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## MUSINGS

Vol. I. No. 3

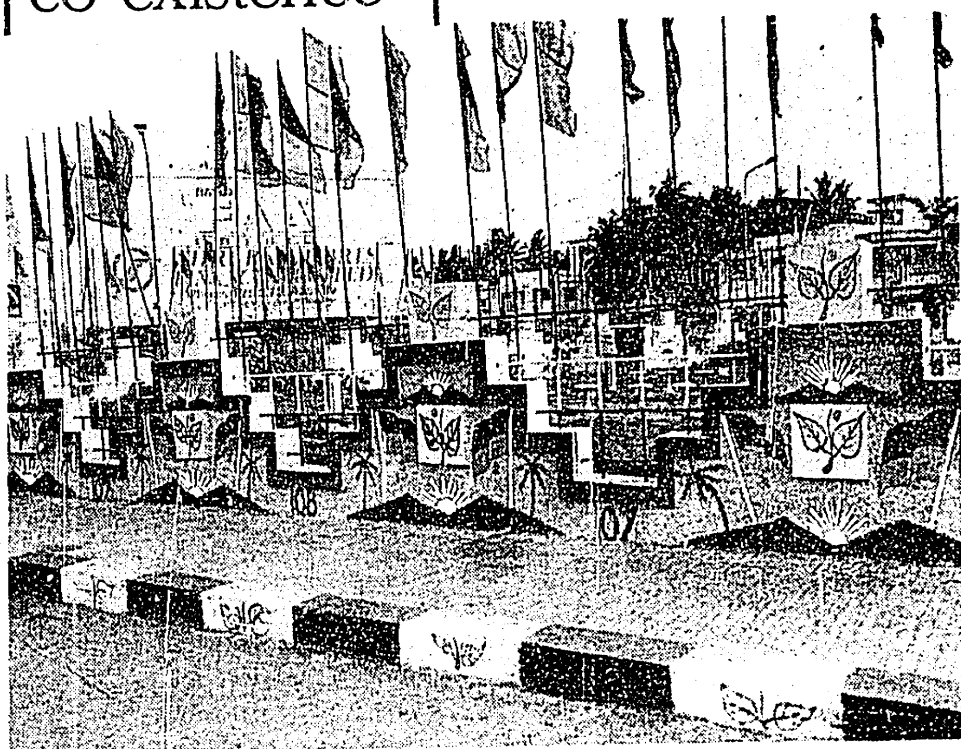
FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

May 15, 1991

Peaceful co-existence

# 'Al-Seshan', guardian of the polls

(By a Special Correspondent)



In a splendid display of amicability, the DMK and AIDMK have jointly decorated the parapet wall outside Valluvar Kottam. This 'friendly' sharing of space has not only ensured decoration more tasteful than usual but also is an indicator that 'Al-Seshan' will have less headaches in his home state than elsewhere when the country goes to the polls during the next fortnight. (Photograph by SUSHEELA NAIR)

His detractors, victims of his acidic tongue, short temper and aggressive personality, call him 'Al-Seshan'. And even his supporters are terrified by his bark and run scared of his occasional bite. But most people who know him agree that burly, bald, bullying Tirunellai Narayanaier Seshan would make the ideal watchdog to prevent any hijacking of this fortnight's greatest election in the world.

Appointed Chief Election Commissioner a few months ago, just three days before he was due to retire, T N Seshan came to the post amidst controversy. Described by many as 'a Rajiv Gandhi man', he is said to have been one of an informal triumvirate of advisers the former Prime Minister depended on when he was in power, the other two — M K Narayanan of Intelligence and P Chidambaram — also being from Madras. But ever since he donned the 'umpire's' coat, more and more politicians of all hues have come to believe that Seshan would act as he himself has promised: "ruthlessly, fearlessly, impartially". Playing "tough" as CEC, he's only enhanced his 'Al-Seshan' image and become, in that role, someone acceptable all round as the guardian of the democratic process.

Born the son of an advocate — and into a family of scholars, administrators and professionals — Seshan was 23 when he joined the IAS in 1955 after topping his batch despite being one of the youngest in it. Ten years later he went to Harvard to get a Master's degree; that's where he met Subramaniam Swamy and it was this former teacher of his who picked him as CEC despite his lack of legal training.

As a member of the Tamil Nadu cadre of the IAS, Seshan had served as Commissioner of Motor Transport, Collector of Madras, Labour Commissioner and Industries Secretary among other postings. In the Centre, he had tenures in the Atomic Energy and Space Departments but began his meteoric rise after he returned to Delhi in 1979. After serving on the Oil and Natural Gas Commission and as Additional Secretary in the Department of Space, he came to Rajiv



Gandhi's notice when he became Environment Secretary. The brilliantly conceived Environment Protection Act was his brainchild and helped enhance Rajiv Gandhi's global image.

When that attempt was made on the Prime Minister's life in 1986, Seshan was appointed to look into the Prime Minister's security and for three years, he supervised it. A further token of Rajiv Gandhi's trust was when he made Seshan his Defence Secretary during his most troubled hour and, then, superseding several others, Cabinet Secretary. When the National Front came into power, Seshan was moved to the Planning Commission and it looked as though he might end his career there. But then governments changed and mid-term polls hove to on the horizon.

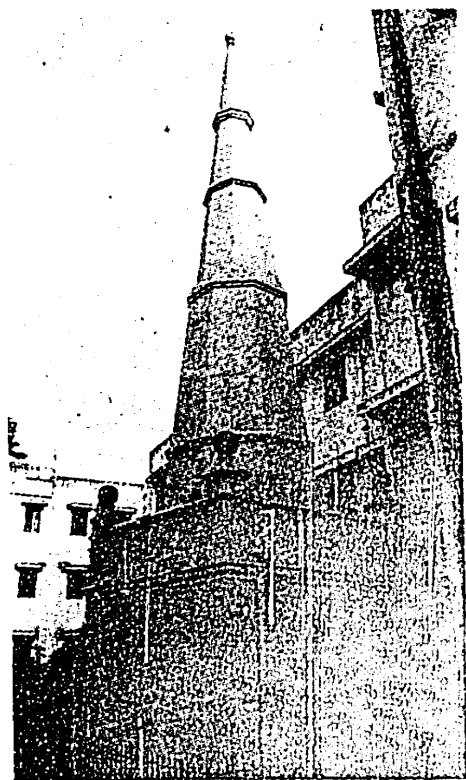
When the elections looked like being a nasty, dirty fight, Swamy saw in Seshan the tough, upright, efficient administrator needed for what might become an ugly situation. The coming fortnight gives 'Al-Seshan' the opportunity to prove that he was the right choice. If there's the free, fair, frictionless poll the nation hopes for, 'Al-Seshan' would have had a lot to do with it.

Do the stars and the lines in his palm promise him that moment of glory? He would have already worked that out when he accepted, pursuing his favourite hobby!

**MANAALI RAMAN...**

I say, this is unfair!  
Now where will we dig?

**IN MAD, MAD MADRAS**



The Hynmer's Obelisk in the Law College Grounds. In this tomb of his mother's first husband and father's friend and colleague, the four-year-old David, son of Elihu Yale, was buried. (Photograph by SUSHEELA NAIR)

# Lest we forget, Yale's being remembered

(By S Muthiah)

Elihu Yale, whose name is commemorated in one of the world's great universities, Yale, in New Haven, Connecticut, is at last going to be remembered in the city that was the capital of the Presidency he governed. His portrait — to be painted by the versatile Dhanushkodi — is to hang in Ripon Building, marking the fact that Yale was the Governor who inaugurated India's first municipal corporation in Madras in 1688.

It is, however, to be hoped that on either side of it will hang the portraits of two others who played a notable role in Madras's civic affairs. Sir Josiah Child, Chairman of the East India Company, was the person who first suggested, and then ordered, the

Corporation to be established. Nathaniel Higginson, Yale's deputy, became the first Mayor by Company fiat and then proceeded to give the Corporation its character. The Corporation the trio established was to serve as model for civic government in an expanding Empire. The Indo-American Association would make this belated tercentenary celebration a more memorable one if it dedicated itself to remembering all three progenitors and not merely the American connection.

Dolly Simon, erstwhile USIS Librarian and life and soul of the Association, has been almost single-handedly responsible for getting Yale better remembered in Madras. That effort started with helping to give a new

lease of life to the little known and sole memorial associated with him in Madras.

That memorial is Hynmer's Tomb, in the Law College campus, opposite what was once the Burmah Shell offices. In it is buried David Yale, the 4-year-old son of Yale and Catherine Hynmer, whom he married on the death of her husband and his colleague in Council.

The tomb, with its tall obelisk surmounting a square arched chamber, was 'rediscovered' by Dolly Simon, who, after a lecture in 1986, went looking for it and found it "surrounded by filth and dirt and with a most nauseating smell emanating from the surroundings".

With the help of Dr John Stempel, the then US Consul General in Madras, she managed to get a host of departments interested in renovating the tomb and, on September 11, 1987, the Indo-American Association organised what might be described as a "re-dedication" ceremony, with the US Ambassador in India participating. Ever since then, Hynmer's Obelisk has remained in reasonably good shape.

Yale, who spent his early years in New Haven when his family migrated there from Wales, remembered those years with a contribution to a new school that was started there in the early 18th Century. In a few years, school grew to college and then named itself Yale University, remembering that

contribution. The contributor had by then retired as Governor of Madras after a distinguished, but often controversial, career.

It was Yale who first raised the Union Jack over Fort St George, it was he who acquired and developed the fort that became Fort St David in Cuddalore and which ensured the British the toehold they needed when they were ousted from Madras, it was he who organised the Indian militia, secured confirmation of the rights over several villages that later became part of the Carnatic acquisition or part of growing Madras, and who introduced several civic amenities, such as the first hospital and first library.



## CHROME NO MORE!

One more early Madras industry that's threatened with closure unless a fairy godfather comes along is the Chrome Leather Company which lent its name to city suburb Chromepet.

Founded by G A Chambers, who arrived in Madras in 1894 and went into business in 1903, tanning and manufacturing were started in 1912 when the Chrome Leather Company was established. It became a limited company in 1917, shortly after its new buildings were built on a 25-acre site in South Pallavaram. Chambers not only introduced chrome tanning in Madras but he also ensured the process would leave its mark in a Madras name. The Chambers family connection also continued until a few years ago, well after the Indian take-over.

The company, which used to employ over 600 persons at one time and contributed much to the prosperity of the Pallavaram

mothers in nursing homes. The first copy of this record book was presented on this occasion by T T Vasu of TTK's to Bhooma Sharma, who looked as though she'd soon be putting it to good use. How sweet, crowned a grandmother in the audience, referring to this presentation.

### Sterling worth

Two leading NRI's with Madras connections have made it to the *Sunday Times*, London's annual list of the 200 richest persons in Britain. The Hinduja family, who are associated with Ashok Leyland's, make 'The Top Ten' for the first time and Vijay Malaya, who's associated with Best & Crompton, enters the list for the first time at 75rd.

The Hinduja's, described as controlling "one of the world's largest trading empires", are reported to be worth £100

### SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

area, still employs 300 persons. Chrome Leather Company has, in the past, "risen phoenix-like from several failures", so it is hard to see it going under when leather is booming; a rescue package could well be on the way by July.

### No baby's voice

"Doesn't she sound just like Connie Francis?" Who? "You know, who made *Que Sera, Que Sera* a hit in the Fifties! Doesn't she sound just like her? Who is she?" That was the most repeated question at the recent release of the first title in the Woodward's Childcare Series: *Bringing Up Baby*.

The mystery surrounded the singer whose voice was part of the delightful promotional video HTA Bangalore had produced for the TTK Group-sponsored publication and which was first screened at the release function. Eventually someone came up with the answer that the voice that so charmingly launched the book was that of Arathi Rao Shetty, a Bangalore housewife. Wonder what she's doing staying at home when there's a Connie Francis fortune waiting for her out there?

The cartoon video, incidentally, was a splendid bit of promotion, presenting in line and song everything there is to know about the contents of Dr Nandini Mundkur's book, from a crying baby's *Aaaaah* to its sleepy *Zzzzz*. Dr Lalitha Kameswaran, Vice Chancellor, MGR Medical University, the Chief Guest, was as taken up with the book as she was with the audiovisual.

The book is also being promoted with the gift of another Woodward's book, *Milestones*, to

million, while the Malaya assets are valued at £100 million. The Queen, Elizabeth II, heads the list as usual with assets of over £7000 million.

### A study in Udupi

The things they research! In town recently was Stig Madsen of Denmark making a study video on Udupi 'hotels'. A socio-anthropologist, he's been fascinated by the thought of the cuisine of Udupi, with its strong religious overtones, being made into a commercially successful, internationally known business and then contributing much back to roots, the temples of Udupi.

Meanwhile, American Andrew Lightman is working on the old trusts and charities of Madras. And you can spot him in the Archives poring over the records of the Pachaiyappa, Monegar Choultry and Petrus Usan Trusts among others.

### Short and tragic

It was one of those days when car registrations were being made with a fine. A colleague, negotiating the narrow lane that's bedlam during the day because of the T Nagar RTO's thoughtless location, brushed past, with inches to spare, a brand new, gleaming white Maruti 1000 coming in for registration.

A couple of hours later he passed the same vehicle positioned katty-cornered on C V Raman Road in Alwarpet. It's front was a wreck and sitting on the kerb, literally weeping, was its owner-driver. Is a car worth all that?

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# Takeovers — quietly, quietly

This has not been a fortnight of exciting business activity in Tamil Nadu. I can hear cynics asking "Is it ever?" Southern business tends to be cautious and careful in its pursuit of growth. But diehard Madras businessmen will swear that slow and steady will win the race. It is a fact that the South has not produced an Ambani, or from the more established business houses, an Aditya Birla. You can argue the merits of aggressive strategies versus more cautious ones, or the other way round, without coming to any conclusion. However, if you pierce the low profile armour of Southern industry, you will see that action does take place albeit unobtrusively.

In the recent past, there have been several takeovers by Madras companies. Some have been quiet acquisitions, but there have also been hostile takeovers. The auto ancillary group, Rane, five years ago decided to diversify into a hotel project. But very soon Rane realised that it wanted out, as it was not comfortable in areas it was not familiar with. Having disposed of its shares to the Oberois, who were looking for a foothold in Madras, it went on an acquisition spree of companies which fitted into its existing operations.

One of the group's companies, Rane Brake Linings, has just completed the formalities of taking over Shree Auto Parts, a unit based in a backward district in Andhra Pradesh. Rane is confident of reviving this closed unit by infusing funds, upgrading technology and offering better management and marketing services.

### BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

EID Parry, the 200-year-plus company, which is into fertilisers, sugar and ceramics, has successfully negotiated the takeover of Falcon Gulf Ceramics in Alwar, Rajasthan. This company was set up by two Non Resident Indian brothers who were in international trading in West Asia. They had no experience in industry and, so, before Falcon Gulf could take off, it started making losses.

It makes perfectly good sense for Madras-based Parry's to take over a ceramicware company in Rajasthan. It makes it easier for it to capture an all-India market. Parry-ware, the upmarket sanitary fittings made by Parry's, is not

an easy product to freight across the country. Freight charges also push the costs up and make Parry's products expensive.

Parry's itself was an old British company which was taken over by the Murugappa (T) group and new life breathed into it. So the Murugappa group is not shy about takeovers. Its low profile Carbonundum Universal, makers of abrasives, successfully completed a hostile takeover of the Bangalore-based Wendt India, a company promoted by the Khatauls of Bombay. This takeover fits in very well with Carbonundum's operations.

A year ago, India Cements, which had a turbulent decade because of leadership problems, made a daring move to take over the one million tonne cement plant of Coromandal Fertilisers in Andhra Pradesh. When Parry's, who have been involved with Coromandal Fertilisers, didn't join battle too fiercely, India Cements became the largest cement company in the South.

The Shriram group of companies, well known for its chitfund operations and transport financing, has been diversifying into manufacturing operations in the last four or five years. Its latest acquisition is Super Shock Absorbers, a Hyderabad-based company. What is interesting about this is the fact that the group was willing to take on another contender, and a market leader at that, Gabriel from Bombay, and successfully push through its bid.

These are definite signs of changing attitudes. Who knows, before long the Southern industrialist might do something so dramatic that his Northern and Western counterparts would never call him conservative again.

## An upswing, after a temporary aberration

Although we had forecast a general upswing, the market took a tumble last week after an initial upsurge. This was because of the unexpected imposition of a regulation by the Reserve Bank of India, further limiting the funds available with banks for lending. This trend, we believe, is a temporary aberration, and we continue to maintain that the prognosis for the market in the medium and long-term is good.

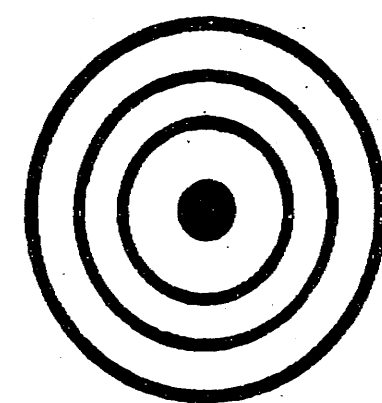
Too much investible money is chasing too few good scrips and this is bound to push up prices. The values of the 'Investment Grade' scrips will rise without relevance to the see-saw behaviour of the market. Just consider names such as those of Lakshmi Machines Works, India Cements, Kunal Engineering, Madras Cements, Elgi Tyres, Ashok Leyland Ltd., Ashok Leyland Finance, Lakshmi Mills, Harrisons Malayalam, Chemplast, Dalmia Cement, Loyal Textiles, P.A. Cotton, Super Spinning, Super Sales, Precot Mills, Shanti Gears, Ballarpur Paper or Badrachalam Paper and a host of others that have yielded phenomenal profits. In many cases, money has multiplied more than ten times in two years.

The secret of good investment is therefore, the identification of a good name for purchase. The investor has nothing to fear if he chooses his share carefully and has some idea of its intrinsic worth. What we can do, is to help you with the identification process,

but it is for you to make up your mind after careful evaluation.

In the last issue we wrote of KGK's first adage: "Profits are always slow in coming — Do not buy stocks unless you can hold them".

Now we have the second of the precepts: "Carefully investigate basic



### BULL'S EYE

facts before you buy — you determine your fate in the Market." Here are three suggestions for you.

**India Precision Ltd** (Rs. 36.75 @ MSE): The fortunes of this company changed for the better after it was taken over by M/s Lakshmi Machine Works. This textile machinery company, earlier known as Kunal Machinery Mfrs Ltd, announced impressive results for the year ended March '90. Its sales recorded a growth of 79% over the previous year. The future outlook is good, especially due to its association with LMW, the leader in the textile machinery industry.

Although a dividend is possible only in 1993, due to the accumulated losses, we

recommend this share for longterm gains at the Rs. 30-Rs. 35/- level. The share price movement indicates that the share is now on the upward march after arresting the downfall (from Rs. 54/- in November '90 to Rs. 28/- in Feb. '91) at the Rs. 28/- level. A person can double his investment in less than two years time, if picked up at the recommended level.

**Rikvin Floors Ltd** (Rs. 13/- @ MSE): This company entered the capital market in November '90 to part-finance a project for the manufacture of quartz vinyl reinforced flooring. The project is in Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh, and is in technical collaboration with Reiber & Sons, Norway. The public issue received encouraging response and was oversubscribed eight times. The vinyl quartz tile made from silica quartz is a low-priced product compared to other conventional flooring materials. The collaborators have signed a buy-back agreement also.

The share is now quoting at around Rs. 13/- in Madras. Investment at current prices would yield considerable gains if held for a year and a half. The company expects to declare dividends in March '93.

**Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd** (Rs. 18/- @ MSE): This company entered the capital market recently with a public issue of Rs. 3.45 crs which was over-subscribed by more than ten times. The company pioneered the concept of time-sharing in the country by starting resorts in Kodaikanal and Ooty. Results for the nine months ended December '90 are highly encouraging. The profit after tax amounted to Rs. 40.57 lakhs. A dividend of 20% pro-rata is most likely. For the year ending March '92, turnover is expected to triple and PAT is anticipated to be in the region of Rs. 1.50 crores.

# THE POLITICS OF ADVERTISING

At a recent public meeting in Maharashtra, Prime Minister Chandrashekar vehemently decried commercial advertising — for creating want and, consequently, frustration among the rural poor. Doordarshan is now giving serious thought to a ban on advertising! Astonishing but true.

To viewers, this means we may go back to the pre-Asiad days when there was even less to watch on television than there is today. We'll have Door-

must address the issue of employment, which is the real and far more disturbing cause of widespread frustration, before pointing its gun at advertising.

Another Prime Minister from another country, another age, displayed a deeper understanding of the economic functions of advertising. Winston Churchill believed that advertising "sets up before Man, the goal of a better home, better clothing, better food for himself and his family. It spurs

If the advertising misleads, the consumer can retaliate by refusing to re-purchase.

If it is a big-ticket item — such as a refrigerator or a TV set — it probably carries a warranty. If it doesn't work, he can take it back to the manufacturer.

What recourse does a citizen have after voting a candidate to power, on the basis of his much-publicised promises, unfulfilled in office?

Product advertising is an on-going process. There are competitive products also advertising. Market shares are always changing and manufacturers are aware of the risk of false promises, exaggerated claims and lying about the competition.

The results of unethical advertising are reflected quickly in poor sales figures.

Product advertising, therefore, is based on continual "elections", every day in the marketplace.

Political advertising is rooted in a single election, in which one "product" wins 100% of the market for five years — and all the others are put out of business.

The stakes are so high that the temptation to lie and mislead is overwhelming. If you win, who can take it away from you? And if you lose, who cares any more? Who can help?

### Corrupt advertising

Any politician who speaks of the corruptive influence of advertising must know that there is one kind of advertising which is itself corrupt: political advertising.

Look at it this way: Advertising a product represents a relatively small expenditure.

### ADLIBBING WITH COPYCAT

darshan programmes of Doordarshan quality. Since nobody will be watching, the advertisers will find another way of reaching their customers, given the inventive minds of the advertising business. So, who loses?

Whether the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting actually will kill the proverbial goose that lays the golden egg — the takings from commercial services on Doordarshan were Rs. 260 crores last year — remains to be seen.

It is unlikely that any decision will be taken before the elections. However, any government that comes into power

individual exertion and greater production", Chandrashekar and his myopic followers would be well-advised to ponder that.

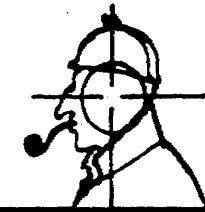
# The acid test

Screams, loud, terrifying and blood-curdling, tore the enveloping still of darkness into shreds. Neighbours, mostly half-starved workers, fast asleep in their lean-tos, were jolted into

Muthayee died of severe acid burns and secondary shock before medical aid could be given to her. She was the wife of Sabaratnam, a watchman at a rice-mill in Kalluvempatti in old

gullet. And that meant it had been poured down her throat as well. As no acid bottle was found in the hut, it was obvious to the police that it was murder, not suicide.

### CRIME NOTEBOOK BY RANDOR GUY



wakefulness and rushed out to trace the unabated screams.

The men found the low and narrow door of a hut broken and hanging open. Crawling in, they found Muthayee rolling in pain on the mud floor. Her thin, emaciated body was nearly nude and in the mild glow of a lantern the men could see that patches of it were burnt. A distinct, strong smell hung heavily in the air. Acid!

Ramanathapuram district. She was the mother of seven, all daughters, of whom only two survived into adulthood. One of them, Kathayee, had died a few months earlier, leaving an infant daughter.

The post-mortem found death due to nitric acid burns. Traces of the corrosive acid had also been found in the walls of the mouth, throat and

The police searched for the husband. Sabaratnam was found at the back of the rice mill, moaning and groaning in pain. There were acid burns on his hands, feet and also his chin! The husband became a prime suspect. A few days later, he was charged with the murder of his wife of 49 years.

The nitric acid bottle was found in a garbage dump near the rice mill. It bore the finger-prints of Sabaratnam.

The watchman confessed before a magistrate. Yes, he had killed his wife, literally bathing her in the acid. And the reason? Jealousy, pure and simple!

After the death of Kathayee at childbirth, Muthayee had been regularly visiting her daughter's hut in the adjoining village to tend the sickly infant. There were also four other children to be attended to. So she often stayed overnight at her son-in-law's.

These frequent nightly sojourns drove Sabaratnam mad. He accused his sixty-year-old wife of carrying on an adulterous relationship with her son-in-law, her elder brother's son! She was shocked by such an unlikely accusation — but it did not stop the lights and the beatings. Yet Muthayee would not stop her visits to the sickly, motherless infant. Then came the acid test of her chastity.

At the trial before the Sessions Judge in Madurai, a plea of insanity was offered by the defence. But it was rejected and Sabaratnam was sentenced to life imprisonment. On appeal, the High Court reduced it to ten years.

Human nature is unfathomable, remarked a judge, and Sabaratnam is a splendid example of that observation.

### OUR READERS WRITE

Several readers have requested additional features. We would very much like to meet all your requests, but until *Madras Musings* becomes a bigger paper through greater advertising support we will have to hold these features back. But we hope that before long we will be able to meet all your interests.

### Entertainment, please

I said "No, not another tabloid on Madras", as I picked up *Madras Musings* at Landmark; but to my surprise, quality was top notch. Keep up the excellent work, but please introduce an entertainment column.... And the quiz was very informative but tough.

T.K. Balaji  
10, I Street  
North Gopalapuram-600 086

### Names to reckon with

Its lay-out, features, paper and printing make *Madras Musings* stand out from the tabloids I am used to seeing. Congratulations! Your contributors themselves are names to reckon with, which further increases the image of *Madras Musings*.

Eiji K Umamahesh  
82 Dr Radhakrishnan Salai-600 004

### Columns of note

The columns 'Bull's Eye' by K Gopalakrishnan and 'Crime Notebook' by Randor Guy are very impressive.

K V Rangaswamy  
PRO, CECRI,  
CSIR Complex-600 113

### Witty cartoons

*Madras Musings* makes very good reading. Please keep up the tempo, especially the witty cartoons, like the one on Page 5, "Keep the City Clean."

Dr M A Subban  
94 South West Boag Road-600 017

### Nothing comparable

I was very impressed with *Madras Musings*. Though others have attempted similar publications in the past, nothing comparable to *Madras Musings* has appeared so far. I have no doubt that *Madras Musings* will be

a part of every household in Madras in the near future.

R V Rajan  
Anugrah Marketing and Advertising Services  
319 Anna Salai-600 035.

### Why no photo?

A speciality in Madras is not only the population but also the population of big trees, even on the roads, about 10,000. It is disheartening to hear of the cutting down of big trees, especially in a school. Why don't you publish a photo on the scene?

Ct. Vairavan

10 Jagadambal Colony-600 014

### Like the clock story?

I've known Lokavani for years as being sticklers for quality and obsessed with customer satisfaction. *Madras Musings* therefore, came as no surprise. But I've also known their high rates. Which was why *Madras Musings* being given away free was a surprise.

Is it a promotion technique, like the one adopted by a clock-maker in England? He made twenty alarm-clocks and distributed them in his neighbourhood. None of his neighbours wanted a clock. But he pleaded with them to keep them for twenty days and return them if they still did not want them. After twenty days, he called on them and took the clocks back. In a few days all of them trooped in to buy the clocks. They had got so used to the clocks for their everyday work that they could not do without them.

In the same way, I hope, *Madras Musings* becomes a habit with Chennaians.

Pa Subramanian

51 Cross Street, West C.I.T. Nagar-600 035

### How about the stars?

Congratulations on bringing out a fortnightly on various issues of human interest. But I regret there are no forecasts in line with other regular newspapers. Can we have a 'What the Stars Foretell?'

VS Rao

130/26-B Ganapathy Colony  
Kulchery Road-600 004

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## Art out of the attic big business now



### THE OLD...

Tanjore paintings..... an antique on the left and, on right, a contemporary creation in the ancient Tanjore style. — (Photographs by Scope)

chandeliers, even cushions and divans. And the whole encrusted in gold leaf and gems.

Collectors are queuing to pay even a lakh and a half for such antique paintings! Soon they will not be available. Even now, it's increasingly difficult to get one and, more importantly, tell the genuine from the fake. Yet, until a few years ago, they were gathering dust in South Indian *havelis* and most of the artists had abandoned the profession for the greener pastures of calendar art.

M Deenadayal of Aparna Art Gallery attributes the sudden popularity

of these paintings to the "religious themes which appeal to everyone. Moreover, people feel comfortable with Tanjore paintings. With abstract modern art you are never very sure". But he also points out, "They are the only affordable traditional art available today. Northern miniatures can no longer be found. So people, especially from Delhi, are snapping Tanjores up".

Not everyone, however, can afford an antique. And, naturally, artists have surfaced out of nowhere to peddle imitations. There are, however, a few master painters who scrupulously follow

### ...& THE NEW

the traditional methods, insisting on 24 carat gold foil and quality gems.

Some of the contemporary Tanjore paintings are breathtakingly beautiful. Says Ramachandra Raju of Indian Crafts, the first handicrafts shop to be opened in Madras (as early as in 1958), "A few artists are simply brilliant, so why can't their work be considered as good as those of earlier artists?" After all, an antique, despite the genuine gold foil and semi-precious stones, could still have been executed badly. Says Deendayal, "Out of every 20 old paintings we get, we reject 10 for their poor brushstrokes".

Some buyers, however, are not that discerning. Geetha Raju of Dakshin Art Gallery tries to convince a couple of buyers why a smaller painting with less gold work should cost more than a bigger, more decorative one. "Look at the brush strokes, the craftsmanship," she says, but they are not convinced.

Discussing such buyers, Meena Muthiah of Chettinad says, "In a way I don't blame them, because money does matter and not everyone can afford a genuine painting. But it does show that an awareness of Tanjore painting is spreading. However, only if they insist on quality will the art be sustained". And Geetha Raju adds, "I stock anything from Rs. 200 onwards because I don't like to disappoint buyers".

To Meena Muthiah goes much of the credit for reviving this dying art form. After she learnt the technique in the early Seventies, she started a school for it in Madras. The first master was a wizened 83 and the school is even today run as a *gurukulam*, free of cost. Any talented and deserving student can undergo the three years' training.

It is surprising how many housewives join the school. Some later fashion imitations, but a few adopt the proper techniques. Surendra Babu, a master painter in Meena Muthiah's school, has mixed feelings about these newcomers. "It's good they learn how expensive the material is, how difficult the process and how long a painting takes. But when after just six months of learning they start classes at home, that's bad for the art. I've been at this for the past 16 years and I still learn something new every day." Art, it would seem, is in danger of becoming craft.

SUBASHREE  
KRISHNASWAMY

It all began when grandma's heavy, cooking utensils joined the ethnic bandwagon, making their way into cosy niches in the drawing rooms from relative obscurity in dusty attics. Not very much later, the *kumkum*-laden gods and goddesses from the *pooja* rooms, resplendent in their gold finery, embedded with semi-precious stones and glass pieces, joined them, transformed almost overnight into *objets d'art* from mere family-gods. Suddenly, for the first time, art critics and connoisseurs who had so long looked askance at anything south of the Vindhyas, saw the Tanjore paintings for what they really are: unabashedly opulent, brilliantly coloured, endearingly naive, yet stingingly sensual. In short, an art like none other, vibrant and eye-catching. These days, not only has the whole art world woken up to the Tanjore School, but it has also become the conversation piece in most drawing rooms. And, oh yes, painting schools have mushroomed, art dealers have multiplied and art galleries exhibiting only Tanjore paintings have opened. It definitely is big business now.

The Tanjore School dates back a couple of centuries when it flourished under the Nayak and Maharastra kings. But, curiously, most of the artists, even today, are from Andhra, descendants of those who fled oppressive Mughal rule. The Maharrattas of the South were more interested in the arts than arms. In the gracious Serfoji II, many an artist found a new patron. And those who deserted Vijayanagar settled in Tanjore, Trichy, Madurai, Kumbakonam and Srirangam.

Naturally, the local culture, strong in mythologic, iconic and religious imagery, influenced them. Over the years, the style which is so distinct today evolved — chubby figures, draperies falling in gentle scallops, rich backgrounds with canopies and

## Rukmini Devi's silken legacy

Rukmini Devi Arundale, founder of Kalakshetra, created several unique sarees in traditional designs for the dancers of her austere but elegant school of dancing. Those designs are enjoying a revival now, with exhibitions of silks and cottons based on her designs being recently held with the cooperation of Co-optex and the Crafts Council.

Firmly believing that culture did not manifest itself only in the performing arts, Rukmini Devi included craft education — painting and weaving — in her dance academy.

The Weaving Centre was inaugurated on September 19, 1937, with just one loom in a thatched cottage at Besant Gardens, Adyar. The weavers came from Kanchipuram, the yarn from Bangalore and it was twisted into a three-ply *murukku* pattu.

At Kalakshetra, Rukmini Devi insisted on the recovery of forgotten traditional motifs and also encouraged experiments in keeping within the norms of tradition. Broad borders returned, memories were tapped for old designs, available material from the past was collected and a record book maintained.

Kalakshetra's Weaving Centre was soon providing traditionally designed handlooms for dance costumes as well as exclusive sarees for the lucky few.

Despite six looms working by the end of 1938, getting a saree designed

at Kalakshetra Weaving Centre became not merely a symbol of good taste and class but also a reward for patience. The Maami of Madras has waited months to get a single saree made. Kalakshetra proudly says, "The Centre was never commercially oriented; individual attention was given by Rukmini Devi to each piece of cloth woven. With no ambitions of mass production, the Centre remained from the beginning a small-scale atelier with only those orders that it could handle on its few looms and fewer workmen."

But the wait was always worth it. For at the end, there was "The Kalakshetra Saree".... a special kind of hand-woven saree with its distinctive features, deep colours, broad borders.... of special quality, durability and beauty.... a saree that became a cherished and coveted possession.

Some of the designs revived by Kalakshetra are the *mubbagam*, in which the saree is divided into three equal parts, the *tazhambu* design, *puliankottai*, *rudraksham*, *vazhaippu*, *malli mokku*, *attumuzhi*, *panner shombu* and *nelivanki* embellishments. Kalakshetra also experimented with *ahimsa* silk (woven with the broken threads from the cocoon after the flight of the silk moth).

The work at the Weaving Centre began to reduce in the Seventies as the weavers employed were lured away by

some traditional terms used to describe motifs and colors....

	Rudraksham		Manga butta	"Sindia" color — araku with orange
	Vanki		Benares	Mykalkathu — blue with green
	Thutthirippoo		Pancershombu	Krishna megalavarnam — violet with araku
	Neli		Puli negam	Maantufur — violet with green
	Pogidi		Arni madam	"enani" color — black with araku
	Maralkam		Arni pogidi	
	Safangai		Muttu	
	Pavutu		Thialambu reku	
	Diamond		Kamalām	
	Pillaiyar mukku		Kodivisiri	
	Temple reku		Kothumai	
	Kuilkan		Jadai nagam	
	Star		Malli muggu	
			Muthukattam	
			Rattai neli	
			Zaimadi	

commercial houses. And the market became flooded with imitation 'Adyar' and 'Kalakshetra' sarees when the 'ethnic' wave made wearing cottons fashionable.

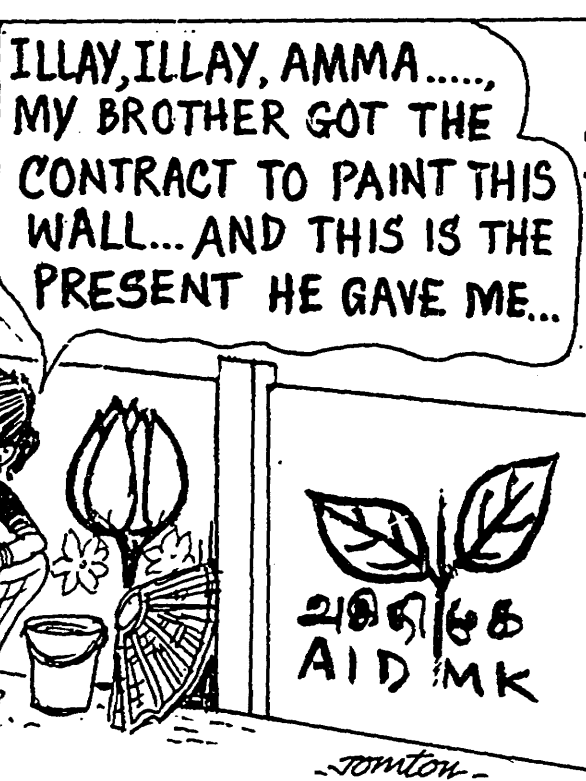
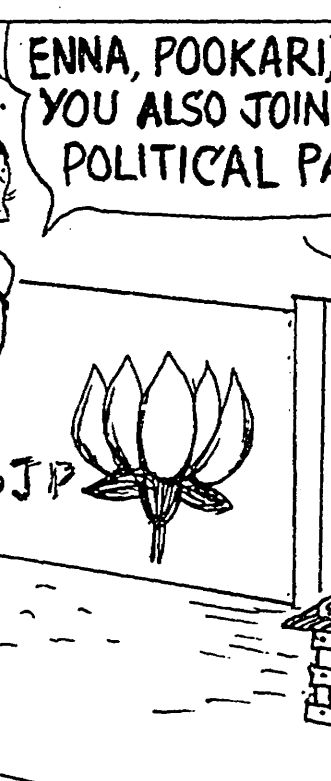
Today, only one loom operates in the hands of an expert weaver at

Kalakshetra. But there are plans to establish a weaving institute to produce and 'Kalakshetra' sarees when the tradition. Also on the anvil is a 'Textile Museum' at Kalakshetra dedicated to the memory of Rukmini Devi.

MENAKA

MAKE  
MINE  
MADRAS  
Featuring

GUNDOO-MALLI  
by  
JOMTON



## QUIZZIN' WITH NAVIN-3

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

Yes, three prizes are offered — Rs. 150, Rs. 100 and Rs. 50 — for the first three all-correct or nearest all-correct entries opened. Anyone may enter with any number of entries except those employed by the publishers and printers, the editorial staff and those connected with running the quiz.

To enter, write your answers on a sheet of paper, fill the coupon below and attach it to your answer-sheet, then mail both to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ, Clo Lakavani Hall Mark Press, 62/63 Greames Road, Madras 600 006. CLOSING DATE: 5 p.m. May 23rd.

### QUIZ COUPON-3

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

(The Fortnight of April 21 to May 4)

- In which country is the sea resort of Cox's Bazar?
- What is the name of the Madras-based private air taxi service now flying?
- A Sri Lankan helicopter recently dropped a bomb on three members of the French medical team MSF (by mistake?). What does MSF stand for?
- Who won the Best Child Artiste 1990 Cinema Express Award?
- Who said, "Just because I am a short chubby chap who won't hit back, everyone takes pot-shots at me"?
- Which well loved pianist and organist completed 50 years as choirmaster at St. Andrew's Church, Egmore, on March 28?
- Which republic of the USSR was hit by a massive earthquake measuring 8.5 on the Richter Scale?
- At which poet's centenary celebrations were the Pavendar Virudhu awards given?
- Who built the Taj Mahal in the USA and what is it?
- In the nine Assembly elections held since Independence, the maximum polling in Tamil Nadu was 76.59%. Which watershed year was that?
- Which three countries has the USA named for failure to prevent intellectual property violations?
- Who is the BJP candidate for the Baroda parliamentary constituency?
- Which team won the inaugural Pepsi Trophy for hockey?
- Derogatory remarks about whom, made by Khushwant Singh in *India Today*, resulted in a ban on the May 15 issue of the magazine in Maharashtra?
- Name the US space shuttle which zoomed into orbit on April 29?
- Where was an RPF constable recently shot dead by a ticketless traveller?
- Why will voters for West Bengal's Howrah Lok Sabha seat have to think twice before voting for Mr. Sushanta Chakraborty?
- P.C. Sorcar recently performed at the Music Academy. What is the name of his show?
- Which enchanting actress of yesteryear was honoured by her colleagues at the Lincoln Centre Film Society tribute?
- Does the world really need another brand of ready-made shirts? Which brand was launched recently in Madras and what is the answer to their slogan?

### THE LAST WORD ON QUIZ 2

With the shorter, easier quiz last fortnight, the response was somewhat better, but not enough to convince us that we should continue with this feature. What say you, readers? We will take a decision based on this fortnight's response. Meanwhile, here are the lucky winners in Quiz 2 and the correct answers:

### PRIZE WINNERS

1st Prize: NANDINI V. 19/16, Venus Apts., Venus Colony, 11nd Street, MADRAS- 600 018.

2nd Prize: SHANKAR 25 Kasturi Rangan Road, MADRAS-600 018.

3rd Prize: UTHARA SESHADRI 195, Lloyd's Road, MADRAS-600 086.

### ANSWERS

- Akkini Nageswara Rao. 2. MJF — Muslim Janbaz Force. 3. The ceremonial changing of the guard. 4. Illegal tapping of water from mains. Informants will be rewarded with Rs. 1001.5, 15 months. 5. Atlantis. 6. Six pairs of handwired barn owls (*Fyto alba*). 8. Steve and Mark Waugh. 9. Dr B R Ambedkar. 10. Biomass. 11. Operation Comfort. 12. Madras GPO, Anna Road and T. Nagar Head Office. 13. Sir David Lean. 14. Fairfax ... naturally! 15. Kerala. 16. A chemical solution which can erase any ink mark; in demand now for erasing the ink mark on the index finger of voters! 17. M F Hussain. 18. Zulu Inkatha movement. 19. M S Subbalakshmi. 20. A new fruit drink in tetrapack, launched recently in Madras by Parle Agro Pvt. Ltd.

## How improbable can we get?

It is a mad world, my masters, as the character in Shakespeare said, but not mad enough for me except in one sphere — you guessed it — politics. Probably the most improbable event is M. Karunanidhi wooing voters for the AIADMK detectors who have joined his party. And how does he go about doing this? By extolling MGR of course, waxing eloquent over their 40 years of beautiful friendship, and all the good things he has done in MGR's name.

The reports are that in return for giving a certain number of seats to the anti-Miss J. types, he tacitly made it a condition that he could use MGR's name in his campaign. In fact, he went so far as to unveil a statue of MGR at Aranthangi, but subsequently denied having done so. Maybe, maybe not — I was not there. But how does he propose to explain away the huge painting in the Harbour, showing him and MGR in a great state of togetherness? Politics, like misery, makes strange bed-fellows.

Whom to believe? I doubt that any, except the most dedicated follower of politics or those with an in-born masochistic tendency, read the miles of verbiage that appear in the press every day about electioneering. And if you occasionally take a brief look, you are immediately confronted by contradictions.

An account of Rajiv Gandhi's campaigning in Western U.P. drew the following headlines respectively from *The Hindu* and the *Indian Express*: "Adulation makes up for the heat" and "Cool response to Rajiv in Western U.P.". The stories that followed were in the same tenor. The editors should, of course, be congratulated for their clever, if obvious, puns, and of course they are all honourable men.

As long as we are on the subject, let us raise a toast for V.T.R. Veerappa Gounder of Chingleput. He has the unique distinction of fighting 29 elections since 1977 and losing every one of them (or thereabouts, for I can't quite vouch for my figures since a computer would be needed to follow all of Gounder's electoral sallies).

Every opponent is grist to his mill (though he is the one who is always crumbled), and the mightier the opponent the more gleefully does he enter the fray. He has fought against Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh, and in this election he has filed against Rajiv, Chandrashekar, Karunanidhi and Miss J. A real maverick, he is against the establish-

ment everywhere, and I think he deserves our admiration.

### Labour's Love Is Selective?

On May Day I took an auto-rickshaw, and the driver asked me why the streets were so deserted. I explained with some eloquence the origins of May Day (incidentally, the struggle for a day to honour labour began in the U.S., but the proletarian movement made it its own, and the U.S. celebrates a Labour Day in September), and told him that the day was a holiday in honour and appreciation of the worker.

He asked me a few more rather pointed questions about the categories of people who had the day off, and



then asked: "I am a worker too. Why don't I have a holiday?" As none of the answers I might have given him would have pleased him, I remained silent, but I think it is a good question, even if a positive answer would have meant everything coming to a standstill for a day.

**Unseemly melange:** Let me say pompously that the erosion of values is nowhere more apparent than in the administration of our institutions of higher education. What is happening in the Madras University is, as they say, enough to make its graduates hang their heads in shame. Without going into

sordid details, and certainly I am in no position to vouch for the facts — I only go by what has appeared in the press — the crux of the matter would seem to be a tussle between the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar. The latter, an IAS man, was posted to look into some allegations against the previous Registrar. He seems to have done his job well. Now, the Vice-Chancellor, newly appointed to the post, has asked the Governor in a letter for the removal of the IAS officer. This has become public knowledge, and the first good question is — how? Meanwhile, charges and counter-charges fly back and forth, and inevitable communal aspersions are being cast, and the entire affair is an unseemly melange of corruption, nepotism and communalism.

### Dog — Bites — Man — Bites

**Man — Bites — Dog:** One night not long ago an estimated 50 people were attacked, presumably by a rabid dog, though there was a wild rumour that it might have been a wolf. Due treatment was given and everybody asked to come back for rabies shots. End of story. Literally. There has been no follow-up and no one knows whether the dog-wolf was ever caught. But listen to this.

A passenger and a bus conductor had an altercation over a ticket or some such, and motivated by god knows what atavistic reaction, the passenger bit the conductor's hand. Naturally, all passing busmen, in their infinite affection for their colleague, parked their buses pell-mell. This was of course big news. (ED NOTE: See Page 6)

S.K.

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## WHAT'S BOMBAY GOT THAT...?

Are you one of those who has gazed longingly at the wares of chaat vendors on the street and then dolefully turned away for fear of catching some terrible disease? Well, there is now some fulfilment to your dreams in the form of a perfectly hygienic little restaurant called *Khatta Meetha* on Montieth Road, run by the Shyam Group — that pioneering fast food chain in the city.

*Khatta Meetha* is situated in the open air, as it were, with ample parking space for cars. There is a large work area in the form of a cooking island that guests can keep an eye on as *aloo ki tikis* are grilled on its huge round griddle. The decor is pleasing, with exposed brick, little walled alcoves and several granite-top tables that seat four persons each. Above all, what is reassuring is the rather bright lighting — ensuring what you eat or wish to eat is clearly within view.

There is also a sort of spill-over space to the left furnished with tables and chairs. One wishes that the table-cloths here were more prosperous-looking and the chairs less rickety, but

then, looking at the very reasonable prices of the dishes (between Rs. 5 and Rs. 8 each, on an average) you can't be too fussy, right?

I must add that the quality of each dish — *bhelpuri*, *channa batura*, *pav bhaji*, to name but a few — compares rather well with the best I've eaten in Bombay. However, my favourite item here is *dhokla* — deliciously light and fluffy.

### FOODS and FADS

By the way, don't forget that you may pack and take home any of this fare too!

### Another exotic

Last fortnight I mentioned broccoli, but I forgot to say where it's available; only Panagal Park Market stocks this vegetable, as far as I know. Another delicious vegetable

available there is the leek, which belongs to the onion family.

The leek, with its elongated white bulb, sprouting bright green flat stalks, can be used in innumerable preparations — in place of onions or in its own right. However, there are certain ground rules to be followed. Leeks must be washed several times in cold water before and after being cut, as they have a nasty habit of collecting mud and dust particles in their folds. Before cooking, remove the outer cover of the bulb and retain the green top only, upto two inches of the bulb.

Chopped finely, leeks may be eaten raw in salads. Cooked, they are very appetising in soups or when simply buttered in salt and pepper and sprinkled with grated cheese. I add chopped leeks to all *dhal* and legume preparations, as well as to curries. Another favourite is leek and potato pie, for which you need to make a pastry shell and bake in a hot oven.

Here is a recipe for a quick leek soup. The ingredients are ½ kilo leeks, cleaned and cut into small pieces, a heaped tablespoon

butter, a tablespoon quick-cooking rolled oats, 3 to 4 cups water or chicken bouillon, salt and pepper to taste. Prepare and clean leeks. Melt butter in saucepan. Add leeks and oats and mix thoroughly. Stir in the water (or bouillon) gradually and allow it to boil on low heat for 10-15 minutes. Season to taste and serve hot.

### Tasty roughage

The other day, one of my friends who is a health food fanatic brought me a packet of *Wheat and Bran Flakes*, a product of Greenacres Health Foods. Let me add that I was tempted to gobble it all up at one sitting — it was that tasty! On second thoughts, I am pleased that I resisted the temptation to eat more than a cup a day, since it contains a bit more than the roughage quota one requires in our Indian diet!

Incidentally, Greenacres' products are available at Nilgiris, Spencers and all Stop & Shop stores in Madras.

V.K.

## Man bites Man, for a change

(By Our Medical Correspondent)

You might think "Dog bites Man" a trifle too common to merit attention, while "Man bites Dog" has been rendered banal following the antics of the protagonist in *The World According to Garp*. So how about "Man bites Man"?

That's what happened to a young man called Ramesh who came to the hospital the other day to have his right foot treated. How did he get bitten in a spot which, one would have thought, was normally reserved for the oral pleasure of the canine race? Therein hangs a tale.

Right from his adolescence, it would appear, Ramesh had nursed a secret passion for the martial arts — especially of the movie kind. He would spend countless hours dreaming of himself chopping and striking his way into the heart of his beloved, who also happened to be his sister's best friend. However, he was thwarted in his aspirations by his pedestrian-minded father who flatly refused to pay for Ramesh's karate classes and advocated additional hours of study instead. So Ramesh had no other recourse left but to practice secretly in his room, aping Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth vanquish all enemies without any aid from a karate teacher. He didn't see them taking time off from running around trees to attend karate classes!

Such were Ramesh's reflections on life when he decided one fine evening to accompany his sister and his girlfriend to the movies. Unfortunately, there were no tickets available for the show. They were about to return home when a seedy fellow approached the girls, brandishing two tickets in his hand and an evil leer on his face (or so it seemed to Ramesh).

Determined to get rid of the leek, Ramesh stepped out of his shoes, rolled up his sleeves and aimed a neat karate kick on the slightly-built stranger. Sadly, our hero's foot caught the mouth of the villain, who lost no time in digging his teeth into Ramesh's flesh. Thus it was that poor Ramesh came painfully limping to the hospital — with the growing awareness that life is often somewhat more complex than fiction!

## Awesome power of primary schools

According to modern scholarship, the species *Homo* has been around for about two million years, although it may not have become properly *sapiens* till some 100,000 years ago. If you take the latter figure as a rough time scale, what we are pleased to call civilization (planned agriculture — cities — armies — a system of money — some kind of literacy) occupies only about 4000 years of that span. In its turn, the period during which learning from records has been documented, or even guessed at, is less than 1%, a mere eyelink from nature's point of view. In terms of the experience of our race, therefore, what we are circulating as "education" is late, brief and tenuous.

Today, in hungry, overpopulated India, education has become the battering ram with which you can crash your way to better food, clothing, housing etc (the legitimate way, that is). Since it is the passport to a job, education is candidly viewed as a system to pass examinations, not something to truly learn and integrate with, in order to become a more refined person. The result is that today's school-goer is so hard worked, s/he is numb with fatigue. What was, a generation ago, a comfortable 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. plus an hour of games has become a nightmare in which the fragile mind of the child is suppressed, used like a blotting paper and made to absorb the endless flow of the ink of information.

It may astonish younger readers to know that most recognized schools in Tamil Nadu, till the mid — to late sixties ran only Std VI and above, leading on to the classes that took their certificate examinations. Till s/he was twelve years old, the child was virtually invisible. All that was expected was a certain fluency and familiarity with numbers, languages and their grammar and, since competition was not particularly fierce, the best always stood first and not everyone aspired to being a matriculate.

However, an association of primary schools was formed by farsighted educationists who had high standards and, incidentally, made a comfortable living for themselves. This body systematized primary education: they worked backwards from Std VI to the alphabet and

the numerals, prepared syllabi and course contents, won the confidence of parents and their young children and introduced children painlessly to slate, chalk, book and pencil. Classes were manageable, treatment of child and teacher humane.

The Seventies saw the rise of primary schools, both recognized and

### by OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

unrecognized, the substance of their existence being the supposition that some education is better than none at all. When the profitability of junior school economics was calculated, most of the recognized affiliated schools embraced primary education, Maria Montessori was enshrined by commit-

ted child-specialists, and feeder schools flourished even more.

While social aspiration is an encouraging thing, it has created a situation in which the power of the primary school teacher/institute is awesome. Even the most ordinary 25 chair-verandah-and-backyard elemen-

tary school controls the anxiety levels of at least a hundred adults — parents all — who have yielded up their youngsters to three hours of songs, games and so on with strangers. Come Class One and the recognized syllabi are mimicked as far as possible. Some of the more sensible schools take care

not to load the child too heavily, though teaching attitudes are based as much on irresponsibility as they are on a real feeling for the child's abilities.

At the end of five years or seven (if there is a kindergarten attached to the five classes), these schools will, at best, feed the bigger schools; at worst, turn out partly literate children who, according to their means, find placements somewhere in the vast wall of pigeon holes called school education in Tamil Nadu — S S L C (Tamil or English medium), I C S E, Matriculation, Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary or the Central Board of Secondary Education.

Since India is one of the "youngest" countries in the world today (80% of the population being below 30 years), the basic education provided in these early years should concern us all. But how many of us show that concern?

## A dispute under the microscope

On the eve of the general elections, Viking India has published a timely book on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. *Anatomy of a Confrontation* (Rs. 195), edited by Professor S Gopal, is a collection of articles by academics, historians and legal experts on the issues involved in the controversy. An attempt has been made to understand the dispute in the larger context of the politics of communalism. All available historical, archaeological and legal evidence, including that of the parties to the dispute, is examined. While the book attempts to be objective, it reads more like an exposé of the distortions and simplifications of history by the BJP-VHP propaganda machine.

It is always a pleasure to read Khushwant Singh's rationalistic approach to religion, in this age of growing fundamentalism and intolerance. *Need for a New Religion in India and Other Essays* (UBSPD Rs. 125) is the latest collection of the Sardar's writings. Apart

from the title essay, there are profiles of literary figures, an introduction to the *Koran* and, characteristically, an essay on the language of love and lust.

Inder Malhotra's biography of Indira Gandhi is now available in



paperback (Cornel' Rs. 91.25). As a family friend, Malhotra had the opportunity to see both the private and the public sides of this stateswoman. Reviewers have found this biography to be both objective and highly readable.

Until now, very little was known about the personal life of Andrei

Tarkovsky, the world famous Russian film director. *Time Within Time* (Seagull Rs. 300) is a collection of writings from his diaries and notebooks covering the period 1970-86 (the year he died). It provides admirers of his films insights into his working style, views on Russian Society, literary influences, thoughts on personal dramas and world events and his hopes and aspirations while working under a repressive regime.

The makers of *Milkmaid* have sponsored a beautifully produced recipe book. *The Gold Collection* (UBSPD Rs. 140) is a compilation of 101 desserts both Indian and Western, (each predictably having *Milkmaid* as an important ingredient). An expert cook tells me that the recipes are well written and easy to make. The colour illustrations are sumptuous.

Over the years, the crime fiction genre has undergone a lot of change. Today, there is stronger characterisation

GAUTAM PADMANABHAN

### THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

## Professionals for music



Nirupama Nithyanandan — lauded in France, hailed in New York.

YACM, the Youth Association for Classical Music, is peopled by intelligent young professionals (CAS, Medicos, MBAs, Engineers etc.) who are also top-level musicians in their age group. They have brought a rare sophistication to a profession riddled with professional jealousies. It is really refreshing to see these smart young people working together as organisers. Incidentally, I wonder why the majority of them are D K Jayaraman's students.

These enthusiasts also bring out a newsletter called *Dhvani* and it is fast being recognised as the voice of young musicians. It is a serious journal, but has a nice sense of humour.

The good humour of the members of YACM came into focus when they took part in an impromptu speech contest recently at the third anniversary celebrations of *Dhvani*. The topics ranged from Saddam Hussain getting the Sandai Kalanidhi award to Thyagaraja vs Elayaraja to MDR vs MGR. Some speeches had the audience in splits. The contest was preceded by a discussion on "Criticism: What it means to me" with N Pattabhiraman, K S Mahadevan, V Ramamurthy and your correspondent the invited speakers. We all gave personal accounts of our careers as critics and, then, Pattabhiraman wound it up with a thought-provoking statement on criticism.

### Traditional theatre

This is the Therkoothu season. All the troupes are extremely busy playing in villages around Madras. If you hear of a performance near your place, don't miss it. The traditional theatre of Tamil Nadu is total entertainment.

With fabulous costumes, highly literate dialogue and colloquial puns added to the political drama of the *Mahabharata* times, the magic of the form can really grow on you. Once you cultivate a taste, sophisticated urban theatre begins to seem inane. One of the best-known groups is Dakshinamurthy; when they next play, go see them and get high on this earthy theatre.

### Wholesome, easy-to-prepare Mooli Parathas make a well-balanced, whole meal along with the Boondi Raita. But if you are non-veg, why not supplement them with Kheema Vadais, an authentic family recipe? For the vadais, the batter can be prepared the day before and stored in the fridge; you need fry the vadais just after the guests arrive. The Minty Chocolate dessert, unusual yet simple, can be made in a jiffy and rounds off the meal; only the cream cheese need be prepared ahead.

### MOOLI PARATHA

2 cups whole wheat flour  
2 long white radishes, skinned and grated  
1 teaspoon cummin seed, toasted and powdered  
2 green chillies, chopped fine  
½ teaspoon chilli powder  
1½ teaspoon amchur  
1 tablespoon oil  
salt to taste  
some oil for shallow frying

And in literary fiction there is *Evening at Mongini's* by Russell Lewis (Minerva £2.50). This is a collection of short stories set mostly in the India of the 1940s and 50s. Sexual obsession is a recurring theme in these stories which are alternatively funny, bawdy, dark and macabre. Not recommended for the prudish and the faint-hearted!

### Method

Heat oil in a frying pan, add the chopped green chillies and grated radish, and cook on a low fire for a couple of minutes.

Add cummin seed powder, chilli powder, amchur and salt. Mix well. Set aside to cool.

Sift the wheat flour. Make a dough with the wheat, adding the cooked radish.

Divide the dough equally. Shape into balls. Roll out on a floured board into 6" discs. Shallow fry till golden. Serve hot.

### BOONDI RAITA

2 cups fresh curd  
¼ teaspoon toasted cummin seed, powdered  
¼ teaspoon black pepper powder  
¼ teaspoon chilli powder  
1 green chilli, chopped fine  
1 small bunch of coriander leaves, chopped  
salt to taste

For Boondi  
¼ cup bengal gram flour (besan)  
4 tablespoons water  
salt and chilli powder to taste  
oil for frying

### Method

Make a batter with the bengal gram flour adding salt and chilli powder. Beat well.

It was a play-reading session in its cool, sophisticated premises on Mount Road.

Peter Ustinov's *Half Way Up the Tree*, directed by Yamuna, made delightful listening. It had earlier been presented at the British Council, but I caught up with it at the Bank.

There was high tea for the audience during the interval and the air-conditioned comfort of the bank added to making it a really pleasant evening. Enjoyable too was the acting. Deepika Radhakrishna was totally unselfconscious in the role of the young girl bearing the child of her unnamed lover. General Mallalieu, returning home to confront a home changed beyond recognition — with son Robert turned

### P(1)aying relations

ANZ Grindlay Bank staged a new customer relations exercise recently.

## The return of MGR

Among the films being screened all over the state is *Rajakumari*, released way back in 1947. Produced by Jupiter Pictures, this was the very first picture to be successfully completed and released with MGR as the hero. In 1941, he had been cast as the hero in a film called *Chaya*, an Indianised adaptation of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. His heroine was T V Kumudhini. After



Now, with elections round the corner, MGR has returned with a bang to the movie houses of Tamil Nadu. All his available films, old and new, good and bad, are being revived with bells on, mainly with an eye on the voter. The two leading contestants, the AIADMK (the party MGR founded) and the DMK, are both vying with each other to grab voters' attention and sympathy with this homage to MGR. Ironically, the DMK, the party he left and trounced at the polls, is singing his praises louder!

Later, MGR was cast as the hero in a historical romance based on the



Dakshinamurthy as Duryodhana in a Therkoothu performance staged by his troupe.

a hippie, a daughter sure of finding a man if her child needed a father and a wife living a hypocritical life in sin — was played by Philip Brown with understanding and freshness. And this on the first occasion he has acted in public! Andrew Picken, as the secret lover in Mrs. Mallalieu's life, changed his normally hesitant voice to play the role and stayed with it throughout. A

popular tale of Rani Samyuktha and Prithiviraj. But this venture too proved a non-starter. It was only after many more disappointments that MGR finally made it in *Rajakumari*.

But even *Rajakumari* was not without its problems. One of the bosses, S K Mohideen, did not like the way the movie was shaping and wanted to shelve the project after 5-6000 feet! Shocked, the writer-director of the film, a college professor turned-filmmaker, A S A Sami, who was also making his debut, begged, cajoled and succeeded in persuading Mohideen to go ahead and complete *Rajakumari*.

The film — less than 11,000 feet in length due to World War II Government restrictions on the use of raw film stock — proved a box-office success. The long cherished dream of MGR was at last fulfilled; there was to be no stopping him thereafter.

Incidentally, the king-sized posters of *Rajakumari* plastered all over Tamil Nadu mention in large print that the DMK supreme Muthuvel Karunanidhi

remarkable feat indeed. The play was hilarious, thought-provoking and, in Yamuna's hands, refreshing too.

### Waves in Paris

Nirupama Nithyanandan, the talented Bharatha Natyam dancer from Madras who made her debut on stage acting in the Madras Players' *Meera*, directed by Bhagirathi Narayan, is now making waves in Paris. French drama critics have been raving about her performance as Iphigenie and Cassandra in the Greek Trilogie (staged in French) in Paris' Theatre du Soleil (Theatre of the Sun).

One critic said Nirupama had the simplicity of a very great actress and to see her alone playgoers should rush to the theatre! Now we have received clippings of the *New York Times* reviews; its critic, while describing Niru's acting as "refreshing", says it would be a great loss for America if the play was not staged there! Is that where our Madras girl is heading?

V R DEVIKA

wrote the story and dialogue. In fact, it was A S A Sami and he who together spun this yarn that's a mix of *The Invisible Man*, *Arabian Nights* and a couple of other Hollywood films!

### RIP, Sudarsanam Master!

The popular Tamil film music composer R Sudarsanam is no more. The in-house music director of the A V Meyyappan movie moghul-dom had fought a valiant but losing battle against cancer.

A humble, modest, hard-working harmonium-player who made his way up to preside over the AVM music wing, Sudarsanam scored for most of the AVM films and in more than one language. Many of his songs earned their place in the roll of 'Immortal Movie Melodies'; they included *Da da da da un kann* (Vaazhakai), *Kaa, kaa, kaa!* (Parasakthi) and *Kannaakarumai nira kanna!* (Nanum Oru Penn). Affectionately known as 'Sudarsanam Master', he was one of the few old-timers for whom work was worship.



¼ kg. onions cut fine  
1 bunch coriander leaves cut fine  
1 heaped teaspoon cummin seeds  
2 heaped teaspoons cinnamon sticks  
4 cloves  
1 inch piece ginger  
1 full pod garlic

½ coconut (grated and ground to a fine paste)

½ cup fried gram dal (pottu kadala) (powdered fine)

1 egg  
salt to taste  
oil for frying

Method  
Wash the *kheema* and boil with salt, turmeric powder and the ground *masala* with little water to cook dry.

Grind the cooked mince meat fairly coarse and add to it all the other ingredients and coconut paste. Mix thoroughly.

Form small balls the size of a lime, flatten and place on a dry plate.  
Heat the oil to nearly smoking point in a *kadai* and deep fry the *vadais* to a dark brown colour. Remove and serve hot.

### MINTY CHOCOLATE

200 gms chocolate biscuits  
1 slab chocolate  
1 tin condensed milk  
½ cup lime juice  
¼ litre curd  
mint essence  
green colouring

Method  
Strain the curd and tie in a muslin cloth. Allow the water to drain for 2 to 3 hours.

Crush the chocolate biscuits coarsely with a rolling pin. Mix with just enough table butter to bind and press on to a plate whose edges are curved upwards.

Whip the cream cheese along with ¾ rds of the condensed milk and the lime juice. You will find that as you beat it, the quantity will increase as the mixture becomes fluffy.  
Add a few drops of mint essence and a touch of colouring and make it look pale green.

Pour this mixture over the biscuit base.  
Grate a slab of chocolate and sprinkle on top.  
Leave in the fridge till required.  
Sabita Radhakrishnan





Sivanthi Adityan — back at the helm of the IOA.

## A clear winner to head I.O.A.

(By a Sports Reporter)

"Sivanthi, Sivanthi," shouted everyone in the big gathering that gave B Sivanthi Adityan a rousing reception at Meenambakkam airport on April 29th, on his return from Calcutta, where, a day earlier, he had been re-elected President of the Indian Olympic Association, defeating Vidya Charan Shukla, his lone rival, by a decisive 76-43 margin.

The newspaper magnate was a hot favourite to return to the helm, but few expected him to win by such a wide margin. Now the first Indian to be honoured by the International Olympic Association with its annual Sports and Study Award in 1987 can only have a firmer grip of his country's Olympic affairs.

Well educated and well disciplined, 54-year-old Adityan (he graduated from Presidency College, Madras), has been associated with several controlling bodies, both Indian and foreign, such as the Olympic Council of Asia Finance Committee and the Asian Volleyball Confederation. But tall, dark and handsome, and always well-dressed too, he is more likely to be mistaken for an actor. Beneath his Clark Gable looks, however, lies a dynamic personality wedded to the cause of sport and sportsmanship. That dedication will become manifest when the first Afro-Asian Games are made to happen in Delhi later this year.

## Bookmakers at receiving end

"You can't beat MAM," yelled nearly every punter in the Guindy ring on Sunday, April 28th, when *Ace of Diamonds*, one of M A M Ramaswamy's three runners in a field of six, stormed to victory in the first of the Ooty classics, the Nilgiris Fillies Trial Stakes. She beat stablemate, *Star of Fashion*, and Vijay Mallya's *Equation*, joint 5-4 favourites.

*Ace of Diamonds*, which closed at 9-4, with some keen late support, was splendidly ridden by young Krishnan who boosted Ramaswamy's world classics record tally to 158. This was one of the six winners saddled on this Classics day by trainer Robert Foley.

The Ooty season has, thus, become a virtual replica of the 1990-91 season

# Sponsorship helps out TNCA

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association owes Indo-National Ltd and Dynavision Ltd, manufacturers, respectively, of Nippo batteries and Dyanora TV sets, a debt of gratitude for their joint sponsorship of its Diamond Jubilee match. Their gesture saved the TNCA from an embarrassing situation and that venerable Test centre of Chepauk, known throughout the cricketing world for its sporting wicket, from its first-ever "duck".

As a curtain-raiser to its Jubilee celebrations, the TNCA had decided to conduct an international limited-overs match during either of the proposed tours by the West Indies and Pakistan. But these plans fell through with the cancellation of those visits and the TNCA had to decide on a home 'festival' fixture. But such a match posed financial problems, for a home festival match, even if studded with stars, was unlikely to draw the

crowds, especially in summer. Fortunately for the TNCA, in the wake of its descent from fantasy to reality, it got a ready response from Indo-National and Dynavision.

While Dwarkanath Reddy of Dynavision, a sports lover, had already made his mark in sponsorship, the Japanese-linked Indo-National were making their debut. It was no wonder that its joint Managing Director, Y Kyoden, got a big hand when, on behalf of the joint sponsors,

by  
JAICI

he presented a Rs. 4 lakh cheque to R B Alagannan, the TNCA president. The presentation was made at a press conference by the chubby-faced business



R B Alagannan... Making further plans for a Diamond Jubilee.

executive from a country where cricket is virtually unknown and he took everyone by surprise by expressing the hope "that the match will produce plenty of exciting cricket".

That it did, but what the rest of the jubilee celebration programme will be, perhaps only Alagannan and his hard-working secretary, Prabhakar Rao, will be able to tell. It is, however, certain that the curtain will be brought down in a manner befitting the TNCA's status and reputation as one of the oldest associations of

its kind in the whole of Asia.

From P Subbaroyan and K S Ranga Rao, founder President and Secretary, respectively, of the Madras Cricket Association, its predecessor, the TNCA has had a distinguished list of administrators. For it to gain the distinction of being the first Indian sports body to own its own stadium, it owes a great deal to the drive and initiative of M A Chidambaram and S Sriman, president and secretary, respectively, for decades. But Alagannan and Prabhakar Rao have the unique distinction of being the TNCA's first cricketing president and secretary, a rare set-up indeed in Indian sport.

Alagannan led Tamil Nadu to its first-ever Ranji Trophy title triumph, which came in 1955 when his team extinguished the challenge of Mushtaq Ali and his Holkar team on their favourite Indore ground. Prabhakar Rao was not that lucky, but he was, for long, one of the State's leading all-rounders.

# A fun game that might determine a team

It was nice to see a festival match played in the spirit the TNCA's diamond jubilee match was, a serious effort being put in by all without the pressure of any competitive aggressiveness. The end result was some very good cricket, with

a little more on that perennial team-picking game.

As of now, I'd look at a 12 for the one-day tournaments as follows, in batting order, and based mainly on the Chepauk experience: Srikanth,

them, neither More nor Kirmani kept particularly well, but the latter batted better and, despite his age, kept well throughout the Season, looking in the process one of the fittest players on the field. Which is why I'll go with him and have More in reserve.

As for the Test team, there's no denying Shastri's dependability opening the innings nowadays or Manjerakar's class while playing innings calling for greater patience. The batting reserve is

chosen on the grounds that left-hander Ganguly is a splendid bat and a most promising all-rounder (there's even talk this teenager could develop into a second Kapil, so a tour understudying the veteran might do wonders). The last place could be between Kambli, who has the talent and fire to want to recreate those epic innings he played together with Tendulkar in their schooldays, and a paceman. In fact, the only debate likely is over who will fill the pace slots.

by THE CORNER FLAG

the bat dominating the ball (continuing to show up Indian bowling weaknesses) but with no blind sloggling.

In fact, with so little cricket ahead before the five-month Australian tour towards the end of the year — a trip which will include the World Cup challenge this match might well influence the Selectors in their task. Certainly, it helped to focus my thoughts

Siddhu, Raman, Azharuddin, Tendulkar, Kapil Dev, Robin Singh, Kirmani, Kumble, Arshad Ayub, Venkatapathy Raju and a paceman (Prabhakar, Zaidi or Razdan), with the final playing choice being one of the spinners or the unnamed paceman, depending on the state of the pitch. The five extra names I'd add for the entire tour would be Test opener Shastri, Manjrekar (instead of Raman in the Tests), Saurav Ganguly, More, and Kambli or another paceman.

Srikanth's clean striking of the ball was the highlight of the festival match, with his century emphasising a welcome return to form. Siddhu was almost as impressive, but the best batting of the game came from the lazily elegant Raman who brought back memories of Durrani. Tendulkar, no doubt, picked up the best batting award because all 7-8000 people who turned up for the match were in the same frame of mind as the Maami sitting front of me — "What a sweet boy," she crowed in pure Mylapore Tamil, "and he can bat so nicely too against all these bigger and older players". But Maami apart, the teenager can certainly bat, though nowhere near as prettily as Raman.

As for the bowling, the southern spinners were a class apart and pick themselves. Robin Singh looked the only dangerous bowler among the faster men, though Kapil was, as ever, a model of containment. And in the team suggested, the off-spin of Srikanth and military medium of Tendulkar will always be bonuses. As for keeping to

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