

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

May 1, 1991

## Madras to get IIM challenger

(By Our Education Correspondent)

Madras will, before the end of next year, have a School of Business determined to be considered among the best in the country. With the fourth Indian Institute of Management being established in Lucknow, to the disappointment of Madras industry, the industrialists of the city have decided to found their own institution of management excellence and take on the leaders.

It is learned that the task of setting up the Madras School of Business will be entrusted to V Narayanan of Ponds (India) Ltd. Narayanan, it is understood,

will shortly be exchanging his ranking in the Hindustan — and international — Lever hierarchy for the challenge of establishing an institution which, it is hoped, will turn out managers as successful as he.

First suggested by the Madras Management Association and vigorously pursued by M V Arunachalam of the Murugappa Group, the Madras School of Business now appears to have all Madras industry behind it. Twelve business houses in the city and state, it is learned, will each contribute a million to get the venture going. It is anticipated that this Rs. 1.2 crores will be backed by Government granting the School land. Ambattur — with its IT links — is being suggested as the favoured site, but both Taramani, the IIT area and Maraimalainagar are also being mentioned.

Once the School is established, its aim will be to acquire a reputation as enviable as the top five business schools. In a recent survey of 26 institutions, IIM Ahmadabad was rated well ahead of the pack and was followed by IIM Calcutta, Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur, IIM Bangalore and Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Bombay, in that order and all in almost a bunch. The rest trailed badly.

Of the Tamil Nadu institutions, only IIT Madras's management courses received noteworthy recognition in Madras and Bangalore. Loyola and Madras University's business

management courses received some recognition in these two cities, even if they were placed just above a 40 per cent passing grade. Bharatidasan Institute of Management and College of Engineering, Guindy, didn't even make that cut-off point. All six institutions received no recognition outside the South. It is in this context that the Madras School of Business is going to be something to look forward to.



These five talented young dancers and one of their teachers, Anita Murthy, are off to perform in New York. — (See story on page 7)

## THE GRAMMAR OF THE HOUSE

A reader writing in about our lead last fortnight (*The Queen's English at the Bar*) enclosed a clipping of a Delhi report of one of the last sessions in the Rajya Sabha. Apparently that ebullient representative of the DMK, V. Gopalaswamy, kept popping up, Jack-in-the-Box style, during the debate, irking deputy chairman Neelma Heptullah, who exasperatedly asked why he kept standing up repeatedly. Gopalaswamy replied, "Madam, I'm standing up to attract you".

Neither she nor many others noted the titter-provoking slip, but later, in a different context, she made a statement which might explain her lack of earlier reaction. "This is the Rajya

Lankan Tamil guerillas and the Sinhala-dominated government. But the Government insists that whatever rapprochement Thondaman, a minister in that government, makes with the Tigers of Eelam, a final settlement acceptable to the Government can only be with Tiger supremo Pirabhakaran.

But if you go by what appears in the jazzy *Sunday Times* of Sri Lanka, such a demand may pose its own problems. Quoting Professor L W Nardasena, a leading astrologer and the only one who had predicted last January the "assassination of a prominent political leader in 1991" (Minister Ranjan Wijeratne?), the paper says the LTTE will be defeated by August and

### Hollywood way

What Kamal Hassan has not been able to do in Bollywood, he may yet succeed in doing in Hollywood if Ashok Amritraj has his way. In town recently, Madras's own Hollywood producer talked about the possibility of making a film in America with India's finest actor.

Ashok, the most promising of the tennis-playing Amritraj bothers, was the one who turned his back on his tennis talent and parlayed it for a Hollywood dream. The ever-laughing youngest son of Maggie and Robert Amritraj now talks of buying a dozen properties or so every year and making half a dozen films from them. One of them in 1991 may have Kamal's name on it. Certainly it won't have Ashok's name on it as a player; acting's for Vijay, he laughs. But even for Vijay it's fun; with Kamal it'll be different.

### SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Sabha and not an English grammar class," she said.

### The Secretary's flag

Chief Secretary T V Antony's hobby-horse is family planning. And at every opportunity he has much to say on what is now euphemistically called Family Welfare. To emphasise what he says, he now also encourages a flag-hoisting ceremony. And the flag, often hoisted by him, is an inverted red triangle on a white background!

### The end in sight?

Leader of Sri Lanka's Indian Tamil settlers, S Thondaman, whose roots are in the Ramanathapuram District, has recently indicated his willingness to mediate in the fratricidal strife in the island between the Sri

Pirabhakaran will be captured soon after. But this, says the astrologer, will only take place after a senior military officer dies in a bomb blast. He also adds that a terrorist act some time before December will involve a train or plane and be one of "history's most horrifying tragedies". He further predicts a death of another political leader by then and a new government. "There's a horrendous year ahead," he warns.

And to make confusion worse confounded, Reggie Balasingham, writing in the same paper, says, "It is an established truth that Pirabhakaran bled to death during the IPKF operation at Ithikarikulam in a hide-out in the Mullaitivu jungle. The present Pirabhakaran is only an impostor". With all these prophets of doom about, Thondaman is going to find his work cut out for him!

### Colour-coding

A colleague walked into a video shop the other morning just in time to hear the solitary customer ask, "Has the Sanjiva Reddy film come?"

"Come about seven this evening, Sir," the shop-owner advised.

As the customer left, the Man from MM asked, "What film's that? Have they made a new documentary?"

"No, No, Sir," replied the renter. "He's talking of Neelam, Sir."

His puzzled questioner wondered, "Neelam? What's that?"

"Blue, Sir. You know, blue, Sir!"

And the penny dropped.

MMM

### MANALI RAMAN...



Our chaps are the best in the city... The rate is per hour... make-up, costumes and accessories are extra...

IN MAD, MAD MADRAS

## Open skies will fill Madras skies

(By a Staff Reporter)

Despite the disappointment of Lufthansa, the German airline, postponing the inauguration of its twice-a-week Madras-Frankfurt service to the end of the year, Madras is likely to see much more international traffic in the coming months. This traffic is as much intended to meet the growing tourist demand to a South that is being opened up as it is for the burgeoning exports in leather, garments, spices and automobile equipment.

Lufthansa, though temporarily shelving its April date with passengers, has already commenced cargo operations. Soon Zack Air, a Tata venture with a Swiss charter service,

will be offering 100 tonnes of cargo space a week to Europe.

Meanwhile, on the passenger front, while British Airway has begun to fly non-stop to London and Saudia has opened up a direct route for Madras traffic to West Asia, Egypt Air is likely to be the next passenger carrier to touch down at Meenambakkam. And on the local front, UB and Air Asiatic are likely to be soon joined by Phoenix Airlines, another air taxi service.

With Government's open skies policy and its decision to promote the South as a major tourist destination, Madras International Airport is likely to soon become one of the busiest places in the city.



# No doctors yet for 3 sick companies

The future of three well-known Madras companies appears rather bleak at the moment. B & C Mills (Binny's) was closed a few weeks ago. MALCO (The Madras Aluminium Company Ltd) appears to be heading towards closure. And the fate of ill-fated Standard Motors, which was closed some time back, continues to remain uncertain. There is an element of Greek tragedy in the story of all these three companies.

Binny's has had turbulent times since the mid-Seventies and eventually turned sick. After many management changes, the Udayar Group (promoted by liquor baron Ramaswamy Udayar and his associates) acquired controlling interest of the mills about four years ago. Binny's by that time was no prize catch. It was laden with debts, full of worn-down machinery and unproductive labour (the labour unions might dispute this, but compared to the more modern textile mills which have sprung up in the south, Binny's productivity ratios are rather dismal).

The Udayar Group gave every appearance of taking seriously the rather uphill task of reviving Binny's. To do this, the management negotiated a Rs. 60 crore modernisation fund with a consortium of banks and financial institutions led by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). So what is the problem?

The management wants to move the processing house (an important activity of the mill which requires continuous water and power, neither of which are available in adequate quantities in Madras) to rural Bhuvanagiri. Labour opposes this. It also accuses the management of eventually wanting to shift the entire operations out of Madras and, thereby, deprive the workers of jobs while it makes money out of the real estate in Perambur. 'Nonsense', says the management; even if it sells the real estate, that will only go towards paying off the loans.

Meanwhile, the IDBI consortium won't release funds till the labour problem is sorted out. The mill remains closed. Labour wants the State to take over the mills. The State Government is making soothing noises. Would any near-bankrupt State Government wish to get itself saddled with a millstone round its neck these days?

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MALCO, the Madras-based manufacturer of aluminium, has also had a troubled history. Aluminium is a power-intensive industry. And MALCO was promoted in the Sixties when power was not really a problem. It turned sick partly due to problems faced by its Coimbatore-based promoters (the family of R Prabhu, former Congress Union Minister) and the steep power cuts and power tariff hikes.

In November 1988, the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) (the institution to which all sick companies turn for help) had issued a notice to the company to wind up its operations. The Board considered the unit not viable, as the State Government was unwilling to step up power supply to it. The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) had also taken the company to court claiming dues running into crores.

In January 1989, when the State was under President's Rule and

Congress ruled in the centre, an agreement was reached between MALCO and the TNEB, settling the issue amicably. But soon afterwards, the DMK came to power and Chief Minister M Karunanidhi alleged that these decisions were taken to please Prabhu. The matter then went back to the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the management had been making, and continues to make, a valiant attempt to run the company. But in spite of the boom in the aluminium industry, the company has not been able to take off, mainly because of its small size and inherent problems. Last heard of, the BIFR was

## BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

opposed to the injection of funds into the company and preferred to close it. The management remains silent. Will MALCO now be closed or will it be taken over by some other interested party who can raise funds? The next few weeks will tell.

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Till a few years ago Standard Motors was the pride of Madras. The smallest of India's four car-makers (Hindustan Motors, Premier Automobiles and Maruti), it had survived a couple of bad patches and had come out of the woods in the late '70s.

# There's profit in waiting

Investment in the Stock Market calls for capital, for the ability to stay with a share that has been purchased, after paying for it fully, is one of the secrets of success in the market. Indeed, it is a classical ploy for strong investors to eliminate the weak ones, by keeping the prices of a good share depressed for a while after it has been acquired by them. This is the phenomenon known as 'accumulation'. Strong investors are those who can afford to pay for the share that they buy and hold on to it, irrespective of the price behaviour, until the gains that they anticipated are realised. The strong investors can be either small or large. The important rule of successful investment is the ability to invest in a share and await the reward. Profits in the stock market are made only slowly.

For this reason, small investors in search of a suitable investment pursue low-priced shares. Also, believing in the adage that 'all their eggs should not be in the same basket', they attempt to spread their resources over two or three low-priced names. What they forget is that low-priced names carry greater risk than those sold at higher prices.

We would, therefore, strongly counsel small investors against shares

It had successfully developed its Standard 20, a diesel light commercial vehicle, and carved a niche for itself in the market. Then, in the mid-80s, it decided to make an upmarket car based on the Rover of UK. This was when Government imposed stringent conditions on automakers to comply with fuel efficiency norms (a vehicle with a certain sized engine had to do a certain number of kilometres under test conditions).

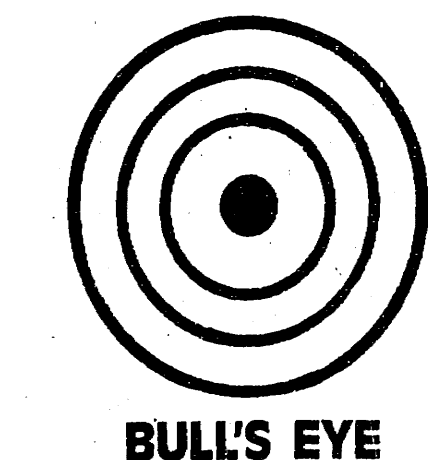
When the luxurious Standard 2000 hit the market in 1987, it was much admired. But criticism soon followed. There were insidious rumours that the vehicle had passed its fuel efficiency test by devious ways. The Government moved in by turning the CBI on the company. Although nothing was proved ultimately, the harm was done. The Standard 2000 market crashed.

The company, which was on top of the world, turned sick by 1989. That was when industrialist A C Muthiah, Vice-Chairman of the fertiliser giant SPIC, stepped in to help save it. But somehow no rescue package suggested by him, or anyone else, has been accepted so far.

Muthiah himself had problems with the DMK Government, which slowed down matters. With the fall of the DMK Government and a Congress-backed Government in the centre, things seemed to look up. The inevitable BIFR meeting this month was supposed to settle matters. But that meeting has now been postponed. So it will take a few more weeks before we know more about the destinies of Standard, or of the other two Tamil Nadu industrial giants, for that matter.

ruling in the Rs. 10/15 price range. Shares recommended below, after careful thought and consideration, are better risks, but they are risks all the same. So, carefully consider their merits before making your investment decision.

**UTI Mastershare:** This scheme was launched in September 1986 by Unit Trust



BULL'S EYE

of India to provide long-term appreciation for small investors. During the year March '89, it offered rights in the ratio of 1:2 at a premium of Rs. 2/- per share. The dividends have steadily increased over the years — for 1990, a dividend of 18% was declared. The net asset value of Mastershare is estimated at Rs. 37.77 as on April 3, '91. The share price movement record shows a good sign, as the prices have now begun to move up after gaining good support at

## OUR READERS WRITE

elusive reason why MM is distributed free and sent by post incurring an expenditure of Rs. 1/-, but gave up finally. What is the angle, Saar?

First things last — as is usual in this topsy-turvy World. Many thanks for being included in the mailing list. I value your gift at the beginning of the Tamil New Year and wish you more strength to your elbow! With an elder's blessings to the new-born.

**K. Ramamurthy**  
SA/2, Selin Apartments  
P V Rajamannar Road-600 078

### Delightful search

I have found your fortnightly *Madras Musings* quite delightful — and find myself looking for a possible cobra everywhere around the house and in the garden!

**Seetha Badrinath**  
17 Subramaniam Colony-600 044

### Longevity & Profitability

*Madras Musings* — an interesting idea, well executed — and I fervently wish it longevity and, its obvious hand-maiden, profitability.

**K.R.N. Menon**  
24 College Road-600 006

### Intellectual Welcome

Congratulations and welcome to the *Madras Scene* of Intellectuals. Hope more and more of such will follow.

**Dr. S. Arumugam**  
78-C Gul Mohar Avenue-600 032

### Quite different

Saw your mag and liked it a lot. It's quite different from the other free-mailers.

**K.P. Srinivasan**  
E-3 Income Tax Quarters  
121 Nungambakkam High Road-600 034

### And educative too

Congratulations on your venture. Every page was interesting, entertaining and educative. Please continue the publications.

**Dr. M.A. Muthusethupathi**  
14, 1st St, N. Gopalapuram-600 086

**Editor's Note:** To all who asked, we assure you there's no catch; we want you to get *Madras Musings* FREE. And the more of you on our list, the more impressed, we hope, advertisers will get.

Rs. 28/- The share is now selling at Rs. 28.75 and offers good investment opportunity.

**Elgi Finance Ltd:** This company in the Elgi group is engaged in hire purchase and leasing. Its track record in terms of leasing income and profits is excellent.

In 1990, to broaden the financial service network and to meet working capital requirements, it announced rights in the ratio 1:1 at a premium of Rs. 3/- per share. Shareholders would have made a tidy packet if they had acquired shares in February '89, at the time of the maiden public issue, and retained them till the rights issue. The share price touched a peak of Rs. 84.50 after the rights announcement. It became ex-rights at Rs. 59/-. The ex-rights quotation opened at Rs. 42/- and then came down to Rs. 25/- due to profit-booking. It has now gained good support and is all set to move up again.

The half year results for Sep. '90 are encouraging and the EPS for Mar. '91 is estimated at Rs. 5.75. We expect the share price to rule in the Rs. 50/- range by the time of results. The shares, now quoting at Rs. 32/-, are, therefore, a good investment.

**Kunal Engineering Co. Ltd:** Belonging to the D.C. Kohhari group, the company was in the red until 1989, due to recession in the domestic textile spinning industry. Cash profits were reported in 1990 and for the half year ended September '90, a net profit of Rs. 0.95 cr. was recorded on a sale of Rs. 12.55 crs. We anticipate a turnover of Rs. 30 crs and an EPS of Rs. 10/- for the year ending March '91, as the company's textile machinery division and plastics engineering division enjoy a brisk off-take. A price of Rs. 100/- plus can be expected by the time of results. The shares are now traded at Rs. 86.50. We counsel purchase of this share for medium and long term gains.

**K. Gopalakrishnan**

# The city's quizzing stars are North Star ones too

(By a Staff Reporter)

The Quiz Foundation (QF), Madras, recently finished second after an exciting tie-breaker in the All-India Final of the North Star Quiz contest held in Calcutta. INTACH, Delhi, were the winners, while Jadavpur University (JU), Calcutta, finished third.

Eight teams — one each from Madras, Bangalore and Bombay, two from Delhi and three from Calcutta — competed in the all India Final at the Dalhousie Institute. The quiz was held on the club's lawns — at least, until rain ended the first half. At that stage, the Madras team was in the lead. A steady downpour shifted proceedings indoors and also washed away QF's luck. INTACH jumped ahead and held on to it, while JU also overtook the Madras team. But off the last question, QF equalised with JU. A tense and thrilling tie-breaker then earned Madras second place.

Earlier, on February 21st, 205 teams had participated in the Madras round of the North Star Quiz. After a written elimination round, eight teams were chosen for the final. QF and IIT, Madras, teams claimed seven of the eight places. Quiz Foundation 'A' team, the reigning champions, won the final quite easily. QF teams also claimed the second and third places.

The QF, Madras, was represented by Mrs Saranya Jayakumar, Dr G S Praveen, Srikanth Jayakumar, another



The runners-up in the All-India North Star Quiz... from Madras, Gautam Padmanabhan, Dr G.S. Praveen and Saranya Jayakumar

member of the quizzing Jayakumar family — his brother, Dr Navin, 'Mr Madras Quizzing', was too busy to take part this year — and Gautam Padmanabhan.

Mrs Jayakumar is an exception to two rules — one, that women are poor quizzers, and two, that older people fare badly in quizzes. She is a housewife and could claim to be the city's best quizzier.

Dr Praveen has just graduated from Medical College and is the Secretary of the Quiz Foundation. He was co-conductor of the *Madras 350 Years Quiz* held last year.

Gautam Padmanabhan is a book publisher and distributor by profession. Apart from an obvious interest in books, he has an ear for music and an eye for the movies.

Srikanth Jayakumar, who will be graduating shortly from BITS, Pilani, was easily the star of the Madras round. His pet subject — Sport. Unfortunately he could not accompany the team to Calcutta, as he was busy with his college project.

The Quiz Foundation, Madras, has been in existence three years now. It aims at promoting quizzing among all age groups, especially among those who lose touch with quizzing after they leave college. The Foundation meets at the JDP Guild Hall, Mylapore, on alternate Saturdays for a quiz. The members of the Foundation also conduct quizzes at schools, colleges and other organisations.

# Holidaying with computers, camps, classes & clubs

The summer vacation is here and the newspapers are filled with advertisements telling people what to do with the time that's hanging on their hands.

Leading the list are computer science courses for people of all ages, indeed, entire families. (The implication is that, at the turn of this century, everybody, including housewives, had better be *au fait* with the use of a computer. It is also a way to expand the computers market — the hope of the manufacturers who loan/lease their machines to the teaching institutes.)

much better than leaving them unsupervised at home (or with reluctant surrogate mothers) during the vacation.

### Faster than sound

The other day, a 12-year-old nephew asked me why almost all advertisements on the radio were spoken so fast. He was in earnest and sounded very puzzled.

Radio advertising in our country is still extremely crude. Compared to the cost of Rs. 1 lakh for 20 seconds of Doordarshan commercial time on the national network, a radio spot of the

advertising agencies appear to give it step-sisterly treatment.) And professionalism in advertising means **single-mindedness** — mentioning one major benefit and saying it well. Instead you have these hack advertisers who crowd a dozen details about their product in a few fleeting seconds, leaving the poor audience stunned by the wham-wham-wham of product features. The logic of the marketer is that he must get full value for the money he is paying. But is anyone listening?

### Loosening of advertisements

Have you noticed that there's a spate of contests, recently? Titan and HMT watches, British Airways, Close-up toothpaste, Stardust magazine and BSA SLR bicycles have all been running contests. Obviously the consumer has tightened his purse-strings lately and these are attempts to make him loosen up.

### Tumultuous times

As we go to print, we now make way for the biggest, noisiest advertising of them all — the election campaigns. The gigantic cut-outs, the traffic obstructions and the chattering loudspeakers point to a tumultuous time ahead. Let's wait and watch.

# The Sound of Murder!

The DIG involved had a theory about crime investigation: Always enact the crime.

preliminary investigations unearthed some evidence of a conspiracy, but nothing more. The astute detective, who had a legal background as well, was only too well aware that mere intention, or the existence of motive, was, by itself, no proof of murder. There had to be solid, suspicion-free evidence which could withstand cross-examination in court.

The *Sound of Music* may be a famous song, but the *Sound of Murder* is memorable in other ways.

A wealthy person, Chinnna Veeriah in a rural area, Valavanur near Salem, had several enemies anxious to see him silenced forever for more than one reason. These envious rivals gathered one moonlit night for a cards-party at a lonely but comfortable farm-house that belonged to a farmer known to be an excellent host and who provided his friends with every creature comfort.

Shortly afterwards, they invited their rival to the farm-house for an evening of fun and frolic; let's settle our differences over a drink, they suggested.

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One sunny morning, a few days later, the rich farmer left home after an early breakfast, promising to return for lunch. A couple of neighbours, returning home after attending to calls of nature in the fields, saw him walking briskly towards the isolated farm-house where he had a few days earlier enjoyed himself.

When he did not return by evening, his anxious wife and family began to make enquiries. But no trace of him could be found.

At dawn the next morning, his brutally battered body was found under a huge tamarind tree near the next village. His eye-balls had been gouged out, their vacant sockets filled with turmeric paste. Murder it was.

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A DIG from Madras was asked to investigate by the top brass. His

## CRIME NOTEBOOK BY RANDOR GUY



The post-mortem report now reached the investigator. The time of death was around 7 a.m. The break he sought soon followed. A villager turned up, offering eye-witness evidence.

This farmer told the police that he was at work on his farm when the murdered man walked past towards the lonely farm-house. Later, he heard the screams of a man in pain, begging his attackers not to kill him. The witness ran to the farm to see what was happening and saw several men attacking the rich farmer with axes and swords. Frightened and not willing to get involved, he retraced his steps. Now he named the persons he saw on that fateful morn; they were the 'conspirators' about whom the police had heard.

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When the enactment was over, the DIG went up to the hard-working witness and asked him whether he had heard anything. No, he had heard nothing, not a word!

Then how did he hear the screams of the murdered man? The man broke down; he had concocted the story at the behest of some enemies of the alleged conspirators.

Always reconstruct the crime, the DIG advises; it will always yield dividends. But in this case the murderers have still not been found.

## SUBRAMANIAM AND COMPANY

16, MOSQUE STREET, CHEPAUK,  
MADRAS-600 005.

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## ADLIBBING ... WITH COPYCAT

Then there are the ads for arts and crafts classes for children; swimming camps, cookery classes, health clubs. These are all signs of the times we live in, where competition is harsh and every talent has to be turned to advantage; to get into a good college, land a good job and to stay with it. They also tell you that there are many more working couples today who welcome these recreation-cum-learning opportunities for their children — so

same duration on prime time costs a few thousands. Also, since the advent of television, radio has become the medium of reaching the middle and lower middle classes. The result, unfortunately, is an attitude of anything-goes on radio.

Since there is not much money in radio advertising — at least not big money — there are hardly any professionals in the business. (Even

## MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

### BUSINESS OFFERS

For all your assistance in drawings, approvals, construction, purchase and sale, of plots, buildings etc. Please contact: 4821948.

If you wish to appeal directly to one of 5000 homes, take a

## MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

Upto 4 lines,  
Rs. 100 only



# The colour of leadership

It's election time. Again. And you can't help but notice that nearly every street corner of the city now has King Kong size cutouts of our political leaders. I presume that such heroic proportions are meant to seize our imaginations, send us into paroxysms of worship and create in our minds leadership images far larger than life.

I can't help but admire the works of these artists who, almost overnight, create these perfectly proportioned giants. I met some once. They work in cramped little rooms off Mount Road, usually on giant movie posters. They create our heroes (and heroines) in small, manageable proportions in their ateliers. You'll find heads, arms, torsos, lying scattered around and it's impossible to imagine how they can calculate the exact dimensions of each piece; I can't draw a perfectly proportioned stick figure. And then, in the dead of night, the bits and pieces are spirited out and assembled. I've always hoped one day they'll get the wrong piece in the right place.

## MUSING WITH MURARI

What they do get wrong — and it must be deliberate because they get all the other colours right — is the colour of our leaders. I am brown, and everyone around me is a varying shade of brown. From milky coffee to black coffee. I am aware we're a very colour-conscious society (just read the matrimonial columns), but the colours of our giant politicians come nowhere near the reality of the people wandering below their boat-sized feet. They're not even 'wheatish in complexion'. They are, in fact, as pink and white as Meryl Streep's cheeks. I imagine that, if they could get away with it, they'd also all



It's election time again — and that's when the cut-outs become bigger and bigger and more and more fanciful. (Pictures: Susheela Nair)

want to have the same beautiful blonde hair.

But they have to face two facts. They have: 1) dark hair (not exactly black, and never ever gray or even balding; they're our immortals) and, 2) they all wear one or another sort of 'national dress'. If it weren't for these two small problems, they'd pass for our ex-rulers.

The next time you look at them, just squint your eyes and dress them in suits or viceregal clothes. With that blushing pink and white skin they could as well look like Wavell or Mountbatten or one of the British Collectors who once stumped about the districts on horseback.

I guess white is, in the minds of our political leaders and the public at large, still considered the colour of a superior race. Or, maybe, the colour is meant to represent a purity of the heart! So, while ordinary people can't change their skin colours, our politicians can. Even faster than their parties. All it takes is a couple of gallons of paint. And this

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

# Cushioned deprivation!

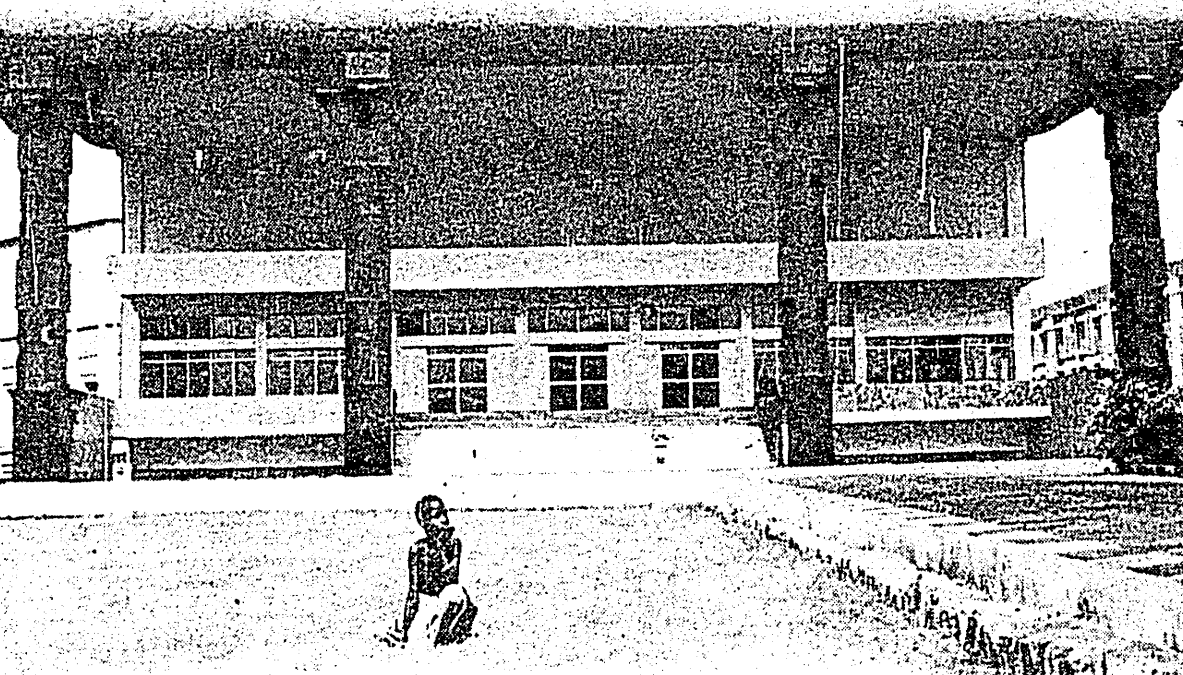
(By Our Medical Correspondent)

Chandulal is the average, run-of-the-mill Marwari pawnbroker in north Madras. Day after day, he'd sit in his shop, on the outer verandah of his home, massive and unmoving.

The only thing remarkable about him was his right leg, which resembled the hind limb of a giant elephant. The thigh and calf were like enormous balloons, the foot resembled a huge ball with five globules attached. Passers-by invariably stopped to take a second look at this strange phenomenon — but Chandu remained unperturbed. In fact, so phlegmatic did he appear to the outside world that it was hard to believe that Chandu could metamorphose into a delightful, clowning chronicler of the day's events when his six-year-old grand-daughter was around. Every evening, he would regale her with charming bed-time stories, while she would jump with glee on the massive "cushions" of his outstretched right leg.

That leg, however, was an acute source of embarrassment to the rest of his large family, who constantly kept marching him off to one doctor or another. After countless frustrating visits to hospitals all over the country, an enterprising plastic surgeon in the city agreed to operate on the leg and make it normal again. Both doctor and patient may have spent many an anxious moment beforehand worrying about the outcome, but after five long and arduous hours of surgery under general anaesthesia, both heaved a sigh of relief. After much initial loss of blood, and the removal of 25 kg of extra flesh, Chandu's leg was restored to its normal size.

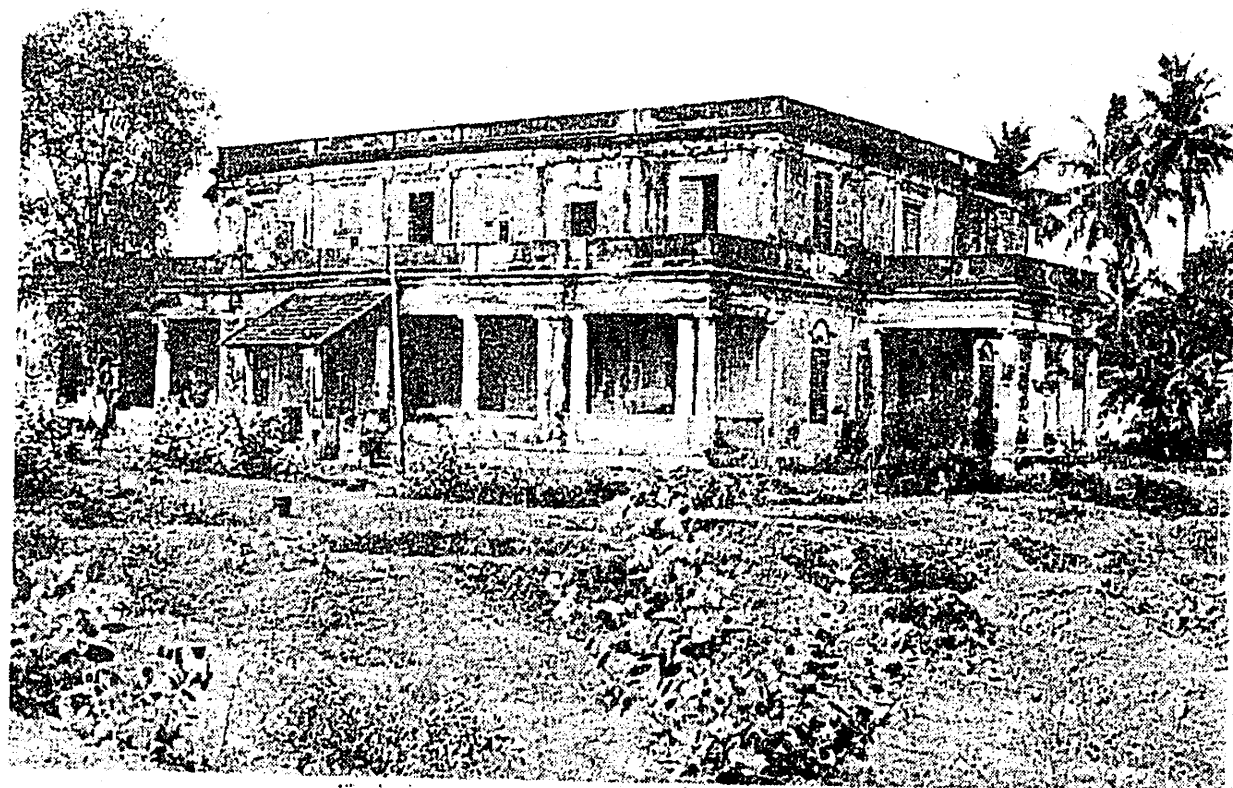
Two weeks later, Chandu came home. His little grand-daughter rushed out to greet him. But as he proudly exhibited his leg, she burst into tears, crying: "Where are my cushions? I want my cushions!"




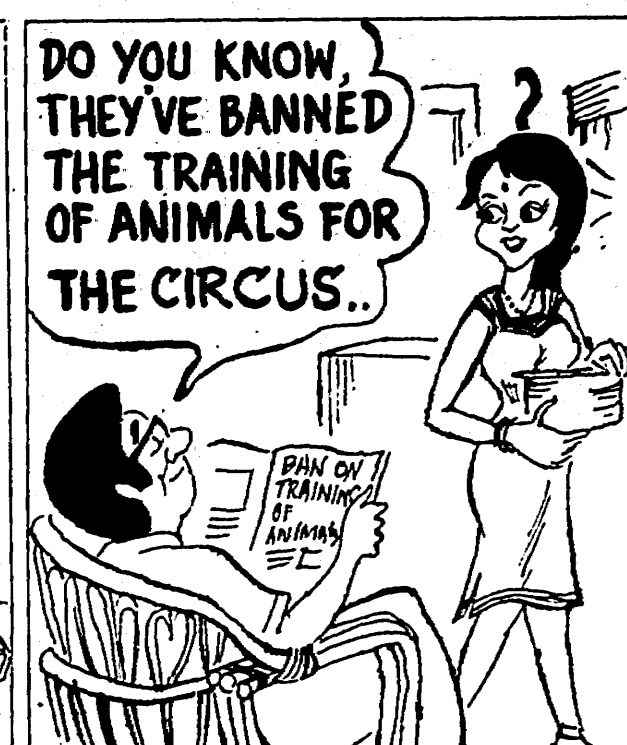
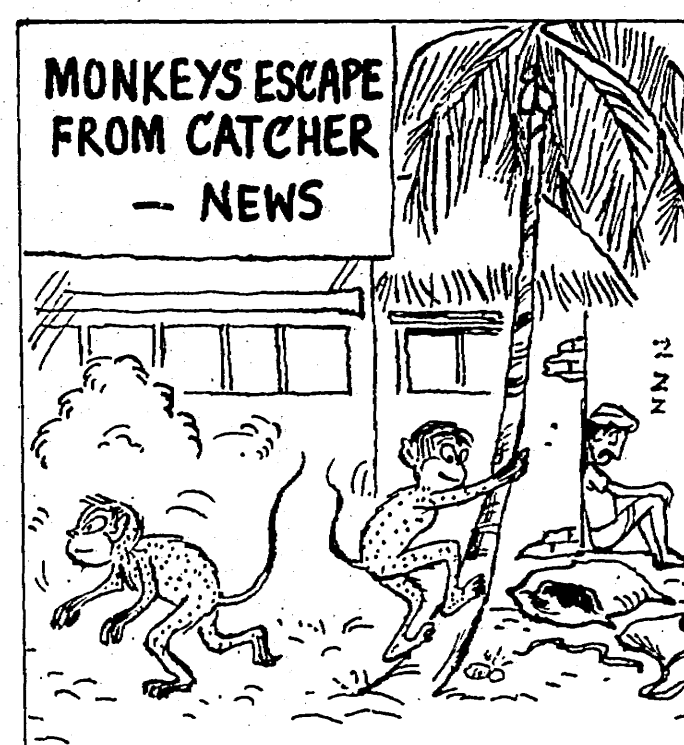
One of the most architecturally striking new buildings in Madras is the recently inaugurated Kamaraj Memorial Hall. It may have no specific memorial within for the Congress leader, and it may still have no specific use in mind, but the gleaming black Charnockite pillars of the giant auditorium and the sunshade they hold up, evoke memories of the great builders of the ancient land of the Tamils. By stirring that response, they form a memorial apt indeed for one of the modern builders of Tamil Nadu. And to emphasise his political affiliations, splendid lighting in the colours of Congress imaginatively bathed the facade of the vestibule saffron, off-white and green on the days preceding the inauguration.

A striking contrast to this magnificence is this garden house of yesteryear. Home of the Chetpet Post Office until recently, it awaits the wreckers' hammers and then, on its site, will arise another hotel for room-starved Madras. But when the building is brought down, one more garden house would have vanished from a city of garden houses. Whose garden house was this, that will soon crumble to dust, unhonoured, unsung? Does a reader have an answer?

Photographs by SUSHEELA NAIR



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## QUIZZIN WITH NAVIN-2

This is not merely a quiz to test your memory, but it is also a refresher on what happened in Madras, Tamil Nadu and the rest of India and the world during the fortnight that was. Your daily newspapers and the popular Indian news journals are Quizmaster Navin Jayakumar's sources. If you have read them carefully, you could well be in the running for a prize.

MADRAS MUSINGS offers three prizes — Rs. 150, Rs. 100 and Rs. 50 — for the first three all-correct or nearest all-correct entries opened. The decision of the Quizmaster and the Editor will be final in this connection, as in all quizzes.

To enter, all you have to do is write your answers on a sheet of paper, fill in the coupon below (use capitals only), attach filled-in coupon to answer-sheet and mail them to reach us BEFORE 5 p.m. on May 8th. Address your envelope to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ, Clo Lokavani-Hall Mark Press, 62163 Greaves Road, Madras 600 006.

### QUIZ COUPON-2

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

(The Fortnight of April 7 to April 20)

- Which doyen of cinema was conferred the Dada Sahab Phalke award this year?
- Which militant group kidnapped two Swedish engineers in Kashmir?
- What tourist attraction was recently introduced at Rashtrapati Bhavan at the Buckingham Palace?
- About what anti-social activity has the public been requested to inform Metrowater on phone numbers 835312 or 8344367?
- For how many months has Maradona been banned by the Italian league's disciplinary committee for cocaine abuse?
- Which space shuttle recently thundered into orbit with five astronauts and an immense observatory?
- What novel avian remedy for rodent menace in the Little Andamans was flown in to the islands from Madras?
- Which two Aussies became the first twins to play together in 114 years of test cricket?
- Who is considered the 'Father of the Indian Constitution'?
- What was the subject of the 10-day national level educational fair organised by the Rotary Club of Madras East in association with the Indian Bank?
- What is the code name for the US programme to provide relief for Kurds?
- Which are the three night post offices in Madras?
- The director of *A Passage to India*, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Dr. Zhivago* died on April 16. Name him.
- Which US agency is probing Gen. Ershad's foreign accounts?
- Which is the first state in India to achieve total literacy?
- What is 'silver liquid' and why is it in great demand now?
- Which artist held an exhibition titled *Front Page* at Sakshi Gallery recently?
- With which militant black group is the ANC currently engaged in fierce clashes in South Africa?
- Which 'nightingale' was conferred the Konark Samman award by the Governor at Madras on April 17?
- What is 'Pingo'? Is it (a) a new fruit drink, (b) a new two-wheeler or (c) a new fast-food eat-out?

### THE LAST WORD ON QUIZ 1

Was the competition too tough? But surely that shouldn't matter with prizes at stake even for the NEAREST all-correct. Or aren't our readers interested in Quizzin? We don't believe that either. But whatever the reason, we've decided to give you fewer questions and lot simpler ones. And we look forward to a better response this week. Meanwhile, here are last week's answers and the lucky winners:

#### PRIZE WINNERS

1st Prize: V SHANKAR, Clo N.V. Iyer, Oxford University Press, 219 Anna Salai, Madras 600 006.  
2nd Prize: V V RAMANAN, 7, Nyniappan Street, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Madras 600 028.  
3rd Prize: T K BALAJI, 10, Ist Street, North Gopalapuram, Madras 600 086.

#### ANSWERS

1. Sarvabhotham 2. Dr. Ambedkar's Birthday 3. Cocaine 4. Thiruvannur 5. INS Charial 6. At Karbala. It contains the tomb of Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet. 7. While golling on the Cosmopolitan links he scored two holes-in-one 18. M G K Menon 9. Martha Graham 10. Six - Madras, Pudukottai, Pasumpon-Thevar, North Arcot-Ambedkar, Nilgiris and Chengal-Anna. 11. It is alleged that the KGB had bugged Shastri's bedroom and heard his dying cries. A call for help would have exposed the bugging, so, after creating a commotion to alert the Indian delegation, they did nothing. 12. That modern humane, so, after creating a commotion to alert the Indian delegation, they did nothing. 13. The Narmada skull or homo sapiens, evolved in Africa, then migrated to other parts of the world. The Narmada skull (homo erectus Narmadensis), recently found on the banks of the Narmada, provides fresh evidence that modern man evolved more or less simultaneously but separately in Africa, Asia and Europe. 14. Ali Sher 15. Visweswaraya Tower Park, Annanagar 16. A cursory reading reveals no hidden meaning in this innocuous patriotic appeal to revitalise the country, but if read diagonally, the message is clear: 'Step down Li Peng; assuage popular indignation' 16. Film star Shivakumar 17. Yelahanka Air Force base near Bangalore 18. Mali 19. The Stanley Barrage 20. T.N. Seshan 21. Seven 22. a) South Arcot b) Nilgiris 23. Dr Subramaniam Swamy 24. Albania 25. Watermelons 26. Grameen Satellite Experiment (GRAMSAT) 27. The umpire shall intervene if he is satisfied that a batsman, not having been given out, has left his wicket under a misconception that he has been dismissed. 28. Jyoti Basu 29. Ali Akbar Khan 30. Graham Greene.

# The ecstasy of not running

As my multitudinous readers are aware, the editor has earnestly asked me, somewhat in the manner of a well-known Ashram in the South, to abjure from sex and politics in these columns. I doubt very much that sex will tear its lovely head in my chaste paragraphs, but in this silly season it is practically impossible to stay away from politics.

I shall be very restrained though and limit myself to one or two obvious examples of our leaders' double talk. Incidentally, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and, even more so, its companion volume, *Through the Looking-Glass* should be required reading for all of us during these weeks of sound and fury, signifying nothing, for there isn't one sentence or sequence in the books that does not reflect the charade going on around us. Try this for size. "When I use a word", Humpty Dumpty said, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less". "The question is", said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things". "The question is", said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master — that is all".

**No Foolish Consistency Here:** One of the first rituals in the election process is for a senior leader to announce that he would not be contesting, but would "concentrate on party work". I am not quite sure who he thinks will believe this hoariest of clichés, but whether his following believe it or not, they go through the customary charade of bringing great pressure on him, including threats of self-immolation, to run. And does he? Of course he retracts his decision after a suitable interval.

Two who plunged their constituencies, at least apparently, into confusion and panic, were M. Karunanidhi and Devi Lal. Expectedly, however, we have since seen large-size photographs of a happy Karunanidhi filing his nomination surrounded by his equally ecstatic admirers. Devi Lal, well-known for his off-the-cuff decisions and announcements, blithely stated that he was not running as — guess — he wanted to strengthen the party. Naturally enough, a few days later, he announced his decision to run from not one but two constituencies.

Unlike Karunanidhi who "only acceded to his friends' demands", Devi Lal brought a lot of class to his retraction — the announcement was made by the party spokesman, and it was given out that Devi Lal was persuaded to change his mind by no less than the Prime Minister, and Chandraswami. All of you of course know all the above, but putting it all together can be a thought-

provoking reminder of political sleight-of-hand.

**The Daring Middle-Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze:** Nothing has given me more unalloyed pleasure during this period than the frenzied activities of Dr Subramaniam Swamy.

## looking aSkance

He has been shuttling between Delhi and Madras for dear life, trying to reconcile irreconcilables, of course, in the process improving his shining hour also. According to an unconfirmed story, he seems to have invited Rajiv's wrath by saying that Miss J had promised him, Swamy, a seat in Tamil Nadu, something which Rajiv, much to his chagrin, seems to have believed.

The confusion was put to rest, again according to reports, by Miss J assuring Rajiv that she had not offered Swamy a seat nor had he asked for one. Dr Swamy then announced that he had decided to opt out, "in deference to a request from both Mr. Chandrasekhar and Mr. Devi Lal not to contest the Lok Sabha election but to head the

campaign committee of the party". He did have the last word, though, by throwing everything back to square one by thanking both Congress-I and AIADMK "for their readiness to provide him a seat in Tamil Nadu". One thing is clear — Dr Swamy likes to fly, and in style. At last report he was clamouring for an Air India Boeing for a two-day non-official trip to the Middle East.

**Flutter in the Dovecote:** Well, well, the BJP has got both Sita and Ravana in its fold but not Rama. As far as I know, a situation akin to Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. I am of course referring to the actors in the TV horse-opera. It has been announced that Arvind Trivedi, who played Ravana in the tele-serial, has joined the BJP, apparently inspired to do so by L.K. Advani's *rath yatra*. But listen to this — Trivedi has announced that he will "fight for Lord Rama" in the Lok Sabha poll. His brother seems to belong to Congress-I, and the brothers will have to make sure that they don't clash in the same arena. Dipika, who played Sita in the serial, beyond joining the BJP, does not seem to have made any inspirational statement.

**Monkey Business:** This is a sad story. Readers may remember that a monkey that had started causing a lot

(Continued on P8)

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# BROCCOLI'S BETTER THAN BUSH'S WORD

It has just arrived in the Madras market — a green vegetable that looks like cauliflower gone bad! But just because President Bush loathes it is no reason why you should ignore it: It's delicious and goes by the exotic name of broccoli (from brocco: sprout).

Actually broccoli is a hardy variety of cauliflower — only tastier. Even though its price is slightly steep, don't balk at it — remember that exotica always costs a bit more than the homespun product all over the world! Cook it as a substitute for cauliflower in all Indian-style preparations like curries and pulao. Incidentally, broccoli is an extremely popular ingredient in Chinese food served in Western countries.

Try the following recipe — *broccoli au gratin* — as a variation in your menu: Cut one large head of broccoli into one-inch pieces and cook lightly (as you would cauliflower) with a little water and salt to taste. Meanwhile, make a white sauce (roughly one cup) with a little butter, refined wheat flour (*maida*) and milk. Add some grated nutmeg — half a teaspoon should do — and powdered pepper to taste and pour the sauce over the lightly cooked

broccoli pieces. Grate 50 gm of cooking cheese over the mixture and bake in a hot oven for about 30 minutes or until the top is browned.

## For kids and heavies

Have you tasted the new Farmhouse breakfast cereal produced and marketed by Earth Foods, Bangalore? The preparation contains delicious items like

figs, dates, raisins, almonds, groundnuts and honey, besides a cereal combination of wheat, corn, oats and rice — all of which is expected to give you the right kind of energy to get through the day.

I would say that this new breakfast cereal compares rather favourably with the concoction known as *granola* in the U.S.A. or *muesli* in Europe. The only difference is the addition of groundnuts.

This is former film star Waheeda Rehman's most notable

contribution to the noncelluloid world. Apparently, she used to prepare it for her own children's breakfast. But since they loved it so much and introduced it to all their friends, who, in their turn, became ardent fans, the actress decided to go commercial!

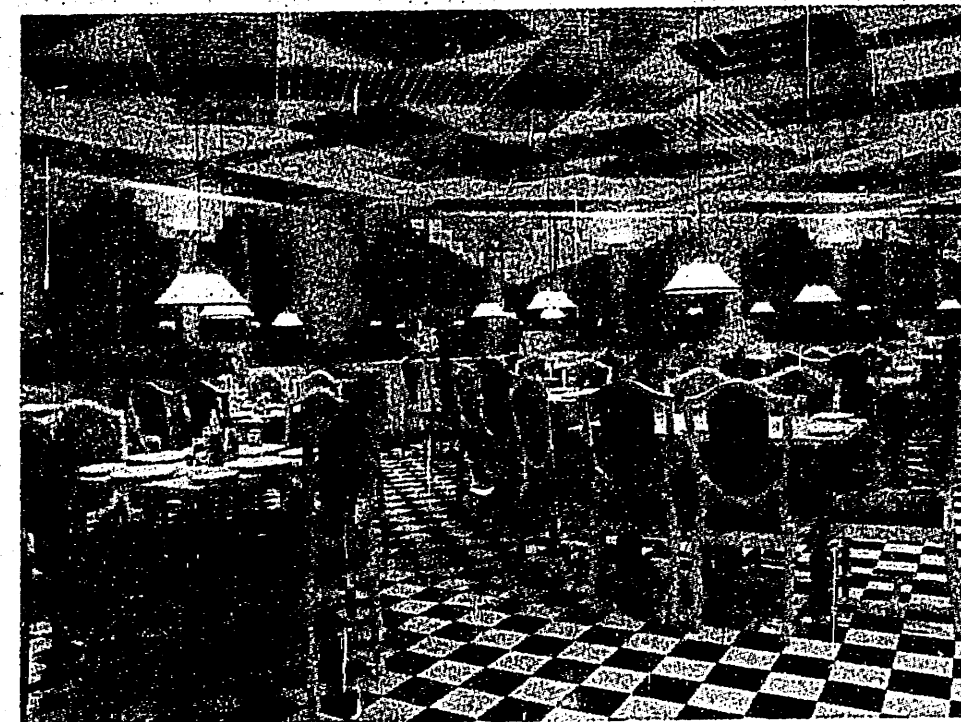
I'm sure your kiddies will love it too. Grown-ups and weight-watchers, please note: mixed with skimmed milk or yoghurt, this cereal is an easy and mouth-watering way to diet!

## A sign to stop at

On one of those hot, exhausting evenings — on the way back from an impulsive trip to Mahabalipuram — why not stop at *Leel Maha* in Nilankara? You are not likely to miss the restaurant — it is situated on the main highway and there are huge signposts to signal you to its entrance.

I will not pretend that the food — the usual snacks, apart from regular Punjabi and Chinese dishes — is the best I've ever eaten or that the decor is extraordinary. But it is a nice enough place for those of us who are not overly-fastidious and who yearn for a touch of the city outside city limits!

V.K.



One of the delights of Madras airport

# TERMINAL DELIGHTS

It's the most exclusive place in town, but no one knows about it, no, them. The Taj airport restaurants, one of them pretty and pink, named *Flights of Fancy*, the other black and white like a giant chessboard, waiting for Viswanath Anand to make the next move, are open to the public.

Most people imagine that they are meant only for irate passengers who wait with one ear on the intercom, announcing a further delay of half an hour, and the other one hoping to hear that they are going to be given a free meal at the expense of Indian airlines.

"Not so," says Maneck Patel, the unflappable Manager of the Taj

Coromandel hotel at Madras. "They're open to the public every day of the week, almost round the clock." As a special incentive, both the restaurants offer their customers a refund of the Rs 5 airport entry charge on their bills.

*Flights of Fancy* is located in the domestic terminal building and looks out onto the runway. The decor is more *calé au lait* than pink, but the use of candy stripes in wood to serve as a hedge against the sun, as partition and as a motif creates the impression of an informal patio filled with ferns. The windows have been covered with an anti-glare film and allow a clear view of the planes landing or taking off, though given that Madras is one of the sleeper air terminals, there is not much activity, except at certain times of the day.

This enhances the intimate coffee and cake charm of the place. Of course, you can get a wide selection of meals starting with breakfast, going on to lunch and dinner, with buffets thrown in when there is a delay in a normal flight take-off. The staff is young and friendly and specially recommended is their Biryani, with snack items such as a Club Sandwich and a Kattai roll coming a close second. M.O. Koshy, who is in charge of Taj Airport Catering, is even now dreaming up an exciting range of ice-cream sundaes and parfaits to cater to a younger clientele. *Flights of Fancy* is open till midnight and starts again at 5 am.

At the International terminus, it's simply called *The Taj Restaurant* and is located in a long sweeping wing of the building that gives you a dramatic view of the Tiruvoolam railway station and the mountain behind it (of course, every one knows it's just a tiny hill). The black and white decor with an intricate false ceiling made of golden cedar takes on a dramatic appearance at night. At the far end there is a special enclosure for a bar in deep Coromandel pink with matching granite at the bar and glasses hanging upside down from a bistro-style rack.

Again, though the restaurant is primarily meant for the passengers, local visitors may be pleasantly surprised to come in for a quick lunch or a late night coffee. The restaurant has one of the most up-to-date kitchens at the back and enough amenities for a bakery. Soon, the pastries that are going to be made there are going to tempt visitors to fly in for a slice of lemon tart and coffee-round-the-clock or almost. The restaurant closes between 2 am and 4.30 am.

GEETA DOCTOR

# To N.Y. with talent

Five young girls from Madras will be visiting New York this summer. All under twelve, they are the dancers chosen by that pied piper of dance, Jack d' Ambiose of New York, after a nationwide search.

Jack has been working on mass dance for children in the U.S.A. and works with some 5000 less-privileged children. His project for them this year is India.

He has made a workbook on India, distributed copies in the schools and has developed a story line that will enable them to know India for the event of

the year in New York in which 1500 children will participate.

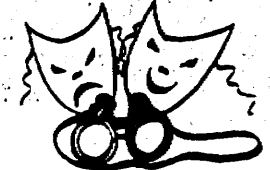
The guest dancers will be the five from Madras. Divya Ramachandran, Suchitra Rajan, Deepa Narayanan, Divya Devaguptapu and Monika Choudhury are thrilled to be performing in New York's **Radio City Music Hall** on May 20th and in ten subsequent performances. Accompanying them will be their gurus, the Dhananjayans, and Anita Murthy, another of their teachers.

A perennial winner Abhinaya exponent **Kalanidhi Narayanan** seems to be the

unanimous choice for any award in the field of dance. She returned to Bharatha Natyam after a gap of thirty years and after becoming a grandmother, yet she

Sheshadri Bal Bhavan, continued to present programmes even during examination time. I went to see a young girl, on the rise in the Bharatha Natyam

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



has had most of the prestigious awards in the country presented to her in the last two years.

Dancers go to her to learn the Abhinaya portions for Padams. She runs a lovely institution called **Abhinayasudha**. This summer, the students of Abhinayasudha plan to camp in the S.O.S. Children's Village and learn and teach dancing. Conducting a terracotta workshop for the children there will be Hans Kaushik, a sculptor from the University of Baroda, while mass Kolattam will be taught by Shanmuga Sundaram from Thanjavur.

April has been a very busy month for the arts. It was Ramanavami time and there were dances and music concerts everywhere.

**Bharath Kalachar**, a cultural organisation attached to Padma

scene, dance at one of these programmes.

**Laya Medhini** is beautiful. She has a strong resemblance to Shrinidhi Rangarajan, the much-acclaimed child prodigy who held out the promise of being the next Kamala. Laya is sixteen and just beginning. She is the disciple of Krishnaveni Lakshmanan and that says a lot for a very strong foundation.

The structure is likely to be sturdy and long lasting, but how beautiful it will be will entirely depend on the colours a still-hesitant Laya will choose to decorate it with.

**Cleaning their heritage:**

World Heritage Day was celebrated on April 18th. Mamallapuram is a world heritage monument and the day was of significance there in view of the new excavations at the shore temple. **INTACH** (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) got the students of the Mamallapuram Government High School to work on cleaning the monuments and discussing the great heritage they have in their midst.

**The Songs of Summer**

I guess this summer will have its ever-increasing share of swimming sessions, arts, and crafts workshops etc (at the C.P. Arts Centre, Chinmaya Vidyalaya...). But there'll also be lots of good music to listen to. Some kutchers... Lots of very good young people singing these days... Sanjay Subramanian, Sowmya, Vijay Shiva, Unnikrishnan etc... Their Carnatic Music has obviously been thought deeply over before they sing in front of an audience....



Kalanidhi Narayanan... Abhinaya her winning speciality

# Kashmir to Hollywood

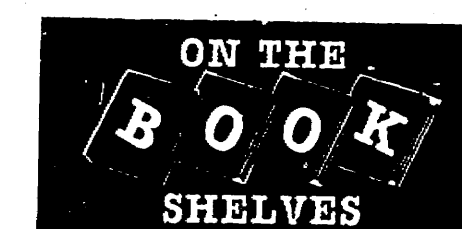
The tragedy of Kashmir is that of centuries of misrule, by local rulers and those in Delhi. Throughout history, the Kashmiri's heart has also been governed by **Kashmiriyat** — a blend of pride in being Kashmiri, be he Hindu or Muslim, and the desire to live in peace and harmony, without outside interference.

Misrule and **Kashmiriyat** are the two strands that run through M J Akbar's **Kashmir: Behind the Vale** (Viking Rs. 250). It is a racy, well-researched history of the state and the blame the Nehru dynasty, Sheikh Abdullah's family, the Janata Dal, Jagmohan, the BJP trioka and others all share. While the reader might not agree with all the inferences made by Akbar, it is heartening to note that this is a balanced study, devoid of party considerations.

Over the years, Salman Rushdie has been contributing a steady stream of reviews and articles to newspapers and journals all over the world. Viking has just published **Imaginary Homelands** (Rs. 295) which is a collection of some of these articles published between 1981-1991. Rushdie covers a wide range of topics — from fellow writers, film-makers and artists to the politics of the sub-continent, racism and religious fundamentalism. The book ends with his defence of the **Satanic Verses** and his most recent statement on his decision to embrace Islam again.

Turning to literary fiction, two of America's foremost contemporary novelists, Thomas Pynchon and Kurt Vonnegut, have their latest books competing for shelf-space in bookshops. Pynchon appears to have the upper hand, with **Vineland** (Penguin Rs. 70) his first novel in 17 years, being dubbed "a literary event". Mystery, incidentally, surrounds this author: where's he been hiding these many years? While **Vineland** may be described as an allegorical comment on the state of the nation, Kurt Vonnegut's **Hocus Pocus** (Vintage Rs. 95) has been described as "a work by an artist a little impatient with allegory and more than a little impatient with his own country".

Bestselling author Morris West has always been fascinated with the inner workings of the Catholic church. His latest book, **Lazarus** (Coronet E. 1.95), is the final volume of what can loosely be described as a trilogy (the other two being **The Shoes of the Fisherman** and **The Clowns of God**). Pope Leo, staunch defender of the Catholic faith, has a change of heart, when faced with the prospect of a bypass surgery. If he survives, he vows



to reform the Church. Meanwhile there is a terrorist plot to assassinate him... **Lazarus** is a potent mix of theological arguments and thrills, guaranteed to keep the reader engrossed till the very end.

And, finally, there's **Dance with the Devil** (Arrow Rs. 100). In it, encouraged by the success of his autobiography, **The Ragman's Son**, Hollywood star Kirk Douglas (tries his hand at popular fiction. Predictably, his setting is what he knows best, Hollywood. And that appears to have got reviewers raving for more, to judge from the jacket blurbs!

GAUTAM PADMANABHAN

# THE BIG ONE, AT LAST!

Tamil cinema has done it. At last. For the first time in the history of Indian Government awards, a Tamil film has won the coveted and prestigious National Award for Best Picture.

In all its 60-year history, during which over 2000 films have been made, no discerning critic has ever taken Tamil films seriously. They've been considered mere vehicles of loud, theatrical, mindless entertainment. Now the unexpected has happened. Someone has at last seen the Tamil film differently.

The film that's different is **Marupakkam**, a tele-film jointly produced by Doordarshan and the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) and directed by a famed and talented filmmaker, K S Sethumadhavan.



A veteran of South Indian cinema, Sethumadhavan has made several classics in Malayalam and contributed much to the growth of that cinema with such memorable movies as **Vaazhvey Maayam**, **Ara Nazhiga Neram**, **Daaham** and many others. He has also made successful films in Tamil and Hindi: No stranger to awards and citations he may be, but **Marupakkam** is the high-point of his three decades in cinema.

**Marupakkam** is the filmisation of that fine Tamil novel **Uchhi Veyyil** written by that leading playwright and man of letters Indira Parthasarathy. (Indira, incidentally, in his wife and he, writes under their 'compound name', a play often used by Indian government servants). A story set in the Tamil Nadu of the 1940's, it is about an orthodox Brahmin family in which a scholarly

Brahmin with an interest in the fine arts marries a beautiful woman who loves dancing. His widowed mother, tradition-bound and a prude, hates the arts. She sees Bharata Natyam, or any other form of dance, as immoral and unchaste, fit only for such professional entertainers as **Devadasis**, that community of temple dancers who are also known as **thevar adiyal** — Slaves of the Lord — an expression that's become mutilated as **thevdiyil**, the contemptuous Tamil for a whore! It was because her husband had 'kept' a dancer and neglected wife and son that this shaven-headed widow sees immorality in every pair of dancing feet.

When the daughter-in-law refuses to give up dancing, the mother forces her cowardly, apron-strung son to shed his wife and take another. The second wife presents him a son who, in time, goes to work in Delhi and marries a Christian girl. The parents reject the girl and, soon, the marriage breaks up. The father, ridden with guilt at the inhuman way he had treated his first wife, is brought down by a stroke which destroys his power of speech. As his health declines, he fights to live, unwilling to die until his first wife visits him on his death bed....

This moving family melodrama is better on the screen for the effective underplaying that a sensitive director has encouraged. The customary, loud, artificial theatrics of the usual Kodambakkam Tamil film have been studiously eschewed by Sethumadhavan and he has wrung some fine performances from the stars.

Sivakumar, as the long-suffering son, carries away the acting honours with his low-key emoting. As the artistic wife with twinkling toes, Radha, the glamour gal of mainstream cinema, gives a surprisingly impressive performance. Sensuous, mischievous and loving in turn, her role, though small, makes an impact; obviously, under a good filmmaker, she can act seriously and well. Jayabharathy, the

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## PERCEPTIONS ON A TRAIN

# Dress maketh the man

They sat opposite me in the train compartment. It wasn't long before we got into conversation. But this time it was a bit different from the usual.

"Chee-chee! What's so great about the man?" asked the sweet young thing in her best 'convent'-bred manner. "He asked his wife to clean out all the shit from the toilets and when she refused he threatened to beat her. Isn't that being a real MCP?"

Her husband looked at her indulgently. They had been married only a year. "What would you do if the sweeper didn't come, wouldn't you clean out your toilets?" he asked.

"No! I'll get another sweeper and if that one didn't come I'd get another one and another one. It's a sweeper's job, so why should I do it!"

I tried to assume an avuncular look and remonstrated, "Now look here, young lady, you can't dismiss him in this fashion. After all, didn't he go on to do other things. Give us our Independence, for instance."

"And anyway, what have you got against the man?" asked the husband, genuinely puzzled at such vehemence.

"He crucified Pakistan. He thought he was so great he refused to shake hands with Jinnah and so Jinnah said,

'Chalo Pakistan'. I tell you, the man is a real pseudo. One minute he cleans the toilets and the next minute he refuses to shake hands with Jinnah who was such a gentleman. Hah, that's another thing, he was so badly dressed. That loin cloth of his and those small round soda water bottle glasses" (she made circles round her eyes with her thumbs and forefingers) "and those wooden sandals. In the movie there's that scene where he takes off his shirt and gives it to a poor woman as though that would solve her problem. Millions



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of people are without clothes, so he also takes off his clothes, but how can that help them?"

"But don't you realise that the man has been heralded as the most important personality not only of this century, but perhaps of the entire millenium?" I asked, totally aghast at her perceptions.



"That's because he was on such an ego trip he called himself a Mahatma and so everyone else thought he must be a great man. I'm telling you though, he's taken everyone for a ride." Her husband looked apologetic. "It's the schools," he said. "Her father sent her to one of the best schools in the hills" (he mentioned the name) "and, obviously, they still follow the British system."

"What's wrong with the British system?" she countered. "At least they had discipline and order. Which is more than you can say for him. Tell me, why did he have all those fasts? So many people are starving and he goes on fasts as though that will feed the poor. And why did he have to burn all that lovely British mill-made cloth and force people

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A. VASUDEVAN

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# Gym races show Imran pedigree

Imran Khan was the find of the season. In racing parlance, the youngster sports a promising pedigree. He is the youngest son of Amanullah Khan, Starter, Tamil Nadu Government's Department of Racing, a grandson of the late Baba Khan, a leading Madras jockey of the 40's and champion trainer of the 50's, and a grandnephew of the late Ahmed Khan, champion Madras jockey for more than one season. True to his bloodline, 12-year-old Imran Khan stole the thunder at the recent Madras Gymkhana race meetings.

The small guy not only cornered the riding honours and won the Best Student Rider trophy, but is also now considered a lad with a future. His stock rose sky-high when, like a seasoned professional, he rode an unforgettable finish on a gelding called *Sweet Success* (-20 metres). In the hands of another promising lad, Balkumar, *Good News* (scr.) looked the winner with hardly 50

metres left. But Imran had the last word. Riding with both his hands and heels, he brought *Sweet Success* on in an electrifying run, and the gelding pipped *Good News* right under the line to win the Eagle Flask Cup and earn his rider a standing ovation.

As Principal of the Madras Riding School, which now conducts the

by  
**JAICI**

Gymkhana meetings, Amanullah Khan had already formed a high opinion of his son's potential. His Gymkhana performances not only confirmed Amanullah's estimate of Imran's worth but also gave the father something to think about. "He is a gifted boy with an easy seat and exceptionally strong hands for his age," Amanullah told this writer, "but now he should go to England for a short training session."

It is not because the Principal feels that the facilities at the local school are inadequate. Anything but that. He is proud of the record of the M.R.S., which had turned out several champions. Even so, he feels a short term at a centre like Newmarket can do the boy a world of good. For one thing, dozens of youths are in training there year-round and, for another, it abounds with opportunities for trainees to ride along with, and learn from, senior professionals.

There is, of course, the usual snag, money. But with the Khans calling Bangalore home, there's every possibility that globe-trotting businessman Vijay Mallya, whose business and racing headquarters in India is Bangalore but who lives and also races in England, would consider sponsorship sympathetically.

Druv Futnani, Ravinder Singh and Manav Futnani, besides Balkumar, were others to impress at the meet. In



Imran Khan receives the Best Student Rider Trophy from Mahajaben P Padamsee, daughter of M A Padamsee, Managing Director of Eagle Flask Industries. Imran brought off his best finish during the Gymkhana Races when he rode *Sweet Success* to victory in the Eagle Flask Cup.

the very first race, Druv Futnani on *Katana* and Ravinder on *Dillion* fought out a thriller, which *Katana* won narrowly to launch the season on an exciting note. Later, Manav Futnani had the distinction of lowering the colour of Imran Khan and *Sweet Success* by a neck in the Nutrine Cup. The seniors, as only to be expected, were headed by Ramesh, the most experienced amateur in Madras, who crowned his

two decades of riding at Guindy by completing a century of winners.

The fairly good standard of horsemanship witnessed during the three-meeting season was a tribute to the role the M.R.S. has played in promoting amateur riding. It has indeed proved a worthy successor to the Madras Polo and Riders Club.

Thanks mainly to the drive and initiative of S Govind Swaminadhan and his loyal band of assistants, headed by A C Muthanna, the M.P.R.C. had, since 1946 conducted the amateur sport with enthusiasm. This dedicated team has been responsible for the sport's growth in popularity as a social occasion with a picnic atmosphere, whole families turning out with their children.

Swaminadhan has, throughout these years, shone not only as an organiser but also as a disciplinarian. He spared none. Once he even took M.A.M. Ramaswamy to task for dangerous riding. Yes, Ramaswamy was an amateur rider of note before he entered the professional racing scene to emerge as the country's leading and record-shattering owner.

Three mouth-watering traditional dishes, shortened and simplified to save cooking time. And oh-so-easy to make. The *Mutton Biryani* and *Chicken Masala* can be made in quick, easy steps, yet retain the original flavour. The *Mysore Vada* can be made in a jiffy with ready-made flours and doesn't require grinding at all. The fourth recipe, *Cream Cheese Salad*, is an unusual way to serve an ordinary salad. Handy recipes for working women and busy housewives.

## CHICKEN MASALA

- 1 chicken (jointed) cut into 12 pieces
- 1 cup sour curd
- 1 pod garlic
- 3-inch piece ginger
- 1 bunch green coriander leaves
- 2 pieces cinnamon
- 3 cardamoms
- 3 cloves
- 3 green chillies (slit lengthwise)
- 2 tsp chilli powder
- 2 tsp coriander seed powder (dhania)
- 2 large onions
- 1 tsp turmeric powder

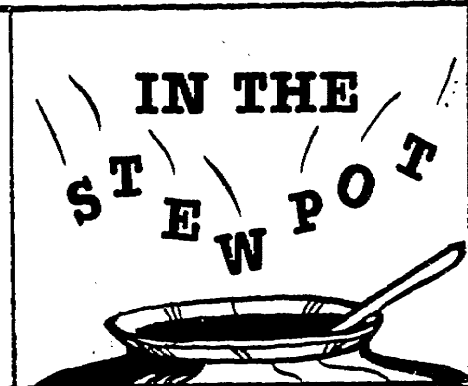
### Method

Wash the chicken pieces, add salt to taste with turmeric powder and the beaten curd and allow to marinate for 2 hours.

Slice the onions lengthwise. Heat oil in a thick-bottomed pan and add the spices.

Add the sliced onions and green chillies and fry till light brown.

Add chilli and *dhania* powder and the paste of ginger, garlic and green coriander.



Fry on low heat till the oil rises to the surface.

Add the marinated chicken and fry for another 7 minutes till the masala is absorbed. (All frying should be done on very low heat.)

Add one cup of water and simmer for about 20 minutes till the chicken is cooked. This can be done either as a gravy or a thick masala, whichever preferred.

Serve hot with *phulkas*.

## INSTANT MUTTON BIRIYANI

- ¼ kg meat
- 2 pods garlic
- 1½" piece ginger
- 8 red chillies
- 3 cardamoms
- 3 cloves
- 3 pieces cinnamon
- 4 green chillies (slit lengthwise)
- 2 large onions (slit lengthwise)
- A few mint leaves
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 2½ cups rice
- ½ cup curd
- ½ cup ghee and oil
- 1 bay leaf

Grind to a fine paste

Heat the mixture of ghee and oil in a pressure cooker and add bay leaf.

Add sliced onions and green chillies and fry to a golden brown colour.

Add the ground masala and fry for a few minutes till oil rises to the top.

Add the chunks of meat and fry for some more time and add the mint leaves.

Add the turmeric powder, curd and 2 cups of water with enough salt for the meat and pressure-cook for 10 minutes, or till meat is fairly tender.

Clean and wash the rice.

Remove the meat from the gravy and measure the liquid. Top up with water so that liquid measures double the quantity of rice. In this case, 5 cups of liquid. Place liquid and meat in the pressure cooker and when it begins to boil add the washed rice and pressure-cook for 2 minutes.

Switch off and allow the cooker to return to room temperature before removing the weight.

Garnish with boiled peas and chopped coriander leaves and serve with curd *pachdi* (*raita*).

Sabita Radhakrishna

## MYSORE VADAI

- ½ cup rice flour
- ½ cup fine semolina (*rawa*)
- ½ cup maida
- ¼ cup melted fat (*ghee* or oil)
- 4-5 green chillies chopped fine
- 2 medium sized onions chopped fine
- 1 small bunch of coriander leaves chopped fine
- ½ tsp asafoetida powder
- Salt to taste
- Some water
- A small polythene sheet

### Method

Mix everything together, adding sufficient water to make a stiff dough.

Make a ball the size of a lemon from the dough. Place the moistened polythene sheet on the palm of the left hand. With the right hand flatten the dough into a small disc on the moistened polythene sheet.

Gently slip the *vada* into the oil.

Fry 4 or 5 *vadas* at the same time till uniformly golden on both sides.

Serve hot with *podina* chutney.

## CREAM CHEESE SALAD

- 1 litre milk set to fresh curd
- 2 spring onions or 1 small onion chopped fine
- 1 capsicum deseeded & chopped fine
- 1 tomato skinned by dipping into hot water, then chopped fine

- ½ cup celery chopped fine
- ½ tsp chilli powder
- ¼ tsp pepper powder
- salt to taste
- 30 grams (1 oz) grated cheese

### Method

Make cream cheese by tying the fresh curd in a muslin cloth and allowing the whey to drain off for about 2-3 hrs.

Mix in a bowl the onion, capsicum, tomato and celery with the cream cheese. Add salt, chilli and pepper powder.

Mix well. Garnish with grated cheese.

Serve cold.

Chandra Padmanabhan

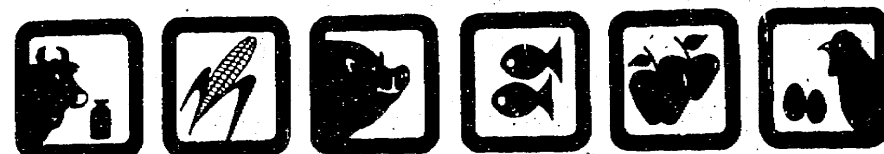
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(Continued from P5)

## LOOKING ASKANCE

of deprecation in Trivandrum was, I think, caught and ordered to be shot by a magistrate. A damn silly decision, if you ask me; I would have left a tremendous amount of food-stuff which would have calmed the monkey down. Anyway, animal lovers got into the act and, at the insistence of Maneka Gandhi, his life was spared, and he was let into the forest. But, alas, it was no longer his familiar environment; the other animals attacked him, and the improbably named Ganesan sneaked back to town, where he died, apparently of starvation.

*Moral:* A little discretion should go along with even compassion, and Maneka Gandhi does not have all the answers.

*Song of the Bullet:* The following item in its entirety is taken from *The Hindu*, dated April 10: "About 17.5 tonnes of Red sanders, worth Rs. 3.5 lakhs, kept illegally in a godown at Thandalam village near Maduravoyal, were seized by the officials of the Forest Cell CID last night. The wood is used in the production of musical instruments such as violin veena and rifles."

S.K.