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MADRAS

METAL CUTTING TOOLS

MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

August 16 — 31, 1992

Free flow of films expected from the West

Bonanza or ill-wind?

(By A Staff Reporter)

It was in its July 16th issue that *Madras Musings* reported the regret of George Deligianis, formerly of USIS, Madras, that the city did not see enough of the new and better class films coming in from the West. Almost as answer to

his prayer is the news that the Government of India has decided to liberalise its policy on foreign films and allow them "free, direct and uncensored" entry.

American films are expected to be the biggest beneficiaries of this largesse which also speaks of "concessional terms". Besides the Motion Pictures Exhibitors of America (MPEA) — the largest importers at present — several NRIs, not the least Madras' own Amrithraj brothers, are expected to benefit once the policy is notified.

In 1990-91, 141 foreign films were imported, the next year only 73 were imported and this year just about 20 films have been imported so far, predicting an all-time low unless the new policy comes into force.

The delay in announcing the policy is, of course, the Indian Film Industry's lobby. The strongest component of this lobby is, of course, Western India — Bollywood, that is — but Kodambakkam is not without its own clout.

That clout will be wielded strong to protect the benefits bound to arise from the concessions Chief Minister Jayalalitha recently announced at the South India Film Chamber of

Commerce's felicitation to her. She promised:

- ★ Permission for a 25 per cent increase in admission rates to cinemas in the state.
- ★ Air-conditioned cinema theatres would be permitted to collect 'maintenance charges' from the viewers at 25 paise per ticket. The corresponding rate for the non-air-conditioned theatres would be 10 paise per ticket.
- ★ A waiver of tax on (advertisement) slides shown in cinemas.
- ★ Hiking of the subsidy for small-budget films from Rs.2 lakh to Rs. 3 lakh (to be given to 50 films in a year). The subsidy amount would be disbursed within three months of the release of the film.
- ★ Single-window clearance (through the Information and Public Relations Department) for outdoor shootings.
- ★ Places to be earmarked for pasting of film posters in the City.

Will these promises now benefit the films from the West or will the Indian film industry triumph? Watch out for the next thrilling instalment.

Debut by accident

(By A Staff Reporter)

The felicitation function organised by the South India Film Chamber of Commerce was occasion for Chief Minister Jayalalitha to turn nostalgic and talk about her *thai veedu* (mother's house), the film world.

She recalled how it was sheer chance that she had got into films. She was seven at the time her mother was making *Sri Saila Mahatmyam*, a Kannada film. One day, she had accompanied her mother to the studio and, there, was 'discovered' when the child artiste who was due for shooting did not turn up. Not only did she step into a goddess's role, but the producer liked the way she played it and gave her an additional song-and-dance sequence, she related.

But it was a lawyer she wanted to be, not a film star, she told the large SIFCC audience. That, however, was not to be; due to circumstances, she found herself in films. And then *Chinnathakombe* and *Vennira Adai* changed her fate.

It was her film successes that brought her to the notice of M G Ramachandran and he was to become her "mentor in both the film world and political life", showing her the way to where she is now.

TAILPIECE: The occasion was noteworthy for Rajinikanth publicly denying that he had any political ambitions — at present. Politics gave its practitioner no peace of mind, he explained. The Chief Minister agreed that this was so, but felt those who wanted to do good things should join politics. Was this an invitation?

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright!

(By A Staff Reporter)

Even as reports appear that the Sri Lankan Army has the LTTE on the run, other reports keep appearing with monotonous regularity of ambushes by the Tigers that take a toll of the Army by the dozen. "Thirtyfive soldiers killed", today's headline, would appear to indicate that the Tigers are far from cornered in their little patch of 'Eelam'; they seem to be able to strike at will anywhere in the island and their capability has obviously not been blunted.

That alone should be a matter for concern for Tamil Nadu, with its new anti-Tiger posture. But recent reports of Tiger leader Kittu (Krishna Kumar) negotiating for arms in Pakistan should be of greater concern.

Kittu, injured in the fallout of internecine militant strife in Jaffna, lived for a while in Madras, then moved on to London and Geneva. He's now reported as having surfaced in Pakistan,

where one of the world's biggest arms bazaars has been growing as a result of local wars and Afghanistan's bloody battles.

Kittu, the reports allege, had four LTTE vessels handy to take on the arms purchased. Now if that was true, the Indian Navy's Western Command will have its work cut out for it; all this time it's been the Eastern Command and the Coast Guard that have been busy off the Coromandel Coast. But whether these reports are true or not, it is totally believable that Pakistan would like to fish in troubled Indian waters. And what better group to encourage to stir those waters than an LTTE angered by the attitudes of both the Indian and Tamil Nadu Governments.

Indian analysts believe that even as the LTTE keeps bloodying the nose of



Beautifying the trees of Madras

To think that I shall never see
 A poster lovelier than a tree...

This tree, carrying no less than ten posters, was found and photographed by P. Justine near the petrol bunk at the Alwarpet beginning of what used to be called Mowbray's (or Mowbray's) Road and is now TTK Road—(H.M.).

the Sri Lankan Army, Prabhakaran still is pondering ways and means of getting even for the reverses he has suffered in Tamil Nadu. The latest reports can only increase the sense of unease of those analysts.

FOOTNOTE: Since these lines were written, the Tigers have once again demonstrated that they can strike at will. By decimating virtually the entire Northern High Command in Sri Lanka they have not only eased the pressure on themselves but have also created a situation that could have an unhappy fall-out elsewhere in the Island — and, possibly, even in India.

TAILPIECE: There are several unconfirmed stories making the rounds in Madras of arrests of young LTTE infiltrators and sympathisers, both men and women; found near key locations in the city. Are there further threats in store for Tamil Nadu in the days ahead?

MANAALI RAMAN...

I'm going on indefinite strike... If any of them want to see me they can come home.

IN MAD MAD MADRAS

Battle royal at Express speed

Saroj Goenka was once quoted as having said, "I have become ambitious, but not because of an interest in business. It is the paper I want to make successful—not the money." And as the battle with nephew-by-marriage Vivek Khaitan-Goenka intensifies, it appears that the lady ensconced in Club House Road, Madras, wants the entire paper and not merely its southern (and bigger) editions.

The most recent salvos in the battle are the increased rents she has been asking for the properties occupied in the North by the *Indian Express* editions published in those parts. She has also been talking of undervalued properties and book debts. She also claims her three daughters as Ramnath Goenka's next of kin.

The Grand Old Man of Indian journalism certainly left a mess of problems when he adopted Vivek Khaitan and left a contest. In the last days of his life, he was not able to push through the trusteeship ownership he had envisaged, as he'd fallen out with the proposed trustees, on the one hand, and, on the other, kept seeing different members of the family differently each time he thought about it. And by involving Nuzli Wadia in the financial affairs of the *Express*, as well as by giving him a seat of honour on the board, he made confusion worse confounded.

It strikes *The Man From Madras Musings* as passing strange that vociferous crusading-accountant Gurumurthy is remaining silent through all this, neither writing of the allegations of undervaluation or of the roles of various persons on the Board who have no kinship with the family or of the undervalued sales of the group's publications in Gujarat. *The Hindu*, whose own family squabbles were grist for the Goenka mill, is also silent on all issues being raised in this battle. Meanwhile *MMM* can't help but wonder whether the *Express* isn't in danger of being quietly hijacked in the midst of this increasingly loud battle or whether in the end it is going to boil down to an equitable division of the Group—down to the policies of the journals it publishes.

Meanwhile, imagine both sides in the dispute going calling on a government their papers delight in attacking—to seek help and justice, mind you!

The VC presides

It was only a few weeks ago that there was a long piece in *The Hindu* in which columnist SK shared his thoughts with you and me as he looked at SKance at all the doctorates that are being received by the citizens of Tamil Nadu, and especially of this city. Besides the rather dubious conferment of doctorates locally, SK drew rather pointed attention to the doctorates several unrecognised universities in the US were doling out to OUR citizens in exchange for a fee and a 'thesis'.

Following on this story a couple of weeks later, the *Indian Express* exposed the sad state of

affairs at Madras University where plagiarism and worse have been rampant over the past few years as Ph.Ds are sought to be obtained by fair means and foul. Dr Beatrix D'Souza, educationist and nominated MLA, has also added her two cents by citing examples of plagiarism in M. Phil dissertations.

After pondering over the matter, Madras University finally deigned to respond—by saying, in effect, don't blame us who belong to this generation of faculty and administrators; after all, it has been going on for over a decade, during the tenures of various others. *The Man From Madras Musings* had always thought that good management practice was to take responsibility for the sins of one's predecessors and, instead of

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

passing back the buck, ensure that the lessons of the past do not recur. But Madras University obviously has other views on such practices. So be it.

But can Vice Chancellor Sathikh afford to have such contrary views on dubious American doctorates obtained by local citizenry? The other day, he PRESIDED over a function at which the gentleman who'd got this doctorate was felicitated. Did Dr Sathikh make sure that it was a doctorate from a recognised American institution? Or was he, by his presence, recognising an unrecognised award and giving it respectability—perhaps, thereby, opening the floodgates wide? Perhaps Dr Sathikh and the government Secretary who was also present would like to tell our readers their views on this doctorate from a California university that does not figure in the American official collegiate list.

Incidentally, does anyone have an idea why this craze for doctorates is greatest in Tamil Nadu where once-high educational standards have plummeted the most?

Popular filmfare?

Madras's own Ashok Amritraj, who gave up tennis for film production, is doing very well in the film world not only in Los Angeles, but the world over, thank you. Now he's eyeing a more liberalised mother country.

Having signed a distribution contract, he has, it is reported, offered Doordarshan 40 of their films, among them some of the biggest box office hits. Will DD bite? And if it does, will it offer viewers the films in its favourite late night slot for English-speaking audiences by then fast asleep, or will it offer them at a more respectable hour for all?

Amritraj, incidentally, is, it is also reported, planning to make a whole series of action-mystery-romances in India for audiences both in India and abroad.

M M M

OUR READERS WRITE

Mango delights

'The Riches of Mangoes' by V.K. (in *MM* July 1) was quite interesting, but I feel the author had not started from the very beginning of the season nor had she rounded it off with season's end.

The first to appear in the Madras market are the 'kadhar' and the 'peelhar' varieties. While 'kadhar' has a greenish skin even when ripe, the 'peelhar' is golden yellow and has a pink red sheen near the stalk region. Both smell superbly and their juice is sweet. But one snag. Both abound in thick long fibres which make them unsuitable to eat in the conventional way. The best method to eat them is to squeeze them with skin intact. Then make a hole at the tip by biting off the skin and suck out the juice! Children like them, as the stone with the beard can be sucked and licked till it turns almost white!

In brief

★ One Indian participant in Barcelona went almost unnoticed here. And that was former child prodigy Mandolin Srinivasan. He and his troupe performed, on invitation, at the Arts and Cultural Centre of the Barcelona Games on August 1st and, from all reports, were more warmly applauded than the Indian effort in the arenas and stadia of the Catalan capital. He is now in the throes of an U.K., North American and Japanese tour. India, not to say Madras, obviously seems more attuned to cultural success than sporting achievement.

★ Did the arrest of AIADMK (MGR) leader Thirunavakkarasu under a now-defunct act have anything to do with the incidents on his birthday on July 13th? His plans to celebrate the occasion included visits to the Anna and MGR samadhis. And at both places he was stalled by the police. It was only when push came to shove by his followers, that the police for once showed discretion, and he was able to reach the samadhis without untoward incident. But what seemed almost inevitable followed.

★ That aquarium on the Marina is a disgrace. No wonder the Chief Minister wants to do something about it. And she's not satisfied with a mere, improved aquarium, like, say, what Colombo has got. No, sir, she wants an Oceanarium. At the Rs. 5 crores ear-marked for it, is Singapore the model? In which case, Lyn de Alwis, the man who did the Colombo job and went on to advise Malaysia and Singapore, might be the man she is looking for.

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Choreographed by the dance teachers of various schools, but blended into a joyous whole, it told an ancient tale in understandable contemporary *melier*.

So many lovely images from *Aayana* are with me still. The incredible beauty of hundreds of handicapped children, enacting with graceful waves of their hands the turbulent waters of life which Rama bravely crossed, filling the arena with their touching courage. The luminous loveliness of a stadium with white clad children recreating Rama's poignant search for the abducted Sita. The fantastic spectacle of Jatayu being escorted by two elephants. The night lit up by magically floating red and green lamps held aloft by the warring armies. The cornering of Ravana and his final fall....

It was the grace, talent and vivacity of the 1000 participating children which gave *Aayana* its flesh and blood and its special magic. Here's hoping we'll see more such meaningful happenings in Madras

Pushpa Chari
Harrington Road
Madras-600 031.

Costly recipe

I thoroughly enjoy your paper—lots of interesting information—entertaining and stimulating. I cut out and keep the recipes and promise myself I will try them out—some day! I do, however, manage to read them with a critical eye. Hence this query regarding Neela Prabhakar's recipe (June 15th) for Jellied Chicken Salad. She says to mix 1 c. milk and 3-4 tbs. vinegar plus, of course, a whole lot of other good ingredients and cook them albeit "over a low flame." In these days of scams, inflation, trucks' strikes and other budget-breakers, I hesitate to try out this recipe. Surely Ms Prabhakar, one must add the vinegar to the cooled salad dressing!

The "bangaloo" or "kilimookku" is ubiquitous and lasts the full season. It is best for making sweet *pachchadi*. It also makes a fine jelly. When refrigerated, it makes a perfect substitute for ice cream. In the raw, it is best eaten half ripe, garnished with salt and chilli powder. Again, this is a favourite of schoolchildren. Many a street vendor in front of schools sells strips of this mango with chilli powder to make a neat pile at the end of the day!

Mrs E Khursheed
Kasturba Nagar
Madras-600 020

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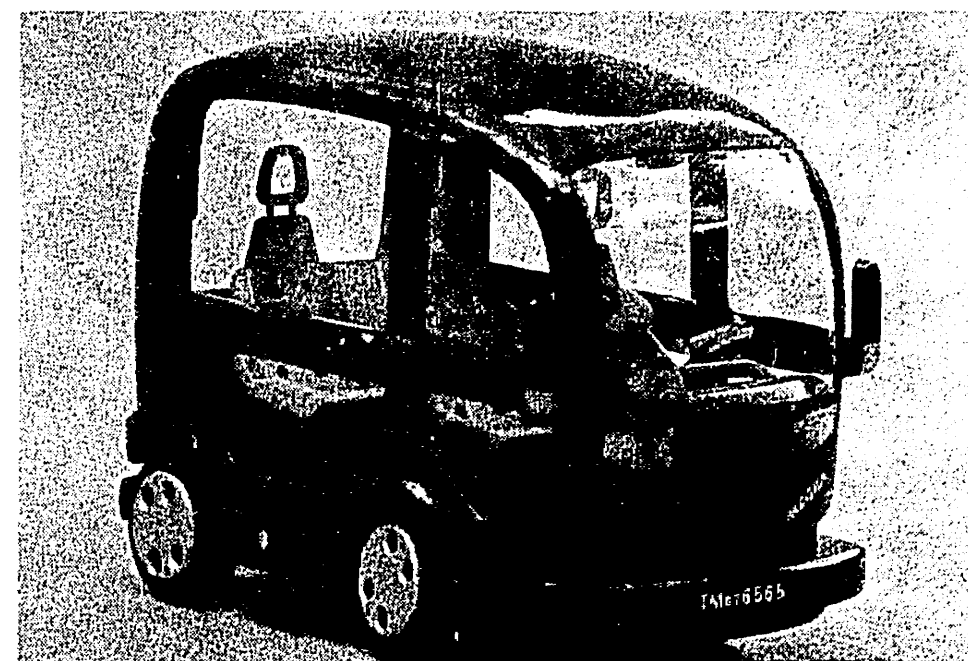
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Above: The prize-winning Megha, above right: The Lenca and on right, the battery-operated vehicle for materials movement. Their designer, Mirajker, is to be seen in the inset.

Car styles of tomorrow from Madras

Car styling expert Rajesh Mirajker (29) is all set to usher in a design revolution in India. His arrangements for setting up a new studio at Commander-in-Chief Road, with sister Mrs. Sonu Amarnath for secretarial assistance, are in full swing. Madras could, perhaps, one day become the transportation designing centre of India, having as it does in Mirajker the country's only international award winner in this field.

Megha is the name of his little model car which was adjudged the best designed by the Japanese bi-monthly, *Carstyling* in 1991. It was in the category 'Basic personal transportation', for which designs for the smallest possible vehicles for commuting in crowded cities were invited.

Meaning 'light clouds' in Hindi, and thus denoting a feeling of lightness and an expression of freedom, *Megha* will be on Indian roads in another three years. Some manufacturers have shown keen interest, but certain technical difficulties need to be sorted out in the prototype, says Mirajker.

Megha could be just the right car for city driving, for it is a four-passenger vehicle ideal for short-distance travel, yet with an attractive fuel-efficiency.

Curiously, Indian custom abhors, unmitigated praise, which is prone to travel to the recipient's head (so one should say "the *payasam* needed just a little more sugar"—even after drinking buckets of it) and so I should complain about your referring to Vivek Goenka as *nee* Khaitan (*MM* 16-31.7.92). 'Nee' is used only to reveal a lady's maiden name.

In spite of my 'nay' to your 'nee', I rank *MM* topdrawish in its genre. I hope such praise will not go to your head—but a price will go with your mashead.

J S Raghavan
21 Casa Major Road
Egmore—600 008.

J S Raghavan
21 Casa Major Road
Egmore—600 008.

J S Raghavan
21 Casa Major Road
Egmore—600 008.

J S Raghavan
21 Casa Major Road
Egmore—600 008.

The light that M.S. lit

(By A Special Correspondent)

When K (Kalki) Rajendran called on President R Venkataraman last March and invited him to preside over Kalki's golden jubilee celebrations on August 1st, the President did not know quite what to reply. Venkataraman had in January decided not to seek a second term and in February he had communicated his decision to the Government. But it was still a secret — and so his dilemma.

Promising to give the son of his old friend Kalki Krishnamurthy an answer in a couple of weeks, he expressed his dilemma to his Joint Secretary, Gopal Gandhi, grandson of both Gandhiji and Rajaji. The latter having blessed the efforts of Kalki and his colleague T Sadasivam of the *Ananda Vikatan* when starting their new journal *Kalki*, Gopal Gandhi could freely talk to Rajendran, son of Kalki, son-in-law of Sadasivam and self-effacing but principled editor of *Kalki*, about the President's dilemma.

Was Kalki inviting R Venkataraman in his capacity as President? Gopal Gandhi gently asked and went on to explain the situation. Rajendran's reply was that they wanted neither the President nor a former President but Venkataraman the man, a lifelong friend and well-wisher of the institution.

In narrating this story at the celebrations at Kamaraj Memorial Hall, the former President was paying rich tribute to the ethical standards of *Kalki*. But at the same time he was displaying those remarkable qualities of his that Cho, amidst asides about women's power, drew the audience's attention to. No President, said Cho, had ever been beset with the problems Venkataraman had had to cope with — imagine dealing with four Prime Ministers and two of them with minority governments! — yet he had with immense tact negotiated every crisis and kept the country from slipping into chaos. When some future President would have to face such problems, that's when the country would recall, and want to recall, the man who had slipped out of Delhi unnoticed and unsung. Cho said in a rare lapse from levity.

Business Review

(Continued from P3)

GM gave due weightage to the following factors — SFL's approval by GM Opel for supply of critical fasteners, the ISO 9000 accreditation, and the overall professional approach of the company.

The company hopes that this major breakthrough would help open many other doors in the international market.

Gloom in Ambattur

The auto component industry in the Madras belt is really feeling the pinch of the recession in the automobile sector. The small-scale units in the Ambattur belt are particularly badly hit. Ashok Leyland, TAFE and the TVS group acquire nearly 65 per cent of the ancillary parts produced at the estate. The 50 per cent production cut by Telco and Ashok Leyland and 40 per cent reduction in the production of LCV's has hit the ancillary sector deeply. Orders have been plummeting. And so; cuts in shifts and working days. The gloomy part is nobody is quite sure when recovery will happen.

Former President Venkataraman's story was an important part of his speech from the heart; he was, he stated, not reading a prepared speech, for no longer did he have to be careful with his words lest they be misquoted or misinterpreted. Now he could say what he really felt — and on this occasion it was the awe he felt at the immensity of Kalki's contribution to both the Tamil language and Indian journalism.

That was to be a recurring theme during the 2½-hour long evening that was the highlight of the day-long celebrations, feasting and a play by Kalki. Yet through it all, a crowd overflowing into the aisles and foyer sat and stood rapt, listening to a politically-free dais capture and hold its attention at all levels.

Cho had MS hiding her face in her hands as she laughed every time he talked about what women were doing to men these days. And he had the crowd in stitches as he blamed Rajendran, publisher of his first effort, for having got him bitten by a bug which would not let go. Shivashankari, on the other hand, almost had it in tears as she told a similar story — but recalled it emotionally — of how, 25 years ago, Rajendran accepted the first story of a young woman who had played as a child in *Kalki Gardens*.

If these were tributes by latter day writers, MaPoSi's was a contemporary's recollection of the days with Rajaji. And as he spoke as only he can so eloquently do, he beseeched the heavens for a revival of pride in Tamil and pride in India. Today we live in a country where the only gold we can win is for the number of humiliations we have suffered in Olympian fields; where is that courage, determination and pride that men like Kalki displayed, he thundered as only he can do so softly.

An act of such courage was recalled by M V Arunachalam as he narrated how MS, reluctant to play a male role, said 'yes' to playing Naradar in the film *Savithri* so that *Kalki* could be. Many were the sacrifices made by others over the years — all because they believed in *Kalki*, man and magazine.

Linking all this nostalgia together into a smooth weave was Kaviyarasu Vairamuthu. A particular gem was his introduction of M Gopalakrishnan, which went something like this:

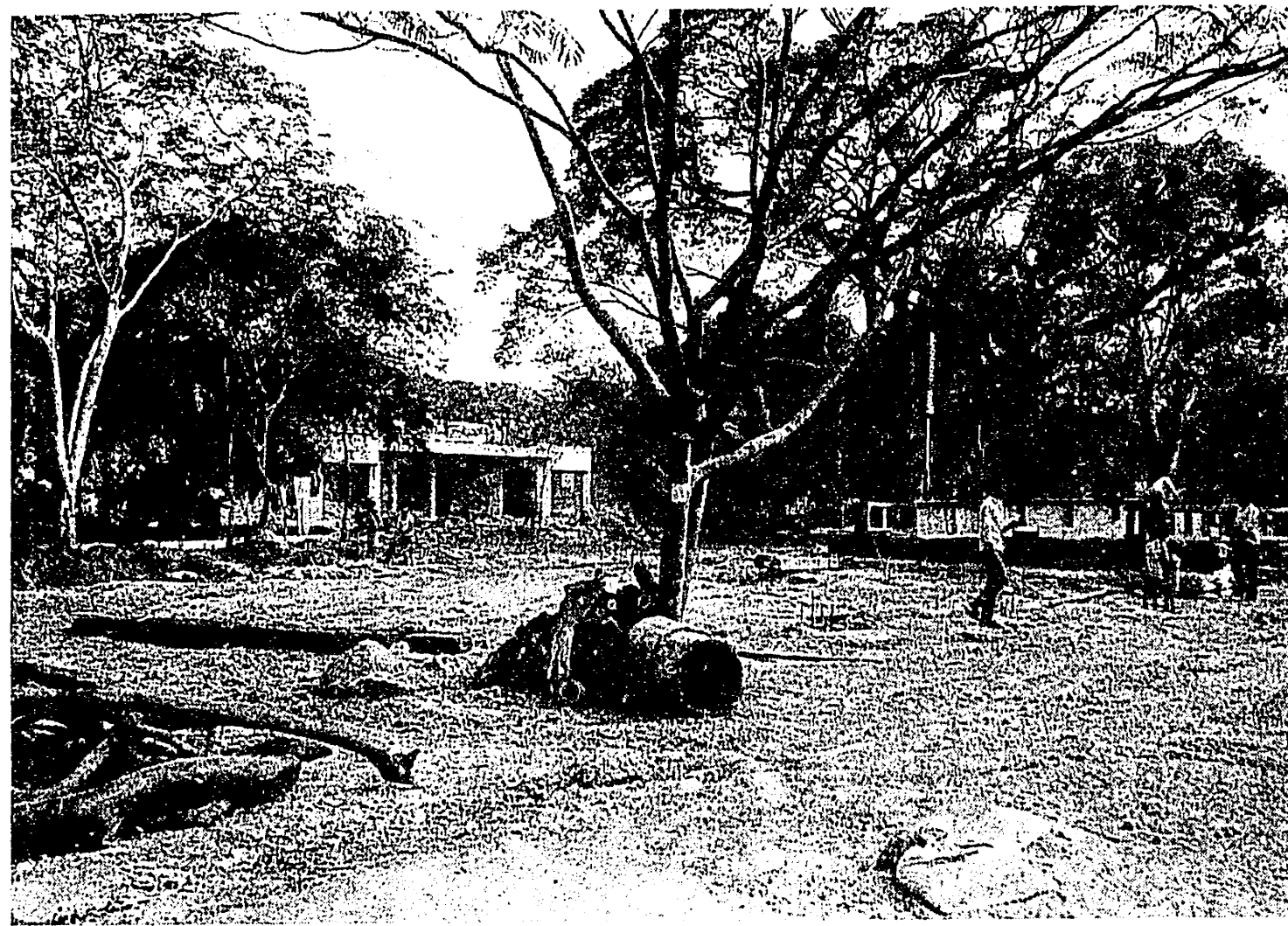
If there's a day he's not seen at a function, you can be sure it's a bandh.

If there's a day he's not been on TV, you can be sure there's something wrong with the transmission tower.

All's well with the world today, so he's here with us.

Speak on, Mr Gopalakrishnan, but count your words like your coin.

Kalki and Rajaji would have enjoyed it all, but for that evening there was no one who enjoyed it, or deserved it more, than Sadasivam and MS who made *Kalki* possible. She had figuratively lit the lamp 50 years ago, on August 1st she literally lit it in commemoration of what she had helped start. It was a sad moment of pure joy.

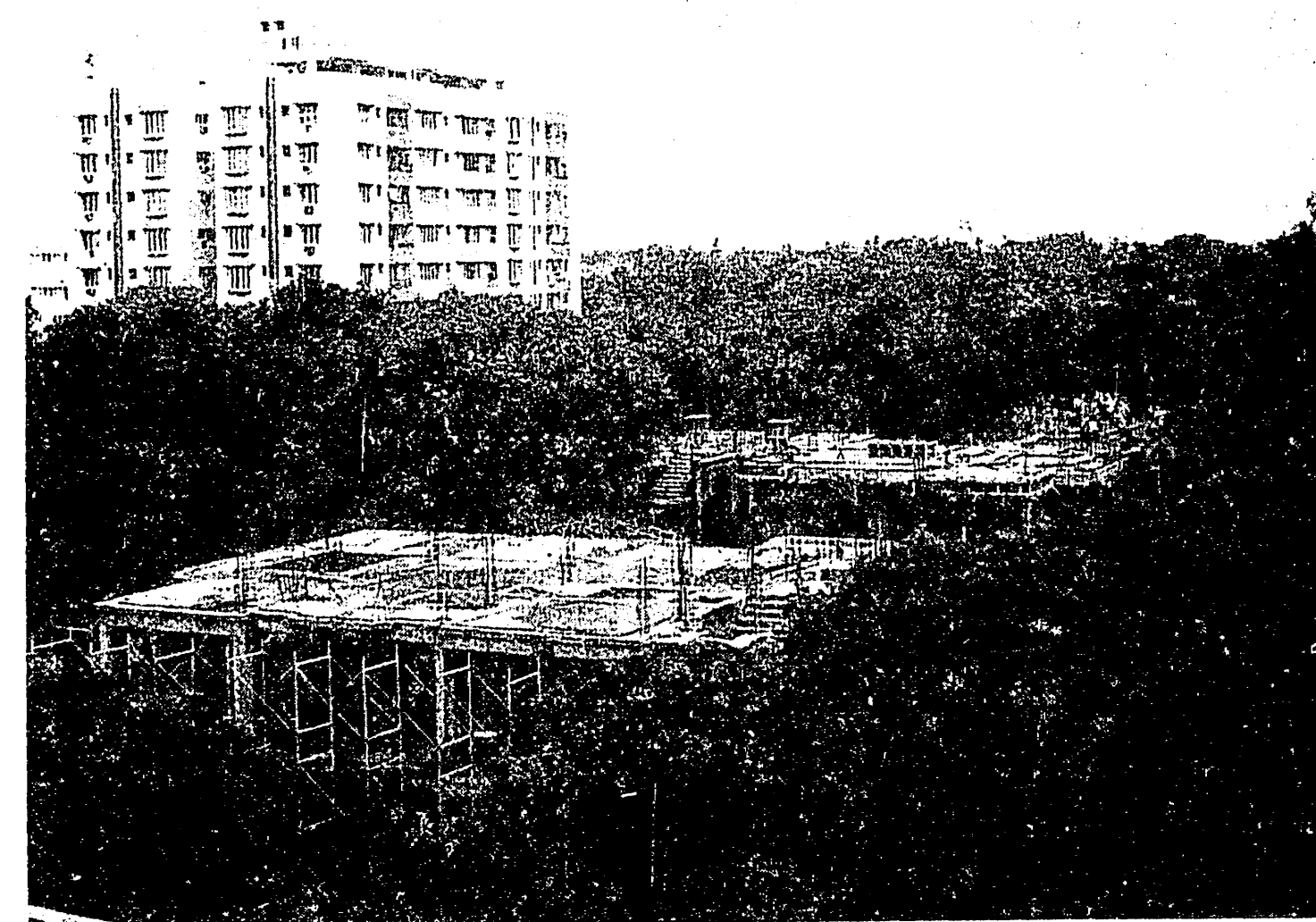


This fortnight's Old and New is something different. They're pictures of the same old "gardens" taken about six months apart. Morison's Gardens in Haddow's Road, Nungambakkam, the scene of both these photographs, belonged to Col W Morison, C.B. between 1816 and 1837. He had entered the Madras Artillery in 1799, was a Lt. Col. and Commissary-General of Madras in 1822 and became a Colonel in 1827.

Somewhere along the way, in the 1940s or thereabouts, the palatial old house in acres of gardens got pulled down and in its place was built a splendid Colonial bungalow with wooden flooring, a magnificent staircase etc, all centred in those same acres. This became the bungalow of the Regional Manager of Grindlay's Bank, now ANZ Grindlay's. On which the work of pulling it down began some months ago.

Now, in record time, a maze of concrete and steel is springing up on those once-beautiful lawns and the site where the bungalow was. A garden and a garden-bungalow are becoming part of ANZ Grindlay's thrust to make Madras a major Grindlay base.

What is being built here with beehive alacrity are a training institute, an EDP Centre, offices for the Bank's Indian Credit Card operations and accommodation for some of its staff. This training institute, it is reported, will eventually serve the Bank's entire Asian operations and any other bank that wants to use its services. Now that may do a world of good for business and up-market employment in Madras, but did it have to be at the cost of filling a magnificent garden with several multistoried buildings? The answer to that lies in such topical phrases as "new business environment" and "new technological environment", all of which have very little to do with THE environment. Fortunately, some concern has been shown for that environment and many of the magnificent shade trees have survived the axe. By not building too tall, the new blocks are integrating with the treescape and homes in a forest-park' atmosphere are being created. It is to be hoped that the trees will continue to survive at least in this fashion. (Photographs: The OLD — SUSHEELA NAIR, the NEW — GOPI)



Temple thief... 59 n.o.

Two fortnights ago I mentioned the enormous increase in temple thefts, leading to the loss of antique jewellery, valuable ikons and other precious pieces of Hindu temple art. Such thefts have been spread all over Tamil Nadu, but have mainly been in the Thanjavur, Tiruchchirappalli, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari Districts. The situation has become so alarming that a special police squad has been formed, with an officer of IG rank heading the team, to solve these crimes and prevent their recurrence.

Fingerprints play an important role in crime detection, especially in the case of thefts. And it is appropriate that an experts' conference on fingerprints recently took place in the ancient temple town of Madurai.

During the two-day conference, many interesting facts emerged. The

Tamil Nadu Police had taken fingerprints from as many as 59 scenes of REPORTED temple crimes in the state. And in all the 59 cases, one set of fingerprints repeatedly appeared! In other words, the same temple thief had

by
Randor Guy

successfully got away with the gods' treasures in every case.

The Tamil Nadu police department has an archives of fingerprints of 'Known Defaulters' (KD's) and convicts. But the fingerprints of '59 n.o.' could not be traced anywhere in these archives! Obviously a new nimble-

fingered man is in the business, successfully evading the cops.

A baffled detective team is doing its best to nab this criminal, who must be describing himself as a master.

FOOTNOTE: The average thief in India has not learnt the sophistication of wearing gloves when at work. But a criminologist of repute once told me that if the gloves used by a thief were found, it would be possible to get his fingerprints! According to him the inside of the gloves would contain the user's fingerprints and thanks to the mind-boggling computerised equipment available today such fingerprints could be developed and photographed.

Talking of computers and crime detection, a famed forensic specialist feels that it won't be long before super-computers are used to 'tap' a KD's mind while he — or she — is planning a crime! —

A new twinkle in T'Nagar

The signs in royal maroon with the diamond symbol rising above the "M" of Mehta like a crown, have been coming up everywhere in the City. They proclaim what most people associate with the Mehta brothers, the younger members of a larger clan of Palanpuri Jains who have made a name for themselves in Madras. The Mehtas are specialists in diamonds.

"The Palanpuri Jains have become famous for dealing in diamonds," explains Tushar Mehta, the eldest of the third generation of the family that was collectively known as 'Bapalals' in memory of its founder, Bapalal Mehta, who came to Madras after World War I. "My Granduncle, Bapalal Mehta, left Palanpur (in Gujarat) and spent some time in Bombay and Calcutta before packing his bags and coming down South. He used his first name, 'Bapalal', to start his business here and that is how the family has been known." Tushar goes on to relate how the Mehta name has now been resurrected.

"Palanpur is a relatively small town. Any businessman who wanted to do

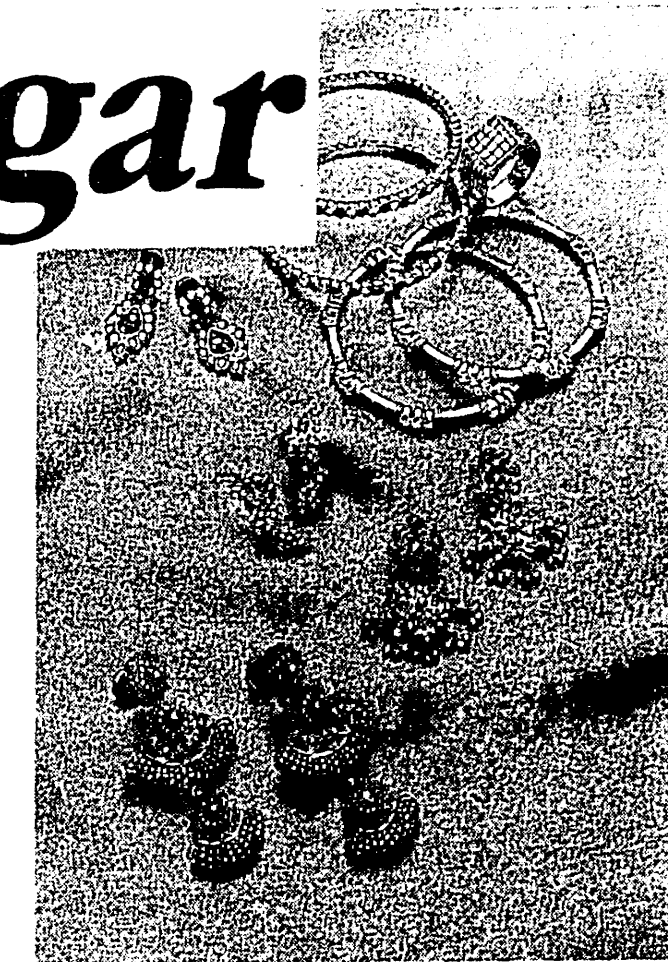
• GEETA DOCTOR

better would head for the bigger cities. For most of us it would be Bombay, which has a large community of Gujaratis, and, of course, many of us are settled there now. But in those days people were different, there was a pioneering spirit. People were in search for new horizons, new pastures. My Granduncle coming down to Madras was part of that spirit. This was long before the Palanpuri Jains became prominent in the 60s and 70s and 80s, when our exports really sort of exploded and the Palanpuri Jains caught the public eye.

"Using the Mehta name as we are doing now and establishing our identity is perhaps part of that same pioneering spirit. The old one was an individual identity, because 'Bapalal' is a first name. In the public mind it meant a family. Like the Veecumsees. Now 'Veecumsee' was a first name, yet the whole family borrowed it. They dropped Shah and used 'Veecumsee' as a last name. Even though we did not do this, people always referred to all of us as the Bapalal family, probably because we were well known in the business, but we have always retained our last name.

"There comes a time in the history, or development or growth of any family when people go their own way. Not that we might have wanted this either directly or indirectly, but when it happens, certain things are thrust upon you, and then you've got to take it how it comes and make the most of it. It's given us an opportunity to establish ourselves under a different name, our name, Mehta Jewellery.

"But the product line will be the same. Diamonds and Jewellery. My father helped build the diamond department at Bapalal's, so we have all that experience with us. Of the four of us, three of us were in the diamond section and that's still more experience to make diamonds the cornerstone of Mehta Jewellery. But we're also specialists in gold jewellery, traditional designs that have been adapted to suit a contemporary style, and silverware. And at a



The traditional, the modern and adaptations of the ancient are part of the collection at newly-opened Mehta Jewellery, run by Surendra Mehta (inset) and his sons, Tushar, Naresh and Abhay. The pictures show, from left to right: gold jewellery... bangles, rings and earrings; gold with diamonds... necklace, earrings and ring; and a traditional gold necklace with earrings and ring.

later stage, as there is so much space available to us here, we might even expand into watches. Jewellers and watches go together. We might also consider some craft. We're open to all sorts of possibilities."

The new shop is taking shape in one of the grand old garden houses that used to be a feature of the gracious life in T'Nagar, not far from Vani Mahal. The whole area is changing rapidly with hotels and highrise, so it's heartening to see that one of the old buildings, rather than being pulled down, is being refurbished in style. Already the main halls upstairs and downstairs are a-glimmer with bowls and salvers and cups and trays in lovely shapes of hammered silver, with gold ornaments shining in their cases along the walls. The ceiling is studded with the new style of brilliant spotlights. And the building is beginning to respond like Cinderella being told there is to be a ball.

"Our craftsmen are amongst the best in the world, absolutely first class," says Tushar, reacting against the criticism made by the early European travellers to India, who, while commenting on the size and splendour of some of the gems, complained that Indian jewellers did not know how to get the maximum out of them. "It's always been, I think, the line that the West has adapted, that we orientals are not as good as them. I think you will agree that, by now, history has proved that we were wearing clothes when they were in skins. However, what did happen is that, somewhere along the way, they got a little ahead of us, while at the same time the East stagnated. Using the knowledge that we had already gained, they made a thorough study of the subject. What was it that made a gem sparkle, what were the factors that could scientifically work out the proportion of the cutting that would enhance a gem and so on. By enumerating these, the pavilion cut, the crown cut and so forth, they were able to establish a standard which they then compared to what was being done in the East. So you could say that the art itself originated in India and the East, but the developments took place in the West. Even today, we go there to study gemmology, for instance, because the facilities for study are better organised. But we are in the process of doing the same thing in India, of trying to set up an institute of jewellery manufacture, design and so on.

"It's not that we do not have designers who can come up with new designs. Our craftsmen can pick up any concept and then Indianise them, because our craftsmen have a very fine

eye for appreciation. But because we already have a rich, established tradition, we tend to copy the old designs."

Tushar Mehta agreed that there was now a need to standardise some of the components that went into the making of jewellery, the clasps and snap boxes for chains, and the screws for earrings, what the jewellers refer to as 'findings'. "These have to be mass produced in India, we need standardisation and we

need quantity. All along, our jewellers have been making one piece at a time by hand. Now we have the Japanese asking us for 5000 chains, all of a certain standard, how on earth are we going to make them by hand? We have to resort to mass production in some areas.

"But as far as Mehta's are concerned, we are basically into custom-made jewellery. Our business is made up of the individual customer, so we

try to cater to individual needs. Our entire thinking and work is oriented to the individual and not so much towards a company or a country."

"Is it better to invest in gold or in diamonds?" Tushar asks quizzically repeating the question. "It depends on how much you're investing and why you're investing. If you want quick encashment, then gold is better, but if you've got lots of money and you want to put it in something small, then, diamonds. A diamond is not as easy to encash as gold. If you have, say, a kilo of gold, you can sell one gram at a time, but if you have one single diamond, you've got to sell the whole thing and you've got to find a buyer for it and that's a little more difficult."

How do you choose a jeweller? I ask and Tushar explains, "You go to a person you trust, or to someone you

(Continued on P6)

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Shrimp join the family — and her industries

Successful R. Usha is positive illustration of what women are achieving in Madras — despite rampant male chauvinism. She is another example of how determination is the real 'gender bender', wherever you are.

A strictly starched cotton saree type, 40-year-old Usha has a whispery voice, button eyes and a diminutive frame. This is where the parallel with countless other middle-class, slightly past-their-prime ladies ends and she joins the ranks of the 'tough cookie legion' — the smart, intelligent, successful and confident women.

"I find that gender is no real obstacle to any kind of venture, business or otherwise," Usha claims. As the chairperson of Pavitra Enterprises, an innovative mini-conglomerate encompassing various industries, from refractory-tile production to water cooler assembly for the Integral Coach Factory, she could talk in such platitudes as the 'subjugated female syndrome', but she refuses to do so. Diplomatically she reiterates that "just as long as you don't rub anyone the wrong way, you're all right whatever your sex".

IN PROFILE by Lisa Durante

Her latest venture is shrimp aquaculture — "It's profitable, it's stimulating and it's also a bit creative". Shrimp are, in her opinion, "tricky creatures which have to be treated with expertise and love". Both of which Usha has in plenty.

Her participation in several specialised courses was the first step towards learning more about this new activity. The Small Industries Services Institute in Guindy, for instance, ran several courses in shrimp farming, processing and preservation earlier this year, which Usha attended religiously. Even though she has a hectic family

SOUTH INDIAN MASALA MUTTON CHOPS

Ingredients
½ kg mutton chops (ribs with flesh)
½ kg onions } cut
½ kg tomatoes } fine
10 pods garlic
2" piece ginger } grind to a
½ lbs pepper } fine
1 lbs cummin seeds (jeera) } paste
1 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon dhania powder
1 teaspoon turmeric powder

Garam Masala
2 or 3 sticks cinnamon
4 cloves
2 cardamoms
½ teaspoon saunf
1 small piece bay leaf (brinjil leaf)
1 sprig curry leaves
1 bunch of coriander leaves
1 bunch of mint leaves (pudina)
½ cup cooking oil

Method
Wash and clean the chops and flatten them lightly. Add the onions, tomatoes, the ground masala, half the bunch of coriander and half the bunch of mint leaves. Mix thoroughly. Add



R. Usha

receptive, studious mood," she recalls those days. "It was tough to begin with, but I am tenacious by nature, so I managed".

The next thing Usha did was answer an ad in *The Hindu* for "enthusiastic small entrepreneurs wanting to attend a month-long, all expenses paid course in Malaysia" on shrimp nurturing and culture. That was exactly the type of area she wanted to get involved with. "I had recently purchased a few acres outside Madras for this specific reason — a hatchery is precisely my cup of tea," she says.

With nine other participants, all small entrepreneurs and fisheries' technocrats selected out of 350 applicants, they set out for Pulau Sayak in Kedah, Malaysia, a couple of months ago. The training workshop, sponsored jointly by the Department of Fisheries and an FAO agency in Madras, was

Quizzin' with Navin

(Quizzmaster NAVIN JAYAKUMAR'S questions are all from the fortnight of July 16-31)

1. Which Basque game was a demonstration sport at the Barcelona Olympics?
2. What is the name of the operation launched by the TN government to rid the 3600 fair price shops of all malpractices and irregularities?
3. What is the Willow of the World?
4. According to CPI Rajya Sabha member N E Balan, how much does one minute of Parliament's proceedings cost our exchequer?
5. Which film star who shot to fame with his portrayal of 'Gabbar Singh' passed away on July 27?
6. The Gandhi cap staged a comeback to *Rashtrapati Bhavan* after an absence of ten years with the new President, Mr. S D Sharma. Who was the last President to wear this cap?
7. Where has the Madras Corporation built a new electric crematorium?
8. Seven countries are in the fray to host the 2000 Olympic Games. Which oil-rich and newly independent country has offered a blank cheque to get the Games?
9. Which was the most sought after event in the Barcelona Games, the demand for seals exceeding even that of the opening ceremony?
10. Kerala has the nation's largest population of unemployed and underemployed. Which is the second state?
11. Name the Medellin drug cartel leader who recently escaped from his luxurious ranch house prison?
12. Who was the recipient of the Akshara Award of AGNI (Awakened Group for National Integration) for his contribution to Tamil writing?
13. How did Iraqi President Saddam Hussein recently celebrate his 1959 escape to Syria after an unsuccessful attempt on his life?
14. Where was the Mathematics Olympiad held at which the six-member Indian team of school-children won one silver and five bronze medals?
15. Where did the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Bishma Narain Singh, inaugurate the first World Spiritual Camp?
16. Name the currency with which Estonia has replaced the Russian rouble?
17. Who is the new Vice Chancellor of the Tamil Nadu Dr MGR Medical University?
18. The Department of Posts recently provided a special one-day cancellation to mark the golden jubilee of a famous Tamil weekly. Which weekly?
19. For what local sport are Indian children being smuggled to Saudi Arabia?
20. Which place in TN is getting ready for the Sangu Theertham, Pushpa Mela, Laksha Deepa Peruvizha conducted once in twelve years and comparable to Kumbakonam's Mahamakam?

(Answers on Page 7)

Posters in search of a record

The Heritage Art Gallery presents an exhibition of poster paintings on Drug Abuse by A M Raj. This young man is relentlessly pursuing an ambition of getting into the *Guinness Book of World Records*. He wants to make the longest painting in the world. But he has not yet found a sponsor to present him cloth bigger than 5 kms by two metres.



Marco Horvat

fitted into the courtyard and seemed a part of the natural setting.

West meets East

Alliance Francaise also recently presented a concert of Gregorian chants and Carnatic vocal music by Marco Horvat. Marco, Italian by birth, is now French. He had given a wonderful lute concert two years ago at the Alliance Francaise. He is married to a French Bharatha Natyam dancer Shakuntala who has some brilliant choreography to her credit.

Marco Horvat is basically an exponent of Western classical music. He

started his career as a lute player, specialising in Renaissance and baroque music. He has spent the last four years learning Carnatic vocal and the *tavil*.

A soft-spoken couple, Shakuntala and Marco are a familiar sight in Madras during the December cultural season.

Dance-drama from Canada

An NRI worth watching is Menaka Thakkar, a Bharatha Natyam and Odissi dancer who has made a name for herself in Canada. She is a serious dancer, a good performer and a dedicated teacher. She will be coming to Madras with her students from Toronto to present a dance-drama.

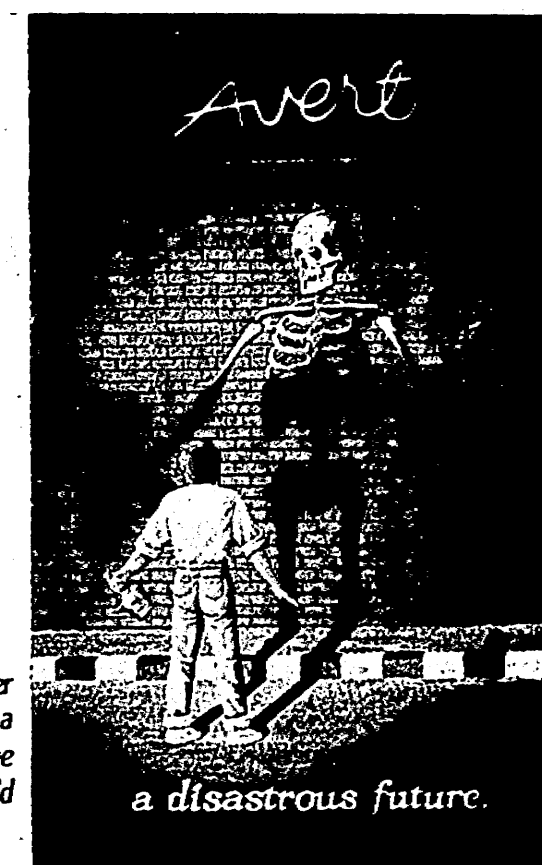
Kalamandir presents this dance-drama at the Music Academy auditorium on August 28th.

V.R. Devika

Taking a break

Devika will be away in the U.K for two months on a Charles Wallace Art Fellowship. Her View From the Wings will resume in November.

— The Editor



An anti-drug abuse poster by A M Raj, one of a collection with which he hopes to set a world record.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Search for life

Now on till August 22nd at the Alliance Francaise Art Gallery: BIOPOP, the engineering of living matter — A science exhibition that will give you the pleasure of understanding biotechnology.

Since the beginning of Earth, billions and billions of invisible living beings have been inhabiting it: microbes. BIOPOP enables visitors to plunge into the life of these organisms: What are microbes and where are they found? How do they live and reproduce? How do they transform vegetal, animal and mineral matter?

How Man has only recently learned to control them, how he seeks to programme them and how they can be used to transform agriculture, health,

alimentation and environment is told in BIOPOP through demonstrations and games and audiovisual and illustrative material.

Peep into the future

On till August 22nd, at the Sakshi Gallery, Khader Nawaz Khan Road: An exhibition of the selected works of Amitava Das, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Ganesh Pyne, Himmat Shah, Jogen Chowdhury, Krishan Khanna, Lakshma Goud, Manjit Bawa, Somnath Hore, K G Subramanyam, Sunil Das and Vivian Sundaram.

This show presents selected works of diverse and varying styles by well-known artists whose solo exhibitions SAKSHI hopes to present in the near future.

Twinkling in T'Nagar

(Continued from P5)

have been told about, someone who inspires a feeling of confidence.

"It's like how do you choose a diamond. Over the years, the evaluation of the diamond has gradually been internationalised and now you know there are four factors that effect its value: its caratweight, colour, cutting and clarity. But then there is one more 'C' — the confidence in your jeweller. That's where the experience comes in."

Tushar Mehta does not elaborate. He doesn't have to. As I go out, it seems as if there is a new twinkle on the signboard outside, a diadem on an old landmark.

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one cup water and salt to taste. Cook till the mutton is tender.

Heat oil in a deep *kara*. Add the *garam masala* and the curry leaves. Now add the cooked chops and cover for a few minutes. Stir occasionally and fry till the gravy is of desired consistency.

Remove from fire. Add the remaining finely chopped coriander and mint leaves. Garnish with onions and tomatoes cut in rings. Serve with *parathas*.

Mrs. P. Raghupathy

CHANNA DAL PARATHAS

2 cups wheat flour (*atta*)
½ cup *channa dal*, cooked and the water removed
1 onion, chopped fine
2 or 3 green chillies chopped fine
Small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
Salt to taste
Oil for frying

Method

Add sufficient water and salt to the *atta* and knead to a soft dough.
Mix the chopped onion, green chillies, coriander leaves, salt and the cooked *channa dal*. Set aside.

Divide the dough into equal balls. Roll them into 6" discs. Place a tablespoon of the filling in the centre. Bring all sides together and cover the filling.

Roll out once more. Fry till golden in a hot griddle.

MANGO CURD SALAD

1 small raw mango, skinned and chopped fine
2 lbs grated coconut
4 green chillies
1 teaspoon cummin seeds
2 cups fresh curd

A bunch of coriander leaves
Salt to taste

For tempering

1 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
1 teaspoon cummin seeds
¼ teaspoon asafoetida powder
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

Method

Grind the mango, grated coconut, green chillies and cummin seeds into a fine paste in a liquidiser, using a little water.

Mix the curd with the ground paste in a serving dish.

Heat the oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add to the salad.

Garnish with coriander leaves, serve cold or at room temperature.

CHOCOLATE CHIFFON CAKE

1½ cups flour
1½ cups sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup oil
1 cup egg whites (approximately 8 eggs)
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
8 egg yolks
½ cup cocoa
½ cup boiling water
2 teaspoons vanilla essence

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Sift the flour with baking powder and salt. Add the sugar, oil, egg yolks, cocoa mixture and vanilla essence.

Beat with a wooden spoon till smooth. Measure egg whites in a cup. Add cream of tartar and whip the whites stiff.

Gently fold in the whipped egg white.

Pour into an ungreased pan and bake in a moderate oven till done. Cool on a wire rack and serve.

Chandra Padmanabhan

The Gabbar laugh is stilled

by
Our Cinema
Correspondent

Amjad Khan, perhaps the finest villain of Indian Cinema in any language, since vintage actor-villain Chandramohan thrilled moviegoers in the Thirties and Forties, is no more. And Indian films won't be the same again.

It was in Ramesh Sippy's Hindi film hit *Sholay* that Amjad Khan played his first major role. And he created film history with his 'Gabbar Singh', the mountain bandit whose 'Arrey Samba' helped make a cult figure of him in the Hindi belt.

As often happens to film artists who hit the bull's eye in their maiden venture, Amjad Khan too suffered the fate of audiences seeing him as Gabbar Singh in every subsequent performance. An example of this closer home is the

I saw the play at the Alliance Francaise where a courtyard has been cleverly converted into a small open air theatre. The sets of the play ingeniously

case of civil servant-turned-film actor J V Somayajulu whose maiden film *Shankarabharanam* catapulted him to instant stardom. When JVS played the title role in Bapu's artistic Telugu film based on the life of the great musical saint Thyagaraja, people saw in Somayajulu not the famed Carnatic composer who sang 'Endharo Mahanu-bhaavulu' but only Sankara Sastry who sang 'Shankarabharanamuuu...!'

The son of Hindi film actor Jayant, Amjad Khan, a man of education and

culture, was a familiar figure in Madras because of his several appearances in locally produced Hindi movies. Madras folk saw him here, there and everywhere in the city, a larger-than-life man of huge bulk, who enjoyed life to the hilt, always laughing, loudest at himself.

Once, this correspondent was in a five-star hotel in Madras waiting for a lift to take him down to the ground-floor. When a lift stopped at the floor and the door opened, there was Amjad Khan occupying almost the entire lift.

Was there space for both of us? This correspondent is by no means slim, but he was pencil-thin compared to AK! Yet he hesitated to step into the lift. Amjad Khan warmly invited him in. Your dubious correspondent told him that he would take the next lift down.

"Come, come! If this lift can take my weight, surely it can take yours too!" AK remarked.

"I am not so sure!" the correspondent replied.

"Come in, Johnny. After all this damned lift is going down, not up... even if it crashes, we'll still reach the ground — but it'll be with a bang!"

And with a Gabbar Singh-like roar of laughter he pulled in his new-found friend and the poor lift creakingly made its downward journey.

During the journey, AK narrated the story about a furniture shop selling beds. Above one bed was a tiny sticker with the legend, "Our beds are discreet. They do not creak!" And his laughter shook the lift.

The man who loved life is gone, but his Gabbar Singh will live for ever. Au Revoir, Amjad Khan!

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Pelota. 2. Operation Clean Up. 3. It is a cricket bat with the autographs of all the players of the nine teams in the 1992 World Cup, collected by K Srikanth and donated by him as the first prize at a Round Table charity programme. 4. Rs. 2000/-. 5. Amjad Khan. 6. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy. 7. Besant Nagar. 8. Uzbekistan (Tashkent). 9. The men's basketball final. 10. Tamil Nadu. 11. Pablo Escobar. 12. D. Jayakanthan. 13. He swam across the River Tigris. 14. Moscow. 15. Port Blair. 16. Crown. 17. Dr B.P. Rajan. 18. Kalki. 19. Camel racing. 20. Thirukazhukunram.

Rendezvous with nouvelle cuisine

'Patio' from the Spanish and it promises the sun, the moon and open skies. The Patio at The Taj Coromandel is an invitation to compliment the chefs on their artistry but induced a compulsion to suggest to our hosts a different way of going about making The Patio popular.

The intimate lounge, the glass-decorated shimmering bar and the impeccably uniformed staff — all in a corner of the Taj basement — are a warm invitation before the dining room beyond. In fact, so comfortable is it there that it takes an effort to pull oneself out of plush settees to move on to the effort of eating. But in the dining room, with its gleaming silver and snow-white napery, eating doesn't take long.

Nor is it any more expensive than at any other 5-Star restaurant. It's just that it seems eating is NOT the main business on the agenda. And for one who loves food that's a little difficult to digest.

The rather slim menu leaves diners effectively with a three-course meal, an array of mousses on offer for each course. Alter-

wasn't quite sure whether the rolls could be used to mop up the plateful of sauce the crab mousse floated in and the THREE sauces which divided the plate when I rendezvous with three fillets, the tiny breast of a quail, half a breast of spring chicken and a sliver of pork. It just didn't seem the type of place to do that.

And so there developed this compulsion to suggest why not offer a six-course table d'hote meal with two or three alternatives for each course, all at a special price, say Rs. 250/-. A cold or warm appetiser, a soup, a fish dish, a meat dish (suitable alternatives for vegetarians), a sweet and a cheese plate, all in the present mood, would combine successfully nouvelle cuisine with an English clubman's — or trencherman's — requirements. And would make The Patio a more inviting place to visit.

natives are cold or warm salads for the first course, bits and pieces of fish, meat or vegetables in a bewildering variety of sauces for the second course, and then you're on dessert. All to the accompaniment of deliciously flavoured, marble-size soft rolls and almost bigger flavoured butter balls. But having forgotten Emily Post a long time ago, I

and the impeccably uniformed staff — all in a corner of the Taj basement — are a warm invitation before the dining room beyond. In fact, so comfortable is it there that it takes an effort to pull oneself out of plush settees to move on to the effort of eating. But in the dining room, with its gleaming silver and snow-white napery, eating doesn't take long.

• by A Special Correspondent

A dream stopped by drawing a champ

Capt. Aspy Adjanina, 'Mr Indian Boxing', was confident that young Venkatesan Devarajan would get a high ranking at the Olympics PROVIDED he got "a good draw". Like many another Indian sportsperson at Barcelona he got the worst possible draw! In the very first round itself he had to meet a world-ranked Cuban, Joel Casamayor.

He had met Cubans in finals twice in tournaments in Cuba during his recent training stint there. In his first outing, Devarajan appeared to be outclassed. In the second, the result was closer. And at the Olympics it was closest of all, Devarajan losing 7-13.

Those who watched the glimpses of that Olympic bout will agree that Devarajan was by no means outclassed by a boxer whose tactics appeared to be to "sting like a bee, and float like a butterfly". More experience would have taught Devarajan how to handle those tactics. But on this, and his other

BY
**SESHAGIRI
RAO**

performances this year, Devarajan, if he does not get discouraged and is, on the other hand, encouraged by the authorities, should figure among the next Asian medallists. And who knows what that can lead to in Atlanta in 1996 when he'll be only 23.

Devarajan, who celebrated his 19th birthday in Barcelona on July 22, was the youngest Indian boxer to qualify for an Olympics when he won the bantam weight gold medal at the second leg of the Asian Olympics qualifying tournament held in Manila earlier this year. That achievement was made possible by his father Venkatesan, who provided him with the video cassettes of all Cassius Clay Mohammed Ali's fights.

Venkatesan, a Dunlop employee, was a body builder. He won the Mr Madras (1972) and Mr South India (1973) titles and participated in ten national body-building championships. He was only too aware of the difficulties body-building faced in India. So he interested his children in boxing. In spite of his wife Surya Prabha's fears that boxing would spoil her children's health and studies, Venkatesan started training Devarajan and his younger brothers early for boxing careers.

At eleven, Devarajan began training for the future his father saw for him. The next year, his father introduced him to Madivanan, a former boxing international and a silver medallist at the Delhi Asiad. Madivanan recommended him to Siva Prakasam and Arasappa, who are involved with a boxing club in George Town. And Siva Prakasam took him under his wing.

Between 1986 and 1989 Devarajan won four golds in the sub-juniors at State level and a gold, a bronze and two silvers at the national level.



V. Devarajan

Though he had a very good academic record, Devarajan had to leave St Gabriel's Higher Secondary School in 1989 when he was in the 12th standard. He had skipped the quarterly exams to participate in the National Subjunior Championships held in Kerala where he won Gold. "The headmaster refused to give permission for him to participate. So we gave sick letters, but on our return he was ready with TC's," says Venkatesan. Both Devarajan and his brother Bhaskar — silver medallist in the 1988 Simla Subjunior championships — were punished. So much for encouragement for sport in Tamil Nadu!

Undaunted, Devarajan went on to win the Gold in his first appearance at the All India National Boxing Championships held in Calcutta in 1990. This performance fetched him a job in Indian Railways. The next year he won the Gold in the All-India Inter-Railway Championships and followed

it up with a bronze at the SAF Games in Sri Lanka.

But Devarajan was dropped from the Indian squad that went to Bangkok to participate in the first leg of the Asian Olympic qualifying boxing championship, as he failed to retain his National title. He lost to Shashi Kapoor of Punjab in the finals in Jamshedpur. However, he was recalled to compete in the second leg in Manila — and there he booked his berth to Barcelona.

Devarajan is basically a 'points' boxer. Footwork, height and reach are his advantage. With his excellent footwork he tries to keep his opponents at a distance and lands solid punches when they least expect it. This helped him to enter two finals in Cuba during his training stint there.

From the Cubans he learned much. His middle-class family have given him all the encouragement they can. If he is to go further, only his employers and the State can help now.

FOOTNOTE: Joel Casamayor, whom Devarajan lost to 7-13 in the first round at the Olympics, went on to win the gold, winning every fight of his by about the same margin. Wouldn't that indicate that, with a better draw, young Devarajan might have gone very much further?

Curtain-raiser for cricket season

While even tiny nations like Peru, Mongolia and Suriname figured in the medals list, the Indian giant has once again been reduced to a pygmy and the powers-that-be in Delhi have already started talking yet again of taking immediate steps to revolutionise Indian sport. It's the same old story of almost stupid, meaningless post-mortems that follows every Indian Olympic campaign. The stark truth is that Indian sport will remain stagnant

by
AJAX

as long as persons who have never kicked or hit a ball, or wielded a racquet, emerge as those in charge of sport.

Anyway, sports fans throughout the country can now heave a sigh of relief as the curtain was brought down on the newsprint-devouring Olympic Games, which virtually blacked out any Indian sports news for nearly a fortnight. Fortunately for Madras city fans, the local sports pages could not have returned to normal at a more appropriate time. The eve of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's prestigious MRF-sponsored annual Buchi Babu Trophy Invitation tournament.

Madras had never before witnessed a cricket festival like the latest edition of the Buchi Babu trophy tournament, which perpetuates the memory of the most distinguished member of the country's most eminent cricketing family that included C Ramaswamy, India's first double international (cricket

and tennis). The size of the field and the number of star-studded outstation teams that responded to the TNCA's invitation underscored the tournament's phenomenal popularity. The outstation entries included State Association teams from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Hyderabad. Air India, Bombay and a Chandigarh side led by former India captain, the ever-green Kapil Dev, completed the line-up of invited teams.

Organised for the first time as a one-day league competition in two groups, with four matches a day until the final stages, the decades-old tournament pulled the crowds as never before. Picked by the TNCA, the Madras teams, SPIC, MRF and Chemplast, the top three City sides, besides the TNCA XI and TN Districts XI gave the fancied outstation combinations a good run for their money.

As a result, as many as 55 T.N. players gained valuable match practice on both turf and matting wickets, in preparation for the Ranji Trophy and other representative matches scheduled for the rest of what is going to be the country's most hectic season ever.

The change in the Buchi Babu trophy format was a blessing for the members of the five T.N. teams. Besides giving them the benefit of match practice against some of the country's top combinations, it also gave them a chance to display their talent on the eve of selections for the Moin-ud-Dowla Cup and Duleep and Deodhar Trophy tournaments. The TNCA, in fact, could see no justification in the criticism expressed in certain quarters that the one-dayers would spoil the chances of youngsters aspiring for State caps.

Sinking Sport

(by The Corner Flag)

The normally reliable *Hindu*, edited by N Ravi, who, incidentally, is President of the Tamil Nadu Swimming Association, seldom errs. And Ravi himself, according to people who know him, never goes out on a limb; he's as solid as you can get, they say.

Then what was *The Hindu*, undoubtedly with Ravi's blessings, doing, alleging foul play at the recent 19th National Junior Aquatics championships held in Thiruvananthapuram? The next day the Swimming Federation of India denied that the time of a Tamil Nadu swimmer had been ALTERED a full second to bring him within the qualifying mark for a Beijing meet which he was astray of by 0.77 seconds. *The Hindu* did not respond to the denial, but was there smoke without fire?

The Corner Flag does not think so. From all he's heard from a host of Tamil Nadu well-wishers in Thiruvananthapuram, this was not the only case where there was much talk at the pool, and away from it, right through the tournaments. And in most of these discussions, Tamil Nadu figured prominently.

As for instance in the case where all these agitated fans allege a Tamil Nadu sub-junior swimmer, swimming while recovering from injury, finished third (in the eyes of the audience), only to find NO results announced that day. The next day he found himself placed fifth!

Is there any hope for Indian sport when every tournament is full of stories like this, of youngsters' enthusiasm blunted, of a select few trying to corner the trips abroad, and officials co-

operating with those who support them the most enthusiastically? Frankly, *The Corner Flag* sees Indian sport as a lost cause, sunk by selfish officials and parents and by the apathy of the talented unable to overcome the machinations of the former.

Vijay's words

With Sunil Gavaskar constantly writing that newspapers should get those who've played the games at the highest level to comment for them, *The Corner Flag* was looking forward to seeing how our own Vijay Amritraj's expert comments in *The Times of India* would differ from the reams filled by Nirmal Shekhar in *The Hindu* on a sport played by just a couple of thousand in India — and not by Shekhar.

In the end, Vijay probably judged his audience right. They probably were more interested in his reports of hosting Amitabh Bachchan, singing in the rain with the umpires, sitting in the Royal Box and sipping champagne in the locker room. All this was undoubtedly of greater interest to the tens of thousands who read *The Time of India* than the few thousands who follow tennis in *The Hindu*.

But if we are looking for expert comment on sport — as Gavaskar believes we should be — do you really need an Amritraj to dish out such stuff? True, only an Amritraj could have got to the Royal Box and hosted Amitabh, but wouldn't Nirmal Shekhar have been as capable of writing of strawberries, the rain and the panties on display — all perhaps of greater interest to many more thousands of *Hindu* readers.

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