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MADRAS

ADDISON METAL CUTTING TOOLS

MUSINGS

Vol. 11. No. 6

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

July 1 — 15, 1992

Questions are asked and doubts remain as...

The posters come down

MANALI RAMAN...



It's another lot of refugees, Sir, from yet another CBSE school!

(By The Editor)

Thank you, Madam Chief Minister. By ordering a new ordinance with greater teeth, you've got the posters in Madras being scraped off the walls. And, no doubt, after the Madurai celebrations they'll vanish from the walls of the other urban centres in the state too. But then, what next?

There are already political parties grumbling that the ordinance is aimed against them. The Police Commissioner says he didn't say what he should have been saying. The poster printers are complaining that they have no business and want relief. And the lawyers are going through the ordinance with a fine-tooth comb.

While one set of lawyers involved in consumer protection see hope in all those clauses about *thalties* as a way to bring down the cutouts, another lot of lawyers point out that it may be no offence if you plaster **your own** walls with posters if you so wish and put up as many poster-covered *thalties* as you want in **your own** premises. The latter feel that if their arguments are carried to their logical conclusions, members of each political party will volunteer to have the walls of their homes and businesses covered with posters, either out of political conviction or for a fee. And that will once again put the poster printers back in business!

The latter set of lawyers also appear to feel that the ordinance does not cover

all those wall-paintings that desecrate the city. Certainly, the wall-painters have not protested, to date.

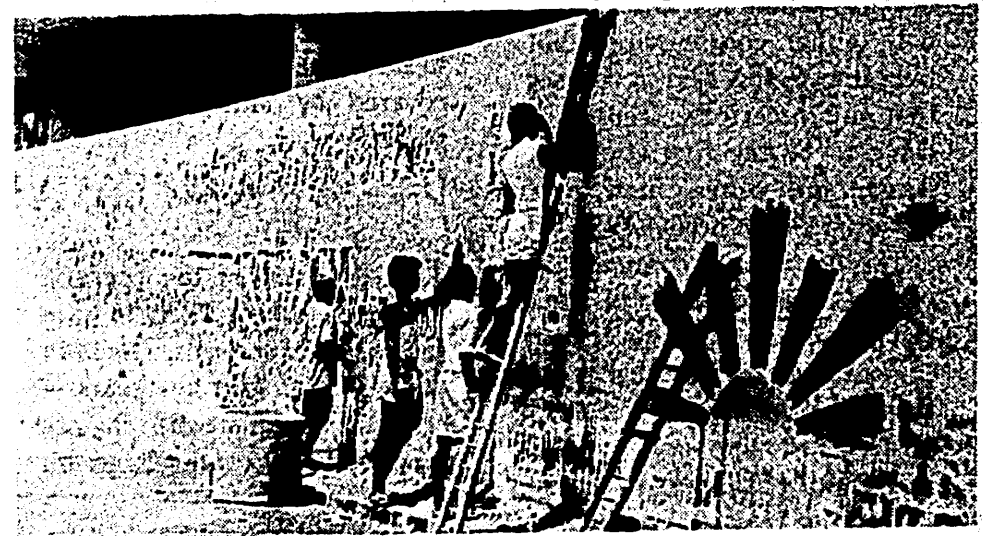
Ordinances are all well and good, but the trouble is that for every ordinance there is someone out there waiting to challenge it in court. Which is why, if we really want a city and state free of posters and cutouts, what we need is the political will. All Madam Chief Minister has to say is "The AIADMK will not put up any more posters and cutouts" and you can be sure none will be put up. Not even by her opponents. The Law can then take care of cinema and commercial posters.

If we are to get a cleaner, better Madras, it is the leadership that must show the way, not the Law.



A symbolic beginning...the posters on Gemini Flyover were scraped off to a lot of fanfare last fortnight, leaving the walls uglier than ever (below) and with the wall-writing intact (above). At last sighting, however, a solitary worker was attempting to do a whitewash job. But after all this scraping and whitewashing, there's been nothing even symbolic elsewhere — and the city's posters remain an eyesore.

(Photographs: V S RAGHAVAN)



IN MAD, MAD MADRAS

Putting them to the test

(By A Staff Reporter)

The controversy over State Board education and Central Board education has gone on for years. During all those years, one fact has stood out: the number of students with State Board qualifications who've made it into the prestigious Central Services HAS BEEN MINIMAL.

Most educationists have felt that this was because the State Board stream was not offering an education that was solid enough for the tough grind ahead. Has the changed State Board syllabus now begun to meet that demand?

The answer to the question is not to be found in depriving Central Board students of seats in colleges by ordinance. The answer, says one leading educationist, is to RE-TEST ALL THE STUDENTS WITH FIRST CLASSES in BOTH streams with a syllabus-based, three-hour exam on general learning and then rank them for consideration by the colleges.

Such an impartial test might, once and for all, put a stop to the long-time argument over which stream equips students better for higher studies. Let the students prove themselves — by test NOT writ.

When a thousand will dance

(By a Special Correspondent)

Nearly a thousand city school-children, of ages 10 to 15, will, in one of the biggest mass entertainments even seen in Madras, put on a show of the traditional performing arts of the South at the IIT's Open Air Theatre on July 9th and 10th. "Wish I could be

23/05/92.

AAYANA '92 is a big, bold and brilliant concept! Here's wishing its realisation lots of grace and power. Wish I could be there too!

Love - Remo.

Greetings, good wishes and love from Remo Fernandes

there too!" wrote pop star Remo Fernandes to the Madras Craft Foundation (MCF).

The MCF was organising the show as part of their outreach programme to get "children bred on Tamil films and now fed on Star TV Culture" interested in their cultural roots, to be found deep in the art forms of rural India, and make them "feel Indian in spirit".

The MCF has been involved from 1985 in bringing together folk artists from the villages, urban classical artists, theatre groups and plastic artists of the city in school workshops. Drawing from the experience, the MCF has now planned the mega-production involving children from Padma Sheshadri Bala Bhavan, A M Matriculation, T I School, Rajaji Vidyashram, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Asan Memorial, Olcott Memorial, Avvai Home and the School for Orthopaedically Handicapped run by the Indian Council for Child Welfare. Some of these schools even held their final examinations in April to make the children available for rehearsals.

When the MCF approached IIT for its Open Air Theatre, IIT Director Dr N.V.C. Swamy go so excited about the project that he insisted IIT be a partner in AAYANA '92.

Why AAYANA '92? The word means 'the coming' or 'happening', and with the story of the Ramayana not being told in full in this presentation,

but only in episodes inspired from scenes in it, AAYANA seemed an apt title, the organisers explain.

Each episode will be of ten minutes and will portray the challenges of evils like pollution, corruption, and greed. Each episode will also be presented by a school and each school will be using a different traditional performing art of South India like Bharatha Natyam, Mohini Attam, Devarattam, Oyilattam, Therukoothu and the Padayani mask dance of Kerala. There will be creative theatrical expressions too. And 15-foot tall giant puppets. The grand finale will have everyone dancing together, celebrating Life with all its ups and downs.

The Dhananjayans, Ambica Kameswar, Anita Ratnam and Shyamala Surendran, all dancers, and theatre activists Pathmanathan, Pralayan, Mangai, Mina Swaminathan, Mithran Devanesan and Hans Kaushik comprise the team of artistic directors. Sculptor John Devaraj is creating the puppets.

Among the many who've sent messages to the production are Remo Fernandes, Sharon Prabhakar, Malavika Sarukkai, Kamini Kaushal and Handel Manuel. Says Remo Fernandes, "AAYANA '92 is a big, bold and brilliant concept". Kamini Kaushal says: "What a wonderful way to combine all the creative arts and give form to

(Continued on P3)

Slow courses & slower books

When the 40-year-old Madras Printers' & Lithographers' Association recently went up in the world, moving into newer and more spacious premises on Hall's Road, it was in the fitness of things that they should get Dr M Ananthakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, to inaugurate the new premises. It was the MPLA's collaboration with Anna University nearly ten years ago that made the first ever degree course in Printing Technology in India possible.

Since then, every graduate from the course has found handsome employment in the industry in India or abroad. In fact, this year's graduating batch of 17 was snapped up well before end of term and there were takers for a dozen and more if they were available. Why then, lamented the Vice-Chancellor, do students (backed by their parents) shun the two industry-oriented courses Anna University pioneered? Namely Leather Technology and Printing Technology, in which fields Madras has shown the way for centuries and in which there is now a boom in India. One parent, the VC narrated, said that he didn't want his son to do either of them because when his son did the GRE either course would not help him much! And so courses that suit America's needs continue to be the first choice at Anna and other such professional institutions.

An equally sad commentary of the state of education in Tamil Nadu was the VC's revelation that he didn't think that more than TEN textbooks had been written by members of Anna University's 500-plus faculty in the last five years! Get our faculty to write and help them to get published, he appealed to the printers, and said it was time Indian students were given the opportunity to study with well-produced, well-written books of Indian origin instead of depending on publications from abroad.

Why this sad state of affairs exists, no listener appeared to know. But is there a faculty member out there with an answer? Or, better still, a book?

Thru other's eyes

This would have been funny, if it wasn't so annoying. But before giving readers the quote, a word of background.

Paul Theroux is a well-known and well-liked travel writer who's usually on most best-seller lists. His latest work is a coffee-table type book, *Traveling the World: The Illustrated Travels of Paul Theroux*. Boasting "the lumbering express that bisects India, a 1400-mile slash from Delhi south to Madras... (which) might easily have derived (its name) from the kind of luggage the porters were heaving on board..." he found that "the train was full of Tamils". And of this species he goes on to write:

"Tamils are black and bony; they have thick straight hair and

their teeth are prominent and glister from repeated scrubbings with peeled green twigs. Watch a Tamil going over his teeth with an eight-inch twig and you begin to wonder if he isn't trying to yank a branch out of his stomach..."

"Tamils are also modest. Before they change their clothes each makes a toga of his bed-sheet, and, hopping up and down and working his elbows, he kicks his shoes and trousers off, all the while babbling in that rippling

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

speech that resembles the sputtering of a man singing in the shower. Tamils seem to talk constantly; only toothbrushing silences them. Pleasure for a Tamil is discussing a large matter (life, truth, beauty, 'values') over a large meal..."

"The Tamils were happy on the Grand Trunk Express: their language was spoken; their food was served; their belongings were dumped helter-skelter, giving the train the customary clutter of a Tamil home."

When, oh when, are Indians and other natives going to stop being exotic to British and other white writers? Isn't there more to India than natives being discovered by latter-day Livingstones?

Private power

By the turn of the century, Tamil Nadu is likely to have all the power it needs. The *Man From Madras Musings* hears — provided all the private schemes now being encouraged go on stream.

Coimbatore, which has for years been trying to get a power project going to feed the city's booming industries, is at last off the mark. A 95-company consortium called Tamil Nadu Industries Captive Power Company Ltd has tied up with an Italian company to set up a Rs. 800 crore thermal power plant at Srimushan in South Arcot District. The plant will exploit the 230 million tonnes of lignite available here over a 30 sq km area and generate 250 MW of power.

The Memorandum of Understanding for this first power plant in the private sector in India with foreign equity has been followed by Government calling

for "prospective promoters" to establish several other power projects in the State. Fort St George has announced three such private projects whose output the TNEB would buy. The projects are a 300 MW one at Pillaiperumalnallur, near Tarangambadi, which will use Natural Gas, an expansion of 500 MW at the Tuticorin thermal station and two 500 MW thermal power plants to be sited in Thiagavalli, near Cuddalore.

It would seem to *MMM* that there is slowly emerging a greater commitment to industry in the state. But the proof of the pudding lies in how quickly permissions are given for the making. Fort St George, where red tape was invented, has had a reputation for several years now of files moving at snail's pace. Is there a better dawn ahead?

In brief

★ The Centre for People's Movement, operating out of Shenoy Nagar, is reported as launching not only a training centre for domestic workers but also a campaign for a law to protect domestic help and ensure them a fair wage. The campaign for social service benefits and fair wages might take some time to get under way, but training of domestic help was scheduled to start with the recent opening of the Centre by the Commissioner of Labour. Training in the use AND maintenance of the whole range of electrical and mechanical gadgets now found in most urban middle class homes is high on the curriculum. So are instruction in homecare, childcare, and first aid. Special attention is also to be paid to the development of literacy. But *The Man From Madras Musings* found no mention of special attention to instruction in hygiene in the reports of this welfare organisation's most worthwhile activities. And a sense of hygiene is what we've always lacked in Madras.

★ Air Asiatic, the first of the private air taxi services, was another Madras first. Unfortunately, it went through a managerial wrangle but appears to be emerging unmingled. The word

is that it will soon reach for the skies again. Meanwhile, another air taxi service eyeing Madras is East West Airlines, which, with its Bombay-Ahmadabad travel trade links, is considered by many the service that's really made a success of take-off. In its first hundred days of operation, it has flown over 76,000 passengers on 610 commercial flights from Bombay, Ahmadabad, Cochin and Mangalore. Now it's drawing up plans to touch Madras, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Kozhikode, Goa and Delhi. Will Air Asiatic take wing before East West arrives in its home city?

FOOTNOTE: Since these lines were written, East West Airlines has started its Bombay-Madras-Bombay service and has begun planning on a Coimbatore service. Air Asiatic has still to take wing.

★ This year's Miss India, Madhushi Sapre, missed out on becoming Miss Universe by preferring to be honest about her interest in sport rather than in social service commitment. Last year's Miss India, Madras's own Christobel Howie, appears, however, to be more interested in education and the social graces. Recently married and now announcing herself as Christabelle Robson, she's also announced the recent opening of PRIM-ROSE, a school for "modelling, painting, sketching, makeup, etiquette, spoken English and a special painting course for children". *The Man From Madras Musings* wishes her luck with her Kilpaik venture and hopes it will help to produce many more Miss Madras and Miss Indias. This city could do with some brightness.

★ What's the Snuggly Club up to? The way *The Man From Madras Musings* understands it, it is a club for parents with tots under three. Promoted by a diaper manufacturer, the Club hopes to get the parents together at Healthy Baby, Beautiful Mother & Child and other such countests as well as at meets with paediatricians, gynaecologists, child psychologists and other specialists. A quarterly newsletter will provide more childcare information. The Snuggly Club, it would seem, is out to make sure that tots will be cared for as never before. *The Man From Madras Musings* only hopes they'll not get smothered with all this care and knowledge! *MMM*

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OUR READERS WRITE

What C.P. did

I wish to take issue with a statement made in the article 'The Mylapore Galaxy' (*Musings*, June 1-15) in respect of Sir C P Ramaswamy Iyer who has been called "the greatest of them all" in comparison with other luminaries of Mylapore. As I understand it, the word 'great', when applied to a person, should take into account the moral and ethical dimensions. You may, if you feel so, claim that Harshad Mehta is more talented than Manmohan Singh in handling money matters, but you cannot call him the greatest Indian financier. I doubt whether the author has taken into account the following facts while making his assessment of C.P.:

1. He had jailed, out of pique, persons who were active supporters of a popular Government for Travancore and Independence for India.
2. He did his best to obstruct the integration of 'Native States' with India and even tried, in collaboration with Pakistan, to get sovereign status for 'Native States' like Travancore and Hyderabad.
3. He created religious rivalries in a state traditionally known for its religious tolerance and communal amity.

For further details, refer to the book *I Have Borne Much* by C P Mathen, M.P., my father.

Omana Mathew
10 Third Avenue,
Harrington Road, Madras-600 031.

Distasteful writing

Randor Guy's latest 'Crime Notebook' (*Musings* 16-30 June) must surely rank high in the list of distasteful writing. I find it difficult to believe that this insensitive piece escaped the editor's notice. The verdict hardly matters except to the accused, but the behaviour of the defending lawyer was sleazy to say the least. "Storehouse of humour" indeed! He ought to have been pilloried for his action and Randor Guy along with him for choosing the episode as an example of "winning advocacy".

Radha Gopalakrishnan
Kalakshetra Colony
Madras-600 090.

Papaya seeds for you

As a contribution to the beautification and greening of Madras I offer each reader of *Madras Musings* one or two seedlings of a tasty, early bearing and short variety of Papaya free of cost.

The plants will be distributed (with advice on how to grow them) from Mehra Gardens, Spencer's, 769 Anna Salai, Madras 600 002.

Bring your copy of *Madras Musings* with you to collect the seedling.

O T Ravindran
Madras 600 035.

Preserving the heritage

Like the laid back style of writing in *Madras Musings*, the paper is definitely needed to highlight the people's voice in preserving the heritage of the city. I'm glad a new magazine can touch my heart even in the hurly-burly of today.

B K Venkatraman
K Pudur,
Madurai-625 007

Why 'cuckolded husband'?

This refers to the feature 'Putting his Aiyar on the book' by your special correspondent (M.M. 16-30 June). Why the words "cuckolded husband" (para 5, line 12)? Does not the word "cuckold" itself mean "husband of an unfaithful wife"? It is like saying "potable drinking water"!

But then even D.D. used the words "potable drinking water" in one of their English News Bulletins a couple of years back!

K Ramamurthy
K K Nagar
Madras-600 078.

Catching them young to study the City

We can no longer legitimately consider Madras as the "Gracious City", claim 21 Standard VIII pupils from 'The School', that educational establishment run by the Krishnamurti Foundation in Besant Nagar. After spending six action-packed weeks studying the "changing pace of Mylapore", they came up with fascinating examples to corroborate this view. Pigeon hole-sized flats mushrooming in the place of hastily demolished historical buildings, worsening pollution — environmental and acoustic — soaring crime rates and the drying up and abuse of the Kapaleeswarar temple tank, were some of them.

For these children, Sandhya, Vijay, Sriram, Vivek and Ram Shreya among others, middle to upper-middle class youngsters who often miss out on the day-to-day contact with their areas, a full immersion study into what happens "out there" was a "million times more exciting than watching Star TV", claims Laiya. And, after all, adds another student, "Krishnamurti taught us that 'we are the world'. We are responsible for the world and if the world is not OK, then it is perhaps a reflection of our own disorder; so Mylapore is not 'out there', but 'in here,' he says pointing at his heart.

Clearly, the project expectations were high, and, according to the three

teachers who assisted the students on their three-hour per day research, amply fulfilled. Even though they were not graded for their efforts, the children took it upon themselves to deliver "their best", claims one satisfied teacher.

Each day students would go to Mylapore in small supervised teams and tackle their routine assignments. "We

by LISA DURANTE

learned to overcome our shyness and conduct interviews," says one. "We began to appreciate the rapid process of change," says another. Most significantly, however, "We learnt to stop complaining about urban inefficiency and corruption and really got involved in helping out," affirms a third civic-minded pupil.

The Kapaleeswarar temple tank debate is one such example. Eight years ago, the tank was filled with fresh water and floating lotus! A couple of years later, it dried up, due to the increasing number of private wells in the area siphoning off water, as well as clogging storm water drains. The dry tank was, evidently, an irresistible temptation for litter-bugs and, in no time, it had "degenerated into a rubbish dump", a student explains.

Consistent pressure on the concerned government departments,

Metrowater, the Corporation and Police is "bringing about improvements", claims one hopeful pupil. All the same, "we realise that these organisations are not fully to blame. They hardly have enough money to improve the amenities in the area," says another.

Whatever the cause, or causes of this deterioration, the fact that children are aware of the circumstances and capable of mobilising themselves, albeit in a small way, to bring about change, spells hope for the future of Madras. "I am committed to making my city a beautiful place to live in," one student says simply.

The School's project is the first of its kind in Tamil Nadu. It concentrates on the hallowed "multi-disciplinary" teaching approach, especially popular in the West. Shortly before the summer holidays the study culminated in a beautifully organised slide show and debate in which both parents and children vociferously participated.

Even though teachers confessed to "initial doubts" regarding parental approval of this unorthodox study assignment, they were pleased to report that once Mums and Dads saw their children's motivation and appreciated their hard work, it was they themselves who have, in fact, "been pestering us to organise another such project for next term", one teacher claims.

The aftermath of an Ordinance

The scam's shadow continues to stalk the bourse, affecting brokers and investors alike. As I write, there's been a week of absolute lack of activity at the Bombay Stock Exchange. And all the attempts made by the authorities to resume trading by segregating the shares of Harshad Mehta and associates have been of no avail. This *cul de sac* is the result of a Presidential Ordinance issued on June 6 empowering the President to attach all the moveable and immovable properties, including financial securities, of Harshad Mehta and his associates acquired after April 1, 1991.

The stalemate in Dalal Street, Delhi and Lyons Range over the refusal of the Stock Holding Corporation to accept deliveries of scrips which can be sourced to Harshad Mehta and associates is causing concern. The scrips held in blank transfer are good delivery until the book closure of the transfer books of the companies concerned are announced. A quaintly perplexing situation has arisen, leading to doubts about the validity of scrips involved. In fact, according to reports, even the management of some companies have not been forthcoming when it comes to accepting shares of this category for transfer into new areas.

The authorities fully understand the intricacies of transacting business in stocks and shares and the resultant need to establish the credibility of ownership

BULL'S EYE

the banking system is understandable. But only those assets directly linked to the persons involved should have been frozen. After all, the shares sold by them and paid for in chain delivery are the property of brokers and investors. As a long period is involved, scrips of blank transfer are usually held till a record date is announced to get them registered in the owner's name to reap the benefits of dividends, rights or bonus issues. There are vast volumes of such stock circulating in Dalal Street, Delhi and Lyons Range. The amount involved is

believed to be about Rs. 100 — 230 cr. The stock market must function, especially when morale appears to be sagging. However, till unambiguous clarifications are made, brokers have decided to refrain from trading, in spite of the fact that the exchange has officially remained open for some time.

The best of players in the market have been stumped by the happenings. In our view, this is neither the time to buy nor sell scrips. The Index is expected to come down by another 10 or 15 per cent. Investors who have bought shares should hold on to their scrips till the situation stabilises. There is cause for worry. But, given the encouraging flow of creditable corporate results and the ambitious plans of managements to tap the market with equity issues and bonuses, it will be a different story altogether when we have done with it. Considering this, we are refraining from making recommendations for the present.

K. Gopalakrishnan

A thousand dance

(Continued from P1)

them in such a dynamic way! Our urban children could do with exposure to our cultural heritage and learn to be proud of what our country has to offer.

And Malavika Sarukkai says: "I am happy that, in AAYANA '92, con-



Several groups, including one from The School (see story on left), have been trying to 'save' Mylapore. But will all their efforts fill to the brim the tank of the Kapaleeswarar Temple, the heart of Mylapore, and clear the streets round it? (Photograph: V S RAGHAVAN)

Business Review... by The Shroff

Perceptions need to be changed

One year is too short a period to review a government. However, when a government comes in with such massive support and a most popular leader is sworn in as Chief Minister, expectations run high. A state which was in the forefront of industrialisation and which had woefully fallen behind in recent times was expected to gain momentum once again, under this dynamic leadership. Are there signs of this happening?

One of the first things that the Chief Minister did was to convene a meeting of industrialists. Those who attended went back with positive feelings. Soon, an attractive package of incentives, an improvement over the previous DMK regime's, was announced. Some sort of solutions were found for Standard Motors' and B&C Mills' long-standing problems and the factories were reopened. Whether these are lasting solutions time alone will tell.

Another major achievement has been the approval for the long-pending aromatics project. This project, which has been hanging fire for four years, has finally got all its clearances through. The Tamil Nadu Government has also taken the first step in promoting a joint sector power project based on lignite deposits at Jayamkondam. But this is a project with a long gestation period.

On the flip side, there are complaints as well. The various measures announced have not exactly made investment flow into the state. The major electronics projects are all going to Karnataka. The Chief Minister, who is also the Industries Minister, is getting increasingly inaccessible to industrialists. And there have been four Industry Secretaries in the last one year. Industrialists are beginning to get more and more uncertain. Is this state seriously committed to industrialisation? wonder the industrialists. As mentioned earlier, one year is too short a time to pass any kind of judgement. But it is up to government to change these unhappy perceptions of the industrialists.

Major breakthrough

One of the major breakthroughs for this state is the clearing of the aromatics project. What will be the

Hit by the ban

The banning of posters in the city has been welcomed by many (including this journal) and has been greeted with dismay by others. Apart from the pros and cons of the move — and the possible motivation behind it — certain sectors have certainly been hit by the ban.

Film posters constitute nearly 75 per cent of the total posters printed in the city. Film distributors spend nearly Rs. 2 lakhs on posters for every Tamil film. Scores of presses are involved in the printing of posters. This is a Rs. 50 crore industry, giving direct and indirect employment to over 10,000 people.

gains? The aromatics plant will produce 200,000 tonnes per annum (T/A) of purified terephthalic acid (PTA), 3000 T/A of orthoxylene and 30,000 T/A of benzene.

According to H Krishnamurthy, Chairman and Managing Director of Madras Refineries Ltd (MRL), who are promoting the project along with SPIC, the project will have two complexes, the aromatics complex and a PTA complex. The raw material for aromatics is Naphtha, which MRL can supply. For the PTA complex, the raw material is paraxylene which is to be produced in the aromatics complex.

PTA is the basic raw material for producing polyester stable fibre (PSP), polyester filament yarn (PFY), polyester film and polyester bottle resin. Orthoxylene is used in the manufacture of dyes, insecticides and pharmaceuticals. Benzene is the main building block for a number of downstream industries like phenol, styrene, caprolactum and nitro-aromatics. According to projections, six standard size plants for producing PSF and PFY can be set up using PTA produced by the complex.

What all this means is that the Rs. 1750 crores aromatics project will, in turn, lead to a whole lot of downstream industries. The total investment for these downstream industries is expected to be around Rs. 2500 crores. The prospect of employment generation is around 20,000. And if the PFY and PIS is produced to capacity, a lot more jobs will be created in the textile sector.

Hit by the ban

The banning of posters in the city has been welcomed by many (including this journal) and has been greeted with dismay by others. Apart from the pros and cons of the move — and the possible motivation behind it — certain sectors have certainly been hit by the ban.

Film posters constitute nearly 75 per cent of the total posters printed in the city. Film distributors spend nearly Rs. 2 lakhs on posters for every Tamil film. Scores of presses are involved in the printing of posters. This is a Rs. 50 crore industry, giving direct and indirect employment to over 10,000 people.

Is there a solution to the problems faced by these people? Can they be given text-book printing? Or any other kind of printing? Or can there be special billboards erected only for posters to be pasted on, leading to a revival of poster printing?

MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS FURNITURE

FOR SALE: 30 Nos. of Teakwood Chairs with cane seat and provision for writing attachment. For inspection Phone: 862739.

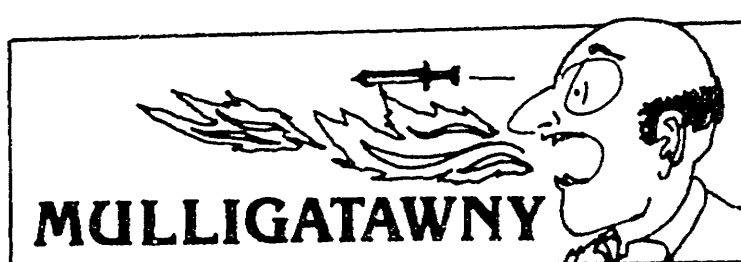
Scam cho! Scam cho!

Is it a man? Is it a bull? No, it's a folk hero named Midas Mehta.

So what if his golden touch finally turned into ashes! For at least a few years he could have bought a diamond as big as the Ritz, and the Ritz with it! Say what you will about the man, the blow dried hair, the beady eyes, the bovine mouth, the thick-set head growing out of an ox-like body, he's captured the imagination of the people. Even if he's taken their money.

It proves more than anything else that what really turns Indians on, bless

Bombay will tell you, it's like being admitted into a Cathedral. Tall, fluting columns with gilded leaves crowning the top, soar high into a Victorian ceiling. Down below, everything is hi-tech and completely computerised. If someone has the time to look up from his or her computer work station, with just that tiny frown, he or she will ask you, "May I help you, please" in accents that are meant to freeze the marrow of your bones, for even daring to stand there, asking for what is, after all, your own money. He or she is



their non-materialistic souls, is MONEY! Mehta takes us back to the golden age of excess, when Maharajas dissolved pearls in emerald goblets, or organised weddings for their dogs, or kept a fleet of Rolls-Royces in different colours of the rainbow, alongside their stables with their choicest Arab steeds. Harshad Mehta has brought romance back into our dreary lives.

Even our temples, at least the most popular ones, are known not for their austerity or simplicity, but for their power to dazzle the beholder by their sheer accumulation of wealth. They are the favourite spiritual destinations for Bombay's super rich, because they reassure them that money is everything in the world. Like a spiritual health farm, they even help them shed some of their excess wealth (donations in gold and diamonds, please, no credit cards will be accepted), so that they can go back and make some more.

"It's people like Mehta who make this world a more interesting place," remarked one man.

"Our political leaders are so dull and the news we get on Doordarshan is so boring that it's a relief to hear about Harshad Mehta. So what if he made a fast buck? It's worth it," was another response. As far as most people are concerned, it's like winning a bumper lottery ticket.

It's even given rise to a whole portfolio of Harshad Mehta jokes. Gujjus waddling down Marine Drive in Bombay for their morning constitutional, talking about money (what else?) greet each other with "Scam Cho? Scam Cho?" instead of their customary "Kem Cho?". The banks are busy changing their names, to reflect their altered status, from Standard Shattered, to the CAN-Scam Bank, and the Un-Reserved Bank of India. And in Madras, it is stated that there is no truth in the rumour that the new set of apartment blocks being constructed at top speed by the Grin'n'bearit Bank on their once pristine property is going to be named Brokers' Towers.

There's also the secret delight of seeing the "Oh so pompous" and staid Banking profession in a tight squeeze. As anyone who has entered the portals of Grin'n'bearit's Head Office in

either a foreign returnee, or an MBA (Money Before All), who has been carefully selected to put the natives in their place. They should take the opportunity now to distribute stickers saying, "Kicked a Banker lately?" to improve customer relations.

As everything does in India, it all goes back to the Vedic age, when people first started the worship of the sacred Bull. There must be a verse in Sanskrit somewhere that sums it all up so that we can chant in unison: "Big Bull: Plenty Shit!"

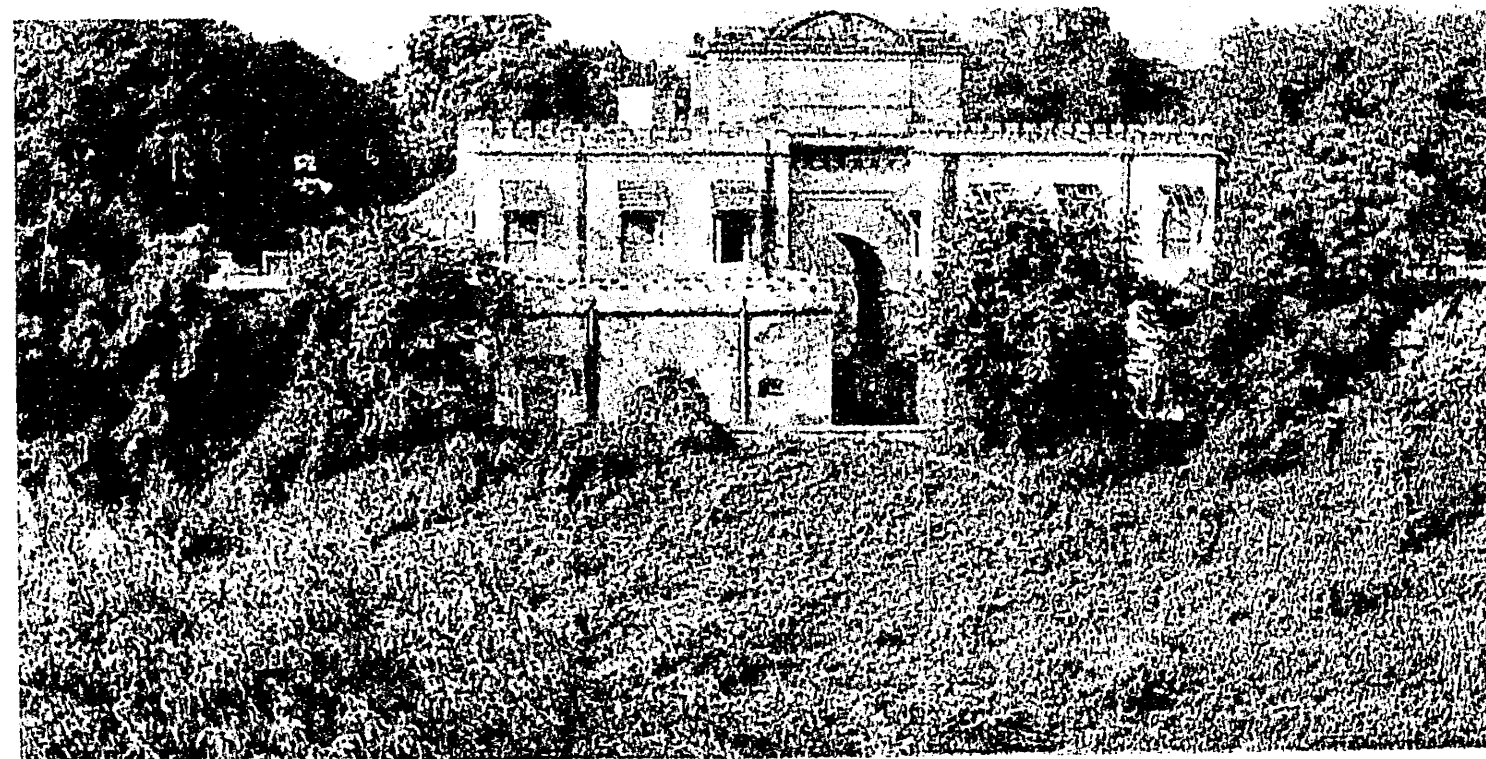
No takers — on the street where I live

A friend gives me the following account. I reproduce it below, using the first person for the narrative. Just remember it is not me talking, it could be any one of us talking.

I live in a small street off a main road. Essentially, it is a good-looking, tree-lined street. I don't think there are more than forty buildings on our street, half of them facing the other half. One or two of them are highrises, by which I mean four or five floors, several of them are private houses, and the rest are duplexes. It is a classical middle-class neighbourhood, except for the one or two plutocrats in it. Most every family has a car and I have counted as many as 35 scooters owned by the residents on the street.

I would say between 70 and 80 families live on this street. Probably more. It does not take much imagination to figure out that these families engender a considerable amount of garbage every day. The street is populated by and large by vegetarians, so the problem of eliminating any kind of offal is not a serious one. But, my goodness, says my friend, the amount of garbage the vegetarians generate in half a morning has to be seen to be believed.

Near where I live, we have a couple of garbage cans provided by the Corporation. These are filled with garbage before the morning turns even bright. If the Corporation cleaners show up even once a week, it would be some help, but they don't. In the meanwhile,

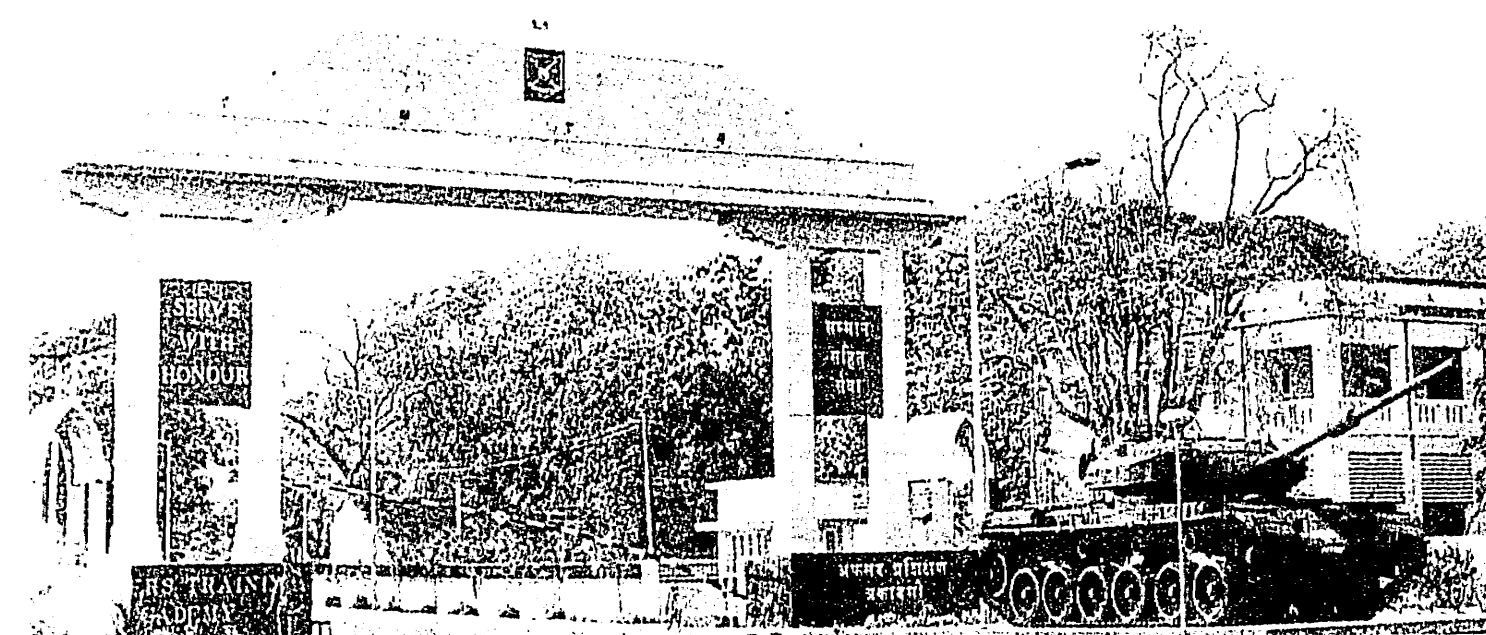


This handsome old arch in a rural setting is a building College, founded in 1812, really got itself organised by few readers are likely to have noticed. It's the once-upon-a-time entrance to the College of Fort St George, now the campus of the Directorate of Public Instruction. The

Whenever the Governor paid the College an 'inspection visit', he'd come in state by road and enter through the arch on College Road —

familiar to most road-users in the city, or he'd come by barge, rowed up the Cooum, and make his entrance through THIS even more stately arch. The view from the erstwhile College (on right) might be a little more familiar to those who frequent the DPI campus.

A spare contrast to the ornate 19th Century arch is the city's newest archway, entrance to the Officers Training Academy — formerly Officers Training School — in St Thomas' Mount. Passers-by tend to notice the captured Pakistani tank first rather than the towering but stark entrance, set well back from the Great Southern Trunk Road on the way to the Airport. (Photographs: The 'Old' by SUSHEELA NAIR, the 'New' by GOPI).



the so-called rag-picking battalion of the city pay regular visits, pick out what they want and strew the rest on the ground, in front of the cans. The net result is that the area is even more filthy than before. At this point, the servant-women from the various houses show



up with their own garbage and fling it wherever they please.

What I am trying to say (says my friend) is this is just one end of the street. The rest of the street does not even have garbage cans, so the householders just dump their refuse in front of their houses. God bless them, it doesn't seem to bother them. Also, as a progressive street, by which I mean that almost every house wants to make physical additions through which they can make more money, there is a considerable amount of building activity going on here much of the time. And, of course, the rubble is also deposited on the pavements, or what passes for pavements. There is a municipal rule against this — the builder is supposed to cart away the rubble and deposit it wherever

it is supposed to be deposited. But having broken every other municipal rule and been unpenalised for doing so (it is amazing what a long way a small bribe can go), my neighbours are the least worried by the way they are littering the streets. I imagine we should consider ourselves lucky that not even the children of servants use the street as a lavatory, though adults use one end of the street for this purpose. Not resident adults, but their drivers and suchlike.

Well, all this is by way of background. To get to the point (says my friend), one day two young women, well-educated, sophisticated, and with natural good breeding, decided enough was enough. Their thinking was simply this: we pay taxes, we try to maintain attractive houses, the Corporation does nothing for us, and in the meanwhile the neighbourhood is going to the dogs, and, pretty soon, it will be to the pigs. They said, we have got to do something about this.

As they discussed the subject earnestly, one of them remembered the civic service organisation, Exnora, how it helps keep neighbourhoods clean, and how it can organise such help for neighbourhoods in the city if they want to be helped. Now, anyone who knows any of the Exnora-supported neighbourhoods will know what a fantastic job they do. They organise a regular, daily clearance of garbage for a small sum of money, with which they hire the staff for carrying out the service.

Ah, small sum, may be ten or twenty rupees per month. The young ladies jumped up in enthusiasm, decided to campaign up and down the street, and get enough resident-participants to join the programme, so that our street could also be one of the show-pieces in the city. When they came to our house we signed up with great gladness, and offered whatever other assistance we could give. We called out to our neighbours and they also seemed very interested. We sat back with a good feeling, thinking that finally our neighbourhood would not be a civic blot.

Alas, we waited one week, two weeks, but nothing happened. Finally, one day, I ran into one of the young ladies, and she said she just could not get enough takers at twenty rupees a month for the service to be rendered. Let me add at this point, said my friend, that I do not think there is a single family on our street which has a monthly income of less than, let us say, five thousand rupees.

I don't know what the moral of this story is, says he. I shudder to think about what it says about the character of our people. Now, some of the young people on the street, male ones this time, have coaxed, cajoled, bullied and bribed the Corporation personnel into clearing up the more ugly areas on our street, and have also started a tree-planting programme. Never say die. That might be the moral, concluded my friend. Good old self-help. S.K.

The great doorway bazaar

I share the great M.F. Hussein's admiration for the giant advertising posters which rise like multi-hued butterflies in the Madras sky. I can even muster up enthusiasm for the advertisement jingles and shots which pepper the local radio and TV. It is the city's door-to-door salespersons who send me up the wall.

Articulate, persistent, pesky, ubiquitous, massively afflicted with "foot wedged in the door disease", they not only walk into your house as to the manor (bungalow, flat, whatever) born, but also proceed forthwith to inflict on you a prolonged and painful litany of their products' rare virtues, despite your repeated protests that you really don't want anything, you are not interested, no, nein, niet, illay, nahin, neicht, PLEASE. Flourishing soaps, jam, wax polish, deodorant and worse, they thrust into your hands questionable questionnaires which demand such grim information as your age, monetary status, whether you wash adequately (Just four soaps a month, Madam!) etc. etc. Very often they also subtly insult you by staring pointedly at your dusty, dog-eared, not to mention dog-wetted carpet when trying to sell some wondrous carpet wash or other.

Remember that lovely poem
If there were dreams to sell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?
When the modern day avataar of the crier comes acalling, all I can think of is doing a hatchet job on him/her and buying my peace.

This time it was my turn to shriek, for framed in the doorway were two look-alike youths in identical faces, T-shirts and hairstyles, who seemed, to my alarmed gaze, to be doing a nifty jig while balancing a couple of crates of drinks in their hands. "Miranda,

If you think I am being extreme, let me give you a blow-by-blow account of a morning last week. There I was, about to imbibe my hard-won 10-o'clock morning coffee, with mehndi and tea leaves in my hair, mullani milli on my face and cucumber slices on my anguished brow when the doorbell rang manically. I opened the door to a pretty young thing who emitted a series of

• by
PUSHPA CHARI

shrieks on seeing my masked and muddled visage. After pacifying her and after I'd washed it all off, she was calm enough to dig into her bag of tricks and produce assorted agarbattis which "Madam will love, Gods also, but not muskitoes definitely, Madam. Madam has dog? Dogs also love the nice-nice smell. Please buy, Madam, and make my bony". This last left me a little puzzled, but I bought a couple of packets anyway and had barely shut the door when the bell went off again. Ah well, coffee would have to wait.

and importance with reference to the case under study. Such analytical study was brilliantly used by one of the leading members of the Madras Bar, S Govind Swaminathan, in a criminal case some time ago.

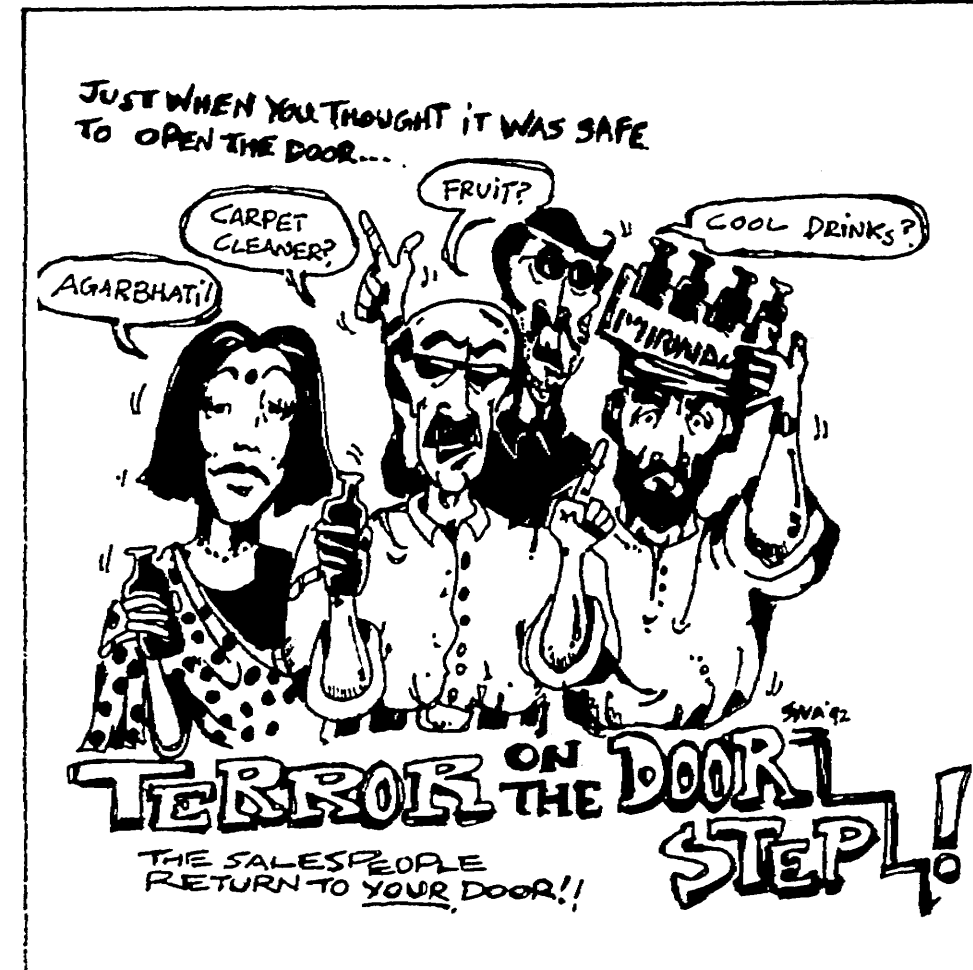
A popular film star of yesteryear, known for her oomph and buxom

Madam?" asked Tweedledum and I replied that there was no Miranda here, perhaps they could try the next house? My answer sent both Tweedledum and Tweedledee into convulsions of uncontrollable giggles, but they managed to explain amidst hoots of laughter that they were there with a crate of Miranda, not Miranda, with compliments of the manufacturers and they'd be back tomorrow for the empties and my comments. "Have a great Miranda-drinking day," they chorussed in unison and waltzed off, their retreating backs still shaken with mirth.

I was wondering where I was going to fit in six Mirandas in my sugar-free diabetic diet, when the gale latch lifted and I walked a stern-looking gentleman, selling — what was it? — Yes, toilet bowl cleaning liquid.

Well, I already had a shelf-full of that, so that settled it. I was firm in telling him, No thank you, kind of you to have called, but no way. I was about to close the door on him, when the gentleman put a canny foot into the doorway and requested me to answer a few questions for his market survey. How often did I clean my toilet bowl? Did my toilet bowl come up smelling of roses after I had er-cleaned it with the 'brand of clean liquid I normally used? Feeling defeated, I asked him in, to answer some more questions in the same vein. He concluded his visit by intoning the virtues of his brand of cleaning liquid over mine, interjected a meaningful "So Madam also has cockroaches in her bathroom?" and left after sniffing gently but significantly, leaving me somewhat crushed.

I was beginning to feel rather hunted and put upon, and in a bid to unwind asked the maid for a hot cup of coffee. Minutes later she announced, "Tea amma" and flounced off — but I'd asked for coffee! I should have known. "Tea amma" was a lady with festoons of tea sachets who'd parked herself in my verandah, looking expectantly at the door. She said graciously that one string of tea sachets was free, "if you buy a tea packet you get four festoons..." I cut in aggressively



to point out that I did not want any tea sachets, free or otherwise, strung in festoons or any other way, and, furthermore, I'd be obliged if she left, and now. The lady insisted with some urgency that I must take a free festoon. Did I want her to lose her job? Had I no heart?

The battle lines were clearly drawn now and I raised my voice and asked her to beat it. She burst into tears: "Amma, I have two daughters, aged mother, also..." To cut a long story short, being a sucker for the sob story

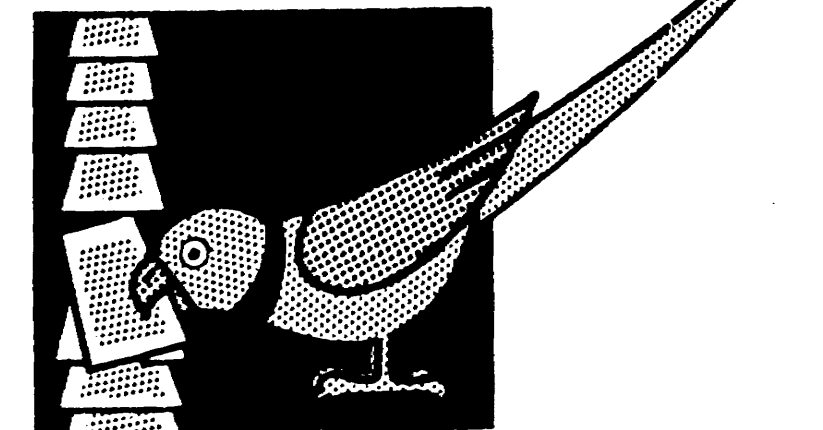
bit, I bought up entire garlands of tea sachets...

My head ached fiendishly by now. Oh, for that cup of hot coffee...

That was when the bell rang again. And at this point I become totally unglued. I ran berserk with a Naga spear in my hand and yelled from behind the door. GET-OFF-MYSPACE-WITH YOUR-TEA-BONY-AGAR-BATTIS-TOILET PAPER AND MIRANDAS — FISH OFF..

Alas, it was my mother-in-law come to call...

The card may tell your fortune



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A QUESTION OF WHEELS

Great lawyers have many methods of winning cases in a court of law. Some achieve success by their legal brilliance, others by their ability to cross-examine witnesses and smash their evidence to smithereens. But one thing all of them have in common is that they are hard-working, making it

CRIME NOTEBOOK

BY
RANDOR GUY



a point to go down to the basic roots of each case, namely the statute or legislative act under which the case is born.

That legal giant of the Madras Bar, Sir Vembakkam Bhashyam Ayyangar (who lived in a palatial mansion on Luz Church Road, Mylapore, called Lakshmi Nivas, on whose site the cinema house Kamadhenu now functions) always advised his disciples that every time any of them took up a case for study and preparation, he should read the concerned sections of the Act repeatedly and weigh each and every word, analysing its significance

beauty, was found — or, so the Madras city police said — in a state of mild intoxication and engaged in amorous activity inside a car in a street off Marina Beach.

The police arrested her and charged her for engaging herself in unlawful sexual intercourse, an offence under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act (its acronym is rather ironically SITA, the personification of chastity in Hindu society!). In due course, the actress was brought to trial before a city magistrate whose pronouncement did not treat her kindly. The matter was taken up in appeal, with the London-educated

The riches of mangoes

Suddenly the talk in all the newspapers and magazines is about mangoes. We hear that this year's crop has been good and that the fashionable hotels have been organising 'Mango Festivals' and what-have-you. Truly, the local market in the past one month has been inundated with mangoes of every conceivable shape and size, and to suit all pockets.

To begin with, there has been a profusion of BANGANAPALLI. This variety come in various sizes, ranging from Rs. 10 — 12 per dozen for small ones to Rs. 60/- per dozen for the extra large. This extremely popular type of fruit, which is available at every street corner, has got a thin, light-coloured skin with a fleshy, yellow-coloured pulp. The BANGANAPALLI is faintly aromatic and is supposed to come to us from Andhra Pradesh. However, my friend who gave me some BANGANAPALLI from Andhra Pradesh tells me that the ones we buy in Madras are locally Gudiyattam-grown and I am inclined to agree that they are not the real thing. Having tasted the authentic Andhra variety, with its orange, extra-sweet pulp, I can understand his indignation regarding the "abuse" of the BANGANAPALLI brand-name.

Still, the low price of the local variety — not to mention its flavour — is nothing to sneeze at!

For those on a splurge, the Bombay ALPHONSO is available at Rs. 40 per kg or about Rs. 100 per dozen. This kind of mango is much smaller than the BANGANAPALLI and is, in fact, shaped like the classical mango in drawings. With its beautiful

FOODS & FADS

golden skin, its succulent orange flesh and its distinctive aroma, the ALPHONSO is in a class of its own.

In profusion this year, unlike other years, is the MALGOVA — ranging in size from 200 gm to a monstrous 700 gm each. With its thicker greenish skin, yellow flesh and flowery fragrance, this local Tamil variety brings to mind the old Chandrababu song, *Malgova mambazhamé*. This breed is slightly pricey at Rs. 5 each, depending on its size and on your bargaining power. Anyway, since they are so large and fleshy, there is a lot to go around.

Incidentally, there is another variety which looks most invit-

ing — beautiful rounded shape and orange skin — and is priced about the same as the BANGANAPALLI. The shopkeeper said something that sounded like "grape" (?), but I must say I found the taste slightly disappointing. However, for those of you who turn your noses up at the BANGANAPALLI, there is good news in the form

of its uppity Andhra cousins, the JEHANGIR and IMAM PASAND, available at the more snobbish retail outlets in town.

Then, of course, there are the cheaper, poor man's varieties — the PAIRI and the KILLIMUKKU. Of late, even the RUMANI has started appearing in the market at Rs. 5 for three, or thereabouts. The RUMANI, with its spherical, thin, orange, almost translucent, skin, is an acquired taste. But this variety of fruit always makes me feel sad, since its arrival signals the end of the mango season.

So, just let yourself go, and disregard the warning that the

mango is the fruit with the maximum number of calories! After all, the mango season, like the strawberry season in the West, comes but once every year. Even Gandhiji, despite his many austerities, was unable to resist this luscious offering of the gods. You might want to emulate his practice of cutting the fruit along its horizontal meridian, separating the two halves, and scooping the flesh out fastidiously with a spoon!

Finally, a word about the complaint voiced in many quarters about the use of ethylene oxide to artificially ripen the fruit. This, I feel, is the price we must pay for acquiring sophisticated tastes and for not being content with the local varieties. If we insist on getting exotic varieties from other parts of the country to cater to our palates, artificial aids in ripening become an inevitable byproduct of transportation, especially in the case of perishable commodities like mangoes and tomatoes. After all, how many of us can afford the luxury of owning mango trees in the garden and allowing the fruit to naturally ripen on a "politically correct," organic bed of hay?

V.K.

That's my nosy hubby

What is that fixture I see on your nose Darling, quipped Hubby looking down at the flashing gem that adorned my nose. I noticed that his normally inscrutable face for once bore an expression of utter dislike and disapproval. Though I anticipated such reaction to my new acquisition, I never expected him to make it so blatantly obvious.

I thought it would look nice on me, don't you think so, Dear? I asked hopefully trying to flaunt the colourless stone.

Well, I feel there is nothing wrong with 'that' piece of jewellery, in fact it has a lovely sparkle, he said emphasising 'that'.

Yes, I knew you would love the sparkle, I said feeling happy that he was able to admire the diamond.

Don't you think the diamond stud gives a face lift, Darling? I asked enthusiastically.

He scrutinised my face for a long time but no answer came.

Instead of hedging, why don't you simply say whether it does or doesn't give a face lift?

O.K. if you insist on an answer, here it is, he said. Yes it does, if the nose is aquiline, pointed and shapely but no it does not give a face lift if the nose is blunt, flat and

I chose to leave hubby alone to complete the sentence.

N. Meera Raghavendra Rao



Method

Crush the garlic and mix salt and butter.

Spread this butter evenly on both sides of the bread. Set aside for an hour.

Wrap the loaf in aluminium foil and bake in a moderate oven for half an hour, until it is heated through and crisp on the outside.

Serve immediately with a soup.

FRESH MANGO ICE CREAM

2 cups mango pulp
¼ litre fresh whipped cream
1 teaspoon gelatine
2½ cups milk
Sugar to taste

Method

Boil the milk, stirring continuously till it thickens. Add sugar.

Dissolve the gelatine over hot water and mix.

Blend in the mango pulp.

Finally, blend in the whipped cream.

Mix well and freeze in an ice tray. If icicles form, blend in a liquidiser and freeze once more.

Serve cold.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Help for the small man

Determined to help the country's poor youth establish small business and run them well is Lakshmi Venkatesan, who got patronage for her project during Prince Charles' recent visit to Delhi. Venkatesan not only got the Prince of Wales to inaugurate the Bharat Yuva Shakti Trust, but she also got J R D Tata to agree to be its President and several others in Big Business to participate in its activities.

Ms Venkatesan's inspiration for the Trust was the Prince of Wales' Youth Business Trust, whose success she had a chance to see in Britain a year ago. She had begun to get interested in such activity when, as a technology-management consultant in the United States some years ago, she used the Small Business Administration Programme there to help young men and women set up shop. Indian youth needed such support from both trained managers as well as from Big Business, she was convinced, and so she pursued her idea with single-minded determination. Undoubtedly Father's good-will helped in seeing her dream come true. Lakshmi Venkatesan is President R Venkataraman's second daughter. And now that he's stepping in to retirement, he could well play a major role in the activities of the Trust in the years to come. Remember, as a trade union leader, the President has had years of experience of industry and shop-floor practices.

Our Cinema Correspondent reports from the Madras Film World

he is perfectly at home in Tamil too, having lived in Madras since his college days. He does a fine job of dubbing every time, at fees of, it is said, Rs. 50,000 and more.

Other stars who dub for equally famous stars include the multi-lingual actress Saritha, who, besides her hefty fees, demands, according to the Kodambakkam grapevine, an air-

conditioned sound-recording theatre. Even Suhasini and Rajesh lend their voices to others.

When star film-maker Sridhar made a movie, with the Kannada film star Vishnuvardhan, the Tamil stage-TV-movie star V Gopalakrishnan lent his voice. Interestingly, when that movie genius K Rammoth made *Kanniyin Kadhalai* (an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*) decades ago, with that buxom star of yesteryear Madhuri Devi playing the twins, VG spoke the lines for MD in the male role!

Durga, Anuradha and Keerti are those who dominate the local dubbing scene. They speak for every Diana, Dhanam, Helen or Heera. There is often a monotony to listening to the same voices in every film. The laughter, sobs and shouts all sound the same. Perhaps the latest decision will make for more interesting listening.

A new kind of festival

An interesting development in the dance world is small festivals of dance conducted by small organisations run by individuals as a business.

A typical organiser collects money from young dancers to feature them in a dance festival. He/she visits not-so-well-known dance schools in the city and offers their 'stars' places in such festivals. The organiser books the hall, and looks after the publicity and invitations. All the dancer/s has/have to do is bring in the crowd. And the profit.

Quality is, of course, no criterion for selection. If a dancer can sponsor herself or get an advertisement, she is good enough to go on the stage.

Dancers shouldn't complain. It is their great need to perform that has led to the mushrooming of such organisers.

But, for my part, I wonder what is

wrong in learning an art form merely for the sake of acquiring a skill? Why should every one who learns go on stage? The new profiteers have the answer to that one as they keep flattering egos.

Disappointing A-V

The Kalamandir Trust's Thyagaraja Vaibhavam festival was a huge

presentation on Thyagaraja by the Youth Association for Classical Music. The impressive handout spoke of a presentation in four modules, each module with a theme: "Kritis signifying memorable events in Thyagaraja's life", "Thyagaraja and Bhakthi", "Thyagaraja and concert music" and "Thyagaraja's compositions on the way of life".

I was disappointed with the whole experience. It must have been the idea

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

success on the eve of S Viswanathan contesting the Music Academy's presidency, the results of which will be out by the time these lines appear.

As expected, the Festival was extremely well organised, but the disappointment was the audio-visual

of an upcoming management trainee. The projection of drawings and writings contributed much to the destruction of the beautiful imagery the poetry of Thyagaraja evokes in listeners. The group singing was extremely well done. But it left the listener cold.

'Little Anand' on his way up

'Little Anand' is what he is known as at Don Bosco, where G Vinod, aged 13, is studying in the XIth standard. Vinod is the newly-crowned National Under-14 Chess Champion.

Vinod won the title by winning all nine games he played at Ahmadabad. Even when he was assured of the title at the end of the penultimate round, he demonstrated his mettle by playing for a win in the last round rather than offering a draw.

In the National eye since 1988, when he was fourth in the Under-10 Nationals after he had beaten the eventual champion along the way, Vinod moved up to 2nd, again scoring over the eventual winner, in 1989. Then, in 1991, he missed the Under-14 title narrowly, being placed third because of low median court. He was determined 1992 was going to be his year.

But the omens before the Ahmadabad Nationals were not auspicious; he had to return from Tirupathi without having the *darshan* of the Lord because of his tight schedule. He was reluctant to participate in the tournament, but his mother persuaded him to go to Ahmadabad. And he went, saw and conquered.

It was the first time in the history of the championship that a player had won every game he played. It was also the first time a Tamil Nadu player had won the Under-14 title.

Vinod learned his chess when he was eight from his father, R Gopal, a businessman. "Vinod used to defeat an old lady living in the neighbourhood in *dayakattai* — a game of dice," narrates the father. "Seeing the way he moved the pieces and his calculations, I thought he would have an aptitude for chess and started teaching him and my elder daughter Vidya." Gopal adds. Incidentally, Vidya was second in the Tamil Nadu State Under-14 Chess Championship.

Vinod grasped the basics quickly and sharpened his skills at the Tal Chess



G Vinod, Indian Under-14 Chess champion...now in the midst of a world championship.

Club and in local tournaments. In 1991, it was obvious he was on his way up; that year he won the Tamil Nadu Under-12, -14 and -15 titles.

Comparisons cannot be avoided, especially when Vinod has most of the qualities which Grandmaster Anand exhibited in his schooldays. He thinks and plays fast. He is strong and imaginative in the middle game and has a solid end game technique. He likes to play a simple positional game, like his hero Capablanca. He does not resort to adventurism nor is he very cautious in his strategies.

Vinod's favourite opening move is 'e4' when playing white and French Defence while playing black. But "Vinod has to improve his opening moves. Though he makes up for the lapses in the middle game, it will be difficult when he plays at the senior level," says V Kameswaran of the Tamil Nadu Chess Association. This was evident when he was not even in the top ten in the Under-19 Nationals.

"Even during tournaments he does not have the patience to prepare seriously. Once, in Ooty, when most of the players were preparing seriously for the crucial last round match, Vinod was enjoying a cinema shooting," bemoans his mother, the moving force behind his success. Her 13-year-old counter, "When my friends enjoy TV and video after the exams, must I study

chess theory? It is like having exams throughout the year. Can't I have some free time?"

But Kameswaran says, "A junior player should master all kinds of openings before he is 18. Only then can he graduate to the senior league. Vinod, fortunately, has time on his side." Fortunately, too, Vinod has begun to think differently, after winning the National title. He now practises for more than three hours daily, apart from the coaching sessions. And he appears willing to eventually consider chess as a profession, as his mother would like him to.

A striking feature of Vinod is that he remembers vividly only the games he's lost, not those he's won. Talking about last year's Nationals he says, "It was terrible. Whenever I think of it, I almost cry. I lost a winning game because I was over-confident and wanted to watch the game on the next board."

Besides chess, Vinod enjoys reading comics, watching videos and listening to cine songs. But all that is on hold for now as he participates in the World Under-14 Chess Championships being held at Duisberg, Germany, from June 29th. This is his first tournament abroad. On current form, there'll be many more.

V Jagannathan



Padayani, with bird-mask dancers, will be a part of AAYANA '92, "a happening" featuring over a thousand children. (Story on Page 1.)

A light goes out

Madras will miss R Desikan, the administrative officer of the Max Mueller Bhavan, who died recently. Desikan was loved by countless students of German and by most artists in Madras in the fields of Art, music and dance, to whom he was a god-father.

He had helped build the Max Mueller Bhavan from its infancy in Madras and was largely responsible for its reputation as an impartial cultural organisation presenting only the very best in the arts in Madras. Film societies, amateur theatre groups, young artists all found encouragement at the MMB. Desikan had a kind word for everyone. Many a career was built on the initial push given by him at the MMB.

Desikan, whose enthusiasm and energy for work was unbounded, attended office till the last, in spite of a heart attack he had earlier. His illness had reduced him to a shadow of his self, but the fact that he could no longer wear a pair of trousers did not keep him from office; he would come in wearing a vest and work as enthusiastically as ever, his genial smile lighting up the Max Mueller Bhavan. That is a smile everyone is going to miss.

Exorbitant jugalbandhi

A big *Jugalbandhi* (duet) with famed Carnatic musician Balamurali-krishna and Hindustani stalwart Bhimsen Joshi has been planned for July 24th at the Kamaraj Memorial Hall in Madras. Tickets are priced at an exorbitant Rs. 2000/- and 1000/- each!

No, don't gasp. If you buy a ticket you enter a raffle in which you might win a cricket bat signed by all the fourteen members of each of the nine teams that took part in the World Cup tournament in Australia.

Madras Round Table No. 1 (the first Round Table formed in India) found it difficult to find company sponsorship for the event, hence the high rates for the tickets. The other prizes in the raffle are a Solitaire satellite system worth Rs. 55,000, business class air tickets for two to Bangalore, jewellery sets etc.

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A MADRAS CRAFT FOUNDATION PRESENTATION

Dates to note

The Vimonisha Art Gallery in Khader Nawaz Khan Road has scheduled the following exhibitions and sales for the second half of July:

16th-18th — ANAMIKA — from Delhi — *Salwar Kameezes* and *Sarees*
20th-22nd — SAGARI — *Chumidar* sets and garments
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— V R Devika

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A champion in search of facilities

Here's a naturally talented athlete — with brains too. But where is this neglected national champion headed? Even he's not too sure of his future.

Ramaswamy Bharadwaj, a first year M.Sc. (Statistics) student of Madras Christian College, won the Gold Medal in the 100 metre dash at the 30th National Inter-State senior athletics meet held in Thiruvananthapuram in March this year.

But versatile Bharadwaj is not a champion athlete alone. He's busy shattering that traditional notion that sportspersons are not good students. He scored 70% and 66% marks in his 10th and 12th Standard exams respectively. In 1991, he completed his B.Sc. (Statistics) at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, with 82% marks, ranking second in Bharathidasan University. All this he's been determinedly achieving against great odds.

His aged father, an ex-serviceman, is now bed-ridden. His family is maintained with the help of his paternal uncles. "When my father was in service, he gave his brothers a good education. Now two of them, Purushothaman and Muralidharan, are working in Delhi and the third, Sundarajan, is settled in Hong Kong. It's they who are helping father to maintain the family", says Bharadwaj. As far as his studies are concerned, his

maternal uncle, V Devangathan, is helping out with the expenses.

Twenty-year-old Bharadwaj is from a family of sportspersons. His father, Srinivasan Ramaswamy, representing the Air Force, won the Inter-Services Gold Medal in the 100 m in 1956. He also represented Delhi in various basketball tournaments in the late 50's. His sister Sangeetha had won the

BY
**SESHAGIRI
RAO**

100 m dash in the Junior District Championships in Trichy, but her athletics career ended abruptly due to the family's financial position. His cousin, M Mukund, represented Tamil Nadu in various basketball tournaments. However, it was his elder brother Prasanna's performance at the Trichy District Athletic championships in 1984 — where he won the 100 m silver — that made Bharadwaj take to athletics.

Learning basic techniques from his father, Bharadwaj started participating in school meets at Mannachanallur Government Higher Secondary School (Trichy) when he was 13. In 1984 he began competing in Inter-school meets. Participating at junior level (there was

no sub-junior category at the school level at that time), he met with little success, as he had to compete against older and more mature athletes.

Two friends of his father, K Panneerselvam and R Ayyappan, a former football coach now settled in Australia, encouraged Bharadwaj to continue in athletics and have shown a keen interest in his athletics career ever since. "Mr Panneerselvam gave me my first spikes and Mr Ayyappan sends new kits from Australia. They did everything to make me a successful athlete," recalls Bharadwaj.

In 1988, while studying in the twelfth standard at Swami Vivekananda Higher Secondary School, Coimbatore, Bharadwaj came into the limelight for the first time. With good performances in the 100m, 200m, Long Jump and Triple Jump, he won the championship in the meet held by the Coimbatore Maruthi Sports School. Impressed by this performance, Panneerselvam the next year took him to a Summer Coaching camp conducted by David Premnath in Bangalore. Under the watchful eye of Premnath, Bharadwaj improved his technique and started sprinting with better coordination of footwork and free natural arm movement.

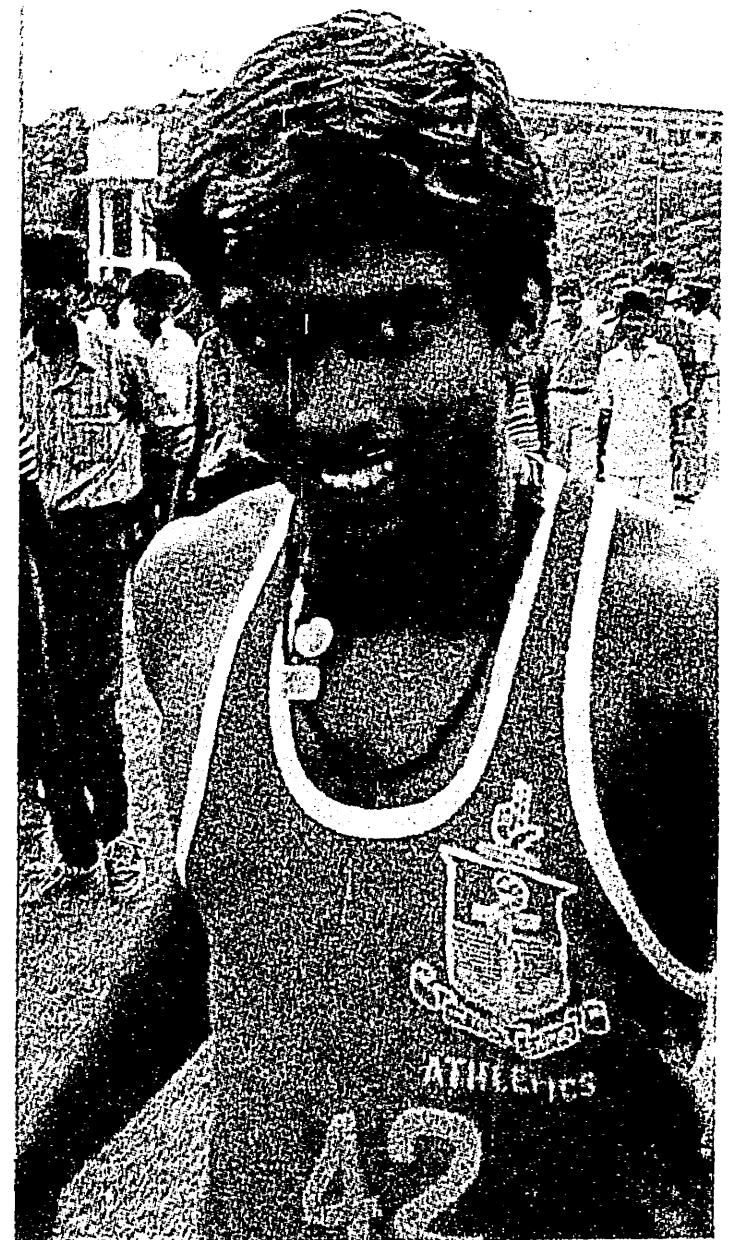
Over the next three years, while studying for his B.Sc., he participated in various Inter-University meets and Junior National Championships. In 1989-90, he represented Tamil Nadu at the Junior level in the Fifth Inter-State Athletics Meet, where he won the Gold Medal in Long Jump and the Silver in the Triple Jump. That same year, he was presented with the "Best Performance" Award for winning Gold Medals both in the Long Jump and 100 m dash at the All-India National Invitation Meet.

In March 1991, he represented Tamil Nadu in the Inter-State National Athletic Meet, winning a Bronze in the Long Jump with a leap of 7.44 metres. Two months later, the Physical Education Department of Madras Christian College promised him financial help and training facilities and he registered his name for the M.Sc. at M.C.C.

A few months later, in September, he represented India in the International Permit Meet in Delhi and was placed 5th in both the 100 m and the Long Jump events.

Bharadwaj arrived on the National scene when he won the 100 m Gold in the Escorts Masters Meet in Delhi last October, defeating four former national champions, Selvaraj Robert, Sabir Roy, Anand Shetty and Anand Natarajan, hand timed in 10.3 seconds and equalling the National record set by Natarajan at the SAF Games in Pakistan. The electronic watch, however, clocked him in 10.7 seconds. Nevertheless, this performance qualified him to represent India in the SAF Games to be held in Sri Lanka and to attend the coaching camp in Delhi.

But in November he left the camp and came back to Madras to represent M.C.C. in the A.L. Mudaliar inter-collegiate athletic meet. Winning the 100m, 200m, Triple Jump and Long Jump events, he helped M.C.C. to lift the prestigious A.L. Mudaliar Trophy.



Ramaswamy Bharadwaj, champion sprinter with an eye on the Asian Games.

But fate was working against him. He injured himself while taking part in one of the events at the meet and was dropped from the Indian squad. "Of course I was disappointed, but what irritates me most is that no one provided me medical facilities when I was injured," Bharadwaj laments. However, he recovered in time to become the National 100 m Champion at the Inter-State meet in Thiruvananthapuram.

In the past he had rejected jobs offered by L.I.C., Railways, the C.R.P.F. and the Punjab Police, as he wanted to continue with his studies. But disillusioned with the College after its lack of interest in his physical fitness, he now wants to discontinue his studies and take up a job. Probably with Customs. "There is no point in hanging around college when it does not encourage sportspersons," says Bharadwaj. But he'll miss his friends at Selaiyur Hall -- he is friendliness personified, they say

— and is sorry to leave a faculty that has helped him much.

Bharadwaj, who is from Mannachanallur West Agraharam (Trichy), is a very religious person. He wears symbols of his faith around his neck, and pictures of Lord Venkateswara and Ramakrishna Paramahansa adorn the walls of his room at M.C.C.

Headmires Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis, but Bharadwaj says it is P T Usha's sheer hard work and dedication that are the best examples for him. His ultimate aim is to represent India in the Olympics, but he is aiming first at a medal in the 1994 Asiad to be held in Japan. "And the only way to that is to keep practising and retaining the national title."

Will the Indian Amateur Athletics Federation provide this national champion the training and coaching facilities he requires to make him an international star? Will Tamil Nadu?

Madras gets cricket under lights

Cricket is the one sport in Madras which has no season as such. Barring a few days in October-November, when grounds are flooded by the Northeast Monsoon, it is played throughout the year. The city can indeed take justifiable pride in the 'national' record it holds for the number of tournaments and coaching camps it runs round the year.

Come to think of it, it is a wonder that the May-June dog days of the country's hottest metropolis have not produced a single casualty, even among pace bowlers with the longest of runs, or among the deep fielders throwing their sun-hats away and chasing the speeding ball while the mercury hovers round the 110-degree mark. The advent of night cricket in Madras must be a relief to all of them.

Surprisingly, only a few hundreds turned out at the Guindy Engineering College ground on Wednesday, June 17, to watch SR Balasubramaniam, MLA, inaugurate South India's first-ever floodlit match, Prithvi CC v. Port Trust, a semi-final of the Vijay CC's annual Raghunathan-Shajeesh trophy tournament. The size of the crowd for the historic occasion was understandable, and so was its dwindling after a couple of hours, the accessibility of the venue being what it was.

Scheduled to begin at 7, the match, after the formalities, got under way at a quarter to eight. By nine, the crowd had started melting, for the problem of bus transport back home was there. It is not known how many fans, it any at all, stayed to witness the finish which, it was learnt, came in the early hours of Thursday, June 18. But those who witnessed the launching of the match

by
AJAX

were all praise for Vijay CC and its organising committee, headed by P Raghunathan, for having made history in Madras.

Vijay CC, backed by sponsors MRF, Indian Bank and KGF, did a fine job of the match. Six towers of floodlights lit the ground and its green matting wicket so well that the white ball could be followed with the utmost ease. The batsman wore grey and donned black pads, while the fielders were in blue. The sightscreens may have been jet black, but the floodlights and the players' colourful kit combined to provide an atmosphere of fun.

It is to be hoped that what Vijay CC set rolling will lead to a floodlit cricket stadium for the city.

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