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## MUSINGS

Vol. I. No. 7

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

July 15 — 31, 1991



(By Our Fort St George  
Correspondent)

It was a very impressive performance, from all accounts, that first meeting at the Secretariat that Chief Minister Jayalalitha had with her Secretaries and officials and the subsequent meeting she had with the industrialists. In sessions conducted in English, and marked by the fluency in the language of all present on the occasion, the Chief Minister revealed that she was remarkably well-informed about all that was happening within and without the precincts of the Fort.

It seemed obvious that she had been well briefed by someone with a sound knowledge of the action in Fort St George and in industry. But what struck those present was her incisive questions and decisive responses. With none of the vestiges of imperiousness that family friend S Krishnan makes passing mention of in a warm profile that appeared recently in a Sunday *Hindu*, the Chief Minister managed to strike a smooth relationship with all present.

It is to be hoped that those briefing her will continue with their objective approach and avoid personal attitudes influencing their briefs. If they succeed in doing so, the goodwill generated at these first meetings can only grow into efficient governance. After all, Tamil Nadu has always had an excellent cadre of Civilians — so long as they did not allow themselves to be influenced or

cowed by the politicians — and able industrialists and bankers.

Madam Chief Minister's first fortnight was also marked by a decision welcomed by all — and especially by families in the weaker sections of Society. Namely, the closing down of cheap liquor shops. It is to be appreciated that she did not go the whole hog and impose Prohibition again; rather, she has wisely tackled the problem where the ills of liquor are at their worst and, hopefully, she has made walking the roads of Madras a pleasanter experience.

Her attitude to the Sri Lankan refugees also shows maturity. By ordering registration, she has provided the opportunity for the wheat to be separated from the chaff. She has also shown shrewdness in putting the onus of getting tenants to register on the landlords. With these actions, she made it clear that Tamil Nadu will always be a haven for refugees but never a base for militants who believe in the rule of the gun and the bomb.

It is to be hoped that the same maturity will be shown when it comes to planning the memorials for her mentor, the late MGR, and her erstwhile political ally, Rajiv Gandhi. Both deserve something better than mere monuments and parks, no matter how beautifully designed they be. Both would have themselves undoubtedly preferred institutions in their names that

would contribute to the common good of the people they were closest to.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister herself has ordered the police to take it a bit easier on closing roads whenever she passes. And that has made most people using Cathedral and Dr Radhakrishnan Roads breathe a little easier. But those who work in Fort St George are being rather overwhelmed by the security. People who have worked there for decades say they can't remember

when they were last asked to produce their identity passes; now they have to produce them half a dozen times on even a simple walk from one building to another.

Unfortunately the fortnight ended on a sad note with the incidents in the legislature (See SHORT 'N' SNAPPY) and their spillover in the Vanniart belt. It is to be hoped greater decorum will return to the House and more order to the streets.

## An impressive beginning

MANAALI RAMAN...



The trials I faced on the city's roads gave me the immense confidence necessary to win the rally.

IN MAD. MAD MADRAS

## A school out of the ordinary

(By Our Education  
Correspondent)

It might be supposed that most qualified, well-spoken teenagers flow out of the privately-run English medium schools, though it would be kinder *not* to mention that, today, an English medium education drains Indians (who are known to be polyglots by nature and instinct) of felicity in both English and vernacular languages.

It might also be supposed that in a society still tolerant of the notion that

there are leaders and the led, it doesn't seem to have struck the intellectual community that their true challenge is to make the poor prosperous. What is the first step? Equality in educational opportunities leading to mental development, and enabling students from different sorts of backgrounds to compete in a fairly well-matched manner in the job/career market.

Inevitably, there is an elitist pattern in intellectual pursuits which is a

measure of the respect accorded to it. But many parents who cannot afford to spend about Rs. 3,000 per child per year (uniforms, to and fro-ing and books) in a private school, send their children to Corporation Schools which have been established in Madras, Coimbatore and Salem. Madras has 37, most of them doing their best, but undistinguished because the children usually come from under-educated backgrounds and lack the motivation. However, a truly astonishing exception is the Corporation boys' School in Nungambakkam, the oldest of the twelve corporation higher secondary schools in Madras.

Established in the days of Lord Ripon, in 1929, it is now on land Dr Nageswar Iyer donated for the present building. This building is as well designed, spacious and neatly maintained as any modern private school. Since 1964, a dedicated graduate in philosophy, Anand Shanmugham, has been the principal, providing the central dynamism that any such institution needs.

The school attempts to service its neighbourhood. There are eight sections each in the Std X, Plus One and Plus Two courses. The count drops to 7, 6, 4 and 5 sections in the lower classes. There are Telugu, English and Tamil mediums offered, in order to accommodate the educational demands of the local populace.

The school has fared consistently well in the Plus Two exams, quite unusually showing high percentages in

(Continued on P5)

## PERMANENT FAIR SITE A PRIORITY

(By a Special Correspondent)

One of the first tasks the new Government of Tamil Nadu will have to address itself to will be the setting up of a permanent trade fair site in Madras. If it delays, the state's leather industry, perhaps the country's best known and certainly its biggest, will not only lose face but, quite possibly, also lose its premier position.

For several years now, the International Leather Fair has been held at *Rajaji Hall*. But as the industry has grown, and more and more visitors from abroad attend the Fair, it has become quite obvious in the past few years that *Rajaji Hall* is really the *Banqueting Hall* it was built as and not a substitute for a fairground. In fact, not a few visitors have agreed with local conservationists views that the Hall, together with refurbished *Old Govern-*

*ment House*, would make one of the best residential conference centres in the country.

While Leather Fair visitors would welcome the Government Estate complex as a conference centre, they have been becoming totally dissatisfied with it as an amenity-less fair site. Which is why the Trade Authority of India has threatened to pull the Fair out of Madras in 1993 and hold it at Delhi's magnificent sprawling Fair site, *Pragati Maidan*, unless...!

The Indian Leather Products Association echoes the TFAI view. An industry that exported over Rs. 2700 crores worth of leather and leather products in the past year, that hopes to achieve an export turnover of Rs. 9000 crores and a 10 per cent share of the global cake before the end of the Eighth Plan, and that plans to make India one of the top five countries in the leather

field by 2000 A.D. deserves better, both state.

Towards that need, the TFAI has money to put into a permanent trade fair site. It also has been talking to the financial institutions for additional funds and received favourable responses. All it needs is the ground space. And that the Tamil Nadu Government will have to provide.

Last year, it is understood, a Nandambakkam site was offered. But whereas the site was just right, the riders — especially on the question of manning — were unacceptable. So what next?

With the Printers' Federation also committed to holding the next Printing and Allied Machinery Exhibition in Madras in 1993/4 — an exhibition only possible if there is a permanent fair site — the automobile ancillaries industry seeking a fair site, and the

leather industry's even more pressing need. Government will have to pay immediate attention to locating a site for the TFAI to begin work on.

After that, perhaps, as Government begins to look at welcoming more visitors, it might look at two other suggestions long awaiting action. One is converting *Fairlands*, between the Coom and the Fort, into a permanent entertainment and dining park where culture, pop fare and restaurants serving the different cuisines of the South will all find a place. The other is staging a sound-and-light show on the ramparts of Fort St George, narrating the 350-year-old story of Madras and to be watched by audiences occupying the lawns of the park in front.

All this together might make the rest of the country pay a little more attention to what was once the 'Gateway to the South'



# An Opposition to be heard

For those expressing concern that there'll no longer be an Opposition that can make itself heard in the Madras legislature and bring meaning to the word "debate", the news that the Congress-I will function as a 'Friendly Opposition' is welcome. Led by S R Balasubramaniam, a lawyer whose knowledge of constitutional procedure is as considerable as his familiarity with Law, this 'Friendly Opposition' is bound to feature such irrepressible debaters as Kumari Anandan and Peter Alphonse, P V Rajendran and R Singaram. And who knows who else the block of 60 will throw up in the course of debate?

Of course, none of these legislators can match the oratory or repartee of former Chief Minister Karunanidhi nor do they have his prodigious memory. Which is reason enough for the House to miss him. He would certainly have

ment in Tamil Nadu, the consequence of that is the state most of its urban conglomerations are in. Yet — and this is indeed curious — the public have accepted this sad state of affairs with what can only be described as abject apathy.

A grand opportunity now presents itself to reintroduce civic government and, at the same time, shake the citizen out of his slumbrous stupor. There can be no better time for a government in power to order municipal elections than now; there can, after all, be no greater certainty of the ruling party being voted into local office as well, than at the present time. Will Madam Chief Minister grab this opportunity and let the people have their say again in the cities of Tamil Nadu?

## Two also-rans

Among all those on whom the *Man from Madras Musings*

Karunanidhi. *MMM* has not been able to trace his votes in Amethi and Ballia, but wonders whether any reader knows. Whatever the results, *MMM* acknowledges the determination of a man who has spent over Rs. 30 lakhs — "all accounted for" — tilting at windmills.

The other intriguing candidate was M S Srinivasan who contested Jayalalitha both at Kangayam and Bargur. Obsessed with the idea that Madam had done him wrong in the 1989 Assembly elections by not giving him a seat, he had threatened to commit suicide before Election Day so that the elections in both constituencies would be countermanded. To keep Jayalalitha out of the Assembly, he was determined, he told all who would listen. In the event, the police got to him first and he spent the days running up to the polls in gaol. But on election day he managed to get 92 votes in Bargur and 78 votes in Kangayam.

## Successful legwork

The latest issue of *India Today* features an exclusive account of what it claims was the plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi. In it, it names LTTE leader Pirabhakaran as having initiated the killing exercise last November, entrusting the 'dirty work' to 'Baby' Subramaniam, Muthuraja, Murugan and Sivaraman, the One-eyed Jack — all LTTE cadres.

What is particularly interesting about these revelations is the amount of legwork the Special Investigating Team appears to have done to get to the bottom of the mystery. *Madras Musings* made special reference to this dogged legwork in its July 1 issue.

Curiously, a couple of days after that issue appeared, the *Man from Madras Musings* came across these rather appropriate lines in an American pulp thriller. Says a police captain to the hero, a despondent private 'ec, "Well, what the hell do you expect, hotshot? You want to break it all in three days? You've

been watching too many of these private-eye re-runs on TV. You know better than that. You're supposed to be an investigator, for Christ's sake. Get off your tail and do some legwork."

Legwork, he might have added, always pays. Has it in the Rajiv Gandhi case?

## Vanishing pavements

Call them 'sidewalks', 'pavements' or 'platforms'. Whatever your choice, they are a vanishing breed. And not necessarily because roads are being widened to cope with increasing traffic.

No, the pavements of Madras are vanishing not because of traffic but because of the slum-dwellers. The thought occurred to the *Man from Madras Musings* when he passed the stretch of GNC Road heading towards the Gemini Flyover. An entire stretch of pavement here has been taken over by shanties built overnight.

Mentioning this form of growth to an official the other day brought forth an invitation to see some of the other sights of the city. The surrounding wall round Loyola College makes a sort of circle. And all along it has been built a neat row of shanties, one of whose walls is Loyola's. Neither college nor Authority appears to have been able to move these homes away from home that deface the entire surroundings.

Elsewhere, near Sivaji Ganesan's house, a whole road has vanished under shanty roofs and this has been repeated on several other roads in T'Nagar, to mention only one part of Madras.

A visitor to Madras asked *MMM* the other day whether there wasn't a law to prevent such unseemly encroachment. Is there, Madam Chief Minister?

TAILPIECE: Speaking of unseemliness, who is going to clean up the walls of the city after the elections?

MMM

enlivened its proceedings if only he had decided to stay put as the lone representative of the DMK. But obviously he felt bowing in greeting to his pet hate, the new Chief Minister, would have been too galling. And he couldn't also have been too comfortable with the thought of a possible election petition being filed against him, considering the trend of voting that was recorded in the Harbour constituency. He, therefore, appears to feel the House can do without him and that he has all the time in the world to make his presence felt again.

With Karunanidhi opting out and a couple of others changing sides, what is being described as the 'Real Opposition' is down to five, from five separate parties. The senior-most of these legislators is undoubtedly former AIADMK minister 'Panruti' S Ramachandran. He may not have the flamboyant verbal fencing skills of a Karunanidhi, but this soft-spoken engineer-turned-politician has always been known for his hard work and ability to marshal facts painstakingly. His efforts on behalf of MGR and the Indian Government in the days leading up to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord attest to his persuasiveness and thoroughness of preparation. Uncharacteristic, though, was his failure to greet the Chief Minister on the first day of the House and the contretemps he helped create before the governor addressed the house. The assault on him that followed cast its shadows on the House.

With Balasubramaniam leading the 'Friendly Opposition', (and the Combined Opposition) and Ramachandran the 'Real Opposition' we are likely to see some lively proceedings in the House. But will they be less stormy than those first days?

## Civic polls again?

It's nearly two decades since we've had municipal govern-

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# Separate the sheep from the goats in a bull market

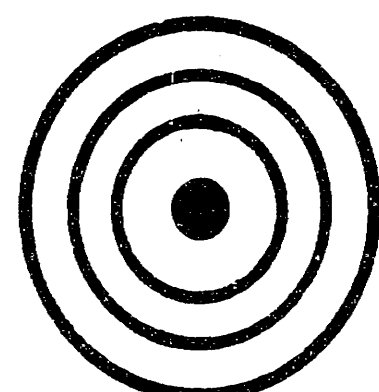
Distinguish the wanted from the unwanted, the valuable from the relatively valueless. This is what one does in the ancient agricultural practice of winnowing, one form of which is to expose, say, wheat to the wind so that the chaff blows away and the grain remains. In the stock market, the speculators are the wind and they quickly identify the grain. Market winners are thus easy to spot.

However, since there are speculators who are strong buyers and others who are strong sellers, a ding-dong battle emerges between them and when one of them begins to dominate, a buying or a selling pressure emerges. When the buying pressure emerges, the shares promise growth and vice-versa.

The next few weeks will witness the emergence of a strong bull market, thanks to the several positive steps that have been announced by the Government for correcting the Indian economy. Certain industrial groups appear to have benefited by the current rather radical measures. Among them are pharmaceuticals, textile mills that are exporting and other companies whose dominant business is export. Cement and shipping shares will continue their winning march, thanks to the substantial demand that has got built. In this scenario, we have the following recommendations for immediate purchase:-

**ITC Agro-Tech Ltd** (Current Market Price Rs. 59/- (MSE)); ITC Agro-Tech Ltd, a member of the ITC group, is engaged in the manufacture of Sunflower, Groundnut and Cotton Seed Oil. It has an installed capacity of 100 tpa. The company's plant is located at Andhra Pradesh. A.P. accounts for 20% of India's total groundnut production. The company has already established itself in the market with well-

known brand names such as *Sundrop*, *Sudham* and *Crystal*. The company's sales



BULL'S EYE

which was Rs. 47.85 crs. in March '90, jumped to Rs. 53.86 crs. for the half year ended Sept '90, registering a 125% increase. The company's earning stands at Rs. 1.50 on the enlarged equity of Rs. 6 crs on an annualised basis. Its profitability is likely to improve considerably during the year, as additional facilities for dewaxing Sunflower oil will be ready by then. Considering the group's track record and future prospects, this scrip is excellent for long-term investment.

**Chemisor Drugs Ltd** (Current Market Price Rs. 67.50 (MSE)); This

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Political mud

A doctor from Madras-86 writes to the Editor:

"This is a Personal letter from one history buff to another."

Though it was a personal communication, we publish his letter here because he raises certain relevant issues. But because it was 'personal' we are withholding his name.

He writes:  
My friends and I have been regular readers of *Madras Musings*. We find the publication full of articles of interest to anyone interested in our City. However, we were horrified to find an article by S K in issue No. 6, bringing in a lot of political mud. May I appeal to you to desist from party-politics of any kind and keep this interesting magazine strictly non-political. We have enough magazines devoted to politics. Let us strive to create and maintain at least one journal devoid of party politics and which will be of interest to anyone who loves Madras and its history.

**Editor's Note:** We agree with the writer that there's more to life than politics, and have been trying our best to keep this journal out of politics. But with an assassination and a major national and state election, it's impossible to ignore politics. So we do have to stray occasionally. But we will keep the straying to the minimum. We trust the doctor and his friends will bear with us.

### CORRECTION

In last fortnight's BULLS EYE (MM, July 1 — 14), the following sentences:

"Do not, however, panic if the share that you bought has not yet yielded a gain. If fundamentally sound purchases were poorly considered and made on impulse, then sell."

### should read as:

"Do not, however, panic if the share that you bought has not yet yielded a gain. If fundamentally sound purchases are made, then hold on to them. But if the purchases were poorly considered and made on impulse, then sell."

The error is regretted — EDITOR.

## Chidambaram's Policies

# Our agro-based will benefit

The much expected economic reforms are on the way. The devaluation of the rupee and a revolutionary export-import policy are clear indications of the direction in which we are heading. It does look as though the long overdue structural reforms will be attempted, at least mildly to start with. What does it all mean?

Essentially, the latest developments are measures to help exporters. During the Eighties this government had introduced a whole lot of steps to provide incentives for export. At the same time, imports were also liberalised to help industry upgrade technology, increase productivity and to introduce the new generations of products much missed by the Indian consumer. This would have worked if the country's exports had grown at a blistering pace, outstripping imports. It didn't happen. In the meanwhile, the country also had to face international developments beyond its control, such as fluctuations in the strong currencies like the yen, mark and the dollar, recession in the developed countries, opening of the East European countries, the Gulf War and so many other undreamt of developments.

The current balance of payments issues and the reality of the looming IMF loan have hastened the reforms. It is too early to make any predictions about the possible outcome of the new policy directions. The new industrial policy has to be announced and the budget has to be presented before the overall picture emerges.

However, as things stand, it is quite possible to make some kind of an assessment. Those companies which are not dependent on imports for their exports will do very well. And the most obvious ones to gain in Tamil Nadu are those who are in agriculture-based exports — the Kolharis, the Murugappa group, A V Thomas and others like them. The well-established cotton yarn

exporters of the Southern belt, the handloom fabric and the garment exporters, the leather lobby (those whose import content is limited) are likely to continue to see good times. But as mentioned earlier, the fine print has to be read and we must wait for further announcements before a clearer picture emerges.

### Engineering breakthrough

It would be interesting to see how the engineering industry copes. It is far more dependent on import (for raw materials, machinery and technology). Even a minimum import content can push costs up a lot. According to an engineering industry source, the

known names in the auto-ancillary field, like Wheels India, Lucas TVS, Brakes India are very close to this certificate. How successful they are going to be in the international market without cash subsidies is the big question.

### A ray of hope

This column had mentioned three ailing Madras companies some weeks ago. While the fate of Malco and Binny remain uncertain, it looks as though Standard Motors stands a chance of revival.

During the recent BIFR hearing held in Madras, entrepreneur A C Muthia, who is the major shareholder in the company, promised to put Rs. 6 crore in the company. A new aid package is also being worked out by the financial institutions. The Tamil Nadu Government has promised to buy 2000 light commercial vehicles each year from the company. Standard Motors vehicles are totally indigenous and, therefore, are expected to be competitively priced compared to those manufactured with Japanese collaboration. All of which makes Standard's chances of revival brighter.

### Increasing profits

To end on an even more cheerful note. Most of the well-known Madras companies have ended their financial years with spectacular performances.

The commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland, the fertiliser giant SPIC, the leading finance company in the country, Sundaram Finance, the largest alcohol-based PVC producer Chemplast, and the South's largest cement company India Cements have all seen steep increases in turnover and profits. How many of them will maintain their growth in these uncertain times?



A rare film still from Film News Ananthan's collection. The film is *EPISTLE*, one of the few English-language films made in India. The star was Jayalalitha, seen here.

# JAY FOR SUCCESS

With Jayalalitha Jayaraman, the multi-lingual movie star of yesteryear and a remarkably intelligent and sophisticated personality, bulldozing her way to success at the recent polls, Tamil Nadu has got another Chief Minister from the world of Tamil Cinema.

Art runs in her veins. Many in her middle-class Ayyangar family were wedded to art, especially films. Her mother, Sandhya (her given name was Vedavalli, shortened later to Veda), was a multi-lingual actress who played lead roles in several Tamil, Telugu and

En Veedu. Noted writer-director A.T. Krishnaswamy, the maker of such popular films as *Sabapathy*, *Sri Valli*, *Vidhyapathi*, *Manam Oru Kurangu* and *Arivali*, was a son-in-law of the Nelaturu family. One of the city's successful auditors, with a large clientele drawn from the world of movies, N C Rajagopal, was another son-in-law. N C Chakravarthy, a disciple of C V Sridhar's, and a noted director, is also from this clan. Old-time character actor and comedian, and a close associate of Y.V. Rao, 'Bangalore' Rangaswami also had close links with this artistic family.

Jayalalitha underwent rigorous training in Bharatha Natyam and classical Carnatic music under the watchful eye of her doting mother. As a student in Church Park Convent in Madras, she walked away with prizes and praise, faring very well in every examination.

It was this 'English education' background that helped her to get a role in one of the very few English language films made in Madras, *Epistle*, one of her first films, was produced and directed by Shankar Giri, son of the Congress trade union leader and former president of India, V V Giri. She played the heroine in this little-known movie opposite G S Gopalakrishnan, a noted figure of the day in English theatre in Madras, a phonetician and a fine 'voice'. A latter day film figure of prominence, 'Choi', also appeared in a minor role in this film.

Jayalalitha's first film was B R Panthulu's *Chinnadha Gombi*, a Kannada movie made in 1964. Then came her sensational debut in Tamil cinema with Sridhar's *Vennira Aadai* (1965). In it, she played a young woman under severe mental stress. It was a performance with depth, conviction and polish and, overnight, she became a star. The success of *Aayirathil Oruvan* opposite M G Ramachandran followed and elevated her to dizzying heights of fame. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

Jayalalitha played the heroine in several scores of films in Tamil, Telugu as well as Hindi. She has held her own acting opposite such superstars as M G Ramachandran, Sivaji Ganesan, N T Rama Rao, A Nageswara Rao and Dev Anand. However, it was her MGR starrer that created film history, bestowing on her the status of a cult figure and, later, endowing her with an incredible mass following. That has now taken her, to the *gadi* in Fort St George.

## BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

withdrawal of the Cash Compensatory Support (CCS) means that the devaluation, as far as the engineering industry is concerned, is neutralised.

A lot of the Tamil Nadu-based engineering companies have made serious attempts to make a breakthrough in the sophisticated European and American markets. The much coveted ISO 9000, a quality assurance certification given by an accredited international rating agency, which would enable companies to operate in the unified Europe from 1993, has already been acquired by two Madras-based companies, Sundaram Fasteners of the TVS Group and W S Industries. They are the first Indian companies to get these ratings. Most of the well-

# Reel-like, real-life drama

It was a secluded corner far from the madding crowd in Salem District. A goatherd, looking for one of his missing goats late in the day, reeled back in shock when he stumbled on a body. It was badly decomposed and the face was no longer recognisable, but the near nude body was unmistakably that of an aging male.

The gasping goatherd soon informed the villagers of Onidapatty of his find. Carrying hurricane lanterns, they rushed to the spot and chased away a couple of stray dogs feasting on the body. Soon, the police arrived and took charge of the body.

The body was dressed in a mud-and-blood splattered shirt which had more holes than cloth. Surprisingly, it had a label intact, with the name and address of a tailor in a nearby town. The tailor identified the body without difficulty as that of his friend, a farmer of modest means, Mallan.

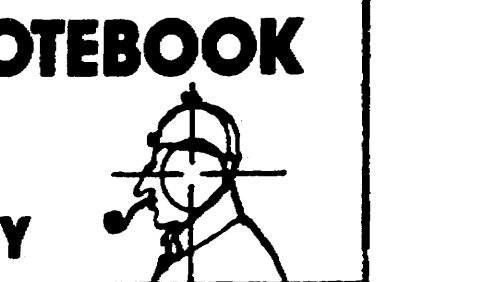
Obviously it was murder, but who had killed Mallan and why? Mallan, according to the tailor, was a bachelor. He had led a life of gay abandon and

had more mistresses than his dog had fleas. One of them, Ponnamma, a bosomy rustic beauty with a garrulous tongue, had an interesting tale to tell the surprised policemen.

Mallan was apparently a wanted man, an accused in a murder case which was still open on the police

As he reached middle-age, his girl friend declared, Mallan had mellowed. He was always willing to help anyone and, so, had no enemies. He lived alone in a tiled house with a servant and a young man, Kuppan.

The police questioned the servant and Kuppan, but they could throw no light on the killing. Kuppan, a strapping



## CRIME NOTEBOOK BY RANDOR GUY

lad of twenty, however, hinted that a woman was involved. But he claimed to know no more.

The police now received a tip from some old-time villagers who had settled in Salem; Kuppan, they said, was Chinnan's brother's son!

Armed with this new bit of information, the police interrogated Kuppan at length. Kuppan broke down and confessed.

K. Gopalakrishnan



# The voice of the white tigress

(By a Staff Reporter)

With Tamil Tigresses much in the news these days in Madras, a feature in *The Guardian*, London, about a "white tigress" is particularly noteworthy. In this article, Gabriella Gaminis profiles Adel Balasingham, wife of the theoretician Anton, who, many say, has aspirations of being Eelam's first Prime Minister to Pirabakaran's President.

Adel, a Melbourne school-teacher who came to London's South Bank Polytechnic to study social sciences, met and married Anton B in 1978 while

he was at Goldsmith's College. They also became British citizens. And got themselves involved in the fight against racism in Britain.

The traumatic events in Sri Lanka in 1983 had them moving into Jaffna, then Madras where they spent several years before returning to Sri Lanka just ahead of the IPKF. The events that followed made a "white tigress" of Adel while Dr Anton the ideologue searched for negotiated freedom or, at least, autonomy.

Writing of Adel and the other tigresses, Gaminis says:

The women fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carry captured AK-47s, M16s, Sterling sub-machine guns and grenades. They are fiercely proud of their skills in face-to-face combat. Several are believed to belong to the LTTE's suicide squad — the Black Tigers.

At least 50 women Tamil Tigers have died in the past three years. In one incident, six held an important bridge in Jaffna until killed by Indian artillery. Their posters are displayed as martyrs to the cause.

One Tamil freedom fighter is Adel Balasingham, a 40-year-old... At first she appears frail and soft spoken. She says her favourite pastime is tending the vegetable garden. But the AK-47 machine gun strapped around her shoulders tells a different story.

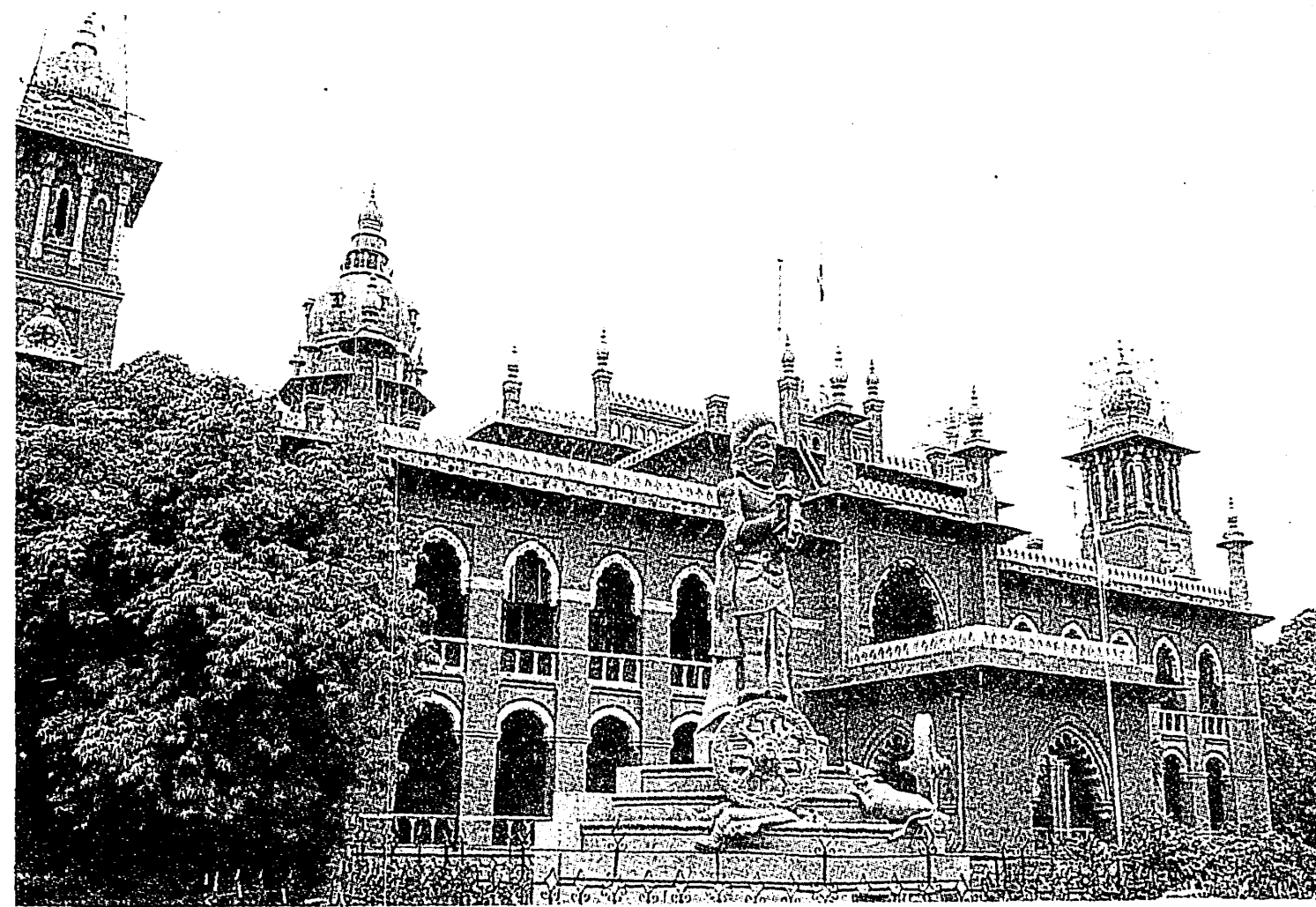
For over a decade she has lived through the bloody civil war in northern Sri Lanka. She has roughed it in muddy trenches and was once on the run for 48 hours, through water-logged paddy fields, escaping a military search. And when the bombs come really close, she is forced to leave the comfort of her bed for a bunker...

According to Balasingham, she abandoned earlier hopes of achieving autonomy for Tamils through political means. She underwent rigorous military training for three years and although she has never killed, she says she would have no qualms about doing so. "When it comes to it, I will kill. I will do whatever it takes to get autonomy for the Tamil people..."

She works in hospitals with civilians caught in the war and edits the movement magazine, *Voice Of The Tigers*. Most significantly, however, she has encouraged women to join the military wing of the Tigers, which is growing in numbers every day. "I felt it was important for women to join since they are suffering just as much." She has trained them and organised women-only camps who plan their own operations against military targets in Jaffna...

At least 3,000 women cadres now form part of the Tigers' fighting force, a remarkable number in a Hindu-dominated society in which women traditionally represent the stability of home and family. "It shows the strength of feeling for the struggle in the Tamil community," claims Balasingham.

That portrait should give readers some idea of the type of women who saw action in the tragic events that overtook Tamil Nadu recently.



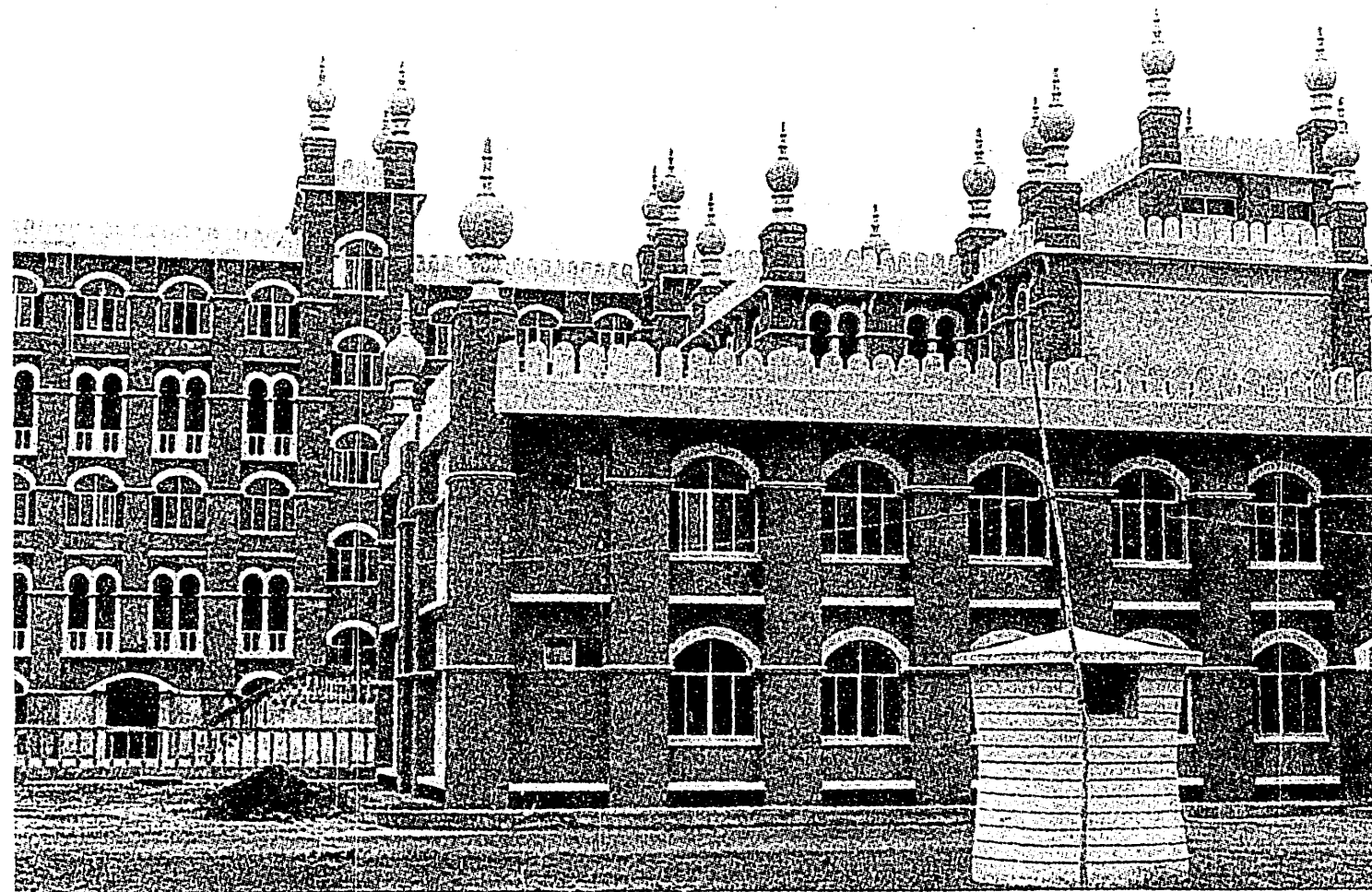
Congratulations to the architects of the PWD. For once, they've come up with buildings that blend magnificently with the old. The three new High Court buildings marvelously echo the Indo-Saracenic that J N Brassington, Henry Irwin and J H Steven created between 1889 and 1892.

The only striking external difference between the two hundred-year apart blocks is the colour and the ornamentation. The old retains the rich red and intricate ornamentation of yesteryear's Indo-Saracenic, whereas the new blocks have been painted a brown. Of course, the new blocks offer all modern amenities in their interiors as well as a great deal more natural ... & THE NEW light.

The new blocks include a southern single storey administrative block with almost 1500 sq m plinth area, a central three storey court hall building and a northern block for the judges. On the 3000 sq m ground floor of the court hall building will be located the library, record rooms, lawyers' room and conference hall. In its upper floors will be nine court halls. The judges' block will have ten chambers for the judges on the first and second floors.

Once the three buildings are ready and fully functional, another look should be taken at the splendid buildings of the old premises, one of the major landmarks of Madras. That look should consider how best these splendid buildings can be conserved for posterity as some of the finest examples of Indo-Saracenic, an architecture form Madras gave India.

The old block, above, and the new building, below, have been photographed by SUSHEELA NAIR.



## BRIEF VACATION

(By a Special Correspondent)

When Devi started working as domestic help in my mother's house, I remember how all of us were a little startled by her appearance. She wasn't particular about washing herself or her clothes, but somehow managed to look stylish in her diaphanous saris (worn three days in a row) and with her hair piled up elegantly on the top of her head.

One of the neighbours remarked that she had looked still more prepossessing five years earlier — that is, before her marriage and the three children that followed in rapid succession. Her husband, it appeared, was a surly fellow and given to jealous fits of rage. Invariably, Devi would be late for work and her tear-stained face would suggest domestic strife in the shape of demanding children and an ill-tempered spouse.

One day, when I harangued her on the evils of walking barefoot — my mother's gifts of slippers had been promptly sold by her in the second-hand market — Devi showed me some additional growth on her right foot which made it difficult for her to walk encumbered with footwear. Feeling sorry for her, I promptly arranged for her foot to be operated on by a senior surgeon, completely free of cost. The operation, though delicate, was successful, and Devi was granted 10 days' paid leave to repose herself.

Instead of staying at home, Devi would be seen all over town — in the market-place, at the temple-site, on the beach, behind her husband on his cycle, and even in the hospital canteen after her check-up — dressed in her best attire and bedecked with flowers like a bride. Nearly every day, various members of her family would come to

my mother's house looking for her, because her children were being neglected, the water hadn't been stored, the cooking had been left half-done, the clothes unwashed; and so on and so forth.

Meanwhile, the surgeon was satisfied that the wound was healing nicely. However, on the day Devi was supposed to rejoin work at my mother's house, she banged her operated foot "accidentally" on a stone in the garden and triumphantly displayed the bloody specimen to my horrified mother, saying, "It's that doctor's fault! I knew he couldn't have been all that great when he didn't take any money!" And before my dumbstruck parent could articulate a syllable, she added cheerfully: "Anyone will tell you that such a major operation requires much more than 10 days' rest!"

## QUIZZIN' WITH NAVIN-7

The response to the new format of the quiz has been steadily getting better. Now the entries are in the scores. But we are still hoping to get a response in the hundreds to the easy prize question set by our Quizmaster.

Meanwhile, try your luck with the other twenty questions, before turning to the answers on PAGE 8. Remember, Quizmaster NAVIN JAYAKUMAR takes all his questions from the local newspapers of the fortnight mentioned in the coupon.

To win a prize, all you have to do is answer Question 21 correctly. Fill in the coupon given below, with space provided for your answer, and mail it to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ - 7, Clo Lokavani Hall Mark Press, 62-63 Grammes Road, Madras-600 006 before 5 p.m. on July 26th. The first three correct answers drawn will be entitled to a prize of Rs. 100 each. We can't make it any simpler than that, can we? So here goes — try your luck with the questions and fill in the coupon as quickly as possible.

- In which country did Mt. Pinatubo explode, the volcano spewing ash more than 32 km skyward?
- What new command was raised in the Indian Army, with the highly decorated IPKF commander Lt. Gen A S Kalkat as its first G O C?
- Which districts recorded the highest and lowest voter turnout in Tamil Nadu during the recent elections?
- For what did Nagano (Japan), Salt Lake City (USA), Ostersund (Sweden), Aosta (Italy) and Jaca (Spain) compete? And who won?
- Which Thyaga Marumalarchi Kazhagam candidate was inflicted a crushing defeat by Jayalalitha in the Bargur constituency?
- The US House of Representatives passed by a big margin, on June 15, a law extending the Pressler Amendment to cover India also. What is the Pressler Amendment?
- Which ad, character ran his own election campaign culminating in the slogan 'Elected Unopposed!'
- Who are the two posthumous recipients of the Bharat Ratna this year?
- What 'in-the-news' instrument, first introduced by psychologist William Marston in Harvard in 1917, has 5 channels — cardiovascular, galvanic skin resistance, respiration, pulse rate and event marker?
- Pablo Escobar recently turned himself in to government authorities. Who is he?
- Where was Ms Jayalalitha sworn in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu?
- The 50,000 colour posters circulated by the CBI shows two photographs of 'Sivarasan', one of which is from the now famous Haribabu Sriperumbudur collection. Where is the other picture from?
- Who received the Bishnuram Medhi Cup and was named the 'State Cricketer of the Year' by the TNCA at its annual day celebrations on June 22?
- Which micro-organism is the suspected cause behind the recent outbreak of acute gastroenteritis in the city?
- Who asked for 'two years to put the economy in shape' and promised a 'vibrant economy in three years'?
- Teachers of which city school found themselves guests of honour at the swearing in ceremony of its most famous alumnus — the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu?
- The youngest governor at 50 years, he also administered oaths of office to the youngest tribal Chief Ministers of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, the youngest Chief Minister of Assam and recently the youngest woman Chief Minister of ..... Want me to go on? Who is this 'youngest' person?
- Sumit Laha created a world record in the 75 kg squat at which championships held recently?
- Which Madras library is one of four national deposit centres for books, to which every publisher in India has to send free of cost a copy of every book published by them?
- What Rs. 1 crore vehicle will Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati be riding soon?

### PRIZE QUESTION

21. Which 'TV' was replaced by another 'TV' on June 25, 1991?  
QUIZ COUPON-7

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

Ans. to Q. 21 .....

(The Fortnight of June 16 to June 29)

We now look forward to a real, big response. Meanwhile, here are the lucky winners of Quiz-6 and the correct answer to the Prize Question:

### PRIZE WINNERS

- ANNIE JOSEPH, M.N. Dastur & Co. Ltd, 480, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Madras-600 035.
- PRAGNESH, B. PATEL, 12/56, West Mada Church St., Royapuram, Madras-600 013.
- K. DHINAKARAN, 2, III Cross, Street, East Shenoy Nagar, Madras-600 030.

ANSWER TO QUIZZIN' 6: Sriperumbudur

## OUT OF THE ORDINARY

(Continued from P1)

What are the long-term results of a school like this? In the last couple of years, sixteen boys from this school have become engineers and doctors. In these days of general gloom over the supercommercialisation of school education, the flowering of this commonsensical, steady and sacrificial attitude to children whose parents cannot be donors or granters of favours to the authorities, is something that enhances a person's hope in the existence of the great variable.

# Let's restore the city to its former self

I am a sad man. In a rare display of unanimity, a highly respected friend, the Editor of this broadsheet, as well as several readers (nice to know one has some) have sternly warned me to lay off politics. The kindlier ones among them pointed out that the journalistic world is already crawling with political hacks, and I didn't need to add to their number, while the others said that my witty comments simply raised their hackles.

What will I do if I can't cover our own theatre of the absurd? Maybe I shall turn to economics about which I know next to nothing, but as well as the next man I can also talk about spiralling vegetable prices and that sort of thing, covering profound ideas in a veneer of lightness, such as: My wife went to Panagal Park with a hundred rupee note and came back with a quarter kilo of ladies' fingers. Let us see.

As far as I see, nothing interesting has been happening in the last fortnight except in the area which is forbidden me. Most people go about with their eyes peeled looking for the Rajiv assassins, motivated in equal part by anger and by the bags of gold offered for information. It is startling to run across someone who looks a bit like the newspaper photograph, only to realise that he is an old friend with impeccable credentials.

The only jolly piece of news was the one about the man who tried to snatch a chain from a lady who turned out to have a blue belt in karate. He must have looked pretty silly indeed, and male chauvinism, which is rife in this city, must have taken a bit of jolt. The moral for women is, of course, don't go out alone when you are wearing a chain — or, learn karate. I

predict gloomily that there is no chance of their taking my advice.

Seriously though, our city is in a bad way. An Indian friend visiting from Minneapolis in the U.S. observed that Madras seemed to have more murders than his domicile in America. It certainly was not ever so. The city until recently had a reputation for safety. It was the city in which women could go about alone even at night. Apart from an isolated burglary or two, the only thing that used to make news was that misguided activity of unfulfilled young

men known curiously enough as "eve-teasing" ("girl-teasing" would be more appropriate, but I suppose "eve" adds a certain glamour to the ridiculous activity).

Whole reams of newsprint have recently been expended on nostalgia for the city as it was, and I don't have to repeat the litany here. But a question emerges. Why don't we, who shed copious tears over the green, clean, peaceful Madras that was, do something about restoring it to its former self? We do nothing as individuals except write indignant letters to the newspapers when something unpleasant happens to us. And the public interest and civic groups seem to come to life once a year when they celebrate their anniversary with a dignitary for Chairman, whose

name will get their name in the press. I suppose I am being somewhat unfair, but public opinion amounting to public indignation does not seem to exist in Madras.

If you ask me what my own suggestions are for bringing back civilisation to our city, one would be to hold the Government to its commitment to hold elections to the city corporation. In theory at least, this would be half the battle won; there would at least be an elected representative to yell and scream at, demanding action. Please remember that we have not had civic elections for 15 years and more, and though the councillors at that time made away with quite a bit of public money (the famous muster-roll case, which I don't believe has yet been brought to a conclusion though several of the participants have since died), the city was a better place to live in.

My second recommendation, absurd as it may sound, is to nationalise the cattle and the auto-rickshaws. We all know why the cattle cannot be moved out of the city, and why auto-rickshaw drivers act with such impunity. For the innocent, let me add that most of them are owned by persons with some authority.

I see a surge among my readers at this point to make a valiant effort to achieve these twin objectives. So what else is new?

S.K.

JOMTON is on vacation. GUNDOO-MALLI will return when he is back.

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\* 23 Sarojini Street, Near  
Gitanjali Hotel, T Nagar,  
Madras-600 017  
Phone: 440248

\* 147 Luz Church Road,  
Mylapore, Madras-600 004  
Phone: 71993



# CHEZ VELU

Outside Velu's, or *Chez Velu*, as the French would say, the horses are packed in tight formation at lunchtime. Never mind that horses are a different breed these days, more chrome and leather, than muscle and bone, or that they tend to be named "Hero Honda" and "Bullet", their very appearance points to one significant facet of Velu's Military Hotel on Village Road in Nungambakkam. Real Men prefer to eat at Velu's.

Whether Real Men prefer the transformation of Velu's from a cave-man joint, to a ceramic tiles and smoky lights establishment, is doubtful. There is an A/C room upstairs with plasterwork on the ceiling and fashionable lighting, comfortable rexine upholstered chairs and two clean washbasins at the entrance, outside.

Of course, even in the old days there were certain conventions at Velu's, even though people sat at a wooden table on unpretentious steel chairs and waited for the "Meals". One could catch a glimpse of the kitchen glowing red through a tunnel of small rooms, each of them inhabited by a djinn presiding over a brass cauldron of steaming food. It was always served through a hatch, the plates of rice unmoulded in small mounds onto a steel plate. The side dishes would be dished out into saucers that were arranged very artistically in enormous round trays that would be offered to the guests. There was also an unlimited quantity of buttermilk. No one stayed for more than ten minutes at a time. If you happened to take longer over lunch, a helper would materialize and ask, flapping his shoulder towel in a belligerent way, "What's the matter? Food not good?" The music consisted of long sensuous slurs of fellow diners, slapping the curries up from leaf to mouth, finally ending with a series of drum beats emanating from a taut belly. This was called "Beating the Retreat".

Non-Veg continues to dominate the menu at Velu's. The moment we have got used to the fashionable gloom of the A/C room we find ourselves being faced with an unbelievable choice. The round tray is now groaning under the weight of Japanese quails, crabs, prawns, giant prawns, chicken curry, chicken fry, chilli chicken, brain masala,

mutton kurma and mutton kebabs and shark meat. Before we can make up our minds, a helper has slapped down a fresh banana leaf in front of us and as much onion *pachadi* as we can stomach, pickles on demand, pappad, salt, but no buttermilk. Another person brings the speciality of the hour, Biryani with a hefty piece of chicken and a boiled egg artfully concealed inside the mound. A rich gravy made from the

## Eating Out with GEETA DOCTOR

mutton bones is served as accompaniment with curds as an extra for those who begin to feel tearful at the thought of so much fiery food.

All around us the other diners are racing through their meals, assisted by the waiters, who bear down with extra ammunition at the merest loss of a head. The old system of service through a hatch continues, but whereas before the food passed from the darkness of the kitchen into the light, now it's we who are sitting in the dark while the food is served from the bright anteroom. Small boys hover with cleaning mops and pails to carry away the used leaves.

## Witness to Raj and Maharaj

The Twentieth Century will be remembered as one of the most tumultuous and eventful periods in the history of mankind. M A Sreenivasan is one of the few who has lived through all the decades of this century. He has been a witness to, and a participant in, many of the events that have shaped our nation.

In his book *Of The Raj, Maharajas and Me* (Ravi Dayal, Rs. 140), Sreenivasan begins with his childhood in Thiru-ali-keni (Tirupicane, if you prefer) and a brief history of his

The place is spotlessly clean and, what's more, the A/C room is not filled with the sour smell of spicy food.

The quails are delicious, small and delicate, yet tender. As we fish around looking for the boiled egg, a helper appears with a platter of golden fried slivers of fish, so fresh, it appears to have leapt straight from the sea into a cauldron of hot oil. It has been lightly coated with a golden batter and even before the man can make the rounds the fish has vanished. The rumour that they are one of the largest buyers of fish straight from the fisherfolk at dawn, though unconfirmed, seems true.

The new touches include paper napkins, saunf, small mountain bananas and *paan* (not very good) that they throw at you very casually along with the bill. A sumptuous meal costs around Rs. 30 per head, but there are the usual "Meals" below the stairs. I noticed that some of the Real Men have even started giving tips, but almost all of them manage to swagger into the sunshine preceded by short volleys of air let out from satisfied stomachs. It's *de rigueur* to burp loudly at the end of a meal at Velu's. Otherwise the cashier, who sits under a large garlanded portrait of the legendary owner himself, looks up in a mildly worried manner as though to say, "What? Food not good today?"

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family. He moves on to his experiences as a civil servant in the princely state of Mysore and the British Government of India. In 1947, as Dewan of Gwalior, he was a member of the Constituent Assembly and the state's negotiation committee. Thus, he was witness to the negotiations that went into the final transfer of power.

Sreenivasan also writes about the style, culture and administration of the two princely states that he worked in, thus throwing light on an area that has been comparatively neglected by scholars. He concludes with an assessment of the gains and losses that the country has achieved since Independence.

The growth of Indian women writers can be linked to the achievements of the women's movement. *The Inner Courtyard*, edited by Lakshmi Holmstrom (Rupa, Rs. 55), is an anthology of short stories that aims to show the evolution of women's writing from roughly before Independence to the present. The stories are either translations or original pieces in English and the anthology features such names as Ismat Chugtai, Anita Desai, Kamla Das and Shashi Deshpande. These stories reflect a woman's point of view on various issues rather than any overtly feminist statements. They tackle such universal themes as the clash of modern ideas with tradition, displacement (a theme common to writers living abroad), poverty, loneliness, childhood and age, sexuality, death and regeneration.

Sharan Jeet Shan, the author of *In My Own Name* (Rupa, Rs. 50), does not aspire to any literary status. Her book is merely a narration of the tragic events in her life that were brought upon by the orthodox marriage

## Mushrooms

# Vegetarian indeed!

When my grandmother first moved to Madras from the village in the 1920s, she was horrified to see a blood-coloured, abhorrent-looking object called a "tomato" for sale in the market. It took a long time to convince her (and her equally orthodox contemporaries) that tomatoes were no less *sattiric* than the benign brinjal or gourd in terms of the vegetarian diet.

However, the mushrooms we get in the market (and in most specialty stores, like NILGIRIS) are commercially cultivated. In the Panagal Park market, you get two varieties — Button mushrooms and Flower mushrooms, the latter with longer stems and floppy heads.

Mushrooms comprise mainly water, though they also contain some protein and minerals. This is true of several other delicious vegetables and should not deter you from trying them out, once in a while, as a variation in your diet.

Apart from western dishes, add them in Indian preparations, such as *sabzis* and curries. It will widen the range of your palate as well as your mind!

For some reason or the other, diehard vegetarians continue to shun this cultivated PLANT food, which is organically similar to yeast. The mushroom is locally referred to as *nai-kodai*, though this appellation properly belongs to the poisonous toadstool, which sprouts naturally in the meadows after a rainy spell.

system. Ever since childhood, she had questioned the restrictions that society imposes on women. While training to be a doctor, she fell in love with a Muslim boy. Her family forced her out of medical college, locked her up and finally pushed her into an arranged marriage. The rest of the book deals with her attempts to make a success of this marriage without compromising her autonomy.

*In My Own Name* exposes the contradictions inherent in a society that veers from 'Devi' worship to bride burning in its treatment of women.

A couple of years ago, Scott Turow made a stunning debut with his novel *Presumed Innocent*. A classic whodunit, with a surprise ending, it captured the imagination of readers with

its strong characterisation and authentic detailing of investigative and legal procedures. The success of the film adaptation of *Presumed Innocent*, starring Harrison Ford, has spurred interest in Turow's second book *The Burden of Proof* (Warner, Rs. 110). The reviews have been as ecstatic, thus ensuring Turow's place among the front ranks of bestselling authors.

And, finally, to bestselling author Robin Cook, the creator of a successful formula. Take a field of medicine that is either thought or on the frontiers of research. Add a large dose of skull-duggery and malpractice. Enter honest upright doctor who attempts to expose these nefarious deeds. The last one hundred pages devoted to 'action', invariably involving a 'race against time' situation! *The Master of the Medical Thriller* returns with *Vital Signs* (Rupa, Rs. 50) in which he deals with developments on the cutting edge of reproductive technologies.

GAUTAM PADMANABHAN

FOODS and FADS

And so it is today with the common mushroom.

There are many Chinese restaurants in town, but apart from DYNASTY (in Harrison's Hotel, Nungambakkam), there are few places that boast a combination of moderate prices, wide variety and efficient service. DYNASTY has a pleasant Chinese-style ambience and is done up in muted shades of green and black, with white silk-screen hangings decorated with figures in black.

The fare is mainly Szechuan food and may be a trifle too spicy and oily for a palate unused to South Indian tastes. The best item, crab-claws, is not even listed in the menu. Available only during lunch-time, crab-claws are more or less succulent, depending on the phases of the moon! Check with one of the waiters (most are friendly and helpful), if you have forgotten your almanac.

There are, of course, other equally exciting appetisers, like spring-rolls, crisp-fried chicken drumsticks, and the Malaysian chicken *sathe-g* (sautéed with capsicum and onion on a skewer) — all served with a delicious garlic sauce. As for the main dishes, there is a wide range of noodles and fried rice and substantial servings of (mainly) Szechuan items, like prawns in garlic sauce, and a few Mandarin preparations, like lemon chicken and sweet and sour pork. In short, at DYNASTY, you get good value for your money — as long as you steer clear of their ice-creams!

Cards for all

If you happen to live in Adyar and are looking for greeting cards, drop in at XAANADU in the Ceebros shopping complex (opposite the Adyar bus terminus). At this bookshop, there is a card for every season, so to speak. What is more, there are very helpful little labels on the cards' counter like "husband", "wife", "mother", "father", and so on — so that you know exactly where to go to get what for whoever you have in mind!

XAANADU is mainly a book-store for the casual browser or traveller, who is dependent on his or her bestseller — "fix" to ward off the agony of boredom. Is it too much to hope that, with time, XAANADU will also start catering to more serious tastes of book lovers? V.K.

# Chroma at The Gallery

It is always a pleasure to walk into The Gallery in Wallace Gardens. There is an air of mystery about the place. The staircase features dashes of colour and gleaming mirrors on its walls, bringing a sophisticated ambience to what seems the cow-dung covered surface of a village hut, on the terrace are an assortment of terracotta sculptures interspersed with lush greenery, and the offerings of the split levels make the journey to this gallery a fascinating experience.

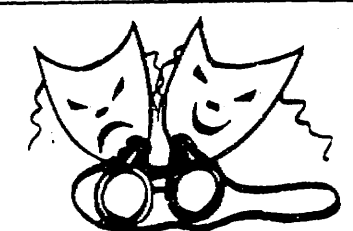
Sharon Appa Rao, its owner, has helped to make Madras more conscious

chroma saturation, a purity of colour hues in their brightest forms. A joyous viewing, indeed!

## The painter's vale

Across the street, at The Sakshi Gallery, there's a display of Babu Xavier's water colours from July 11 to 27. On his own admission, Xavier's work is a seductive peepshow of guilt stained with pleasure, a fair version of Shelley's line, "the painted veil that those who live call life". He says his pictures speak in codes not too difficult

## THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



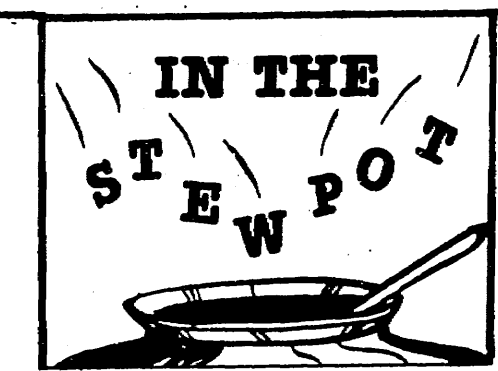
of modern art. Madras society has learned much from her on the merits and wisdom of buying art. She stocks a comprehensive range of paintings, drawings, graphics (prints, etchings, lithographs), sculpture and ceramics, both contemporary and classical. The Gallery also presents from time to time the works of some of the best-known artists in India and constantly encourages the Madras artist.

The latest, and current exhibition there, is of J M S Mani's works (from June 28 to July 5). His works exude light and warmth and engage the viewer in a friendly dialogue. The works shown reveal an intensity of

to break; the artistic intent is not to stun and impress, but to lead on, surprise and, perhaps, amaze.

## Indianising the Bard

Two plays for children are being rehearsed in Madras. One is in English, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and is directed by that theatre stalwart of the city, Mithran Devanesan. Shakespeare has been 'Indianised' here, but in his own language. The other word changed is 'Lion' to 'Tiger', giving scope for our own rural folk dance *Puliattam* (Tiger Dance). Rural India speaks in Shakespearean tones!



Delicious *Dam Alu* made the Bengali way. Serve with hot *lucchis*. For fish lovers, *Machher Dam-Pokto* makes an excellent side dish with both *lucchis* and rice. Finish this Bengali fare with yummy *Sandesh*, served chilled or warm.

**LUCCHIS**  
Makes 35  
2½ cups maida  
2 tablespoons oil  
Salt to taste  
Oil for deep frying  
Method.  
Sieve the flour, add salt and oil. Add enough water and knead to form a stiff dough. Divide the dough into 35 small balls. Flatten each ball and roll out on an oily surface and fry like *puris*. (Do not roll out all the balls at the same time as they tend to stick.) Serve hot with *alu dam*.

**ALU DAM**  
Serves 4  
1 kg potatoes, boiled, peeled and cubed  
3 big onions } ground  
10 pods garlic } to a  
1 inch piece ginger } paste  
2 teaspoons poppy seeds, ground into a separate paste  
1½ teaspoons red chilli powder  
2 teaspoons coriander } mix  
powder } together  
2 teaspoons turmeric } in water  
powder } and make  
2 teaspoons cummin seeds } a paste  
powder  
4 tablespoons oil  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon cummin seeds  
1 tablespoon ghee  
2 teaspoons *garam masala*  
Salt to taste

Heat four tablespoons of oil, add the sugar and fry till brown. Add the cummin seeds. When they splutter, add the red chilli powder and sauté for a minute. Fry till the oil floats on top. Add the fried potatoes, some water and salt. Simmer till everything blends well. Heat ghee and fry the *garam masala*. Add to the *Dam alu*. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot with *lucchis*.

**CHANDRA PADMANABHAN**  
**MACHHER DAM-POKTO**  
Serves 4  
500 grams pomfret or rohu or bekti, cleaned and sliced  
1 cup curd  
1 inch piece ginger, ground into a fine paste

**Method.**  
Mix all the ingredients together and steam till the fish is tender. Serve with rice or *lucchis*. S.J.

**SANDESH**  
Makes 10-12  
1 litre milk  
2 tablespoons maida  
2 tablespoons sugar  
½ teaspoon tartaric acid dissolved in a cup of hot water OR  
1½ cups of whey water  
½ teaspoon rose essence

**Method.**  
Boil the milk. Remove from heat and add tartaric acid. As soon as the milk curdles, place in a muslin bag and hang for about half an hour to drain off whey. Knead the cottage cheese well. Add maida and sugar and knead to a smooth paste. Add essence. Mix well. Simmer on a low heat for about five minutes till it leaves the sides of the pan. Remove from heat and spread on a plate (½ inch thick). Cool slightly. Cut into small diamonds. Serve warm or cold.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Chandra Padmanabhan



One of J M S Mani's paintings at The Gallery

## The best junior bat shows...

# No complacency at the crease

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association wouldn't have had to debate at length while choosing the 18-year-old collegian Sharath Sridharan for the M. Baliah Memorial Trophy (the best collegiate cricketer of the year) for 1990-91. He has been the most prolific batsman in the junior grade.

Apart from his dazzling run in the under-19 tournament last season, which included a big hundred (165) against Andhra, Sharath's performance in the senior grade has been remarkable too. He represented Chemplast, Madras, in the Escorts Trophy in New Delhi and got cracking straightaway with a century against Indian Airlines. He continued to pile up impressive scores in successive matches as Chemplast went on to challenge Escorts in the final. The Madras team fell at the final hurdle, but the left-hander stood up bravely against the Escorts attack and made 44.

Considering his prodigious talent, Sharath's debut for Tamil Nadu in the under-15 tournament (1985-86) was far from satisfactory. But the lad continued to perform well for his *alma mater*, Santhome Higher Secondary, in the inter-schools tournaments. This ultimately weighed in his favour when the Tamil Nadu team for the under-17 A.C. Ram Singh Trophy (Tirupati, 1986-87) was picked.

Sharath, however, got to bat in only one match in the tournament (against Karnataka), as the final against Hyderabad was rained out. Though Sharath made only 62 and 45, he gave ample proof of his talent and was promptly picked by the South Zone selectors for the All-India Inter-Zonal tournament. Sharath made 80 in the only match he played, as South lost to West Zone early in the tournament.

On a few occasions his team-mates have let him down, and, on some, his luck, his efforts going down the drain as a consequence. For instance, in the Inter-Zonal tournament (under-19) in 1987-88, South ran into North in the final. Sharath made 72 and an unbeaten 50 in the match, but his effort was a lone one in the wilderness.

Again, in the M.A. Chidambaram Trophy final (1987-88), Sharath scored 110 against North Zone. But the knock would have given him greater satisfaction had North not won by the quotient rule.



Umapathy, who coached the state under-19 team last season, has this to say about Sharath: "He may possess limited strokes, but what really puts him ahead of other players in his batch is his restraint and ability to play within his limitations. Besides, he has the temperament too. "Once he gets to the half century mark, he never gets complacent like other youngsters. He will stick around and try to get a hundred. And once past hundred, he will aim for a double hundred."

A safe fielder, Sharath is a bundle of energy on the field. With players of his calibre, Tamil Nadu can look ahead with hope. — The Outsider

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# Two legends of Madras cricket

Anyone who had been regularly attending the annual day celebrations of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (formerly the Madras Cricket Association) would have been struck by the unfailing presence of M.J. Gopalan and A.G. Ram Singh at the gatherings. So it was at the annual day at the Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday, June 23rd.

There were quite a few champions of the bat and ball that evening from different decades, but none stood taller than these two octogenarians, Gopalan and Ram Singh. To persons like me, who had partaken of the grand repast they had given in their playing days, their presence provoked us into offering our respects to them. And even as they were seated in the front row of the audience, the photographers turned their backs to the dais where the VIPs were and trained their lenses on the two

— on the sharp, aquiline lines of Gopalan's face and the bearded grey, swarthy countenance of Ram Singh. No other famous name present received such special attention, probably because none of them had won the hearts of the cricketing fraternity as Gopalan and Ram Singh had done.

Gopalan told me that he and Ram Singh had attended every annual day of the TNCA as well as other functions, and only a hip injury had deprived Ram Singh of the pleasure during the past couple of years. Both looked fit for their age, though Ram Singh now uses a stick to move about because of his injury. The diamond jubilee that the TNCA will be celebrating shortly will also mark a 61 years association the two grand veterans have had with the TNCA.

The current crop of cricketers need to be told about the nature of their



The veterans gather for yet another Tamil Nadu Cricket Association Annual Day. M.J. Gopalan, the all-rounder who was capped for India in two major sports and played several others, is in a reflective mood as he watches the action with S. Sriram, former President of the TNCA as well as of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (on his left). In the picture on the right, the other hero of yesteryear, A.G. Ram Singh gets ready to leave the celebrations, an occasion he refused to miss despite being handicapped after a major illness.

(Photographs: K N CHARI)



stature in our sport. Gopalan and Ram Singh not only excelled in their respective spheres but also entrenched themselves in the hearts of sports lovers even as the three immensely popular sons of M.V. Buchi Babu Naidu — Bhatt, Baliah and Ramaswami — were fading out. For about two decades, they held aloft Madras cricket on their broad shoulders. Their skills developed from different roots, through differing strains, but both reached the same pinnacle.

Gopalan, the younger of the two, was a born athlete, a gifted player; every movement of his in cricket and hockey, in which also he was an adept, came naturally and instinctively to him. Migrating as an unkempt village lad, from a village in Chingleput district to Madras (and Triplicane), Gopalan took

the minimum time to impress his basic skills on cricket and hockey, and with well-known sports persons such as B. Subramaniam, P.R. Murugesan (of *The Hindu*) and C.P. Johnstone giving him a helping hand, he made rapid strides to the top — to stay there comfortably for more than two decades.

In 1936 he was faced with an unenviable choice when he had to choose between a tour of England with the Indian cricket team and the Indian hockey side for the Berlin Olympics. As the schedules overlapped, he could go on only one of the tours. Gopalan chose the England trip, which, however, ended in a low key for him. As his position in the final Indian hockey side was assured because of his superb skill as a half-back, Gopalan would have

returned with an Olympic Gold Medal in his pocket and the title of an Olympic champion if his decision had been otherwise. But the octogenarian has no regrets about his choice even today.

Ram Singh, even as a lad, had the proper perceptions about cricket, and with unremitting hard work and devotion to the game he rose to be a great all rounder — a left-arm batsman and left-arm spinner. C. Ramaswami, who went with the Indian team to England in 1936, when he was forty, felt that Ram Singh should have gone in his place; he also was of the firm opinion that Ram Singh was superior to the all-rounder Vinoo Mankad, both as a batsman and bowler. If Ram Singh had not missed the 1946 tour to England by a hair's breadth, so to say, he would have become as famous as Vinoo, as, like the latter, he had the same professional approach to cricket.

Ram Singh did not play in an official test for India, while Gopalan had the slightly better record of having played in one test. Their fame rests mainly on their deeds for their state team, both in the Ranji Trophy and in other matches.

Gopalan was an entertainer, and the crowds loved him for it. Ram Singh, on the other hand, was the sheet anchor of his team and never showed the slightest infallibility, which Gopalan did on occasion. The effervescence of Gopalan and the solidity of Ram Singh fused admirably to provide a strong backbone for their team. After retirement from the game, Gopalan was close to the TNCA administration while Ram Singh, who developed into a professor of cricket, so to say, turned out, in his coaching camps, many fine cricketers, including his own sons, Kripal and Milkha.

P.N. SUNDARESAN

## How about a trend-setting Shanker Gold Cup?

The Parasuji Shanker Gold Cup (1,600 m.) for four-year-olds! It will be in the fitness of things if the Tamil Nadu Government's Department of Racing (DOR) runs such an annual race on Tamil New Year's day to perpetuate the memory of Parasuji Shanker, the most successful, and yet the most modest, Indian horseman to ride at the ancient centre of Guindy. In doing so, the DOR will earn the gratitude and admiration of the racing fraternity not only of Tamil Nadu but of the whole country. For, Shanker, who passed away at Bangalore on June 22, 1991, had left his mark as a champion, no-nonsense jockey not only at Guindy but also at other Indian centres.

Every Indian turf club's prospectus is studded with memorial races for leading owners and even champion

horses, like the S.A.A. Annamalai Chettiar Cup and the A.I. M. Muthukaruppan Chettiar Cup, the Mount Everest Cup and the Track Lightning Cup. But, ironically enough, there is hardly a race in the country named after the small man who, crouched on the back of a horse and using his hands and feet to the best of his ability, makes leading owners

by  
**AJAX**

and champion gallopers. It is up to the DOR to seize the golden opportunity to fill the gap and emerge as trendsetters.

Come to think of it, Shanker was a British "product." Born in 1919, Shanker picked up riding as a nine-year-old stable-lad at the Mysore Palace stables, where his father was a jamedar, and it was while riding as companion rider to the then Maharaja of Mysore that he was "spotted" by P.F. Browning, the then I-G of Police, Mysore. The British Police Chief introduced the teenager to Brig. R.C.R. Hill, a British racing authority, who in turn entrusted him to Tom Hill, then Calcutta's leading British jockey and a frequent visitor to Bangalore. In 1937, Hill took Shanker to Calcutta, where he worked as an apprentice for nearly two years before he obtained his licence. He began riding at Poona, and came to Madras for the 1939-40 season.

Quick to make his mark in a field dominated by more experienced Australian, British and Ceylonese horsemen, Shanker won the jockeys' championship for the first time in 1943-44 and never looked back. In 1947, he set an Ooty record by steering home six winners in seven mounts. Going from strength to strength, he set a Guindy record

as well by piloting 49 winners in the 1948-49 season.

His horsemanship apart, Shanker was a class above most others of his fraternity. A taciturn, modest little man with an inscrutable face, Shanker kept punters at a safe distance. In vain they waited around the Guindy paddock to catch a glint in his eyes as his trainer whispered to him his final instructions. Sphinx-like, Shanker stood, his left leg tucked behind, ready to mount any moment. When his trainer finished, Shanker was quickly away, and during the parade seemed to view with joy the beauty of the surrounding trees and the cloudless sky, ignoring the pleading smiles of even friends.

Though he was slippery like a fish when they tried to meet him, Shanker commanded great

respect from the Guindy railbirds for his sense of honesty and readiness to produce his best on every mount. Perhaps for a jockey of his ability and standing, there was good reason for Shanker to be elusive in the world of the money sport that racing was.

But he was not that elusive to greedy relatives and friends after retirement, paid the penalty for his indiscretion and died in distress. But it can by no means detract from the name and fame he earned as India's finest horseman, who was, for nearly half a century, the pride of the Madras turf. He certainly deserves a memorial at the country's oldest centre, where he had been champion longer than any other professional

## ANSWERS TO QUIZZIN'-7

1. Philippines.
2. Training Command.
3. Coimbatore (60%) and Salem (57%) respectively.
4. For being the venue of the 1998 Winter Olympic Games. Nagano won.
5. Film star T. Rajendar.
6. Presidential certification that a country does not possess Nuclear weapons, before bilateral assistance can be given.
7. Fido Dido.
8. Sardar Patel and Rajiv Gandhi.
9. The lie detector.
10. The billionaire leader of the Medellin cocaine cartel.
11. University Centenary Auditorium.
12. His driving licence.
13. W.V. Raman.
14. Cholera.
15. Dr. Manmohan Singh.
16. Church Park Convent.
17. Dr. Bishma Narain Singh.
18. World Women's Powerlifting Championships at New Delhi.
19. Connemara Public Library.
20. A golden chariot.

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