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MUSINGS

Vol. I. No. 14

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

November 1 — 14, 1991

World champs from Madras

Do we know we've got two of them?

(By The Corner Flag)

Do we in the city realise we've got not one but TWO world champions? Have the achievements of Maria Irudayam (Men) and Anu Raju

An island of contention

(By a Staff Reporter)

Chief Minister Jayalalitha's ploy to keep in the Tamil Nadu limelight has been her demand for the restoration of Kachativu to India — and, thereby, to Tamil Nadu and, more specifically, to the fishermen of Rameswaram.

Kachativu historically belonged to the Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram, one of the major principalities of the ancient South. When the Portuguese occupied Jaffna in the 16th Century, they also made Kachativu part of their Jaffna domain. In time, both India and Ceylon become part of the British Empire and Kachativu was proclaimed by Queen Victoria as territory belonging to India.

Over all this period, the fisherfolk on both sides of the Palk Strait happily shared the fishing in the area and treated Kachativu as their joint property. A shrine to St Anthony on the island was held sacred by both and its annual festival was a *mela* attended by both Indian and Ceylon fishermen.

When oil became a world-wide issue in the Sixties and Seventies, and offshore oil an even bigger priority, Ceylon — by now Sri Lanka — began eyeing Kachativu. This happened to be the period of great official and personal friendship between the world's first two women Prime Ministers, Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike — so Mrs Gandhi sealed that friendship by ceding Kachativu to Sri Lanka. The fisherfolk of Ramanathapuram, and of Rameswaram in particular, were not consulted about the loss of traditional fishing rights that would follow.

It is those rights more than the island itself that Chief Minister Jayalalitha wants restored.

(Women), on the carrom boards of the world recently, sunk in? Where are the arches and banners of welcome, the congratulatory messages from the political leadership, the promises of prizes from Government, the profiles in the newspapers? All *The Corner Flag* has seen is a small and sparsely lettered white banner outside the Defence Pay & Accounts Office in Alwarpet, congratulating Anu Raju and presumably put up by colleagues or teammates.

It must be presumed that this lack of adulation is because carrom, basically of Indian origin, is played only in about a dozen countries and only half of them were in Delhi. Yet it is seen as quite logical to fill reams with cricket, competed for at world level by no more than eight countries, the senior seven and the representative of no more than 15 other countries. And no matter how much billiards champions moan about the lack of attention paid to them compared to the Kapils and Sunils of the world, they too are considered more genuine world champions than the carrom players, even though their game is played in only about as many countries as carrom is. And as for the song and dance made about winning

the Asiad kabbadi title, is that a game even Asian in extent?

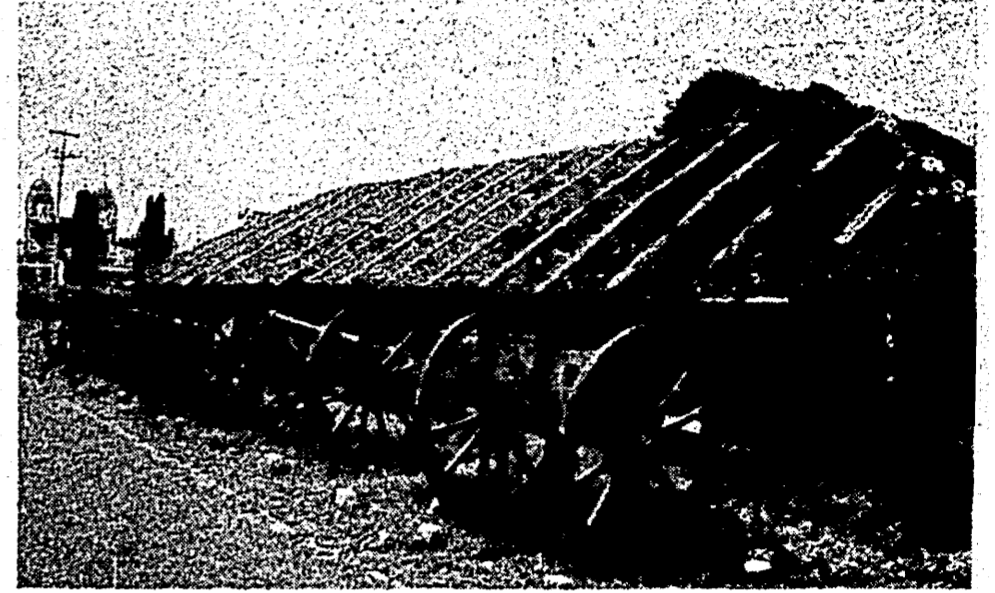
It is against this background that it seems sad that the achievements of Irudayam and Anu Raju are unhonoured and unsung. But, curiously, when the world stealthily — and unnoticed by India — catches up with the game, as it did with hockey, and when India no longer wins world titles, the country will beat the message out loud that it is tragic the way standards have fallen. And make no mistake about it; just as India lost its grip on hockey, it is slowly losing its grip on billiards and will lose its grip on kabbadi and carrom as well.

The Japanese and Chinese have begun taking a long look at kabbadi — and they could still do to it what the South Koreans did to our hockey. Carrom is becoming increasingly popular in Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands and those countries are determined to popularise it by holding a European championship. In those circumstances, India's world crown and the world crowns of the Madras individuals might not last long unless they are projected as role models to the rest of the country. But who really cares about world champions — or any other champions in non-elitist sports — in India till it is too late? Will Tamil Nadu and Madras take the lead in recognising, feting and encouraging their only two world champions and their sport whose world title also India won?

MANAALI RAMAN...



IN MAD, MAD MADRAS



Now where could that be? This gun battery is all lined up for 'Fire'... but the ammunition is no longer manufactured for it. And so it remains, in a crowded part of Madras, a memorial to the days when the Presidency was being created and the first steps to an imperial age were being taken. If you still haven't worked out the location, turn to Page 4.

A way to save the coast

(By a Special Correspondent)

Beach resorts are better for the coast than industrial units, was the line V G Santhosham of the V G P group plugged at the recent workshop on 'Sustainable Management of Coastal Eco Systems' which was held at Anna University.

Starting his paper with a 'Man alone is vile' theme — "India has had a deep commitment to environmental conservation drawn from its ethos. Man, like the other organisms, has always polluted his environment with the by-products of his actions" — he warmed up by accusing industries of wanting to locate their facilities along the sea coast to make it easy for them to discharge their effluents into the sea. Referring to the industries on the Tamil Nadu coast, he said: "In the Manali area, major industries, which include a refinery, three fertilizer factories, a benzene processing unit, a few engineering units, acid chloroalkali plants etc are found. The waste waters from these plants are diverse in

character, but generally harmful to the aquatic environment. The oil laden wastes from the refinery, carrying a wide range of petro-refractory organics like phenolics... etc find access to the sea. Phenols... etc are known for their potential hazards to fish. The coal-based thermal plants at Ennore and Tuticorin discharge into the sea their fly ash, in the form of slurry. The fly ash is found to have heavy metal in traces which leach into water in course of time and have their impact on fish life. The hot and cold effluents... drastically alter the marine environment".

His alternative to this was, naturally, beach resorts. "I can boldly say", he said, "that only by the formation of beach resorts on the sea coast, we can conserve not only the natural beauty of the sea coast, but also improve the beaches by planting trees on the sea-coast. While we can provide wholesome entertainment to tourists and earn much-needed foreign exchange, we can

(Continued on P3)

Trouble on the campus

(By a Special Correspondent)

What Scottish missionary John Anderson started 154 years ago as a school and which Dr William Miller nurtured from 1876 as Madras Christian College, is one of India's best-known institutions of higher education, its alumni including Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, General K Sundarji, Dr Raja Ramanna and several others distinguished in various fields. That this institution is today riven by strife is a sad commentary on changing times.

Who is right in the present 10-month-old dispute — which has seen the termination of the services of three highly qualified faculty members

and punitive action taken against two others — is something this writer is not competent to judge. But it is crystal clear that all's not well in a hallowed city institution and that, when it should be setting an example to all in troubled times, all concerned on its campus are behaving in a deplorable manner unworthy of this grand old institution.

That trouble has been brewing on the campus for quite some time now has been obvious to all. There have been allegations of misbehaviour and drugs on the campus. There was that spot of bother over cutting down several acres of the natural forest in which the

campus is set. And now there are the staff allegations relating to use of grants, disbursements of scholarships abroad and the ways of management.

But whatever the allegations, allowing the crisis to snowball is not the way to enhance MCC's reputation. Education Minister R M Veerappan has been advising dialogue, but at the same time indicating the Government, which gives the college a Rs. 1.25 crore grant annually, cannot remain a passive spectator. The carrot and the stick policy may be all very good, but a better way would be to call all parties to the dispute to the Ministry and lock them up in a room till they come to their senses.

OUR READERS WRITE

In different style

I am happy to read that Kamal Hasan, the dynamic actor from the South, is making a series of Audio and Video cassettes to make literate the illiterates. He is always a good thinker and wishes to do things in different style, whether it is on the screen or off it. Nowadays filmmakers are doing something only for propaganda. So we must appreciate his efforts to fulfil the basic need of the state.

I feel very happy to also read that Madras Engineering College has the largest number of women in India.

R Shanmuganandam
25 Mosque Street
Saidapet-600 015.

Keep the Quiz

Your column "Quizzin' with Navin" helps me a lot in remembering important news-making items of the fortnight. I request you to give up the idea of abandoning this column. It is really interesting and useful.

Muthulakshmi Subramanian
1 Bank Street, Kilpauk-600 010

Encouraging quizzin'

Hats off to you for conducting such quiz programmes and encouraging the readers of Madras Musings!

M R V Nath
K-24 First Avenue-600 102.

Carrying messages

Madras Musings provides focus on various issues and problems connected with the fast growing city. I am sure Madras Musings will serve as an effective tool to carry the messages to the concerned authorities, to provide a new look to the City and to improve its infrastructure. Hearty congratulations to you.

H K Lakshman Rao
33 Krishnapuri-600 028.

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Nothing "great"

When things are overdone and/or taken for granted, it insults the common sense and intelligence of not only intellectuals, but even lay people. Specifically, some of your "The Old & The New" are not only meaningless, but can be called stupid too! What's so great about your feature in the October 15-31 issue? Neither there is anything of comparison nor contrast. It would be better you stop this feature or publish it as and when it is worthwhile.

Geetha Menon
109 Kilpauk Gardens-600 010.

Editor's Note: We have never claimed anything "great" about this feature nor have we attempted to make "comparisons" and "contrasts". All we have been doing is presenting some of the buildings in Madras, Old and New, that strike us as noteworthy for one reason or another. In the process, we hope that at least a few people in the city become aware of local architecture, old and new, and the history of some of its buildings. If that's being stupid, there's not much hope for a city peopled with those holding such contrary views.

P.S. We trust Ms. Menon will continue to do us the favour of continuing to accept Madras Musings, even if it takes "things for granted". But if she has no use for it, she could always return it to us.

The record straight

I saw a misleading item about Rajaji Hall appearing in the latest issue of Madras Musings.

To set the record straight, let me state that a Committee under my Chairmanship, consisting only of Indian experts, declared the Hall to be structurally safe, provided the repairs and strengthening measures recommended in our report are carried out without further loss of time. I am not aware of the association of any English expert with this exercise. Follow-up action, if any, taken by the Government on our report is not known.

Prof. G S Ramaswamy
E-119, 16th Cross Road-600 090.

Editor's Note: We are not quite sure what was "misleading" about our report. But obviously Professor Ramaswamy wants to set the record straight that it was he and his team ALONE who declared Rajaji Hall structurally safe. He, however, appears to be unaware that INTACH had a British expert also take a look at the building and that he, too declared it safe. Obviously both exercises were distinct-as distinct as 'checking' and 'vetting'. But with all agreed about Rajaji Hall's structural safety, we hope that Prof. Ramaswamy agrees that saving the building is more important than who did what.

Stepped up security

The latest security measures opposite Malligai on Greenways Road, where SIT (the Special Investigation Team looking into Rajiv Gandhi's murder) sits, is two pairs of half-road-width barriers which vehicles have to negotiate doing a kind of double-S which calls for reduced speeds.

Another high visibility security measure is sandbagged gun emplacements on top of two porticos at Police Headquarters on the Marina. Besides fixed machine guns, these bunkers have a complement of gun-toting policemen with the kind of equipment the LTTE is more likely to have.

In fact, the city is beginning to acquire the same kind of high security image that Colombo and Delhi already have. The reasons for which appear to be the Man from Madras Musings as mysterious as the Masonic goings-on which once must have taken place in the Lodge that has now become the City's police headquarters.

These security embellishments of the past few weeks make MMM wonder whether a major LTTE attack is imminent on the Law in this state — which danger the public deserves to know about, if there is any information on the subject — or is this just the window dressing necessary to get the Centre to cough up the several crores the State is asking for to beef up its police force?

A second term?

Is President R Venkataraman seeking a second term or is he planning to come to his home in Kotturpuram, one of the first houses built in that newly developing part of the city? Or, if he does not favour a second term, would he prefer the government to give him a house in Madras or Delhi more suited to his status as retired elder statesman and which would be more secure?

These are the kind of questions that have been cropping up in Delhi political

circles as the President's term draws to a close. With much less than a year left for his period of office, the rumour mill in Delhi appears to lean towards his seeking a second term, especially considering his splendid equation with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, the first Prime Minister India has had who regularly calls on the President and not only briefs him on what is going on but also considers the advice he is given in turn.

If President Venkataraman seeks a second term, the thinking is that he shouldn't have a difficult time winning, as the BJP and the National Front

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

are bound each to go its own way. The only shadow on the horizon is the 100-odd Parliamentary representatives with ST, SC backgrounds who have been rather upset that the President did not entertain them ALL and only allowed into his parlour their nominees when they gathered at Rashtrapati Bhavan to pour out to him SC-ST grievances. Would they prefer one of their own when it comes to voting time?

Lawrentian exchanges

When Rear Admiral K R Menon was on a recent visit to Islamabad with an Indian military delegation, he wondered, as an old boy of Lawrence School, Lovedale in the Nilgiris, how Lawrence College, its once and former sister school, was faring in Gora Gali, near Murree, Pakistan's premier hill station. He was immediately whisked off to see for himself.

As a VIP on that sylvan, tree-shaded campus in the hills, he took the opportunity of suggesting exchanges of visits between students of the Lawrence Schools

in India, Lovedale and Sanawar, and their counterparts in Gora Gali. In fact, the Indian and Pakistan Military Colleges born of the old Royal Indian Military Academy have such a scheme that has survived fitfully. And the two Indian Lawrence Schools also encourage exchange visits. So why not take it all a step further, suggested the Admiral.

In fact, several old boys of Lawrence, Gora Gali, who now live in India would also like to visit their *alma mater*. Would they too be welcome on the campus? No sooner had the Admiral's views been published in India, than *The Man from Madras Musings* bumped into a Gora Gali alumnus in Madras, possibly the only one in the South, and he was raring to return to old haunts if a delegation was welcomed by the college. The year or so he spent there, he remembers, were quite memorable for the ragging, which involved a 'snow bath', a nickname which lasted for many years afterwards, the eggs and chips in Murree and the girls of St Denys, just beyond Murree.

Nalli, in Delhi

Guess who's turned up in Delhi from Madras? To meet the capital's needs of rich silks from the South, Nalli's has opened Nalli Sarees in Delhi. And if you think it has located itself in a nice South Indian location like Karol Bagh, you're in for another surprise. The address it's got itself is up-market South Extension

Another indication of its upwardly mobile intentions is that elegant, full-page ad with which it announced its presence in Delhi. The ad makes it quite clear that if anyone in Delhi wants sarees from Arni, Kanchipuram, Dharmavaram, Thirubhuvanam, Thottiapatti, Sathyamangalam, Madurai, Kumbakonam, Salem, Bangalore, Belgaum and other southern handloom silk centres, then Nalli's in Delhi is the best address. MMM

Blackmail in the Blue Mountains

Benhope is a sprawling estate in the cool of the Nilgiris. One day, many years ago, its owner, Rathnam, and a friend, a wealthy young land-owner from the prosperous town of Coimbatore, were out for an early morning stroll. The two had known each other for years and the man from Coimbatore had come up for a couple of days to discuss a business deal.

As the two friends reached a leafy lane, away from the road, Rathnam, the smiling host, stopped in his tracks and, whipping out a lethal-looking revolver from his pocket, threatened to shoot his friend who was popularly known as Ramapatnam Zamindar. Shocked and scared, Ramapatnam did not know what was going on, but he realised that the revolver aimed at him was his own! He had always carried it with him for self-protection and kept it under his pillow at night. Obviously someone had stolen it from his bed during the chill December night.

Rathnam shouted and ranted at the shivering Zamindar, accusing him of committing adultery, seducing his (Rathnam's) innocent wife Sathyabhama and writing filthy love-letters to her. Indeed, he played the role of the enraged cuckolded husband convincingly.

Moments later, a few others came rushing to the spot, as though on cue. Some of them were armed. One of them, a friend of both, pleaded with the revolver-toting husband to spare the young Zamindar's life for which kindness he would certainly compensate the 'dishonoured' husband.

Confused and helpless, the Zamindar admitted the affair and the writing of the letters. He undertook to pay Rathnam Rs. 25,000 as compensation, quite a fortune for those days! At once, one of the armed men, a farm servant, produced a briefcase out of which Rathnam took out sheets of white paper, a pen and revenue stamps! Ramapatnam readily signed not one but two promissory notes, each for Rs. 25,000, and also a statement in which he admitted his relationship with Sathyabhama for which he was now paying an agreed sum as compensation. Rathnam then sent one of his men by car to Coimbatore to meet three leading money-lenders whom he had informed a week before that Rama-

patnam would be needing a large loan. In a matter of hours, Rathnam's man returned to the estate with Rs. 27,000 — obviously Rs. 30,000, less interest deducted in advance.

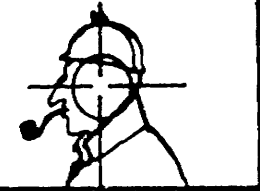
Until the cash was received by Rathnam, the young playboy was kept locked up in one of the dimly lit rooms of the estate bungalow. Now he had

arrests rocked the Nilgiris and the surrounding plains.

The sensational trial for extortion, robbery and other charges came up before the Coimbatore Sessions court. Many witnesses went back on their earlier statements and were treated as hostile. Rathnam was held guilty of robbery at gunpoint and sentenced to

CRIME NOTEBOOK

BY RANDOR GUY



to sign three more promissory notes, this time in favour of the three Coimbatore money-lenders!

The Zamindar's troubles were not yet over. The bundle of love letters he had written in purple Tamil prose to his married inamorata was still in the possession of Rathnam who made it clear that he would part with those erotic epistles only after the three money-lenders had been paid in full.

Once freed, the Zamindar, curiously, did not go to the police. He feared ridicule and scandal. But scandals, especially a juicy one involving sex and blackmail, has a habit of becoming public. This one was no exception and it became the talk of Coimbatore and the Blue Mountains.

So scandalous were the stories that the police stepped in on their own and arrested Rathnam, Sathyabhama, the farmhands and also the common friend who had negotiated the terms. The

two years in prison. All others were acquitted. Both the accused and the prosecution filed appeals to the Madras High Court, with the prosecution asking for an enhancement of the sentence.

An array of eminent counsel, led by Nugent Grant, a legend in Madras, V L Elhiraj, T M Kashuri and N Somasudaram (a later High Court judge) appeared for Rathnam. The High Court confirmed the sentence of two years. But the story did not end there.

Rathnam had contacts in high places and on a petition filed by him the local government remitted half the jail sentence. The matter still did not rest. A similar petition was filed in Delhi and the other half of the sentence was remitted by the Central Government.

The Madras press criticised the remissions, calling it 'an executive indulgence'. But Rathnam got away with it! And the Zamindar paid.

We've got to wake up

The last fortnight has been full of World Bank meetings, finance ministers get-togethers, IMF loans, conditionalities and IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus. The papers gave a lot of prominence to the visit of Camdessus to India. There was a collective sigh of relief when he announced that cuts in military expenditure would not be part of IMF's conditionalities for giving development assistance. Camdessus seemed quite pleased at India's efforts at restructuring its economy. Maybe he would like some quicker results. But the long and

short of it is, IMF is expected to disburse \$2 billion in the next 18 months to India. But unlike long-term loans from the World Bank, the IMF loans have a short repayment cycle.

To repay these loans, the thrust has to be on exports, and that too on a war footing. A much increased inflow of foreign investments will also help a great deal. However, these two things are not happening yet. It was thought in some circles that, with devaluation and the new export-import and industrial policies, miracles were round the corner. But reality is different. In the last quarter, export earnings have actually fallen in dollar terms. The large multinationals, which are supposed to bring in technology and investment, are still waiting and watching.

The problem is that the entire world has changed in the last few years. Market economy is the new *mantra*. The Latin American countries, which were the debt-ridden region of the Eighties, have gone on an unbelievable privatisation binge. Their erstwhile socialist economies have opened the doors to foreign investment with no holds barred. An American company would rather go to Mexico or Brazil rather than come to India.

The other major change has been in Eastern Europe. Here again, the countries are vying with each other to



At a time when there's hardly any good news, a heartening bit of news is the recent announcement by the film industry that there will be no posters of films for publicity purposes for some time to come.

For years and more in this part of the country, especially in Madras city, walls and any other flat surface have been suffering from an overdose of movie posters. These posters, running riot with colours and design, have been a potent weapon in the publicity armoury of movie-makers. In fact, in the last few years, the poster has achieved the distinction of becoming a medium of expression.

The Indian film poster has been honed into an art form and many a foreign graphic arts expert has been fascinated by it, more especially by the Tamil film poster. Last year, two Americans deeply involved in art designing for theatre in the Land of Broadway and Belasco spent a few days in Madras. They were enthralled by the colourful posters, the larger-than-life-size cutouts of the superstars of Tamil cinema, especially that of the biggest superstar of them all, music director Ilayaraja. They couldn't believe their eyes and other senses that there could be a cutout of the music composer of a film! The soul-mate of this writer helped them collect quite a bundle of movie posters to carry back home.

In the good old days, Tamil movie posters were of average size and rather less colourful. There were no posters in those days announcing the tenth day of a film, or, as happened recently, the 15th show!

A film producer, this writer's soul mate's friend whose film hibernated in cans for many a humid summer, had actually asked his publicity consultants

Hey, Ma, look, no posters

to design a poster with a telling headline on top in huge letters: *Nichheyamaga Mudhal Kaatchi Undu!* (Certainly there will be a first show!). So optimistic was he about his celluloid child! Interestingly, it is not unusual in Kerala for a film to be removed from a cinema house after the first show!

Some years ago, this writer and his soul-mate were in Kerala and had heard of a national award winner being released on that day in the small town they were visiting. When they reached the auditorium for the evening show, they were astonished to find that some old movie was playing. Thinking that the film to be released had not been received, they asked the manager what the problem was. He explained it all with a giggle. The award winner was released that afternoon and during its maiden screening there were more people on the screen than in front of it!

To get back to posters, today's film posters have grown larger in area and are more colourful than in days past. But with rising costs of paper and printing, such posters have become an expensive medium, especially when the returns at the box-office for the majority of Tamil films do not warrant such investment. It is for this reason that the wise old men of the Film Chamber have decided that the members of the Chamber should not print any posters, until the situation improves. But whoever has heard of prices coming down?

Perhaps such prices are what the walls of the city need to breathe freely without being suffocated to death by posters! May be they'll even get the politicians to follow the film-makers' lead.

opposition leaders first. Considering that, during the late Seventies, AP emerged as one of the more dynamic states in setting up industries, there is a marked sluggishness there today.

The dynamism of the Seventies was replaced by populism in the mid-Eighties and industry took a back seat. Although everybody realises that only increased employment can help the state get rid of its growing Naxalite problem (the movement is full of educated, jobless youth), no one wants to bell the cat.

Will we learn?

Nearer home, the expected increase in bus fares has received the expected protest. And the government has also compromised by reducing the fare. Everybody is aware that the Tamil Nadu state road transport corporations are heavily subsidised, yet are running at a loss. The input costs, like tyres, diesel and salaries to workers, have gone up steeply. Compared to most of the other states, Tamil Nadu has kept its rates very low. The comparable rates in Bombay and Delhi, and even Calcutta, are much steeper. However, the opposition parties and students have chosen to protest.

Will we never learn that there is no such thing as free lunch?

BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

Saving the coast

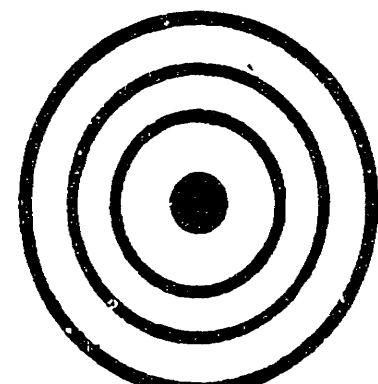
(Continued from P1)

also protect our sea coast. Tamil Nadu, with its long coast line, offers a rich diversity in terms of marine life and social infrastructure along the coast. With beach resorts, we can safely avoid the toxic effluents which destroy the fish.

He concluded with a forceful sales pitch, in case anyone missed the point. "VGP's contribution to the development of beach resorts is quite significant and V G P Golden Beach Resort on the shores of the Bay of Bengal is standing testimony to the protection of

beaches and conservation of the flora and fauna and protection of the marine life. We are planning to construct another beach resort in Velankanni, near the shrine. Madras, Cuddalore, Pondicherry, Tuticorin, Nagapattinam, Poompuhar, Rameswaram and Kanyakumari are places of importance for heritage and tourism. We can build beach resorts in all these places". And he wound up by proceeding to offer VGP's "fullest support and assistance to build tourist resorts on the shores of Tamil Nadu".

K. Gopalakrishnan



BULL'S EYE

for March '90. Another positive feature about the company is its investments in group companies—there is a hidden reserve of over Rs. 6 crs by way of appreciation alone. The company is also a bonus candidate and a liberal issue can be expected as the book value is now at Rs. 70/- and the equity is low at Rs. 1 cr. We anticipate a price of

Those less involved in the stock market will do well to stick with investments and here are three names that inspire confidence at their current prices.

L.G.B. BROS LTD (Current Market Price - Rs. 146/-); This Elgi Group company, engaged in the manufacture of ROLON chains for two-wheelers and industrial applications, also does body-building for buses. The track record of the company is good—the results for March 1991 indicate an EPS of Rs. 15.10 as against Rs. 5.80

Rs. 180/- for this share by the time of March '92 results.

INDIA CEMENTS LTD (Current Market Price - Rs. 280/-): The company turned the corner in March '90, following the changes in the fortunes of the cement industry. The modernisation programme which was part-financed by an issue of rights in March '90 was completed and its effects can be seen in the encouraging performance for the year ended March '91. The take-over of Coromandel Fertilizer's Cement Unit has improved its performance further. The company is now making a rights issue at a premium of Rs. 40/- in the ratio of 1:5. The share at the current cum-rights price should yield good gains in the medium-term/long-term.

MADURA COATS LTD (Current Market Price - Rs. 212/-): The company has the largest integrated thread manufacturing facility in the country and is the market leader for most of its products. The company's thrust on exports has enabled it to reach the top position among the private sector exporters. Its exports have shown steady increase and are slated to reach Rs. 80 crs in the coming year. We anticipate Rs. 300/- for this share by the time of announcement of March '92 results.

Drying out in Haryana

It had started as a quiet Sunday morning jaunt to the Mulligatawny family to the latest 5-star hotel entertainment, an exhibition of home appliances.

"Do you see it?" asked my wife with a breathless air. I had been busy testing all the taps and washers and switches with gold plating wondering who would want to have a genuine 14-carat gold plated light switch.

"That's a washing machine," I noted, looking in the direction of my wife's gaze. Three washing machines had been placed against a backdrop of blue skies and white clouds like those fat angels in a Renaissance painting

layer of the packing. "Am I an electrician?" screamed the wife.

Leaving the kids to calm their Mother, I took out a sizeable chunk from my pocket towards additional expenses. The plumber looked thoughtfully at the drain and suggested that we re-design the bathroom so that the tube from the washing machine would reach it. "Just leave it," I said, "we're used to a wet bathroom." He finally left assuring us that the washing machine instructor would be with us the next day. Naturally there was a fat tip.

"Do you have Fairy liquid detergent?" asked the expert, the next day. "What do you think I am, a department store?" asked my wife.



who wear nothing but a few trailing bits of cloth.

"My dream machine," said my wife. I made a few mental calculations and asked the salesman whether there would be a special discount for buying the machine on the spot.

"I'm just the salesman in charge of the display," he said, giving me a smile that looked washed in detergent. "You'll have to ask the dealer."

I dashed to the nearest phone and the dealer assured me that he would give me a discount if he could manage to get hold of a machine. The ones at the exhibition were only for show. The real ones had to come all the way from Haryana, or Goa, or some distant place like that. "Holy cowdung," I shouted, "Who's going to get us the spares in case of a breakdown?"

I need not have worried. By the time I got back to the stall, my wife had already filled up the order form. All the residents of Karuvipalay Colony had also probably been told of the new addition to the family. "The salesman says not to worry. The machine is just assembled in Haryana, or Goa, or some place like that, the latest screwdriver technology he said. The machine will never break down. It's been tested all over the world."

The next evening there was a loud knock on the door. A handcart man was waiting with a parcel so huge we thought we might have to take out the front door. It needed the efforts of the entire family to manoeuvre the machine into the bathroom. "Do not touch anything; our experts will come and install it first thing in the morning and then we will send you an instructor," said the dealer. "Just pay the money the moment the machine is installed."

We could not take our baths for half a day because of the lack of breathing space. Then a man from the cave age came and announced that he had been sent to install the machine. The wife got hysterical because he stripped down to a loin cloth before starting to work and asked for pliers, hammers, wiring, plug points and switches before even peeling off the first

"Why don't you people make a list of all the things you need before connecting the machine?" She was beginning to lose face in the Karuvipalay Colony. Our washing had to be out on the line that morning or else the rumours that we had bought a dud machine would be confirmed. What was worse, our regular washing woman now turned up her nose and refused to look in the direction of the unwashed clothes. There was a small pile of them. The washing machine consultant fed the entire mountain in small doses into the machine where we could see them being chummed in the see-through belly.

Finally it seemed that everything was doing just fine. The consultant listened to the machine like a satisfied obstetrician and pronounced himself satisfied. He was given a cup of coffee and he departed in a haze of glory, telling us to relax, the machine had been programmed to spin dry everything.

Hardly had he left the house when the machine began bucking and throbbed, taking great leaps in the air. It seemed to be making romantic overtures to the white washbasin that was sitting demurely in the centre of the room as it had done for the last two decades. One leap more and the washbasin would be destroyed. Both my wife and Manimekalai the daughter leapt with cries of "Banzai!" and held the machine down, while our son Vengayam consulted the manual. The ayah cowered in one corner, moaning that the machine had been possessed by a spirit. This was Mulligatawny's finest hour. I strode into the bathroom and switched the infernal machine off.

The washing machine consultant was summoned. He put his hand inside the innards of the machine and produced a bolt. "Caution: Remove all bolts before using," said a sticker. "Why didn't you make sure that the plumber removed all the bolts?" he asked us. "Your machine is probably damaged for life."

"Oh Haryana!" I cried, weeping into the towels that were still soaking wet. The spin dryer was out of order.

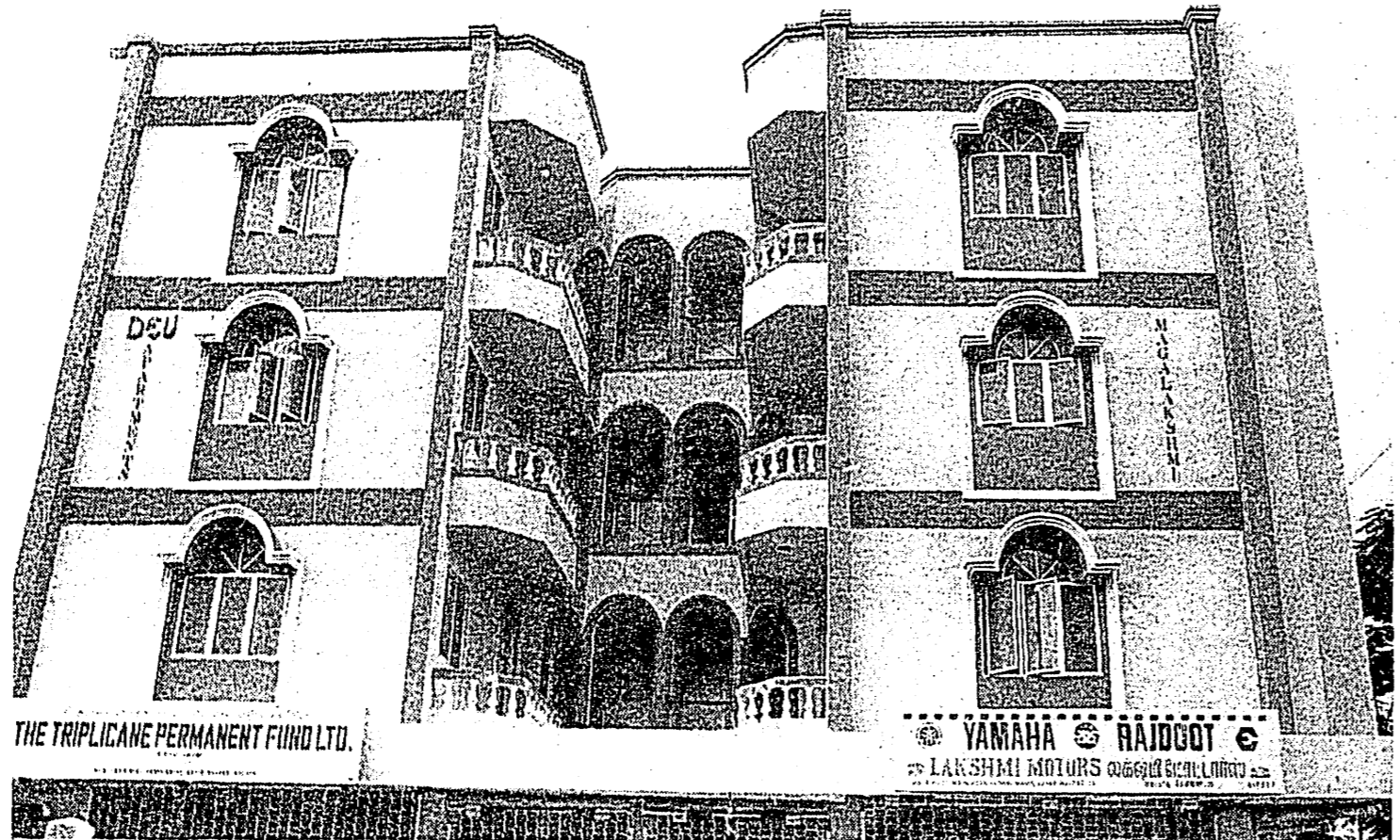


SUSHEELA NAIR'S Page 1 picture is of the guns that line the drive leading up to the Amir Mahal Palace of the Prince of Arcot, one of the best kept stately old homes in Madras. The towering archway on Pycroft's Road is a glimpse of things to come, but there's little visible of the palace from there. For a closer look you need an invitation extended with old world courtesy by either the Prince or his son.

THE OLD... & THE NEW
Arcot was the original home of the Nawabs of the Carnatic, but Nawab Muhammad Wallajah, following British victory in the Carnatic, wanted to live under the protection of the guns of his benefactors. And so Chepauk Palace was built in the 1760s. But British suspicion of the Arcot role in the Mysore Wars led to their acquisition of the palace and the abolition of the nawabocracy in 1855. The Arcot family were granted Amir Mahal — built in 1798 — in 1870, but moved in only in 1876 after much debate. The Princes of Arcot were at that time granted various other privileges by the British and those are still honoured — including the family's place on the Protocol List.

A world apart from such gracious living are the new homes of today, call them flats or apartments, as you will. But several builders are making efforts to make even such blocks attractive — and some of them, like this one in Adayar, are quite striking. One thing curious, however, about many of these blocks that are more ornate than the usual run is the preference for Regency and other British architectural forms of another age; Madras's own Indo-Saracenic has not found favour anywhere. Presumably it is for Nawabs and Princes alone, not commoners, though, strictly speaking, Amir Mahal too is not in this style either.

— (Photographs by SUSHEELA NAIR)



COMEDY IS KING

Comedy is king in Hollywood today as filmmakers rush to churn 'em out by the dozen. Such unlikely stars as Sylvester Stallone, Meryl Streep, Sally Fields and Arnold Schwarzenegger are on the bandwagon and even the more serious pictures have their lighter moments. But is this burst of comic creativity a good thing? Isn't it resulting in a certain sacrifice of quality? The answers I leave to the reader to decide.

City Slickers, the latest star vehicle of comedian Billy Crystal, is easily the best of the current crop. Three friends, fed up with their mundane urban existence, decide to go to the great outdoors to "find themselves". Their experiences there are in turn adventurous, hilarious and, ultimately, uplifting.

Soap Dish has Sally Fields in the role of an aging soap opera star whose life begins to imitate her art. While rival stars are plotting her downfall, her ex-husband is cast as her co-star, and an extra on the set turns out to be her daughter! This over-the-top spoof of American TV. soaps also stars Kevin Kline and Whoopie Goldberg.

In **What About Bob** Bill Murray plays a mentally disturbed patient of

psychiatrist Richard Dreyfuss. When the shrink goes on holiday, the patient follows him and slowly begins to take over his life. In the process, Murray gets snarier while Dreyfuss gets madder! Both the stars are at their wacky best under the able direction of Frank Oz.

Thelma and Louise is the story of two friends who, after a series of

misadventures, are on the run from the law. Director Ridley Scott sets this human drama against the breathtaking backdrop of the Utah landscape, while Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis are brilliant in the title roles. Though the critics have been divided over the film's so-called anti-liberation theme, Scott sees it as an allegory on the state of the male. Along the way **Thelma and Louise**

evokes memories of such road movie greats as **Bonnie and Clyde** and **Sugarland Express**.

The 1940s saw Hollywood making dark sombre films featuring themes of crime and corruption that were cynical and pessimistic in mood. The type of film came to be known as 'Film Noir', a term coined by French critics. **The Maltese Falcon**, **The Big Sleep**, **Sunset Boulevard** and **Ace in the Hole** are all among the classics of 'Film Noir'.

Double Indemnity, directed by Billy Wilder in 1944, is easily one of the grimmest of the genre. The story is of an insurance salesman (Fred MacMurray) who teams with the wife (Barbara Stanwyck) of a client to kill him and collect on his policy. Based on the novel by James M. Cain, and with Raymond Chandler helping out on the script, the film bristles with memorable lines of cynical dialogue. Billy Wilder's taut direction has the viewer hooked as he watches with horrified fascination this trolley ride into hell.

Double Indemnity is thus the perfect antidote for this fortnight's overdose of fun and good cheer!



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JOMTON



QUIZZIN' WITH NAVIN-14

A poor response last fortnight. We hope it will be better this time, with an interesting Prize question. Meanwhile, try and answer the first twenty questions 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 20 correctly. Fill in the coupon given below — which leaves space for your answer — and mail it to MADRAS MUSINGS QUIZ 14, C/o, Lokavani Hall Mark Press, 62-63 Creams Road, Madras-600 006 before 5 p.m., on November 11th. The first three correct answers drawn will be entitled to a prize of Rs. 100/- each. We can't make it any simpler than that, can we?

- The country remembered two of its illustrious sons on Oct. 2, on the occasion of their birth anniversaries. One, of course, was Mahatma Gandhi. Who is the other and where is his Samadhi?
- Name the nuclear research reactor at Kalpakkam which will attain criticality in a couple of months?
- Name the Romanian diplomat kidnapped in Delhi by suspected militants?
- Dr. Arunachalam, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, recently said that DRDO's ANURAG in co-operation with ECIL had developed PACE, a mission computer for LCA. Expand these acronyms.
- What is the 'Marina Waves'?
- Amnesty International recently indicted a country for flouting international standards by sentencing juvenile offenders to death. It said more juvenile offenders have been executed in this country than in any other, apart from Iraq and Iran. Name the offending country?
- New lamps for old — turn black into white. Under the National Housing Bank Scheme, the Government has identified 15 banks for 'laundering'. If you deposit Rs. 1 lakh in 'black', how much can you withdraw the next day as 'white'?
- The Local Administration Minister recently announced a Rs. 1,250 crore programme to beautify Madras in five years. What is the project called?
- Name the US Trade Representative who on October 7, expressed strong hopes at Delhi that if India fell in line with US thinking (the 'stick') on the Intellectual Property Rights issue, it would be far more beneficial to India than otherwise (the 'carrot')?
- Which controversial press baron passed away on October 5?
- What caused the mysterious loss of seven employees of State Bank of Mysore recently?
- Steffi Graf became the youngest woman to win 500 singles pro-matches. Who held this record previously?
- Who is the Cong-I candidate for the Nandyal Lok Sabha constituency for the by-election on November 15?
- The Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted an official resolution urging the Centre to contact the Sri Lankan Government and get back an island and the sea adjacent to it. Which island?
- Name the 68-year-old south African writer celebrated for her works, such as *A World of Strangers* and *Burger's Daughter*, who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize for literature 1991?
- What prize, also known as the alternative Nobel Prize, was awarded to the Narmada Bachao Andolan which is spearheading the environmental cause in Western India?
- Which 'Pocket Hercules' made a triumphant comeback after two years of injury, winning a gold medal at the World Championships in the featherweight weightlifting event?
- Who or what are Lawley, Nye, Stanley, Munro, Wellington and Gochen and what have they been changed to?
- Which eminent writer spoke of a plan to bring a private member's bill in the winter session of Parliament against ragging in educational institutions?

PRIZE QUESTION

20. 2000 birds of which species arrived recently at the Pulicat bird sanctuary — an annual event which bird watchers and naturalists look forward to?

QUIZ COUPON-14

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Ans. to Q. 21

(The Fortnight of Oct. 1 to Oct. 15)

PRIZE WINNERS 1st Prize: BHAMA BALARAMAN, Rest House, M I T Campus, Chromepet, Madras-600 044.
2nd Prize: GOPAL KIDAO, 15/4-Brahadambal Road, Nungambakkam, Madras-600 034.
3rd Prize: LAKSHMI RAO, 14 Chinnaya Road, T Nagar, Madras-600 017
ANSWER TO QUIZZIN' 13: Dr. Pennathur Sundaram

The woman who took a rest

Some time ago, we moved into a house in one of the quiet, shady and small streets in the heart of South Madras. Most of the people on the street are middle-class professionals, and the street tends to be very quiet and sparsely populated during the working day. Here, I had my first experience of door-to-door saleswomen, for whom the street certainly offers some scope, since it is by and large a woman's domain during the day.

A householder's first reaction to these saleswomen is one of sympathy. Even before they start out, most of them look pretty tired. They usually carry samples or goods for sale in heavy bags. You can't help feeling sorry for them. But having studied them for some time (what am I doing at home during the day? well, I am a retired old coot with nothing much to do), I tend to classify them as the sensible, the bad and the stupid.

The sensible ones usually demand to know, I regret to say in rather raucous voices, whether there are any 'ladies' at home. They stand outside the house at a respectable distance. It took me a while to realise that to get rid of them all I had to do was to say there were no 'ladies' at home. They usually go away without pestering you further. The saleswomen also work in tandem, each covering one side of the street and keeping her partner in view all the time. Madras is, by and large, one of the safest towns, but they do not leave anything to chance. They are earnest and they need the pittance of a commission they make on their sales, and now, while I know I can rid of them easily enough, I usually call my wife 'out, and she invariably buys something from them, whether we need it or not. "Result, happiness", as Mr Micawber was wont to say, all round.

The bad ones are really a pain; actually much more than that, for they can cause damage. Usually they refuse to take no for an answer, and hang around, as it seems, indefinitely, sometimes waiting pathetically, so that you feel like a louse. They also ask for water to drink, and if you turn aside for a moment to get it, they make away with whatever they can lay their hands on, and in a fleeting moment put quite a bit of distance between you and them. In any event you usually notice that something is missing only much later.

The stupid ones are in a class by themselves. They just look at you pathetically, having forgotten the sales talk they had been taught. Normally, a woman requires a certain amount of gall to do a sales pitch, and these sad ones lack it badly. They also have no

sense of self-protection. Let me tell you an embarrassing true story.

Some while ago I happened to be all alone in my house at mid-morning, when the bell rang. Sure enough it was a saleswoman. What struck me about her at once was how defenceless she looked. She was comparatively young, about thirty years old. I don't remember what she was trying to sell me, in fact it never registered, but when I politely declined her offer, she gave a great big sigh and said: "I am awfully tired. May I come in and rest a while?" This colloquy was all in English, indicating that she came from a somewhat better background than most other saleswomen. What would you have done if you had been me? I said, yes, of course, and she came in and collapsed into a chair across from me.

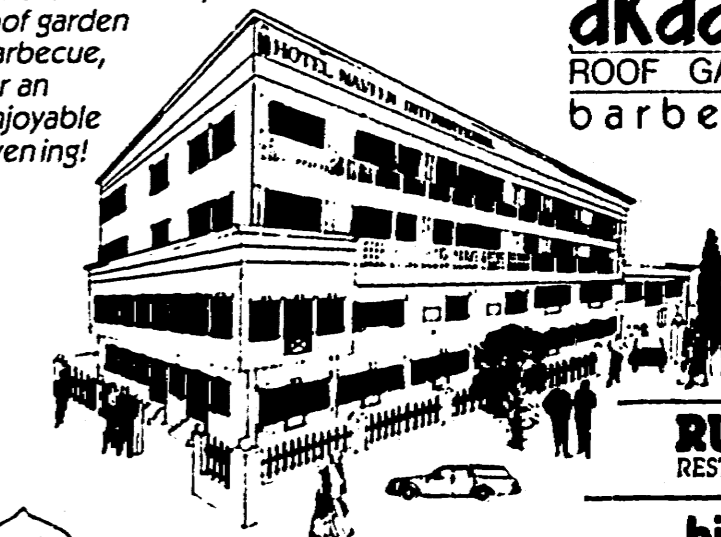
Against my wiser instincts, I actually went in and got some water for her. A few minutes passed thus, then she said absolutely ingenuously: "Can I lie down for a while? I simply can't hold up any longer". If she hadn't looked like she might drop down any moment, I would have thrown her out, but I sent her to the bedroom.

To this day I have not figured her out, and only hope she does not get into real trouble somewhere. S.K.

declined her offer, she gave a great big sigh and said: "I am awfully tired. May I come in and rest a while?" This colloquy was all in English, indicating that she came from a somewhat better background than most other saleswomen. What would you have done if you had been me? I said, yes, of course, and she came in and collapsed into a chair across from me.

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Do you know your washing machine?

Radical elements in government circles may fret about the profusion of washing machines in the market, but the fact of the matter is that rampant consumerism is here to stay. Since you can't beat 'em, you might as well get to know 'em. Here's a rapid survey of the Indian washing machine scenario.

Top of the list is the BOSCH, which costs all of Rs. 16,500 (or thereabouts). It is fully automatic, with a shiny stainless steel interior and a front loading system, which can handle up to 5 kg at a time. This splendid machine has got a built-in water heater (going up 90°C) and a choice of several cycles, from the hardy to the most delicate — including a "no-spin" and a "mini-wash". The manufacturers claim that the clothes come out 90% dry — and "far better than the leading brand", as the saying goes in most American ads.

Then there is the slightly less expensive SUMEET, which is well-known for its tough, all-purpose grinders. The look of this washing-machine is streamlined and futuristic. Close competitors are the TVS and VIDEOCON machines, which

cost around Rs. 11,000 each. These do not have heaters and possess top-loading systems. Finally there are the semi-automatic products like CITIZEN, WASHOTEX and VIDEOCON (again), with a twin-tub system and costing around Rs. 7000 each. These machines, which are portable and lightweight, take smaller loads, say 2-3 kg, at a time. Here, you wash in one tub and dry in the other.

FOODS & FADS

Thus, depending on your budget, needs and convenience — remember, the automatic machines require plenty of running water — take your pick in the market.

A bit of Bombay?

For the past week or so (ever since I visited the restaurant), I have been trying hard to figure out why PALIMAR reminds me so much of the eating-places one frequents in the Bombay Fort area. True, situated as it is at the busy junction of the Gemini flyover, it aptly captures the bustle of Bombay life. Further more, as is the case with restaurants in the western metropolis, PALIMAR is not the place to linger at for a chat with friends after a meal. There are far too many people waiting to take your place.

The decor, like the food — which comprises South Indian snacks and North Indian fare, ranging from *thalis* to stuffed *parathas*, *kulchas* and an assortment of vegetarian curries — is functional, but also pleasing, with dark wood furniture and oil paintings of (presumably) the English countryside.

V.K.

My Husband's second marriage

"If only I could, if only I could..." Hubby's words trailed away. What if only you could, dear? I asked, wondering at his wishful thinking.

He suddenly looked guilty. As no answer came, I prompted, are you thinking of winning a bumper prize in a lottery?

"No," he nodded, "something more exciting than that", and thrust the latest issue of a woman's magazine into my hands. "Just read that box item", he said.

"Will you marry your spouse again if given a chance? Write to us in 150 words. The best reply will win a prize," I read the item aloud.

"Oh, so this is what is bothering you! Why don't you send in your reply?" I goaded.

"Well, that is not the point, I have to give the proposition serious thought

The high point in this moderately priced restaurant is the constant relay of video cartoons (with the volume mercifully kept low) — another possible indication of the Bombay ethos of keeping people usefully employed while waiting for a meal!

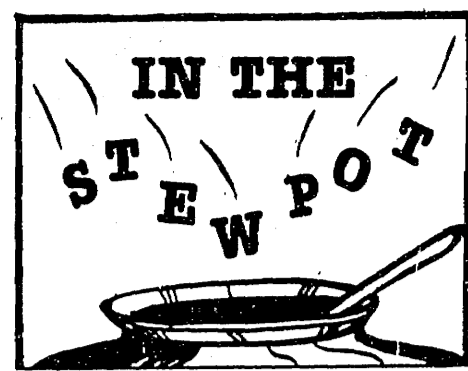
A reasonable buffet

If you are looking for something a bit more upgrade, try the Sunday buffet lunch at AHAAR, situated in the RESIDENCY HOTEL opposite Vani Mahal.

The hotel itself is an imposing ten-storey building with a facade of pink sandstone. You have to cross a rather small and narrow lobby — all marble and granite, with a profusion of artificial plants and cane furniture — before you come to the AHAAR restaurant. Here, the decor is distinctly more pleasing, with wood panelling, beautiful black wooden beams criss-crossing the ceiling, light Japanese blinds on the windows, stark paintings of the seaside and grey-and-white windswept landscapes adorning the walls.

The buffet consists of cold cuts, salads, an assortment of *dals* and curries, *biryani*s, a few Western dishes, and desserts ranging from *barfis*, *jalebis*, *souffles*, *mousse* and *ice-cream*. In my opinion, the best items were the mutton *biryani*, *khadi* with *pakodis* and the dry *sabzis* (vegetables). I would suggest you steer clear of the Western items — the cold cuts, lasagne, beef-and-cheese casserole and the desserts are all below average. However, considering that one pays at least 30% more for a similar meal in other restaurants (in the same league), Ahaar's buffet lunch priced at Rs. 80 per head is certainly not unreasonable.

V.K.



Three unusual recipes, basically continental, but adapted ingeniously to suit the Indian palate. **Mince Meat Spaghetti Pie** is a meal by itself. **Stuffed Capsicum** and **Potato Balls** served on the side, make excellent accompaniments. **Potato Balls** also make a delicious snack. And home-made **Kulfi** is the ideal way to round it all off.

MINCE MEAT SPAGHETTI PIE

15 sticks of spaghetti
250 grams minced meat
2 large onions, chopped fine
250 grams tomatoes, chopped fine
8 eggs
2 inch piece ginger scraped and chopped fine
6 pods of garlic, chopped fine
3-4 green chillies chopped fine
2 teaspoons chilli powder
½ teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon coriander seeds powder (*dhaniya*)
2-3 tbs butter
2 tbs ghee or dalda
1 bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
1 small piece cinnamon
2 cloves
2 cardamoms
Salt and pepper to taste.

Method

Boil the spaghetti in salted water with a teaspoon of oil. When cooled, drain in a colander and wash under a tap. Keep aside. Wash the minced meat. Add the chopped onions, chillies, ginger, garlic, tomatoes and half the coriander leaves to the minced meat.

Add the *masala* powder and salt. Mix well. Add sufficient water to the meat and cook till done.

Add the cooked spaghetti to the cooked meat. Mix well. Set aside. Beat the eggs with salt and pepper. Take an oven-proof dish or a pressure cooker container. Smear the utensil with dalda.

Pour half the egg mixture and turn it around till well coated.

Pour the spaghetti mixture and spread it evenly with a spatula.

Pour the remaining egg mixture on top. Spread it evenly.

Pre-heat the oven and cook on a slow heat till a knife inserted comes out clear.

Decorate with chopped coriander leaves and tomato sauce.

Mrs P. Raghupathi

STUFFED CAPSICUM

6 medium sized capsicums
2 cups cooked rice
½ cup grated cheese
1 teaspoon pepper, powdered
3 tbs butter
4 tbs bread crumbs
Salt to taste

Method

Wash the capsicums. Remove the top, the seeds and the pith. Set aside. Mix the grated cheese, powdered pepper and salt with the cooked rice.

Add two tablespoons of butter. Mix well. Stuff the prepared capsicums. Sprinkle the bread crumbs and dot with the remaining butter.

Bake in a pre-heated moderate oven for 45 minutes till done. Serve hot.

POTATO BALLS

½ kg potatoes, boiled, skinned and mashed
2 tbs butter
1 egg
½ cup *maida*
1 teaspoon pepper powder
Oil for deep frying
Salt to taste

Method

Add butter, salt and pepper to the mashed potatoes. Mix well. Add the egg and stir in the *maida*.

Toss onto a well floured surface and make 1-inch balls.

Deep fry them till golden. Drain and serve piping hot.

KULFI

2 litres milk (full cream milk)
4-6 cardamoms, crushed
6 tbs sugar
A few drops almond essence
2 teaspoon cornflour, mixed in 1½ tablespoons of cold water
1 tbs pista
20 almonds, blanched
½ teaspoon saffron

Method

Mix sugar and cornflour to the milk and bring to the boil. Stir constantly and reduce to one-third of original quantity.

Add the chopped nuts, saffron, almond essence and the crushed cardamoms. Cool.

Pour into kulfi moulds and freeze. Or pour into ice-trays. Cover with aluminium foil and freeze till set.

Chandra Padmanabhan

The Rao way to quit

Can you quit smoking in three hours? 'Yes', claims Mr. U.N.R. Rao, an ex-smoker with a past record of 35 years of continuous devotion to smoking!

Whenever you have an urge to smoke, take five deep breaths and the urge will disappear, he says. Ironically, it is the fifth cigarette which leads to addiction. And that's dangerous, because nicotine is the most

pernicious drug invented, he observed at a seminar he had organized for cigarette addicts wanting to quit smoking.

The participants, whose number did not cross a single digit, included curious observers who gaterashed and had to leave reluctantly when they realised they had to pay a price to quit smoking.

N.M.R.

The City's dancers get together

ABHAI (Association of Bharatha Natyam Dancers of India) and the Fine Arts Foundation recently organised a meeting of young dancers at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to discuss their "problems". Of the estimated 6000 young dancers in the city, not even a hundred turned up.

To preside over the problems of young musicians, a young musician was invited. Vijay Siva took his role too seriously. He thought he knew the answer for every problem and kept talking, not realising that the problems of dancers are completely different from those of musicians, until a few irate people in the audience stood up and said, "Thank you, we have heard enough. We are more interested in our problems".

With everyone expressing anxiety about it getting late, Subramaniam of the Fine Arts Foundation stood up to tell us about how the Foundation was started, how it's always given remuneration etc. Very little time was taken up for discussion. But some things did get said.

The problem, said Mrs Leela Sekhar, the organiser of the International Dance Alliance in Madras, is that amateur dancers depend upon a group of professional musicians who demand their fees irrespective of whether the dancers gets paid or not.

"There are no standards of payment set, as they are freelancers". Sumithra Vijayaraghavan, a singer and a dancer, talked of gurus having a hold on young dancers, while young musicians are free of their gurus on the stage. Priyadarshini Govind, a brilliant dancer, wanted to know if a few months in the year could not be allotted to dancers who did not live off dance.

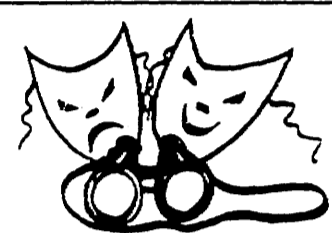
A big problem in the Bharatha Natyam scene is that there are no set

larger interests of the organisation in mind during business.

A revival ahead

The Chief Minister, I have heard it said, has asked the Department of Culture to use the Museum Theatre year round to present dance and other programmes. Perhaps particular days of the week can be fixed for music, dance, lecture, folk art performances etc. It

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



standards. Everyone is a good dancer, or so they and their mothers think, and feel they ought to be performing on the Music Academy stage during the December season, never mind if you are not a professional. This is one thing the dancers should sort out themselves. There ought to be some kind of grading system that ABHAI should evolve.

I hear that the young dancers have formed an association and have their first meeting scheduled for the 27th of this month. I wish them luck, but hope individuals don't get the better of the organisation and that they will keep the

would be a good way of using the Museum Theatre.

A beautiful theatre, with extremely good acoustics, it is now in a state of sheer neglect. The theatre has been made good use of by the Madras Players alone, who are among the few who see the beauty of this theatre. The Madras Museum authorities also never make it easy for people wanting to use it. Let us now hope there are better times ahead of it.

Lost in the glare

Watching Tulsi Badrinath dance at the Spirit of the Youth programme

Those were the days!

I came to Madras in 1934 as a boy of 15. I am still able to recall some of the landmarks, which now remain only as scars as historical buildings are pulled down, burnt by accident(?) or kept willfully in a dilapidated condition, like a *Bhooth Bangala*, adding to the several eyesores in our wonderful 'city of neglect', as Harry Miller would have it. (This sentence, incidentally, contains 53 words, not a record you'll agree, if you read editorials in *The Hindu!*)

When we got down at Egmore Railway Station, the station itself was a building of ancient (relatively speaking) vintage. Madras City Motor Service, run by Sundaram Iyer, a pioneer, was catering to the limited needs of people from suburbia, which itself was just taking shape. Newspapers were eveningers and not numerous enough to count even on one's fingers.

Tamil newspapers were conspicuous by their near absence. Goenka was yet to begin his battle royal with the Establishment. The *Madras Mail*, which remained an evening till its last, had its own admirers, especially those of its editor, Hayles.

The *Swadesamitran*, a blood relation of *The Hindu*, was being published from a building that was worth looking at. Whiteaway Laidlaw and Wrenn, Bennett (which a wag called Wrenn Comma Bennett) nearby were the white man's preserves but models in merchandising.

Hoe & Co, Madras Pencil Factory and V Perumal Chetty, the triumvirate, were there with a German 'Rollider' who was arrested when hostilities broke out on September 3, 1939. (I wonder how many have read the novel *Come September*.)

Ananda Vikatan was in 'Broadway', a euphemism for the narrowest thoroughfare which was clogged even in those days, what with trams, *julkas* and other fancy transport. Loane Square had the *Sunday Times* and Broadway *My Magazine*. Ananda Vikatan was publishing *Merry Magazine* with a serial by Deisvi (D Sundaravaran, whose son D S Raghavan is still with the *Indian Express*). Deisvi, a race-goer and a stickler for accuracy, precision and punctuality, used to have a notice suspended outside his room during the lunch break (DO NOT DISTURB).

• THE MUSER

In Armenian Street, with *Anderson Hall* nearby where Madras Christian College was housed, Father Bertram reigned supreme at Loyola, making a characteristic remark when a student wanted a character certificate: "Say you are from Loyola. That is your conduct certificate". He produced committed, involved, dedicated intellectuals, who became model (even first) citizens of India. Admissions were not difficult for higher education and, in fact, seats went a-begging, so to speak.

Pachaiyappa's was in China Bazaar Road (now Netaji Subhas Road, in memory of the battle royal he waged with the high command when he defeated Paltabhi Sitaramayya for Congress Presidentship; I attended the Beach meeting addressed by Netaji, but the sobriquet had not yet evolved at that point of time). Aurobindo was meditating at nearby Pondicherry on Supramental, Jiddu Krishnamurthi was

breaking away from the Theosophical Society and declining the offer to become a Jagadguru, which lesser humans would think a hundred times before refusing.

On First Line Beach, the GPO, Indian Bank, Customs House and other towering buildings were proof that the architecture of those days was built to last, there being honest contractors and less corrupt officials. The Cooum and the Adyar were not so contaminated: fish loved and lived in these waterways which now are a threat to environment.

Spencer's was on Mount Road, so too *Bharat Buildings* and the now vanished Elphinstone, where I had seen the first movie and talked a few years earlier, during a short visit to 'Patnam'.

Coimbatore Krishnaier served *halwa* made of wheat to Beach goers and in China Bazar Ramakrishna Lunch Home, owned by race lover Ramanatha Iyer, used to serve a pair of largish *bondas* for half an anna! Neo Komala Vilas in the next street was also popular. Modern Cafe was being built by Sitarama Rao; Dasaprakash was to come much later.

Mention should be made of Kasi-patti Hotel in Mint Street, where two meals a day for a month were served for 13 rupees apiece. Mint Street had many tall buildings. Dinroze Estate was bought by Byramshaw for a fabulous sum in those days — Rs. 2 lakhs! Round Tana was there and *Rajaji Hall* was still the *Banqueting Hall of Government House*, where Governors had beautiful wives who provided grist to the gossip mill of those days. Bodyguard Road had a big stable of several horses and the Island ground was a real lung for the city.

Those were the days!



Braga Guruswamy

its variety, from the villages of India to the remote corners of the world, to discover how music is enriched through intra—and inter-cultural activities".

Brihaddhvani is now preparing a programme of *Shringara Rasa* (the erotic sentiment) as dealt with in Bharatha Natyam *Abhinaya* and Tamil folk forms.

Rare opportunity

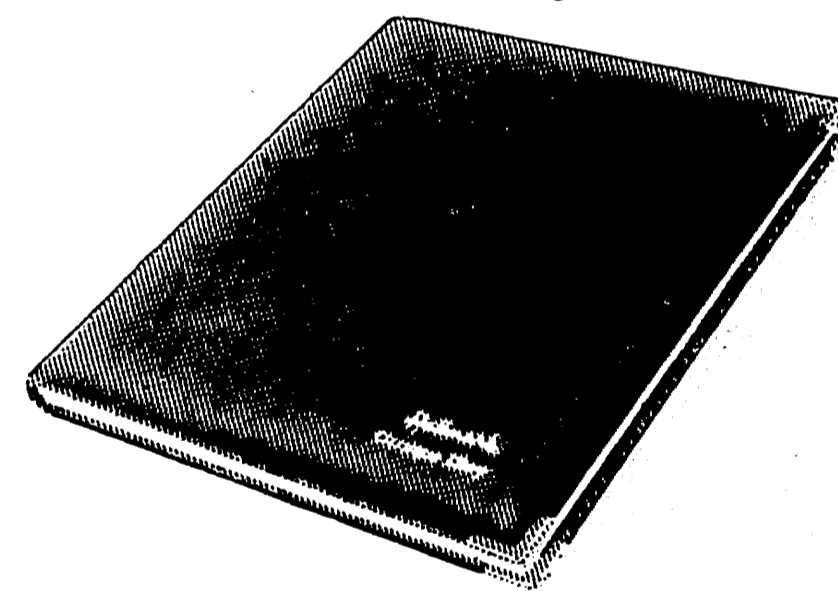
Braga Guruswamy Bassel is a Bharatha Natyam dancer extraordinaire. She reveals her total dedication and involvement every time she dances. Watching her dance is an experience, a rare dance treat. But she also dances rarely. For....

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Dancers these days are very good. So performing opportunities become like seats in private engineering colleges. There are many dancers like Braga in Madras who never get their due as a consequence. And that is the greatest tragedy of the dance scene in the city.

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Wanted another sponsor

A week before he left for Hong Kong to compete in the Asian Zone ITF championships, 16-year-old Vikram Venkatraghavan truly surprised the media. Seated between his parents, S Venkatraghavan, the newest national cricket selector and India's former Test skipper, and Mrs. Venkatraghavan, a tennis addict, Vikram, at his first-ever Press briefing, had a ready and knowledgeable answer to every query.

"Are you a baseliner?" "No, no, I have a good enough first serve to prefer the serve-and-volley game," was the teenager's prompt reply.

"Will another foreign tour help your ratings?" "Certainly it will," asserted Vikram, whose under-18 rating has gone up from 350 to 150. After a moment's hesitation, he added: "But how to make it? Everything indeed depends on my father's search for sponsorship".

Vikram had only a couple of days earlier returned from a six-month tour

by
JAICI

of Europe, the USA and Thailand, and Venkatraghavan invited the Press for a chat with his son. The well-built lad had even before the tour established himself as one of India's most promising juniors. Unfortunately, his tour fortunes had gone unnoticed in the Indian media. With a view to making amends, as it were, Madras journalists readily responded to his father's invitation.

Vikram had not only his tour exploits, successes and failures, the contacts he made, and the benefits he had gained from a coaching stint under Hank Pfister, the former US Davis Cup player, at his fingertips, but also his own reasons for the comparatively poor Indian standards. He was emphatic that foreign exposure was a 'must' for Indian juniors. As an example, he quoted the good performances Rohit Reddy, Akshat Mishra and he recorded in the Junior World Cup competition in Barcelona after their European tour. They reached the pre-quarter-final round before going down to Germany. Further proof of the tour benefits came in Brunei, where Vikram won the singles, and the doubles as well, in partnership with Nitin Kirtane, in an ITF under-18 tournament.

When his accomplished son finished, it was the ambitious father's turn, and Venkatraghavan assured pressmen he would go all out to secure for his promising son the patronage he needed to make a mark in the world circuit. He got a big hand all right, but was evasive on a question how a former India Test Cricket skipper's son was allowed to go in for the racquet game. Perhaps the boy's mother had a hand, considering the tremendous interest she takes in Vikram's progress.

SIXTY GLORIOUS YEARS

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, formerly the Madras Cricket Association, is set to celebrate its Diamond Jubilee, but ill-luck dogs its plans. Nevertheless, it is time to recall what it has achieved through hard work and professional management.

The Madras Cricket Association, formed in 1930, was only an *ad hoc* committee composed of the Madras Cricket Club, representing the Europeans, Madras United Club, representing the Indians, and the Anglo-Indian Sports Club. It was active only when organising representative matches.

It was the Indian Cricket Federation, formed with the various cricket clubs as members in 1932, that was the real forerunner of the Association as it now exists. It took charge of the game in Madras city by organising a league championship for the member-clubs and grew in stature so rapidly that the MCA merged with it, with even the

reluctant MCC joining in. The ICF then dropped its name and the MCA became the sole body managing cricket in the state from 1935.

It was T Govindarajulu Naidu, of the Emmanuel Club, who took the initiative to form the ICF. He was its first secretary and the Federation had its offices in the premises of his club on Pycroft's Road in Triplicane. K S Ranga Rao, who was chosen the Secretary of the enlarged MCA, ran its affairs from his residence in T P Koil Street. He had a couple of voluntary assistants, of whom T A Ramachandran, fondly called Laddu, was later to become a national cricket and hockey umpire. Ranga Rao was assisted in his secretarial work by the diminutive, bespectacled

S Kannan who ran a publishing business on Mount Road. Kannan was also the founder of the *The Field*, the first sports magazine in Tamil Nadu and, probably, in the country.

The period when T Srinivasaraghavan succeeded Ranga Rao as secretary of the MCA was when its offices were shifted to the Nehru Stadium, to remain there for about 15 years. The venue of test matches and other representative matches was also moved to the Stadium following differences between the MCA and the M.C.C. The lease of the Chepauk ground, which the MCC held with the State Government, was coming to a close in the early Sixties and there were unsettling rumours that the government was keen to take it over to raise its own

buildings. However, with his persuasive skill, M A Chidambaram, the MCA president, convinced Chief Minister K Kamaraj of the imperative need to preserve Chepauk, with the halo it had acquired over the years, as the home of cricket in Tamil Nadu, and obtained a fresh lease in 1966 in favour of the MCA. The MCC's rights were confined to an area around its club house. C Subramaniam, at present Governor of Maharashtra, then a Madras Minister, lent a helping hand in getting the lease. This was a milestone in the history of the MCA and triggered not only the building of the massive stadium but also put it on the road to affluence. Before moving to the Stadium, the MCA, whose secretary by now was S Sriman, had its offices in a small building in the eastern corner of the Chepauk ground.

The Duleep trophy final between the South and the Central Zones in December 1965 was the first representative match when first class cricket returned to Chepauk. It was marked by a unique feat in Indian cricket, the Karnataka spin twins, Prasanna and Chandrasekhar, between them sharing all the 20 Central Zone wickets that fell and helping win the trophy for South Zone! Prasanna claimed 11 for 80 and Chandrasekhar nine for 66. Central Zone made 123 and 167 and the South 310 runs, with Budhi Kunderan, the dashing opener, coming up with an even 100.

Test cricket returned to Chepauk with a bang next season, when the West Indians played their last match of a three-Test series during the Pongal holidays. The versatile Garfield Sobers, who led the West Indians, displayed his great skill with the bat to save his side from a defeat that had seemed imminent when the Indian spinners, Prasanna and Bishen Singh Bedi, struck a brilliant patch. It was a great match in every way, but perhaps its high point was Sobers nursing the West Indian tail to earn the draw.

That memorable Madras season closed the following week with a superb 213 by the Mysore captain V Subramanyam in a Ranji Trophy South Zone tie. Batting in true Caribbean manner, Subramanyam scored his second hundred during a last wicket partnership of 117 runs with Chandrasekhar! Famous for his 'ducks', Chandra made 10 in determined support of his skipper.

P N SUNDARESAN

Remembered Classics, forgotten names

Guindy is back to life. It is perhaps more appropriate to say that India's oldest racing centre has, after a seven-month break, resumed its main role of entertaining turfites, for, ever since the introduction of off-course betting, which goes on throughout the year, it never remains dormant. The curtain has now gone up on its 1991-92 season, and everything points to it being a bumper one. With nearly 500 horses, including about 200 fashionably-bred juveniles, in the fray, fields will be big and competitive enough to test every punter's horse-sense.

But the pattern of the 40-meeting season will be the same as in recent years. It cannot be otherwise, considering the strength and quality of M.A.M. Ramaswamy's establishment. This has stood head and shoulders above the rest over the years. The fact that MAM, as Ramaswamy is popularly called, his trainer and his No. One jockey have, for years, headed their respective lists virtually unchallenged speaks for itself.

It will indeed be no surprise if MAM, the most successful owner in Indian turf history, better the Indian winnings record of Rs. 23 lakhs plus he himself set last season. But it will not all be one-way traffic. S. Rangarajan, V.S. Dhanasekhar, Md. Javeed Ghalala, R. Ramakrishnan, N.S. Manradiar, M.G.K. Nair, Mrs. S.R. Shetty,

ANSWERS -14

1. Lal Bahadur Shastri — Vijay Ghat. 2. Kamani. 3. Mr Liviu Radu. 4. DRDO — Defence Research and Development Organisation; ANURAG — Advanced Numerical Research and Analysis Group; ECIL — Electronic Corporation of India Ltd; PACE — Processor for Aerodynamic Computations and Evaluation; LCA — Light Combat Aircraft. 5. An organisation recently started to make people environment conscious: the Governor inaugurated their campaign to clean the Marina Beach. 6. USA. 7. Rs. 60,000 (i.e. 60%). 8. 'MADRAS VISION 2000'. 9. Ms Carla Hills. 10. Ramnath Goenka. 11. Carbon Monoxide from the exhaust of a portable generator. 12. Chris Evert. 13. P V Narasimha Rao. 14. Kachativu. 15. Nadine Gordimer. 16. The Right Livelihood Prize. 17. Naim Suleymanoglu. 18. Names of suites in the Raj Bhavan which the Governor recently renamed as Bharati, Thiruvalluvar, Bharatidasan, Cauvery and Kambar respectively. 19. R K Narayan.

Mrs. P.D. Cruz and others have horses of high potential to provide keen and exciting racing. But they can by no means pose a threat to MAM's high-power contingent, which is certain to rule the roost again.

MAM's record reign has at long last been recognised by the Department of Racing (DR), Government of Tamil Nadu. Nearly a decade after he completed his century of Classics Winners and emerged as the first Indian

by
AJAX

to be mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records, the DR has framed a race in honour of his unique feat. The belated decision has, however, robbed the M.A.M. Ramaswamy 100 Classics Win Cup of some of its status. It has come to be clubbed with three other identical races, all in honour of professionals (trainers A.B. David and Rashid Byramji and jockey Vasant Shinde) who also completed Classics centuries, but did so long after MAM hit the target. But better late than never, so the DR would seem to have decided,

and it is a safe bet MAM will write another new chapter by himself bagging the new trophy and making it the most significant addition to the dozens of cups and shields that adorn the *Chettinad House* drawing room.

Well as the DR deserves to be congratulated on having framed the century-makers' races, it is guilty of having overlooked the claims of a dear departed soul for identical recognition. The ancient centre of Guindy has not known a more honest, loyal or persevering horseman than Parsuji Shanker, who passed away three months ago. Guindy's champion more often than any other horseman, Shanker certainly deserved a most distinguished place in its Roll of Honour. It is no wonder the question is being asked in Madras racing circles if, to the Tamil Nadu Government that now runs racing at Guindy, a horseman is only a second-class citizen, inferior even to trainers, so many of whom have been honoured. It is not too late for the DR to undo a wrong and earn the gratitude of thousands of Shanker fans still patronising a sport in which the horseman is only second to the main actor, the horse.

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