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# MADRAS

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## MUSINGS

Vol. II. No. 7

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

July 16 — 31, 1992

Major transport project has environmentalists casting...

# Shadows on a highway

The first murmurs of protest by environmentalists are being heard in the State against a major highway project. But are there options open to the planners if the State is to develop?

I first heard about the project in the late 1960s when a planning dreamer said an East Coast Road, from Madras to Kanniyakumari, would become essential before the 1990s as National Highway 45 from Madras to Tiruchirappalli to Madurai and on to Kanniyakumari would become clogged with traffic. Talk turned into plans about a decade ago. And then, finally, last September, even as work on the first stage of National Highway 45 becoming a four-lane motorway intensified, work got underway on the East Coast Road.

The first stage of the new road-building exercise envisages a 165 km-long highway from Madras to Cuddalore at a cost of approximately Rs. 60 crores, the work to be completed in four years. The second stage will see the road pushed on to Nagapattinam and the third stage will take it up to Kanniyakumari. By which time, it is expected, even a four-lane motorway will not suffice for NH 45!

Environmentalists, led by the 'citizens' of Auroville, however, don't see the planned road as a necessity. As they look at shade trees being uprooted all along the thin ribbon that at present leads from Madras to Pondicherry along the east coast, as they watch coconut

(by A Special Correspondent)

and mango groves, homes and villages having to give way before the progress of the 150-foot wide highway, the environmentalists are calling it "The Road of Doom".

The view of the Doomsday brigade is that a road to supplement NH 45 may be necessary, but why must it be another four-lane highway? Surely a road wide enough for two trucks to pass side-by-side is enough, they wonder. And why must the felling of trees be so ruthlessly done? Why couldn't some judicious transplanting have been indulged in? And as final questions they ask, what is all this going to do to the march of sand and a falling water table?

The road, which it is envisioned will link with an Andhra Pradesh East Coast Road from Vishakhapatnam to Madras, is funded 60:30:10 by the Asian Development Bank, the Tamil Nadu Government and the Centre. But work on it is not as fast as any of them

would like. Not because of the environmentalists, but because of a few scores of cases by farmers and house owners whose property is to be acquired. Such litigation is, however, not stopping progress.

## The price of a ground!

(By A Staff Reporter)

The price of land in and around Madras is rising as fast as high-rise is taking over the city of garden houses. But mention of one astronomical figure rocked even pressmen conscious of rising prices. The price at which a parcel of land changed hands on Radhakrishnan Salai recently was announced, at a press conference in connection with a housing seminar, as **Rs. 26.5 lakhs per ground (2400 sq feet)**!

The deal, it was stated, was struck for four grounds after income tax approval had been obtained. No wonder high-rise is becoming the only way out — but even that too, at a price. Most flats in the city are in the price range of Rs. 4-12 lakhs.

The move out of the city is inevitable — even if the infrastructure, particularly transport, is lacking. But in the suburbs too, land prices are now between Rs. 1 and 3 lakhs a ground. That, however, is still quite some way from what appears to be the minimum land value within City limits: Rs. 4 lakhs a ground.

Where's the 'homeless' middle class headed with such prices facing them?

## Coming of age?

**Madras Musings** has obviously come of age. We've received our first ANONYMOUS letter. And it is also our first one in ABUSIVE terms.

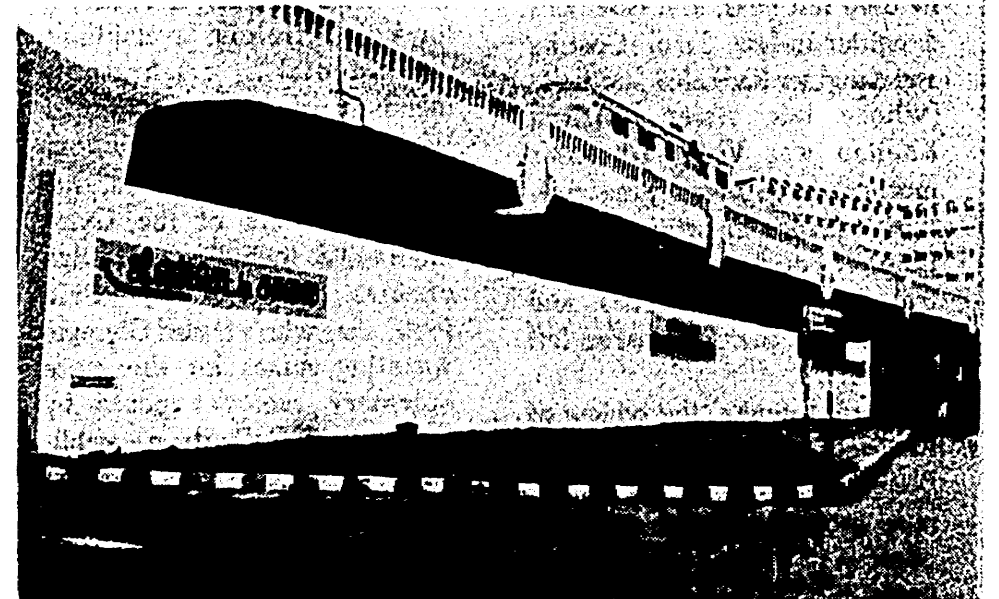
Curiously, this letter of the last week of June 1992 refers to a feature more than six months old — THE OLD ... & THE NEW which appeared in the December 1st, 1991, issue. Why such a harmless feature should warrant such abuse and such anonymity is beyond our ken, for, with a name and address, we'd gladly have published the comment.

As it was, the sum total of the comment was that there was nothing old and new about the two photographs, which, together with the write-up, constituted a waste of space. We can only presume that after a cursory glance the writer did not proceed to study the pictures further or "read the verbose" (sic).

Which is a pity, because we felt it was one of the most significant features in this series, covering as it did over 100 years of architectural styles in Madras in just two pictures and discussing "thinking" and "un-thinking" ways of integrating those styles.

As the last word on this subject, let us say we welcome views, whatever they be, on any material appearing in *Madras Musings* — as many letter writers would, no doubt, have already found. But we insist that they have a genuine name and address and would appreciate it if they were rational and not sickly abusive.

— THE EDITOR



## Let's hang out the posters

(By The Editor)

Most parts of Gemini Flyover have been cleaned of posters and some parts of them have begun to take on a new look, as V S RAGHAVAN'S picture shows. But as we briefly mentioned, in the July 1st issue of *Madras Musings*, the rumblings over such cleanliness have already started.

The same issue carried a brief mention by THE SHROFF in his 'Business Review' of at least one group facing difficulties consequent to the new Ordinance on posters. The Madras Printers' and Lithographers' Association, speaking on behalf of the poster printers, issued a Press Note on this subject on June 30th. The comment by 'The Shroff', received by us almost a week earlier, had anticipated the concern of these printers and had made suggestions echoed in the Press Note.

The printers did not request textbook printing, as suggested by 'The Shroff', but they did suggest special sites for posters. Making some "humble suggestions" to the Chief Minister on this subject, the Press Note requested:

1. Explore alternate arrangements for pasting printed posters at places other than structures open to public view.
2. Erect cement panels at various selected places in the City which could be reserved for pasting posters only.
3. Reserve certain other places in the city for pasting posters.

We would like to take these suggestions a step further, echoing some of the options exercised abroad to keep the posters off the walls but in the public eye — without being eyesores.

ONE is to use billboards that can be hung at vantage points all over the city and rented by those wanting to paste posters on them. With Madras going on a massive drive to put up road dividers and pavement fences, what better use could be made of them than to hang billboards, as photographer RAGHAVAN and MM's artist CHINNU get together to demonstrate below. The walls of theatres, the insides of railway and bus stations, bus shelters etc can also be all used for this purpose — which would also earn the revenue the printers say is now being lost to Government.

TWO, we could take a cue from Paris and other European cities and set up pavement kiosks wherever possible, where the renting-vendors could rent out billboards in turn.

No doubt, readers can come up with numerous other such solutions.

Let it be said, *Madras Musings* is not against posters — ugly though the designing of many of them are. All it wants is controlled use of them, an orderly display that will help even the ugliest of them look as though it has some planned purpose.

Over to you, Madam Chief Minister.



**MANALI RAMAN...**

PRIVATE PROP  
TO STICK POSTER  
ON THIS WALL  
CONTACT  
68045

**IN MAD, MAD MADRAS**

# No headlines for this *Express* story

This is a story that has not made the headlines in most of the national press. In fact, much of that press wouldn't mind if this bit of embarrassment was quickly brought to an end and decently buried, before a doughty crusader for press freedom becomes a bit of a laughing stock.

The *Man from Madras Musings* understands that Vivek Goenka nee Khaitan, adopted as his son by stormy petrel Ramnath Goenka shortly before he died last year, and Goenka's daughter-in-law Saroj Goenka and daughter Radhabai Sonthalia (whose late sister Krishna Khaitan was Vivek Khaitan's mother) have been filing petitions and counter-petitions in the Bombay court seeking full control over the properties and newspapers the press baron left behind.

Saroj Goenka, the widow of Ramnath Goenka's only son Bhagwandas, has, for some years now, looked after the southern editions of the *Express* from her bungalow in the *Indian Express* campus in Madras. Vivek Goenka, in his Khaitan days and since, has looked after the other editions. Both groupings often did not see eye-to-eye on policy. Now Vivek Goenka and his aunt do not even see eye-to-eye on his adoption; she has, in her replies to his petition, challenged the adoption itself. She also insists in her affidavit that the Bombay court has no jurisdiction in this matter as Ramnath Goenka was a resident of Madras.

The *Indian Express*, known to whip up storms in teacups, seems headed to be the eye of a storm itself!

## A galaxy of guests

Sipping tea and nibbling biscuits in the large foyer of the Narada Gana Sabha auditorium,

as nattily clad K Mohandas, former DGP of Tamil Nadu, received his galaxy of guests on the steep steps leading to it, *The Man from Madras Musings* asked a neighbour, "Who are all these people interested in books"? It struck him as being the biggest gathering ever in Madras for the release of an English-language title.

They are, replied the knowledgeable neighbour, all the Police brass and their armed escorts who are not in Madurai for Chief Minister Jayalalitha's coincidental celebration, members of the International Women's Association whom Mohandas had addressed, his fellow-members of the Gymkhana Club including his bridge cronies headed by Eric Prabhakar who's traded Olympic sprinting spikes for the more sedentary exercises posed by Goren and Culbertson, publishers, booksellers and fellow authors, many of the Malayalam community that call Madras 'home', and the Press.

That made quite a crowd and assured the function of all success.

Getting the book off also a successful start were the Home Guards who presented the author a cheque for Rs. 10,000 towards 50 autographed copies. Presumably five extra copies were thrown in to ensure that the 10 per cent discount promised for the occasion was honoured. *MMM* hopes that many more copies are sold — if only to present to a wider audience a correct reading of the Tigers' stripes. It was nice seeing on the same stage, honouring each other, two people who had read those stripes differently — Mohandas and N Ram of *Frontline*. More of all this on Page 4 of this issue.

## Get that man!

Speaking of Tigers, the ever-in-the-headlines Dr Subramaniam Swamy has captured them again with an alleged order: 'Arrest Prabhakaran by Aug. 15!' Now it would be nice to know what the Harvard theory is to make such action reality.

Does Dr Swamy imply that the massive Indian Peace Keeping Force did not try hard enough to arrest Prabhakaran?

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Does he imply that a Sri Lankan Army, built up to almost that same strength over all these years, is not trying? Or is he suggesting that India launch a massive invasion 'to get that man'? Or is he suggesting that India order a commando-type operation in the fashion of the Israelis at Entebbe, forgetting what happened to the Americans in the Iranian desert and to the Indian paratroopers on the Jaffna University campus? Or does he have other ideas?

Like leading, himself, a volunteer force of Rajiv avengers? *The Man From Madras Musings* would be glad to hear from Dr Swamy how that damned pimpel of the forests of Mullaivivu is to be brought to book. Or perhaps there's an IPKF general out there with an answer for Dr. Swamy.

## 225th Anniversary

The Survey of India, one of the world's oldest government

Survey organisations, recently celebrated its 225th anniversary. But in all the celebrations there was little said of Madras's contribution to the founding of that splendid organisation and less recognition given to the pioneering work of Rennell, Colin Mackenzie and Thomas Lambton, all of whom began their careers in Madras.

Rennell was a ship's captain who surveyed the waters of the Fisheries Coast off Tuticorin and who was summoned by Robert Clive, another Madras hand, to found the Survey of Bengal. Rennell became the 'Father of Indian Geography'. As for Indologist Mackenzie — whose priceless collection languishes in the Oriental Manuscripts Library of Madras University — he conducted the topographical surveys of South India before becoming the first Surveyor-General of India. And Lambton was the man who started the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India that George Everest took to its conclusion, giving us a complete picture of India's shape and size. That survey began at a point that lies in the shadow of St Thomas' Mount.

All of them are not only forgotten by the Dehra Dun-based Survey of India but also in Madras. The extent of that forgetfulness is that Madras does not even have a Survey of India office and none has been asked for. Will somebody even at this late stage ask for commemoration to be made where it is due?

## In brief

★ There's no more chaotic scene than the auto-park at Central Station whenever a train disgorges its passengers. Queues are forgotten, drivers break rank and indiscipline passengers add to the chaos by offering them

services up for fleecing. Now, we're promised, all this will soon be over. PRE-PAID autos will be made available at Central and Egmore Stations, courtesy Police discipline. *The Man from Madras Musings* welcomes the news but notes that no sooner was the suggestion made than an evening carried a story on the woes of auto-drivers who are unable to earn a fair living from the present rates. Will the pre-paid fare coincide with an increase in auto fares to 'fairer' levels?

★ Madras Airport is just a few years old; in fact, it is so new that work is still going on in its central block. Yet, there's talk of 'modernising' it because it is already outdated! It strikes *The Man from Madras Musings* that in this day and age when planes in India never seem to fly on time, airports seem to get outdated quicker than computerised equipment. Or may be this is so because of such equipment. *MMM* only hopes that the vehicular subway planned opposite the airport, to ease traffic congestion and link the railway station across the road from the airport, will not get similarly outdated before it is completed.

With Pallavan Transport, an organisation recognised for its rather realistic views, associated with the planning, such fears are likely to be unfounded.

★ With the decision that a Doordarshan channel will allot five hours a day for private producers, *The Hindu's* long-planned TV production unit is expected to get into its stride right away. Despite dropping its Hs, Indus TV promises serious and sophisticated fare, not entertainment, going by accounts of early planning. After all, *The Hindu* has a tradition of sobriety to live upto.

MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Mirror of the city

*I find Madras Musings a mirror of Madras City. The articles are responsible, constructive, suggestive and forthright. I like every comment.*

G Ramanathan  
8 Chinthamani Nagar  
Coimbatore-641 038

### Directionlessly partisan?

*I* is over a year since the *Muse* at *Madras Musings* became active, and since then this tabloid has been a delight to a large number of readers who have had the benefit of reading some of the past history of Madras city and crystal gazing into its very bleak future.

However, of late, I have had occasion to note that the editorial content of this excellent paper has been moving away from its professed theme and, as one of your readers has aptly reminded us, it 'lacks direction'. Another very distracting aspect has been that most of the articles have tended to be rather partisan.

The provocation for this letter is your story on "Dakshin beguiles Jiggs". While you may have quoted extensively from Jiggs Kalra's article on this restaurant, I feel that you have become the mouthpiece for the Park Sheraton Hotel and its restaurant for reasons best known to you. Having been a regular visitor to Dakshin, I did not realise that "Dakshin became a show-case, not just the cuisine, but also the southern arts, crafts and culture..." and, incidentally, since when did Geeta Doctor become the high priestess of Southern cookery? (sic)

**C. Shammughanathan**, (Managing Director), *Mds-84*: Must strive to give light (not so serious) reading material.

**C. Pratal Kumar**, (General Secretary, Madras Seva Sadan), *Mds-81*: Certainly getting to know my city better.

**Rajiv Char**, *Mds-4*: Introduce colour photos.

I would have been happy if the article had been a result of your own survey and more objective, but unfortunately it smacks of "quid pro quo."

Anyway keep up the good work.

P Madhusudan  
Harrington Road  
Madras-600 031.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We at *Madras Musings* are not aware of any change of "direction" over the last year and would be grateful to hear where exactly we have changed. We would also like to hear about where we have been partisan. As for the Jiggs Kalra piece, which we clearly stated had appeared in *The Telegraph* of Calcutta, we would like to know what the "quid pro quo" was. We have not, like reader Madhusudan been a "regular visitor" to Dakshin nor have we received any advertising from the Park Sheraton. So what are we guilty of Mr Madhusudan?

### Word from the U.S.

One of the most enjoyable experiences I had on my recent visit to India was reading *Musings*. As an ex-Madrasite, I especially like "The Old and the New" and "The View from the Wings."

*MM* is excellent in its local coverage and offers an independent perspective on local issues. It is comparable in quality to some of the independent (free) weeklies in circulation in some of the major US cities. I hope this excellent venture continues and becomes very much a part of the Madras way of life.

It's too bad that there is no international subscription. I would be your first subscriber!

**Sucharita Gopal**  
Asst. Professor  
Boston University,  
Boston, MA., U.S.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** All you need to do is send us postage (US \$10 for a year) and we'd gladly send you a copy of *MM*.



On left: A crayon-and-pencil sketch of Mother Theresa done by Christy Amalora when he was 10.

Above: A riot of colour and dominant checks... by Sylvia Amalora

# Art's not all to them

## IN PROFILE by Lisa Durante

I paint," she says. "It is so different from the endless calculating I have to do when playing chess." The difference is why she has not made up her mind which way to go.

But the future holds the vastest of horizons for children such as these. Especially when parents, like



Christy and Sylvia Amalora ... concentrating on art

Christy is looking forward to the finals of the ICS's nationwide competition, due to be held in Delhi before the end of the year. But the opportunity to win a PC — which is the first prize — is not the be-all and end-all of his youthful aspirations. "I want to be an artist, sure, but I also want to be an engineer and a top-class cricketer too," he says. And, it would seem, he is single-minded about each.

Her pretty, eight-year-old sister Sylvia is a little more flexible. "I want to be a chess-champion or a painter," she says with a smile that is set to break a million hearts one day.

Last year, she placed sixth in the National Chess Sub-Juniors Championships. But she is doggedly resolved to win in the coming year.

Until recently, Sylvia had her own private chess tutor, but now she is enjoying a short break before starting on the last lap of intensive practice in time for next year's competitions. "But I am not all work and no play," she laughs. "In class, at Good Shepherd, I am the Number One joker!"

Sylvia's paintings reflect, yet belie, her fun-loving personality. They are explosions of colour in an attractive 'naif' style which echoes the chess board. "My imagination runs riot when

# A matter of honour



Commerce Minister P Chidambaram's resignation over his investing in Fairgrowth Finance Ltd has sent shock waves everywhere. Bangalore based Fairgrowth is, of course, being investigated under the securities scam. The question that is being asked is if this warrants such an extreme step.

Before the conspiracy theorists work overtime, people who know Chidambaram feel that resigning is just the kind of thing he would do. However, there

people in Delhi think, he is somebody who has worked his way to the top. He entered politics at the grassroots level by joining the Youth Congress in 1969. As he himself has put it, it was an exciting time to join politics, when Mrs Gandhi was taking on the Old Guard. He clearly came under her spell.

In 1984 he got his ticket for parliament from the Sivaganga constituency and got elected from there. Since then he has looked after his constituency very well and even the Opposition concede that it is very difficult to defeat him there.

Chidambaram, before he became drawn into Delhi politics full time, was a most successful lawyer in Madras. After completing his law degree from Madras he went to Harvard to do an MBA. On his return he started practising and concentrated on labour service and election law. In September 1984 Chidambaram met Rajiv Gandhi for the first time. Many meetings followed. Then, in September 1985, Chidambaram joined the Cabinet as Minister of State for Personnel. After a few months he was also put in charge of Internal Security.

## BUSINESS REVIEW by THE SHROFF

is general dismay that a Minister who was considered most efficient and perfectly suited for his job has been allowed to go with such alacrity.

Chidambaram, as the Commerce Minister, along with Dr Manmohan Singh, Finance Minister, has been one of the main architects of economic liberalisation. Under his leadership the Commerce Ministry abandoned a lot of old time-worn ideas in a bid to make India globally competitive. First came the exim scrip for exporters. When that was not working out quite as it should be, partial convertibility of the rupee was introduced. He has been a sincere believer in reduced tariffs and fewer import controls. On a symbolic level he cut down the export import policy document from the cumbersome 500-odd pages to less than 100 pages. He wanted to show the world that India was serious about dismantling controls.

Chidambaram has never been a conventional politician. But unlike what

After the trauma of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination (he had developed a personal rapport with Gandhi and his death was a terrible loss) and when the Congress came back to power, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao gave him the Commerce Ministry. In spite of the pressures, he obviously enjoyed the challenges of the job. With his debating skills, legal background and an MBA he has been considered the ideal person to represent India in international fora. Whether people liked him or not, there was general agreement that a person of his ability was needed in a world where trade and economy were becoming dominant issues and protectionism was creeping in everywhere.

Chidambaram is a grandson of the late Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad. He shocked his close-knit conservative Chettiar community when he married Nalini, his classmate from Law College, who does not belong to the community. They started working together under the Supreme Court lawyer K K Venugopal. Today, Nalini Chidambaram is a successful lawyer in her own right. She specialises in constitutional law. Although Chidambaram has been working in Delhi from 1985, Nalini continues to practise from Madras. Supreme Court work takes her to Delhi every week.

Chidambaram has been in the middle of many ticklish trade issues. The break up of the Soviet Union has had a major repercussion on the country's exports. The end of rupee trade has to be sorted out carefully. The all-powerful USA has been throwing out weapons like Super 301, and threatening trade sanctions. Europe is getting ready to become a fortress and has plans to keep other countries out.

He has also been fully aware of the fact that although the reform process has been initiated, much remains to be done. He had been planning to be in

(Continued on P4)

## WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

A will came up to be probated in the Original Side of the Madras High Court. (For a will to become operational it has to be probated, or proved as validly executed before a court having testamentary jurisdiction, like the Madras High Court.) Interestingly, the will was on 'one-side' paper and in the handwriting of the lawyer whose client was the person who had died shortly after executing the will.

Under the law there are no rules governing the size or thickness or colour or quality of the paper on which a will can be written. There is no need that it should be typed or composed on a word-processor. All that is required is that it should be executed by a man of his free will, while in a state of sound mind. The mind and message are important, but not the medium! So there was nothing wrong in the will being written on a sheet of paper that was blank only on one side.

The lawyer explained in court that the will was written at dead of night

The lawyer's version of events seemed quite convincing, and experts opined that the signature of the dead man appeared genuine. "But the will is a fake!" screamed an army of relations, each claiming a share of the dead man's estate.

The shrewd judge smelt a rat. He sent his Bench Clerk to search the High Court files for what should have been on the other half of the 'one-side' Cause List. It was soon traced, and on the top of it was the tell-tale date of issue. Looking at it, the learned judge found his suspicions confirmed. On that day and date, the executant of the will was already three days dead and departed! The case of the fake will caused a sensation and was hotly discussed for long in the legal world of Madras.

FOOTNOTE: This case was used by this writer as the foundation for an episode in a crime detection television serial he made some time ago in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.

## CRIME NOTE BOOK by Randor Guy

with one half to meet his rich client. (The 'Cause List' is a daily bulletin published by the High Court for information about cases — causes — coming up for hearing on a particular day and date. Details, like the number of case, names of the advocates on record, classification of the case, names of parties in some cases and other such information are found printed in the list, which is available on payment or subscription.)

# The social climb in post-Raj years

from the most exclusive ladies' college in England, were declined. The couple promptly left Madras for shame!

★ ★ ★ ★

History tends to get re-written to accommodate the prejudices of succeeding generations. The names on statues have been substituted since Roman times. The object is to obliterate the facts of an intervening past so that, hopefully, the present generation may be consoled into a comforting pride in an unsullied antiquity continuing into the present — a re-covering of the original footprints on the sands of time. How appropriate that the poet should have preferred sand to cement mortar to remind us! This article is intended to restore the footmarks as they once were imprinted.

Prohibition turned out to be a great racial leveller. Just as the affluent West now sends food to starved areas of the world, the kindly foreigners were ever ready to extend a helping tot or two to the thirsting Madrasites. This was particularly true in Clubs. Soon, a Subramanian was heard to be hailed as Sam, and a Kandhasamy dubbed Ken. Camaraderie permeated through the Bar to fade out the colour bar.

Not that we Indians failed to reciprocate. One-upmanship went so far as to invite totally strange foreign residents to our homes. They accepted, because Scotch had already crossed the fantastic level of 35 Rupees a bottle!

★ ★ ★ ★

The writer, returning to Madras in the transitional phase of the Raj, turned to the Adayar River for sport. The Madras Boat Club was then a near-exclusive preserve for expatriate youth to flex their limbs and meet, however briefly, the senior members of their companies on equal social terms. For the few Indians who got in, the unwritten rule was to be proposed and seconded by foreigners. For the writer, who had previously held voting rights in England, this was not on. He chose to risk Indian sponsorship, much against considered advice based on precedents.

Those days the Committee turned up in evening dress, ready to go on to, or to seem to be going on to, other engagements of pomp and circumstance. The writer was scrutinised through a menacing monocle by the President, a distinguished former Colour of the Club. And passed muster.

★ ★ ★ ★

There existed at the time a circuitous route for social climbing in Madras, punctuated by a year or two at a time of acceptable behaviour in less socially-oriented Clubs or the Free Masonry, before being passed fit for social intercourse with the expatriate community that yet ruled 'Society' well after Independence.

You had to start with the Boat Club or Cricket Club, even if too pot-bellied for an oar or a bat, and then, in time, pass with due humility and a negative élan approaching invisibility into the precincts of the Madras Gymkhana Club. There the native halted for life. For, the next rung, THE Madras Club's imposing edifice, well concealed at the dead end of a lane off Mount Road, was unattainable.

There were rules and traditions to keep out of it all except the SENIOR-MOST British bureaucracy, judiciary, the Bar, merchants and bankers. By some strange reckoning, these hands that amassed their wherewithal were not thought soiled like those of tradesmen, shippers or shopkeepers, such as Spencer. Continentals, however high their status in their fields, had to repair for relaxation away from the natives to that 'other' Club, The Adyar. Note. NOT Adayar!

There was an instance when a British shopkeeper, educated at a public school and Cambridge, and his wife,

Before Rajaji struck at human conviviality, many who did not aspire to club admission by the set route used to gather of an evening at the Spencer's restaurants of the Central and Egmore Stations. The decor, the appointments, the glass, doily and Patta-wallahs could match those of the best clubs. Among frequenters were eminent Brahmin advocates who would not drink at home, and more such of many parts.

This writer's friend and philosopher, who was a regular, could not overcome his routine when Prohibition snatched the alcohol away. Being law-abiding by nature, he abjured hooch of all available kinds, but could not forego the tinkle of ice cubes come 7 o'clock; he continued to take his place at the Railway station evening after evening.

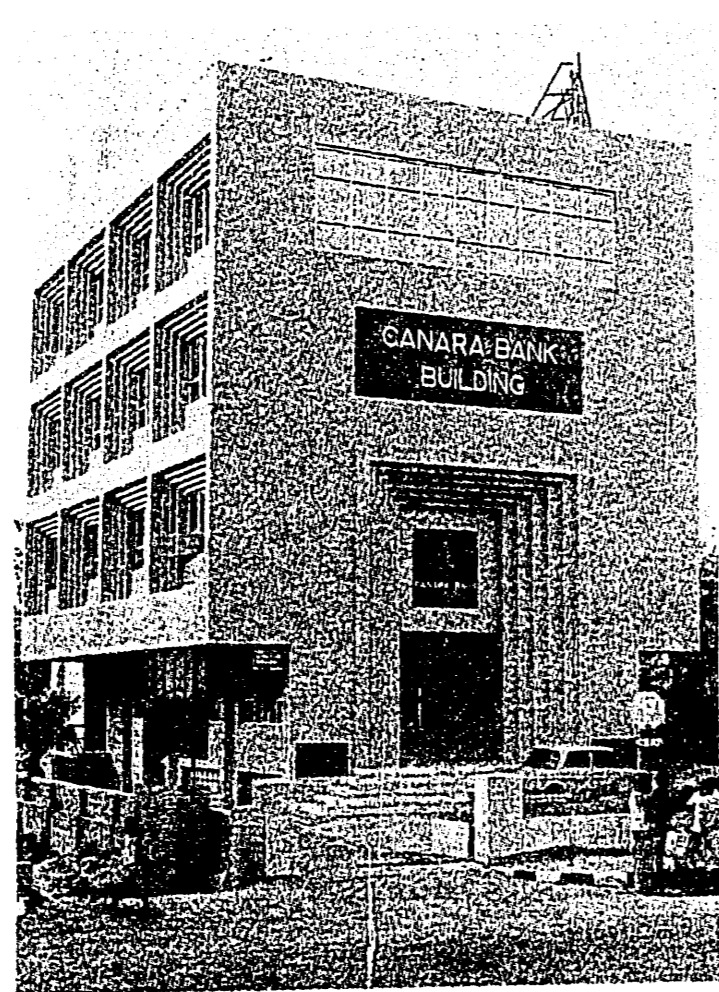
Once, a gentleman from Andhra in a *jibba* and *dhoti*, unbecoming garb for the place in those days, came over and, pulling his *jibba* pocket close to the tumbler of this stranger, siphoned into it a large gin, whispered "Sir, I have seen you here for the past many years, and now you come to take only Soda. Have a decent drink, with my compliments" and walked away.

★ ★ ★ ★

The final take-over of the social milieu of Madras from the Raj was a kind of second independence movement. No salt was gathered nor lathi blows borne. No fasts. Instead, cocktail parties were footed by aspirants to the Committee, to prove again that the way to a man's mind was through his gullet. No hartal, but an egregious presence even at the loo door to shake hands and beg a vote at the AGM. No speeches, but an insidious campaign by phone to cast only one vote instead of the full complement of Nine.

"The good sort of fellow" once inducted by the Sahibs, in the process of conscientious Indianisation, was replaced by aggressive nationalists in Syed Bakhsh 3-piece suits, to spell the end of the decayed Raj.

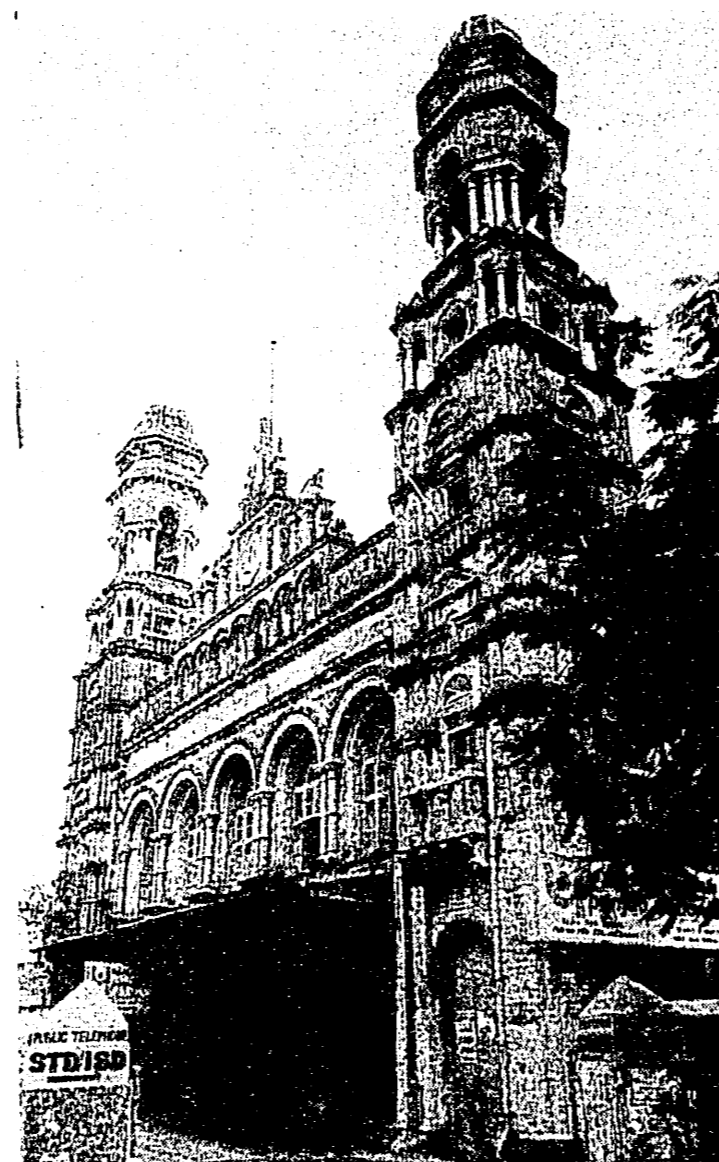
— K Varugis  
the first Indian to  
Captain the Madras  
Club, later its  
President and a  
Licensed Rowing Umpire.



The old is the Bharat Insurance Building on Mount Road which features a medley of architectural styles that make it one of the most striking buildings on this stretch of road. Its arches and domes, minarets and pediments,

pillars and towers have drawn inspiration from all over the world. In front of it, at the triangle it makes with General Patter's Road, is a newer Bharat Insurance Building that seems more suited to this 20th Century company. Then what is the older building that bears the company's name in relief on some of its upper friezes? There is a school of thought that it is W E Smith & Co's Kardyl Buildings, described as a "palatial structure...one of the sights of the city" in the first quarter of this century.

W E Smith, it is believed, started business on this site as a druggist in 1868 and grew into "manufacturing druggists, dealers in (medical) instruments and makers



of aerated water" by the time a limited company was formed in 1904, around the time Kardyl Buildings was built. Is there anyone who can shed light on these presumptions based on a text that accompanies a 1914 photograph of a building which looks like a dead ringer for the older Bharat Insurance Building?

The new is much further down Mount Road — near The Mount Anna Salai becomes Mount Road — near The Mount as this location is — and prepares to become the Great Southern Trunk Road. This rather interesting building is in Guindy. Its clean lines emphasise rectangular formats, its upper floors spread out over a narrow base and foundation, but in overall design it rather echoes a museum building in Safdarjung, Delhi, where a solitary plane of the early days of aviation hangs in space as a reminder of the beginnings of flying in India.

# Going ga(l/g)a over a book

Jasmine flowers, the rustle of Kanchipuram silks, exotic perfumes, video cameras whirring, flashing lights, gun-toting security men, the nattily dressed 'hero of the day' at the entrance welcoming the guests... If you've come to the logical conclusion that it was a VIP's wedding reception, you stand forgiven. In reality, however, it was, and now you come to take only Soda. Have a decent drink, with my compliments" and walked away.

By a Special Correspondent

Super cop-turned-writer K Mohandas has written a book on — yes, you guessed right — MGR. *MGR: The Man and the Myth* is what it is called.

Mohandas, if you remember, had a near ten-year tenure as DGP under the MGR regime. He is best remembered, of course, as the gutsy man who organised a haul of LITE guns, refused to be cowed down and had the temerity to disagree with MGR on more occasions than one. As the title itself suggests, the book is a candid portrayal of the man and his persona. And Mohandas should know. After all, he had direct access to MGR (Mohandas insisted upon it before taking on the job) throughout the 'MGR Era'.

Befitting that background, the book release was a gala affair. Everybody who was somebody in Madras shook hands with the author, before enjoying gossip and tea in the spacious lobby. Then they carefully adjusted the pleats of their heavy Kanchipuram silks or hitched the crisp folding lines of their

safari suits (Oh yes! It is very much the fashion in Madras even now!) before sinking into the cushiony seats of the Narada Gana Sabha auditorium to the soft melodious music of Ananda Shankar. Suddenly an electric bell pealed harshly. On cue, the music was hastily changed to a racy MGR number — to welcome the immaculately Kanchi-sareed Janaki Ramachandran who, adorned in dark glasses and unaccompanied by visible armed escort, glided in through a side entrance. The set was ready.

Then the action began. There was much much welcoming of the distinguished guests by one another. Eric Prabhakar, formerly of UNESCO, presided over the function. Rajasekhar of Panther Publishers (the Bangalore-Singapore publishers of the book) welcomed the gathering. The book was released by N Ram and F V Arul and M Singaravelu, both former IGP's, received the first copies. Together with, of course, Janaki Ramachandran.

In contrast to the stiff-upper-lip staccato style of Arul was Singaravelu's long-winded anecdotes from a sepia-tinted memory book. The author — thankfully — confined himself to effervescent thanks.

The centre stage, of course, belonged to N Ram who delivered a long and comprehensive 'review'. Which said:

The book has much to commend itself. Not being a hagiographer's account (which is what biographies are in our country these days), it provides new insights of MGR as a man and a phenomenon, which

should be of interest to both the serious historian as well as the lay reader. It is a balanced overview by a sympathetic observer who is intelligently critical. (Here, it must be said, Ram was critical of his own perceptions of the Sri Lankan crisis. Mohandas repeatedly warned the state and the Centre not to interfere in another country's affairs. "You will create a Frankenstein's monster on your soil," he is believed to have said. And he was proved exactly right, Ram said.)

The book was "a learnable experience", concluded Ram. If you'd like a lesson, buy the book (an autographed copy, please). Or you could wait a while — the second and the third book in the series are on the way. Before year-end.

## BUSINESS REVIEW

(Continued from P3)

constant touch with industrial and export houses to motivate them to perform better. The Ministry was working out a plan for 35 extreme focus items for export and trying to increase exports by at least 30 per cent in them. The office of the Controller of Exports and Imports was to be reorganised so that it becomes a body to promote export rather than regulate it. Chidambaram also hoped to re-orient foreign policy so that India's trade promotion becomes the priority of our External Affairs Ministry.

Now it remains to be seen what direction our commerce policies will take.

## Quizzin' with Navin

(Quizmaster NAVIN JAYAKUMAR's questions are all from June 15 — 30)

- Who is the new President of the Philippines?
- Name the new superfast express that connects Bangalore and Madras?
- According to the Chief Minister, the World Tamil Sangam would be revived soon. Who founded the Sangam in Madurai in 1986?
- Four ancient monuments at Mamallapuram will be illuminated. Which are they?
- The starting of what hostel marked the beginning of the Dravidian movement?
- 'An 8 year old Tibetan boy has become the first living Buddha to win the stamp of approval from China's communist government.' Who is a 'living Buddha'?
- What percentage of seats was to be set aside for CBSE and ISC students in all professional colleges in the State according to the controversial GO issued by the TN Government?
- Who was recently sworn in as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court?
- What scheme has recently been introduced in the electronic exchange in Madras to reduce congestion in the exchanges?
- Some of Rio's most famous beaches recently faced their worst pollution crisis thanks to...?
- According to a new entry in the Guinness Book of World Records, who holds the record for the largest evacuation of civilians?
- Who is opposing Vice-President S D Sharma in the forthcoming Presidential elections?
- What is the Bradford Morse Commission?
- What 'corridor' was leased to Bangladesh on June 26?
- Where in Thanjavur District will the Veda Agama Centre be located?
- Which noted Camatic singer died recently in a road accident?
- How much is the Thirumala Tirupati Devasthanam losing on each Tirupati laddu?
- What is the official rate charged by the Madras Corporation to cremate a person above 12 years of age in any of its cremation grounds?
- What happened to clocks, particularly atomic clocks, at midnight on June 30?
- What is a 'gruntemeter' used for?

(Answers on Page 8)

# An answer to the Japanese

## candour

(By a Staff Reporter)

The Japanese Ambassador to India, Shungi Kobayashi, was surprisingly undiplomatic the other day when addressing a meeting organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry in the City.

At one point he said that "xenophobia was the single largest hurdle" to India's quick economic progress. He also described India as a "fragile economy" and said that the country lacked confidence despite several decades of independence. A deep fear of foreign domination through overseas investment was holding the country back, he alleged.

India, he felt, would HAVE TO promote private

investment, both domestic and foreign, despite "financial and psychological" constraints. In this context, he said, India would have to meet the challenge posed by labour uneasy with such reforms.

In another bit of bluntness he observed that there are two classes of businessmen in India, one who manage enterprises and the other who manage government. The latter also stood in the way of progress in the country.

There was only one person in the audience to counter Mr Kobayashi's views. Equally outspoken in his reply was Joy Oomen, Joint Chief Controller of Imports and Exports.

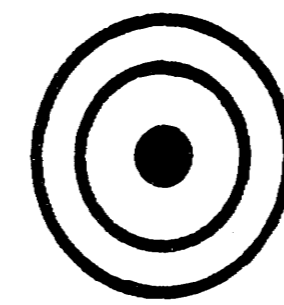
Japan or no Japan, opportunities have come our way and gone. But now is the time to reckon with forces that leave India with little choice and necessitate a decisive statement on its stand with foreign investors.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's recent visit to Japan was engineered precisely to present the case for foreign

a greater Japan on Indian soil. The IMF conditionality clauses have put our resilience to test. If the Japanese want us to go further in opening up the country, tact will be needed to cope with the implicit economic challenges which untrammelled foreign penetration is sure to create. This is, therefore, the hour for men of enterprise within the country to show their mettle. And the wisdom of a government lies in making it easier for them to operate at maximum efficiency by a fearless removal of what remains of constraints. Let us not forget that our country offers opportunities that are large and attractive to all — not only to the foreign investor.

Meanwhile, the activity in major stock exchanges in the country remaining at a standstill, I do not propose, this fortnight too, to make my usual recommendations on the scrips for trading.

K. Gopalakrishnan



BULL'S EYE

investment in India There had been ample reason to sense a Japanese inclination that could be tempted by the prospects offered by an India in need. That, plus the international scenario, where an unfriendly US attitude and an emerging Europe intent on the priorities that the break-up of the former Soviet Union had thrust on it, had set the stage. But apart from political exchanges of platitudes and grandiloquently vague expressions about foreign investment, there's been little reason to enthuse over the Prime Minister's visit. Confirming this predicament has been the supercilious Japanese attitude that has not promised much and ignored Indian feelings.

A delegation led by the President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry has not minced words in explaining its industrialists' lack of interest in India. On the other hand, it has shown no hesitation in spelling out some of their expectations, delegating all those principles of mutuality of interest governing international relations to the sidelines. In its opinion, reforms relating to investment, trade, financial and other policies have fallen short, the new import and banking regulations are not satisfying and the shift from Government-dependent to private-led initiative in industry has not become pronounced.

If the Japanese, however, do get involved, it might just open the gates for other countries to participate in Indian ventures. Meanwhile, to think that foreign investors are waiting with bated breath to plunge into this land of opportunities is hoping against hope. For a great leeway has to be made in meeting the stipulations of intending foreign investors.

The apathy of foreign investors proves that the present liberalisation measures will not do the trick and draw them, willy nilly, into our fold. But this is no reason for India to cave in under pressure and agree to the creation of

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## COMPLETE PLANNED FOOD



Latha Rajinikanth and the children on the cover of the HMV audio-cassette that features the popular English nursery rhymes in their Tamil version.

# Ding dong bell, sing along in Tamil



Dr. Shanmugam

For years we've heard the debate on whether our children should be brought up on English nursery rhymes. A new dimension to the discussion has been added with the introduction by HMV of an audio cassette that provides Tamil adaptations of the popular English nursery rhymes. And competing the tape and leading the singing is Latha Rajinikanth, wife of the film star but who herself is treading new paths in the field of education.

HMV's successful debut in the field of nursery rhymes was with Preethy

Sagar, the well-known pop singer who has distinguished herself in children's programmes. Now HMV's *Nilaa Nilaa Odi Vaa* features, besides Latha Rajinikanth, five young singers. "We wanted the tots to feel that these nursery rhymes were meant exclusively for them, so we got these budding child artistes to participate in the singing," says J Muthu Kumar, A & R Manager, The Gramophone Co. India Ltd.

Prasanthi, daughter of Malaysia Vasudevan, Varalakshmi, who sings professionally, Gayathri, daughter of

Raghunath Raman, Rajini, who sings professionally, and Neeraja, Muthu Kumar's daughter, are the five young singers. They were trained by R Meera, a Madras Doordashan announcer who is well known for her light music singing. The musical arrangements were made by T Selva Kumar, who is virtually a one-man orchestra, with his computerised keyboard. "He has helped us with six tapes before this and what a variety he has offered in each," adds Dr Shanmugam.

Both Muthu Kumar and Shanmugam acknowledge that Latha Rajinikanth's understanding of a child's mind and her presentation of the rhymes in simple, everyday language have contributed much to the appeal of the cassette. A good singer in her Ehiraj College days, Latha Rajinikanth completed the recording for this particular cassette in half a day.

Offering some insights into his contribution, Dr Shanmugam cited the third song in the tape. "I deliberately changed the pussy to an elephant as I thought the bell and the elephant more befitting an Indian environment. That is how I arrived at *Ding dong ding yanai paar*," he points out. In the Tamil version of *Mary had a Little Lamb*, Dr Shanmugam has named the lamb Alamelu and the girl Ammalu, making the whole song rhyme beautifully. And in *London Bridge is Falling Down*, he has, rather imaginatively, substituted a banana peel for London Bridge, taking his cue from "falling down."

He has, however, retained a few of the original versions in translation, as

by DHANYA GOPINATH

# Cats for crickets, Harry for cobras

In my last contribution to *Madras Musings* I described how to get rid of cockroaches, and hope readers have followed my advice. I should very much like to hear from those who have, and with what success.

Another household pest I used to suffer acutely from in my ancient cottage were crickets, those ugly little insects that make an unceasing screeching noise which seems to come from everywhere in the room except where you are looking for them. They seem to have an uncanny ventriloquist ability. There you are on your hands and knees searching for the abominable insect you could have sworn by its noise was there, only to hear it seemingly from the opposite side of the room. I've spent hours going from corner to corner before locating and 'flitting' the beastly things.

However, one of my household staff is crazy about cats and now has no less than four, all females, three already spayed at the Blue Cross (after having litters of kittens), the other a kitten herself, who, I'm afraid, will have



between the common cobra, a venomous snake, and the very large (up to eight feet-long) rat-snake (*Sarai pambu*

at least 75 per cent of such bites are what are called 'dry bites' in which the snake delivers little or no venom — which is a voluntary act, like spitting or urinating, not an automatically lethal one. And that 25 per cent in which SOME venom is delivered does not mean death; you might get a swelling of the area around the bite. If you do, leave it alone. The days of cutting with unsterilised razor blades in the belief you can suck out the venom are past. To start with, you can't suck out venom, even if there is any inside you, and more people die from the 'treatment' than ever died from snake-bite. Use unsterilised blades and you die of tetanus or septicæmia (blood poisoning) and, of course, the snake is always blamed.

Please don't confuse venoms with poisons: they are two different things. Practically anything can be poisonous — from aspirin (if you take too many of them) to cyanide — but venoms have been evolved by certain animals over millions of years with the specific purpose of killing or, at least, paralysing their prey.

Unconvinced? Still frightened of snakes are you? Still call the house-boy or gardener, with a 'Kill the horrid thing, quickly!'. Well, if you feel like that, give me a call (it's 450 580) and I'll be glad to reassure you.

Harry Miller

## LIVING WITH FAUNA

to receive surgical attention like the others when the time comes.

These are just ordinary household pussy cats, *Felis domesticus*, not the magnificent jungle cats, *Felis chaus*, I used to delight in. But the curious thing is that since we have had those cats I haven't been bothered by a single cricket. Presumably the cats can locate them with their keen hearing and eat them. I don't know.

So there you are then: boric acid for cockroaches, cats for crickets.

\*\*\*

The meteorologists say we have had an unusually hot, dry June. This is probably the reason I have had so many telephone calls from hysterical householders saying they've seen snakes in their houses, and what should they do. No doubt the hot dry weather has driven the snakes inside to keep cool — reptiles have no means of temperature control as we mammals have. They die quickly if they are over-heated.

My advice: leave them alone. Few who are not experts can distinguish

in Tamil). The confusion is compounded by the village belief that *Sarai pambu* is the male cobra, and that the male cobra lacks a hood. This is arrant nonsense. *Sarai pambu*, the well named rat-snake, belongs to a totally different family of snakes and is not venomous at all. If you interfere with it, it will, of course, bite, like any other wild animal, and viciously at that. I have been bitten badly so many times by rat-snakes, the blood dripping from my elbow, but though, naturally, it hurts, it does no more than that.

Even cobras will not bite, unless you molest them. Sometimes if I find a cobra in someone's house, I pick it up and 'bag' it; but when I catch the snake exactly on the point of the jaws — an exercise calling for skill and practice — the snake does not know my intentions are honourable, and, if it gets a chance, it will bury its fangs into my fingers and give me all the venom it's got, in an attempt to save itself from what it believes to be its death. You can't blame it for that.

However, if there's a cobra in your house and you accidentally step on it in the dark, it will certainly bite, but

# The Rhymes

SIDE 'A'

1. Nilaa nilaa odi vaa — Yankee doodle went to town
2. Thulli thulli chellum — Ding dong bell, pussy's in the well
3. Ding dong ding yanai paar — Poonguyil
4. Poonguyil — Aattukkutti
5. Aattukkutti — Thaavi odum maanai pola
6. Thaavi odum maanai pola — Vizhunthu vittu
7. Vizhunthu vittu — Sundeli sundeli doi
8. Sundeli sundeli doi — Three blind mice
9. Poonai vanthathu paar — Baa baa black sheep
10. Pasuve pasuve — Kutikkaranam podum
11. Kutikkaranam podum — Amma inge vaa vaa
12. Amma inge vaa vaa — Kannil minnum
13. Kannil minnum — Ondru yaavarkkum
14. Ondru yaavarkkum — Thaalelo
15. Thaalelo — A...Aa...E...Ee
16. A...Aa...E...Ee — Naam vaavazhum nadethu
17. Naam vaavazhum nadethu —

SIDE 'B'

1. Ondru irandu — One two, buckle my shoe
2. Dam dam dam damaaram — Jack and Jill went up the hill
3. Nil gavane sel — Hot cross buns
4. Neeriril neenthidum — Little Bo-peep
5. Anile anile odi vaa — Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
6. Megangal koodum — Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
7. Kukkuo kukkuo — Pussy cat, pussy cat
8. Vidiumurai — Here we go round the mulberry bush
9. Vanthaane komali — Buggy buggy buggy
10. Kuthirai nalla kuthirai — Ring-a-ring o' roses
11. Idiyan osai — I hear thunder
12. Mazhaiye mazhaiye — Rain, rain, go away
13. Oothaamal oru naalum — Ten little Indians
14. Sooriyan ezhumunne —
15. Kulla kulla vaathu —
16. Kaakkaa kaakkaa —
17. Engal thaaimozhi — The farmer's in the dell.

# A committed film-maker fades away



T. Prakasha Rao

double role which catapulted him to stardom.)

... *Mathar Kula Manickam* (A Savitri-Gemini Ganesan starrer, it was an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's immortal work *Nauka Doob* (The Wreck)). The ghastly Ariyalur train tragedy which took place around the time the film was planned, was cleverly used by TPR as the foundation for the tear-jerking tale. In Tagore's original it was a sinking boat, and hence its Bengali title.)

(Continued on P8)

Tatinei Prakasha Rao, a fine film director who made movies in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi — indeed, he was one of the earliest multi-lingual moviemakers of Madras — passed away some days ago.

TPR was the creator of several major hits. Among them...

... *Uthamaputhran* (Shivaji Ganesan played a double role in this film of the 50's, the second successful version of the famed Alexandre Dumas

novel *The Man in the Iron Mask*. The first Tamil version was made by T R Sundaram of Modern Theatres,

Our Cinema Correspondent reports from the Madras Film World

Salem, in 1939-40, with the top star of his day, P U Chinnappa, in the

# How do you see good films here?

Why doesn't someone think of starting a little theatre in Madras where good American and British films can be seen not too long after first release? asked George Deligianis the other day. The former USIS Deputy Director, a film fanatic if ever there was one, is now sort-of-settled in Madras, contributing actively to the local stage, screen and arts scene. Part of that contribution was a role in the recent USIS film festival and in leading the post-festival discussion on the new American film-makers who made the



A scene from *Dad*, the best film by popular acclaim at the USIS's recent film festival featuring new American film-makers.

Flynn, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Johnny Weismuller films that seemed to run on and on. The better films did as well or as badly as now.

FOOTNOTE: The almost unanimous vote in the discussion group for the best film of the festival was that brilliant Jack Lemmon tear-jerker *Dad*. Yet, according to Deligianis, this was a film that bombed in the U.S.! Why

then should it do well in a little theatre in Madras? Yet, curiously, its tear-jerking and its family ethos could be just the formula for success in Madras. Just wait and see whether it isn't made into a successful Tamil film before long! But that doesn't mean it'll be a little theatre success, unless the questions asked above have some very positive numbers as answers.

by H.A. SUMITH

films shown. It was in the course of that discussion that he wondered about a little theatre for the City.

I don't know the economics of little theatres, especially *vis-a-vis* comparatively new films, but there are several questions an investor is likely to ask. With video hurting even Tamil films and with videos available, especially to the English-speaking affluent, of most new American and British films, will the little theatre draw audiences? During the film festival, the USIS auditorium was 'House Full'. But would that audience which came in FREE have been willing to pay Rs. 10, 20, 30 per head a little theatre might charge? And in a city of four million, where probably less than two hundred thousand speak English fluently enough to understand, even moderately, American and British films, how many adults are there interested enough in cinema — especially to the extent of going out to watch a film?

These are all questions that the little theatre suggestion poses. And in that context we should be thankful that the occasional good film that comes our way gets a moderate run. *Dance of the Wolves*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Robin Hood*, *Home Alone* and *Pretty Woman* are amongst the recent lot which have had such runs — without having strong sex and violence going for them. In fact, for those sceptics in that small discussion group who felt people NOWADAYS went to English films only because of their sex and violence content, here's a question: When did good English films have better runs? Even in the good old New Elphinstone, Globe and Casino days, it was the Errol

## THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

# The whistler sings his way to honours



Tanjore Kalyanaram

Madras is doing a December in August! Plenty of music and dance on stage, almost as if a mini cultural season is on.

The focus is on the Krishna Gana Sabha on Griffith Road in T' Nagar. KGS is holding its 37th Gokulashtami music festival through August and some very good concerts can be looked forward to.

KGS is conferring its coveted title 'Sangeetha Choodamani' for 1992 on Tanjore S Kalyanaraman, the Carnatic vocalist. Kalyanaraman proudly says he has never canvassed for a programme or a title, yet things have gone well for him. His independent attitude may have irked many a sabha organiser who likes to be fawned on by musicians seeking the spotlight, but Kalyanaraman has, nevertheless, got his share of concerts.

He is a senior disciple of the legendary G N Balasubramaniam and has, himself, trained many well-known vocalists. Quite a few leading violinists have also gone to him for instruction, among them Kanyakumari and Nagai Muralidharan, the new star on the violin scene. He trains his students without lee — and over 50 have benefited. He also married one of them, Bhushani, and she has turned out to be quite a popular singer herself.

Kalyanaraman fights shy of talking about his ability to whistle an entire Carnatic music concert, though he was featured on Doordashan for this particular talent. He says he began to whistle his songs while away from his practice sessions. When this got

Elected again

The rather unseemly canvassing for an unnecessary election at the Music Academy ended with TT Vasu being elected Chairman for a fourth time. His margin of victory was handsome, but it is to be hoped that the substantial numbers who voted against him are not indicative of any split the Academy might be heading for. Now that the election is over, it is time to, mixing metaphors, build bridges and heal wounds.

V R Devika



## DHAKAI PARATHAS

- 2½ cups *atta*
- 2½ cups *maida*
- ½ - ¾ cup oil
- Salt to taste
- Oil for frying

### Method

Sieve the *atta* and *maida*. Add salt and sufficient water to form a stiff dough.

Cover with a damp cloth and set aside for 10 minutes.

On a floured board roll out the entire dough as thin as possible. Smear the oil evenly on the surface. Roll tightly like a Swiss Roll.

Divide the dough into equal parts. Take one at a time and roll into a 5" circle. The *paratha* will have concentric circles.

Heat a griddle and fry the *parathas* till golden.

## MANGO PIE

For the pastry  
¾ cup *maida*  
½ cup oil  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 - 4 lbs cold water

Mango filling  
3 ripe mangoes, peeled and chopped  
4 - 5 lbs sugar  
Juice of a lemon  
½ teaspoon grated nutmeg

### Method

Mix the flour with salt in a bowl. Add oil and knead into a dough, adding cold water.

Divide the dough into two halves. On a floured board, roll out the dough. Carefully lift the pastry and place it on a pie dish. Mix the mango filling with sugar, lemon juice and nutmeg. Spoon this mixture onto the prepared pie dish.

Roll out the second half of the dough. Carefully lift out the pastry and cover the filling. Press the two edges. Trim neatly. Cut three or four slits on top of the pastry to allow the steam to escape. Heat oven to 425°F and bake for 30 minutes.

When cooked, cut into wedges and serve topped with a scoop of ice-cream.

Chandra Padmanabhan

### Method

Wash & clean the mince meat and *channa dal* and keep aside. Heat the cooking medium in a pressure cooker and, when hot, add the chopped onions. Fry till it is golden and transparent.

Add the *garam masala*, then the powdered *masala*, *jeera*, ginger-garlic paste, the curry leaves, mint, tomatoes and green chillies and stir. Next add the mince meat and *channa dal* and mix well. Now add the coconut paste and keep on stirring till everything is well blended.

Add three cups of warm water and mix well. Cover the pressure cooker and cook the meat with the pressure on till two whistles, or a nice aroma comes. (Appx. 15-20 mins).

Remove from fire, but don't open for another 10-15 minutes.

Before serving sprinkle with chopped coriander leaves. Serve with *parathas*.

Mrs. P. Raghupathy

## MINCE MEAT AND CHANNA DAL KURMA

### Ingredients:

- 300 gms mince meat
- 1 teaspoon *channa dal* (Bengal gram *dhal*)
- 1 large onion (cut into small pieces)
- 2 medium tomatoes (cut into small pieces)
- 2 green chillies (slit lengthwise)
- ½ coconut — ground
- 3 - 6 cashewnuts — to a paste
- 6 pods garlic — ground
- 1" piece ginger — to a paste
- 6 cloves
- 4 cardamoms — powdered
- 2" piece cinnamon
- 3 teaspoons *dhania* (coriander) powder
- ½ teaspoon turmeric powder
- ½ teaspoon *jeera*
- ½ teaspoon *saunf*
- 1 small piece *bininj* leaf (bay leaf)
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 1 tbs mint leaves
- ½ bunch coriander leaves
- 2 tbs gingelly oil or any cooking medium
- Salt to taste

Two writers look at the sorry pass Tamil Nadu cricket has come to

# The disturbed atmosphere

As these lines are written, the ball is now in the court of R Balu Alaganan, President of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, and four of his six Vice-Presidents, A C Muthiah and N Sankar, both leading industrialists, N Murali, General Manager, *The Hindu*, and M Gopalakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Bank.

What a line-up for a sports body's Vice-Presidents! Yet, for various reasons, they all resigned from their posts a day or two after they were re-elected at the TNCA's annual general body meeting on June 28th. They thus not only left the 62-year-old controlling body in the lurch, but also took the entire Indian sporting world by surprise, for there seemed no justification whatsoever for the hasty, unprecedented step they took. It could truly be said of them that, though they did not take it to the streets, the leaders of the industrial, newspaper

and banking world associated with the TNCA staged a lightning strike.

The orphaned TNCA's Executive Committee members now plan to go to the President and Vice-Presidents and beg them back to duty. At an urgent

by  
**AJAX**

meeting on July 5th, the Committee decided to "call on the above gentlemen and request them to reconsider their decision and continue to give their guidance and help in the shaping of the fortunes of the TNCA".

It is not known when the Committee members will meet each of the five office-bearers or what the outcome of their meetings will be, given the reasons the President and the Vice-

Presidents have given for their resignations. One of them, a dynamic and yet most unassuming personality and the only cricketer among the country's cricketing chiefs, wanted to "take time off to spend in my village"! Another maintained that he could not carry on "in the disturbed atmosphere". Only Murali was willing to admit in public what the world knew, that the resignations were all due to the defeat of the previous Honorary Secretary, U Prabhakar Rao, by Bharath Reddy.

Elected in 1989, Prabhakar Rao, a former State medium-pacer, performed his job with such an inflexible sense of duty that he was a hot favourite to retain his post. But, in a straight contest, Reddy defeated him 96 votes to 72, a clear 24-vote margin.

Oddly enough, Reddy's resounding democratic victory made him an unwanted child. There was nothing hanky-panky at all about his election.

## A committed film-maker

(Continued from P7)

... *Padagotti* (A MGR-super hit, and a cult film which is often revived with success to this day.)

... *Ellorum Innattu Mannar* (scripted by Mu. Karunanidhi.)

... *Charana Dasi ... Palleturu ... Jayam Manahley* (all in Telugu.)

... *Sasural* (a Hindi superhit featuring B Saroja Devi in the lead.)

... *Suraj* (a Vijayanthimala starrer.)

... And several others.

Prakasha Rao was born in the Andhra heartland in 1922 of parents who were ardent followers of Mahatma Gandhi and who took part in the Indian freedom movement. Born and brought up in this fervent atmosphere, young Prakasha drank deeply at the fount of politics, but, though he hero-

worshipped Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, he turned more and more to the radical Left as he sought to change the world overnight.

He joined the Indian Communist Party as a card-holder and before long found himself on the British Indian Government's 'Wanted' list. He once told this writer's soul-mate, who had worked with him as writer-associate director in the Tamil state award-winning film *Engalalum Mudiyum* (1982), about how he had gone to Varanasi to take an examination for the Benares Matriculation. As he was about to write the test, he received information that plainclothesmen were on their way to arrest him. He vanished from the scene and, later, disguised as a *sadhu*, left sacred Kashi. "That was the last exam I ever tried to answer in my life," he wisecracked.

With a flair for organisation and the arts, and possessing an impressive physique, he became the party's all-rounder, involving himself in training the party's cadres at physiculture camps and staging propaganda plays for them in rural Andhra, all in disguise! But then came the parting of the ways, when the party adopted an antagonistic attitude towards his idol, Pandit Nehru. According to TPR, during the mid-1940s, certain groups even toyed seriously with the idea of assassinating Nehru!

He now turned to movies, an art form he felt could be used for social reform. A meeting in Bezwada (now Vijayawada) with the fast-rising Telugu film director Akkineni Lakshmi Vara Prasada Rao, soon to achieve fame under the name L V Prasad, led Prakasha Rao to take the train to Madras. Another handsome young man, a college graduate and government servant, also took the same train to Madras on Prasad's summons. "My friend, fairly well off, had enough money to buy his ticket back home, while I had just enough coppers to buy my ticket only one way, to Madras!" TPR would chuckle decades later.

Prakasha Rao joined Prasad as assistant director in a successful film with pinkish undertones, *Drohi* (Telugu, 1948), and in another socially relevant film *Mana Desam* (1949). It was in this film that the affluent fellow-traveller took his bow in a supporting role as a police officer. His name was N T Rama Rao!

TPR found life in Madras harsh and hard. He often slept in Panagal Park (named in memory of the Justice Party leader and Chief Minister of Madras, Raja of Panagal, a name pronounced 'Paanagal' with a long 'a' and not as many pronounce it today!) and lived on 'Moloney's Mixture' (now called water!) From time to time he worked with L V Prasad. One of the films he assisted in was *Sahukaru*, Nagi Reddi-Chakrapani's maiden venture in Telugu, which gave its pretty new face Janaki her famed prefix, 'Sowcar'!

Then came 1952 — and his debut as director in *Palleturu*, a rural tale presented without frills and in a realistic manner. Prakasha Rao was hailed as a director to be watched. And there was no looking back. He went places, from Madras to Bombay, directing 50-odd films in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. One of them in Hindi was *Dil*, in which one-day-to-be-Chief Minister Jayalalitha acted.

A person of culture and class, Prakasha Rao generously trained many who were later to become successful as film-makers... Tatineni Rama Rao, S P Muthuraman, A Jagannathan, Hemambaradharao Rao, K Pratyagatma, his son, T L V Prasad, and several others. Many are not aware that the AVIM-hit film *Kalathur Kannamma* was directed by Prakasha Rao and, that Kamal Hasan, who made his debut in this film, was his discovery. After more than half the film was completed, differences arose between Prakasha Rao and A V Meiyappan, and TPR withdrew from the film. It was completed by A Bhim Singh who received all credit for it.

In Tatineni Prakasha Rao's death South Indian cinema has lost a giant.

## What's wrong with Bharath Reddy?

(By The Corner Flag)

The recent events in the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association have been shocking, to say the least. By the time these lines appear, the storm might have blown over and the President and four Vice-Presidents of the TNCA may be back in office in answer to the pleas of a headless Executive Committee. But the events that preceded it are unlikely to be blown away from memory so easily.

Will Messrs Alaganan, Murali, Sankar, Muthiah and Gopalakrishnan stand up and announce that they would have resigned even if Prabhakar Rao had been elected Honorary Secretary? If they are not prepared to state that, their resignations could only have been because they had no time for Bharath Reddy who was elected fair and square by the same body which had elected them. What, then, is wrong with Bharath Reddy, gentlemen?

Everyone finding the decision of this quintet to resign unseemly keeps saying the resignation is not fair by those who elected them. *The Corner Flag* agrees, but far more important is whether it is fair by Bharath Reddy? Do men of wisdom and righteousness resign because one of their coterie is not elected? If they do so, in a democracy, then they must stand up and tell us what is so wrong with Bharath Reddy that they don't want to be seen in his company.

In the silence that answers such questions, *The Corner Flag* can only surmise that here is a classic case of the Establishment — much of it, as usual, non-playing and dilettantish — and player power, something Reddy has long been associated with, coming up against each other head on. If that is indeed the case, sad days have dawned on Tamil Nadu cricket, whatever occurs after these lines were written. But if that is not the case, the quintet owe it to the public to explain their resignations in more plausible terms than those expressed in their unbelievably naive letters. *The Corner Flag* would indeed be glad to hear from them if they would like to express their mature views loud and clear in these columns.

Yet it precipitated the crisis and brought about the "disturbed atmosphere". All norms of democracy were thrown to the winds. And they say cricket is a gentleman's game!

The drama has now been made more farcical by the latest turn it has taken. Whether the Executive Committee's mission, which has given the 'resigners' an indispensable status, will succeed or not is anybody's guess.

But it is easy to guess what respect the five will get, if they return, from their unwanted, nay, condemned, child, a former Test wicket-keeper and former State skipper.

The resignations have indeed accentuated the divisions in the TNCA that came to the surface a couple of years ago, when a popular Assistant Secretary was defeated in the election for the Secretary's post. Things can only get worse now.

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Fidel Ramos.
2. Lalbagh Express.
3. M G Ramachandran.
4. Shore Temple.
5. Arjuna's Penance, the Rathas and the old Lighthouse.
6. In Tibetan Buddhism he is a person who is holy enough to attain nirvana, but chooses to be repeatedly reincarnated to help others.
7. Two per cent.
8. Justice Ms Kanta Kumari Bhatnagar.
9. The 5-minute metering scheme in which local calls will be metered as one call for the first 5 minutes and one call for every subsequent 5 minute period.
10. ... the Earth Summit, attended by over 30,000 delegates.
11. Air India's airlift of over a lakh of stranded Indian nationals from Amman during Aug-Oct 1990.
12. G G Swell.
13. An independent study group appointed by the World Bank to look into the allegations made by the anti-Narmada dam activists.
14. Tin Bigha.
15. Thiruvaiyaru.
16. Maharajapuram Santhanam.
17. Rs. 3/-, because of rising production costs. Hence the price has been raised from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5.
18. The charge has recently been revised from Rs. 185 to Rs. 400.
19. They had been stopped for a second. The leap second was introduced to adjust to the slowing down of the Earth's rotation.
20. It is a handheld machine used to measure the amount of noise tennis players like Monica Seles make when they hit the ball.

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