangalore, ranging from the trained speaker's tourist spiel to the horribly accented but reassuring information on why the train had stopped in the middle of nowhere and when it would proceed onwards.

MMM would dearly love the Southern Railway staff to look at how things are done on the Delhi-Agra Shatabdi — if they still are as they were two years ago — and replicate them on the Chennai-Bangalore-Mysore route. But if it can't be replicated, can't we at least have the same standards both ways, the standard set on the journey from Chennai?

In brief

★ In case you — or more particularly your children — have not caught up with a magazine called *Jantar Mantar* (and, no doubt, its Tamil counterpart *Thudir* is no different), do so as soon as possible. The *Man From Madras Musings* suggests. For here is a science magazine for 8-15-year-olds that's easy to read for all of them, is well-illustrated, has a mine of information and loads of fun by way of crosswords, puzzles and games. The editors, all volunteers from such organisations as The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, IIT, SPIC Mathematical Institute, Anna University and Imagine Technologies, are doing a marvellous job in making science not only easy to understand but also interesting for the young as well as for

non-science-oriented oldies like MMM. Producing each journal is, however, a financial struggle, they grumble, as they put together the next issue, and look forward not only to more subscriptions (which won't cover the cost of the journal, considering its production values) but also help in other forms, to their Tamil Nadu Science Forum, 7 ARK Colony, Eldam's Road, Alwarpet, Madras 600 018.

★ The Madras Medical Mission in Mogappair recently celebrated the first anniversary of its first heart transplant operation, with the recipient, Maimoon Beevi, and two other later recipients, T A Ittiyara, a physiotherapist from Norway, and Sudarshan, a Madras student, the cynosure of all eyes. Maimoon Beevi cut the 'birthday' cake,

thus celebrating one year with a new heart, and offered it to actress and social activist Revathi Menon. But for all the smiles all around, what struck *The Man From Madras Musings* was the donors' regrets over all the red tape they had had to face and the little recognition of their gesture. This attitude by officialdom has made many fight shy of organ donation, MMM was told, which was why the Madras Medical Mission, which had 45 patients waiting for hearts at the time, still had 35 — the other ten having died, never realising their hopes.

★ T N Seshan, due to retire any day after the Uttar Pradesh elections, is not looking forward to a quiet retirement. The *Man From Madras Musings* hears that he has told reporters that he would like to become the President or the Vice-President of India — or even the U.N. Secretary-General, if he were offered any of these posts. If these offers didn't come his way, he'd rather become a teacher and, simultaneously, attempt to do "a sweeping job of cleaning up uncleanness in public life". Oh no, he wouldn't accept a Governorship or an Ambassadorship. Nor would he retreat into obscurity. "It would be inconsistent with my character!" he told a group of reporters who wanted to know his future plans.

★ Arthur J Ranasinghe, at the time Minister for State for Broadcasting in Sri Lanka, claims that the late Ranasingha Premadasa, then President of Sri Lanka, was determined to declare war on India for refusing to accept his deadline — July 29, 1989 — for the withdrawal of the Indian Peacekeeping Force! The *Man From Madras Musings* is told that he had wanted Radio Sri Lanka to broadcast the declaration but Ranasinghe, General A S Kalkat, commander of the IPKF, the then Indian High Commissioner, L L Mehrotra, and the Indian First Sec-

retary, Gurjit Singh, managed to talk the furious President out of such precipitate action.

But he insisted the Indian diplomats "tell Rajiv that he is making a big mistake. Tell him that Premadasa is a very good friend of Rajiv Gandhi and India, but don't make the mistake of making him your worst enemy. Tell Rajiv that he will never get such a good friend as Premadasa, but if he makes him an enemy, he will be able to help those who want to defeat Rajiv at the elections". With both leaders dead, we'll never know the truth, but MMM wonders what the Indians mentioned have to say.

★ An obituary for Silk Smitha that *The Man From Madras Musings* came across concluded in this fashion: "The siren, famous for her eyes that said 'I love you' and lips that said 'why don't you?' died lonely and unhappy providing yet another instance of beauty that led to self-destruction." With 430 films over 16 years, MMM would be inclined to think that overwork and few rewards for that kind of work would have had more to do with her death than the fanciful marriage of sex and beauty in the obituary note.

Business briefs

★ Is what Chennai going to get from Hundai a 1989 plant that is not wanted in Canada by the Company? The *Man From Madras Musings* understands that, after trying for two years to sell its 100,000 capacity 'Sonata' plant, the Company has decided to relocate the \$400 million facility in Chennai. The transfer of the Canadian plant, shut down since 1994 for want of orders for the 'Sonata' in North America, will enable Hyundai to not only save enormously on investment but will also help it to put its 1300cc and 1500cc 'Accent' on the Indian roads by this time 1998, well ahead of the Ford 'Fiesta'. But with an eight-year-old plant, is Tamil Nadu or India getting what it was promised by way of investment, MMM wonders. The price of the 'Accent' might, however, be lower because of the savings incurred from using a second-hand plant. Or, at least, MMM hopes so.

★ How did Titan arrive at the brandname *Tanishq* for its designer jewellery? The Company recently explained that "It is a combination of Ta from Tata and Tan from Tamil Nadu, on the one hand, and Nishq which means a gold coin in Sanskrit, on the other. It is also a combination of Tan, meaning body, and Ishq, meaning love." Rather different, it seems to *The Man From Madras Musings* from the answer accepted as correct in a recent quiz in the City.

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MMM

OUR READERS WRITE

Crumbling Chennai

Recently I walked from Broadway's southern end to its northernmost extremity, peeping into by-roads adjacent to it. Many a grand old building is crumbling, many worthwhile buildings are decaying. I was moved to tears as I remembered seeing grand buildings, like the Vizianagaram Palace in Nungambakkam housed in vast grounds, being pulled down to make way for new, concrete soap-boxes.

A year ago it was the turn of the grand structure on the Marina, the DGP Building. Thanks to many and the Government's willingness, it seems to have had a reprieve. We must not rest on our oars, but must see to it that the structure is preserved by fortifying it by modern means without hurting the original. That is possible, as many old buildings have been preserved in the US and other countries. We need the will to preserve. "The political will", as you have so well put it in *Madras Musings*, Sept. 16.

As for the change in the name of Madras City, while it has all along been Chennai in Tamil, it need not be so in English. Do we not have, in our own Constitution, two names for our country, which our Constitution-makers have in their wisdom described as "India that is Bharat"? Why not "Madras that is Chennai"? Or "Chennai that is Madras", if you so like? Why not, indeed?

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Thoughts on change

While I for one welcomed the restoration of correct Tamil place-names for towns like Tanjore and Trichy (Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli) and while I agree that Madras has no such origin as 'Chennai', I have often wondered why successive Governments have not considered restoring the very beautiful original Tamil names of locations within the city, such as Mylapore (Mylaladuparam = The Place where the Peacocks Dance) and Triplicane (Thirullacane = The Sacred Lily Tank) since Tamil place names are often of great beauty and frequently have delightful legends associated with them. For instance, my (former) home was in the village of Thirumullavayal, meaning "A Gateway of Jasmynes". What could be more beautiful than that!

However, may I point out a misunderstanding that has given rise to the re-naming of many roads after local or national celebrities? It seems to be the impression that the British named certain roads and streets after individuals, such as Moubray, White, Edward Elliot, and so on, because those people were in some way celebrities. They were not. The roads bore their names simply because they led to their respective homes. Thus Moubray's (or Mowbray's) Road was so named not because Moubray was famous in some way, but simply because it led to *Moubray's Gardens*, where he lived (or, at least, spent weekends).

After Independence many roads were re-named after national heroes without much thought being given to the practical side of the matter. Thus, if Esplanade had been re-named Netaji Road it would still be called that. Instead, it was given the somewhat pompous title of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Road, which quickly and naturally became abbreviated to N.S.C. Bose Road, and, thus, today we have a road called by most people Ennesee Bose Road. The amusing if apocryphal story of "Barber's Bridge" also comes to mind. Similarly, generations in the future will, I predict, go on referring to this city as Madras, and to the city's principal thoroughfare as Mount Road, regardless of what we do about it, or what the merits of change may be.

Harry Miller

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Madras 600 028.

Great piety

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is constantly in the headlines, with an alarming body count being announced each day. In March this year I flew into this beautiful but riven island with the Madras Players, who were to perform *This English* at the Colombo Hilton. It was just after the bombing of the Central Bank building. People were edgy and everywhere we went, there were check points and military police with automatic weapons at the ready. Most Tamil families had taken down their nameboards for fear of reprisals.

Then the other day, I received a letter from my cousin in Sri Lanka, asking us to help a Sri Lankan who had come to Madras for a kidney transplant. We called on the family, and were moved to find that the family were Anglican Sri Lankans, to help them a Tamil boy had accompanied them and the donor was a Buddhist nun, shaven head and all. When I asked her why she was doing this, she gently replied, "What greater piety can I achieve than helping to save a human life". What greater piety indeed! Surely this little tableau holds out the promise that despite the ravages of war people can still act in faith and harmony.

Mithran Devanesan,

Chennai
DGP's office

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Karunanidhi, deserves congratulations for his historically perspective and aesthetically sensitive decision in ordering that the DGP's building on the Marina continue as of old.

On a personal level, my father, the late P.K. Monappa, who was in the Police Department, worked in the same building, as the Principal Staff Officer to the then IG of Police, Sir Charles Cunningham (1930's), when there was only one officer of that rank. Hence, the latest decision makes me doubly happy.

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To gather dust?

Regarding the consultative groups set up by the MMDA to identify the problems facing Madras city (MM, June 16), I have no doubt that these expert groups will produce excellent reports, excellent concept-wise and drafted in impeccable English. We Indians are past masters at this kind of work. But, alas, if past experience is any guide, these reports will gather dust

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty was looking for a shop
To buy his wife some eardrops.
He studied the ads on TV and in mags,
Many to choose from, he soon discovered.

They promised him purity,
Authenticity and quality,
With glitter and gloss
For rocks and gewgaws

The attraction was a promise:
For a fixed deposit, an interest
So huge and tempting
To the public unsuspecting.

He put in his life's savings
Hoping to make a living,
With thirty per cent interest
On all his deposits and instruments.

Suddenly he needed
Some of his capital,
To spend on matters medical.
Alas, he was in for a shock!

Interest you can draw
Unfailingly, said the jeweller,
But ask not for the capital,
For I've made no promises to deliver!

And so, poor Humpty Dumpty
Had a great fall,
With no law to help him
Back on the wall.

Padmini Natarajan

in our archives. The following quotation from a book *Quiet Crisis in India* by John P Lewis, a well-known journalist, seems to be very apt in this context:

"Every Western social scientist who arrives in India exclaims ever the wonderful crackle of concepts and insights he finds in New Delhi, but if he stays a while, he is almost equally sure to become critical of the implementation. The Indians are better talkers than doers, better planners than executors."

RC Narayanan

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Besant Nagar,
Madras 600 090.

Parent language

With reference to the article by S. Jagadisan (MM, July 16) I feel the study of Sanskrit does more than what other languages do. Sanskrit, an ancient language of India, is the mother of many languages. The etymologist, the philologist, the ethnologist and even the historian cannot perfect their investigations without it — parent as it is of almost every European and of many Asian languages.

P.S. Krishnamoorthy
No.28, Ramanathan Street,
Gobichettipalayam.

Acknowledgement

The pictures of M.S. Subbulakshmi and T. Sadasivam in MM, Oct. 1, were by N. Sundar Raj of Sruti.

The Editor

There's a lot in a name

As I imbibe my crack-of-the-dawn yardage of what is known throughout India as Madras filter coffee, I gloomily mull over the notification that decrees the disappearance down the corridors of history of the (Madeiros Family inspired?) name 'Madras'. A name etched forever for posterity in the sepia tints of the Daniells, Meadows Taylor and many others, in the baroque beauty of the Madras School of Indo-Saracenic Architecture, in the invincibility of Madras Terrace roof tiling, in the creative individuality of the Madras School of Art, etc., etc. A name evocative of the legendary 'Madras brains' which

'Chennai Thali' and 'Chennai Beeda' dampen ever so slightly the culinary delights of the Madras Thali and Madras Beeda, the pride of many an eatery all over India? And, good grief, whatever will happen to Madras Club by any other name? Then there is the quintessential Madras accent, the butt of every cretin-like joke in illiterate Bollywood movies, and never mind if the movie producer's acquaintance with the English language and accents is less than minimal... Also, just think of generations, past and present, of Madras *maamis*, who might wreak terrible revenge, even from their graves, if mere

• by
PUSHPA CHARI

included some of the most brilliant mathematical, scientific, legal, literary and bureaucratic luminaries of this century, of mouth-watering Madras 'chutneys and poppudums' served in restaurants in places as far as London and Londonderry, not to mention the delights of the Madrassi *idli-vadaai-sambhar* packaged as breakfast *par excellence* in the remotest corners of the country.

Unlike, say, Delhi or Varanasi, the 350-years-old name of Madras might be comparatively *nouveau* in the hoary annals of Indian history (so is Chennai!). But it has entwined its magic into the warp and woof of local and national legend, lore, myth, culture and identity, today as inseparable from itself as from its 'Madras' label. I dare say "A rose smells as sweet by any other name" etc., etc., and Madras (on the *Coo-um*) will continue, ho hum, to smell as sweet by the name of Chennai, but...

I wonder. When the name Madras goes into oblivion, what trauma will the name-change inflict on the unforgettable ambience and unique flavour which 'Madras' lent to names, places, things, happenings — and to history? Would Bleeding Madras become Bleeding Chennai and will we shop around for Real Chennai Handkerchief, Chennai lungis and so on? Will a rechristened

My eyes are swollen and full of pain, and sticky tears run down my cheeks. Alas, I am stricken with what future medical textbooks might call Chennaieye. As for me, and as of now, give me Madras Eye any day!

Getting more than one copy of Madras Musings?

Due to duplications in mailing lists being received by us as well as duplication of requests, you may be getting more than one copy of *Madras Musings*. If you are, and are passing on the extra copy/copies to a friend/friends, we thank you for the thought. But if you don't need the extra copy/copies, kindly mail us the wrapper and the address pasted on it of the copy/copies you do not require. Such a gesture by you will enable us to place more accurate print orders and help make every rupee received from the sponsors go a longer way.

M/s Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd.
62/63, Greames Road, Madras 600 006.

Total Cost Management needed in India

"Cost Management is not just an accounting concept but is a key operational tool," contends Dr. Peter B.B. Turney, CEO, Cost Technology Inc., USA.

Turney, an authority on Activity Based Costing (ABC) and Activity Based Management (ABM), was recently in Madras to address the 'Cost Congress 96' organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries, Southern Region.

While the Japanese companies did pioneering work in combining cost competitiveness with total quality management (TQM) and gave the companies in the West a real run for their money, the latter were quick to size up the situation and alter their strategies, Turney states. Now it is time for

experience in the Printed Circuit Board Company, USA, where ABC and TQM were integrated into one tool called Workforce Activity Based Management, focussing the entire company on profitability.

With most companies having at least 30 per cent of their costs associated with non-value-added activities, and traditional costing methods, like standards, variances and budgets, etc. not taking into account the market place, where competition fixes the likely price, Turney urges corporates to introduce modern approaches like ABC, ABM and Target Costing to fill the void.

While ABC is a method of documenting, measuring and analysing business performance, ABM focusses on man-

Venkatachari Jagannathan looks at THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE

Indian corporates to learn from the experiences of the advanced countries and be lean and cost-effective, he urges. Given the fact that the Indian Economy has been linked to the global one, cost and quality competitiveness will be the only deciding factors in the market place, he points out.

"Indian companies can benefit if they adopt the correct approaches. But will they put in the necessary effort?" wonders Turney. As of now, labour costs in India are cheap when compared to most other parts of the globe, but the companies here need to tune their production processes to reduce costs and wastage in order to make Indian products globally competitive.

Turney is not in favour of downsizing labour to cut costs, since it won't have a lasting effect. About 80 per cent of a product's cost is determined at the production design stage itself and any improvement in costs by downsizing, restructuring, outsourcing etc. will have an effect only on the remaining 20 per cent, Turney points out. The only viable option is to restructure the entire operation in order to reduce visible and invisible costs, he says. He also does not subscribe to the view that if quality is taken care of, cost would take care of itself, pointing out that the best quality product need not be cost-competitive.

Cost and Quality Management should go hand in hand to succeed, he says, and cites his

agement of activities for continuous performance improvement. On the other hand, Target Costing is a method whereby a company, before launching a product, fixes the likely price which would be accepted by the particular market segment and tunes its manufacturing and other activities to meet that price. In other words, the market price is the determinant of the production cost and other overheads and not vice versa.

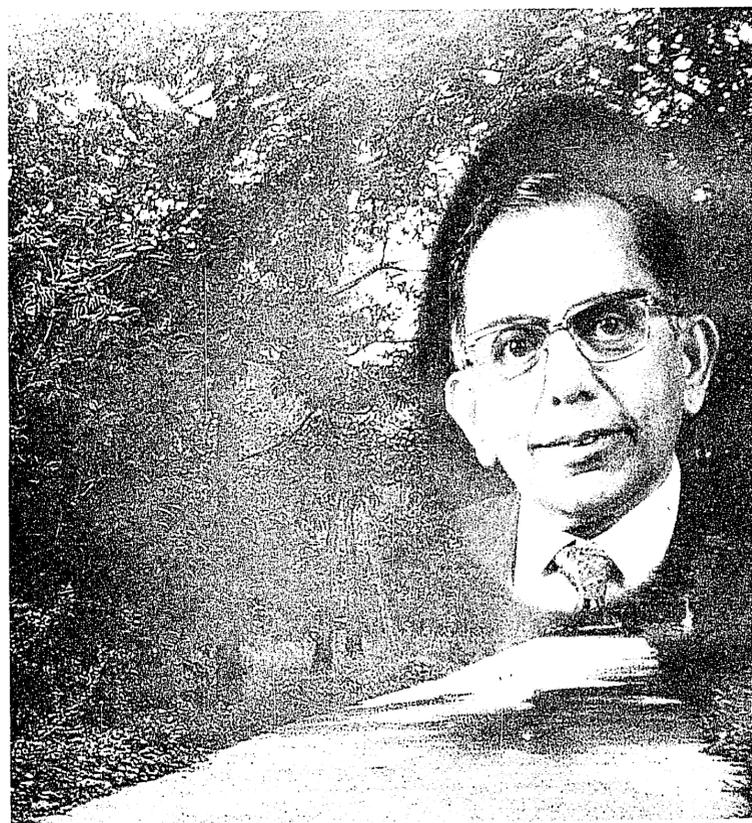
In this regard, it is worth noting that some of the country's leading auto ancillary majors are finding it difficult to quote rates on a long-term basis when approached by the Hyundai Motor Company. Hence, it is imperative for Indian companies to take Total Cost Management seriously in order to maintain their place in the changed Indian market place, where they now have to compete with MNCs.

Sensing good business potential in India, Turney is now firming up plans to open a branch in Madras before the end of the year.

* * *

Heard in the market

The UCAL Group is likely to hive off its loss-making genset manufacturing company, UCAL Power Systems. The suitor in this friendly takeover is India Meters Ltd, headed by former Planning Commission Member V Krishnamurthy. No comment was forthcoming from either party.



[The woods are lovely, dark and deep ... and in them M.V. Arunachalam would walk regularly, exploring the numerous pathways in the gardens of the Theosophical Society. Recalling his concern for the environment, Chakra, the TI house journal, featured this beautiful picture (so much lovelier in colour) and the headline above on its cover and the excerpts below inside. A few days later, on October 4th, exactly a month after his untimely death, the Emperor of Japan honoured him with the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Stars, one of Japan's highest decorations. The posthumous award, recognising his immense efforts in improving Indo-Japanese industrial relations, will be presented to his son, A. Vellayan, later this month by the Japanese Consul-General in Chennai. Meanwhile, in India, the three industrial and commercial chambers with which the Murugappa Group was associated couldn't get together even for a joint condolence meeting for one of its leaders! — The Editor]

*The faint rustle of morning leaves
Chirping birds at the break of dawn
The waft of fresh air in early hours
A figure small but walking tall
A smile for all who pass him by ...*

Morning walkers at the Theosophical Society will miss him, along with scores of others who knew MV as a friend, an industrialist, a litterateur, a debater, a thinker, a music lover, and, above all, a gentleman.

Though soft-spoken and always polite, he never flinched from expressing his views frankly to the Government or to the International Community. MV was one of those who projected himself as a major personality not by making other people feel small but by making those around him feel great. He knew that

showing appreciation and recognising the good work of others was the best way to lift his own spirits. Driver Ashwini in Delhi, for instance, will never forget the note he got from MV at two one afternoon. It read "Go for a iunch. I am delayed". A FICCI meeting that had started at 10 a.m. was running over and the Committee had decided to sit till finished. The note showed MV's concern for his driver and Ashwini made sure every other driver around knew it. MV's concept of leadership was: "Two principal demands of leadership are to recognise that rank does not confer privilege but entails responsibilities and to impose on oneself the discipline of congruence between word and deed and between behaviour and professional beliefs and values, termed broadly as personal integrity." He would time and again reiterate this in many ways.

Private aviation spreads its wings

(By A Staff Reporter)

India's private airlines are planning to expand their fleets and add destinations. Four private sector airlines — Jet, East West, Madras's NEPC Skyline and ModiLuft — plan to add 16 wide-bodied planes in the next two years. Most of them will be 400 seaters. This means a 50 per cent hike in their current seat capacity of 20,000 per day.

A Boeing study has estimated that, within the next four years, private airlines in India will buy or lease 75 planes to cater to the growing

demand. The study indicates that Indian private sector airlines are poised to get stronger at the expense of Indian Airlines.

Madras's NEPC Skyline has already brought two 20-year-old Boeing 737s, shed by Indian Airlines, and is currently having them overhauled. "These will be deployed on trunk routes, shortly," says R.P. Khemka, chairman of the airlines.

Air travel growth in India is projected to grow at

10 per cent annually in the years to come as compared to 5.1 per cent globally and 7.1 per cent in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, the growth in fleet size might actually outstrip the growth in passenger traffic. At present, all Indian airlines taken together are functioning at about 72 per cent of the total seat capacity of 50,000 seats a day. This is expected to fall to 66 per cent in 1997 when capacity will increase to 60,000.

LOOKING BACK

Madras gets a Mayor

The originator of the idea was Sir Josiah Child, the masterful and imperious Governor of the Court of Directors of the East India Company.

In the general letter to Madras dated September 28, 1687, Child detailed a plan for the formation of a Corporation with a regular Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses, a Recorder and a Town Clerk and armed with power to decide petty cases and to levy rates upon the inhabitants for the building of schools, of a Town Hall and a Jail. In this elaborate letter, he stated, among other things:

"... if you could contrive a form of a Corporation to be established, of the Natives mixed with some English freemen, for aught we know some public use might be made thereof; and we might give the members some privileges and pre-eminencies by Charter under our seal, that might please them (as all men are naturally with a little

(Adapted from an article by C.S. SRINIVASACHARI in *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume, O.U.P., Madras — 1939*)

power)... And it is not unlikely that (with) the heads of the several castes, being made Aldermen and some others Burgesses, with power to choose out of themselves yearly their Mayor, and to tax all the inhabitants for a Town Hall, or any public buildings for themselves to make use of, — your people would more willingly and liberally disburse five shilling towards the public good, being taxed by themselves, than six pence imposed by our despotic power....

"We direct nothing positively in this, but refer it to your consideration and, if you think it may redound to the public good, you may the better adapt it to the good of the place... and create such a Corporation in Madras, as will be beneficial to the Company and place....

"We conceive their Court Books must always be kept in the English tongue; and the Town Clerk must always be an Englishman that can speak Portuguese and Gentoo; and their Recorder must be the same....

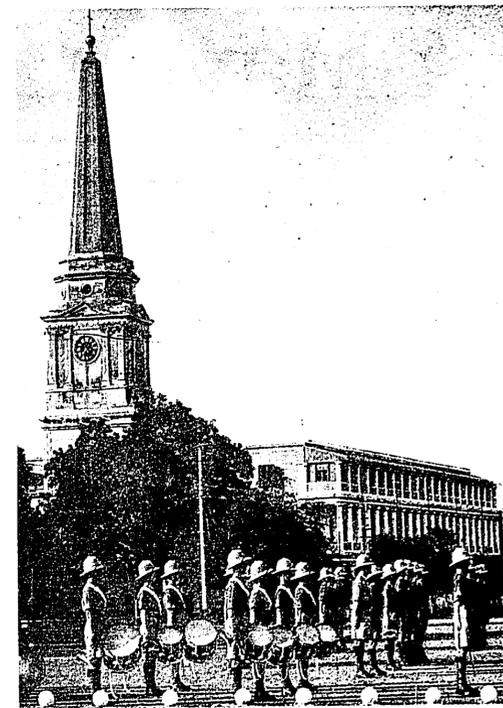
"We think it may be convenient that in the said Court of Aldermen, being twelve beside

the Mayor, there should never be above three English freemen, and three Portuguese; the other seven to be Moors and Gentoos."

The Charter was issued by the Company on the December 30, 1687; and along with it were sent out the Maces and the Sword together with orders that the Corporation should be immediately started. The Charter stated, "We do nominate, constitute and make Nathaniel Higginson, Second of Our Council of Fort St. George, the First and Modern (Current) Mayor of the said Corporation... Also we do assign, nominate and constitute John Littleton, Thomas Wavell, and William Fraser, three of Our Council of Fort St. George, Daniel Chardin, French Merchant, Lucas de Oliveria and Alvaro Capella de Valle, Portuguese Merchants, Bartholomew Rodrigues, Jaques de Paiva and Domingos de Porte, Hebrew Merchants, China Vencatadre, Mooda Verona and Alling Pella, Gentu Merchants, to be the Twelve First and Modern Aldermen." Then follows the names of 29 free merchants nominated Burgesses. A new Mayor was to be elected annually from the Aldermen. Any vacancy among the Aldermen was to be filled by election from the Burgesses.

On the appointed day, September 29, 1688, the Corporation was inaugurated. "After dinner, towards 3 in the afternoon, the whole Corporation marched in their several robes, the Mayor and Aldermen in scarlet serge gowns and the Burgesses in white China silk, with the Mace carried before the Mayor in procession, to the Town Hall. Two silver-gilt maces were carried before the Mayor by two English-born sergeants. The Mayor and Aldermen enjoyed also the privilege of having rundellos (broad umbrellas) and Kettysols (umbrellas made of bamboo and paper imported from China) borne over them. The Mayor was always to be addressed as 'the Worshipful Mayor.'"

In 1727, came the reorganisation of the Corporation in accordance with the terms of the Royal Charter issued by King George I in 1726, which gave greater judicial powers to that



body. According to this Royal Charter, the body corporate of the City was to be composed of the Mayor and nine Aldermen, of whom at least several should be natural-born British subjects? The Mayor was to be elected annually; but the Aldermen, unless removed, were to continue for life and vacancies among them were to be filled by the Corporation.

On Thursday, August 17, 1727, the new Mayor and Aldermen were sworn in at the Company's Garden-House in Peddanaickenpettah where the Governor and Councillors met to receive them. "The Mayor and Aldermen proceeded from the parade ground in the Fort through Old Black Town on horseback with guards, peons and country music in the following manner:- Major John Roach on horse-back at the head of the company of foot-soldiers with kettle-drum, trumpet and other music; the dancing girls with country music; the Peddanayak on horseback at the head of his peons; the Marshall with his staff on horse-back; the old Mayor on the right hand and the new Mayor on the left; the Aldermen two and all on horse-back, the Company's chief peon; the Sheriff with a white wand on horse-back; the chief gentry in the town on horse-back."

The Charter contained the names of the first Mayor and Aldermen — "Richard Higginson is appointed to be the 'First and modern Mayor of the said

THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

On October 25th, our NEW, Ripon Building in gleaming white, will be occupied once again by a Mayor and his Council. After 23 years, true municipal governance takes its seat again in the headquarters of the oldest municipal corporation in the Commonwealth, outside Britain. And 'Hooray' we say.

That Corporation had its beginnings in our OLD, the first Town Hall of Madras (seen in our picture around 1907). Built in 1680, soon after St. Mary's, it is the third oldest building in the Fort. Improvements to it by the military gave it this look, not very different from what it is today. When it was the Town Hall of Madras, it had a debtors' prison below the main hall and a cupola above; neither remain in what is now the headquarters of the Sub-Area Commander in Fort St. George.

The Corporation moved from the Town Hall to Errabalu Chetty Street, when civilian life moved out of the Fort in the early 19th Century and from there to our NEW in 1913. Rs 7.5 lakh was spent on Ripon Building, of which Rs 5.5 lakh went to Loganatha Mudaliar for the civil construction. Four years in the building, three-storeyed Ripon Building, 252' x 126', has a first floor area of 25,000 sq.ft. and is topped by a 132'-tall tower in the front face of which is a clock 8' in diameter. Its splendid, wood-rich Council chamber and an adjoining Mayor's office have been refurbished to welcome the new Mayor. May he have a comfortable and successful tenure. (Photographs: OLD from the Vintage Vignettes' Collection and NEW by SUSHEELA NAIR.)

Aldermen remained during all this time primarily a judicial and magisterial body. Municipal action proper proceeded from the Act of Parliament of 1792 containing a clause making provision "for the good order and Government of the towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay". Clause 151 of this Act provided for the appointment of Justices of the Peace, while a succeeding clause empowered them to assemble at general or quarter sessions to make arrangements for the care of the streets.

This is the commencement of the Madras Municipality as such, differing from the Mayor and Corporation who were almost purely judicial functionaries. A Member of the Council presided over the meetings of Justices for municipal purposes. An Act of 1856 abolished the Bench of Justices and replaced them by three Commissioners, who were called "the Municipal Commissioners for the Town of Madras". They were salaried officials and were empowered to look after the conservancy and improvement of the City and to assess and collect the municipal taxes.

An Act of the Madras Provincial Legislature, in 1865, added to the three paid commissioners, three honorary Members to be selected from the resident inhabitants of the town. Two years later a radical change was made in the constitution of the Municipality. The

(Continued on Page 6)



[Quizmaster V.V. RAMAN's questions are from the fortnight September 16 to 30. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Madras (... sorry, not Chennai, during this period).]

1. A famed Swiss tradition is to be broken at the insistence of countries investigating the business done by Nazi Germany. What tradition?
2. A famed comic book superhero and his colleague are to tie the knot after sixty years of courtship. Name the couple.
3. Which State was brought under President's rule, by invoking Article 356, after recent political turmoil there?
4. What is the annual plan outlay for Tamil Nadu for 1996-'97?
5. Where was the Indian Railways' first fully computerised electric locomotive flagged off recently?
6. Name the political leader, a brother of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was gunned down on September 20th?
7. Who is the new president of the AICC, following the stepping down of Narasimha Rao?
8. What historic document was signed by many world leaders, India staying away, on September 24th, at the U.N.?
9. Who was voted the 'Man of the Series' at the recently concluded Sahara Cup tournament in Toronto?
10. Name the former Agriculture Minister of Tamil Nadu arrested by the State's Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Department on charges of acquiring property worth Rs. 2 cr.
11. Who is the new cricket coach of the Indian team?
12. This industrialist, who has accused Narasimha Rao of cheating him, has launched a political party called Azad Aryavrat Assembly. Name him.
13. Name the militia group which took control of Kabul and hanged former President Najibullah in public on September 27th?
14. Which temple in India earned a record income of Rs. 217.66 crore in '95-'96.
15. Who dethroned Geet Sethi and took over the world professional billiards crown in Bombay recently?

A Mayor for Madras

(Continued from Page 5)

City was divided into eight wards, each being represented by four Commissioners appointed by the Government from among the inhabitants of the respective divisions. An Executive Officer presided over the meetings of these 32 Commissioners and become known as the President. In 1878, an Act of the Legislature provided that 16 out of the 32 Commissioners should be elected from among the rate-payers.

In 1884, there was passed the City of Madras Municipal Act, which defined the purposes for which the municipal funds might be spent. These purposes were divided into four categories, public health, public safety, elementary education and poor schools, and public conveniences. 24 out of the 32 Commissioners were to be elected. This was supplemented by the Act of 1904 which raised the number of Commissioners from 32 to 36.

The Madras City Municipality Act of 1919 created in the place of the President, the Vice-President and the Commissioners, a council of 50 Councillors, 30 of them representing the 30 divisions of the City, 11 representing institutions and 9 nominated by Government, "with particular reference to the representation of Muhammadans and other minorities"; four Standing Committees dealing respectively with taxation and finance, works, health, and education; and a Commissioner appointed by Government as the Chief Executive Officer.

At their first meeting in November, the Council elected, according to the Act, one of their number, Diwan Bahadur

Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar, to be their President.

During the Ministry of the Raja of Bobbili and at the instance of the Kumararaja of Chettinad, who was then President of the Corporation, a Bill was passed to amend the City Municipal Act so as to create the office of Mayor. A Gazette Extraordinary containing the Bill was issued on January 19, 1933; it was introduced in the Legislative Council on the 26th following and was passed into Law on the same day. The

The office of the Mayor came into official existence on the March 7, 1933. The Mayor was conducted to the Council Chamber in a procession, where one of the ex-Presidents received him and installed him in his seat. Since then the Mayor has always been preceded by the mace-bearer and ushered in by the Secretary when he enters the Council Chamber, all the members standing till he occupies the chair, after bowing to all sides of the House.

monogram and shield, bearing the City Coat of Arms; the top plaque of the pendant is beautifully enamelled with a picture of the Ripon Buildings (and surrounded by a wreath of thistle); the pendant itself is enamelled with the City Coat of Arms raised in relief and surrounded by a highly embossed wreath of thistles. There has also been provided for the Mayor a mace of 4 feet and 6 inches in length, consisting of a highly chased spiral design surmounted by a crown bearing on one side an embossed view of the Corporation, while on the top of the crown, there is the City Coat of Arms. A grand Mayoral Chair, which was presented to the Corporation by the first Mayor, serves as his seat.

"The robe worn by the Mayor of Madras is almost a replica of that worn by the Lord Mayor of London, but made to suit the conditions of this country. It is made of a specially soft light-weight silk velvet in a rich shade of fuschia, trimmed with gold lace, instead of ermine, and lined with silk.

"The Mayor's full court-dress suits, for both day or evening wear, are made of light-weight black vicuna fully lined with silk, and completely equipped with sword and Mayor's cocked hat."

In 1934-35 further amendments to the City Municipal Act were taken up; and the present Act is the outcome of the Amending Bill of 1936. This Act continued till the Corporation was dissolved 23 years ago. In the intervening years, the Central Government had legislated new images for local government.

Statement of Objects and Reasons contained the following: "The object of this Bill is to designate the President of the Corporation as the Mayor. The Presidents of most of the civic bodies in England and of the Corporation of Calcutta and Bombay are styled Mayors. It is desirable that the same designation should be adopted in the case of the President of the premier Municipal Corporation of the Presidency."

Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiar, Minister, in the absence of the Raja of Bobbili, Chief Minister, who was in charge of the Bill, observed, in moving that the Bill be passed into law: "It gives me great pleasure on behalf of this House to offer its most sincere congratulations to my Hon'ble friend the Kumararaja of Chettinad who will be the first Mayor of Madras. It is a dignity that has been long overdue."

Soon afterwards the Council resolved as follows: "At the time the Mayor attends the Council meetings, he shall wear the ordinary gown made of black silk or material with gold lace border, one inch broad, and white bands.

"The Mayor shall wear on special and ceremonial occasions a gown made of velvet or other suitable material of fuschia shade, with a gold lace border of two inches breadth.

"The head-dress for the Mayor shall be a lace turban of the Hindu or Muslim type, or a three-cornered hat of black velvet with gold braid cloth over it or a tarboosh."

The Corporation provided the Mayor with a gold Mayoral Chain and Badge to be worn by him on special and ceremonial occasions. The chain consists alternately of the Corporation

LOOKING BACK

COOKING with Chandra

The pungent bulb makes its appearance in almost every dish, lending it a unique flavour. The recipes I've chosen are guaranteed to make you know your onions!

ONION PARATHAS

For the stuffing
2 onions, chopped fine
2 or 3 green chillies, chopped fine
3 or 4 tbs chopped coriander leaves
2 tbs lemon juice
Salt to taste

For the parathas
2 cups whole wheat flour
1 tbs ghee
Salt to taste
Ghee for shallow frying

Method

Mix all the ingredients for the stuffing. Divide into eight equal portions. Set aside.
Sift the wheat flour, adding salt. Add the ghee and sufficient warm water. Knead to a soft pliable dough. Divide into eight equal portions.

Roll out one portion of the dough on a floured board into a 4-inch disc. Place a portion of the filling in the centre. Fold the dough over the filling and flatten with the hand.
Roll once again into a 6" disc. Shallow fry the parathas in a tawa till golden. Serve hot.

FRENCH ONION SOUP

1 cup finely chopped onions
6 cups vegetable stock
2 slices bread, toasted
1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup cheese, grated
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Heat the butter and sauté the onions till they are golden, stirring continuously.
Add the stock and simmer for half an hour. Season with pepper and salt according to taste.

Place the toast in a large bowl. Add the soup. Sprinkle with cheese. Dot the top with bits of butter and bake in a moderate oven till the top is golden brown. Serve immediately.

IRULI DOSAI

2 cups fine semolina (rava)
1/2 cup maida
1/2 cup rice flour
2 or 3 onions, chopped fine
4 green chillies, chopped fine

A small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
Salt to taste
Oil for shallow frying

For tempering

4 tbs ghee
2 tbs oil
1 tsp asafoetida powder
A few curry leaves

Method

Heat ghee and oil. Add all the ingredients for tempering. When the cumin seeds splutter, add the chopped onions, green chillies and fry till onions turn golden. Set aside.

Mix semolina, maida and rice flour. Add salt, chopped coriander leaves, fried onion mixture and sufficient water to form a batter of thick pouring consistency.

Heat a tawa and make crisp dosais. Serve hot.

ONION VATRAL KUZHAMBU

3/4 cup sambar onions, peeled
2 tbs powdered jaggery
2 tbs sesame oil
Salt to taste

For the masala

1 1/2 tbs sesame oil
1 tbs Bengal gram dhal

1 tbs redgram dhal
3/4 tbs blackgram dhal
2 tsp coriander seeds
1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds
6-8 red chillies
1 small piece asafoetida
Lemon-sized tamarind

For the tempering

1 tsp oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

Method

In two tablespoons oil, fry the sambar onions till golden. Set aside.

Heat oil and fry all the ingredients for the masala, except the tamarind, till golden. Grind to a fine paste, adding the tamarind.

Add 1 1/2 cups of water to the paste and bring to a boil. Add the powdered jaggery and salt and simmer till the raw smell of the tamarind disappears.

Add the fried onions and simmer for a minute or two.
Heat oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add to the kuzhambu (gravy). Serve hot with plain rice.

— Chandra Padmanabhan

East-West dance-drama

Highlight of Ohio Fest

Music composer Pandit Raghav Rao advised them that fusion would only cause confusion. And so the Dhananjays of Bharata Kalanjali and Heinz Poll of the Ohio Ballet, by way of Berlin and Paris, decided they'd get their wards to stick to the Bharata Natyam and American ballet styles, respectively, as they romped through *Jungle Book*: *The Adventures of Mowgli*.



Percussionist Ricardo picks up the beat from Shanta Dhananjayan at a *Jungle Book* rehearsal in Cleveland, Ohio, as Dhananjayan offers a tip or two. Heinz Poll of the Ohio Ballet is seen in the rear (white hair).

the story that is a perennial favourite.

Jungle Book, which has received enormous publicity in the Cleveland area and tremendous support, is the highlight of 'India Fest, Northern Ohio', a two-month festival that will feature at least 115 programmes during October and November. There will be music and dance, talks and lecture demonstrations, films and story-telling, art and photographic exhibitions, food festivals and several workshops. Participating in the Fest are eight universities — John Carroll U, Cuyahoga and Lakeland Community Colleges, U of Akron, Notre Dame College, Oberlin College, Cleveland State U, and Case Western Reserve U — and organisations such as the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Cinematheque, the Music Circle of

Cleveland and the Cleveland Public Library. And this Fest, I hear, has been growing from year to year, ever since two former Madras classical arts enthusiasts founded the Cleveland Cultural Alliance in 1991. The way the Alliance's effort is growing, the Cleveland Festival threatens to surpass the 'Madras Season' — which will only see *Jungle Book* in 1997-98.

FOOTNOTE: What was truly fantastic was the ease with which the percussionist, Ricardo, picked up the Indian beat during the rehearsals and enabled the dancers to create a performance that was still awaiting its music, which was being annotated as they went along by the Pandit!

(Alongside are some excerpts from the American Press).

S.M.



The costumes for the *Jungle Book* dance-drama ... by Christiana Gianini

October-December: The work of three young artists — Ramachandran (Painting), Suresh (Sculpture) and Anamika (Printmaking) — all final year students from the College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. The exhibits will comprise a selection of paintings, graphics and sculpture. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan)

October 18th: An interactive show on Gandhi and the freedom struggle presented by IWA. (At the British Council)

October 19th: Madras Book Club meeting. Release of E.R.C. David's *Lord of the Jungle* by B. Vijayaraghavan of the Madras Snake Park Trust. (At the Connemara Hotel 6 p.m.)



From October 19th: Surjit Kaur's canvases. (At the Gallery)

October 20th: *Veena* recital by Revathi Krishna. (At the Narada Gana Sabha)
October 23rd: 'Women who Break Rules'. Lakshmi Holmstrom's talk is based on two famous Tamil historical works. (At the British Council)

October 25th: Probir Gupta's recent work in wood, stone and canvas. (At the Alliance Francaise)

October 25th: 'Rain Water Harvesting' — Lecture by Dr Dieter Beck, Visiting Expert, Centre for Environmental Studies, Anna University. (At MMB Library, 6 p.m.)

October 26th: A concert by the Madras Musical Association. (At the Museum Theatre)

October 26th: One-man show on paper and canvas by Ebenezer Sundar Singh. (At The Easel)
October 31st: Madras Book Club meeting. Three Australian authors speak on their work. (At the Connemara Hotel 6 p.m.)



East meets West in *Jungle Book*, a dance-drama to be staged in Cleveland, Ohio, in November. Seen at a rehearsal in Cleveland are Xochil (Sua) and Satyajit (Mowgli).

An East-West story

Choreographers Heinz Poll and V P Dhananjayan come from different worlds. When Poll was invited to collaborate with Dhananjayan on an East-West story ballet, he was initially apprehensive. "I thought it impossible to choreograph such defined and different classical idioms into one form and make it a coherent statement," he said.

But after meeting with Dhananjayan and viewing videotapes of his work, Poll changed his mind. "What will make it work is our Western perception of production values," he said. "It will be a nice mixture of styles," added Dhananjayan. "We will keep the identity of each style."

Dhananjayan, who leads an annual summer dance camp in Charlottesville, Virginia, has developed strong ties in northeast Ohio since he and his wife Shanta gave the first concert sponsored by the Cleveland Cultural Alliance four years ago. Now he has teamed with the Ohio Ballet on a two-hour production of *Mowgli*.

Ten years ago, Dhananjayan produced his own version of *Mowgli* in London. Performed by students of classical Indian dance and produced by the British Arts Council, Dhananjayan's choreography combined elements of Bharata Natyam, Kathakali and free styles of movements. For the new East-West version, Dhananjayan has rethought his choreographic concepts. He saw the title character as a male Indian dancer and the principal female role as an Ohio Ballet ballerina. Indian dancers portray earthy jungle animals, while ballet dancers create birds, deer and other light-footed creatures.

Things started happening when Gruber met Ganesan. Ganesan told Gruber that she had always had a dream of pairing an American ballet company with a classical Indian dance company. She mentioned *Jungle Book*, the Kipling tale about Mowgli, the Indian baby brought up by Mother Wolf, as a possible ballet. Gruber thought of the Ohio Ballet, because of what she describes as its "openness to experimentation".

Rao, 72, looks like a kindly grandfather. But his eyes dance behind wire-rimmed glasses, and his body is nimble as he seated himself cross-legged on the beautiful shawl Dhananjayan took off his own shoulders and spread on the floor for the master. "This is my second experience with

Dhananjayan. The first time I saw him with Heinz Poll, I saw the absolute coherence of both choreographers. It's like one soul and two bodies," Rao described his commitment to both.

"Indian music is mainly improvised. It is purely melodic. Western music is purely harmonic. I borrow from beautiful Western music. But I make no fusion music. Fusion music is confusion," he added, explaining what he had created for *Mowgli*.

While watching Poll work with the dancer, Rao had made notes on the movements. Using these notes, a kind of dance stenography, he composed the score in classical Indian styles. It was then recorded by an orchestra of Indian and Western instruments in Madras.

Part of the money for the project has been provided by the Indian community in America. The major funding for the \$220,000 project was, however, raised jointly by Lucille Gruber of Cuyahoga Community College and Uma Ganesan of the Cleveland Cultural Alliance. Gruber got to know the Dhananjays two years ago, when their company gave a lecture demonstration in Cleveland. It was the speaking portion of the performance that really hooked Gruber. "I had seen a lot of Indian dances myself, but I never saw beyond what I was seeing," she says. Through the lecture-demonstration, she began to understand how the dance fitted into Indian culture.

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As part of the *Mowgli* project, Poll and Ohio Ballet's ballet master, Richard Dickinson, studied in Madras for a week. What they saw and learnt has resulted in the happy blending of styles. (From reports in *The Plain Dealer* and *The Beacon Journal*, Cleveland, Ohio).

As more and more English medium schools spring up in every corner of the City and more and more writing is imposed on children earlier and earlier, the more educated among parents have been looking for alternate education centres for the very young. There are some very interesting schools in the City for which admissions are at a premium.

Kalakshetra and the Theosophical Society had pioneered



A. T. Ariyaratne, winner of the Gandhi Peace Prize.

Sing a song of English

the Montessori School of education but, barring a few enthusiastic teachers, and just one or two schools, this wonderful method of child-training, which lays emphasis on sensory training and training in a concepts rather than skills, has found very few takers. Now

Rukmini Ramachandran, from the famous Kalki family, with its rich cultural foundation in literature, music and dance and close links with the Balasaraswathi family, Kalakshetra, Rukmini Devi and the M.S. family, has founded the Supraja School based on Montessori methodology. The school in Gandhi Nagar is supported by Kalakshetra Publications and Swami Nachiappan who had close links with Rukmini Devi and Arundale and has seen the flowering of Montessori methods.

It was in Adyar that the Montessori School flowered. It was here that Madam Maria Montessori visited and saw her dream in action. Kalakshetra also started a Montessori training course. It was given up after a while, but Rukmini's school is proving to be very popular.

Rukmini has just brought out a cassette of nursery songs called *Raindrops and Rabbits*. Listening to it made me nostalgic and brought back memories of the days I used these very same songs in the kindergartens I taught. The songs are sung by Rukmini, Anuradha Cheyyur, Priyadarshini Nandan and Rukmini's niece and nephew, the talented Akhila and Abhinav Ramnarayan.

The songs are sung very clearly and you just can't miss a word. They are simple, melodious and easy to repeat. Teachers in many a kindergarten will find them very useful.

Rukmini says, "Music is part of the great cultural tradition a child inherits. Maria Montessori believed that the tradition is directly absorbed by the child from the environment. Unfortunately, very few educational institutions are able to provide such an ambience for the young."

She, however, feels that in India's multilingual society, the child's introduction to English through nursery rhymes like 'Hey diddle diddle' and 'Humpty Dumpty' can cause

confusion. Though children are fascinated by the sound of the words, their meaning escapes them. "The dish and the spoon can't run!" is a fairly common reaction. Therefore, a teacher needs to find English songs which relate to the child's life and experience.

As a kindergarten teacher, I found most nursery rhymes to be morbid. There were very few happy rhymes to choose from, yet singing is a very important aspect of childhood. I rejected most of the usual songs. *Rain-*

by

V.R. Devika

drops and Rabbits has songs that have been carefully chosen, but these are songs that have been around for decades. And, as ever, they remain too urban, too convent schools-oriented. I wonder why some Indian songs could not have been included. A group of us kindergarten teachers once composed and taught some Indian English songs just to make our lives as teachers more interesting. Rukmini could have tried something like that.

Good effort, Rukmini, but I'm waiting for an Indian version...

In Gandhiji's footsteps

A Sri Lankan Buddhist disciple of Mahatma Gandhi was in Madras recently to meet Dr. M.S. Swaminathan. He wanted to talk to Dr. Swaminathan about planting a hundred trees a day. Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne also wants to lead a walk from Colombo to Jaffna in an appeal for peace. It was an impressive speech that he made at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in Madras the other day.

'Ari', as he is popularly called, is the Founder President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana movement of Sri Lanka. Since its founding in 1958, he has developed an integrated rural awakening programme in over 8600 villages in the island on the lines of our *panchayat raj* movement and has shown it can work.

I found Ariyaratne quite intriguing. To research him further, I went to the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission and

LEARNING TAMIL

I was surprised recently at the comparatively large numbers of engineers, technicians and managerial experts from other countries who have come to live in Madras, at least for a short time. At one get-to-know-each-other session I found no less than fifty new faces from the U.K. alone! And there must be many more from other countries who have come to help hasten India's economic development in one way or another.

Many of these technocrats bring their families with them, and I reflected on the number of times I have heard expatriate wives tell me that they had no doubt they would soon pick up Tamil from their cook, their bearer, their nanny or some other domestic employee. I have never known one to succeed!

Hindi, Urdu, and other North Indian languages, 'yes!' I found myself speaking the language mixture called Hindustani fairly fluently after six months in the North many years ago. But Tamil is a language I defy anyone to learn by ear. The problem is that Tamil is spoken at such a speed that, with all due respect, it often sounds like a tape-recorder being run ten times too fast. I offer the example of a single word that continued to defeat me for a very long period. When I tell educated Tamil friends this story, they always smile and acknowledge its truth and the difficulty it exemplifies so well.

When I married and returned to live permanently in India as long back as 1956, my wife and I built our unusual little house 15 miles outside Madras near the village of Thirumullaivayal, between Ambattur and Avadi. In those days it really was a village, a delightful 20-minute drive past lush paddy fields, little groves of palms, a tiny hamlet here and there, and a temple or two. Today, that drive has been transformed into a hideous ordeal, an hour and a half of battling against waves of kamikaze cyclists, lorries, buses and every conceivable kind of transport bringing workers to and from the innumerable factories that have established themselves

found them extremely courteous and helpful. This warmth should be put to better use in greater cultural interaction, such as Sri Lankan festivals of dance, music, films etc.

and their infrastructure all along a road that has scarcely been widened an inch since my first days there!

But those early days at Thirumullaivayal were idyllic. Among other things, I found myself involved with the health problems of the local village children. Carefully instructed by highly trained doctors from the great C.M.C. Hospital, Vellore, who used to come and stay with me over weekends, I used to treat children for all manner of problems, from scabies to leprosy, and every morning had up to two hundred of them sitting in disciplined lines along the drive to my house where they were given nourishing food additives donated by the good people of New Zealand.

And, of course, I badly wanted to talk to the children in their own language, but found this very difficult. Revati, my wife, used to laugh and tell me I would never learn Tamil, and indeed there was very little encouragement from anyone

**One Man's
Madras —
HARRY
MILLER'S**

else either, partly because of the prevalence of English spoken in Tamil Nadu. However, I was determined to try. There was one word I kept hearing which I asked everyone the meaning of without success. The word sounded to me exactly like 'wheat', but whenever I asked my wife, my friends, my colleagues or the villagers what this word 'wheat' meant they all shook their heads and said there was no such word in Tamil.

It wasn't until, in despair, I hired myself a pundit to teach me to read and write that I discovered the answer. Take this "En veetikku po-ree-ar". Now say that in the usual Tamil, ten-times tape-recorder speed, and the 'en veetu....' comes out sounding exactly like 'wheat'. Try it for yourself and, like all my Tamil friends, I'm sure you'll agree that I'm right.

So that's the obstacle to learning Tamil by ear. You MUST learn to read and write if you have any hope of learning to speak the language. In my case, however, even that didn't go far enough.

One of my principal reasons for wishing to acquire fluency in the language was to talk to those village kids I told you about. So every morning I'd ask my pundit to teach me new words and phrases I could try on them, but when I did I was always greeted by blank, uncomprehending faces. Checking with my wife or friends I was told that my pundit was teaching me classical Tamil which none of the children could possibly understand, any more than they could understand Chinese.

Back with my pundit I would complain and tell him what my friends told me I should have learned from him, only to be met with exclamations of dismay and the remark, "No, no, Mr. Millerr, you don't want to learn that vulgurr Tamil. Give me six months and I'll have you translating the Tamirr classics." Attempts to convince him that I had no wish or ambitions to translate the Tamil classics and only wanted to talk to the kids proved useless and at last I simply gave up.

But I did learn a lot and can at least read the Tamil script today, though I don't always understand what I'm reading. One thing I have always found irritating and inexplicable on the subject, though, is the attempt to transliterate that very difficult Tamil, 'rah', with the tongue going to the roof of the mouth, as 'zh'. Whoever thought that 'zh' could possibly give any indication of what the genuine sound was like in Tamil? Why not put some sign over the English 'r' to indicate its special pronunciation, just as the Germans put their umlaut over the letter 'U' (I'm Harry Müller in German) or the French their circumflexes and accents. The Scandinavians, too, have several signs to indicate the differences of alphabetical sounds.

Meanwhile, best of luck to our new expatriate community in their attempts to learn the language. I don't know if they are still available, but there used to be a series of four little booklets introducing the stranger to the wonders and beauty of the Tamil language published (for missionaries originally, I suppose) by the Bible people's bookshop down near the General Hospital, on the opposite side of the road. The booklets are an excellent introduction to learning the language, and infinitely superior to instruction from cook or bearer.

• The Farmers' Scientist — Part II

Save the soil, his plea

As a keen conservationist and a visionary M.S. Swaminathan was the first to recognise the problems of technology. In January 1968, he said, "Intensive cultivation of land without conservation of soil fertility and soil structure would lead ultimately to the springing up of deserts. Irrigation without arrangements for drainage would result in soils getting alkaline or saline. Indiscriminate use of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides could cause adverse changes in biological balance as well as lead to an increase in the incidence of cancer and other diseases, through the toxic residues being present in the grains or other edible parts. Unscientific tapping of underground water would lead to the rapid exhaustion of this wonderful capital resource left to us through ages of natural farming. The rapid replacement of numerous locally adapted varieties with one or two high-yielding strains in large contiguous areas would result in the spread of serious diseases capable of wiping out entire crops. Therefore, the initiation of exploitative agriculture without a proper understanding of the various consequences of every one of the changes introduced into traditional agriculture and without first building up a proper scientific and training base to sustain it, may only lead us into an era of agricultural disaster in the long run, rather than to an era of agricultural prosperity."



Dr. M.S. Swaminathan

MSS's rise in the hierarchy of Indian agriculture's officialdom was meteoric. In 1979 he became the Secretary for Agriculture and Irrigation, and for a short while, in 1980, he acted as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. He was a member of the Planning Commission for agriculture, rural development, science and

By A Special Correspondent

education. Then followed six years abroad, till April 1988, as the Director-General of the International Rice Research Institute in The Philippines. At the IRR, MSS brought in new ideas to include women in agriculture and stressed sustainable agriculture. He re-oriented IRR's research programmes and, through a novel programme on 'Prosperity through rice', he ushered in

several farmer-oriented and value-added concepts.

After his return from The Philippines in 1988, MSS decided to set up a research foundation with all the prize money he had got and started the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Madras. He set up the Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (CRSARD) in 1989 in rented premises in Kotturpuram.

MSS has been a great lover of nature and, as a geneticist, he has been instrumental in starting several genetic resources conservation units in India as well as in other developing countries. He was the President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) from 1984 to 1990, and Vice President of the World Wide Fund for Nature International in Switzerland during the same period.

As a conservationist, his role in saving the pristine forests of Silent Valley in the early Eighties is well-known. As President of the World Wide Fund for Nature-India, his signal contribution in protecting the protected areas came to be recognised. MSS served as a Founder-Trustee and, later, Chairman of the Board of the International Council for Research on Agroforestry during 1977-1982. His efforts to save the Amazon forests in Guyana stand testimony to his concern for conservation. His commit-

WE WELCOME THE MAYOR

(Continued from Page 1)

- parking, monitor bus stops etc.?
- Garbage clearance and solid waste disposal, keeping the cattle not only off the streets but outside the city, and preventing the streets being used as public toilets.
- Public health facilities, Corporation dispensaries and medical centres, including providing better and more motivated staff.
- Corporation schools and other education facilities, including providing them with modern facilities like computers etc.
- The markets of the City, which are not only a shambles, but are also filthy and unhygienic.
- Street lighting, parking lots, bus stops, public conveniences, parks, gardens, playgrounds, burial and cremation grounds (which must be the most disgraceful in

the world), electric crematoria, and fire services. Here the need is adding to the existing and maintaining them all.

Protecting the City's heritage, both manmade and God-given. This includes its forests, waterways, estuaries, tanks, coastline and its historic public and private buildings, starting with the Town Hall.

To ensure all this needs money. And Government must not be seen as the only milch cow. Not only must rates and taxes be realistically considered and collected, but it must also be ensured that EVERY citizen of the City makes a contribution, no matter how small. The Corporation must seek something from each within his means, but is at the same time responsible for accounting for its collection as well as ensuring that it is well spent on the above services.

While action is taken on these fronts on a priority basis, the Mayor and his team will have to build bridges with the State Government to enable, in the first place, active liaison between the Corporation and the Government bodies which have taken over several of the City's powers. Seeking the return of these powers will be the second stage, but meanwhile, instead of dissipating its energies on this, let the Corporation ensure through negotiation that our streets are not flooded by the slightest rain, that are roads are not dug up at the slightest provocation and that new buildings of all sizes and shapes are not built on the slightest whim.

Madras Musings sincerely wishes you all the best and happy days ahead, Your Worship. We will be glad to help in any way.

The 'Nobel' for conserving the environment

The M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation has been awarded the Blue Planet Prize for 1996.

This prize, instituted by the Asahi Glass Foundation of Japan on the occasion of the UN Conference of Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, recognises the work of individuals, groups and organisations whose achievements have contributed to the resolution of global environmental problems. MSSRF is the first Blue Planet prize-winner from Asia.

One of the Research Foundation's major achievements has been the study and conservation of coastal ecosystems, particularly mangrove wetlands. Based on its research into vegetation, soil salinity, and other aspects of mangrove habi-

tats, the Research Foundation has taken steps to restore degraded wetlands.

The Research Foundation conducts a community biodiversity programme to rescue endangered plant species from extinction, identifies micro-organisms to serve as bioindicators of ecosystem health, and conserves genetic diversity of plant species used as food or in medicinal and other applications.

In addition, the Research Foundation promotes the Biovillage model of sustainable rural development. By helping to conserve the natural environment of developing countries while supporting the economic viability of rural communities, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation is playing an important role in the search for solutions to global environmental problems.

ment to save the mangroves and other tropical forests has come to be recognised the world over. Recently, MSS helped in developing a transparent and implementable method of recognising and rewarding the intellectual property contributions of tribals and rural families in the conservation of plant genetic resources.

Among his distinguished awards are the Ramon Mag-saysay Award for Community Leadership in 1971 and the first award for serving the cause of women in development in 1985. He became the first laureate of the World Food Prize,

regarded widely as the equivalent of a Nobel Prize in Agriculture. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by more than 30 universities across the globe and has been honoured by several international scientific academies.

As the Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, wrote in 1987, "By any standard, Dr Swaminathan will go into the annals of history as a world scientist of rare distinction". (Courtesy: Industrial Economist, Madras).

(Concluded)

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Young Kamalesh Sekhar, a student of Guru Nanak College, just promoted to No.4 from his earlier position at the tailend of his first division league team, was in the midst of a match-saving innings of 66 n.o as wickets kept tumbling all around him. Earlier, his team had the opponents reeling at 75/6 in reply to a meagre first innings total of 87, but the hour had found the man, or, rather, boy. Vasanth Saravanan, like Kamalesh Sekhar, still in his teens and also a student of Guru Nanak, had played a magnificent 86 n.o. in the company of yet another young player, MSK Prasad (of Andhra), to give his side a lead of over 150.

Vasanth Saravanan and Kamalesh Sekhar were not the only Tamil Nadu young players to make an impression that September day at Guru Nanak's picturesque ground where the superb covers had nullified the effect of heavy overnight rain. Leftarm fast-medium Dev Anand struck telling blows in both innings with his splendid line at a lively pace, slanting the ball away from the right hander. Fast bowling Guru Dennis Lillee and deputy TA Sekhar — who were among the spectators — were full of praise for Dev Anand's easy action and excellent follow-through.

Elsewhere a number of young players have been performing creditably with bat and ball. Kumaran of Sridhar C.C. is a medium pacer of exceptional talent. Chandramouli, a consistent off-spinner, has been

The talented Under-19s

among the wickets and so has his Globe Trotters partner left-arm spinner S. Sriram, who seems to have regained some of his lost rhythm while improving all the time in the batting department. Leftarm-spinner Raghuram and off-spinner Ganesh Kumar of SPIC have also caught the selectors' eye.

cannot but be impressed with the abundant talent in that age group. In addition to the names mentioned here, there are several more bright prospects whose deeds in their age group offer sufficient promise of a bright future.

Velmurugan, 17, a game little leg-spinner from North

quickly into the opener's slot in a first division team, while the latter has been scoring a string of centuries in schools' cricket, charming onlookers with his footwork and strokeplay.

Harish Nataraj is a brilliant fielder too, as are several of the teen brigade — Anand George, Dharman, Vasanth Saravanan, Velmurugan and Surendra Dass (Appiah Chettiar Memorial) are among a sprightly lot who can dive, slide and throw as well as the best in the game, besides performing consistently with bat and ball. Anand George of Alwarpet C.C. has been a prolific scorer at the national level in his age group and in senior division league cricket, while Dharman of Vijay C.C. is an off-spinning all rounder with a tremendous fighting spirit. Sunil Viswanathan (St. Bede's) and Hemant (San Thome) are two left-handed batsmen of unusual merit and maturity. Young wicketkeepers Raju and Hari Prashant who turn out for Indian Bank and Kohinoor C.C. in the league, are two other players to watch.

It is hard to believe that the stylish left-hand batsman Hemang Badani of Vijay C.C. and leg-spinner W.D. Balaji Rao of Jolly Rovers are hardly older than the teenagers discussed here, so much have they achieved at the national and international level. C. Vasanth Kumar of Jolly Rovers, a stylish right-hand opening batsman, is another young player of immense potential.

There is a surfeit of talent in the State not reflected in places secured in the Indian Test team. The blame for this failure to translate innate talent into runs and wickets at the higher level should be shared by all concerned, not least by the administrators who tend to put the blame squarely on the youngsters, accusing them of lack of dedication. That is not so; lack of encouragement can kill dedication.

• by V. RAMNARAYAN

Arasu (Alwarpet C.C.), with a hundred under his belt, has been serving notice on the selectors as a candidate for the State wicketkeeper's slot, a position now occupied by the talented Reuben Paul of Jolly Rovers.

The official TNCA teams fared badly in the recent Buchi Babu tournament. Last season too, Tamil Nadu started its national campaign poorly but recovered to reach the final. There is much concern among close followers of the game about the apparent lack of an effective second string, but anyone who was had anything to do with the juniors of the State — especially those below 19 —

Arcot District, has an old head on young shoulders. He is bound to give the state leg-spinner Balaji Rao a run for his money with his flight, control and variation. Velmurugan can bat and field quite splendidly too. Vidyut Sivaramakrishnan, of Saraswati Kendra, is a fine leftarm spinner-in-the-making with a classical action and sound cricket sense. Together, the two young spinners make a formidable pair capable of holding their own, M. Srinivasan is another left-armed to do well.

Harish Nataraj of Vidya Mandir, the left-hander, and J. Harish of St. Bede's are both excellent batting prospects. The former is settling down

Answers to Quiz

1. The secrecy of their famed bank account numbers; 2. Superman and Lois Lane; 3. Gujarat; 4. At Allahabad; 5. Rs. 3,700 crore; 6. Murtaza Bhutto; 7. Sitaram Kesri; 8. The CTBT; 9. Anil Kumble; 10. K.P. Krishnan; 11. Madani Lal; 12. Lakhubai Pathak; 13. The Taliban; 14. Obviously, the Tirumala shrine; 15. Mike Russell.

* * *

16. Changing Madras to Chennai; 17. 'Silk' Smitha; 18. Madras Automated Network Trading, the online trading system; 19. Enathur; 20. Perambur.

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