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City transport planners urge...

A highway in the sky

(By a Special Correspondent)

Plans have been drawn up to give Madras a road in the sky to ease the traffic congestion in the city's main thoroughfare, Anna Salai (Mount Road). Land acquisition along the length of this road, from Anna Statue (Old Round Tana) to Kathipara Junction (Nehru Roundabout) in Guindy is expected to soon begin for this new 'bus route'.

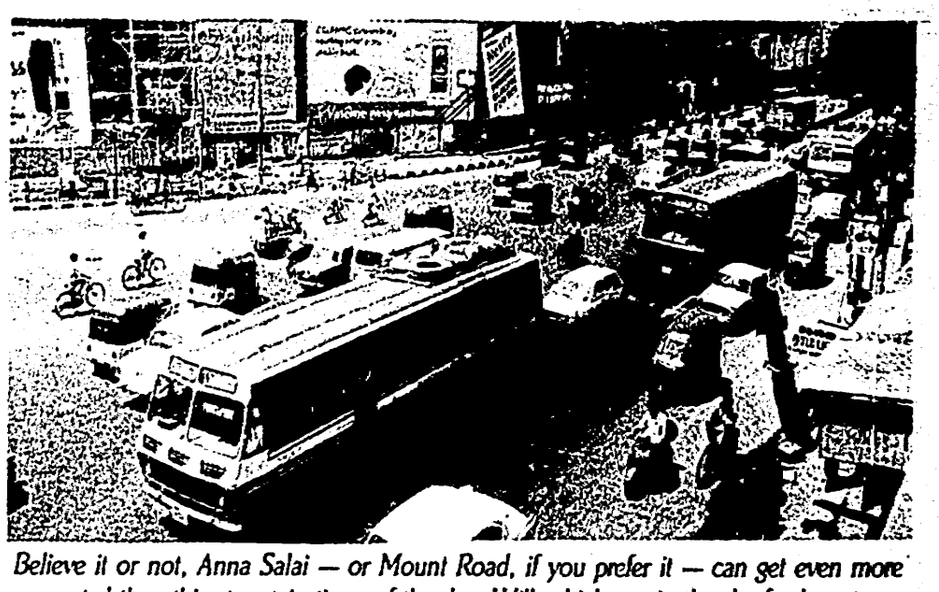
This elevated 12.8 km long road, expected to be built with World Bank aid or institutional funding, will, initially, be meant for bus traffic alone. It is expected to cost over Rs. 100 crores and will, in parts, parallel Anna Salai, in other parts run alongside what was once Nandanam's Long Tank. In a couple of stretches, in Saidapet and Guindy, it will run on ground level.

Work on this High-Capacity Mass Transport System skyway is scheduled to start towards the end of 1993 and be completed by 1996. Thereafter, it is planned to upgrade it at a cost of over Rs. 250 crores into a Light Rail Transport System which is planned to be ready by 2011. The busway will, in the initial stages itself, be built in such a fashion that it can later be upgraded. Until then, bus users will have a comfortable and fast ride all along the new mall to the Mount which will have bus stops at every 800-1000m intervals.

If the plans drawn up materialise into a busway in the sky, this rapid transit system will go a long way towards solving the city's traffic problems of the late 1990s and the second decade of the 21st Century, it is claimed. It has been estimated in a feasibility report prepared by Pallavan Transport for the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority, who conceived the busway, that 400,000 passengers in 1996 and 715,000 passengers in 2011 would want to use public transport in the city every day and, at peak hours, this traffic would need nearly 25,000 and 44,000 trips in one direction in a one-hour period! With such numbers, the sooner work starts on the project the better the chances of the City's survival.

But while plans go ahead for this giant 'flyover', there are some transport experts who believe that for a little more money the city could get a much more modern and efficient transport system. They suggest the city should go in for an elevated monorail along this alignment. This would mean less acquisition of land, they point out, and by using state of the art technology the groundwork would have been laid for a transport system that could last well into the 21st Century.

Protagonists of this view suggest a perusal of such alternative proposals before a final decision is taken.



Believe it or not, Anna Salai — or Mount Road, if you prefer it — can get even more congested than this at certain times of the day. Will a highway in the sky for buses ease this traffic crush? We'll know a few years from now. (Photograph by SUSHEELA NAIR)

Banks for buses?

(By a Staff Reporter)

Several suggestions are being considered by Metro planners in the city to ease traffic congestion. The elevated road service is one. Another is the use of the banks of the Cooum for some kind of bus service.

The Cooum, which meanders through the city for nearly 20 kilometres, has very broad banks in some places. It is suggested that when the actual cleaning of the river is taken up in right earnest within the next year or so, efforts be also made to widen its banks in those stretches where they are narrow. These wide and widened banks, according to this scheme, could be strengthened and protected by retaining walls, thereby allowing roads to be laid on them that will take a rapid service of mini-buses. A wheel-cum-rail system has also been suggested for this stretch.

An integrated road and water transport system for the city is another idea being discussed. The water transport system could involve boats, but hovercraft have been mooted as a more suitable means of transport. In fact, the previous government talked about a hovercraft service all along the coast, from Ennore down to Mamallapuram, with plans to extend it further to Pondicherry.

It might be worth ferreting out that proposal from its pigeonhole and looking at it again in the light of other proposals now being discussed.

MANAALI RAMAN...

I swear I have had nothing to do with them. I'm not hiding; I just live here!

IN MAD, MAD MADRAS

Look! No queues for the long wait!

(By a Staff Reporter)

I'm glad several people up there paid a lot of attention to my story *The Long Wait* (*MM*, Aug. 1), even if they didn't all agree with it. But if they all take another look into how to make those long lines outside the US Consul-General's office vanish, then perhaps the story would have been worth it.

That said, the contention of all those up there needs recording. Those lines begin at 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. and are more created — and occupied — by touts and travel agents, on the one hand, and parents holding *baba's* hands — as is habitual in the Old World — on the other, this reporter has been repeatedly told. Never mind that the picture confirms neither fact. But the purpose is not to debate; it is to solve the problem.

And Bill Lawrence, Director, United States Information Service, writes that all the problems of discomfort outside can be solved if our readers know "two simple facts":

"1. EVERYONE who comes to our consulate between 8.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. WILL be interviewed for a visa.

"2. The applicants are briefly screened at the gate, then ushered into an airconditioned waiting room, where television programs from our Worldnet satellite system are broadcast and where they can find snacks and drinks."

Presumably, then, if you do away with touts and parents and arrive for a visa at the American Consulate's doorstep any time between 8.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m., and not earlier, you will be almost immediately ushered into a comfortable waiting hall — on whose comforts this reporter stands corrected. No queues, no long wait. That, this reporter presumes, is Bill Lawrence's assurance.

But what this reporter can't understand is how Bill Lawrence presumes his story, which led to all this explaining, "gives people the totally mistaken idea that they need to get to the consulate hours before it opens to avoid the long lines that this very practise creates". However, as said before, the purpose of all this is not to win debating points; it is to find a solution.

And one suggestion from someone out there is why not allow an appointment request to be posted in or dropped and send back a reply with a place-in-the-comfort number and time. That might help keep only touts, travel agents, mommas and poppas out in the sun, while *baba* need only arrive at the appointed time and join his place in the queue inside. Of course, there might be practical difficulties about that that this reporter knows nothing about, but he's sure American ingenuity will be able to come up with a feasible alternative. Shall we now shake hands, Bill Lawrence, and may you continue to "enjoy reading *Madras Musings*?"

The Tholkappiyam according to Karunanidhi

Former Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi may not have been formally educated beyond primary school, but he has always been a man of letters. He is now occupying himself even more with scholarship than has been his wont. He is busy on a major literary exercise, writing an interpretative commentary on that classical Tamil grammar, *Tholkappiyam*.

Over the years, Karunanidhi has been better known for his screen and stage plays, his short stories and novels, many of which laid the foundations for the Dravidian movement. As journalist and DMK leader, his *Kalaingnar Kaditham*, a daily column in his nephew's newspaper *Murasoli*, was much sought after by the cadres of the party.

But though he had written several literary commentaries, essays and reviews, he had not done a major work and was thus better known for his 'filmi' and political scripts.

The *Tholkappiyam* according to Karunanidhi promises to change all that. So intent is he on this scholarly exercise that he's put politics on the back-burner for the nonce and taken things easy with his daily letters. While this switch-over after more than fifty years in public life may disappoint his political following, the former Chief Minister's scholarly pursuits may yet earn him a more permanent place in the Tamil people's hall of fame than his politics.

Staff Reporter

OUR READERS WRITE

The things we do

I refer to the picture on page 1 of *Madras Musings* (Aug. 1-14) encaptioned "The Long Wait". While it is true that something could be done to make it easier for visa seekers (in Delhi things are better because Delhi is Delhi and the rest of India is well, India) perhaps we Indians should realise that the US Consulate-General views these visa applicants in the same light that the WASP establishment in America viewed immigrants, who, at the turn of the century, flooded Ellis Island from Europe and Ireland, seeking a better life. They were poor, famine-stricken and they fled to America in search of a better life. I should imagine that very few of the visa seekers in your picture are visiting America in search of a richer cultural life or spiritual peace. (As every Indian knows with deep conviction, India is superior to every country in the world when it comes to spiritual values — it's only in material values that we are a bit backward!

Visa seekers to the affluent West are treated with scorn if they are citizens of countries which are poverty-stricken, insanitary, and are perpetual borrowers on the international scene because they cannot pay their way in the world. Twentyfive years ago, citizens of most countries in SE Asia were viewed with suspicion when they tried to enter the West — this despite the fact that international travel was a good deal easier. Today, citizens of Singapore, Malaysia or Thailand are well treated when they apply for a visa. In fact, I'm told that in Singapore today, unlike 25 years ago, Indians need visas to enter — a situation true of Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia also.

So, we must learn to respect ourselves first before others respect us. Harijans are burnt alive; a Harijan woman is stripped naked and paraded on the streets; eyes are gouged out in an act of public frenzy. If this is what Indians do to each other, I, for one, do not find it surprising that the US Consulate is of the view that it does no harm to the Indians to wait in the sun for a while. After all, look at the things that they do to each other!

Thomas Abraham
"Kadapra",
20, MRC Nagar-600 028.

Think of Humanity!

US Consul-General's office in Madras feels a queue is not a crucial matter. Who will care for students and the unemployed? Everything is surrounded by two things. One is cash, the other is Politics. Who will think of Humanity?

Kottathur Kavinila
No. 6 Brindavanam IV Street-600 031.

The Madrasis' fault

You deplored the ill-treatment of Madrasis before American Consul's office. It is not the Americans' fault, but only the fault of Madrasis who won't even protest. So they only deserve what they get!

C T Vairavan
10 Jagadambal Colony-600 014.

Professor's feats

Apropos the 'Doctor in the House' in the column, 'People of the City' by 'The Recorder', it was indeed sad to note that you had omitted the name of a very active M L A, Prof. Oscar. C. Nigli, who had secured reservations for Anglo-Indians in 1) Diploma is Engineering, 2) Degree in Nursing, and 3) Bachelor of Engineering during his two years as a M.L.A. He is currently the Dean of Students, Loyola College, Madras.

F Mendoza
7 Noble Third Street, Alandur-600 016

EDITOR'S NOTE: The strident tone of the rest of this letter would appear to indicate that the microscopic Anglo-Indian community is still a divided one. Which is a pity. Can't two senior educationists team together and apply the soothing balm?

Excellent, but puzzling

Congratulation on the excellent manner in which your paper is brought out and the way in which the articles are chosen. "Short 'N' Snappy" and 'Bull's Eye' are becoming popular by the fortnight, if not by the day.

However for puzzle lovers like us, Navin poses questions too easy even to think. How about the introduction of a crossword puzzle corner?

S Rajesh Garga
13, III East Street-600 041

Navin a help

In these days of haste, not everyone gets a chance to read the newspaper throughly. "Quizzin' with Navin" helps me a lot in knowing what is happening all over the world.

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Raising money to run away

The five girls from Holy Angels Girls High School, Chrome-pet, who went walkabout and were returned to their families after 'holidaying' in Kodaikanal offer a salutary question to all parents and administrators. Can such runaways be prevented from raising the wherewithal to indulge in such or other types of escapades?

In this case, the girls PAWNED various bits of jewellery and made use of the Rs. 700 so raised to go on their jaunt. It has been suggested that pawnbrokers should not lend to children and minors against the pledge of jewellery.

The *Man from Madras Musings* is not very certain of the law, but it might be worthwhile legislating — if there does not already exist such regulation — a BAN on any kind of loans to children by pawnbrokers, be the pledge jewellery or otherwise. Or the pawn brokers themselves might take a pledge not to indulge in such lending. Such action would not only help call a halt to runaways, but also limit the funds available to minors for drugs and illicit liquor, which are increasingly being consumed by teenagers.

And shouldn't parents also think of doing away with gold jewellery for school, no matter how small the pieces?

Clipped wings?

Have the wings of Air Asiatic, one of the first air taxi services to take off, been clipped? Certainly the services it once offered to Bombay, Cochin and Calicut are no longer being offered. But what's with this Madras-based airline?

One side of the picture focusses on disagreements between directors and lack of resources, according to suppliers — including those who leased it its one aircraft — on the other, Air Asiatic appears to be flying high, with a series of advertisements appearing in the newspapers calling for a lot of staff to man its various offices and other rosters.

Whatever the truth, Madras Airport's new central block, now getting ready, plans to have at least four counters for air taxi services. UB, of course, has been doing moderately well with its low key operation featuring Dorniers. The small capacity of these craft has even made a success of its three-times-a-week Madurai-Bangalore operation which virtually is a private

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

service enabling Harvey and Coats staff in Madurai, Ambasamudram and Koratti to commute to headquarters in Bangalore.

Will Continental Aviation be the third air taxi service touching Madras? It began by concentrating on the Delhi-Bombay sector, welcoming passengers aboard with a drink and offering a choice of Indian and Western menus. Owning three Boeings, it had a big enough fleet to look at traffic to and from the other metros. But now Continental too appears to be having trouble. Making the *Man from Madras Musings* wonder whether there really is room in our skies for air taxis.

Video Scoop

The stormy petrel of Madras journalism, N Ram, has had sections of the local press critical of his actions in his latest scoop. He apparently had in his possession for eight days a video recording of one of the dry runs that Sivarasan had organised in preparation for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. It was only just before *Frontline* hit the stalls that Ram handed over a print of the film to the authorities.

Even since Ram took over *The Hindu's* beautifully printed stablemate *Frontline*, the magazine has acquired a more strident political tone. Among the many politically oriented stories it has recently pursued assiduously is the assassination and its aftermath, several pages in each issue being devoted to the case.

One of the recent issues of the magazine ran a dozen or so frames from the film in question, in all of which Sivarasan was seen prominently in the front row of the press enclosure. The film was shot at a V P Singh meeting and it has been reported that it was at this meeting that Sivarasan watched 'suicide-bomber' Dhanu easily break the security cordon and get within range of the former Prime Minister.

The local press, much of it anti the political Ram, has been alleging that not only had Ram suppressed vital evidence for several days but he has also had an unholy interest in the film from the time it was commissioned.

A dear deer

The Bangalore racing season always brings down a large crowd of the elite from Bombay. Four of that Bombay racing elite went a-hunting recently in a reserve forest near Udhagamandalam and brought down a handsome sambhur. Then, back at the estate bungalow where they were holidaying, they got ready to prepare a delicious venison roast.

That's when the Forest Guards of the Coimbatore Range turned up. When the hunters fled in a Jeep, the guards refused to give up and gave chase. An hour later they brought in the four to face charges.

Fines of Rs. 25,000 each were levied and their local helpers had to pay Rs. 10,000 each. It was a record haul for the Range. But while crowing over it, the Range should remember that for every catch made, the poachers who get away are many more.

MMM

On the Horns of a Dilemma

"Judgement is not the knowledge of fundamental laws; it is knowing how to apply a knowledge of them." The wisdom of this quote is being tested today in the stock market, for, prices of many good scrips have risen smartly in recent times and investors are faced with a difficult choice in which each of the alternatives is unsatisfactory. Will the prices now sustain or will it reverse? What is the smartest thing to do now? Is it booking profits on existing holdings or is it holding on? Should we add new names to our portfolio now?

The truth is that this decision-making skill comes out of experience. Those who have gone through earlier spells of euphoria know the dangers of greed. It is said that there is only one thing more painful than learning from experience, and that is **not** learning from experience. The only way to operate in the stock market is to book profits constantly as soon as they have become significant and accept new and different risks as they present themselves.

Our advice therefore is to book profits now and realise big gains. But do accept new risks, for there can be no profits in the future, if you do not prepare for them now.

BULL'S EYE

Super Spinning Mills Limited (Current Market Price Rs. 95/-): This Elgi group company, which is engaged in cotton yarn spinning, has produced satisfactory results for the year ending March '91. The company is now setting up a 100 per cent EOU at Karur for the manufacture of coarser yarns. This project is expected to commence production in January '92 and reach full capacity by the end of 1992. The share price is expected to rule at the Rs. 120/- level by the time of announcement of March '92 results. Buy now for good gains in the medium-term.

Raymond Synthetics Ltd (Current Market Price Rs. 25/-): Promoted by Raymond Woollen Ltd., this company went public in August '90 for the manufacture of 15,000 tpa of Polyester Filament Yarn and speciality yarns. The issue received encouraging response from the public. The company has entered into a collaboration agreement with Toray of Japan. The commercial production reportedly commenced in June '91. The long-term prospects are good. Good pick for long-term investment.

Ruchi Soya (Current Market Price Rs. 41/-): The company has exported soya and other products worth Rs. 12 crs. to Japan, EEC countries and USSR. Future prospects appear bright, as the new unit at Indore has started operations. The export demand is also reportedly good. Buy for a target of Rs. 50/- plus.

K. Gopalakrishnan

Yarn's got spinners in a spin

BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

It may not be very widely known, but the South, especially Tamil Nadu, is a major cotton spinning state. About a third of the spinning capacity in the country is represented by the Southern India Mills Association (SIMA) and 45 per cent of the cotton yarn exports is also from the South. This is a sector which has been quietly taking giant strides in the last four or five years.

The South is also a major cotton handloom weaving and export centre. The powerloom industry flourishes in and around Salem and Karur. And, of course, Tirupur is the hosiery centre which accounts for Rs. 500 crore worth of exports.

The handloom, powerloom and the hosiery sectors are up in arms against the spinning industry at the moment because the cotton yarn prices have gone over the moon. The handloom trade, which is also doing very well in exports, feels that its costs are being pushed up by the steeply escalating yarn prices. This makes the handloom products unviable in world markets. The knitting (hosiery sector) has similar complaints. Is the spinning industry really to blame?

"No," say the spokesmen of SIMA. According to T Kannan, Chairman, SIMA, the real culprit is cotton whose price in the last one year has skyrocketed. Cotton prices have risen by well over 100 per cent since last year and, in July alone, the prices have gone up by over 25 per cent.

Today, the cotton costs of most of the coarser varieties are more than the sale prices of yarn, which has forced many mills to work below capacity. SIMA gives more interesting statistics. Cotton prices for yarn upto 40's count have, according to the association, increased on an average by 61.6 per cent over the levels of February 1991, while the yarn prices for counts upto 40's have increased only by 13.8%. The level of yarn price increase for some other counts are even lower, compared to the cotton price increase.

The problem is that these mills, which employ about two lakh workers, are at the moment starved of cotton. The government s decision last year to export cotton (to please Devi Lal and the farmers lobby) has had this effect. The cotton crop was vastly overestimated, but the government had to stick to its commitment to export cotton. Hence this shortage. The only way out seems to be the immediate import of cotton.

A record by AL?

The corporate sector is slowly beginning to digest the implications of the industrial trade policy and the budget. As far as one can see, companies are going ahead with projects and expansions planned earlier. Ashok Leyland, for example is going ahead with its Rs. 1200 crore modernisation and expansion plans. To raise resources, the company is going in for a Rs. 200 crore rights issue, which will be one of the largest issues from Madras in recent times.

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Where's the body?

CRIME NOTEBOOK BY RANDOR GUY

The hut was in flames on the outskirts of Mylapuram, in the Coimbatore District. Soon, a crowd of rustics collected around the burning heap. When some ventured a closer look they found that it was an empty hut that had been burnt down.

The same day, in a dense forest not far from Mylapuram, another fire and a characteristic stench attracted the notice of some wood-cutters. When they reached the spot, there were only ashes — and charred bones.

The Mylapuram police took up the investigation and soon identified the bones as those of a human male. Amidst the ashes, they found bits of metal, which turned out to be what was left of spent cartridges. Who was the man shot dead before being consigned to the flames?

The burnt hut came in for detailed attention by the cops. They found unburnt sheets of thatch, which, on examination, seemed to be parts of the burnt hut. How did these pieces escape the wrath of the fire? Could the roof have been dismantled before the hut was ignited? But why?

Soon rumours began to circulate that Mookkan, a cobbler, was missing from Mylapuram. Mookkan's wife confirmed that she had not seen him since the day of the two fires. An itinerant cobbler, Mookkan was in the habit of visiting villages and hamlets around Mylapuram looking for work and would stay away from home for days. His wife had therefore not been unduly alarmed by his absence.

Mookkan's friends, however, had tales to tell. Apparently, the cobbler was in the habit of visiting a wealthy Gounder household where he not only mended soles and shoes but also did odd jobs in the sprawling garden behind the house on the outskirts of Mylapuram. Chinnamma, the mistress of the house, was an attractive dusky young woman. Neighbours reported that she was missing from home some months ago and during her absence the cobbler had been missing too! Servants soon confirmed that the cobbler and their mistress were lovers.

When the affair between the cobbler and wealthy Gounder woman came to light, the entire Gounder community took it as a slur. Eight of them, including Chinnamma's husband's younger brother, decided to act.

All of them, armed with clubs, knives and revolvers, had chased the cobbler one dawn, whereupon he had hid in the hut. The men had climbed the hut's walls, dismantled the roof and abducted Mookkan. They then set fire to the hut. Mookkan was taken deep into the forest, tortured and emasculated shot and set on fire even before he died.

That was the case the prosecution presented the Coimbatore sessions judge. He sentenced the eight to death. An appeal was filed before the Madras High Court and the legendary V L Ethiraj, whom a legal wit had once described as "the defender of the unfaithful", appeared for the appellants.

The High Court hall was overflowing not only with the public but also with fellow lawyers when Ethiraj began his arguments in his inimitable way. There was no corpse, so where was the conclusive proof that the cobbler had been killed? No body, no murder! Who said Mookkan was dead? Out of sheer fear he might be hiding somewhere! The judges agreed with Ethiraj and acquitted the accused. And the sensational Mylapuram Murder Case went into history as a case to be discussed without end by lawyers and lovers of crime!

The patient who kept the doctor sleepless

Every profession has its occupational hazards and, in the case of doctors, these are not only directly linked to the practitioner's rate of success, but they also tend to become highly personalised.

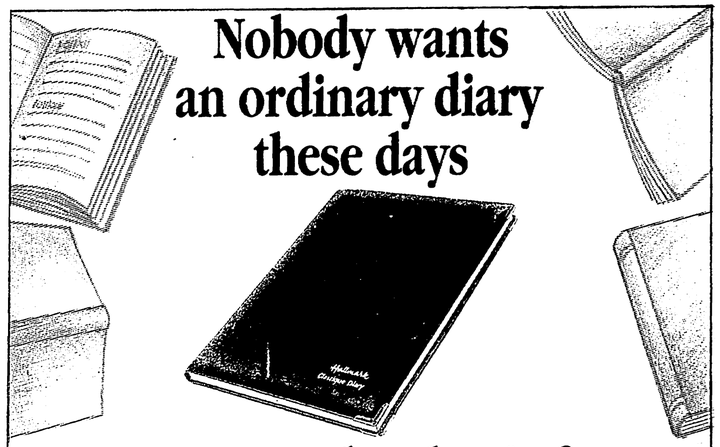
Mr Naidu came to me some time ago, suffering from acute pain due to an intractable problem. I put all my skills to work in order to attenuate his agony, but, alas!, however hard I worked during the day on his problem, there would be the relentless call from him at night to inform me that nothing had changed. Every day brought fresh hope in the form of newer techniques to deal with the case and every night I was overwhelmed with the same despairing feeling that everything was hopeless.

Finally, one afternoon, I picked out the last trick from my bag and treated him, wondering desperately what I would do if this too were to fail. That night there was no call from him. However, I lay in bed, tossing and turning in agitation, unable to sleep or to even entertain the notion that Mr Naidu was going to be cured after all. After one week of nerve-racking tension, when the anxiety of not hearing from him seemed infinitely worse than the unfailing calls of distress each night, I decided to take the bull by the horns and ring him at home. The person who answered the phone informed me that Mr Naidu had gone to Tirupati, but he did not know if the gentleman felt better or worse.

For a further miserable couple of days, I agonised afresh as to why one goes to Tirupati. "Would you go to Tirupati," I would ask everyone I met, "after you were cured, for thanksgiving, or, quite simply, to supplicate the deity, because the doctor *wasn't* able to do anything?" Typically, of course, each of my friends came up with more ambiguous answers than the last. Until one fine day, a beaming Mr Naidu himself (tonsured head and all) walked into my office to gladden my heart with the tidings that he was, indeed, completely cured!

— A DOCTOR

Nobody wants an ordinary diary these days



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English thrives in a crowd

by A STAFF REPORTER

Anyone who thinks interest in the English language is dead in India would have been in for a surprise if he or she was at a recent British Council lecture on *Speaking English*. Dr David Brazil's talk drew the largest crowd in local British Council history, filling the Council's auditorium and gladly accepting Standing Room Only in the patio, on the corridors and up the stairs till the Sold Right Out sign or its equivalent **had** to be put up.

English was obviously alive and kicking in India! And so was the Indian penchant for making speeches, despite Dr Brazil drawing attention to this very fact that limited good communication. Almost every one who had a question to put to Dr Brazil in the floor session made a speech of his question. Curiously, the women who had questions were briefer about it all, rather giving the lie to certain well-entrenched beliefs.

Given half the chance, this question and answer session would have gone on a lot longer, with the help of a minority of the audience. But why, wondered this reporter, did the silent majority turn up to provide an overflowing audience and make the talk an overwhelming success?

Dr Brazil brought the right amount of understated British levity to his talk and added a few delightful flashes of humour. But his major contribution was to emphasise that if people talked without worrying about assembling language grammatically they would be able to communicate better. "Don't worry about the correct grammar; communicate instead, and you'll love it," appeared to be his theme. And that could be said of any language except the dead ones. So what was so special about that, except that it is good, solid advice?

Did the crowd then come to hear English as she is spoke in all its variety? Wasn't it Dr Alan Maley, former Council head in Madras, who once brought the house down with audiences a quarter the size of this, mimicking the variations of the language round the world? Was that what was expected? Or is there **really** such a great interest in linguistics and communication in Madras?

Be that as it may, this reporter was particularly interested to hear that the man who had helped with what is this reporter's favourite dictionary — the *Collins Cobuild* — is now working on a grammar that may be described as a non-grammar. That will certainly be welcomed by a reporter who has had little time for gentlemen like Wren, Martin and Fowler.

Brazilian nuggets

The essentials of a few nuggets Dr Brazil, of Birmingham University, dropped in Madras the other evening:

★ "Grammar is a rule that tells you what you can say and how you can say it after you have said it. Grammar can only analyse sentences after they are written. You can't think in terms of grammar as you speak, can you?" Apparently Indians can.

★ "Is it 7.15 p.m.? The grammatical answer is 'Yes' or 'No'. But if the answer is a negative, the person answering always replies, unasked, with the correct time. This is a typical example of communication totally ignoring grammatical rules."

★ "In Delhi, speaking to a person at a party I said 'the late Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher' and he was horrified. Why?" And the audience shouted back, "You should have said former!" "But was I wrong? Wouldn't you have understood what I was saying? No one in England would have been horrified with my sentence."

READ
KAMAKOTI
Religious cultural Tamil Monthly
Annual Rs. 36/- Monthly Rs.3/-
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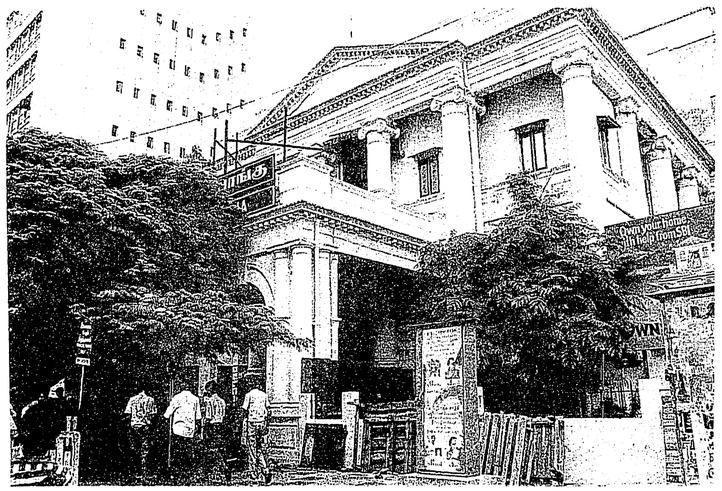
THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

The old and the new way of using pillars. In the State Bank of India's Mount Road Main Branch, unfluted Ionic pillars support a pediment high above a rather plain portico. This threatened building, behind which new bank highrise has arisen, was one of the city's many threatened old buildings. But that threat, it is reported, has been stayed for the while. It would now seem an appropriate time for the bank, whose lineage had its roots in Madras, to restore and refurbish this rather striking building of its imperial age and make it a landmark on Mount Road. In fact, there's a study and a recommendation somewhere that all the old buildings on Mount Road, from Anna Statue to Binny Road junction, be restored and the entire stretch be designated a protected area under the Ancient Monuments Act. But even if Government does not play ball, this is something the mercantile sector, which owns most of the stretch, could dedicate itself to.

While waiting for that to happen, new buildings are experimenting with all kinds of materials to embellish themselves. The Madras Metropolitan Development Authority's headquarters in Egmore — the Thalamuthu Natarajan Building *— has used three gleaming 'pillars' to support its 'portico'. These stainless steel 'tubes' — and tubes in fact they are — are the main highlight of a building that attempts to be somewhat different from the usual PWD style of architecture. In the process, the MMDA-PWD team have pioneered a new building idea. (Pictures by SUSHEELA NAIR)*



'CASABLANCA' REMADE

VIDEOSCOPE by FILM FAN

Cuba 1959. The Batista regime is on the verge of collapse. A professional gambler (Robert Redford) is drawn into the conflict, as he attempts to rescue, from the secret police the beautiful wife (Lena Olin) of a rebel leader. In **Havana,** director Sidney Pollack has remade **Casablanca** in an attempt to recapture the romanticism of an age gone by. Sadly, the attempt is only partially successful, as **Havana** is weighed down by sluggish pacing and an absence of chemistry between Redford and Olin.

Planning to rent out your property? Then **Pacific Heights** is the movie for you. Melanie Griffiths and Mathew Modine play a couple owning an apartment building. Enter Michael Keaton as a mysterious new tenant who refuses to pay his rent. Worse follows, as he uses psychological tactics and dirty tricks to ensnare the couple in a web of legal entanglements. They soon discover that his ultimate aim is to gain control of the building. Director John Schlesinger adopts Hitchcockian techniques as **Pacific Heights** builds up to a gripping climax.

Class Action is a courtroom drama that stars Gene Hackman and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio. Hackman is a civil rights lawyer with a 'Sixties' sensibility. Mastrantonio, his daughter, is a yuppie lawyer and a woman of the Nineties. Their relationship is never very good and matters come to head when they find themselves on opposing sides of a law suit. Fine performances by the stars ensure that this engrossing film is never weighed down by its emotional content.

The Hard Way has Michael J. Fox in the role of a movie star, wanting a taste of the real thing in preparation for the role of a police cop. For this he is attached to James Woods, a tough New York police officer. But Woods finds Fox an unnecessary distraction in his task of tracking down a serial killer. Though **The Hard Way** follows a predictable path, the interplay between Woods and Fox, and John Badham's tongue-in-cheek direction, make this piece of hokum an entertaining option for the weekend.

Fans of Clint Eastwood's action films will not know quite what to make of his latest directorial venture, **White Hunter, Black Heart**. It is actually a fictionalised account of the filming of the screen classic, **The African Queen**. Clint plays the role of director John Huston and comes up with one of his finest performances in recent times. Huston was an adventurer with quite a reputation for unpredictability. The film depicts his obsession with going on safari to kill an elephant rather than getting down to the business of film-making.

One of the famous legends of the American Wild West is the story of how Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday took on the Clanton Gang. I am aware of two Hollywood versions of this story, **Gunfight at the O.K. Corral** and **My Darling Clementine.** As **Gunfight** is likely to be more familiar to readers, I shall confine myself to the latter.

Clementine was made in 1945 by John Ford and stars Henry Fonda (Earp) and Victor Mature (Doc). This is not your standard actioner but an understated, nostalgic evocation of life on the frontier. Acting, cinematography, theme, music and the sheer beauty of the landscape combine in creating a poetic masterpiece. John Ford was truly one of the great directors of American film for whom the Wild West had a special place in his heart. He directed such westerns as **Stagecoach, Rio Grande, The Searchers** and many others. Orson Welles summed up Ford succinctly when he was once asked to name his favourite directors: "The old masters.....by which I mean John Ford, John Ford and John Ford"

Horror stories in a coupé

MULLIGATAWNY

The best way to improve your mind is to travel by train. Trapped as you are for a day and a night, or several days and several nights, preferably in air-conditioned comfort, in a cosy coupé for four, you find yourself becoming a confidante to other people's hopes and fears, not to mention ways of life.

"Do you mind if I make myself more comfortable?" asked the crew-cut gentleman with a smart khaki uniform, removing first his beret, then his scarf, belt and shirt before stripping down to a pair of snazzy Hawaiian shorts over which he pulled a T-shirt. The rest of us watched in fascination as he produced a plastic water bottle with a built-in straw and, having asked our permission once again, started to take strong pulls at it. He also manipulated between his fingers a thin strip of white paper, into which he tamped and rolled a twist of tobacco that he stuffed with a wisp of cotton at one end, but I never saw him smoke it, so I could not make out whether the cotton was to serve as a filter or an ignition point.

By that time the conversation had got rolling to a fine tilt as we exchanged ideas on how easy it would be for a determined group of terrorists to blow up the seat of any government.

"It's so easy", said the balding historian sitting next to me. "The Citadel is a sitting duck. All you have to do is to drift along in a fishing boat with a mini-Scud missile and take an aim at its landmarks. The whole place will come crashing down."

"Nah, that's impossible," said the Hawaiian-shorted gentleman taking a swig from his plastic bottle. "You know what I would do? I would take a flying leap from a nearby towerblock wearing a hang glider. Can you just imagine it? All the crowds cheering, front page pictures in the newspapers and all I'll have to do is to sail down over the Citadel. Then Bang! and all will be over, in a few seconds."

"Would you be able to go up the nearby towerblock in a hang glider?" I asked anxiously.

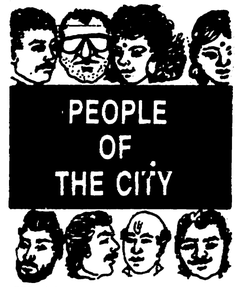
"*Sub ho saktha hai*", he replied airily. "Everything is possible."

The historical gentleman however had another idea. "The Brits did a good job when they planned the Citadel," he said. "They built a moat right round it. There must be passages from underneath the Citadel connected to the moat. All you have to do is to send some divers in through the sewers, secure your weaponry under the target, run the lead out through the moat and wait outside happily. You could be selling *kadalai* and, at the right time, press the button. The *kadalai* may spill due to the delayed impact, but you can always claim compensation."

"You civilians have too much imagination," said the lean and thirsty one rolling his cigarette. "Too messy. Have you noticed the post boxes in the Citadel. Real wrought iron stuff all the way from Birmingham, or those guns which belonged to the Sultan, again solid stuff. All you have to do is prime them casually, walk away, lead in hand, position your peanut vendor outside and, at the right moment, flash goes the Birdie! Hah! It can't fail, but the timing must be right."

The Chartered Accountant who sat opposite me suddenly woke up. "What dreams! But this really happened on a bus that was on its way to Trichy from Madras. Halfway through some of the passengers noticed a couple who were sitting at the back. They felt there was something very familiar. Could it be One-eyed Jack? Before they could even voice their suspicions, the man got up and folded his lungi... People became very quiet until the bus stopped and the man got down with his companion. They melted away into the countryside. Nobody said a word after that until the bus reached Trichy. They all got off and quickly went home. Nobody wanted to get involved. This is a true story because my partner was on that bus. He was shocked. He had never seen so much weaponry as he had seen strapped to those legs."

Dead silence followed this story. We looked around uneasily at all the lungi wearers who passed by. The real thing had made sinister strangers of all of us. Madras and Tamil Nadu were changing...



Wedding bells

The over 110-year-old *Illustrated Weekly* has finally been laid to rest — at least, in its magazine *avatar*. And a broadsheet with a magazine content has taken its place But one of the last stories in the old-style *IW* was the scoop that Madras was likely to see a host of Hollywood stars and American newsmakers come September (this fortnight, in fact). The occasion, it suggested, is the wedding of the ever-grinning Ashok Amritraj, the youngest of the brothers who made their name on the tennis courts of India and the world.

Ashok, who forsook the tennis courts for film-making and became a very business-like film producer, tasted success young. The pity, from the point of view of many in Madras, is that success was in business and film-making, not in tennis. There were many with a discerning tennis eye who thought that Ashok was the most talented of the three brothers on the court and that he would have gone further than Vijay. Unfortunately for Indian sport, a childhood craze for films and his turning up on the Hollywood scene as a tennis player led to American Cinema's gain and Indian Tennis's loss.

Like his brothers in their bachelor days, Ashok's name too has long been linked with those of several female American stars and starlets. But there's also been talk of involvements closer home, Sridevi being one name teamed with his in several Indian film gossip columns.

Then, just a couple of weeks before the wedding, the news broke. Momma Amritraj had a look at three girls, one from Madras and two from metros north. Eventually, the choice was made — Chitranjali Mani Nagappa, a lawyer and daughter of sculptor Mani Nagappa. Her father's works include the Nehru statue at Kathipara junction and the horses by Anna Flyover, which commemerate a ban on racing which no longer is in the books.

Hail & Farewell

While welcoming the news of the appointment of Minnie Menon as the manager of Artig Advertising, Madras, it is with regret that *The Recorder* says farewell to 'Thiru' Thirukode, the Director of the company who founded the Madras branch, led it over the last seven years and enabled it to grow into a well-established professional advertising agency.

Short and bearded Thiru, who was an HTA man in Madras and Bangalore for several years, now heads for the United States, away from the hassles of advertising life in India where nothing is wanted tomorrow and everything is wanted yesterday. Short men, they say, are impetuous and short-tempered. Thiru has been one of the most laid-back persons in a profession where frenzy and tantrums are badges of achievement. Who's ever seen Thiru angry? Or ruffled?

Bustling Minnie Menon, who was with Clarion before she joined Thiru's founding team, now takes over an agency some of whose most solid foundations are her contributions. It was the way she handled the Parrys 200th anniversary celebrations in 1988 that brought Artig into the forefront of Madras agencies. And she followed this up by organising, 18 months or so ago, the most successful quiz show in Madras, MADRAS 350, which was a celebration of both the city's founding as well as Parry's contribution to its growth. She rounded off that show by helping *Madras Musings* Quizmaster Navin Jayakumar and his Quiz Foundation teammate Dr Praveen get published the highlights of that contest. Their *Madras Quiz Book* was that sought-after sequel.

Artig won the Parrys' bicentennial account in what may be described as "open competition", making a presentation that struck a better chord than those by others.

Another coup was getting Gavaskar to model for Sears Elcot TV sets — and visit Madras several times in the process. Sears is the only Madras brand that Gavaskar has modelled for and endorsed.

Minnie Menon, if memory serves *The Recorder* right, is the third woman to head an advertising agency in Madras. Yamuna Prabhu was the first, leading the Ogilvy, Benson and Mather team here. Rita Chowdhury still heads HTA, Madras, and now there's Minnie. Bharathi Shroff was for a short time acting head of Clarion, Madras.

Artig, now very much on its own feet, was cloned by Ogilvy & Mather (was Benson part of the name at the time?) and it is at Ogilvy & Mather, Madras, that the other half of the Menon household is to be found. Mohan Menon is Vice-President and Creative Director of O & M. But Minnie's always been out there in the field at her competitive best showing that what O & M can do Artig can perhaps do better.

The Recorder

QUIZZIN WITH NAVIN-10

The response to the quiz keeps growing every fortnight. But we are sure it will get still better. Meanwhile, try and answer the first twenty question on your own, 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 — which leaves space for your answer — and mail it to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ-10, C/o. Lokavani Hall Mark Press, 62-63 Greames Road, Madras-600 006 **before 5 p.m. on September 10th.** The **first three correct answers drawn** will be entitled to a prize of Rs. 100 ech. We can't make it any simpler than that, can we? So get to it; here are the questions and your coupon.

1. The fortnight started on a historic note with Presidents Bush and Gorbachev signing the START treaty cutting down nuclear arsenals by over 30 per cent. What was unusual about the pens used to sign this 700-page document?
2. August 2, 1991 was the first anniversary of which event, which was publicised in a full page and in the newspapers?
3. August 3 — The Mettur dam filled to capacity this day gladdening the hearts of everyone. It was also an appropriately auspicious day. Why?
4. Which tourist spot was closed for a month for repairs following flash floods in the Cauvery?
5. August 6 — what anniversary was commemorated in Japan this day with solemn prayers?
6. India launched the Prithvi 3 missile on August 7, taking it into a select club of five nations with this capability. Name the other missiles in the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.
7. Which Guinness Book record holder led a "mass skip-run for the handicapped" in Madras on August 10? The event was organised by Exnora International to raise funds for a hostel-cum-rehabilitation centre at Tambaram for the physically handicapped.
8. Where in the country did a gruesome massacre of Harijans take place recently?
9. In a daring attack, assailants stormed the premises of which controversial Tamil political weekly in Egmore, killing two employees while ransacking the office?
10. What is the paper pulp preservation process currently being applied on the Shore Temple, Mamallapuram, to save it from sea erosion?
11. What 'aerial' technology is now being applied to establish a relationship between the water spread and the mosquito population and also map the mosquito breeding sites?
12. Which festival on the banks of the Godavari began on August 14 amidst chanting of Vedic hymns?
13. Name the hospice shortly to come up at Mathur, near Manali, to provide care for terminally ill cancer patients. Its foundation was laid on Independence Day.
14. Which country won the Pre-Olympic Asian Zone Group-B league football tournament and also picked up the Indira Gandhi trophy for peace and friendship?
15. What award was announced in favour of Kannada writer Prof U K Gokak for his outstanding contribution to Indian literature for 1990-1991?
16. Which deposed President threatened to commit suicide if he was not provided with certain facilities, including a companion in jail?
17. What PTC services will be resumed shortly, according to Transport Minister K A Sengottaiyan?
18. Can you identify these personalities who made news this fortnight?
    a) Became deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha
    b) His marriage plans with 10-year-old Ameena failed to take off.
    c) Will be the world's richest pro-athlete this year — Forbes magazine.
    d) British journalist freed in Lebanon after over five years in captivity.
    e) Former Iranian PM stabbed to death in France.
19. Who said (a) "Oval will be my last test".
    (b) "I'll be on the first boat off the ship."
20. What was unusual about a 44 km journey for 2½ hours, passing through 13 stations, taken by a goods train with 27 wagons of cattle on the Moradabad line in UP on July 19?

PRIZE QUESTION

21. Which 12th century bronze finally returned home into the welcoming arms of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha on August 9?

QUIZ COUPON-10

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

Ans. to Q. 21 .....

(The Fortnight of August 1 to August 15)

We now look forward to a real big response. Meanwhile, here are the lucky winners to Quiz-9 the correct answer:

PRIZE WINNERS

1st Prize: P. SELVAKUMAR, No. 12, Jaganathapuram 3rd Street, Chetpet, Madras-600 031.

2nd Prize: GHAN SHYAM GANDHI, C/o. K.K. Rathi, Parsn Apartment, G.N. Chetty Road, Madras-17.

3rd Prize: N.B. STANLY, No. 23, V.R.C. Road, T. Nagar, Madras-600 017.

ANSWER TO QUIZZIN'-9: Pondicherry

My husband and the Budget

by N. Meera Raghavendra Rao

Honey, this is the last time I am going to have a second cup of coffee in the morning, declared my husband, folding the newspaper he was so immersed in till then and reaching out for the hot beverage I held in my out stretched hand.

From the seriousness of his tone and the frown on his face I thought the poor dear, who was so fond of coffee, had 'ultimately' decided to give up his habit of gulping the hot liquid at least half a dozen times a day. The increase in the price of sugar came more as a relief to me for once.

You mean to say you will do with just one cup of coffee in the evening also? I asked.

Yes, that's what I have decided, he stated, and picked up the newspaper again, probably to give the Union Budget another reading.

Aye, listen, he called out no sooner I resumed preparing the morning breakfast.

Do you know the price of gas has gone up by 20 per cent? Have you thought of reducing its consumption in any way? he demanded.

Why don't you suggest something yourself? I prompted.

He seemed to think for a moment. Supposing you do the cooking just once for the entire day? he suggested, looking immensely pleased at his own idea.

And eat the same food twice if not thrice, I completed for him.

Don't be silly, why do we have to do that? Can't you think of making a variety of dishes for lunch and dinner to avoid repetition? he asked, sounding very intelligent.

But that would mean I would be using the same amount of fuel, whether the cooking is done once or twice, wouldn't it? I said trying to suppress my laughter at his idea. He too seemed to have realised this and quickly came up with another bright suggestion.

Supposing, we eat less of cooked food and more of salads. It's good for the health also, don't you agree? he asked.

Now you are talking some sense, I said, feeling happy that hubby was capable of suggesting alternatives, that would not only conserve fuel but my energy as well.

Aren't you doing anything to conserve petrol? I queried, thinking hubby would come with some idea on this, but his answer was only a long sigh.

Why don't you all pool your cars when you go to office? I suggested.

No chance. My colleagues are already thinking of disposing their cars, replied hubby. Shall we also follow suit and depend upon State Transport? he asked.

I did not bother to reply and went back to the kitchen to complete my cooking for the day, leaving the man to work out economy measures all by himself.

Forget the Budget for the moment and let's all have lunch in peace, I warned as I was laying the table.

Mummy, where are my favourite 'aluparathas' you promised to make today? grumbled my son Sudhir, scrutinizing the dishes on the table. 'And why haven't you made 'cholé?

Why don't you try a different kind of menu which your father and I chose for this Sunday? I said, helping him with large servings of sprouted gram and vegetable salad to accompany the cereal.

Oh, Mummy, are you both crazy? I am not going to eat this stuff, muttered Sudhir and stormed out.

If the boy cannot eat the 'stuff' even for a day, how am I to adopt the new menu for the rest of the week, I wondered, watching hubby's face as he ate every morsel, chewing hard the sprouted gram and the raw vegetables. What's worse, he took double the time he normally took over lunch.

Lunch over he adjourned to the sit-out holding something in both his hands. Suddenly somthing struck me and I called out to him.

Honey, don't forget the cost of the two things you are carrying has also escalated considerably. High time you gave up your favourite brand of cigarettes and pan masala if you are serious about economising.

Hubby was taken aback! You women never leave us alone, he expostulated, tightening his fists. I should have known better, he mumbled. I could hear him whispering 'Needles and Pins, Needles and Pins. When a man marries, his trouble begins.'

Not when a man marries, but when the new budget actually comes into effect, I clarified.

Days went by and I stuck to the mixed menu of cooked and raw food which hubby was trying to get used to, more because the 'suggestion' had come from him and his prestige and honour were at stake. My son continued to protest. As for me, I was happy spending less time on making coffee and cooking food.

When I thought things were settling down, hubby declared one morning, 'Darling, from today it's going to be *status quo ante*. After all, what is life if we don't enjoy the small luxuries? I have an alternative to suggest. Why don't you take up a job, dear? he asked pleadingly.

The 'suggestion' silenced even me!

IN THE STEW POT

Make **Channa** the North-West Frontier way. Boiled in tea-leaves (oh, yes!) and cooked till completely dry, it is tart, unusual and has a rustic bite. Serve with hot **Bhaturas**. For a starter, serve scrumptious **Shahi Kababs**. Perfect for high-tea.

PINDI CHANNA

1 cup *kabuli channa*, soaked in water for at least 8 hours
3 tbs oil or ghee
4 green chillies
1 teaspoon red chilli powder
2 teaspoons *garam masala*
½ teaspoon soda bicarbonate
½ teaspoon turmeric powder
2 bay leaves
Juice of 1 lemon
1 tbs used tea leaves tied in a muslin cloth
Salt to taste

Dry Masala Powder

6 cloves
1 teaspoon powdered rock salt
1 two-inch piece cinnamon stick
2 tbs cummin seeds *(jeera)*
2 tbs roasted coriander seeds *(dhaniya)*
(Powdered fine)

For garnishing

1 onion cut into rings
1 inch piece ginger, scraped and shredded fine
A bunch of coriander leaves chopped fine

Method

Pressure cook in very little water the soaked chick peas along with the used tea leaves, turmeric powder, bay leaves and salt. Drain excess water. Remove the tea leaves and bay leaves. Set aside.

Heat oil, add green chillies, cooked *channa*, soda bicarbonate, chilli powder, dry *masala* powder and two tablespoons of water. Simmer for a minute or two till well blended.

Add the *garam masala*. Take off the heat and add the lemon juice.

Serve decorated with onion rings, ginger pieces and chopped coriander leaves.

Note: While pressure cooking, the tea leaves must remain tied in the muslin cloth.

BHATURA

2 cups *maida*
6 tbs curd
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon soda bicarbonate
2 tbs oil
Oil for deep frying
Salt to taste

Method

Mix two tablespoons curd with sugar, salt, soda bicarbonate, one tablespoon oil and two tablespoons flour.

Sprinkle some water, mix well and set aside covered in a warm place for 3-4 hours till well fermented.

Mix this fermented mixture with the remaining flour and curd.

Knead to a soft dough adding sufficient water. Add the remaining oil and knead again.

Cover and set aside in a warm place for another 2-3 hours.

Divide the dough and make balls, each the size of a large lemon. Roll out on a floured board into 5" discs.

Deep fry, like *pooris*, and serve with *Pindi Channa*.

Chandra Padmanabhan

SHAHI KABAB

½ kg minced meat
2 cups milk
2 big cardamoms
4 small cardamoms
3 teaspoons raisins
1 tbs cashewnuts
3 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons chopped ginger
3 cloves
1 teaspoon cummin seeds *(jeera)*
4 green chillies
1 egg
1 bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
150 grams bread crumbs for coating
Oil for deep frying
Salt to taste

Method

Cook the mince meat with milk, salt, green chillies, cardamoms, *jeera*, garlic and ginger till dry. Set aside to cool.

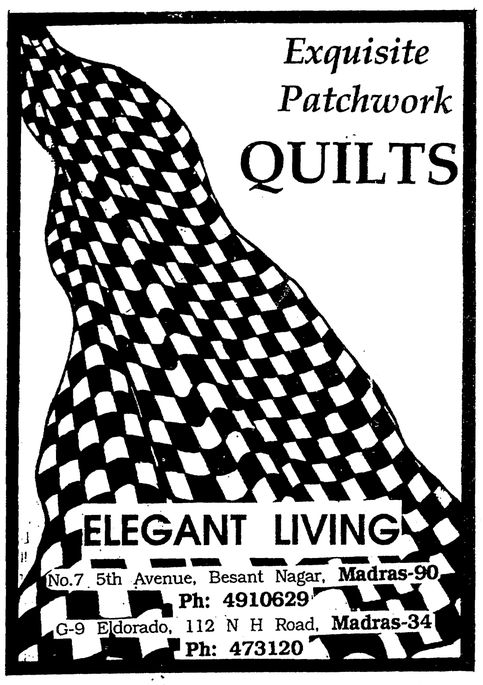
Add chopped coriander leaves and yolk of an egg.

Shape into long *kababs*. In each keep a cashewnut and a few raisins as filling.

Beat the egg white with a little water. Dip the *kabab* in it. Roll on bread crumbs and fry till golden brown.

Drain on an absorbent paper and serve hot.

Vasudha Talwar



The town's best steaks

Attending an evening performance at the Music Academy gives you a reasonably good excuse to stop at the HOT STOP (situated opposite the LOP STOP on Mowbrays Road) for an excellent late-evening dinner of steak and vegetables.

I don't think I have eaten such good meat at such reasonable prices (between Rs. 35 and Rs. 45 per plate) at any other place in town. The steak portions are substantial, piping hot and accompanied by vegetables, French fries and sandwich bread slices.

I have only tasted their fish, vegetable and chateaubriand steaks, but going by the law of probability, I think I can make the claim that one can blindly choose any steak on the menu and not be disappointed.

Sweet treat

Those of you afflicted with a sweet tooth can stop next door at SWEET MEMORIES (same management as HOT STOP) and treat yourselves to some of the innumerable cakes, pastries, tarts, biscuits (ask for the list) on display. By the way, you can also buy various kinds of bread (including brown bread and garlic bread) and even puffs (with different fillings) at this shop.

Sit or take-away

Another bakery which is extremely popular, especially with school and college goers, is CAKES 'N' BAKES on Nungambakkam High Road. Started in 1983 and open every day of the

FOODS & FADS

week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., this little cafe is the ideal place for mid-day snacks and quick lunches and dinners. If you haven't got the time for a sit-down meal, the obliging staff will pack your "take-away" meals in just 10 minutes or so.

CAKES 'N' BAKES has got a wide range of pizzas (large and small), "foot-longs" (or fillings in French bread), cutlets, burgers, hot-dogs, frankies, salads, sandwiches, ice-creams and all kinds of desserts. Incidentally, the shop also takes orders for "special-occasion" cakes for birthdays, weddings and parties.

The cut's the thing

Anyone who has the slightest doubt that the "Yuppie" generation is alive and kicking should walk across the Nungambakkam High Road to BENETTON (not far from CAKES 'N' BAKES). The interior of this boutique looks like any European shop — few clothes in exclusive colours and prints, neatly folded on counters and prodigiously expensive.

All the same, one realises that the "cut" is the most important feature of Western dress and these clothes, even if they do make a hole in your pocket, are designed to flatter your form. So don't bother to fight your teenaged sons or daughters who are determined to possess the BENETTON label. May be you'll even win a few points in domestic dramas by holding the BENETTON "carrot" over their heads!

V.K.

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS...

Child prodigy to music star

My last conversation with N.M.N. (N.M. Narayanan, the inimitable music critic of *The Hindu* who passed away recently) was about Gottuvadyam N. Ravikiran. He was talking about the growth of Ravikiran from a child prodigy into a complete musician.

Ravikiran is one child prodigy who showed his gift through vocal music. Most prodigies, said N.M.N., first come to light as instrumentalists. Ravikiran caused quite a sensation in Madras twenty years ago by recognizing at least 400 *ragas*, spelling out the various technical nuances of Carnatic music and giving full-fledged concerts. And he was all of four years old then! It had astrological circles discussing his horoscope, which is said to have the same composition as that of his musician grandfather who had died dissatisfied with his musical achievements.

Ravikiran made Gottuvadyam quite famous around the world and he is now all set to rename it *Chitra Veena*. His explanation is that was the original name of the instrument. *Vadya* (instrument) makes people confuse it with a percussion instrument, particularly with the hard sound *Gottu* preceding it. *Veena* brings in the imagery of a string instrument and *Chitra Veena* indicates it is different from *Veena*, for it has no frets like the *Veena* and is played with a *Gottu*, or a wooden block.

Ravikiran has now founded his own organisation and calls it International Society for Carnatic (meaning ancient) music. His idea is to propagate music through the three E s (Exposure, Education and Excellence). There are many lecture demonstrations and scholarship schemes for talented young musicians on the anvil.

Ravikiran also has announced an unique service to the music world. A music clinic! To correct voice and other problems musicians face.

Ravikiran with his Chitra Veena

A home from home

The Cholamandal Artists' Village has for 25 years now been home to several artists who were inspired by K C S Panicker. From time to time they are joined by visitors from abroad who want to work in an Indian milieu or by the surf of the Coromandel Coast. Usually these visitors live with the permanent residents or commute from Adyar or make-do around the Village. Things, however, are going to be different for them from now on. There'll be well-equipped guesthouses for them.

TCI's D P Agarwal donated the two-storied guesthouse that was recently opened by Joel Raffier, Director of the Alliance Francaise, Madras. And then Raffier announced that the French Government would donate a similar guesthouse, complete with studio, kitchenette and living quarters on each floor.

These guesthouses are sure to play a great role in future, allowing the free mixing of artistic traditions from the world over.

Two we'll miss

The classical music and dance world has lost quite a few titans in the last few months. N.M.N's music critiques were legendary. They made long reading on a Friday morning, as he touched on many a topic non-musical before he came to the actual subject of his review. He will be missed by the entire music world.

So too Y.G. Doraiswamy, who died almost unsung barely two months after his brother Y.G.P. Y.G.D. was well known for discovering young talent and giving them an introduction to the right circles in Madras. Musicians like Parveen Sultana would have found it difficult to sing in Madras but for him. He had a wealth of information about the evolution of music and dance in Madras after Independence but consistently refused to give interviews in his later years.

The Players in mink

The Madras Players are coming up with yet another bedroom farce directed by Noshir Ratnagar. It is already two years since Ratnagar presented his last one, with its fashionable sets, P.C. Ramakrishna in bath towel etc. This one is called *The Revealing Mink*.

What the mink will actually reveal will be found in a plot thickened with love triangles, clandestine affairs, mistaken identities etc. The publicity blurb says it is irresistible, knotty and has the one and only George Deligianis with Sherry Batlivala, Aryama Sundaram, Deepika Radhakrishna and others. *The Revealing Mink* will be staged on September 3rd and 4th at the Music Academy.

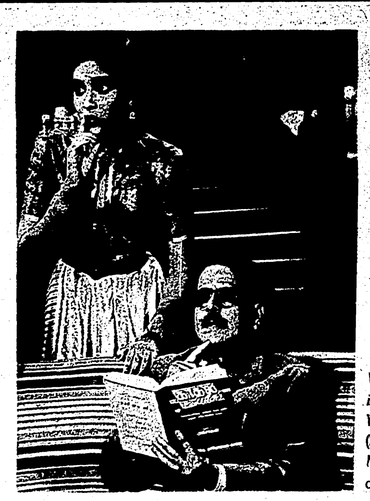
Theatre of action

At Sittrarangam we watched a presentation of issue-based theatre pieces by Chennai Kalai Kuzhu. This group has been presenting street theatre in the city, foussing on such issues as women's problems, illiteracy, environment etc.

The group was formed in 1984 after the Theatre Festival held in Madras. Pralayan, the group director, says a group of people with secular values got inspired by the Festival and decided to make theatre a part of their cultural action.

Theatre as a social campaign has been enormously successful in the Kerala literacy campaign. Influenced by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, this group took an active part in organizing a state-wide Kala Jatha and performed street theatre in 45 places all over Tamil Nadu. The actors and actresses are all middle-level employees in various institutions. Their theatre is simple, direct and full of music and dance.

V.R. Devika.



Vyjayanthimala in a scene from Vaazhkai (Still from *Film News Anandan's* collection)

The 150th AVM story

One of the Kodambakkam giants, the AVM unit, recently released its 150th film, *Maa Nagara Kaaval*. The founder of the AVM unit, South Indian movie moghul A V Meyyappan, who created film history with his spectacular success story, began his film-making innings way back in 1935 with *Alli Arjuna*. His mission of movie-making is being carried on after his death with equal zeal and success by his sons AVM Saravanan and M Balasubramaniam.

Meyyappa Chettiar, who belonged to a Nagarathar family, joined the

KINEMAYANA BY MOVIEMAN

family business as a teenager. 'A V & Sons' was a kind of mini-department store which sold many things, including gramophone records, one of the chief forms of entertainment of that age.

It was in the late 1920's that he moved to Madras and, in association with some friends, promoted Saraswathi Stores to produce and market gramophone records. He entered into an arrangement with a German company and began manufacturing records under the *Odeon* label. Classical Carnatic music by Ariyakkudi Ramaniya Aiyangar and his like....'Drama sets' of famous stage plays....popular folk songs like *Vannan vandane, vannaara chinnaan vandane'* — he produced them all, and most of them sold like hot *idlis*..

When movies began to talk, he entered films, but his first effort was a disaster. The artistes brought from Tamil theatre found the huge studio lights too much to bear and they acted in the film with their eyes tightly closed! The movie turned out to be some kind of a blindman's buff.

In 1935, Meyyappan also produced *Ratnavali* in Calcutta starring the famous Palayankottah sisters, P S Ratna Bai and P S Sarswathi Bai, and Maharajapuram Krishnamurthy (the legendary Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer's brother). This film ran into a different kind of problem, namely the faulty synchronisation of sound. In most scenes in the film, when the artistes moved their lips no dialogue was heard and when sounds were heard the artistes' lips were tightly sealed!

Undaunted by such reverses, Meyyappan forged ahead. The tide turned in 1941 when he produced *Sabhapathy*, a farcical comedy written by the founding father of Tamil theatre, Pammal Sambhandam Mudaliar. Directed by a master of screen humour, A T Krishnaswami, the film catapulted saucer-eyed comedian T R Ramachandran to instant stardom. Four years later, Meyyappan produced another box office bonanza, *Sree Valli*, which bestowed stardom on its hero, singer-actor T R Mahalingam, and seductive charmer Kumari Rukmini.

Meyyappan now shifted his movie-making activities to Karaikudi and made films there which firmly placed him on the higher rungs of success. *Naam Iruvar* was one winner he produced during this period.

Back in Madras, Meyyappan built his own studio and his *Vaazhkai*, in Tamil, and *Bahaar*, in Hindi, set the Cooum and the Mahim Creek afire. Meyyappan the starmaker created Vyjayanthimala in these films and she soon soared to success.

Meyyappan was now a movie moghul next only to Gemini boss S S Vasan. He made movies in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi and even Bengali. Many were hits and several won awards. A person of vision, with a flair for taking risks at the right moment, he also had an instinct for the pulse of the audience. That kept the AVM studio in Kodambakkam throbbing with life the year round. Today, it continues to be a hive of activity.

Skipping into Guinness

The slight, bearded man in shorts and a banian outside the MAC Stadium one recent morning hardly looked like being in any kind of book of records. The red skipping rope he used to limber up with only added to this impression. But record-holder he was and a new record he would set, Exnora International officials informed all those who had gathered round him well before 7.30 in the morning.

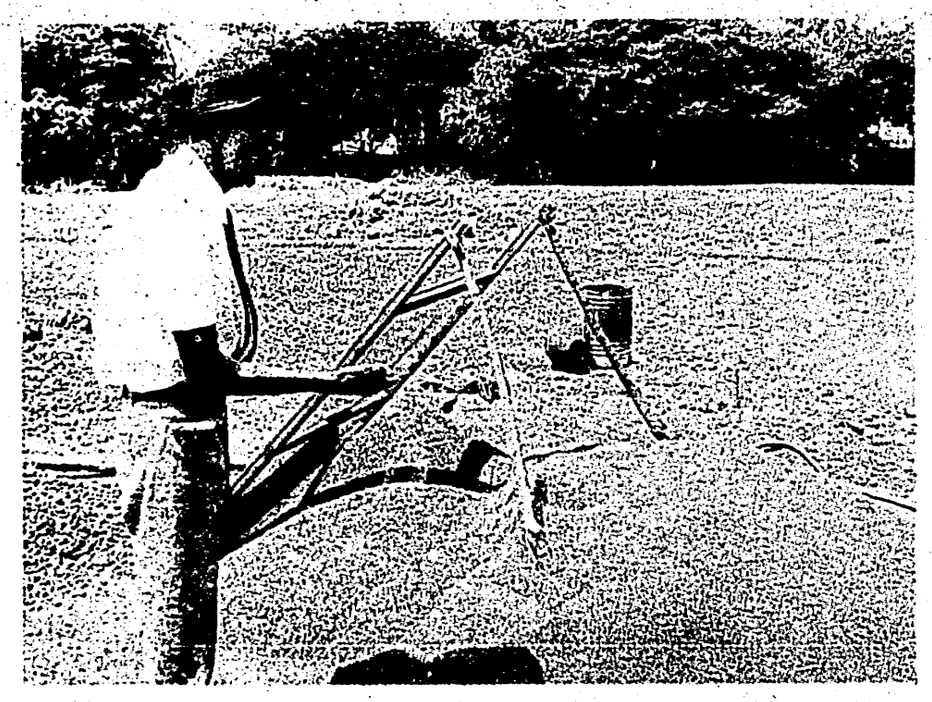
One hour, 25 minutes and 47 seconds after he was flagged off at 8.30 a.m., Karunakaran of Southern Railways had completed a skip-run of 25 kms and was in the running to earn another niche for himself in the *Guinness Book of Records*. His place in it at present — which has enabled him to call himself Guinness Karunakaran — was for skip-running 10 kms in 57 minutes.

Karunakaran set his latest record as a part of an event Exnora organised and called 'Skip for the Handicapped'. Hundreds of schoolchildren and young people skip-running behind Karunakaran did not make his task any easier, but the sponsorship of each of them certainly swelled the coffers of a fund which Exnora will use to establish a guest house for the handicapped coming to the city on a visit or in search of jobs.

A few Ministers, led by K A Krishnaswamy, sportspersons led by Srikkanth, film persons led by Roopini, and the ubiquitous M Gopalakrishnan of the Indian Bank helped get the show on the road. The attempts of most of them at skip-running were, however, strictly for the cameras — and many of them might not have relished that idea as well, so uncomfortable did they look with the skipping rope.

Quite in contrast to these unsteady efforts and even the more practised efforts of several of the younger set was Karunakaran's athletic style. Skip-running with the easy lengthy stride of a champion long-distance runner, he demonstrated that here was an athletics event that could well find itself on the competitive tracks of the world one day.

J.F.



Subbu, still going strong at 80 plus, relaying the Vivekananda pitch. Here he examines the sand to be used in the changeover from matting to turf. — (Photograph: K.N. CHARI)

When Subbu saved a ground

by P.N. Sundaresan

Preservation and improvement of the environment is a major world problem. One of the aspects of this problem is the preservation of the open spaces, the lungs, of a city.

About two decades back, while at *The Hindu*, I was asked to find out the amenities available for sport and recreational activity in the many schools in the city. That investigation revealed that most schools lacked playing fields. The schools in congested North Madras, particularly, had no open spaces to offer their students unless they took them to distant Kesava Pillai Park, west of the Central Station and across the Buckingham Central.

I also came across a booklet prepared by the Corporation identifying the open spaces in the city which could be put to use as playing fields. But, alas most of them are no more. In fact, there is only one playing field along the Marina now — the Presidency College ground — in addition to threatened Wenlock Park, the headquarters of the Scouts. What a contrast to the vast open areas I remember seeing on this stretch three or four decades back. And thereby hangs the tale of how this college ground was saved by a sports-mad physical director of the College.

It was about fifty years ago, on a Monday morning, that the principal of Presidency, H A Papworth, told his physical director, P R Subramanyam, that the State Government had plans to build on the college ground by the beach, and the College should hand it over to the P.W.D. before the week-end. He brushed aside Subramanyam's protests that it would affect the sports and recreational activities of thousands of students, and asked him to carry out the order.

It was to this ground that the Governor, Sir Arthur Hope, would come to watch cricket matches between A.F.W. Dixon's team and the college eleven. Dixon, and his close friend Sir Robert Denniston, both pillars of the Madras Cricket Club, did much to break the barriers between the Europeans and the Indians by forming a team consisting of both, and the Governor used to enjoy these attempts at integration. During his visits to the ground, Subramanyam, Subbu to his colleagues, friends and students, would play host and thus got to know Sir Arthur well.

Now, he lost little time in phoning *Government House* and asking for an immediate appointment with the Governor. He then went straight to Denniston's house and explained the situation to him. Denniston readily agreed to accompany Subbu to the Governor's.

The Governor greeted them with the remark, "What pleasure brings both of you here?" Subbu replied that it was not pleasure but pain that was the reason for their visit. Subbu then explained that His Excellency would no longer be able to witness the "integrated" cricket matches on the Marina ground because his Government preferred to use the land for building. When the Governor, who loved the game and had appeared occasionally for the M.C.C., asked what he could do, Subbu, backed by Denniston, suggested that he instruct his adviser, Mr Austin, to cancel the order. The Governor did exactly that in their presence.

A few years later, Subbu staved off another threat to the ground with the same diplomacy when the then Police Commissioner, an Englishman, wanted a big slice on the eastern side of it to widen the road between the ground and the beach (now Kamaraj Salai). Thus, the Marina ground was saved for cricket twice — and the sport still flourishes there.

To those of my generation, the Marina ground is a reminder of the halycon years when the beach was a haven of peace and fresh air. Walking or cycling up and down the main road was then a great pleasure, with vast open spaces on both sides of it. The turbaned figure of Ram Singh polishing up his cricket at his club nets on the Plague-shed ground, south of the Examination Hall, is one of my strongest memories.

To return to Subbu, now an octogenarian, he can still be seen at every sports gathering, bursting upon the scene with a hat out of the thirties atop his tiny, but shrewd head. And bet wixt these occasions, he can still be seen tending and re-laying cricket pitches. A brilliant sprinter in his youth, who missed the Olympics narrowly, Subbu's stature as a sportsperson is the result of his deep love for sport, and the uncompromising manner he has served it without regard to personal gain or reward.

Whither Usha — and look-alike Beena?

P.T. Usha, the finest woman athlete produced by India, is now very much part of the Madras scene. As a Sports Officer of the Southern Railways, she is stationed in the city and is expected to contribute much to the continued Southern Railway's domination of athletics, by coaching several promising newcomers headquartered in the city. But is Usha ready to coach — or does she prefer getting back on the track?

The talk in athletics circles in the city is the comeback that Usha is said to be planning. Her husband, a BSF police officer, now stationed in Avadi, these stories state, is an enthusiastic sportsman and is, therefore, agreeable to his wife returning to the track. There, it is said, she will concentrate on the flats — from the 100m to the 400m; but, as has been suggested by some in the past, may be she'll try the 400m and the 800m. With the stamina she had for the 400m hurdles, the 800m, would certainly not be beyond her — and the 1500m, which is fast becoming a semi-sprint, is not an inconceivable thought.

If Usha does indeed return to the track, whatever her events, will she stay on in Madras or will she ask for a transfer to Kerala to work with the only coach she has ever known, O M Nambiar? That coach would undoubtedly be delighted to work with Usha again, but meanwhile he's busy with a surrogate.

Watch out for Beena Augustine in the next few months as India prepares for the Asian Track and Field Championships and the South Asia Federation meet in Colombo at the end of the year. Nambiar thinks she'll become a major challenger only by the next Asian Games, in 1994, but this writer feels she'll be in the public eye long before that.

Tall Beena Augustine is an Usha lookalike, not only in build but in appearance and background as well. Like Usha, she's from northern Kerala — the Cannanore area — and was spotted in Sports School. She's yet to show the turn of foot of an Usha in the shorter sprints, but seems ideally suited for the 400m and 800m — perhaps even the metric mile — and I can see Nambiar still hankering after that 400m hurdles Olympic medal.

If Usha does return to the track and to Kerala as well, her workouts with Beena could help both immensely. And Nambiar might look to not one but two winners at the next Asiad.

Talent not in the arena

There is indeed no lack of organising talent in Tamil Nadu, even if the State invariably draws a blank in most games. This was well illustrated, for instance, by the efficient manner in which the State Boxing Association conducted, at short notice, the Federation Cup championships, and the steps the local Badminton Association took to get from R M Veerappan, the Minister in charge of sport and youth welfare, the green signal for a plot of land near Valluvar Kottam on which to build a modern stadium. The boxing meet has just ended, and the TNBA is awaiting formal government orders.

The staging of the Federation Cup meet was made possible mainly by the persuasiveness of the T.N. Boxing Association Secretary M Mohanakrishnan, a more dedicated official than whom the State has not known. To begin with, virtually single-handed he won a long-drawn-out duel with the influential Tamil Nadu Football Association in the corridors of the Corporation for use of the Nehru Stadium for the boxing meet, and in the process reminded the TNFA that the stadium was not its private property even if it used it throughout the year. But what mattered most was the rich sponsorship Mohanakrishnan was able to obtain for the Federation Cup. He was able to convince the Indian Bank's sports-minded Chairman and Managing Director, M Gopalakrishnan, that the Federation Cup deserved as much patronage as any of the numerous tournaments Indian Bank had sponsored since he became its Chairman.

The Indian Bank's sponsorships and employment of Indian internationals like Angela Lincy and Sentheswaran have earned this sports-minded banker much credit in sports circles and he was given a big hand when he inaugurated the Federation Cup meet. An MLA introduced the chief guest in his inimitable oratorical style, but Gopalakrishnan kept it short and sweet so that the boxing programme could resume. The inauguration, you see, came after the first two bouts had been gone through!

The standard of the pugilists on view in those bouts was in keeping with the overcast sky. Unfortunately, that was a standard that was to prevail throughout most of the meet. Mediocrity, that's what Indian boxing seems to be all about, except for the occasional silver lining like Manoj Pingale.

AJAX

Superbikes & Formula 3s

The 34th All India Motor Race Meet, postponed due to the Gulf War, will now be held on September 8th and 15th at the new race track in Sriperumbudur.

This year's action will include Superbikes and Formula 3 racing cars from abroad, but driven by some of India's best drivers. There will also be the McDowell's Formula two-seater, the Maruti Formula single-seater and various classifications of Indian bikes and cars.

An action-packed programme has been planned for both Sundays. Not to be missed.

ANSWERS

1) They were made from scrapped weapons. 2) The invasion of Kuwait. 3) Adi Perukku the traditional day when the Cauvery is in spate. 4) Brindavan Gardens. 5) The destruction of Hiroshima by an atomic bomb. 6) Trishul, Agni, Akash and Nag. 7) V Karunakaran. 8) Isundur, AP. 9) Tharasu. 10) The paper pulp removes salt from the stone which is then coated with a transparent polyvinyl acetate coating to prevent further damage. 11) Remote sensing. 12) Pushkaram. 13) Jeevodaya. 14) Kuwait. 15) Bharatiya Jnanpith award. 16) President H M Ershad. 17) V and J services. 18) (a) S Mallikarjunaiah, (b) Sheikh Yahya H M Al Sagish. (c) Evander Holyfield. (d) John McCarthy. (e) Shapur Bakhtiar. 19) (a) Viv Richards. (b) Yiannis Avramis, captain of the Greek liner *Oceanos* which sank in a storm. He made this statement before the voyage: (2) It ran without a driver!

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