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# MADRAS

**METAL CUTTING TOOLS**

## MUSINGS

Vol. II. No. 17

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

December 16 — 31, 1992

# City's Black Buck need saving

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Black Buck, an endangered species in India, is fast dwindling in one of its two preserves in Tamil Nadu, the Guindy National Park, that forest reserve situated smack in the middle of the Madras metropolis. While the Chital (Spotted Deer) in the Park are multiplying, the Black Buck are in need of urgent attention if they are to survive.

The Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS), under the guidance of Dr G U Kurup of the Zoological Survey of India, undertook a deer count by the transect method in 1979

and arrived at 675 Chital and 368 Black Buck, exclusive of those in the IIT area. In 1982, the Forest Department, helped by volunteers from the MNS and other NGOs, undertook a deer count in an area which included the IIT and Raj Bhavan, and arrived at the figures 750 Chital and 400 Black Buck. In 1989, it was 1261 Chital and 220 Black Buck (Chaudhuri '89). And now the Black Buck are reported as being only around 100. This decline of the Black Buck population is attributed to the fact that it is a selective browser. The Chital, however, not

only seems to thrive on anything edible, but is also a prolific breeder.

The Black Buck is an 'Endangered Species' and is found only in Guindy Park and Point Calimere in Tamil Nadu. Its Madras home was notified as a National Park on 4.9.78 under the Wild Life Protection Act of 1972, but has remained subject to a lot of outside interference. There is a temple called Kannikoil and a dharga in it which attract several hundreds of devotees during specific times of the year. Then there are the members of the Madras Riding Club who use the Park.

In 1983, permission was refused to the Riding Club by the then Government. B Vijayaraghavan, IAS (a dedicated environmentalist) was the Secretary for Forests then. Permission was, however, granted again in 1985. No one seemed to realise that horses galloping or trotting would cause disturbance to the deer, especially during the rutting season. V.P. Rajan, Honorary Secretary of the MNC, told this reporter, "We hope the members of the Riding Club will voluntarily surrender the right of using the National Park for riding and use the vast area beyond Velacheri for their recreation. We realise that animals in the large sanctuaries are not disturbed by cars or

game-watchers' elephants, but in a small restricted area like Guindy National Park, fast-moving horses will surely disturb them".

Besides the two species of deer, the Black Buck (*Antelope cervicapra*) and the Spotted Deer (*Axis axis*), the other animals to be seen in the Park are Bonnet Monkeys, Jungle Cats, Small Indian Civet Cats, Jackals, Rabbits, common Mongoose and the Black-naped Hare. A large number of insects, like grasshoppers, spiders, millipedes, centipedes, scorpions, mantid bugs and butterflies are also found. The Park has Monitor Lizards and a variety of snakes. Over 140 species of birds have been recorded. The MNS, which has been monitoring the Park for the past 15 years, undertook a survey of flora in the Park in 1990 and recorded 123 species of plants, of which 29 were herbs, 27 shrubs, 47 trees and 20 climbers.

The Park is part of a much larger, coastal scrub-forest, mainly of dry deciduous scrub, which once extended from the present Theosophical Society-Guindy National Park area up to the Tambaram campus area of Madras Christian College. A major portion of the Raj Bhavan Forest, as it was called after Independence, was surrendered to the Forest Department, and from October '59 came under the control of the State Wild Life Officer. The extent of the forest in the earlier 1950s was about 504 ha. After allotting land for IIT, the Cancer hospital, Children's Park, Guru Nanak College, Snake Park and the three memorials, the National Park is now 270 ha. in extent.



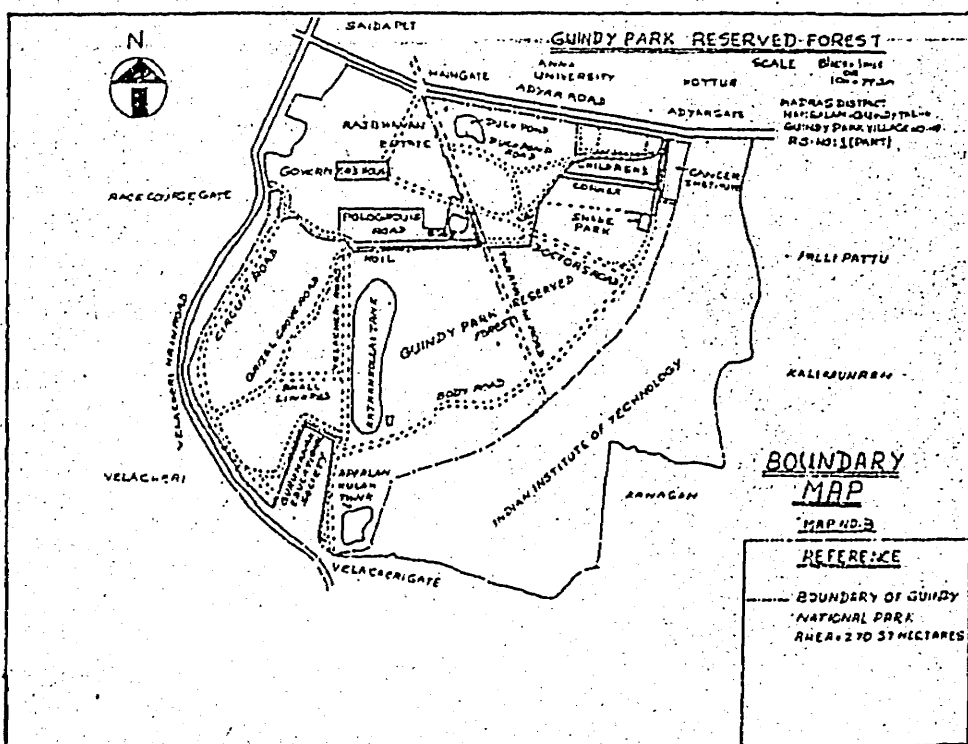
A Black Buck in Guindy National Park. Note the handsome straight but spiralled horns of this fast-vanishing species.

## What the Governor started

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Black Buck were introduced into what is now Guindy National Park in 1924 by the then Governor, Lord Willingdon. Today, they are mainly found in the last two areas of open space in the Park, the old Polo Ground and near the Raj Bhavan quarters. But even there they are coming under pressure from the burgeoning Chital population. New, open grasslands will have to be created for the Black Buck to survive and breed here.

The shiny, black or dark brown and white coated Black Buck grow to about 3 feet in height. The males have straight and pointed spiral horns. And they are amongst the handsomest of deer.



The map shows the extent of Guindy National Park and the bits and pieces gouged out of it. (Courtesy: Guindy Management Plan 1989)

# A TAX ON SNAKES!

(By a Special Correspondent)

Governments can think of more ingenious ways to make money than anyone else. A couple of months ago, the Government wanted to make money from snakes!

A Government Order stated that it would annually collect Rs. 10 per krait and Re. 1 per saw-scaled viper as royalty. No mention was made of the other two poisonous species found in the state, the cobra and the Russell's viper.

The G.O. was obviously aimed at the biggest snake catchers in the state, the Irula tribals who run the Irula Snake Catchers' Industrial Co-operative and extract venom from captured snakes to be supplied for the manufacture of anti-venom. In 1989, the Co-operative had been permitted by the Government to extract venom from 2000 kraits and



A coil of snakes in Snake Park, which has taken a bit out of Guindy National Park. Are these for taxing too? (Photo: S ANWAR)

20,000 saw-scaled vipers for a three-year period, from April that year.

In 1990, the Government suddenly demanded royalty from the Co-operative at a rate of 25 per cent on the gross value of venom sold by the Society. When the Society moved the High Court and got a stay on the order, the Government, after biding its time,

issued the new G.O. The Society has now got another stay.

But is this the way for Government to deal with tribals and life-saving drugs? Aren't there other ways for it to make money? Judging by the attitude to professional tax displayed by some of the biggest professionals, perhaps not.

# Railway stations going private?

(By A Staff Reporter)

It's being tried in a Bombay suburban station. Will the Southern Railways try it in a Madras railway station? And if it does, will there be a business house prepared to accept the offer?

Keeping Bandra station clean has been handed over to a business house. The private firm will give the station a facelift and, thereafter, maintain it for a year, the cleaning and maintenance

cost that the firm will have to incur being in the region of Rs. 15 lakhs. In return, the firm will get exclusive space for its advertisements as well as the rights to book advertising for the Railways in other specified locations in the station.

Western Railways expects to benefit by about Rs. 20 lakhs through this imaginative approach. Any takers in Madras?



# Goodbye, Mr. Chips — and how!

It was a farewell felicitation with a difference on November 26th, Dr C J Nirmal's birthday. That morning he had received a letter from Madras Christian College that his 36-year tenure with the College was over. That evening his old students and friends felicitated him and the MCC presence was conspicuous by its absence.

The Principal's letter only said that Dr Nirmal was no longer the Head of Post-Graduate History. What it left unsaid was that there was to be no superannuation — normally a routine — nor would there be even the courtesy of allowing him to bow out at the end of the academic year. Also left unsaid was the fact that there would be no official felicitation. Which certainly was a curious way for a college, known over the years for the standards of impeccable behaviour it had set, to behave — not even with someone whom it might consider *persona non grata*.

To make up for this rather shabby treatment, Dr Nirmal's old students — several of them the 20 Ph. Ds and 70 M. Phils he had guided over the years — organised the 26th felicitation at which his Institute of Indian and International Studies was inaugurated. What was different about it was that on the dais were three former Vice-Chancellors who between them had headed five universities in the South, a couple of Emerituses from elsewhere and one college Principal. In the audience was another former Vice Chancellor,

a few more college Principals and several History academics. And amongst the messages received were those from a couple of more Vice-Chancellors. Surely there must have been more to even an anti-Establishment 'rebel' for such a galaxy of felicitators to attend, wouldn't you think, MCC?

*The Man From Madras Musings'* interest in the whole affair — other than the journalistic angle referred to — was Dr Nirmal's rather unique contribution to the History syllabus at MCC. Particularly of interest has been the 'History of Madras' option offered nowhere else. Here was one other person in the city deeply interested in it. And it was in the fitness of things that Dr Nirmal had published and released on the occasion a slim volume, *Madras Perspectives*, comprising his three William Meyer Endowment Lectures given at the Madras University in 1985.

Other optional courses introduced at MCC by Dr Nirmal are 'The Press in India', 'The Women's Movement in India', 'The Film in India', 'Indians Abroad', 'The Civil Services in India' and 'Indian Art in the 19th and 20th Centuries'. *MMM* can't think of any other college in Madras paying as much attention to the history of our times in India as the History Department of MCC under Dr Nirmal. It is to be hoped his Institute will play an active role in contemporary affairs without getting sidetracked into ideological issues.

## Saying 'Welcome'

Shakuntala Jagannathan, former GOI Director of Tourism, Bombay, is someone to whom retirement means being busier than ever. To follow her *Hinduism and India: Plan Your Own Holiday*, she's just had published a book on Ganesha. And she keeps in touch with tourism by advising several travel companies now getting more active in welcoming GROUPS to Madras.

The other day, when a Norwegian luxury yacht, flying the Cunard flag, unloaded for a

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

few hours in Madras its entire complement of sixty wealthy round-the-world cruisers, more than half of them from the U.S. and the rest from Scandinavia, as well as its 120-crew, Jagannathan organised for them a reception they're unlikely to forget. At the harbour was the *arathi-and-pottu*, music-and-dance and garland-and-scented-spray welcome she had patented in Bombay. And then she announced that all the holiday-makers had been invited to lunch by one of the first families of Madras. And what a lunch it was!

Held in the back lawns of one of the city's more modern garden houses, it found the hosts gathering the clan together and the guests being overwhelmed with champagne and wines, even beer and coconut water, the last served from the traditional-seller's cart, its scruffiness painted out. With Jagannathan overseeing the decor and the Connemara attending to service arrangements, it was as slick a presentation as any movie director would have wanted.

Would that the Connemara's excellent cuisine was a little more authentically Chettinad! It would also have been nice if there had been less oohing and aching on the part of the rather effusive guests and arrangements made for a little more meaningful interaction with the clan, whose role seemed to be limited to "Would you like something else?". That's a thought for

Jagannathan and the travel agency when they handle another group looking for a bit of the "real India". People, not happenings, are India.

## In brief

\* Bombay's *Femina* magazine, now in a new image where you can't tell the editorial content from the ads and where you find articles like how the sumos "do it", recently picked "the 20 most sensational people in the country". Six well-known photographers were asked to prepare lists of "the boldest and the beautiful" and from their 120-name list, the judges picked the 20 best. And among them were TWO from Madras. One was 'Kamalahaasan' — his name spelt in this now almost forgotten style — and the other, 'Viswanath' Anand. Of 'Kamalahaasan' the magazine said: "Critics equal his histrionics to those of the likes of Robert de Niro and Dustin Hoffman" and the judges said: "Most talented actor ... brilliant and delightful to watch ... Making possible every challenge of our time ... A great actor of our time who understands and knows cinema well." As for Anand, the judges said: "Independent, talented ... His courageous moves on the chessboard have placed him on the world scene." Such words would no doubt have helped 'Kamalahaasan' to get better quicker after his unfortunate accident while 'shooting' recently, and enthused 'Viswanath' to make the moves to get him to move up from an expected January rating of World No. 3 to World No. 2 by January 1994.

\* It was an anniversary as little noticed this year as in years past. The faithful, as usual, celebrated December 3rd as the Feast of St Francis Xavier, but few of them realised that December 3, 1992, was the 450th anniversary of the arrival of this Jesuit in India. The former professor, who fell under the spell of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, and was ordained a priest when he was 31, was 36 when he arrived in Goa. Over the next three years he walked the Fisheries Coast and left behind thousands of Savarirajas and Savarimuthus, not to mention Fernandos and Roches. In 1545, he was in San Thomé to worship at the tomb of Thomas,

who was to be proclaimed the Apostle of India in 1972. Then Francis Xavier set out to follow the Pallava trade routes to the islands of the east and from there went on to preach in Japan and China, where he died in 1552. The next year his incorrupt body was returned to Goa, where it remains. But few elsewhere in India remember that his entire contribution to the Church in India was on Tamil Nadu's Fisheries Coast and that it was that work which contributed much to his canonisation.

\* Another anniversary on the same day was the 250th anniversary of the birth of James Rennell, the 'Father of Indian Geography'. Madras University's Department of Geography, now tying up arrangements for hi-tech Geography studies with the University of Waterloo, Canada, would probably NOT, like all other Geographers in the country, remember this ship's captain's contribution, leave alone the beginnings towards the study of our geography he made in the Palk Strait and the Pamban Channel off Tamil Nadu. Rennell's surveys of these waters made his Madras colleague of those times, Robert Clive, later remember him when he wanted a survey made of Bengal and, in 1767, Rennell was made Surveyor-General of Bengal. In 1777, he returned to England and, there, devoted the rest of his life to Geography. In 1781 he published his famed *Bengal Atlas* and in 1783 his great work of Indian Geography, *Memoir of the Map: a Map of Hindostan*, which included the first map of India to approximate today's boundaryless depiction of the subcontinent. He died in 1830 — and few have remembered since the contribution to Geography of this Madras ship's captain-turned-surveyor. Time Madras and Waterloo did something about that.

\* That we can still smile at ourselves in Tamil Nadu was recently demonstrated by former Attorney General G Ramaswamy. It is reported that he has been describing himself as "Attorney General Resignate". A Supreme Court judge, however, had another view of him. When a Law Ministry official complained that, because Government was delaying nominating a successor to Ramaswamy, "we are topless", Justice M N Venkatachaliah remarked, "What a top!" — *MMM*

## Stadium not enough

The soaring Nehru Stadium is sure to bring a lot of grandeur and respectability to its surroundings. It needs to effect this if top players of the world are not to be given a dismal view of Madras.

Yet, it looks as if the Stadium's rising skyline and its salutary effect may not fall on the not-too-far NH5 and Vyasarpadi eyesores. It cannot, unless the Highways and Rural Works Dept. and the Corporation of Madras also lend a helping hand and clean up the encroachments and filth here. At present it looks as if Vyasarpadi/Perambur do not come within the scope of Madras Vision 2000.

The Chief Minister could also think of building a 3-5 star hotel in the area for the footballers and other sportspersons to live midst us. It will make a world of difference to sport in this area.

**Mangalam Sampath**  
President  
Mahakavi Bharathi Nagar Sangam  
30, V Cross Road  
MKB Nagar, Madras-600 039.

## A special offer to readers on our Mailing List

Readers have from time to time written to us over the past year asking why we do not charge a subscription for *Madras Musings*. They are willing to pay, over a thousand readers have written to us. But we rather like our unique position as a free mailer and still hope to break even on advertising.

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We will give you THREE separate one-centimetre SMALLS over the next three months at an all-inclusive rate of Rs. 100 for the three, if you are on our Mailing List.

And if you are not on our mailing list, but want to get on it, our offer to you is a rate of Rs. 150/- for the three SMALLS between January and March 1993.

We look to you, readers, to build up a lively page of classified SMALLS that will enable *Madras Musings* readers to help each other and *Madras Musings* as well.

**A way to let Madras Musings help you.**

## Who's right?

Re: Mr M Manoharan letter in *MM* Nov. 16-30. P N Sundaresan has indeed written correctly that 1/2 anna is equivalent to 6 paise. Prior to introducing the decimal system, the anna was 12 paise (*Thambidi* in Tamil) and 16 annas make a rupee. The paise we refer to now was, at the introduction, designated as N.P. (New Paise). Now the new has become old, hence we call the present 1 paise = 1/100 Re. You may please rectify the error and give effect to old values (of money) and let history prevail to some extent.

**T Raghava**  
3 Indian Bank Colony  
Vallur Street  
Madras-600 094.

## Save English, thank you

I cannot but take exception to the expression 'Thanking you', just before the subscription in personal and official letters nowadays.

Isn't this incomplete in itself, and hence erroneous? Grandpa will tell us that, when

## OUR READERS WRITE

used in yesteryears, it was rightly followed by the words "I remain... Yours sincerely" etc. The malady is that this latter part is being foolishly omitted even by some Ph.D's in English and PRO's with an impressive array of degrees after their names.

And granted that short-forms and brevity are the order of the day. 'Thank you' (that this manifestation of politeness has lost its meaning is a different matter altogether) should jolly well suffice.

If Amnesty International cannot put the Kibash on this linguistic, perhaps *Madras Musings* can, by disseminating this to the 10,000 homes in reaches.

Please, Mr. Editor, save good old English from mayhem and Sec. 302 IPC!  
**Sanjay Pinto**  
Pinto Villa  
39 LDG Street  
Madras-600 015.

# Chinna China Aasai to soar like a bird

The voice of little Aishwarya and Nageshwar soar sweetly in the air, the words of the song echoing every child's *Chinna China Aasai* to soar like a bird in the sky. Both the children are spastic and, as they sing, their limbs move jerkily to the painful rhythms of physio-therapy, yet the moment caught in the melody of a Tamil pop hit is not so poignant as full of hope. In fact, the bright, cheerful surroundings of the Spastic Society of Tamil Nadu (SPASTN), the scrubbed faces of the children themselves and, above all, the brisk efficiency, technical expertise and enormous dedication of the trained manpower at SPASTN inspire a surge of pragmatic hope.

I meet some of them: spastic children and their parents, the 45-strong professionally trained people who handle them, the in-house staff and the volunteers, and begin to get a glimmering of the enormous reserves of human will, dedication and professionalism which go into the handling of the multi-faceted handicaps of spastic children. The same reserves which have made the miraculous transformation of SPASTN possible, from its inception in 1981 as a five-children strong body to



A spastic child busy with classwork at the SPASTN campus.



A physiotherapy session at the SPASTN campus while parents and students watch and learn.

the 600 spasitics which it handles today, with facilities ranging from formal and special education to speech and physio-therapy, yoga, karate, plays, a multi-faceted vocational training programme for the children, and, at the apex, a vast manpower development programme to train each spastic child to live as fully as his latent potential allows.

The men and women who heed the spastic child's pleas (as expressed in the two poignant posters seen at the Society), "just because we cannot talk, people think we have nothing to say" and "We have a right to live like everyone else", include Mrs. Aloka Guha, the dedicated Director of SPASTN, who details the various training programmes offered by the Society. And then she says, "Statistics are a trifle faceless. Why don't you walk around and meet the people who have been through our training programmes and see them in action?"

graduate diploma course and teaches the boys vocational skills and formal education. "The boys love to learn skills," he says and adds, "Our ultimate aim is to get them placements in the employment market or make them self-employed. We teach them candle-making, painting on gift wrapper paper, reading, writing etc." Selva Kumar, 24, comes to show me his neatly written pages of Tamil and Tables. He paints diyas and pots, while chaty Vjajay, severely speech-impaired, assembles

refills and attends education classes. "Every boy here has talent and skills which he is enthusiastic to work at. In fact, more are keen on learning skills than on education," Lawrence informs me.

Ranjani Ramnath is 27, an M.A. in Literature who has done the one-year diploma in speech therapy. She takes classes at SPASTN for the severely mentally retarded spasitics, and for pre-KG children of normal intelligence. "The 'Normal' spastic children go through the pre-KG academic courses, while to the severely mentally retarded, who are still at the pre-conceptual or picture-reading stage, I teach communication skills so that they can communicate their needs to me," says Ranjani. "The course I took channelises you to look at the spastic child more scientifically, to bring out the best result from the child."

On my way to the physiotherapy room upstairs, I bump into Ayesha Rau, London-educated marine microbiologist. What is she doing at

## • by Pushpa Chari

SPASTN? Part of the Little Theatre group, she conducts workshops for the staff at SPASTN, in drama, making soft toys and finger puppets. The staff would, in turn, train the spastic children. She works along with Ayesha and Hans Kaushik, who conduct workshops in terracotta pottery, and Naina Shah who handles art and craft.

In the physiotherapy room it's business as usual, with many children undergoing their daily therapy regimen.

"We have so many plans," says Mrs. Guha, "like a hostel for outstation students attending our courses, cottages for outstation families coming with their spastic charges. But we are chronically short of funds... I think the disabled, who give back so much more than you can ever give them, are the responsibility of the whole of society". And as I leave, thinking of what society will do to help, bright-eyed spastic children wave at me from gym bars and the sounds of *Chinna China Aasai* waft down.

as she ever was! The three of them convulse into laughter. There is so much loving, giving and sharing in this home.

Two years ago, when Mike Pelletier of the USIS proposed to Sujatha, she was in a quandary. She would accept only if her parents were in favour. Their doubts were not for themselves, whether they could cope without their only child, but about her marrying an American. "We had decided long ago that Sujatha should have a life independent of us... as she has now. We are lucky to have Michael in the family; we've gained a son."

Nobody has witnessed the desolation of depression in the home of the Devadosses nor even sensed an atmosphere of imitation and quarrelling heightened by the tensions of handicapped living. Certainly, there must be moments of grief and sorrow, but they are not only kept very private but are also not large enough to get them down. What they do is celebrate life, every day of the year. Sujatha's 'thank you' was an extra-special thanksgiving for that.

WISHING YOU  
A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

**MADRAS**  
MUSINGS



A speech therapy session at the Spastic Society of Tamil Nadu's campus.

Venkata Lakshmi, physiotherapist, is busy with Anuradha, who is doing spinal exercises to strengthen her back muscles. Nageshwar's mother is beaming at her son's progress: "He's got sitting balance now and is trying to read too". All the mothers seem alert; some have attended the parents' training programmes and even the totally illiterate are aware of the progress in their disabled children's condition since coming to SPASTN. Mrs. G Raghunath, 41, mother of a Downs Syndrome child, is doing the P.G. course. According to her, the course is helping her to handle her child more constructively. "Already I see an improvement in my child..."



day, then retires to her room after breakfast for her day nurse to get her dressed so that, fresh and glowing, she can take on the rigours of the day.

Despite no movement being possible without physical help, Mahema very recently learned to 'write' with the aid of splints. The world for her opened up further. She resumed her painting, changing her medium from oils to watercolours, even if it takes time to complete each canvas. It has also been exhilarating to put down her thoughts on paper. Words of prose and poetry once again take shape on white sheets of paper.

Mahema has learnt to grasp every slice of life. She loved movies, plays and art exhibitions. Her family has seen to it that she doesn't miss any of them. Thank God for those old faithfuls, the driver who understands the knack of lifting her into the car, the housekeeper who has been with her from her mother's days, the day and night nurses who keep constant vigil over her body so that she may never get bed sores.

Manohar pinches his wife's cheek, playfully. Look at her, he says, as pretty

## • Sabita Radhakrishna

*retinitis pigmentosa*, is near blind. Sujatha now understands the depths of their sacrifice, their intense love for her, in just letting her go. It is no longer soft focus — the picture is clear and sharp, like the professional photographs she takes.

Manohar Devadoss was aware of his ophthalmic debility from boyhood. This only served to sharpen his determination to admire life in all its variegated colours before any veil of darkness covered it. Technical Manager in charge of R&D at Standard Batteries, where he puts in a full day, Manohar returns to his art every evening. Today he confines himself to black and white drawings as vision impairment clouds his understanding of colours. Not for him the nebulous aura of modern art, but precise sharp strokes to create temple *gopurams* and vintage

Away from them, at a considerable distance, Sujatha saw home in a different perspective. She understood that



# How do we clean the Cooum?

When are we going to do something about the Cooum? There is no flow of water out to sea, its entrance to the sea is silted up, waste water is allowed to flow in and rubbish is dumped into it. And this sad state has been made worse by the large number of slums on its banks having little or no sanitary facilities.

To remedy this situation, the city sewerage system needs to be overhauled and the existing practice of leading rain water into the sewerage system should be avoided, as it puts an excess burden on pumps already over-worked pumping out sewage water. Separate storm lines need to be constructed and separate measures taken to drain out rainwater.

do this by constructing a model and undertaking experiments.

It is understood that the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority is already engaged in a Project with a foreign agency to sort out the problems relating to the Cooum. However, it is recommended that a separate agency, such as a Cooum Development Corporation, be set-up to deal with the requirements of the Cooum, obtaining assistance from other government departments such as Forestry, Fisheries, Tourism etc., for the development of parks, fish culture, water sports, water transport etc.

Once the water flows into the Cooum, the next major problem will be to keep it clean. The existence of

slums along the banks of the Cooum does not make it easy to keep the Cooum clean. Hence, the obvious answer is to move the slums the way those round the perimeter of Loyola College were moved to alternative accommodation.

Besides strengthening the City's sewerage system, the flow of effluents from chemical and other industries that exist on the banks on Cooum has also to be stopped. This should be possible with legislation and effective control that ensures that the industries arrange disposal of their effluents or they move away from the Cooum banks.

We should learn a lesson from how the River Thames has been made clean again. When that is done to the Cooum, the river will become an asset and provide a 'Green Area' and 'Living Space' for an overcrowded city.

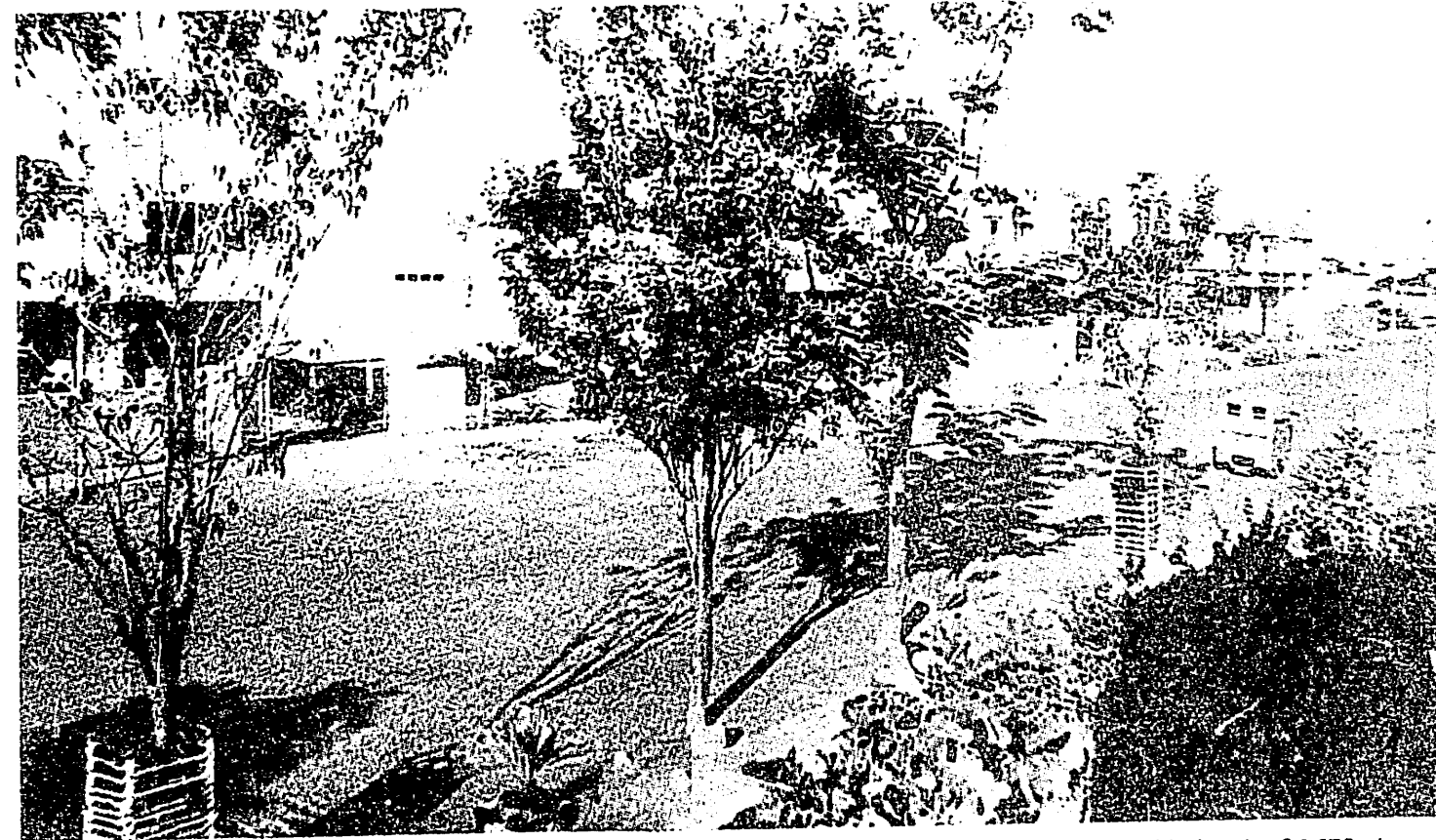
— Commodore  
L.N.C. Jesudason, I.N. (RETD.)

## Advent of a National Stock Exchange

Quite apart from the state of affairs in Ayodhya, which has jolted the very market psyche, two other recent developments on the capital market front are worthy of mention. One is that the concept of a National Stock Exchange of India (NSEI) has finally germinated and the other is the inauguration of the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Even as the rehabilitation of the bourses is commendable, it is the incorporation of the NSEI — which had been put on the backburner for some time now — that calls for debate. The concept of a National Stock Market System in this country is still in a nebulous stage. The primary objective of this system should be, on the one hand, to provide equal opportunity to all investors throughout the country to trade in any security, irrespective of the size of the order, or the broker through whom the order is routed. On the other hand, the system should make it cost-effective for issuer companies to approach the entire mass of investors all over the country simultaneously. Such a system, it is being hoped, will come up at Worli in central Bombay.

The imperative for the NSEI is that it has to have a state-of-the-art infrastructure that facilitates communication. Its entire success, in fact, hinges on its ability to communicate across the



This fortnight's OLD and NEW is something slightly different. Former IGP K R Shehna of M70 Anna Nagar wrote to Madras Musings:

"The picture and article 'New Trees for Old' in Madras Musings November 1-15 struck a chord in me as a long-time lover of trees. Maybe you have seen Harry Miller's reference to my trees — Indian Express July 10, 1976 — Xerox attached."

Harry Miller wrote in his weekly column, 'A Madras Diary', on that occasion: "...our new Inspector-General, Mr E L Stracey... (who) comes from a long line of Conservators of Forests... has given orders that trees are to be planted in the compounds of every police station, where there must be at least one shade tree. Tree-planting is also to be a feature of the new Police Academy in Ashok Nagar, and wherever new police colonies are being constructed."

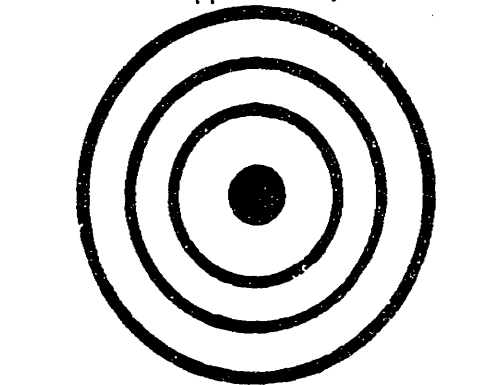
Mr Stracey tells me his Deputy Inspectors-General are enthusiastically cooperating... Mr Shehna, now Additional IG, has given his neighbours at Anna Nagar a splendid example by planting outside his house the four young trees seen in my picture today — and seeing that they are being looked after. And Mr Shehna fondly recalls that two of those trees were Mr Stracey's gift to him on the auspicious occasion of grihapravesham.

Our OLD this fortnight is a copy of K Raghavendra Rao's photograph Harry Miller carried with his column. And our NEW is V S RAGHAVAN's picture of the same trees 16 years later, taken in the last week of November 1992. They've grown handsomely and are a splendid sight for those who pass the former IGP's house. Are there others in Madras who've cared for the trees planted on their roads and ensured they've grown into such splendid specimens? And are the police still carrying out IGP Stracey's orders?!



## Advent of a National Stock Exchange

country, assimilate the several transactions and make prompt settlement. The three-tier system envisaged by the Pherwani Committee, and the support agencies suggested by it, are a National Clearing and Settlement Corporation, a Central Depository Trust to usher scrippless trading and a Securities Facilities Support Corporation to



BULL'S EYE

undertake the onus of establishing and maintaining the network. These institutions will only work if they take the existing exchanges into their complete confidence. Acting the 'Big Brother' and wielding the stick is no strategy. A platform of mutual trust and respect will facilitate the globalisation of the capital market. As of now, however, it expects to start enrolling member brokers by March next. The idea is to enrol institutional brokers. The membership card is expected to be priced at around Rs. 50 lakhs.

Meanwhile, here are some recommendations to be transacted on the existing system for the coming fortnight:

Even so, the NSEI is unlikely to provide the existing Stock Exchanges with any real competition for some time to come. The concept will need time to percolate down to reach popular sentiment. Hence, the existing infrastructure is likely to hold sway for a while.

All said and done, it stands to reason that the dealers who actually transact business with the system are bound to know the system and its needs more intimately than vague public figures who are likely to rule the roost on NSEI boards. Hence, a complementary function between the National System and existing exchanges is of paramount importance. Merely supplanting a concept without considering the merits of existing players will not augur well for the health of the market. The system so conceived must address itself to correcting the gamut of ills that plagues the system with its archaic laws and insider trading. It is hoped that the NSEI will indeed be the harbinger for a progressive market.

Meanwhile, here are some recommendations to be transacted on the existing system for the coming fortnight:

**Sterling Holiday Resorts** (Current Market Price: Rs. 74.00): The company has

declared commendable results in the first half of the current year. It has recently tied up with Resorts Condominium International, USA, the world's largest holiday exchange organisation. To part-finance the expansion plans, Sterling intends to come out with a rights issue in the ratio of 1:2 at a premium of Rs. 20. A turnover projection of Rs. 12 cr and a PAT of Rs. 4 cr is projected for March 1993, which should give an EPS of Rs. 8.90. The current cum-rights price offers an excellent investment opportunity.

**Aban Loyd** (Current Market Price: Rs. 180.00): This Madras-based company engaged in oil drilling services has posted excellent results in the first half of 1992-93 with an all-round improvement. The doubling of rentals for two old rigs and a new addition, which is also placed with ONGC at Bombay High, indicate a bright future ahead. The fundamentals should easily support a price of more than Rs. 200 for March 1993 results.

**Sundaram Abex** (Current Market Price: Rs. 44.00): Engaged in the manufacture of brake linings, the company has reported good results even with reduced demand from the manufacturers of automobiles. A Danish contract worth Rs. 150 cr has been secured for the supply of asbestos-free rolled coil. Fundamentals support a price of Rs. 80 for March 1993 results.

**K. Gopalakrishnan**

# First family of Madras

Who is 'The First Family of Madras'? Protocol may have it differently, but History would have it as the descendants of Beri Thimmappah — if they continue to live in the City. Beri who?

For those rusty on their history, a gentle reminder. Beri Thimmappah was Francis Day's broker (or *dubash*) who helped to negotiate with Vijayanagar's regional governor in 1639 the grant to the East India Company of a five square kilometre of "no man's sand". It was at one end of this spit that Fort St George came up and it was from that 'fort' that Madras grew.

Thimmappah then persuaded dyers, weavers and bleachers from the Nellore area to settle around the fortified warehouse called Fort St George and it was they who manufactured the textiles and cordage the East India Company sought from the Coromandel Coast.

Trying to trace Beri Thimmappah's descendants, I stumbled on the name Appah & Co. And that proved to be the lead to the happy discovery that not only are Beri Thimmappah's family still very much a part of Madras but that, until almost fifty years ago, the family was very much in the limelight, with a road and a park (both of which still exist, though little tended and less known as significant links with the first days of the city) named after a member

of the family, though not the progenitor.

Beri Thimmappah was from Palacole (near Maddepollam in present-day Andhra Pradesh). For his successful negotiations with Damala Venkatadri Nayak on behalf of the East India Company, he was rewarded by the Company with a grant of vast tracts of land in Madras and he held a honoured position in the city, in time becoming its Chief Merchant.

• by Venkatachari Jagannathan

It was Beri Thimmappah and his grandson Ketty Narayanappah Naidu, who travelled together to Madras, who built the ancient Chenna Malleswara and Chenna Kesava Perumal temples in Fort St George's first Indian town, the present High Court campus. The temples were demolished and rebuilt on their present Flower Bazaar site in the 18th Century. But to this day, the descendants of Beri Thimmappah receive the temple honours from these two temples.

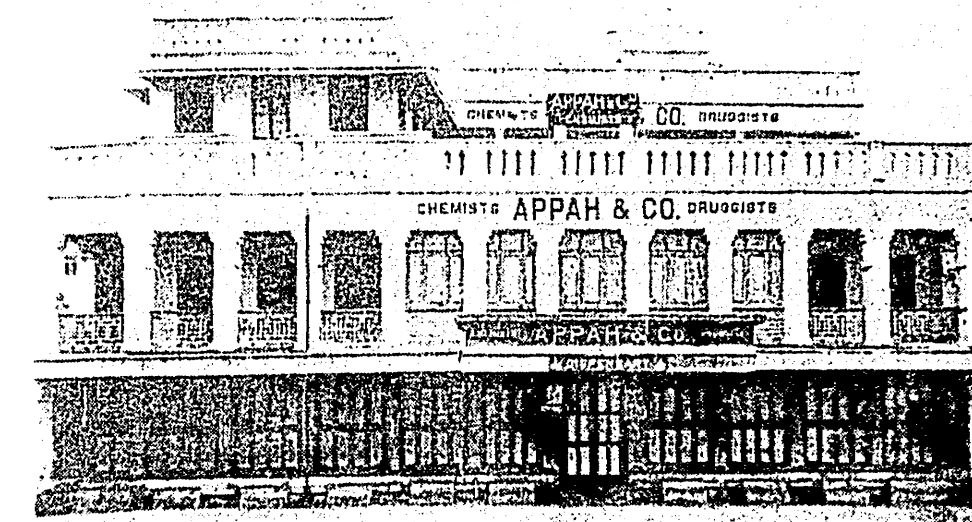
Ketty Thimmappah, the son of Ketty Narayanappah, was of a charitable and philanthropic disposition. He built many choultries that were well

tended by his son Ketty Venkataswami Naidu, a successful businessman. Sadly, Ketty Venkataswami Naidu died young, leaving two sons aged around two at the time. The fatherless boys, Ketty Thimmappah Bashyam Naidu, the elder, and Ketty Narayanappah Naidu, were brought up by their maternal uncle, Goday Parthasarathy Naidu, Shotriemdar of Chintladripet. It was they who started Appah & Co in 1894, the common syllable in their names, 'Appah' — referring to Lord Venkateswara — leading to the firm being named Appah & Co. Initially, the firm dealt in chillies and spices, later they expanded the business and became wholesale commission agents. In 1914, Ketty Narayanappah Naidu started another firm, M/s. K Narayanappah & Co., dealing in groundnuts and other produce.

Of Bashyam Naidu's four sons, the most accomplished was K Venkataswami Naidu, who qualified as a lawyer but became better known as a Municipal Councillor and, later, Mayor of Madras. In 1952, he became the Minister for Hindu Religious Endowments and Registration in Rajaji's Cabinet. He was also the Deputy President of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. And was awarded the Padmashri.

K Venkataramanujulu Naidu, the second son, joined Appah & Co after finishing his formal education. And the third son, K Alavandar Naidu, born in 1902, is the only one of the four still living. It was he who, with Venkatapathy Naidu, his cousin (a son of K Narayanappah Naidu), started M/s. Appah & Co — Pharmaceutical Chemists in 1928. His younger brother, K Parthasarathy Naidu, joined the pharmaceutical firm as a partner after his studies, along with another cousin of theirs, K Jagannatham Naidu. K Narayanappah Naidu's three sons all joined the family firm.

(To be concluded next fortnight)



This is what Appah & Co., Chemists and Druggists, looked like in its heyday. The shop was located at 286 Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Road.

## English as she is spoke

English as she is spoke around the world can often have you howling — with laughter.

The howlers are almost invariably to be found in public notices. And, recently, the European Community's officials were asked to contribute to a compilation of such notices to be called *Mind Your Language*. Perhaps with the thought that it would help prevent the EC's own staff from speaking fractured English.

Some of the best from the collection are:

A Tokyo hotel to its guests: *You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.*

A Paris boutique advertisement: *Dresses for street walking.*

A Swedish furrier's offer: *Coats made for ladies from their own skin.*

A Zurich hotel notice: *Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.*

An Acapulco hotel, reassuring guests about its drinking water: *The*

manager has personally passed all the water served here.

A German campsite warning: *It is strictly forbidden on our camp site that people of different sex, for instance men and women, live together in one tent, unless they are married with each other for that purpose.*

A Roman doctor's announcement: *Specialist in women and other diseases.*

A Tokyo hotel warning to guests: *It was forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person do such thing please not to read notice.*

Notice in a Norwegian cocktail lounge: *Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar.*

At a Bangkok dry cleaner's: *Drop your trousers here for best results.*

A tailor on the Greek island of Rhodes announcing his inability to undertake fresh orders: *Because big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.*

A Paris hotel to its guests: *Please leave your values at the desk.*

An airline's promise at Copenhagen airport: *We will take your bags and send them in all directions.*

A sign in a zoo in Budapest: *Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.*

A Prague tourist agency invitation: *Take one of our horsedrawn city tours. We guarantee no miscarriages.*

Apology in a Budapest hotel: *The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.*

A Hong Kong dentist's advertisement: *Tooth extractions using the latest methods.*

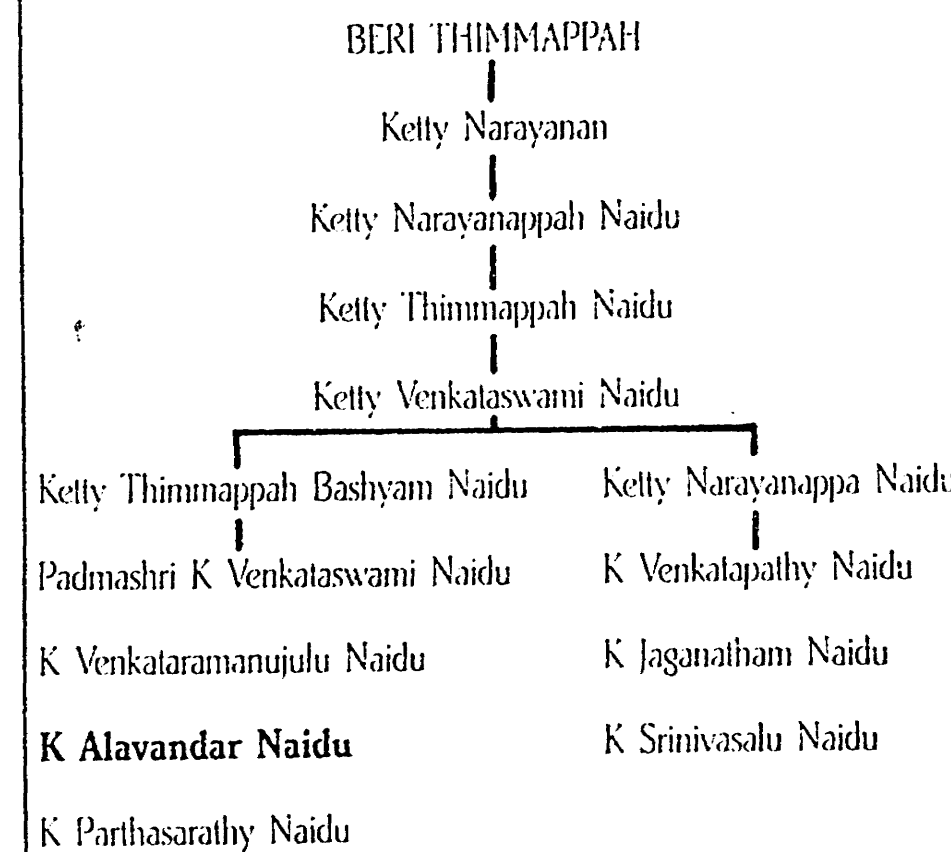
Tourist warning in a temple in Bangkok: *It is forbidden to enter a woman, even a foreigner, if dressed as a man.*

We are sure Madras too must have its share of such howlers. If you come across any, write in and tell us — together with the information where exactly they can be found.



K Alavandar Naidu and a great-great-grandson.

## 'The First Family's' family tree



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IN MAD, MAD MADRAS



# A TRAFFIC JAM TO BE IN

When both the innards of your car and you are fuming once more in the throes of a traffic jam on Gandhinagar's First Main Road, the multi-coloured glass canopy fronted restaurant by the roadside does bring an unwilling smile on your face — it's aptly (and a trifle aggravatingly) called TRAFFIC JAM. Inside, the tasteful decor, done in shades of red, provides a haven away from the hubbub outside. The menu offers a wide variety of a la carte dishes for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

The Hot and Sour Vegetable Soup ideally matches your shaken frame of mind. At Rs. 12/- for a generous serving, it looks both inviting and innocent. Till the first spoonful hits you like a ton of bricks — then what seemed a pleasantly spiced soup gets progressively spicier and hotter until, in desperation, you either reach for the water or the tomato ketchup. Definitely gives the adventurous their money's worth.

The non-vegetarians will probably go into ecstasies over the wide range of Tandoori dishes, especially the chicken. But there are curries to go with the intriguingly named Hops (Rs. 1.50) and Line Hops (Rs. 3.00), the humble *aapam* and *idiapam*, now with suitably

sophisticated names. If you are a vegetarian, try the Malai Kofta (Rs. 15/-) with them — it's not listed on the menu, but ask for it and you'll get two big *koftas* bursting with raisins and topped with cream. The desserts offer only fruit salad and a few icecreams.

On the whole, TRAFFIC JAM serves good, tasty, reasonably-

## FOODS & FADS

priced food and is quite popular judging by the number of couples dining there.

### Abhiramapuram, Ho!

Good ol' Madras always borrows the best from other cities. Just look at C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer Road — every ten yards or so, you'll bang into an eatery, restaurant or fast-food joint (it takes a Bangalorean to explain to us poor country cousins the fine shades of distinction conveyed by these words), but no pubs or bars. The Abhiramapuramvasis, I'm sure, must be fettering their taste-buds. Within a stone's throw of each other, you'll find HOT BREADS, CARNIVAL, CHUTNEY, *mithai*

more unusual results can be sampled here. The Dry Fruits Special Pav Bhaji at Rs. 20/- looks a little costly at first. But wait till you try it. The bite of the *bhaji*, mellowed by the raisins, dates and nuts, is a delectable fusion of sugar and spice. That, in single serving, is almost too much for even two famished teenagers. The *dahi samosa* comes with or without *channa* and, whether plain or embellished, is delicious.

There's also *panneer pav bhaji*, pineapple *pav bhaji*, *aloo chat*, *channa batura* and several *chaats*. The ice-creams provide a counterpoint of texture and flavour which brings out the best in both.

shops, the lot. And the latest addition to the happy family is HOT n' SWEET, combining a *chaat* home and a Dollops parlour.

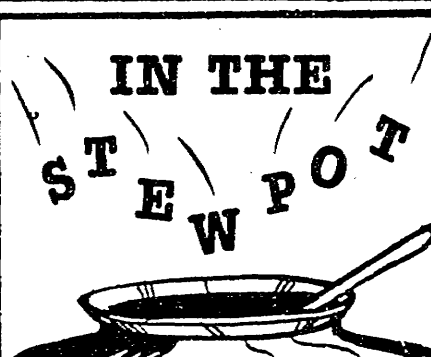
I'd become slightly sick of the inevitable *bhel-puri*, *pani-puri* and *pav-bhaji*, but I was in for a pleasant surprise. The versatile *chaat* elements lend themselves to various permutations and combinations, and some of the

Abhiramapuram ho, then.

Bhavana Kay

grated cheese and bake in a moderate oven for five minutes before serving.

Neela Prabhakar



Remove from heat and gradually add the stock and milk.

Bring to a boil till soup thickens. Add salt, pepper and ajinomoto. Serve in a bowl topped with a dash of fresh cream. Serve hot.

### BAKED CAULIFLOWER

1 medium sized cauliflower  
1 1/2 cups milk  
2 teaspoons flour  
1/4 teaspoon mustard powder  
4 or 5 tbs grated cheese

Chandra Padmanabhan

# Produce your own spawn

## For Oyster Mushrooms

"Spawn" is planting material from which pure mycelia obtain their nutrients. It can be compared to the seed used in vegetable growing. The substrate for spawn-making can be obtained from a variety of materials. Availability and cost of materials are major factors to be considered. Sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*) is commonly used for spawn-making.

### PROCEDURE

**Materials**  
Sorghum grain, calcium carbonate, cotton, glucose bottle, autoclave, mother spawn.

**Method**  
The sorghum grain should be washed and cleaned of impurities. Then they should be half boiled, shade dried and mixed with calcium carbonate. Then fill them into glucose bottles. Plug the bottles with cotton, wrap paper round the mouth of the bottle and fasten with rubber band. Sterilize in an autoclave the bottles with the substrate. When cooled, inoculate each bottle with the mother spawn. Inoculation

should be carried out in a clean cabinet. Mycelia spreads over the substrate from surface downwards. Periodic shaking of the bottle will speed up the spread of the mycelia within the substrate. The time taken for the mycelia to spread completely over the substrate will depend on the quality of genus used, size and quantity of sub-

### • by Rajind Christy

strate and the room temperature of the place where the spawn are being kept for mycelial development. When the mycelia reaches the bottom of the bottle, the spawn is ready for use. The duration for this process is 12-15 days. The quality of good mushroom spawn is mainly determined by the genetic factors of the strain. Generally, vigorous growth, early production, high yield of good quality mushroom are the desired characteristics that growers look

## Madras haute-couture

The problem with being your own dress-designer is that it's hazardous to say the least, what with the high priests and priestesses of fashion waiting to tear you to shreds. That apart, there's the bother of running around picking up a metre of cloth here, a couple of buttons there and hunting for *dupattas* everywhere. Which brings me to the house-cum-shop at 2, Umayal Street, off Taylor's Road in Kilpauk. It's the perfect place for *dupattas* of all types — plain, printed, dots of all sizes and shades, with gold edging, with embroidery.

*Dupattas* provide the final casual look (in spite of the infinite care taken to achieve the precise degree of breeziness) to an otherwise festive ensemble, and are inexpensive here.

The *dupattas* in greatest demand are the plain ones in pastels or darker ethnic shades trimmed with gold. At Rs. 25/- each, every aspirant to *haute couture* is advised to look for them on the first floor of 2 Umayal Street.

Apart from *dupattas*, there are *salwar sets*, too, at reasonable prices and in pleasant designs and shades.

Bhavana Kay

## Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V.Ramanan's questions are all from the fortnight of November 16-30th.)

- Who is the acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court (assumed office on 16.11.92)?
- Who was the Sri Lankan Naval commander killed by a suicide bomber?
- What is the new name adopted by BJP MP Uma Bharathi after she became a *sanyasi*?
- Who killed Superman, aged 54, on November 18th?
- Who is India's new Ambassador to Malaysia?
- Who won this year's Rover's Cup in football?
- Can you name the former Governor of Kerala who passed away in the city recently?
- How was Margaret Thatcher's portrait in Britain's Parliament defaced?
- Who is this year's recipient of 'The G.K. Reddy Memorial Award' for excellence in Journalism?
- Which two European Royal palaces were gutted during the fortnight?
- According to the Finance Ministry, what is the current rate of inflation?
- What are the terminal points of the PTC's recently introduced point-to-point service without a conductor?
- What is the title of the TN Government-produced propaganda film on the evils of drinking?
- Which BBC programme was rapped for praising the LTTE and its activities?
- How much has the Centre sanctioned for cyclone relief in Tamil Nadu?
- What was the name of the first private Russian satellite to promote goodness, especially with the USA?
- Where was the G-15 Summit held recently?
- Who won the Tamil Nadu State Billiards title match held in the city recently?
- Which country pulled out of OPEC after the organisation's inception?
- Which city is going to be the venue for the 30th World Vegetarian Congress?

(Answers on Page 8)

# It's a season of plenty

This Season sees the Andhra brothers' and sisters' teams arriving on the Madras scene with a bang. D Sheshachari and D Raghavachari, the Hyderabad brothers, are singing every day from the 21st to the 27th at different venues in the city. On the 22nd, they have two *Kutchers!* The brothers are very good; I only hope they maintain their top form until the 27th. As for the Priya sisters, HariPriya and Shanmugapriya, they have three big concerts in the next few weeks.

The top star among young Carnatic musicians, Mandolin Srinivas, has eight concerts from the 16th onwards. Among the dancers, Padma Subraman-

Sudharani-Raghupathy with four. The Dhananjays, who have made it a policy not to accept more than one programme during the Season, have relented this year and have two. They will also present their students almost every day during the season.

Violinist Laljudi Jayaraman is fast becoming a living legend. The Indian Foundation for Performing Arts is presenting a project which is a comprehensive multimedia documentary on Laljudi Jayaraman on the 23rd, 24th

by V.R. Devika

jam has the most number of programmes, eight, and she is followed by Chitra Visweswaran with six and

# With Sowcar in the kitchen

Here is news for you, Sowcar Janaki will be your hostess and chef at Coconut Grove, Harrington Road, Madras. I read a newspaper advertisement a few months back. Now that was weird. Who'd imagine a film star in the kitchen of a restaurant, actually sweating it out, cooking for guests!

But it's true: Sowcar Janaki is indeed involved with the Coconut Grove. She not only moves from table to table there, playing the perfect hostess, but she also cooks. And she likes it too. For, as she says, "Food preparation is extremely creative, perhaps even more creative than acting. Here, unlike the movies, where the camera remains my audience for a long time (movies: take time to be screened), I am able to judge the quality of my cooking by the expressions on the faces of my customers. You see, the response is immediate".

Sowcar Janaki admits to having been fond of good food ever since she can remember. As the daughter of a mother who had always been adept at cooking, she not only learnt to eat good food, she also learnt to cook it well. This had, in fact, created a lot of problems for her during her acting days. Being a connoisseur of good food, she had, on many an occasion, to make-do with ice creams and fruit rather than compromise with the unpalatable food often served on location. Again, whenever the necessary cooking facilities were available, she had always gone ahead and done the cooking, much to the delight of co-artists and others in the unit.

"I have not entered the culinary field by accident; I guess the business



Sowcar Janaki the talented Chef.

of food has always been at the back of my mind," she says, and, recollects, "Long back, while my sister Krishna Kumari (also an actress) and I used to sit and ponder about the highly uncertain world of films, this is how we used to console ourselves: 'So what, if it is not films, it will be food', we'd say".

### • by DHANYA GOPINATH

At the Coconut Grove, where she has taken over the management and catering, she can be seen on a long call-sheet from 8:30 in the morning to well past midnight. There are enough cooks, but the Chef and Hostess personally prepares more than 15 dishes — vegetarian and non-vegetarian — on any day. The hot favourites are the *aapams*,

the egg *masala*, the *kummu kari* and, of course, the *meen kolambu*, which is called the 'Sowcar Special'. The curry of the day keeps changing from day-to-day, according to her fancy.

When she's not talking about the Malabar, Chelitinad, Godavari, Coorg and Konkani cuisines, she's ready to talk films. The actress who enthralled viewers with such brilliant performances as the District Collector in *Iru Koodukal*, the mother/daughter in *Kavya Kalai* and that of a crooner in *Puthia Paravai*, says that there is not a single role that she has not played. "My film career has been wonderful. I have been directed by or made films with L V Prasad, Bhim Singh, S S Vasan, Balachander, T R Sundaram, Meyyappa Chettiar, the pillars of the film industry". But, adds the actress, who recently gave a brilliant performance in the Malayalam movie, *Surya Manasam*, with Mammoo as hero and she playing the mother, "as far as movies are concerned, I have more or less called it quits. I have arrived in the food business and I am determined to make a success of it".

Sowcar, as she is popularly known ever since her first movie, *Sowcar*, is articulate, poised and pleasantly attentive, in short, the perfect hostess. She's also a good cook. But what makes this well-preserved actress, who reached the heights of success the hard way, continue to be a success, even in a field so different from films, is the fact she so obviously enjoys whatever she's doing. Confident that the way to a guest's heart is through his or her stomach, she wholeheartedly enjoys doing just that at the Coconut Grove.



Sowcar Janaki the friendly Hostess. (Photos: V S RAGHAVAN)



Mandolin Srinivas (Photo: S. ANWAR)

and 25th of December at the Narada Gana Sabha hall. A book of Laljudi's compositions and an audio cassette of a live concert of his will be released on this occasion.

At Thiruvanniyur, Kalakshetra provides its annual dance-drama experience in its aesthetic auditorium. *Gita Govindam* is being revived and the Kathakali *Bali Vijayam* is scheduled for the 28th.

On January 4th, Chandralekha presents her production *Shri* at the Krishna Gana Sabha. Here is an opportunity for those who have not already seen it to catch up with it. Chandralekha's group choreography presentation of *Angika*, *Prana* and *Shri* won her the Dance Umbrella/Time Out London performance award for 1992.

The outsiders who should not be missed are Sonal Mansingh giving an Odissi performance, Biju Maharaj and his students presenting Kathak and Darshana Jhaveri, Manipuri, on the 26th at the Bharath Kalachar.

Of course, dance lovers will go to the Krishna Gana Sabha for the morning Nalya Kala conference and music lovers will be seen at the Music Academy. It is when they meet in between in other places over hot *bonda*, *pongal* and coffee that the cultural season of Madras really comes alive.

### A magic concert

An extraordinary concert based on an encounter between an Indian group and a French one took place at the Music Academy recently. The hall was packed, many perhaps attracted by the fact that the star *tabla* wizard Zakir Hussain was billed.

It did not take long for the Zakir Hussain fans to leave the hall, as he was very subdued and only provided accompaniment to the singing. And the serious, heavy 17th and 18th Century European music and the pure notes of classical Hindustani music sent the lovers of jazzy music out. Those who remained were treated to some wonderful, pure music from France and North India, played on a beautifully lit, mikelless stage.

It was admirable the way the artists decided not to use amplification. It takes great courage for an artist to do so, particularly in such a large auditorium as the Music Academy hall. They must have had tremendous confidence in themselves for such a feat. Without microphones jutting in front of them; the musicians presented a very pretty picture and made the audience keep as quiet as they could, barring the occasional noises the chairs made when someone shifted, or a child cried or when someone coughed. The atmosphere was completely dignified and the concert almost surrealistic in its magic.

Sulochana Brihaspathi, of course, stole show with her Hindustani singing. The nuances and flexions in her singing were truly amazing. *The Midnight Raga Darbar* was particularly splendid in its elaboration.

The concert, sponsored by the ICCR and the Alliance Francaise, was dedicated to vocal music. The rich tone of French soprano Veronique Dietschy

and counter tenor Allain Zaeffel were a magnificent contrast to the soft and soothing *viole de gambe* of Christine Plubeau and the organ of Amald Purnir.

The only irritating aspect of the performance was a photographer who kept standing up in front of the audience and clicking mercilessly away, his popping flash bulbs distracting both musicians and the audience. The *sarangi* player, Sultan Khan, kept looking around for a reprieve, but no one would tell the photographer to sit down and not use the flash.

### Many similarities

The ICCR has been treating Madras to some excellent performances of late. The Chinese Shandong Peking Opera Theatre's performance at the Kamaraj Hall was brilliant. It cleverly and profusely used acrobatics, balancing acts, music, dance and elaborate make-up and costumes in a performance that was a fine example of total theatre. And what the Chinese displayed seemed very close to South Indian cultural expression. The make-up was very similar to that of Therukoothu and Kathakali, the music was very like the Chendai and Elahalam of Kerala and the humour resembled the Koothu. With the dialogue being translated into English and projected on a screen by the side of the stage, the performance became very real to us in the audience. Props and masks quickly assembled gave us a glimpse of the grandeur of fairy tales of China.

Sadly, the ICCR is not planning any programmes in December and January. They find it difficult to find a venue in Madras at this time of the year, what with the profusion of classical music and dance performances in the city.

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# Here's where snooker began

CLIVE GAMMON and photographer PHILIP DUNN of The Mail on Sunday's YOU Magazine (a popular part of the London tabloid scene) thought it worthwhile to come to Ooty earlier this year to see for themselves where the game of **SNOOKER** began. Here are some excerpts from their spread in the magazine. That in typical London tabloid style they exceeded the bounds of good taste was sad ... and much of that is excluded from what follows.

So this, I thought, was where it had all started, in a room that was harshly white, very masculine. Where the monstrous head of an Indian water buffalo, flanked by the skulls of lesser beasts, glowered down at you. And where immortalised in steel engravings, the Scots still charged at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir and the Welsh forever held firm at Rorke's Drift.

I felt as if I'd slipped into a time warp. This clubland in the days of the Raj in the late 19th Century. At any moment Col Harry Flashman, VC, twisting his moustaches quizzically, would stroll into the room and walk



Neville Chamberlain — Not THE Neville but the Chamberlain who 'invented' snooker up to the billiard table that dominated it, a table as sleek, as greenly perfect as any that will be seen at the ... World Championships...

I'd come at last, you see, to the holy ground, the billiard room of the

Ooty Club — the 'snooty Ooty', as some call it — where the game of snooker was created in 1875 by a Captain Neville Chamberlain (no relation), an officer in the Indian Army.

This was in the little town of Ooty ... Colonial Brits first discovered it in 1821 ... "A perfect galaxy of light and loveliness," wrote Sir Richard Burton of hills that were green and cool as Devon's. They built cottages, planted hollyhocks and bestowed names like the Wenlock Downs, the Lovedale Valley, Glen Morgan. And, of course, they established a club. The Ooty Club.

And then, after India's independence in 1948, most of them went away again. But the Ooty Club continued to flourish, still flourishes. And on the eve of this year's World Championships it seemed a neat idea to investigate at first hand the story of how the game of snooker had begun there.

... The project seemed feasible enough and it began with checking in



'Gale-Force' Gowder, champion of the Nilgiris, visits the Ooty Club — where snooker was invented.

at Ooty's Savoy Hotel, founded, of course, back in 1829. It seemed convenient — it was just a few hundred yards from the Ooty Club.

But it might have been a few hundred miles as it turned out. Because ... a polite request to examine and perhaps even photograph the Club's historic billiard room was met with the blunt (No) ...

... It seemed a good idea, for the moment, to retreat from the club and look at the little town of Ooty itself ...

And straight away it was plain that while the game might have been invented at the Ooty Club, it had put down strong roots elsewhere in the town. There were more snooker hang-outs in Ooty than you could put away portions of chicken vindaloo...

The Lawley Institute had none of the snobbery of the Ooty Club ... and it was there, almost immediately, that I encountered one of Ooty's all-time snooker greats, Andu Gowder, 18 times champion of the Nilgiri Hills region, 55 now but still a power, whose slam-bang style, demonstrated at the Lawley, had him immediately renamed 'Gale-Force' Gowder ...

By now it was clear that a ... demonstration by the old master, Gale-Force ... to take place at the Ooty Club, naturally, (would be perfect)...

The prospects of that happening were not immediately promising... But... Rasik D Vadera, the president of the Ooty Club ... was in town. And so we ... brought out our best suits. ... We wore club ties. We presented ourselves to the president. And it worked, seemingly. He would call a board meeting, he said, to consider our request. And we should reapply next morning.

... In the end he graciously granted us permission to visit the club. We said nothing, I have to confess, about bringing Gale-Force ... but we arranged for (him) to slip in later.

First, though, would come the serious business of tracking down Captain Chamberlain. Which, in fact, proved extremely easy because there, framed on the wall of the Ooty Club billiard room, was a letter, dated May 9, 1939, from the then 84-year-old Colonel Chamberlain. He'd written from 'The Wilderness', Ascot. Rather irritably, as a matter of fact.

He'd seen a suggestion in *The Field* magazine that snooker had first been played at 'The Shop', otherwise the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. And now the old colonel wanted to set the record straight. The misunderstanding had arisen, he said, because a first-year cadet at Woolwich was known disparagingly as a 'snook' or a 'snooker'. And when a young officer at Ooty had produced a poor shot at the new, as yet unnamed game, somebody said, "Why, you're a regular snooker!" And the name stuck.

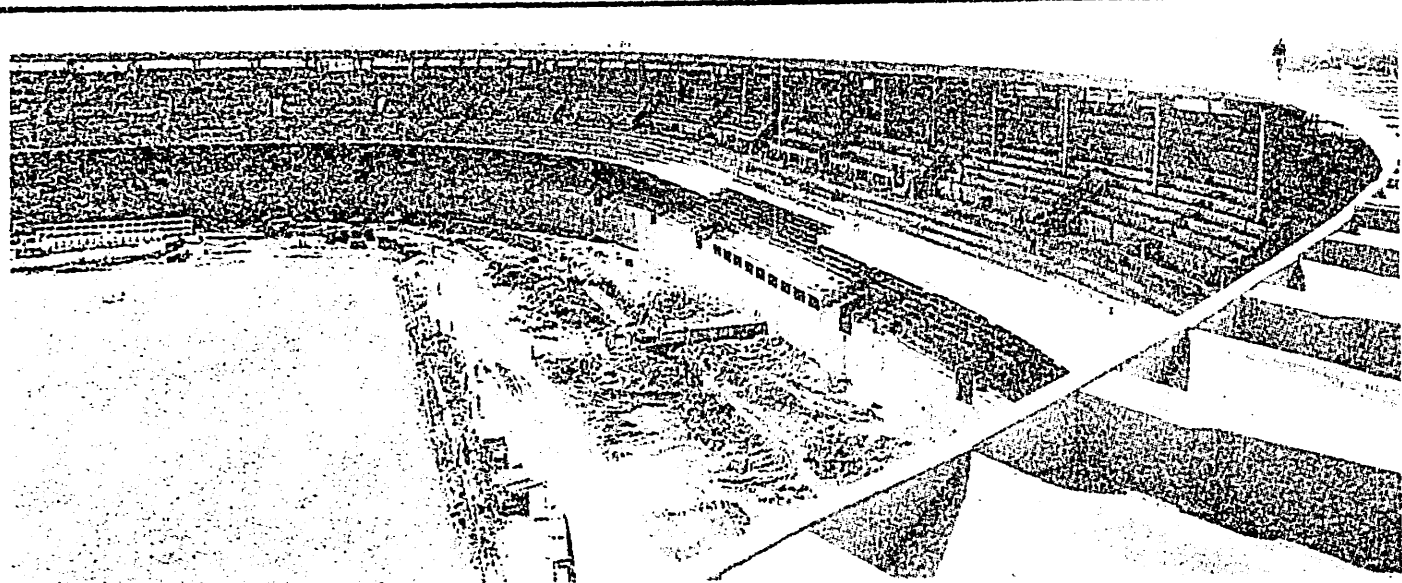
Chamberlain explained how he'd experimented with a form of snooker in Jellabhad in northern India. But it wasn't until he was posted to Ooty that the rules were properly drawn up and regularised. (And aficionados — (at the World Championships) — might like to know how snooker got to England. Some time in the 1880s the Maharaja of Cooch Behar imported a pro from England to coach him at Billiards, one John Roberts, who asked for the rules of the new Indian game. And so it went...)

And then it was time ... to watch (in the historic billiard room) Gale-Force Gowder straighten his turban, squirt down his cue and smash the black home with all the swashbuckling elan that has made him a local hero...

It would have been pleasant (to watch more action) ... But ... who should materialise but ... (the) guardian of the shrine. He thought we'd had enough time, he said, looking askance at the *dhoti* ... So we withdrew in good order ...

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Justice V. Ratnam; 2. Vice Admiral Clancy Fernando; 3. Sanyasini Umashri Bharathi; 4. Doomsday; 5. Vijay Kumar Nambiar; 6. Mohun Bagan beat JCT Mills, 2-0; 7. Jothi Venkatachellum; 8. Somebody added a Adolf Hitler moustache to the portrait; 9. H.K. Dua of *The Hindustan Times*; 10. Hofburg Place in Austria and Windsor Castle in England; 11. Nine per cent; 12. Tambaram to Saidapet; 13. *Neenga Nalla Irukkanum*; 14. 'Inside Story'; 15. Rs. 21.9 crores (later raised to Rs. 50 crores); 16. Resource 500 Sputnik; 17. Dakar, Senegal; 18. Former World No. 2 Subash Agarwal; 19. Ecuador; 20. Madras.



The finishing touches are all that are needed at the new Nehru Stadium before it is ready for the Pongal kick-off.

## Will India match ECC's 'first goal'?

Pongal will give Tamil Nadu sport an unprecedented boost, for on that harvest festival day the modern, multi-storeyed, Rs. 38-crore Nehru Stadium will be inaugurated in traditional manner in the city's People's Park. It is only in the fitness of things that the country's newest stadium of international standard is being inaugurated with the country's lone international football competition, the Nehru Gold Cup international football championship.

India's best-equipped stadium, a showpiece in the city, is a splendid monument dedicated to the State's late Chief Minister M G Ramachandran. What MGR, the actor-turned Chief Minister, could not achieve because of illness, his disciple, Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaraman, has made a reality to the great relief of the Tamil Nadu Football Association and the joy of the State's soccer and athletics fans.

"I will see that the wish for a pucca stadium here is fulfilled in time, and I will be here for the big event, too," MGR had promised while inaugurating the 1984 National Soccer Championships at the old Nehru Stadium. He had just then been

told of the TFA's predicament. The All-India Football Federation had allotted it the 1986 Nehru Cup meet, but it had no modern stadium in which to hold it. MGR's promise made the TFA dream dreams. Unfortunately, an ailing MGR could not honour his word, and the TFA had to humiliatingly decline at the last minute the AIFF's offer.

In the wilderness for long, the TFA was again in 1991 allotted the 1993 Nehru Cup tournament. There had, in the meanwhile, been political changes in the State. After waiting long enough for a new government to settle in, the TFA formed a high power committee, with R Palaniappan as its chairman and C R Viswanathan as its convener, to meet Chief Minister Jayalalitha and plead for the construction of a modern stadium. To the delegation's great joy, the Chief Minister gave the green signal to all its proposals at the meeting on August 20, 1991.

A month later, the Chief Minister convened a meeting of the State's top industrialists and business magnates, who readily assured her of their financial support for the stadium construction. The new government

promptly appointed C R Narayanan and Co. as architects and entrusted the construction to Larsen and Toubro's Engineering Construction Corporation.

A Ramakrishna and S Chandrasekhar, of the L & T Group, recently told the Press that ECC could take justifiable pride in having built the 40,000-seat football-cum-athletics stadium in a world record time of 215 days. They had engaged 4,000 workers to work round the clock in two shifts of 2,000 each. Ramakrishna made special mention of the fact that despite the round-the-clock schedule, the record number of workers, and the outbreak of the monsoon, there was not a single accident, much less a casualty.

Banners inside the stadium proclaim the casualty-free construction of the multi-storeyed stadium as "Larsen and Toubro's first goal". Both ECC and all the men and women who worked on the Stadium certainly deserve to be congratulated on their "first goal". It now only remains to be seen whether India will net a goal in the big tournament starting on Pongal Day.

— AJAX

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