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MUSINGS

Vol. I. No. 12

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

October 1 — 14, 1991

A fast track to Madras?

Rajdhani concept to be examined

(By a Special Correspondent)

Madras at last to get an overnight train service to and from Delhi? For it has been asking for a Rajdhani type service like the 20-year-old ones linking Bombay and Delhi, Calcutta and Delhi, but the Railways has always found one reason or other to consider it impractical. Now, as reported from Delhi, that the railways has agreed "to examine the feasibility" of such a service.

The Calcutta and Bombay Rajdhani are the finest train services in the country, recalls a colleague who used to use them regularly a few years ago.

You leave around 5.30 in the evening and you are at your destination around 10 the next morning. Besides offering a fast, super-smooth run, the Rajdhani are the cleanest trains on the continent. And if you travel First, two-berth coupes with private toilets and valet service offer truly five-star service. In addition, your dinner and breakfast, of first rate quality, are served by your valet with high class cutlery and crockery. After a good meal, a better rest on a train that hardly ever stops and a refreshing shave and shower in the morning, you were ready to start your day's work the moment you get down at Bombay Central, Howrah and Delhi stations.

The success of the three-times-a-week Rajdhani services was the overnight concept which not only saved a night in a hotel but which was made possible by very convenient times for the working executive. The combination produced tremendous savings at even the high rates charged by the service. And with its almost legendary punctuality and non-stop, lulling smoothness, it enabled the executive to get to work on time feeling completely refreshed — making him welcome the service.

It was this total ambience that made a similar express sought by the country's fourth metro. But it is only now that the entire 2200 km Delhi-Madras route has been electrified, making even a feasibility study possible. That study is, however, likely to be positive only if the overnight concept can be retained.

Such a concept will be possible only if the entire Delhi-Madras track is made capable of handling higher speeds than at present. Indian Railways generally limits speeds to 100 kmph for most of its fast trains, though, on a few sections, the limit goes up to 120 kmph and, occasionally, more. The entire Delhi-Madras track might have to be

made capable of handling 140 kmph speeds if the Dakshin Rajdhani is to become a reality. A feasibility study would well reveal that this is not wholly impossible. And then, maybe, a 20-year dream of following the Bombay and Calcutta examples will come true.



Spencer's Towers, a landmark in Madras, are now in a dilapidated condition. When Spencer's Plaza opens shortly, with "the largest department store in India" amongst its occupants, will these towers of yesteryear be allowed to remain as memorials to the time when Spencer's was renowned as "the best department store east of Suez"? (Photograph by SUSHEELA NAIR)

What will be the fate of Spencer's Towers?

(By A Special Correspondent)

110-years-old Spencer & Co, whose beginnings as an all-purpose store go back another 15 or 20 years, was perhaps the first truly modern department store in India when it relocated at its present site and opened for business on December 2, 1895. Since then, it has undergone many metamorphoses, the latest when the R P Goenka Group took it over. Amongst the many activities that this group now envisages for it is real estate.

In its new building fast getting ready, Spencer's will occupy 100,000 sq ft of space and sell 130,000 sq ft of extra space in the first phase. In the second phase, a further 430,000 sq ft of space is planned to be made available. And in the third phase, a further 340,000 sq ft of space is being envisaged, with

parking space for 1000 cars by then! What will this all do to traffic on Mount Road? Will all that planning also see the final destruction of the turrets that have been landmarks in the city since 1897?

Those turrets were the dominating feature of curving Spencer Hall that was built in the Indo-Saracenic style, probably by the father of modern Indo-Saracenic, Robert Fellowes Chisholm. In its heyday, the Hall housed 80 departments, all helping to make the Spencer's name — which it lent to many products made for it — legendary. Spencer's 'Light of Asia' cigars made in its Dindigul factory were a Churchill favourite.

When fire in the 1970s destroyed the inside of Spencer's Hall, there was talk of saving the shell for a magnificent reception hall that would be the centre-

piece for all development around it. That idea was scrapped one fine day, but will the Goenkas — who must have noticed how their Calcutta has cherished the landmarks of its 300-year-old heritage — let at least the two standing tower-blocks of yore remain as memories of another day? An architect with imagination will surely find a way to make those towers embellish the Goenka real estate dream.

Real estate and revival of the department store will, it is reported, be only two of the thrust areas in revamped Spencer's. Indian Manufactured Foreign Liquor, from three distilleries leased in Hyderabad, Nagpur and Indore, and pharmaceuticals, especially those needed for the treatment of cancer, will be other thrust areas. But will those towers be allowed to remain as memorials to a glorious past and beacons of this better future?

Maneka on the sets

(By a Staff Reporter)

Maneka Gandhi, who has little time for frivolity and for whom all life is a political struggle, unexpectedly relaxed for a few hours in Madras on September 1st, deigning to 'star' in the *muhurat* ceremony of a film being made in the AVM Studios. Her condescending appearance on the stage was, however, understandable; the film is very broadly based on her life and times as a politician who did not have it easy at all as minister.

The film, *Lakshyam* in Tamil and *Ashyam* in Telugu, stars 'Best Actress 1990' Vijayashanti who had won the award for her portrayal of another real life headline-grabber, Kiran Bedi. The Bedi film was called *Karthavayam* and its *muhurat* too was graced by the woman on whose life it was based. Policewoman Bedi had, on that occasion, attended in a plain uniform; Maneka Gandhi this time chose a drab brown cotton saree better suited to the world of *khadi* politicians.

Karthavayam was a success in both its Tamil and Telugu versions and is now being made in Hindi as *Tejaswini*. The team that made that film, producer Rathnam and Director Mohan Gandhi, are teaming on this film too — and hope for as great a success.

The attendance of the real life heroines at the *muhurats* may have something to do with potential success, but Maneka appeared to be none too happy in her role as a lucky rabbit's foot. She kept her first visit to a studio to the barest decent minimum and her appearance before the cameras was even briefer. But that seemed to satisfy all concerned. Now the 'angry young woman' of the Telugu screen can get on with playing the honest young woman minister who is the target of the machinations of her male colleagues in the Cabinet.

MANALI RAMAN...



"I'm trying to locate the footpath. Could you help, please?!"

IN MAD. MAD MADRAS

ENVISIONING MADRAS 2000

Tamil Nadu's 1991 budget has warmed the cockles of many hearts with its three-pronged plan for a massive Rs. 1,250 crore improvement of Madras City, containing the galloping price trends as an immediate measure, and shifting all the cattle away from the metropolis for better health, hygiene and smooth traffic. All within the striking distance of five years!

The Madras Development Plan, named Madras Vision 2000, aims at improving water distribution, sewerage and environmental programmes at a

THE VIEW FROM
 FORT ST GEORGE...

by R.K.K.

cost of Rs. 600 crores, transportation (Rs. 200 crores), electricity distribution (Rs. 225 crores), civic services (Rs. 135 crores), slum and other housing (Rs. 75 crores).

(Continued on P5)

If you can't beat them — join them!

"Did you happen to read the election manifestos put out by various political parties during the last polls?"

Kuppuswamy was sipping his rum and water when he shot me this question. And I was nursing my vodka.

"Glanced through some of them... why?"

"If you had read them carefully, you would have found one thing in common."

"What? Mandal? Masjid?"

"No, corruption. I mean, all the parties had played it down. Hardly any mention of Bofors or kick-backs."

"Strange... Must have been a coincidence."

"Not at all. I heard from a reliable source that the major parties in India have come to some sort of an understanding. Whoever comes to power will

be short-listed and the jobs will go to the highest bidders from that list."

"This auction business somehow depressed me. My elder boy is doing his first year B.E."

"That means, I said, "my son will never become a P.W.D. Engineer."

"How come? I thought he was good at his studies?"

"He is. Very good, in fact. But even if he passes B.E. with distinction and clears all those tests, where do I find the money to bid against more affluent parents?"

"Ha. That's where the Public Sector Banks come in. You see, it's a package deal. Any nationalised bank will lend you the money on the strength of your son's selection. Nominal interest and repayable in easy instalments. Once your son gets the job, he can easily take

care of those instalments with his you-know-what."

"You think it will work?"

"Of course it will. Look at the spin-offs man! More revenue for the Government. More business for the banks. A lot of black money gets converted into white."

"Sounds good," I said. "But why do you think Government would go in for something like this? I know they are desperate, but..."

"If you can't beat them, join them. That seems to be the philosophy behind it, I like it."

"I wanted time to think this over. Also for a refill."

"Kuppu, you really think this can happen in our country?"

"This can happen only in our country."

EDITOR'S NOTE: I've heard tell this has already happened in more than a country or two if you keep going east without end.

Whodunnit at Twin Peaks

"The most talked about TV series in America". So the publicity line goes for **TWIN PEAKS**, the soap opera that's currently doing the rounds among the videophiles of Madras. Being too lazy to get hooked on to a long series, I was lucky to chance upon a pilot film that was made as a curtain raiser to the "soap". While several loose ends can only be tied up by viewing the series, the pilot film has a definite conclusion and gives you a fair idea of what the hype is all about.

The story takes place in the sleepy town of Twin Peaks, where the peace is shattered when a local girl is found murdered. Thus the plot is basically a whodunnit that also delves into the lives of the town's residents. What makes the package special is the offbeat and stylish direction of David Lynch, the quirky auteur who is rated today as one of America's most original film-makers.

DEFENDING YOUR LIFE, starring Albert Brooks and Meryl Streep, is Hollywood's latest take on the after-life theme. Albert Brooks (who has also



One of the best maintained cemeteries in India is the British War Cemetery in St Thomas. Its lush green grass must be amongst the richest in the city, its white tombstones gleam and handsome trees offer plenty of shade. Quite a contrast is the historic cemetery in Poonamallee.

Once, five main roads led out of the semi-circular fort that was Britain's first bastion in India, Fort St George. Radiating out like the spokes of a wheel were the roads north and south, to the San Thomé Redoubt and Clive Battery, the road south-west to St Thomas Mount, the road north-west to the Perambur Barracks and the road west to the Poonamallee redoubt.

Many who served in that little fort in Poonamallee, guarding the approaches to Madras, are buried in this small town. Many more who served in various institutions of the Raj — sarkar or educational — are also buried here. But what's now left of this disused cemetery is only the giant tombs of the past, memorials of another era of cemetery architecture. (Photographs by SUSHEELA NAIR)



overcome his fears. **DEFENDING YOUR LIFE** is a witty foray into the after-life that also manages to poke fun at the way we lead our lives.

Director Ron Howard's **BACK-DRAFT** is an all-action film devoted to the exploits of the Chicago fire

department. An arsonist is at work, thus putting the fire department to the ultimate test. While the fire fighting scenes are spectacularly staged, there is little to do for the distinguished cast that includes Robert De Niro and Donald Sutherland.

The anti-communist witch hunt launched by Senator Joe McCarthy and his committee investigating Un-American activities, remains one of the most sordid chapters in that country's history. Hollywood received special attention, several screen personalities being called on by the committee to 'purge' themselves of communism and to name others involved with the Party. A ruined career was the price to pay for those not cooperating, as they found themselves on the so called 'Hollywood Blacklist'. In **GUILTY BY SUSPICION**, Robert De Niro plays a director who has a choice between his career and his conscience, as he faces the committee. Written and directed by Irwin Winkler, the film is a powerful indictment of the McCarthy era.

The topic of McCarthyism led me to a film classic that was seen a parable on the subject. **HIGH NOON**, made in 1952 by Fred Zinnemann, was scripted by Carl Foreman, a writer who was soon to find himself on the Blacklist. Parables and **HIGH NOON** has several things going for it that makes it a classic to be enjoyed by one and all.

The story is about a frontier marshal who has to protect his town from a gang of reving badmen. As it runs out, he fails to muster support from amongst the town's people, leaving him with the choice of leaving town or taking on the gang on his own. The action that takes place over a couple of hours is brilliantly compressed in 86 minutes of heightening suspense. Gary Cooper as the marshal came up with a performance that deservedly earned him his second Oscar. Also to be noted are the music of Dimitri Tiomkin, and Grace Kelly as the marshal's wife, in her first starring role.

THE NEW... & THE OLD

QUIZZIN' WITH NAVIN-12

What a simple question last fortnight, but what a disappointing response! Another equally easy prize question this fortnight, so we hope the response will be better. If it's not, we'll have to do away with the prize question.

To win a prize, all you have to do is answer Question 16 correctly. Fill in the coupon given below — which leaves space for your answer — and mail it to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ 12, C/o. Lokavani, 62-63 Greaves Road, Madras 600 006 before 5 p.m. on October 10th. The first three correct answers drawn will be entitled to a prize of Rs. 100 each. We can't make any simpler than that, can we? So get to it, here are the questions and your coupon.

1. What is 'Black Galaxy' and why was it at the centre of a scandal?
2. The Madras Amateur Radio Society held a two-day exhibition on the occasion of the Amateur Radio International Public Awareness Day. What are amateur radio operators called?
3. The President of which country is suffering from impeachment trouble?
4. The Morita Turntable Ladder was recently inaugurated in Madras by the Chief Minister. What is it?
5. What important bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 14th September?
6. In what way did the MRTS in the city make significant progress recently?
7. 'The way he works at the game, and goes about it, in that respect he reminds me of me.' Who said this about whom?
8. Which young, unmarried ONGC engineer was tragically shot dead by ULFA militants?
9. What engine did Air India drop for powering its Four new Boeing 747-400 Jumbos in favour of General Electric and Pratt & Whitney?
10. Which boxer faced the fight of his life outside the ring when he was charged with the rape of an 18-year-old beauty pageant queen?
11. Dr G Ram Reddy, eminent educationist, was recently appointed Chairman of the University Grants Commission. Whom did he succeed?
12. Who lifted the US Open boys singles title?
13. JUDCO recently received a Scroll of Honour from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. How is this Centre commonly known?
14. Who broke Bob Beamon's long standing long jump world record?
15. Which movie opened recently in Madras with the publicity slogan 'A Movie For The Family. A Movie Off The Beaten Track'?

PRIZE QUESTION

16. He was taken away to Germany by a spy who identified him as anti-British and put him in the German Navy. He came on the **Ernden** and shelled Madras — Fort St George and the Harbour — symbols of British power. He also launched an Indian Volunteer Force, and met Netaji Bose in 1933 in Vienna, inspiring the latter to start the INA. He is also believed to have organised the Jai Hind slogan. This freedom fighter was from Madras and his birth centenary ended on September 15, 1991. His Name?

QUIZ COUPON-12

NAME:

ADDRESS:

to 21

—(The Fortnight of Sept. 1 to Sept. 15)

We now look forward to a real big response. Meanwhile, here are the lucky winners of the correct answer to Quiz-11.

PRIZE WINNERS

- 1st Prize: Mrs R PADMA, 10 K V Koil Street, Ayanavaram, Madras-600 023.
- 2nd Prize: Mr B RAMNATHI, 7 Madley First Street, T. Nagar, Madras-600 017.
- 3rd Prize: Mr K C PATEL, Midland Lodge, G P Road, Madras-600 002.

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Going 'national'

only to its members — as long as they follow all the laws of the land. What kind of inner rules they have for their own code within the premises of the club is entirely their own business. Surely, I cannot claim the right to walk in with shoes into an orthodox Hindu home (this is an example in reverse). Club rules are made by the

Having said all that, I would also say that the primary responsibility to make a guest follow the dress regulations rests solely with the member who invited him. He is really the guilty party, since he knows — or should know — the regulations of the club. You do not invite to your club an important individual, knowing there is every chance of his not being admitted because he is dressed differently.

Looking aSkance

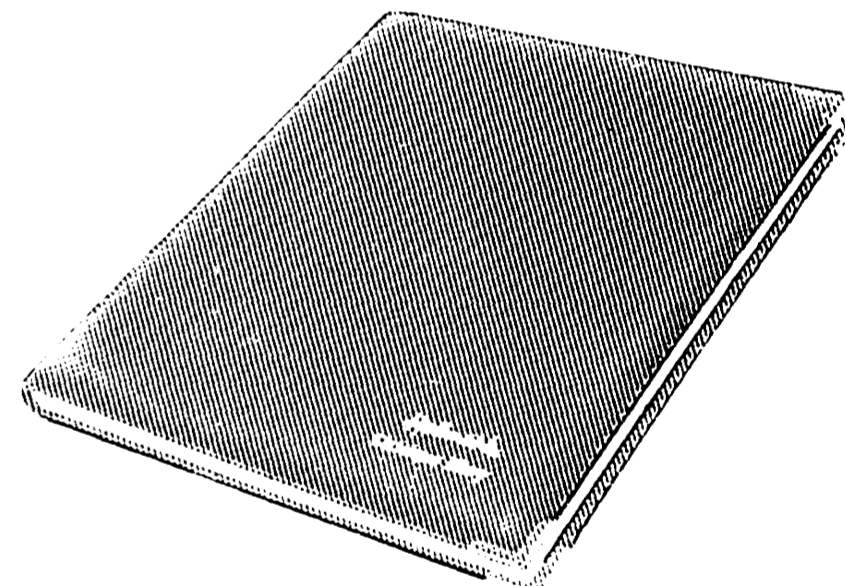
founding members to suit the kind of ambience they want, and if a person doesn't like them, he can get out of the club or try to change the rules by converting a majority to his point of view.

I think most of the social clubs in Madras handle this problem rather well. Their dress regulations apply only to the members, and they turn the other way when a guest shows up in his usual clothing. I should think that the member also has the responsibility, if possible, to advise the club that his guest may not follow the dressing regulations of the club.

In the meanwhile, may I request our law-makers not to waste our money discussing trivia like this?

S.K.

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How undressed?

I see that social clubs are again taking a wallop, this time in the august chambers of our apex law-makers. Apparently, two BJP lawmakers, who had been invited to a party there, had been turned away from the Delhi Gymkhana Club for not being dressed according to the Club's regulations. This of course was a matter of national importance, so they raised it in Parliament, and a certain measure of sound and fury emanated. The next day some volunteers demonstrated in front of the Club.

All of this is pretty routine since some people will do anything to get their names in the papers. What interested me was two things: one was the claim that it is unconstitutional for a club to impose such regulations; and the second was the delightful warning that if the clubs did not change their regulations, all their members would be forced to wear kurta and pyjamas, or whatever.

It has never failed to amaze me that in a country of 85 crores, in which not even a lakh could be members of the clubs all over the country, social clubs could be the cause of so much dudgeon among an infinitesimal group of people. They are usually important in their own right, and have sufficient stature, but all the same they never fail to make a production of it when they are turned away from a prestigious club.

I have waxed eloquent on this subject *ad nauseam*, but, once more, with feeling, can't hurt. A social club is as private as a home, and it belongs

DOSAS AT DASA

Oh, to be seen at DASA! This seems to be the aspiration of the "new" middle-class Madras. Go there at lunchtime or in the evening and the place is packed with all age-groups — executives, professionals, foreigners on a vegetarian trip, the occasional college student on a spree, and children escorted by obliging relatives.

The decor reminds you of the *art nouveau* style of the Twenties, with Tiffany lamps, hanging plants and bamboo screens. Very chic, very nice — and quite a novelty in Madras. However, even if your other senses are somewhat dazzled, your taste buds are likely to remain a trifle dissatisfied at the end of it all.

DASA is rather reminiscent of restaurants with nondescript food in shopping malls in the larger American cities. In the West, such restaurants are no more than places to catch your breath and grab a quick bite, before beginning the long trek back home in the traffic jam. But in Madras, DASA is considered one of the most trendy vegetarian eating-places in town and has become something of a cult.

Personally I feel that one can get better *dosas* and *vadas* at a modest Udipi restaurant for less than half the price you pay at DASA. As for the western dishes on the menu — spaghetti, macaroni, vegetable and what-have-you *au gratin* — I would suggest that they go a little easy on the white sauce and concentrate a little more on the cheese. But try their salad bowl (unlimited quantity and, mind, no sharing!) at Rs. 50 per head.

In my opinion, however, the best items on the menu are the ice-creams and fruit juice — although the portions of the latter have distinctly shrunk over the past year. Still, why bother to make changes as long as the clients come rolling in through the door?

The ship's table

The Shyam group has opened a new restaurant opposite NILGIRIS called COASTLINE

(situated in the KARAIKUDI complex). This is a long narrow room — incredibly designed like the inside of a ship. Painted all white and blue, with clusters of shells and nets hanging from the ceiling, the windows of this restaurant are shaped like the portholes of a ship.

In this indigenous version of "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," the waiters are dressed like Konkani sailors. And you only get seafood—so vegetarians are likely to feel a little out of place. The prices are very reasonable, even if the portions are small, as in the case of their *pulaos*.

FOODS & FADS

arians are likely to feel a little out of place. The prices are very reasonable, even if the portions are small, as in the case of their *pulaos*.

I would highly recommend all their *prawn* items, especially the succulent garlic *prawns*. Their continental dishes are reasonably good — I particularly relished their fish in white sauce. I would like to make one suggestion, though, regarding their crab curry.

Having eaten larger portions with shells in other restaurants, I was a little disappointed to see crab pieces floating sadly in

tomato and onion sauce. Perhaps it would be a better idea to retain their shells and psychologically reassure customers as to their — the crabs, that is — intrinsic worth.

Madam, I'm Adam

Finally, a word (or two) about a fad which is setting most women's teeth on edge. I have no quarrel with the product — coloured lubricated condoms under the brand name of ADAM — in the age of AIDS and sexual freedom. My problem is with the posters plastered all over town, featuring a hunky male figure dragging a seemingly unwilling female (but you can never tell with women, can you?), with the telling caption: "Show her who's the boss!"

If this is supposed to be funny, I, for one, have definitely missed the joke. Will someone kindly enlighten me as to the message conveyed in this ad? Does it imply that rape is all right as long as the man takes the necessary precautions? That, indeed, is a laugh!

V.K.

Keeping your house functioning

(By a Special Correspondent)

To start with the obvious, domestic help is hard to find these days. The help, who in most cases are women, will sweep and clean — in a manner of speaking, and usually in a cinematic way, humming the latest hit song — only if their conditions are met. These almost always include their right to decide on their hours of work, and, more importantly, there being a colour television set available in the house of the employer.

If the non-technical, untrained personnel can make for so many difficulties, it is easy to imagine the plight of someone who wants an electrician or a plumber. Apart from knowing where to find one, the technician when found has to be persuaded to come as quickly as possible — there being a great disparity between the client's perception

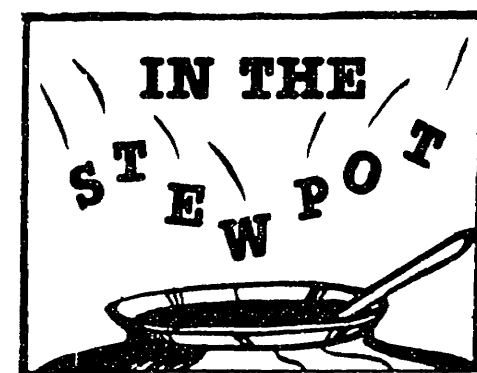


Bhamini Shankar

of quickness and the technician's. Meanwhile, the water overflows, the lights are off, and the refrigerator is on the blink.

Twenty years ago, a young man named "Eiji" Unamahesh, while in between jobs, started wondering whether he should not go into business for himself. Easier thought than done, for he had little or no capital, no training except a college degree. But what he had was self-confidence, a sense of adventure, and a creative imagination. In his travels abroad he had seen companies which provided domestic services on the basis of just a phone call. It struck Eiji that the average citizen in any of our cities was at the capricious mercy of technicians when it came to something as simple as stopping a leaking tap. He decided that what Madras needed was a company that would provide domestic services at a moderate cost. And he set up Eiji Domestic Service.

Premier among such institutions, EDS serves not only the average unaffluent citizen, but does so with the same care and understanding it provides to large corporations, whose cleaning and maintenance it undertakes. It sends 5 squads of workers to multi-storied buildings to clean and check things out. What we are interested, of course, is in what kind of service EDS can provide you and me. Well, practi-



Italian Risotto Indianised to perfection. That's **Vegetable Tomato Rice**, spicy, aromatic and cheesy. Serve with **Pepper Chops**, a tempting yet unbelievably easy preparation. Or try **Sukhi Aloo**, the quickest way to make a mouth-watering potato dish. Everything is simply pressure cooked.

PEPPER CHOPS

Ingredients

- 1/2 kg lamb chops
- 1 level tspn turmeric powder
- 2 tspn curd
- 3 medium size onions
- 2 level tspn pepper (whole)
- 1/2 bunch green coriander
- 1" piece ginger
- 1/2 pod garlic
- 2 tspn dry coriander
- 6 green chillies
- 1/2 tspn fennel
- 1" piece cinnamon (1/2cm to season)
- 3 cloves (1 to season)
- 2 cardamoms (1 to season)
- 2 bay leaves

VEGETABLE-TOMATO RICE

- 1 cup basmati rice — soaked in water for 10 minutes, drained and set aside
- 1/2 cup grated cheese
- 1 cup fresh tomato juice
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped fine
- 10 beans, chopped fine
- 3 tbs ghee
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper powder
- A few bay leaves
- A pinch of saffron powder

Method

Heat ghee. Add the bay leaves. Fry the chopped onions till transparent. Add the chopped beans and carrots. Fry for another minute or two.

Add the drained rice, salt, pepper, saffron powder, one cup of water and the tomato juice. Bring to the boil.

When the water is almost absorbed, mix in half the grated cheese. Keep a griddle below the pan and cook on a low heat till the rice is completely cooked. Serve garnished with the remaining cheese.

SUKHI ALOO

- 1 kg potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 onions, chopped fine
- 3-4 tomatoes, chopped fine
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 2 teaspoon coriander seeds powder (dhaniya)
- 1 teaspoon red chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon amchoor
- 2 teaspoon garam masala
- A small bunch of coriander leaves, chopped for garnishing
- 4 tbs oil

Method

Heat oil. Fry onions till transparent. Add chopped tomatoes and fry for 5 minutes.

Add turmeric, coriander seeds and chilli powder and fry for a couple of minutes.

Add the chopped potatoes and salt. Mix well. Transfer the vegetables to a vessel and pressure cook without adding water to the vegetables.

Add amchoor and garam masala. Mix, well. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Advertise regularly in
MADRAS MUSINGS

Five cover girls from Madras

Remember those five young dancers whose trip to an American dance festival Arts Correspondent V R Devika featured in these columns in our issue of May 1-15? Well, they were not only hit at the Majestic Theater of the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, but they've also become the cover story of the US Information Service's glossy magazine *Span*.

The four pages and cover that *Span* devotes to the lead role they played in *Chakra* — *A Celebration of India*, a dance-drama, narrates not only the contribution of these 10 to 12 year olds but also the year and more preparation that was done in the schools of New York for this show that featured thousands of performers. Here are some excerpts from that report by Herbert Suplerberg:

India was the focus of the "Event of the Year" in New York this June when noted American dancer Jacques d'Amboise's National Dance Institute (NDI) presented a colourful drama...

Most of the show's 1,000 performers were school children from the

New York metropolitan area, selected and trained by d'Amboise and his associates. Joining them were five young dancers from the Bharata Kalanjali Academy in Madras, and a dozen adult Indian and American performers. Composer David Anram

by
A STAFF REPORTER

("the Renaissance man of American music") wrote a special score reflecting both Indian traditional modes and American jazz influences. Artist Red Grooms created colourful and striking stage sets.

The result was a magnificent program that ran eight performances... (and) delighted huge audiences of school children from New York City and its environs.

The arts go to the villages

"Have you lived in a village?" asked K V Subbanna, replying to a person who asked him how sophisticated Western plays and abstract films could be shown to illiterate, poverty-stricken villagers. Subbanna, a 1990 winner of the Magsaysay award for literature, communication and journalism, was participating in a race to face' with theatre and film enthusiasts of Madras at the Narada Sabha mini-hall. "It about 10 per cent can really understand art in villages, the same number will be found in villages too," added Subbanna.

In 1947, the young Subbanna, who grew up in Heggodu village in the Western Ghats, aspired to build a new culture. A few friends got together and started an amateur theatre company, a newspaper and a film society. They also took to publication and began presenting old film classics to rural audiences

with the intention of providing them an intimate knowledge of the medium. Today, the Ninasam Theatre Institute has become one of the prime theatre-training centres in Karnataka.

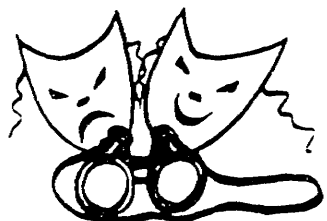
The repertory company of Ninasam, called Tirugata (Wandering),

presents at least 180 shows a year in the villages of Karnataka. Brecht, Shakespeare and other famous western and Indian playwrights, sometimes in adaptation and sometimes in translation, are presented in Kannada. Subbanna said he does not believe in conveying messages through theatre.

"Any work of Art does not convey a message; it only makes people aware. Theatre, film or literature all provide the opportunity for a dialogue with people. This dialogue may build up opinion."

The meeting, presided over by Komal Swaminathan, saw some several

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



lively exchanges on 'message' theatre, art as an essential part of life etc.

Concerts in Adyar

The city is getting congested and driving around in the evenings is getting tiresome. So there's a move to disperse the arts too.

People living in the Adyar area are now served by an ambitious *sabha* called Hamsadhvani, which is the cultural wing of Exnra (the "Clean Madras" people, who seem to be getting into too many things).

The Music Application Circle of this *sabha*, smartly calling itself MAC, has been quite busy arranging programmes of quality music by the bright stars of Carnatic Music. Its concerts are held in the open air at the Indira Nagar Youth Hostel, where the acoustics are surprisingly very good. The concerts of Bombay Jayashree and Unnikrishnan, both of which I heard, were a pleasure to listen to.

Dancers from the US

Bharatha Natyam dancers of Madras have a good summer season every



Chakra went from Madras to New York thanks to the efforts of dance teacher d'Amboise who teamed a group of a thousand dancers with these five young girls from Madras. The six of them provided this cover picture for the September issue of the USIS magazine *SPAN*.

that reached some 6,000 students; a special project to make masks for *Chakra* involved thousands more; and

still others joined a pen-pal project with their Indian counterparts.

Chakra was built around the adventures of twins Nandan and Nandini, as they journey through life "from birth to enlightenment"... The river, desert, forest, and their various denizens were all portrayed with verve by children clad in varicolored dhotis.

Helping the audience keep pace with the story was dancer Mallika Sarabhai as "storyteller and mistress of ceremonies". Sarabhai... also danced in *Chakra*; she jointly choreographed her dances with d'Amboise....

But the real stars of *Chakra* were the five Indian girls, from Madras — Monita Ray Chaudhury, Divya Devaguptapu, Deepa Narayan, Suchitra Ranjan, and Divya Vannadil Ramachandran. Elegantly costumed in gleaming white kurtas and dhotis, they performed the intricate "Dance of the Handmaidens" against the background of the production's most spectacular set depicting an Indian temple. The dance was choreographed by V P Dhananjayan, founder of the Bharata Kalanjali Academy.



Indumati Ganesh

June, July and August nowadays. Innumerable young dancers from Madras have married whiz kids in America and the classical arts scene there is getting to be a mini-Madras.

Top dancers take their musicians and go there not for just performances, but also to perform the arrangements of their student's students. Dancers from America also come down to Madras to perform or present their students here. Two dancers from California were here this year.

The very professional Viji Prakash presented *Sons of Kunti* and her extraordinarily talented nine-year-old daughter, Mythili. The young girl communicates a rhythm of joy in her dancing and demonstrates a splendid understanding of *laya* in her *Nattuvangam*. She also cutely explains the meanings of the items in a very American accent too!

Another Madras dancer doing well in the US is Indumati Ganesh. She was Indumati Gopal, a student of Chitra Visweswaran. Now the mother of a young girl, Indumati Ganesh gave a performance that communicated instantly. *The Glory of Rama* was actually a selection of Ram a items from an earlier repertoire. Her *Bhavayami Raghuraman* Varnam, describing the *Ramayana* in a nutshell, was dramatic, her involvement in the content total. Madurai Sethuraman's singing was expressive, his music translating emotion into communication.

A typical reaction was that of Janine Kenna, who was in the student chorus. "It was wonderfully exotic," she said.... Laila Sales added, "It was beautiful — just beautiful!"....

Chakra has proved such an endearing experience for Anram — "one of the 20 most performed composers in the United States," according to an IBM listing — that he plans to adapt some of his 90-minute score for it into a "Dance Suite from the Ballet *Chakra*," which he hopes to perform with some of the 17 American orchestras for whom he is guest-conductor....

V.R. Devika

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A shot at the champs again

(By The Corner Flag)

Viswanathan Anand of Besant Nagar, the best chess player in Asia and one of the top ten in the world, recently returned home after his epic match with Anatoly Yevgenevitch Karpov, which saw him ousted from the Challenge round. But young Anand did himself a lot of good later by playing in a blindfold tournament in Holland and turning in a better result against eight amateur opponents than had been achieved by some of the best in previous years.

That handsomely plus result would have honed him for his next major tournament. In mid-October he plays in Holland's Interpolis tournament as part of an eight-man field that is almost as good as the one that was at Linares. This double round-robin tournament will see Anand facing world champion Garry Kasparov and six

Government indifference

To be invited to play in this field is to emphasise once again that Anand is now among the world's best in one of the most universal of all games. That standing makes him a national treasure and demands that he become a protégé of the nation. Will the Government of India adopt him? Or will it support the requirements of the Government of Tamil Nadu if it decides to take him under its wing?

Somehow, Government action seems most unlikely, if stories told about its attitude prior to the Challenge round quarter-finals are true. It was bruited about at that time that Anand was LENT the foreign exchange to train for, and participate in, the tournament and that he would, on his return, have to repay the LOAN out of his earnings! If that tale is indeed true, there's no shabbier story this columnist has heard in the annals of sport in this part of the world.

other top players twice. He'll get his chance to avenge his defeat by Karpov and will also meet two other Challenge round semi-finalists, Jan Timman of Holland and Nigel Short of Britain, giving him a chance to demonstrate whether it was only the luck of the draw that prevented him from progressing further in that round. Others in the field are two Russian exiles, the veteran former world champion Viktor Korchnoi, who now lives in Switzerland, and the teenage prodigy Gata Karnsky, who lives in the U.S. The seventh player is yet to be named, but is likely to be the other Challenge round semi-finalist Yusupov or his fellow Russian, Vassily Ivanchuk, whom he surprised in this round. Ivanchuk, whom Anand had beaten to the World Junior title, was the pre-quarter-final favourite to win the Challenger crown.

Filth in the Pool

The Madras schools swimming meet controversy has by no means blown over. Its repercussions can even today be heard in City sporting circles, and it is certain to raise its head again. The respite has perhaps been caused by the devil-may-care pronouncement of the parents of the frustrated young swimmers that not infrequently totally foreign matter, including human excreta, has been found floating in the Marina pool.

Filth in a public swimming pool! It is a monumental shame, which should make those responsible for the pool's maintenance tender a public apology for their sins of omission and commission. The parents did the right thing in appealing to the Chief Minister to order an inquiry. It is anybody's guess

And dirty linen is washed outside

when, if at all, the exceptionally busy CM will find the time. But the fact remains that Madras sport has never before been rocked by a controversy

by
JAICI

like the one sparked by the enforced postponement of the Madras District Aquatics Association's annual two-day schools meet, scheduled for August 30

and 31. It has been put off indefinitely because of the restrictions on the use of the Anna swimming pool at the Marina imposed by the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Corporation, which is in charge of the pool's maintenance.

The MMDA did not develop cold feet. Its top officials, N. Krishnan and M.R. Reddy, were quick to bring the episode to the notice of the public. Their sense of frustration was understandable, for the meet had attracted an

entry of over 200 from as many as 40 schools. The youngsters are now keeping their fingers crossed.

Will the meet now come? Whatever may be its fate, unwholesome clouds of suspicion still hang over it because the TNSDC's reaction to MDA's sabotage charge was too flimsy to be taken seriously. The TNSDC did not acquit itself well by dismissing the accusation in just one sentence. The meet was not sabotaged, nor was it intentionally stopped by the Government Department.

Whatever may be the TNSDC's stand, the controversy will be remembered for the charge of sabotage and the TNSDC's Director's role in the controversy. Both were worthy of investigation. But none did.

CRICKET THE LALA WAY

The final of the Hyderabad Moin-ud-dowla Gold Cup cricket tournament, which celebrated its diamond jubilee this year, took me back to another final about fifty years back: the opponents were the hosts, Nawab Moin-ud-dowla's team, and the Maharajkumar of Vizianagaram's side, which included the effervescent West Indian Leerie Constantine. On the final afternoon, the Nawab's team seemed in a hopeless state, having lost eight wickets for a low score in chasing a sizeable victory target set by Vizzy's team. Only Lala Amarnath, of the recognised batsmen, remained to battle it out with the support of the tail.

In characteristic fashion, Lala took up the challenge and transformed the match with a blistering attack on the opposing bowling. Constantine and all. He was jubilant as he brought a thrilling victory to the host team, with a personal triumph of an unbeaten century.

I am unable to lay my hands on the figures of this remarkable match and relate the facts of that exciting afternoon as recounted to me by the late T. Srinivasaraghavan, former secretary of the then Madras Cricket Association, who died in a tragic air crash while on his way to attend a meeting of the Indian Cricket Board. Ganta, as he was fondly called, was himself a good cricketer. He had spent some of his scholastic days in Hyderabad where he had witnessed this match. Ganta had also recalled that the highly elated Nawab held up the prize distribution for a while so that a special cup could be bought and presented to Lala.

I was privileged to witness Lala at his best on three occasions which revealed his full potential. Lala was a member of the Indian team which visited Ceylon in 1944, and when it halted in Madras to play the Governor's team at Chepauk, Lala came up with two fine innings of 77 and an unbeaten 100 before lunch, against a first class

attack comprising of Gopalan and Rangachari, Ram Singh, Palia and Ghulam Ahmed. There were many

good performances in that match, but "everything paled into insignificance before the magnificent batting of Amarnath". He was simply masterful.

A season later, in cool December, again at Chepauk, Lala put to the sword an aggressively-inclined Australian Services bowling led by Keith Miller and Cecil Pepper. Lala, dancing down the wicket, repeatedly took Pepper's spinners at the pitch to bring off brilliant cover and straight drives. How Pepper glowered at Lala as he tilted his head back and smiled broadly.

In the following summer (1946), thanks to Universal News, which used to precede English feature films, I was able to see Lala's memorable bowling feat in the first Test against England at Lord's. With accurate swing bowling, he befuddled Hutton, Compton, Washbrook and Hammond, dismissing them in a magic spell that gave a flying start to India.

An artiste with the bat who was possessed of a magnificent array of

strokes, a skilful medium-paced bowler who worried the best of batsmen, and a smart fieldsman, Lala won renown

wherever he played. I later came to know him closely as a companion in the press box and enjoyed his open-hearted and boisterous friendship.

Lala had great regard for Prem Chand Dogra, who, when he was Governor-Governor of India, had come to his support when there was some criticism about his captancy of the Indian team in Australia in 1946-47. When Lala visited Madras some years later, I was happy to see him meet Rajaji in his home. *Hindu* published a photo of that meeting that had made Lala a happy man, giving him an opportunity to say 'Thank you' to Rajaji.

by P.N. SUNDARESAN

Gym for a champ

(By a Special Correspondent)

Strictly speaking, this is neither a Madras nor a Tamil Nadu story. But it's a tale that just might sow a seed or two in our part of the world.

Up in the troubled Punjab, the JCT Mills in Phagwara and Hoshiarpur appear to have found a way to keep out of trouble. By doing so, this Thapar institution has been able to raise fine football and hockey teams. Offer several other sports facilities. Start a sports school. And give ONE MAN facilities no other sportsman in India has.

That lone champion is Prem Chand Dogra, the 35-year-old muscleman who recently retained his Asian Pro-Am Bodybuilding title and who is aiming at the world title. To train

for those championships, Prem Chand Dogra has been provided an air-conditioned gym all to himself in Hoshiarpur with the state of the art equipment needed by today's body-builders. Young Samir Thapar is sparing no effort to give Dogra his opportunity of becoming a world champion.

Can't Neyveli and BHEL Trichy, the industrialists of Coimbatore and the giants of North Madras do something similar for Tamil Nadu sportspersons? The Angels, Lincys and Annavis, the Mohammed Riazis and Chandrasekhars would go very much further if only they had employers as dedicated to sporting talent as young Samir Thapar.

ANSWERS-12

1. A variety of granite in AP among the best in the world. It dragged CM Janardhana Reddy into scandal when he awarded the mining licenses to his son. 2. Hans. 3. Sri Lanka. 4. A rescue-cum-firefighting equipment. 5. Finance Bill approving the Union Budget for 1990-91. 6. The first girder was laid across the piers near the MRTS office off Adam's Road. 7. Connors, about Courier, who defeated him in the US Open tennis Semis. 8. T S Raju. 9. Rolls Royce. 10. Mike Tyson. 11. Dr Manmohan Singh. 12. Leander Paes. 13. Habitat. 14. Mike Powell. 15. Ashwani, starring sprint queen Aswini Nachappa.

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