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# MADRAS

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## MUSINGS

Vol. 2. No. 4

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

June 1 — 15, 1992

*A splendid response insists...*

# Carry on, Musings

(By The Editor)

We wouldn't have believed it if we hadn't read through every single comment that was sent in, in response to *Madras Musings'* questionnaire of April 16th. The normal response to such questionnaires, we are told by marketing experts, is around 10 per cent. We received around a 25 per cent response to the 8000 questionnaires sent out — and in almost every instance readers had taken the trouble to give their comments. That's interest for you, from what appears to be a readership of as much as 50,000!

The most significant findings of the survey was that 90 per cent of the readership was willing to PAY for what two-thirds of the readers described as a "good" city journal and which a little less than a third thought was a "satisfactory" publication. Almost every one of those who was willing to pay thought paper and print quality were good. And most of them were willing to pay between Rs. 35 and Rs. 50 a year.

'Old and New' was, by far, the most popular feature. With Susheela Nair having decided to move to Bangalore, keeping the feature going is likely to pose a few headaches. But another dedicated young photographer is bound to turn up. Know of one?

Other high scoring material was Page One, Short 'N' Snappy, Crime Notebook, Bull's Eye, Fort St George View, Foods 'N' Fads and On the Bookshelves. There was a fair to middling response for most of the other features. Significantly, no feature drew a poor response. Every feature appeared to have its fans, but many a comment suggested the need for change here and there.

**Thank you,  
readers**

What's emerged very clearly from this very encouraging response is that people care about Madras and that they like our approach to the city. They consider *Madras Musings* an innovative venture and want it to carry on — even if it means that they might have to pay for it. But for the time being we've decided that **we'll stay as we are, a free-mailer.** And let's see what the second year brings by way of advertising response. **That 50,000 middle class readership the findings show should be of interest, we are sure, to many advertisers.**

Another interesting finding was the large number of persons who indicated an interest in writing for *Madras Musings*. We welcome new contri-

butions — and if you have anything specific to write about the city and its people, past or present, please send in your piece (with a stamp-addressed envelope if you want it back, in case it is not used). But remember, we want only Madras (or Tamil Nadu)-oriented news or features, and brief articles at that. Several of you who've offered specialisation, we've already written to.

The comments received — and 95 per cent of the respondents had something to say — were almost unanimously appreciative, and to publish the lot would be positively embarrassing. But one frequent comment which struck us rather forcefully was the appreciation of the standard of English in *Madras Musings*, with several persons indicating that they were using it as a language study aid. There were several other rather perceptive comments and we plan on publishing these over the next few issues in these columns. We look forward to the rest of you responding to some of these comments.

To conclude, THANK YOU, every one of you, for responding and for giving us so much of your time offering detailed comment. With support like that, we can't help but say, **WE'LL CARRY ON** — at least for the time being.



(Photograph by Gopi)

## Beautifying our streets

This refers to your article "Citizens' concern" in *Madras Musings* (May 1-15), wherein you have referred to the work done by Exnora in various fields but "not without problems". You have also stated that the garbage cleanings from streets of members are being dumped on to memberless streets.

We would like to clarify here that we have the Civic Exnora movement in over 700 streets in the city where residents voluntarily come forward to contribute towards keeping their area clean. Each Civic Exnora employs a "Street Beautifier" who sweeps the streets and collects garbage from each household. The garbage collected is taken to a common transit point fixed by the Corporation of Madras who transport the garbage to the dumping grounds.

The object of this scheme is to eliminate dumping of garbage by households on the streets and also reduce the number of points from where the Corporation of Madras has to pick up the garbage, thereby making it easier for the Corporation to do the job.

We appreciate that problems have cropped up in certain areas due to non-removal of the accumulated garbage from transit collection points by the Corporation of Madras. We are trying our best to solve this problem in co-operation with the Corporation of Madras. We would, however, like to clarify that it is not the intention of the Civic Exnora movement to collect garbage from member streets and dump it on non-member streets.

**T K Ramkumar**  
General Secretary  
Exnora International  
Madras-600 017

# Time to get together

(By A Special Correspondent)

heartening to find Thiru D. Anjaneyulu setting the right tone and calling a spade a spade and informing his fraternity that freedom connotes responsibility. The fourth estate would do well to ponder over the observations of Thiru D. Anjaneyulu, do some serious introspection and exercise its power with responsibility.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

One feature of the Government-and-Legislature versus the Press quarrel that has hogged the headlines of dailies for several weeks now is the appreciation Chief Minister Jayalalitha has expressed in a "Letter to the Editor" she addressed to *News Today*. In it she was particularly appreciative of an article by veteran journalist D Anjaneyulu that had appeared in the evening.

Anjaneyulu, a former President of the Press Club, was at odds with his Club colleagues and other journalistic associations on the matter of press excesses. The burden of his article was that while the privileges of the House needed to be codified for Pressmen's safety — and then guarded for the House's dignity — the Press must also guard against licentiousness.

Maalan, responsible in many ways for the success of the Tamil edition of

*India Today* and also a member of many of the journalist organisations constantly in conclave during this period, partially echoed these thoughts in a recent interview. He said: "Tamil journalism seems to have been affected by a sense of adventure and thrill, a spill-over from the trends in film journalism where the secretive aura was

sought to be dispelled in innuendo writing."

Writer Shivashankari went further: "The present... confrontation... is a result of unhealthy competition (in the Press) which has led to the sensationalisation of topics. Instead of tackling serious issues of public interest, the Press, or at least a large part of it, is

busy indulging in personalised gossip — it is imperative that in the name of freedom the powers of the Press are not misused."

And Lalita Dileep wrote in the *Indian Express*, "Scurrilous writing in the name of investigative journalism has become the order of the day and allegations of overt blackmail are being aired, which are not entirely unfounded. This underscores a lack of professionalism in the proliferating trade of political journals."

Against this background, it becomes imperative that the Ombudsman committee the journalist organisations have promised to set up is established without any further ado. Simultaneously, the House and the journalists should get together on codifying the privileges of the House. And Madam Chief Minister should make herself more accessible to the Press.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We are great admirers of Exnora, its founder and what both are trying to do to get a cleaner Madras. But Exnora must learn to live with reality and face up to the problems this city poses all of us. Like, what do we do with garbage, despite the best efforts of a few to clean their streets? The answer to that might often be that it would be better to address the Corporation — with whom Exnora says it works and with which our reporter agreed, though adding a rather musing "but" — than the Editor of this journal.

For example, Mr Secretary, let's take the case illustrated above. This is the scene on Vijayaraghavachari Road about 100 yards off Mount Road, and not far from Exnora International's headquarters. This picture was taken a week after receipt of your letter published above. This dump, which every Civic Exnora 'Street Beautifier'

(Continued on P6)



# Two now free again

Back in 1972, the Simpson Group factories in Sembiam resembled battlegrounds more than some of the finest industrial units in the South at the time. The DMK and Kuchelur were battling for leadership of the Simpson Group Employees Union which India's present President, R Venkataraman, had founded and which his chela, K Gurumurthy, had taken over, only to be ousted in the post-DMK period. This period of labour strife was the Group's blackest hour — and it was to be years before the Group was to come out of those dark days.

Echoes of that period, however, keep being heard from time to time — the latest could be the last note of a saga that began on June 15, 1972, when there occurred the bloodiest moment of that period of darkness. A labour activist called Pralap Chandran was attacked by an opposition group and later died of his injuries. Two persons were arrested, Nadodi Jayaraman and Dillibabu, charged with murder and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for life. Early last month, the Supreme Court commuted the sentence to the period of rigorous imprisonment they had already undergone.

The two had been on bail since 1978, while their appeal was being heard. Previous to that, they had served more than five years in prison, as suspects, undertrials and on conviction, till their appeal for bail was favourably heard. The Supreme Court in its verdict held the two guilty of only culpable homicide not amounting to murder and judged that the years in prison they had spent were adequate punishment for what had occurred.

Gurumurthy, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands, was one of those who had stood by the two men and helped them to fight their case; yet, at the time of the incident, Gurumurthy was out of power and few among the Simpson employees had the time for the man who had made them the strongest union in Madras at that period.

This, however, does not mean that the Chettiar's are forsaking their new ventures in industry, trade and commerce. Those seem to be growing at a faster rate than ever.

A C Muthiah of SPIC has teamed with Madras Refineries and, together, they have got sanction for a Rs. 1,725 crore aromatics project in Manali, the biggest industrial project in the State in the last 25 years. Once the factory goes on stream three years from now, it is expected that it will generate about Rs. 2500 crores of investment in downstream units and ensure employment for tens of thousands in the area.

Cousin M A M Ramaswamy, meanwhile, took a break from

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

his racing successes and landed the lucrative contract to handle the coal supplies bound for the State's thermal power units. Ramaswamy's stewarding unit beat giant TCI's Bhorka wing to land the spoils, which will involve unloading coal brought in both by sea and rail and forwarding it to the power station.

And the Murugappa Group, now with a turnover of over Rs. 1000 crore, continues to grow quietly with hardly anyone noticing that growth. The group is expected to shortly take over an industrial chain unit in Andhra Pradesh and has acquired the rights for a famed British mountain bike's brand name, Muddy Fox. The two acquisitions together will help TI Cycles' exports in a big way — and the overseas bicycle market is what the group is looking at.

The Chettiar's may be going back to roots with banking, but all's well with their trade and industry too, thank you, it would seem.

MMM

## Bankers again?

There was once upon a time when, if you asked a Nattukottai Chettiar what his profession was, he would say 'Banker'. Those were the days when the Nagarathar were not only 'Bankers' in India, but were better known for this profession — money lending — in Burma, Malaysia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and, to a less degree, in a couple of other countries.

From the traditional 'Banking' business of money lending, the Chettiar, in the years before World War II and soon after it, moved into the more conventional banking of today by helping to found the Indian Bank, the Indian Overseas Bank and, later, the Bank of Madras. After that they began moving into industry.

Now, *The Man from Madras Musings* hears, they are opening their first 'modern' bank in decades. And, making no bones about it, they're calling it the Bank of Chettinad. MMM understands that the bank, which will have 30 branches to start with, was being encouraged to start by Union Minister of State for Commerce, P Chidambaram, himself a Nagarathar, but say it not in his presence.

# A selection of responses

Simeon A Mascarenhas, (School Teacher), Mds-34: Articles are well written, good editing, punctual delivery.

Dr. M.A. Muthusethupathi, (Prof. of Nephrology), Mds-86: MM would be better if more attention is given to the history of Madras and improving the city, and if politics and current politicians are avoided altogether.

Dr. Arjun Rajagopalan, (Surgeon), Mds-4: The editorial style is commendable, particularly in view of the rather poor English that many leading papers put out today.

Ms. W.B. Prathima, (Freelance Journalist), Mds-83: It reminds me of one of those highly personalised, chatty, informal newspapers that come from the coffee houses in England.

Capt. T.K. Lalith, (Retd), Mds-90: Your consumer reports are just on the verge of being partisan.

G.C. Doctor, (General Manager, Syscon Business Systems), Mds-31: Has lost its original spirit. Not so much a newspaper as views by different people who only talk about themselves. Lacks direction.

Prof. S.D. Raj, (Director, School of Architecture), Mds-32: Fills an important gap in publications from Madras. One of the very few publications in good English and on good paper.

## In Brief

★ Somewhere around the end of this month, elections are due to be held at what is perhaps the premier cultural sabha in Madras. And contesting for chairman are two friends and music-lovers, both of whom have contributed immensely to this sabha's success.

*The Man From Madras Musings* is all for democracy, but he's always preferred consensus when it comes to electing the leadership of societies, associations and academics. Too often an election leads to divisive forces which such small bodies can ill-afford to sustain. Which is why, sympathetic as he is to the reasons of both friends for contesting, MMM still hopes they'll both get together and agree on one of them being the uncontested chairman of this society for the next three years.

★ Dunlop advertising all about town is bringing vintage cars back to life. But, as Navin would ask, "Whose is the oldest vintage car in India in running condition and what is it?"

The car is, it is reported, a 1903 vintage Humber and it is apparently kept in immaculate condition by Vijay Malia of McDowell's, Best and Crompton and the rest of the UB Group.

★ Tamil Nadu has lost the Rs. 35-crore Eicher tractor project. Better sales tax concessions in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh had the Enfield Group's partners examine both locations and decide on Bhopal. The 50 hp vehicles to be manufactured there will have no ceiling on sales tax exemption; Tamil Nadu was prepared to offer exemption upto 50 per cent of the investment as incentive and this Eicher found "inadequate". Meanwhile, Eicher and Enfield are strengthening their links and the Chairman of both companies feel that Enfield will be out of the woods before long. Especially after selling the headquarters building, as reported, and land and buildings in Toraipakkam.

MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Park ahead?

We are glad that *Madras Musings* has drawn attention to the plight of the historical Elephinstone Bridge at Adyar and the need to prevent it from vanishing into the river before long!

Your readers would be happy to know that INTACH has already initiated some action in this regard. We wrote to the Corporation of Madras in August 1991 to allow the bridge to be adopted as a pedestrian walkway (promenade, if you please), subject to its structural stability. After many meetings, the Corporation has now agreed to this in principle and has requested the Highways Department (PWD) to confirm the safety aspects of it. INTACH would maintain a close follow up on this.

S. Visweswaran  
Director, Projects  
INTACH, Madras-600 090.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since our report and this letter, it has been reported that the Corporation has been seeking the support of industrial houses to make this 270m long, 11m wide bridge a "Park". Raised parapets, hanging creepers, ornamental plants and elegant benches are all said to be part of these plans.

### When they don't...

*Madras Musings* is surpassing itself. Your issue of April 16-30 is excellent, especially, the front page plea, 'For a better Madras'.

You have quite correctly said in your open letter to the Chief Minister that nothing much will happen about cleaning up the city without political cooperation and support. But there is another aspect.

I frequently drive along Adyar Club Gate Road, Boat Club Road and

Archbishop Matthias Avenue and have always been struck by the fact that these roads are dirty and badly-maintained in spite of the residents being personally very well off or living in properties belonging to prosperous business houses. Could these residents not get together and make their roads an example? If they cannot, or will not, there is no hope for the rest.

Lt. Gen. I S Gill  
21, South Bank Road  
Madras-600 028.

### Ineffectual wings

Your editorial appeal in the April 16th issue to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to rid our metro city of the ills to which it has become an heir to, reminds me of somebody describing the poet Shelley as beating his ineffectual wings in vain.

There cannot be any doubts regarding Madam Jayalitha's credentials. She can transform situations if she wants to. But in the artificial atmosphere prevailing in the State, what chance is there for civilised parties like you?

S Srinivasan  
C/76 10th Cross Street  
Hindu Colony  
Nanganallur-600 061

### Who's to question?

Your article 'For a Better Madras' is timely. Defacing walls and the skyline with posters and cut-outs, usage of the street corners as a toilet or garbage bin, hawkers using the platforms on the sides of the road (intended for pedestrians) to sell their wares (as in South Mada Street, Mylapore), vegetable sellers occupying almost half the road in Mandaveli Street, from Ayyappa temple to the junction with Ramakrishna Mutt Road, and blaring loudspeakers till late in the night, have all become a daily routine with no one to question why.

Travelling on footboards of buses, risking one's own precious life not to mention the trouble to passengers who want to board or get down, has become so common and no one dares question the practice.

It is therefore high time someone, or some organisation, comes up to put an end to such things. No pedestrian or office-goer dares question the roadside hawkers or the footboard travellers on such things lest they receive a shower of abuse!

I congratulate you on your attempt to highlight these malpractices. Unless the Government comes down heavily on such practices and the doers of such, there appears to be no hope.

S. Sarathy  
11 K.P. Koil East Street  
Madras 600 004.

### Instilling concern

While Bombayites and Calcuttians keep singing the praises of their cities, we Madrasis seem to be the most unconcerned lot of all. MM is really trying to instil some concern in what seems to be an otherwise non-enterprising society.

R S Ramam  
Pammal-600 075

### Setting a mark

Congratulations for completing a successful year. MM has set a mark in print-media at a time Madras is launching fewer English periodicals than other metropolitan cities. Madras lovers cannot afford to miss MM.

Samson Aseervatham  
Nagercoil-629 001.

# Another English film shot here

A number of movies in the English language, intended for the international market, are, of late, being made in this part of the country, especially in Tamil Nadu. *Ele My Friend* has been mentioned in *Madras Musings* before. It is being made by an NRI member of the Sivaji Ganesan family and has in it Prabhu, the currently popular Tamil actor.

Another English film recently produced in Tamil Nadu is called *Praying With Anger*. The man behind this project is an Indian domiciled in America, Manoj Night Shyamalan. Of Kerala descent, Shyamalan was born and brought up in the United States, to which his parents migrated some 40-odd years ago.

What's that word 'Night' doing in the middle of Shyamalan's name? Thereby hangs a tale. Manoj had an inseparable companion in the U.S. called Day, as in Francis Day of Madras. So Manoj came to be known as Night! Soon it became part of his name and he is now Manoj Night Shyamalan.

*Praying With Anger* is being directed and produced by Manoj, who also plays its hero. The film is all about an America-born Indian totally alienated from his roots. There is nothing Indian in him when he visits India; in fact, he brings with him several prejudices and misconceptions about his parents' mother country. But during his stay, he discovers 'India' and soon his Indianness surfaces. When he leaves India, he is no longer an Indian American but an Indian Indian!

The film has been shot during the last few weeks in and around Madras

— at famed Presidency College, in some luxurious private bungalows, on Madras's roads and streets and in some of the surrounding villages. The cinematographer is that-award-winning camera wizard Madhu Ambal. An excellent craftsman, with an artistic eye and a brilliant visual imagination, Madhu has won several awards for his brilliant camera work in Malayalam, Kannada and Sanskrit films. His name ensures a film that is sure to have an

in New York, where Madhu Ambal will supervise the grading of the negative and the preparation of the release prints.

## Our Cinema Correspondent reports from the Madras Film World

artistic touch to it. Some of his memorable films include *Anjali* (Tamil), *Vishali* (Malayalam) and *Swathi Thirunal* (Malayalam). Among his many documentaries is *Rama — Glimpses of Ramayana*. This experimental, 24-minute version of the *Ramayana* was produced by B Nagi Reddi of Vijaya-Vahini fame and directed by this-writer's soulmate.

The female lead in *Praying With Anger* is played by local beauty Christobel Howie, who was chosen Miss Madras. Christobel is the daughter of a musical couple, Solomon and Martha Howie. Martha Howie, a school teacher, is a singer and musician, well-known in Western musical circles in Madras. Several other local actors and actresses, from the stage and amateurdom, figure in the cast.

The shooting of the film is over and post-production work is about to begin



Director Manoj Night Shyamalan (centre) sets up a scene with Richa (right), while cameraman Madhu Ambal waits for his 'shot'. (Photograph courtesy Madhu Ambal).

# Playing the market, to help students

He's a Ph.D student who has a foot in the door of the stock market. But it's what he does with his success that makes him different from others making profits in the ring.

P.C. Lakshmi Narayanan, Diwakar to friends, channels considerable amounts of his profits into the Madras United Welfare Association (MUWA), a registered charity. He started MUWA with ten friends in 1989 to help less-advantaged students, those unable to pay the hefty extra tuition fees imposed by regular tutors.

"It all began as a sort of dream. We wanted to share with others the knowledge we had acquired as hard-working graduates in different subject areas," he says. Once an obliging neighbour in Diwakar's George Town area had volunteered a spare room in his home, the lessons — presently Science — and Maths-oriented — began in full swing.

The evening classes began with ten students and by December 1990 "we had sixty in a 60/40 female/male ratio, coaching them in three separate batches," Diwakar narrates. "We then shifted to a school, but were ousted by the resident faculty who could not tolerate the competition free tuition

## IN PROFILE by Lisa Durante

classes posed the Rs. 50-60 they charged per subject," he recalls. Because it cannot find adequate round-the-year accommodation, MUWA has, for the time being, shrunk its classes to summer workshops. "But we will find a way," Diwakar is confident. It may mean asking students to pay Rs. 35 a year towards rent, which is acceptable to all, since these courses are paying healthy academic dividends. "It gives me profound gratification to



see my friends do well. It's wonderful. I suppose this is real power," enthuses the young man who also propounds the theory, "if you have money, you have power".

Certified brokering and Ph.D research in share trends are on the cards for Diwakar in the "short term". The Association will also continue, even though he feels it is set to face "a bit of a depression" — like the stock market — until "logistics get organised" by the end of '92. Meanwhile, it is business as usual for Diwakar.

Madras born and bred, the 22-year-old Diwakar learned about the thrills of business at his grandfather's knee, as it were. A commercial agent, who recently passed away, P. Chilli Babu instilled in Diwakar the wisdom that "never being under a boss" brings with it a rare freedom. And this enterprising young man has followed his grandfather's advice, dabbling in the stock market even while studying and completing his M.Com., from Madras University.

Six months ago, he started acting as a sub-broker, or go-between, for roughly 20 to 30 small investors who trust him unquestioningly with their money. "It is odd," he muses, "that relative strangers entrust me with their savings, and stand by the arbitrary choices I make on their behalf." But then again, "there is such a magical fascination to the stock market that the ordinary investor feels coy about unmasking his craving and prefers to use an intermediary".

# Winning advocacy

That leading Madras lawyer and prominent citizen of yesteryear, V C Gopalaratnam, used to say, "Cases are not always won by mere law. Smart lawyers can make their way to the winning post, sometimes even without law". One such instance was a case of counterfeit five rupee notes which came up for hearing before the Madras High Court.

Kaliappa Nadar, a prosperous businessman, was seated in front of a toddy shop in a small town in Tamil Nadu. Like most of the rural rich, he wore an expensive broad leather belt round his waist which had purses stitched into it. While Kaliappa Nadar waited for his drink, the police suddenly swooped on him and took out of his belt purse a few five-rupee notes which they alleged were fake. There were several currency notes in that waist pouch, but the police picked only four of them as counterfeit notes.

Kaliappa Nadar and seven others were arrested and charged under the Indian Penal Code for circulating counterfeit notes as original.

The trial at the district headquarters became a sensation mainly because of the alleged involvement of the businessman. The District and Sessions Judge found all the accused guilty and

sentenced them to varying terms of imprisonment.

Kaliappa Nadar filed an appeal before the Madras High Court and he engaged the services of that legend among lawyers, V L Ethiraj. The other accused were represented by leading members of the Madras bar.

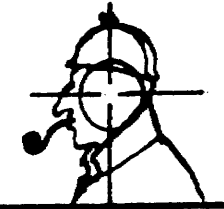
Ethiraj, perhaps the most brilliant strategist who ever walked the corridors of the Madras High Court, always

from court, he found a letter from his bankers and enclosed with it four hundred rupee notes. The letter claimed they were fakes.

"My Lord, if my client could be arrested, the Madras city police should have arrested me too. I had the fake notes, but did not know that they were fake. My client's case is very similar. My Lord!" And with a smile and a bow he sat down.

## CRIME NOTEBOOK

BY RANDOR GUY



believed in making a more thorough study of the judges than of thick law books. He rose in all his majestic splendour and argued his client's case for only 300 seconds. He admitted the recovery of the four fake five-rupee notes, but denied knowledge of their counterfeit nature. He then narrated an experience he had himself recently had.

A client from Andhra had given him as fee Rs. 1,000 in hundred rupee notes. He had sent the money to his bankers, Lloyds, to credit to his account. In the evening, when he returned home

The other lawyers argued for days. At the end of the hearing, the learned judge acquitted Kaliappa Nadar, finding him innocent of the charges, while the other seven accused had their sentences confirmed.

Lawyers who watched Ethiraj were astounded by his winning advocacy. A glamorous figure in an unglamorous profession, Ethiraj won several such cases by strategy and smiles. That was why V C Gopalaratnam wisecracked that Ethiraj's initials, V L, stood for Very Lucky!

Advertise regularly in **MADRAS MUSINGS** We reach 8000 homes



# A cleaner Madras, a better Madras

A few simple but essential steps to make Madras a cleaner and better city — before we enter on large scale planning of comprehensive and expensive projects — are suggested here.

FIRST, wherever you go in Madras, you will find a colony of hut dwellers. To convert all of them into brick and mortar structures would take a long time and a fortune. These colonies are in bad sanitary condition, invariably smelling of human excreta and garbage. An immediate campaign should be set in motion by the Corporation to have these places cleaned daily by sweepers and scavengers. Further, every week,

seen on pavements which are a menace to pedestrians, particularly to children. Recently, some effort was made by the Corporation to cover these holes. But several still remain.

FOURTH, if the effort is to have a cleaner city for better health, surely then there should be a drive against the mosquito menace. The present generation of these insects seems to have developed silencer mechanisms, so much so that the usual buzzing is not as noisy as before. During the anti-malarial campaign, there was definite relief. But now there is an increase in the mosquito population.

• by Alexander Joshua

meetings should be held in these areas and people educated in sanitation and environmental hygiene etc., we have to remember that without the whole-hearted support of the citizens, projects in this direction will not work out. Of course, we can enforce sanitation rules by legislative measures. But this step is to be discouraged. So what must be tried is prolonged propaganda over the Radio, Door-dashan and continued meetings in schools, colleges and in public.

SECOND, an ugly sight, and one which makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk on the pavements on either side of the roads, is the presence of rubble — that is, broken bricks, stones and house plaster. This is seen on almost every roadside. A team of workers should be specially entrusted with the work of removing this. Alternately, the sweepers employed by the Corporation could be instructed to pay special attention to this. Another source which litters the pavements are the deciduous trees which shed their leaves. In our campaign to plant more trees, this aspect has not been thought of.

THIRD, open manholes and bleeding manholes are a regular sight in our city and they are most unhygienic. There seems to be a need for overhauling the sewage system. Along with these, are the large number of holes

Speaking generally about sanitation, environmental hygiene etc., we have to remember that without the whole-hearted support of the citizens, projects in this direction will not work out. Of course, we can enforce sanitation rules by legislative measures. But this step is to be discouraged. So what must be tried is prolonged propaganda over the Radio, Door-dashan and continued meetings in schools, colleges and in public.

We do not seem to have got rid of our infant tendency to throw away things. Give something to a small child, he will invariably throw it away, unless it is something edible. Similarly, we throw all sorts of things on the road, courtyards and pavements — burning cigarette stumps, paper, garbage etc. It is embarrassing to see, among things thrown out, modern inventions of family planning, male version, and women's comforts.

Among the committees formed under the United Nations-sponsored Sustainable Cities Programme, priority should be given to propaganda to educate people on civic sense.



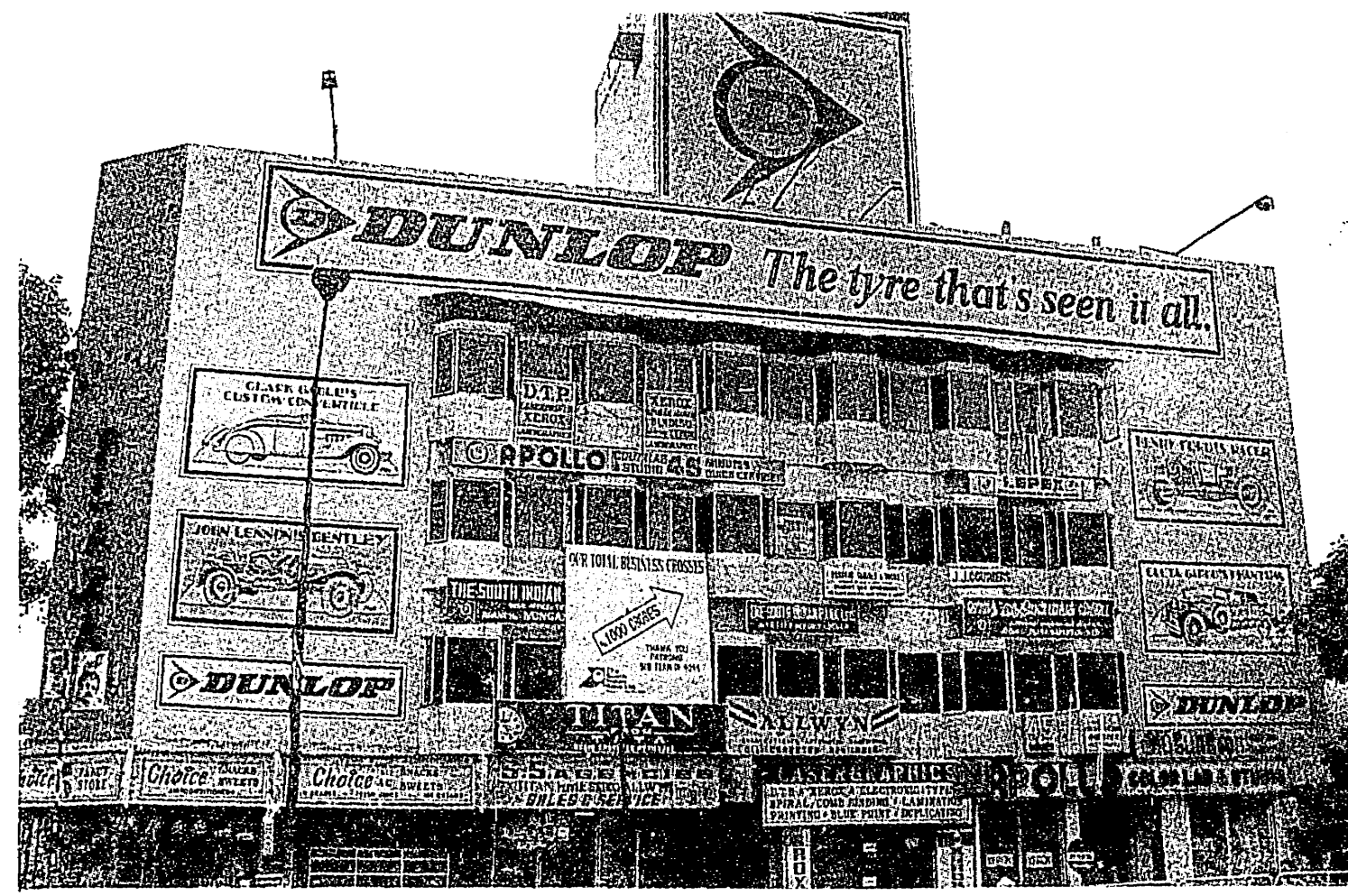
Once 100 Mount Road was one of the best-known addresses in Madras. Today, it is a neglected shell, but with a few signs of its heyday to be found in some of the decorative features that survive — if only one searches hard enough for this historic building hidden behind all the hoardings at what was once called 'Round Tana' and now is 'Anna Circle'.

It was to these premises that The Hindu moved in 1883 from Mint Street, where it began publishing as a weekly on September 20, 1878. In the Mint Street days it used to be printed at the Srinidhi Press, but 100 Mount Road became not only its first property but also housed its first printing press.

By then The Hindu had also begun to appear thrice weekly and continued ... & THE NEW until April 1, 1889, when it became a daily, though remaining an evening paper. It also continued to call 100 Mount Road home till 1939, when it moved to its present premises. All that is left of it at 'Round Tana' is a loud hoarding for the politically brash Frontline, which many hardy Hindu readers find hard to accept as issuing from that same venerable stable.

If the Frontline hoarding keeps the hidden but hallowed Hindu home in the public eye, it is hoardings — or, rather, wall paintings — that keep the rather undistinguished new building in Nungambakkam, near the Village Road junction, in the public gaze. Making good use of a rather bare facade are both building owner and Dunlop's. And the consequent overall effect wouldn't have been too bad if it wasn't for all the other signboards cluttering the facade. Nevertheless, Dunlop's attempt to revive interest in vintage cars is rather striking — the only pity is that this space does not feature vehicles that once used the Indian roads; those vehicles appear in some other hoardings about town, but would have been more interesting grouped in this 'street art gallery'.

(Photographs: 'Old' by Susheela Nair and 'New' by Gopi)



## THE MYLAPORE GALAXY

In the first three decades of this century, Mylapore was the home of several outstanding intellectuals. The majority of them were legal luminaries who distinguished themselves at the Madras Bar and almost all of them were elevated to the Bench, which they adorned with their brilliant legal acumen. It is a remarkable fact of history that they were born in the least affluent families, were exceedingly brilliant students and brought to bear on the career chosen by them a high degree of excellence. All of them became prosperous and affluent and formed the cream of intellectual aristocracy in the Mylapore that was — during that golden age.

Hold your breath, as you run through the list of these illustrious dignitaries:

T Muthuswami Iyer — Judge  
V Bashyam Iyengar — Judge  
K Srinivasa Iyengar — Judge  
V Krishnaswami Iyer — Judge  
P R Sundaram Iyer — Judge

V C Desikachariar  
S Subramania Iyer  
T Sadasiva Iyer — Judge  
C V Ananthakrishna Iyer  
P S Sivaswami Iyer  
Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer — Advocate General  
Vepa Ramesam — Judge  
T V Seshagiri Iyer — Judge  
N Gopalaswami Iyengar  
V T Krishnamachari

• by P.N. Venkatraman

C P Ramaswami Iyer  
Devadas — Judge  
S Varadachari — Judge  
M Palanjali Sastri — Judge  
K S Krishnaswami Iyengar — Judge

V T Rangaswami Iyengar — Advocate General  
Then, there were outstanding lawyers — S Doraiswamy Iyer, who became a great devotee of Aurobindo, S Srinivasa Iyengar, with the uncontrollable quick-fire speed of his

arguments, the sedate, composed advocacy of T R Venkatramana Sastri, the sparkling finesse of K Raja Iyer and K Bashyam Iyengar, T M Krishnaswami Iyer, T L Venkatarama Iyer, V Govindarajachari and S Panchapakasa Sastri. The last four of them were elevated to the Bench at a later stage. A V Viswanatha Sastri was another leading practitioner who also became a Judge.

And to crown it all, three of these dignitaries became Dewans of Princely States before Independence. N Gopalaswami Iyengar (Kashmir) who became the first Defence Minister in Nehru's cabinet, V T Krishnamachari (Baroda) and the greatest of them all, C P Ramaswami Iyer (Travancore). The Right Honourable V S Srinivasa Sastri, the silver-tongued master of the English language and India's Agent General in South Africa, was also a resident of Mylapore, but not a lawyer. Alladi

Krishnaswami Iyer had a major part in drafting the Indian Constitution.

I have confined this resumé of the golden age of Mylapore to three decades from the beginning of this century. Mylapore that was then — from Lloyds Road (north) to Mandaveli (south), from Teynampet (west) to San Thomé (east) — has not altered. As a septuagenarian born in 1919 and as the grandson of one of these great men, I have covered the period up to my graduation in Law in 1939. I may be pardoned for any omissions.

Straying from the boundaries of this write-up about Mylaporeans as indicated above, I must highlight another unique distinction of Mylapore: its gift to the nation of three Presidents — Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and V V Giri, Andhras domiciled in the then undivided Madras Presidency, and the present Rashtrapathi who was a practising lawyer. All three were residents of Mylapore.

# Tycoons and totems

The cigars are genuine Havanas. The tastefully handcrafted furniture couldn't be anything less than Burma teak. And fancy telephones, including a cordless contraption, are strategically strewn around the room for maximum convenience. The entire scene is suffused with an air of surreal sophistication.

Walk into the office ... and you can't help but admire the regal touch... No less regal an air is provided by (his)... residence... Arrive in anything less than an imported limousine, and you're likely to end up a trifle embarrassed as you pass through the main gate, along a tree-lined drive-way, and under the portico... Inside, even the best five-star hotels would pale before the main hall, with its numerous passageways arching out.

The castle culture is part of the typically rich Tamil tapestry. Industrialists from this southern state like to see themselves as monarchs of management. And like industrialists the world over, they too lead extravagant life styles. But what sets them... apart... is the sharp divide in affluence between family members and those that are not, however highly positioned in the hierarchy... At one end you have a chairman and a vice-chairman with penthouse offices and palaces as residences, and who nonchalantly check into the Waldorf Astoria as a matter of routine during their regular trips to New York. The average general manager, on the other hand, gets a salary of Rs.5,000 a month, a house with the monthly rent not exceeding Rs.3,800, and a chauffeur-driven car. Period. Compare this to Delhi, where a general manager of an equivalent company easily makes twice as much.

Readers have been enquiring about what MULLIGATAWNY and THE SHROFF had been exchanging views on a few weeks back. What set them off? They've been asking. It was a feature entitled 'Supremos of the southern citadel' which appeared in ET Esquire, the magazine section of The Economic Times. Here are some excerpts from the article, shorn of the more embarrassing details and the names that littered the feature. This is because there appears to be some genuine doubt about whether those allegedly interviewed were interviewed at all. HARI SHIVARAM, the author, is, from what we hear, not a name that rings a bell among those mentioned in the article. Would he stand up and be counted? The excerpts published, however, raise some rather more general issues. Do readers think that this portrait of the Southern Supremos is a fair one?

— THE EDITOR

everyday corporate decisions: from selecting an advertising agency and choosing a consultant for placements to training courses for staff. The message is simple; there can be absolutely no ambiguity as to where the buck ultimately stops....

At a time when proprietors in the rest of the country are promoting an image of professionalism, top corporate management in Tamil Nadu may still appear to smack of feudalism...

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...Respect for the boss here verges on worship. The adoration and reverence in Tamil Nadu's corporate culture is reflected and reinforced by the universally accepted mode of address of the boss as 'Sir' in the state. 'Sir' has come to be a widely used Tamil word and is part of the Tamil lexicon.

The cultivated arrogance born of affluence is another index of corporate feudalism in Tamil Nadu....

...The big boys of Tamil Nadu's corporate stratosphere never travel alone — either on the ground or off it. An aide dutifully follows with a pouch slashed with money. And it is his duty to meet every incidental expense of the master. After all, the boss's hands are not to be soiled with something as lowly as currency.

And never mind the coming of the era of information technology — that great leveller in any other society. Most captains of industry in Tamil Nadu would not, as a matter of policy, be caught dead with a computer terminal on their tables. It would be unthinkable to have the MD so much as tap a

keyboard. No files on the CEO's table either. It would defile his dignity....

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Given the prevalence of such a culture, it's little wonder that many a corporate professional who has accidentally wound up in Tamil Nadu feels like a fish out of water. Worse still, it affects the way they work. Says one vice-president at a Madras-based two-wheeler company after moving from Delhi: "What seriously prevents us from drawing the best talent to Tamil Nadu is that decision-making in any big company here is very, very centralised. Another deterrent is the pittance that we dole out."

## THE AFTERMATH

In terms of magnitude and effect, the 'Bombay scam' has burgeoned to unprecedented proportions. Investigations into the stock market scandal reveal that banks have been defrauded, perhaps to the tune of Rs. 3000 cr, a great deal more than the Rs. 600 cr talked about earlier. The banking system epicentre of this quake, has opened up a Pandora's box of troubles.

The scandal involves Government bonds/securities (similar to corporate debentures with longer maturities of upto 30 years). Banks, by law, are required to invest a little more than a third of their deposits in these bonds to maintain their statutory liquidity reserves (SLR). Those falling short of their SLR requirements need to buy securities. Similarly, those which exceed their SLR need to sell their securities to use the cash for better yield investments. Banks may also sell their securities to help them make profits in the short term with the proceeds from the sales.

Daily transactions in securities exceed Rs. 1000 cr. Banks find it desirable to maintain secrecy in these transactions, partly to guard their reputation and partly to prevent the price of these securities from shooting up. Brokers essay a crucial role as they buy or sell securities on behalf of the banks. In these transactions the securities do not physically change hands. Instead, a banker's receipt is issued by the bank to certify that the buyer/bank has securities in its possession, and is used as collateral to raise more money.

The seller bank contacts the broker to find a buyer. The broker knows of a buyer bank, but instead of putting the seller bank and buyer bank directly in contact with each other, uses a pliable intermediate bank (X) to act as a routing banker. This bank (X) gets into the act (to get a percentage in the deal) and handles both the buyer and the seller bank. It could happen that the routing banker hands over the money to the broker, to be subsequently given by him to the seller bank at a later date. In the close relationship of the banker and the broker, the cheques get credited in the broker's account instead of in the seller bank's account as per the norm. This goes on in a recurring manner and funds accumulate in the hands of the broker for use.

## New music & dance body plans national survey

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Sruti Foundation has established a Research and Documentation Centre in Madras, with K.V. Ramanathan, former member-secretary of the Planning Commission, former Resident Editor of Indian Express, Madras, and a member of the Haksar Commission, which reviewed the functioning of the Sahitya, Sangeeta Natak and Lalit Kala Akademis, as Honorary Director. Himself a connoisseur of music and dance, he will be working with an advisory council of eminent musicians and musicologists.

The Research and Documentation Centre will function autonomously, raising its own resources, but its work programme will be coordinated to serve the needs of Sruti, the Indian music and dance magazine, and special projects undertaken by the Sruti Foundation. The Centre has an ambitious programme, and on its immediate agenda is a National Survey of Music and Dance Criticism. It will be a comprehensive and systematic study which may be expected to recommend concrete proposals for initiating critically needed improvements and training programmes.

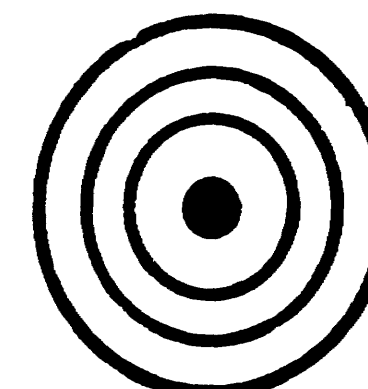
It is the expectation of Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman, Editor of Sruti and ex-officio member of the Advisory Council, that the Foundation's survey-type activity of a continuing nature will make the information on music and dance subjects and performers available with the Sruti Foundation more comprehensive and up-to-date. Sruti has, until now, been serving as an authoritative source of information to the general media as well as to scholars. This function will be shared by the new Centre.

The money generated out of all this was used in the stock market for acquisition of scrips in large volumes, forcing prices to shoot, and create a boom in the stock market. This more or less is what threatens the collapse of our financial establishment.

The moot point is the sum involved — anywhere in the region of Rs. 5000 cr — which was diverted to the stock market to strike speculative deals and unleash the bull on a rampage. In this the entire system is involved. Several brokers' names have appeared

stock markets will not only have overcome a crisis but would also benefit from it in many ways. The market will tone up. And the liberalisation measures will then bring in their wake strict guidelines for fair play and, naturally, a overhauling of our decadent banking system. The small investor has to learn from what has happened and buy scrips that are sound, rather than rush after those that get hiked by the hype of manipulators in the market.

Here are some recommendations for the coming fortnight, but these should be purchased only after the market has completed its dip.



Bull's Eye

**Kamar Chemicals and Industries** (Current Market Price Rs. 42.00): Kamar Chemicals, a low profile company, is likely to announce good results for the period ended March '92. After wiping out all the accumulated losses, the net profit is likely to be about Rs. 50 lakhs on an equity capital of Rs. 81 lakhs, which should yield an EPS of Rs. 6. A dividend of 20 per cent is also on the cards. The company has ambitious expansion plans and is likely to come out with a rights issue in November 1992. Buy this dark horse for a target of Rs. 100.

**Lakshmi Vilas Bank** (Current Market Price Rs. 178.00): This bank, which was incorporated in 1926, has 170 branches today, two-thirds of which are located in rural and semi-urban areas. One of the major activities at its branches is the granting of loans against jewellery. The equity of Rs. 1.92 cr on 31.3.91 is likely to go up as it is considering a rights issue. Its deposits have increased by 31 per cent, to Rs. 351 cr, during March 1992, against Rs. 275 cr in March 1991, while its advances have increased by 11 per cent, to Rs. 165 cr, from Rs. 144 cr in March 1991. It earned a profit of Rs. 0.41 cr during March 1991 and declared a dividend of 20 per cent. The EPS works out to Rs. 9.75. The bank's launching of 'Stock Invest' has been a real success. The share is expected to rule at around Rs. 250.00 by the time of next results.

**Nova Electro Magnetics Ltd** (Current Market Price Rs. 57.00): A one hundred per cent IOU, engaged in the export of video tapes to some of the leading companies abroad, is likely to announce excellent results for the year ended March '92 on an equity of Rs. 14.27 cr. The likely EPS for the March '93 results would be Rs. 4. After touching a high of Rs. 90, it is currently at Rs. 57. The oscillators and the share price recommends a 'buy' for a target of Rs. 100.

But for those who are still there, we counsel patience. Every midnight has a dawn. The fundamentals of the economy have not changed. In fact, this affliction may well bring out the best opportunity. For the steep rise in the BSE Index had hitherto restricted a number of foreign investors and pension funds. So now, if the current crash could bring down the discount level, some of them may contemplate stepping in. If that happens, the Indian

K. Gopalakrishnan

MANAALI RAMAN...



IN MAD, MAD MADRAS



# The variety of fish

Meat-eaters in Madras may despair of finding excellent quality beef or pork for a roast dinner, but they never need do without fish in this city. On any Sunday, go to the fish market in Nadu Kuppam on Lloyd's Road — if you can brave the heat and the dust, the sweat and the grime — and you will discover the whole marvellous universe of fish right in the heart of town. Incidentally, I mentioned Sunday, because the supplies are the most fresh and diverse on that day, in order to meet the demands of the crowds who frequent this bazaar for a good holiday meal.

The most expensive and delicious, top-of-the-line product is the seer (or *vanjaram*) fish, which resembles the swordfish. Being fleshy and with very few bones, it adapts itself well to frying and to curries. The pomfret (or *varvula*) is flat and comes in white and black varieties. It is very appetising as a stuffed and fried dish or in curries. The *Kilangu*, which resembles the smelt, is glistening, narrow and long, with very soft, flaky flesh. The mackerel (or *kanaan kezhithi*) has more oily flesh, while the *sankara* is a red, scaly fish — rather like red snapper. The *madava* is live fish — usually kept in buckets of water and twitching around. And, of course, there are zillions

of tiny fish, from whiting to sardine.

A very popular fish locally is the shark, or *sora*, which is made into tasty *sora pottu*. You will also find plenty of prawns (miniature to jumbo), crabs (the quality depending on the phase of the moon), crayfish (rather than real lobsters, whose prices are simply out of reach), apart

## FOODS & FADS

from mussels, clams and squid — all of which make delectable *bajjias*, Greek or Balkan (dare one say 'Yugoslav' any more?) style!

For those who are squeamish about the cleaning operation, there are a few stalls that will undertake scaling, gutting and slicing for a small price. Make sure that you wash the fish thoroughly of all sand and grime on reaching home, since the conditions in the market are by no means impeccable.

A few tips on how to recognise fresh fish. Remember that fish has no odour when just caught, the skin colour should be intense and bright, the gills red inside, the eyes bright and bulging and the imprint of your fingertip should disappear after you press the flesh.

Shellfish must be alive until eaten or cooked — so make sure your clams and mussels are tight-

ly closed. You can soon become an expert at this sort of thing — but, in the meantime, follow the Japanese (there are a few in this city) who will lead you to the best fish. If all else fails, buy frozen fish. After all, even second-rate fish is better than no fish.

## Avocado Ways

Should you be so lucky as to have avocados in the house on the day you visit the fish market, may I suggest the following delectable operations?

Cut the avocado along its longitudinal meridian and remove the stone. Stuff crabmeat or shrimp sauce (seasoned to your taste and with any dressing you like) in the hole and scoop out the avocado and seafood mixture with a spoon, using the thick skin of the avocado as a cup, so to speak (remember, you cannot peel an avocado.) For best results, make sure that your avocado is neither raw nor overripe. It should be firm and fleshy, not too hard, dark green on the outside, lemony-yellow inside.

Avocado chunks (great in a salad) hold quite nicely if you dip them first for a moment in a solution of cold water and lemon juice.

— V.K.



Health-brimming salads, crunchy, crisp and nutritious, to help you stay C-O-O-L right through the summer. Sprouted mung rich in Vit.C, freshly cut cucumber and carrot and fruit make a colourful spread. And then there's the novel *Jellied Chicken Salad*, moulded to perfection. Go ahead, make a meal of the sumptuous salad spread.

## CUCUMBER-CARROT SALAD

1 large cucumber, peeled and chopped fine  
2 carrots, peeled and grated  
2 tomatoes chopped fine  
1 bunch lettuce leaves, chopped into ½-inch size  
2 capsicums, chopped into ½-inch pieces

Dressing  
1 tbs vinegar  
1 tbs lemon juice  
¼ teaspoon chilli powder  
¼ teaspoon pepper powder  
Dash of mustard powder  
Salt to taste

Method  
Mix the chopped cucumber, carrot, tomatoes, lettuce leaves and capsicum. Shake the dressing thoroughly and mix well with the salad. Serve cold.

## SPROUTED MUNG SALAD

2 cups sprouted mung  
½ cup raw peanuts, soaked in water for at least two hours

Salad dressing  
1 beaten egg  
1 cup milk  
3-4 tbs vinegar  
1½ tbs butter  
1½ tbs flour  
¼ teaspoon mustard powder  
1½ teaspoon sugar  
Salt and pepper to taste

Dressing  
Mix mustard, salt, sugar, flour. Add egg and mix thoroughly. Add milk and vinegar. Cook over low flame, stirring frequently, until thick. Add butter and stir and remove from fire.

Salad  
Add lime juice, celery, coriander, salt and pepper to the shredded chicken. Soak gelatin in cold water for five minutes and dissolve. Add to the cooked salad dressing and mix all the ingredients together. Pour into moulds and chill. Unmould when set. Decorate with lettuce leaves, sliced cucumber and tomatoes arranged around the salad.

\* Note: Unmould and serve immediately. Neela Prabhakar

2 capsicums, deseeded and chopped fine  
2-3 tbs wheat germ  
50 grams fresh paneer, grated  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine  
Salt and pepper to taste

Method  
Mix everything and serve chilled.

## FRESH FRUIT SALAD

2 ripe bananas, chopped to ½-inch pieces  
1 ripe mango, chopped to ½-inch pieces  
1 small papaya, peeled, deseeded and chopped to ½-inch pieces  
2 chickos, chopped to ½-inch pieces  
½ cup chopped walnuts  
A few lettuce leaves  
A couple of lemon wedges for decoration

Dressing  
¼ cup lemon squash  
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice  
¼ cup honey  
1 tbs oil

Method  
Arrange the chopped fruit on lettuce leaves.  
Mix in the dressing. Sprinkle the walnuts and decorate with lemon wedges.  
Serve immediately.

## Chandra Padmanabhan

## JELLIED CHICKEN SALAD

1 tbs lime juice  
1 tbs chopped coriander  
1 cup chopped celery  
2 cups chicken shredded  
1 tbs gelatin  
¼ cup water  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Cooked salad dressing — 1 cup  
Lettuce leaves, cucumber, tomatoes for garnishing

Salad dressing  
1 beaten egg  
1 cup milk  
3-4 tbs vinegar  
1½ tbs butter  
1½ tbs flour  
¼ teaspoon mustard powder  
1½ teaspoon sugar  
Salt and pepper to taste

Dressing  
Mix mustard, salt, sugar, flour. Add egg and mix thoroughly. Add milk and vinegar. Cook over low flame, stirring frequently, until thick. Add butter and stir and remove from fire.

Salad  
Add lime juice, celery, coriander, salt and pepper to the shredded chicken. Soak gelatin in cold water for five minutes and dissolve. Add to the cooked salad dressing and mix all the ingredients together. Pour into moulds and chill. Unmould when set. Decorate with lettuce leaves, sliced cucumber and tomatoes arranged around the salad.

\* Note: Unmould and serve immediately. Neela Prabhakar

# Desk-top music comes to City

Desk-top music is here in Madras. A hundred violins, fifty veenas and several flutes, all in perfect tune and synchronized... all produced from a single desk-top...!

Well-known music directors of films are making a beeline to the beautiful music room of K.S. Narayanan in his Besant Nagar home. An engineer by profession, Mohan, as he is called by friends, is passionately involved in his hobby... Music.

A music buff from childhood, Mohan has a vast collection of music from around the world and takes meticulous care to update his equipment and his collection during his frequent trips abroad as an executive with a large industrial house in Madras. He also spends his Sunday afternoons giving guided listening sessions to whoever is



'Mohan' K.S. Narayanan

in experimentation and travel abroad. UK-based Shobhana Jayasingh is looking for intelligent young women dancers above 18 who would like to participate in her '92-'93 dance production that will criss-cross England during an eight-month tour. Dancers chosen after

UK. The audition in Madras will be in the second week of June. Taped music may be used for each dancer's 30-minute presentation. Interested dancers should get in touch with Hyma Ramakrishna — Phone: 478335/472461.

## Another CFS triumph

A delightful film festival was offered by the Chennai Film Society last month. A King Lear *trioika* was presented by the Society at the Russian Cultural Centre, with Alliance Francaise also teaming with the other groups to make it a success. All three films screened were inspired by Shakespeare's great tragedy and were by Grigory Kosintsev, Akira Kurosawa and Jean Luc Godard.

Kurosawa's was the most interesting presentation. Substituting a trio of sons for Lear's daughters, his *Ran* is set in 16th century Japan. Kurosawa's Lear is an aged warlord, a former samurai, who, homeless and mad, wanders aimlessly. But in moments of lucidity, he comes to realise that it is he who has helped to create this world of betrayal through his own cruelty. A majestic film, it is said to have been the costliest film in Japanese film history.

The Chennai Film Society is conducted by a dedicated band of young film buffs in Madras. Surprisingly, they are able to bring some of the world's best films to the City in spite of financial constraints and lack of patronage. Understandably, they are quite strict about entry, allowing in only members and a few selected guests.

Membership is a mere Rs. 100 a year. Those interested may contact

(Continued on P8)

## THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

interested in knowing something about the world of music.

Mohan is the saviour of many an amateur theatre group wanting good background music and he is god-father to young music-lovers in Madras. He has also directed music for quite a few films.

He is busy working on the music for *Aayana '92*, a mega production with over a thousand schoolchildren and several dancers, painters, sculptors and theatre persons participating. It will be staged at the I.I.T. open air auditorium in July.

## Wanted: Young dancers

There's good news for young, talented Bharatha Natyam dancers with a solid foundation but also interested

auditioning will be on contract to Jayasingh's company from mid-August '92 to March '93. And on good terms too.

Shobhana Jayasingh, who learnt her Bharatha Natyam in Madras, did not make a name for herself here. But her intelligence and willingness to experiment have carried her far abroad, where she's explored new avenues, won critical acclaim and earned commercial success. She was chosen to choreograph the dance movements for the Indian community's presentation in the biennial procession of France. And her dance-drama production based on the correspondence of mathematician Ramanujam has been making waves in the U.K.

It should be good experience for young dancers to take a year off in the

# Dakshin beguiles Jiggs

It is strange that until a few years ago, most of the world thought that Indian cuisine was limited to north Indian curries, vegetarian dishes and *landoori* items... As for south Indian food, the repertoire rarely went beyond vegetarian snack and breakfast foods: *idli*, *dosai*, *vadai* etc....

Until recently, there were some inexcusable (and unforgivable) misconceptions about the food of the south. While the West only knew of curry, the ubiquitous Madras Soup and Mulligatawny, what was worse is that most Indians themselves were unaware of the diversity of the region's cuisine. One of the main reasons for this lack of awareness was that the south had no 'eating out' tradition and so the southern cuisines, exciting though they were, remained securely under wraps.

As a southern scribe put it, "South Indian cuisine has no history, no chronicled evidences of long ago. Nothing solid to build on. Only word-of-mouth traditions handed down successive generations. Dravidians, the original inhabitants of the south, had an intimate knowledge of food. Excavations made at a few places divulge that rice was their staple food, made into *gruel* or *Kanji* — as it is still called — and left to ferment overnight, before being consumed. *Til* (or sesame) oil was the medium of cooking as it still is in Tamil Nadu."

"Aryans, the later colonisers from the north, were unaware of the rich gastronomic pleasures of oil till the Dravidians introduced them to it". Some dishes that the Dravidians made thousands of years ago have had an immutable passage through time. *Thair-vadai*, for instance. *Vadake* was a common Dravidian preparation, though

in its present incarnation it is called *vadai*, made the same way, as tradition prescribes — soaking green beans or *masa* in water, grinding them to a paste, shaping the paste into flattened balls and deep frying them.

In the ancient texts on cooking... there is even a mention of *vadake* being soaked in sour *gruel* after being fried. Today, *gruel* has been replaced by *yoghurt*, which was introduced into southern cuisine much later by the Aryans. All milk and milk products were, for that matter... As Greta Doctor, the High Priestess of southern cookery writers, told me recently... "When it comes to food, the Family tie — at the expense of the individuality, needless to say — is so strong that the Madras cannot see beyond *amma's* (mother's) or *pondalli's* (wife's) cooking."

Restauranting tradition is that before you launch, you invite 'opinion makers' to what the industry calls 'food trials'. Dakshin, at the Park Sheraton, too invited the city's leading epicureans to taste and tell. Problem was that whatever was prepared was good, but not as good as *amma's*. It was a nightmare. Eventually, to keep the largest number happy, the cooks found a common denominator and kept their fingers crossed. The formula worked. Dakshin became a show-case, not just the cuisine, but also the southern arts, crafts and culture....

...Graceful curvilinear forms (smooth hand-finished wood arches separating rooms and framing doors) soften the natural angularity of the space. Decorative elements are provided at the threshold by Lord Ganesa, large and smugly pot bellied, demanding a second respectful look, if not instant obeisance! By an imposing figure of Nataraja, the dancing Siva who holds

A well-known name in the world of cuisine and restaurants in India is JIGGS KALRA. Recently he's been selecting for The Telegraph Magazine, Calcutta, India's three best restaurants in Continental, Chinese and Indian cuisines. Amongst those picked for their Indian cuisine was Madras' own DAKSHIN at the Park Sheraton. Here are excerpts from what he has to say about it.

— THE EDITOR

you in thrall, positioned as He is against a mirrored backdrop. By a collection of early Tanjores showing Lord Krishna in frolic. By the 'chandeliers' in the graceful form of clusters of tiny brass temple bells. By the neat *kolam* ('drawn' every morning) at the entrance.

...It is an elegant, understated restaurant done in rust and green, with a menu to match. It has bell-studded temple doors for its cover, and the delicacies are etched on gold-embroidered silk pages.

The star of Dakshin's unusually talented kitchen team is surely Paramasivam Iyer. By the time you sit down, his smiling septuagenarian visage is upon you with a sizzling *dosai* of the day, that comes straight from the *tawa* to the table. He also stays to find out if it was a success. As soon as he sees the light in a guest's eyes, he is off to please another diner.

The treatment of each of the dishes on the menu is simplicity itself, which is very much how it should be when ingredients of impeccable freshness are used.

# Beautifying our streets

(Continued from P1)

(lovely jargon, that; it is to be hoped that the individual so named appreciates what he is being called!) in this area uses, is by a slum, a mosque, a garment factory, a street of middle class homes and has a couple of other homes almost facing it. We don't know whether this stretch of Vijayaraghavachari Road is Civic Exnora beautified, but this dump was earlier on South Boag Road, by the mosque and facing middle class homes on all sides. The roads near that earlier spot certainly proudly proclaim Exnora beautification.

Now the issue we wished to raise on May 1st was not whether Exnora beautification teams were involved in

spreading this garbage half across Vijayaraghavachari Road or any other road or not. Even if Exnora is willing to shift the dump to an Exnora road, the problem will remain. What we wished to point out was that the present system will NOT work. As we see it, only compulsory use of plastic garbage bags will.

FOOTNOTE: We have several worse pictures of the scene shown if Civic Exnora officials would like to see them. Better still, they should smell the dump itself. But, as we have said in these columns before, there can be no improvement in the city scene unless

there is commitment by the political powers that be and the officials who capitalise on the indifference of the politicians to such problems.

Exnora itself must remember the results of all its efforts to get rid of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles Office just by this dump; situated in a residential LANE, it messes up and blockades the whole area, but has anyone been able to get it to move? In fact, even the policeman on half-day duty who kept some kind of vague order for a while, no longer appears. And the RTO officials are indifferent to the daily chaos. So whom do we all go to from here, Exnora?



# Brainstorming barnstormers

It was an experience out of the ordinary in the small auditorium of the British Council one day early in the merry month of May. I've certainly never seen anything quite like this 'performance' to which anyone would have found it difficult to put a tag. It was part trailer, part demonstration, part instruction, part discussion, part session and part several other things. But at the end of an hour or so, a small but auditorium-packing audience of theatre-enthusiasts had had an eye-

lawn-mower! Now I'm an electric lamp!" To think that a troupe on the road could, on a day off, after a late arrival in the dawn hours, take such exercise seriously and perform them with a will indicated professionalism of the highest order and was almost as impressive as what wound up the evening.

Brief explanations of themes, styles and the story later, there was an excerpt of the *razmataz* scheduled for the next few days, the most striking part of which was the close-up demonstration of the versatility of the troupe — they could sing, they could dance, they could act, they could play burlesque, they could each play two or three musical instruments and each was only too eager to try his hand at the others. Each, it was obvious, could do the lot. Amazing!

But not so amazing as the interaction with the audience that followed. No managers and captains only may speak session, so traditionally Indian, was this. Instead, most of the cast had as much to say as the directors in answer to audience queries and in debate with each other. Indeed, it was almost a rap session that wrapped up a delightfully informal evening that left the audience a lot wiser about what it takes to be a professional — in any activity. Even the Indian cricket team would have benefited from this splendidly constructed lesson. Pity they, and others of their ilk, were not there. It's not *Barnstormers* Madras should be talking about, but how its players brainstormed about the way they prepared for it and every show thereafter.

opening peep into a professional theatre a world apart from the amateur and semi-pro English theatre of this part of the world.

As the audience trickled in, there, in front of them, lounging on the floor, leaning against walls, holding the piano up were the eleven members of the Century Theatre group and the three who've put them through their paces to get the *Barnstormers* on the road. This one's relaxed, that one's self-consciously macho, he's trying to be nonchalant as he too pointedly ignores those trickling in, she's playing a role even before the show, a whispering audience reacted to this posturing and posing, chattering and giggling, music strumming and cavorting group of travelling players in a motley ensemble of casual wear.

But from the moment lanky Director Han Duijvendak got up to speak in an English with undertones of Holland by way of the East End, even his earrings and semi-punk hairstyle were forgiven and forgotten. Not so much by what he had to say about the tradition of the barnstormers of yore or the theatre of today but by the way he, Choreographer Dennis Sayers and Music Director Greg Palmer (shades of the Hare Krishna gang!) got their team to drop their 'look-happy' masks and take seriously the next hour or so.

Wherever did any Indian theatre group in any language prepare for a 2½-hour show with a one hour-plus warm up? Which consists of physical exercises to loosen the vocal chords followed by sound games dreamed up by Palmer and which mingled and mingled Mississippi-Trinidad, Hiroshima-Nagasaki and other geographical permutations, ending it all up with instant reactions of groups to Duijvendak orders like, "Now I'm a

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# Murdering the language

(By The Corner Flag)

**The Hindu** has always been a bit archaic in its language, but its English has been, for all that, quite impeccable. It has also had, and still has, several reporters who write extremely well. Especially on sport. How then did the following appear the other day as part of the lead story on the Sports Page:

'India, though won, performed no better. Its midfield was a suspect. Sudip Chatterji must have seen his golden days long before and he was a total failure as a central midfielder and Bikash Panji was not in his elements. India should have won by 5-0 and two gilt-edged chances were spurned by Bikash himself. Four deep defenders... played their hearts out still Pakistan got some openings only due to poor midfield.

'India's skipper Krishanu Dey withdrew himself after interval as he was not feeling well. He felt giddiness and was taken to a specialist immediately

after the match. Besides Vijayan, substitute Mushtaq Ali looked serious and paved the way for Vijayan's second goal... Krishanu sprayed the pass to Bikash... ?

And there was much, much more in the same hilarious vein.

Is *The Hindu* at last getting a sense of humour?

Is *The Hindu* getting penny-wise and saving on sub-editors?

Is it really modernising with a vengeance and letting reporters feed their 'copy' into computers, with no checks thereafter by sub-editors or editors?

Or is this the treatment it metes out to sport other than its beloved cricket, tennis and racing?

Whatever the reason, this was 'copy' *The Hindu* had no right to inflict on its readers.

**FOOTNOTE:** *The Hindu* woke up to this particular correspondent's 'copy' in the days following and things were much better thereafter. But what did happen on that first day?

# Scurrility — even on racing

Ever since the Government of Tamil Nadu took over the Madras Race Club and its subsidiary, the Ootacamund R.C., nearly two decades ago, its Department of Racing (DOR) has done a fairly satisfactory job. This was only to be expected, for, barring the Custodian, the other officials had for long been associated with the MRC. Like their counterparts at other Indian centres, the DOR officials might have been guilty of occasional lapses, such as unjustifiable demotions and overlooking of in-and-out running. But to condemn them as being spineless is frankly hitting below the belt. This is virtually what the 'Racing Correspondent' of a Bombay daily has done in his comments on trainer Robert Foley's world record of all seven winners, which the Madras and Ooty champion set at the Ooty May Day meeting.

Scurrilous writing is obviously not confined to politics. Not infrequently it raises its ugly head in Indian sport as well. Even India's champion horseman, Pesi Shroff, was found guilty of it by the Stewards of the Royal Western India Turf Club. They recently held his licence in abeyance, maintaining that he had in a newspaper article sullied their status and honour.

In the wake of the Stewards' action came the Bombay writer's outburst. Stating that the DOR officials lacked the uprightness of their Western India counterparts, he maintained that it was their lack of guts that helped Foley scale the heights. Claiming that "the results in Madras and Ooty are so monopolistic that there are great doubts about the fairness of the officials there", he emphasised that there was nothing to rave about Foley's feat because he "trains principally for Dr M.A.M. Ramaswamy, who does not reign but most certainly rules in the South".

Going by the writer's implication, perhaps, A.B. David, who trained

principally for MAM until Foley took over from him over a decade ago, was also aided and abetted by DOR officials. For, even at the time he hit world headlines with his century of classic winners, MAM's colours were

by  
**AJAX**

as successful as they have been since Foley took over his high-power establishment.

It is not known if the DOR officials have noticed the Bombay scribe's comments. But if his allegation that MAM rules the South comes to the notice of the country's leading owner, he will only ignore it with the contempt it deserves. He has over the years taken many such fatuous charges in his stride.

## THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

(Continued from P7)

secretary T. Kalyanaraman, 22 Thayar Sahib Lane, Madras-600 002.

Plans are afoot for a festival of silent films from Russia and a retrospective of Ray's films. Don't miss the programmes of this Society if you are interested in serious cinema.

### Environmental films

Several well known people in Madras are in Rio now to attend the Earth Summit conference there. To mark the event in Madras, the American Centre is screening a ten-part video series entitled 'Race to Save the Planet'.

The programme will take viewers around the globe on an exploration of the enormous environmental challenges

# Disappearing sportsmanship

When the Editor of *MM* called me and suggested it was time I wrote something on sport, I could hardly believe my ears. It would be no exaggeration to say that I was flabbergasted (a word I have always wanted to use). I can't think of any area of human activity that I am farther away from than sport, unless it be space research.

My closest brush was when, at the age of eight, as a cub scout, I won a prize (a book called *The Mystery of the Manor House* which I never finished reading as I couldn't figure out what either a mystery or a manor house was) for being the fastest to be able to make some fancy knots on a rope. These knots, incidentally, were supposed to save our lives if we were drowning or were being chased by a tiger or some such. I must confess that during a long life I have never had the opportunity, rather, the occasion, to put my talents to use. I must also admit that I doubt very much that if such an occasion had indeed arisen I would have had a rope handy. An even more moot question is whether the ability to tie knots in ropes really comes under the category of sport.

Be all that as it may, my idea of participant sport has always been to read about games I never understood in newspaper columns, and, more recently, to watch on television people hitting a ball wildly about, or chasing one in groups with obviously the idea of committing mass suicide. But my Editor is a pretty savvy type. I said to myself, and he must have had some good reason to set me off on such an improbable endeavour. I finally concluded that he wanted the views of a man of ripe years on the state of sport today.

I am not totally unqualified as I watch the boys in my tiny street play improvised cricket every day, and have already spotted half-a-dozen future Gavaskars. The little girls who are kept out of the game usually get their own back when a ball comes close to where they are standing watching, and with the agility of a Kirmani they sweep it up and hit the nearest male player with it. Fortunately, only used tennis balls are employed in our street-cricket.

But, talking a bit more seriously, you can't go through life without picking up some ideas about sport, not to mention developing some philosophical speculations about them. The big difference between sport of

yesteryears and that of today is both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative because of the vast improvements in playing techniques, and quantitative because of the much larger numbers involved, both as players and as crowds, and specifically because of the vast sums of prize money that make millionaires of especially tennis players.

It is worth considering for a moment whether this sort of thing

**Looking  
aSKance**

indicates progress, putting aside the clichés about evolution being continuous, the old order yielding place to the new and so forth. While I know as well as the next man that you can't put the clock back (oops, another cliché), I personally think that disaster looms ahead if the present trends continue, which unfortunately they will.

I am not saying anything new and am repeating only the obvious, but sportsmanship as an admirable human quality is fast disappearing. Like everything else, sport has also been politicised, and sometimes I wonder why a country that has lost a game against another does not go to war with it (*Ed. Note:* At least two have!). The amount of bad manners displayed on the field is something that would not have been seen even about three decades ago. Of course, there is always some bitterness in competitive situations, but except during the brief body-line period in cricket, tempers never got the better of manners (but then Lar-

wood was a professional who was instigated by his gentleman-captain to bowl to hurt). There is now just too much money in sport, and it is an even more powerful force than national pride. The aggression that players display — bouncers in cricket, power-play in tennis — solely to make sure of the big buck, I think, detracts greatly from the undoubted and enormous talent modern players have developed. In the United States and elsewhere, the rewards involved are so high that football, baseball and basketball players are bought and sold for enormous sums by clubs to one another. We may well come to that also.

What am I trying to say? Even if I could change the system I wouldn't want to do so, because the sportsmen give of their best, take great risks, and, therefore, do deserve to be remunerated. I am only expressing an old-fashioned, nostalgic and wistful feeling that everything might be handled with the grace and elegance that characterised spectator sport in the old days, while at the same time seeing to it that the players do benefit. I have no answers on how this can come about.

When I was in school, in a very important regional basketball tournament, the captain of one team, who as it happened came from our school, shot the clinching basket, standing about fifteen feet away from the hoop, **with his back to it**. Great cheers and commotion. He was given a medal and his friends took him out for coffee. Today, Presidents give banquets, sports ministers send telegrams of congratulations, and the team, if it is of the right persuasion, goes to Mecca to offer prayers when a victory is achieved. Times have changed. **S.K.**

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