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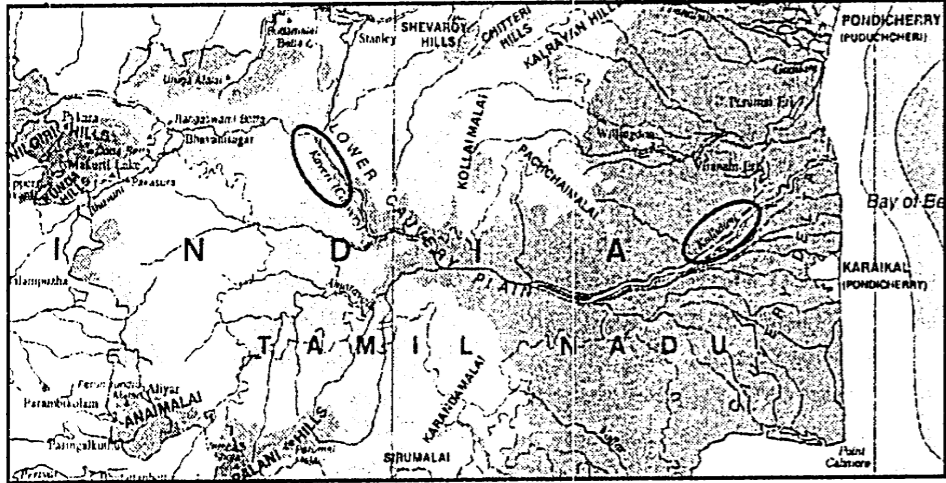
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Re-inventing the wheel?

Must those whom we elect to power constantly re-invent the wheel to keep themselves in the limelight? Must they keep treading the beaten track while pronouncing they're beating a new path which is intended only to capture the headlines?

Fresh from making Madras 'Chennai', there's now talk of Tranquebar becoming 'Tarangambadi', Coleroon becoming 'Kollidam', Porto Novo becoming 'Parangipetai' and Mahabalipuram becoming 'Mamallapuram'. These scans of maps from India's most comprehensive atlas — published in 1990 — however, show all these 'new' names that are old already in place! In fact, it's only because we couldn't find an atlas a decade-or-so older that we are unable to show here that these names were already in place in the Seventies — accepted as the official names of these towns by the Survey of India. 'Thoothukudi' alone awaits acceptance.

As for the suggestion that towns like Srirangam and Srivilliputhur should have their 'Sri' changed to 'Thiru', we wonder whether the ancient Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras weren't "pure Tamils". After all, the records show that these names were freely used in their times without the felt necessity of 'Thiru'. Are we becoming "pure Tamils" only now, after centuries of living with names beginning with 'Sri'? Come off it, Ministers, surely there are more important things to do in the State than 'Tamilising' what's already Tamil.

And as a matter of curiosity, what language is 'Vedaranniyam', which is to be made 'Tirumaraikudi'?

As for Anna University's decision to teach certain courses in 'Tamil only', well that's one way of making certain that our engineering graduates do not migrate ... even to the rest of India. We hope the Government will be able to find jobs for all of them forced to stay put as part of this commitment to language rather than knowledge.

— The Editor

Waiting for the Canal

Another study says 'Go'

(By A Staff Reporter)

Yet another study on the Sethusamudram ship canal project, first mooted a century ago, has once again established the economic viability of the project. Over that period, many proposals have been formulated both by the State and Central Governments and these had repeatedly established the viability beyond doubt. But action has not been forthcoming. Will things be different now?

At present, all ships going from the east to the west coast of India, or the other way, have to round Sri Lanka, adding 400 nautical miles to the voyage

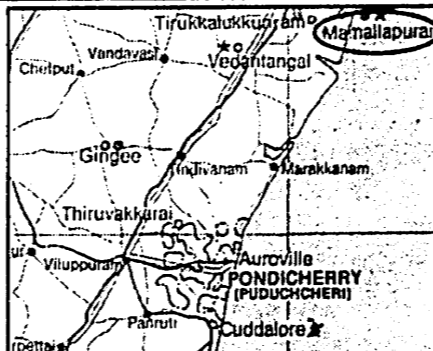
and wasting over 36 hours of ship-time. The Sethusamudram Canal scheme will provide a short cut through the Palk Bay. Like the Suez and Panama Canals, it would also usher in industrial growth in the Indian hinterland along the course of the sea-canal.

The updated study estimates the cost of the canal at Rs.685 crore for a 30-foot draft, Rs.760 crore for a 31-foot draft and Rs.1,200 crore for a 35-foot draft. The project cost has escalated Rs.282 crore since 1983.

The latest report says that, even at these costs, the Sethusamudram project has become more viable due to the steep hike in petroleum prices and rising costs of shipping operations.

According to the study, the project will earn foreign ex-

change of Rs. 35 crore through toll collections from foreign ships (50 per cent of the ships using the canal) and will reduce the petrol import bill by over Rs.40 crore (at March 1996 rates) in the initial years. This is bound to increase by at least four per cent. The boost to coastal and foreign ship traffic will establish Chennai and Tuticorin as nodal ports. And the social benefits to the backward districts in Tamil Nadu's south will be immense.



A vehicle for every 6 persons!

(By a Special Correspondent)

Automobiles are a major contributor to air pollution in and around Madras, says *Econews*, published by the C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre. The total number of vehicles in Madras city itself indicates the threat posed by automobiles to the environment. The table below gives information on the number of vehicles in the city. The situation has only grown worse as we come to the end of 1996. Has anyone got answers to how air pollution can be decreased as the number of vehicles keeps growing?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES

in Madras city as on 1.4.1995
(Source: Office of the Transport Commissioner, Madras, Tamil Nadu)

COMMERCIAL Vehicles	Total Number
Buses	2571
Autorickshaws	21,845
Meter Taxis	423
Tourist Taxis	5067
Tourist Vans	1442
Omnibuses	148
Private Service Vehicles	178

(Continued on Page 3)

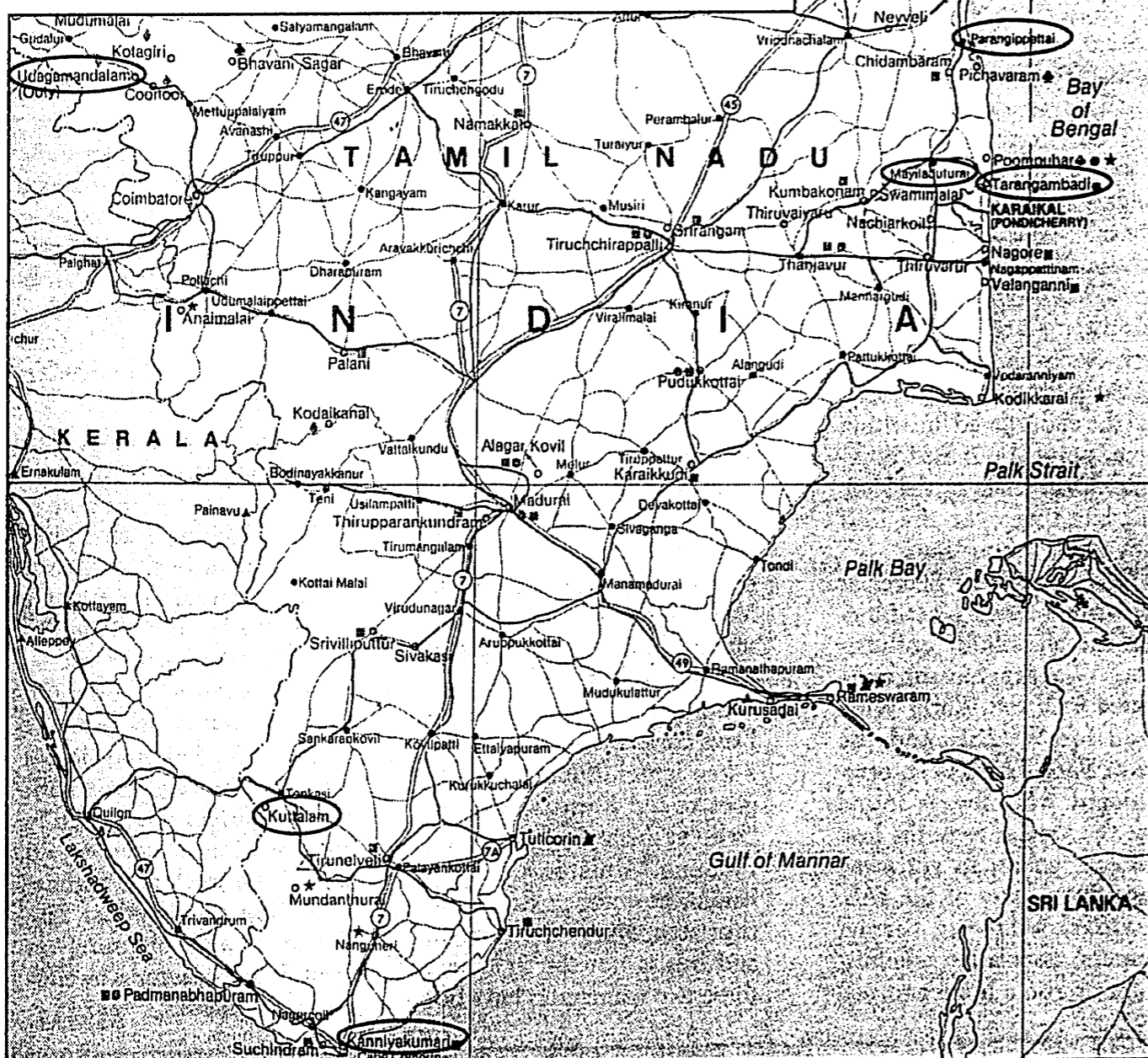
S. African consulate for city?

(By A Staff Reporter)

A proposal for the opening of a South African Consulate in Chennai has been cleared by the South African Government and action on this can be expected soon.

The importance of Tamil Nadu for South Africa is underlined by the fact that as many as 7,00,000 of the 1.3 million South Africans of Indian origin are Tamil-speaking.

The plan to expand to Chennai has also been necessitated by the fact that South African High Commissioner Matsila has been accredited to Sri Lanka as well. This makes a South African presence in South India all the more important.



Dolphins in search of a pool

Madras is one of the few places in India which has almost a year-round favourable climate for swimming, one of the basic sports that also provides healthy exercise. More pools are required all over the City (as stated in MM, August 16th and October 1st). It is not just pools, but operating them in an orderly/organised manner — with lanes marked for beginners, intermediates and advanced swimmers, as is found in many other countries — that is necessary. With more pools there will be more participants and from the larger pool of talent more champions will come.

Meanwhile, let us look at the facilities we have. The Olympic-type facility at Vela-cherry, if and when opened to the public, would be suitable for daily practice only for children in and around South Madras. Other students would find it practically impossible to spare the one-hour commuting time to the pool in the mornings and 1½ hours in the evenings! In West Madras, there is the Shenoy Pool for common practice. At this pool, students barely get 1½ hours in the morning, and 2 hours in the evening to practice. Since only one lane is allotted to a team, the coach has to be versatile enough to effectively train in that single lane about 20 stu-

dents, ranging in age from 7 to 20!

With these restricted training facilities, The Dolphin Club, nevertheless, won the overall team championship at the recently concluded Senior State Meet. The Dolphin girls also secured the women's championship. During the last six years, a good part of the State team has been composed of 'Dolphins', who have also

brings a time when the Dolphin Club swimmers used the Sterling Club swimming pool, among other pools, when the Anna Swimming Pool on the Marina was closed.

Nair remembers the Dolphins using the Sterling Club pool twice a week, on fixed days. When other youngsters were probably asleep, Dolphins, most of them children, would be at the pool well in time for

• by V. Suhas Pandit

brought in many medals and points for the State and University teams.

The Dolphin Club, Kilpauk, was started in 1983 and is the oldest continuously running swimming club in Tamil Nadu active in competitive swimming. Besides training competitive swimmers for National-level competition, the Club conducts "Learn-to-Swim" classes, advanced coaching classes for beginners, and also a "Masters" programme for Seniors.

S K Nair, who retired from the Southern Railway, remem-

bers a time when the Dolphin Club swimmers used the Sterling Club swimming pool, among other pools, when the Anna Swimming Pool on the Marina was closed. Nair remembers the Dolphins using the Sterling Club pool twice a week, on fixed days. When other youngsters were probably asleep, Dolphins, most of them children, would be at the pool well in time for practice, he recalls. Even before the arrival of the coach, they would start their warming up exercises. With the arrival of the coach, the tempo of the daily schedule would increase. Whether the sun was up or it was pouring, they went through their programme of training under the coaches with a discipline and an enthusiasm rarely seen anywhere nowadays, except in the defence forces, Nair observes.

Its coaches are the backbone of the Club. They have not only achieved excellence in their own right, but they are totally

dedicated to the training of the swimmers. As swimmers they have been National medallists, and as coaches they have been appointed as coaches and officials for the SAF and Asia-Pacific Games, coaches for all-India camps, for all-India Railway teams, and for the Tamil Nadu State teams.

The coaches treat all the swimmers alike and without partiality. This has been their hallmark, so much so that most of us bring our children to the pool, leave them there and engage ourselves in other activities, certain that the training that takes place will be in a disciplined manner.

All this has brought its rewards. The Dolphins have seen their names and photos in the papers, they have been admired by teachers and fellow-students, they have received sports scholarships, admissions in schools and colleges through the sports quota, and also job offers in the Railways, Services and Police Departments, even before they have completed their studies.

But what next? It is now necessary to have facilities and build infrastructure for the Club. The Club is at present generating funds to have some gym and health club facilities for the swimmers as well as a library of current technical litera-

ture. But, one day, the Club would like to have a pool of its own, which it can use not only for competitive training and advanced coaching, but also for basic training. This would be in contrast to what is seen in most of our pools, which are primarily recreational, where many come and use the pool in a totally unorganised manner, with no guidance, criss-crossing one another or children just throwing a ball to one another — uncontrolled activities which are not seen on any other field or court, whether it is tennis, badminton, hockey, cricket etc!

Dolphins can dream, can't they?

Answers to Quiz

1. A.T. Ariyaratne of Sri Lanka; 2. Karna; 3. Arun Bhagat; 4. China; 5. P.T. Ummer Koya; 6. Mother Teresa; 7. Shahid Afridi; 8. Jaipal Reddy; 9. The Sikh Regiment; 10. M.F. Hussain; 11. Rohinton Mistry; 12. National Human Rights Commission; 13. East Timor in the Indonesian archipelago; 14. Seymour Cray. 15. Rene Lacoste.

* * *

16. M.K. Stalin; 17. M. V. Arunachalam, former chairman of EID Parry; 18. Sandalwood and snake skin; 19. Ashok Pillar in Ashok Nagar, Udayam Theatre, Kasi Theatre and Jaffarkhanpet-Kodambakkam road intersection; 20. M. S. Subbulakshmi.

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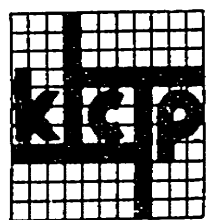


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