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MUSINGS

Vol. III. No. 5

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

June 16 — 30, 1993



● The 'Basic Personal Transportation' that won an international design prize for Rajesh Mirajkar of Madras.

Make-it-yourself computer

Next on Siva's agenda

(By Our Business Correspondent)

Sterling Computers, Madras, who were instrumental in getting the present computer price war underway, are looking ahead to see how they can keep the momentum going. And what they see is an "assemble your own computer" scheme and a consultancy scheme that will offer anyone planning to buy a computer a 'Second Opinion'. Sales for both are, however, still to be announced.

The first scheme will invite anyone to walk into the Sterling factory, go straight to the assembly line, put together the subassemblies with the help of company staff, pay for the computer and walk away with it. The second scheme, titled 'Second Opinion', will offer exactly that to anyone anywhere

in the country who is planning to buy a computer. Fax us the specifications of the computer you are planning to buy, says Sterling Chief Executive C Sivasankaran, and we'll immediately respond with the price ranges of different companies.

Sterling's big push in the HCL-HP, Wipro dominated computer market began making waves when it took the first step shortly after the last Budget and slashed prices. Working on a five per cent margin, Siva now is the cheapest range of computers available, forcing other manufactures to offer substantial discounts even if they haven't cut prices by much. Using these strategies, Sterling is aiming at a Rs. 120 crore turnover this year. Will it make it?

New cars for our roads

Will Tamil Nadu take the lead?

With the delicensing of the automobile industry, the country awaits the fulfilment of the promises being made by the Big Ones. Hondas and Mitsubishis, Peugeots and Opels and many others are being promised to join the ranks of the Zens, Armadas and Sierras. And all are being promised in the Rs. 2.5-5 lakh range. Meanwhile, there are several small industrialists in Tamil Nadu who might well surprise the Big Ones by jumping the gun and taking a lead over them with some genuinely home-designed, home-made cars. Madras and Coimbatore have, for years, made Tamil Nadu a front-runner in the Indian automobile industry. If the plans of some of the State's smaller entrepreneurs materialise, the state may indeed become THE leader of the Indian automobile industry.

Responding to Minister of State for Industry and Commerce, P J Kurian's call for new ideas and new people in the automobile industry, to develop "fuel efficient or alternate energy vehicles", C N Nachiappan, a fibreglass boatbuilder from Salem, plans to introduce the MIKKI. It will be a three-seater with a rear-mounted 400 cc diesel engine and will be able to touch 60 km/hr, more than enough for urban travel. Nachiappan hopes to manufacture 700 of these vehicles a year and feels he can sell the 40 km/lit car at around Rs. 70,000. From all reports, this would be a car that improves on the ubiquitous 'auto'.

At the other end of the scale, there's B Jayachandran of Coimbatore who's developed a Honda Civic lookalike with a 1500 cc engine. MAYURA, he says, can be made available with diesel or petrol engine at a cost of around Rs. 2.6 lakhs. This five-seater will have a top speed of 130 km/hr and fuel consumption of 17 km/lit with diesel and 12 km/lit with petrol. The pity is that Jayachandran appears to have forgotten the Mini Morris lookalike he had developed in 1965. Such cars — the 'Baby' Austin, the Volkswagen 'Beetle' and the 'Bug' Fiat, for instance — are the cars needed by India. If only the Amalgamations Group could have hung on to the Morris Minor that they put on the roads in the first years after Independence, it would have been a car still going strong — as indeed a few are. But the Birlas put paid to that operation — and India has never looked back to develop that truly people's range of vehicles.

Another Coimbatore entrepreneur, M D Jos, has developed a two-door four-seater, fibreglass hatchback that will run on an electric motor. Pegging running costs at 40 paise/km, including

He's still looking for a manufacturer for this 'Basic Personal Transportation' system. A car of rounded design, based on the autorickshaw principle and size but with four wheels, it uses a rear-mounted diesel engine. The semi-modular body — that could be made of either plastic or metal sheets — has swing-up doors with canvas or plastic for the windows. It has several other unique design features and would prove ideal for personalised city transport. Mirajkar, sadly, has not found someone willing to take his design further.

With car sales expected to increase from the present two lakh units a year to 2.5 lakhs a year over the next few years, the bigger manufacturers are looking at the upper end of the market. But if Tamil Nadu captures the lower end, the annual car sales could increase by very much more in the country. But who is going to give Tamil Nadu's enterprising car designers a push?

by
**Our Motoring
Correspondent**

the cost of replacing batteries every three years, Jos is looking at a price of around Rs. 2 lakhs. He estimates that he can produce 6000 cars a year, but points out that this will be strictly an urban car due to its propulsion system.

And then there's the MEGHA that Rajesh Mirajkar of Madras won an international design prize for in 1991.

What's wrong?

With Madras schools?

(By Our Education
Correspondent)

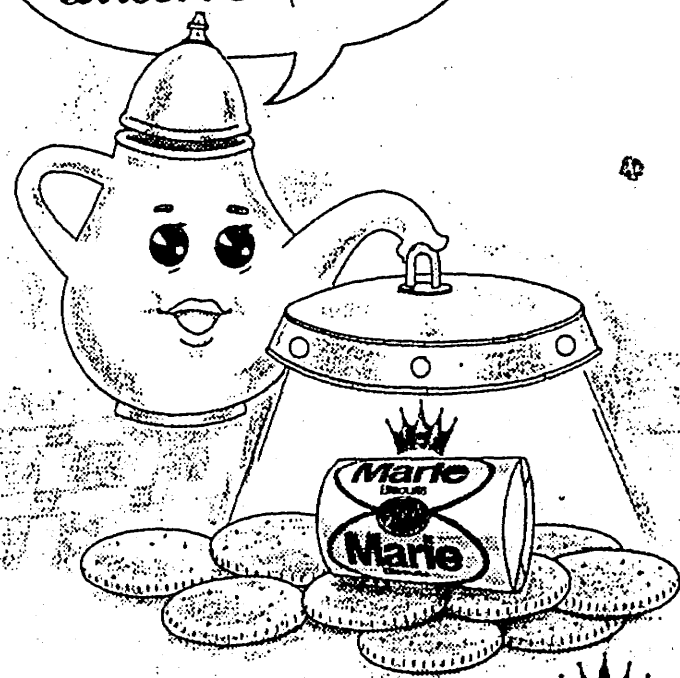
What's wrong with Madras Schools? Have you looked at the Plus Two results carefully? Despite all the advertisements filling the newspapers, the fact is that Madras schools have produced less than half among the 'toppers'. And even those are not from the better known schools in the city.

Not only do standards of education in the City appear to be going down, but there also appear to be a large number of schools in the mofussil — including government schools — capable of doing very much better than Madras schools. It would appear to be time for parents to find out what's going wrong in these Madras schools. Indeed, when some of the city's best known convents and boys schools cannot produce toppers even in a subject like English — which most of their student bodies speak at home — it is time for concern. The first three in English this year were from Melapudur and Salem.

Not counting special language streams, ordinary and advanced, and based on the first three in each of 23 subjects — that is 69 toppers in all — Madras could place only 30 toppers. And the word 'only' is used because 12 of those toppers swept such subjects as Computer Science, Indian Music, Geography and Philosophy. The first and second of those subjects have few facilities in the mofussil and the other two are taught in few institutions in the state. Incidentally, the first three in Philosophy are all from the Corporation Boys Higher Secondary School in Nungambakkam, which rather specialises in this abstruse subject. Here is truly a few cases of flowers blooming in the asphalt jungle.

Of all the Madras schools sending out toppers, the best results have come from the Adarsh group of schools. They have six toppers in such subjects as Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mathematics and Accountancy.

Guess who's come to tea?
Queen Marie!



The Queen among Maries



ART/G/CL/975

When do we get a Madras Urban Arts Commission?

From time to time, *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard that the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA) has plans to set up a body on the lines of an Urban Arts Commission. He's even heard of the MMDA being interested in listings of heritage buildings. But he is also aware that at least a couple of such lists were prepared — including one long before Bentinck's Building was razed — but nothing came of them — and the MMDA did nothing to save Bentinck's Building.

The Man From Madras Musings is reminded of this issue by a recent article that pointed out that Bangalore, which has such a Commission, is finding several of its 'Residency' style

buildings being pulled down. T. Pissar, formerly of the IAS and a former Chairman of Bangalore's Urban Arts Commission, focussed attention on the City's 'Residency' (shouldn't it read Regency?) style buildings in a detailed compilation he published as *The City Beautiful*. Janet Potts in the 1970s also focussed attention on these buildings in her *Beautiful Buildings of Bangalore*.

These works led to the UAC, under Issar's chairmanship, identifying 200 and more buildings, many of them private residences, that should not be pulled down but which, instead, should be restored. Issar then requested Government to pass orders that (1) any building over 50 years old would require

Government sanction before demolition, and (2) a reduction of taxes for buildings built during the 'Residency Period' (1840-1930). The latter was to meet the arguments of owners of private residences who kept pointing out that they were no longer in a position to maintain these historic buildings. One house-owner had pointedly asked, "Would conservationists help us to defray maintenance costs?"

Issar's suggestions were never enforced — and, in the last ten years, at least half of the identified buildings have been pulled down. Does the MMDA think it can do better with its present plans to get a list drawn up of those buildings in Madras which deserve to be 'saved'? If it doesn't, *Madras — The Gracious City*, sponsored by Parry's and published by Affiliated East West, might be the only record left of the splendid buildings of 19th Century Madras, for the buildings themselves could well wind up as so much dust and debris.

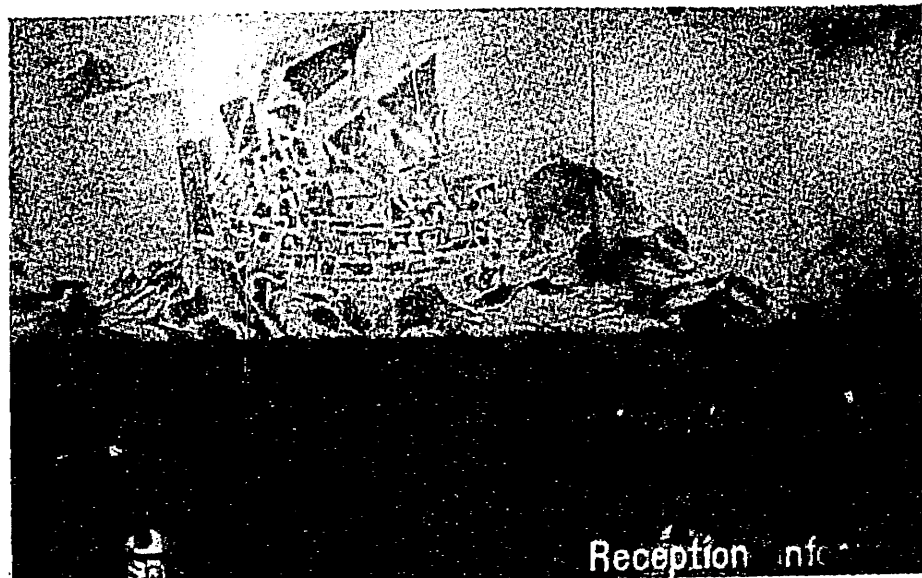
Seafaring Cholas

The latest memoirs of a merchant chief to appear in print are those of A N Haksar, who headed ITC, the tobacco giant that went into a variety of other industries in more recent years. *Bite the Bullet* is an autobiographical recollection of Haksar's 'Thirty four years with ITC', the subtitle of the book. Of particular interest to *The Man From Madras Musings* was Haksar's story of the Welcomgroup and particularly that of 'The Chola, Madras'.

MMM has been often enough in the Chola, but, truth to tell, he has never noticed what Haksar points out in his description. If he had, MMM might have had another answer to that question on what the ships the Cholas sailed in looked like. As it is, Haksar's words that follow are what took MMM to the Chola to take a look-see at Chola ships and get V S Raghavan to take a picture of them:

"The theme for this property was the seafaring dynasty of the Cholas in South India who had spread Indian thought, arts and crafts to countries in the East... As a structure had been purchased, with little that could be done in the architectural design, the translation of the theme was restricted to the interiors. The research done by Martand and Reena Singh showed the use of pillars and columns by the Cholas and indicated the forms of doing up the interiors and the style of furniture. In the Chola, Madras, the guest sees the impact of the pillars in the lobby and cannot but notice the very large mural on the seafaring Cholas which Krishen Khanna, one of the leading artists of international fame, was commissioned to do."

Haksar then goes on to do a bit of hard-sell for the Chola. Next time you visit the Chola, see if you can recognise the following from Haksar's description: "As the guest moves around the hotel, he comes across the Rajarajan and Karikalan (rulers of the dynasty) suites, the Mandapam (conference facility based on the Chola period halls),



Chola seafarers — dominating the lobby of the Chola Sheraton in Madras. (Photo: V.S. RAGHAVAN)

the Sageri (sic) restaurant based on sea-fare of the Cholas, Yali (another restaurant with Chola glass columns), the Dayami (bar designed on the chess motif popular at the time) and a poetic licence in the Mercara (coffee shop based on the capital of Coorg in South India, the home of coffee).

Great emphasis was placed on South Indian food, with the *dosa* in the Mercara becoming famous, the kitchen of India, i.e. foods of India including the vast variety in South India. Not having the freedom of greenfield architecture, compromises had to be made in designing the facilities and locating the services. These were overcome with very highly personalised

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

service, friendliness of the staff and by successfully building the Chola, Madras, image on 'comfortable like home — delightfully unlike it'. The survey conducted confirmed this success and a very loyal clientele was built up. Now if only MMM could find Krishen Khanna, he could perhaps find out where HE got HIS view of the Chola ships from, and thereby answer Simeon Mascarenhas's doubts.

The matchmakers

There are at least three temples in Madras city which have horoscopes of eligible young men and women which may be of help if you are looking for a bride or a groom. *The Man From Madras Musings* retails this information second-hand, but promises to have details before long.

The Mahalingapuram Bhakta Samajam is one of these shrines. Besides its several deities, it has a resident astrologer to help out anyone scanning the list of eligible young men and women that is available with a devotee named Radhakrishnan who is to be regularly found on an evening in the temple.

Then there's the Mallikarwar Temple in Ashok Nagar where the Tamil Nadu Brahmins' Association runs a service where eligible boys and girls can be registered together with their horoscopes. And the Ratnagiri-swar Temple in Besant Nagar is said to have 5000 horoscopes amongst its records to enable devotees to find a suitable bride or groom for their ward.

All three match-making services charge nominal fees for reference to the horoscopes on file and for copying the likely ones. One user is reported as saying that these services are not only a quicker way of finding a suitable partner for one's ward but are also a lot cheaper than advertising.

More on this later...

MMM

A 'bitter-sweet' obsession'

O T Ravindran is an ubiquitous name in the city and further afield. You hear of it in connection with nature, botany and anything even mildly environmentalist, his 'bitter-sweet obsession'. You also hear of it in connection with art, painting and prose.

The passion with which he defends and promotes Nature, beautifully enmeshing it with the range of his artistic talent, is laudable and even a little moving. "I have sacrificed everything, a normal life and all, to dedicate myself to this cause," he claims. (O.T. is referring to his self-imposed bachelorhood!)

His famous watercolours, exhibited at the Smithsonian, at Sotheby's India



Gloriosa Superba drawn by O T Ravindran. Delicate drawings like this by OTR were featured on six Indian stamps — and he hopes they will feature on some American stamps too.

by LISA DURANTE

at the Royal Society for Horticulture in London exclusively depict flowers. "I love 'em," he laughs, "can never get tired of painting them — the colours, the delicate veining..." His rather gruff appearance softens for an instant. "And I'd better put them all down on paper before they get extinct, hadn't I?" So has the Indian Government. It has recently printed a selection of his watercolours on stamps.

Although Kerala-born O.T. has been painting for over twenty years, he will not permit the sale of any of his work. "It is not for sale," he sternly says. "I don't need to sell it when I can simply exhibit it?" This long-standing principle may, however, be revised by popular demand in September 1993 when he will host an exhibition of his botanical watercolours at the Park Sheraton in Madras.

O.T. Ravindran's byline is also well-known. He is regular contributor to *The Hindu's* Sunday magazine and is a writer of regular "green" features for the local press. Before the Madras

— All rubber plants, Ficus and Monstera, add a dash of zest to any interior.
— Less watering is necessary for indoor plants.
— Indoor plants must be regularly rotated with outside plants, and kept in the shade for a while on about three days a week.

When O.T. Ravindran isn't painting, writing or lecturing, he is gardening. "This is really the bottom line of all I do," he says in connection with his activities. "I keep my own garden as well as tend those you see in five-star hotels." Soccer and parapsychology feature as his only two extra-nature



O T Ravindran with a wild Susan's Orchid interests; and "Yes," he claims, "talking gently to your plants is very beneficial for both you and them". So start now, you'd be surprised at the results, according to O.T.

Editor's Note: O.T. now houses a factory and its owner, a Mr. Jain, refuses pictures to be taken of it.

OUR READERS WRITE

Saving monuments

Madras Musings is one of the few magazines which gives serious consideration to our cultural heritage and conservation of monuments and buildings. This subject is very important, considering the decay and destruction of these monuments.

At present we are taking up a research project on TECHNOLOGY OF CONSERVATION OF MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS. It will be very helpful for our research if persons like engineers, architects, archaeologists, artisans etc., who have valuable knowledge of our traditional technologies and materials that can be used in the restoration of monuments, can share their knowledge with us.

Those who are interested in sharing their knowledge with us, may please contact or write to:

Dr M S Mathews
Building Technology and Construction Management Division,
Civil Engineering Department, IIT
Madras-600 036.
Tel. 2351365 [Ext. 3411/3413]
Dr. M S Mathews
Madras 600 036.

Sought by NRMs

My heartiest congratulations on your bringing out the 50th issue. Every fortnight, myself and several NRMs ("Non-Resident Madrasis") in Delhi look forward



On the bridge

We were returning to the village after a tiresome specimen hunting tour of the nearby hills. My friend and I, seeing the welcome sight of a small bridge on the road, decided to rest our tired legs.

The water under the bridge was flowing slowly. We could clearly see the little fishes playing in it. A couple of frogs were sitting on the banks in a posture of meditation. In the centre of the brook a number of black tadpoles moved about around a mossy rock. Groups of four-leaved Marsilea were nodding their fronds in the slow moving water while female dragon flies hovered like helicopters a few inches above the surface. In silence we watched the many cycles of life progressing slowly, purposefully, beneath us.

A bullock cart driver who sat by the side of his hay-laden cart on the road leisurely stood up and approached us. He began to stare at him, he avoided our gaze.

A farmer returning from the field with his two bullocks,

seeing us standing there, left the animals to proceed alone and came towards us. He asked the cart driver something and the latter gave a monosyllabic reply. He took position by the cart driver and began to look searchingly into the water.

Another spectator, a young boy carrying a bundle of green plants (obviously for medicinal purposes), joined us. He silently stood near the two earlier arrivals staring into the brook.

The short rest cheered us and we proceeded towards our temporary abode, a dilapidated hut in the village. Packing the plants we collected took some time. We had to retrace our steps to reach the bus stop.

Even from a distance we could see the crowd on the bridge. About 25 to 30 people were assembled there. All were looking into the water but when asked none could tell us why they were congregating there or what they were searching for.

(A 'middle' by O.T. RAVINDRAN that appeared in THE MAIL. The illustration is by O.T. Mohan)

Into his heart through...

You will be surprised the way I was introduced to *Madras Musings*! It all happened one rainy day last week in Purasawalkam. Waiting for an auto to get back home, I was tempted to buy some crisps in a roadside shop. Believe it or not, the contents were packed on page one and part of page ten of your issue dated September 16-30, 1992. I thoroughly enjoyed reading all the matter made available in the packing. You seem to share so much of my views. I would now very much like to be a regular reader.

Edwin Sundaram
67 Medavakkam Tank Road
Kilpauk, Madras-600 010

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"Serve your elders.
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"Eyes are meant for seeing, don't burn them or bury them, Donate them."

Dr A M Pai
Chairman, Arpan Blood Bank
21 Poonam
R B Mehta Road
Bombay 400 077.

Filling the gap

In *MM* dated April 16-30, the article 'Cho & Co call it a day' reported that a chapter of the Viveka Fine Arts Club came to an end. But I think the pen and the cap of Cho did not come to an end! He may no longer be able to play characters half his age, but hereafter he can act behind the screen by writing scripts and directing youngsters. Moreover, he can give guidance and ideas for stageplays. Cho must help the younger generation in a big way so that the gap he leaves may be filled to a certain extent.

R Srinivasa Prabhu
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Sanjay Pinto
Palo-Villa
39 LDC Street, Madras 600 015

MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

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The grey area of adoption

"Not flesh of my flesh, not bone of my bone, but miraculously my own..." Adoption, symbolic of the supremely human act of compassion, caring and commitment, sharing and hope, has been with man since the beginning of civilisation, sung about in ancient myth, legend and song, from Jason and Paris of Greek mythology to our own Karna, Andral and the beloved Krishna. Yet despite its hoary history stretching to the contemporary scenario of ever larger numbers of Indian parents

demands for babies from children's homes and welfare agencies. The preference for female babies too is on the rise. Once the prospective parents' documents pertaining to family background, medical and financial status are found satisfactory by the Agency, it moves the court for permission for adoption by the specific parents. If permission is granted, social workers begin home studies of the adoptive parents-to-be, gauging their suitability to give a child a wholesome, caring home, counselling them etc. The couple, or the single parent, have to wait a maximum of six months for the Agency to identify a baby to suit their preference. Thereafter, the formal "giving and taking" of the baby and his/her documents take place, which is the final act in the adoption process.

The whole adoption process is child-centred now, with the child's care and future uppermost in mind. Mrs Andral Damodaran, Honorary Secretary, Indian Council of Child Welfare, Tamil Nadu, said that a home, no matter how good, can never replace the familiar one-to-one relationship which a child craves for. She made a strong plea for "Open Adoption", and the right of the adopted child to be told by his adoptive parents, at a suitable time, of his adopted status and his original roots. Of course, at the time of telling him, the greatest emphasis must also be laid on his "specially chosen and loved" status.

(Continued on P6)

by PUSHPA CHARI

wanting to adopt, adoption remains till today shrouded in sentimentality and grey areas of emotional and legal uncertainty.

Is there a clear-cut uniform law of adoption in India? Do the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (1956) and The Guardianship and Ward Act (1890) applicable to Parsis, Christians and Muslims, spell out and cover all aspects of adoption for the benefit of the child? Is every "giving and taking" of the child made impeccably legal? Is there a support system to deal with potential emotional-psychological issues of both adopted child and adoptive parent? And how aware are you and I of the whole process of adoption in India?

The Adoption Awareness Workshop organised recently in Madras by the Adoption wing of The Guild of Service — forerunners in the sponsorship and 'giving' into adoption of children in the city — in conjunction with the Madras School of Social Work sought to answer some of these questions while highlighting the lacunae in the Adoption Act. It suggested remedial in the Adoption Laws. As well as attitudinal changes aimed at making adoption more holistically, emotionally and legally satisfying for the child's mental-emotional-spiritual growth.

The contemporary adoption scenario in India has shown in the past two decades a steep upward rise with "in-family" adoptions giving place to

Primary market has been more than a little off colour lately and issues, both public and rights, have bombed, only to be picked up by financial institutions and mutual funds at massive discounts. A combination of factors have gone to sour matters, with investor confidence hitting a nadir. In fact, most merchant bankers are cautioning their clients to postpone their offerings by a couple of months so that they are not left scouting for buyers.

The extent of the chaos is mind-boggling, considering the momentum this market had shown until some time ago. The last quarter of the year saw the market bustling with activity and the promoters managed to mop-up a whopping Rs. 6,058 cr. which was two-thirds the amount collected in the entire year 1992-93. That's not all. In the year ended March 1993, Rs. 12,629 cr was raised by companies through the rights route!

The frenzy let loose was essentially because of the scrapping of CCI, which saw companies free to fix premiums of their choice. Another reason, perhaps less obvious, was the high interest and bank credit squeeze that forced companies to turn to the market for succor. This was reflected in the increasing shift from debt to the culture of equity. However, the genesis of the bleak sentiment began with companies that went overboard in estimating the size of their premiums. Cases in point



Awaiting the wreckers' hammers and the bulldozer is this old building on NSC Bose Road, by Stringer Street and opposite the Fruit and Flower Market. Delicate wooden tracery and pediments are a feature of the building which is said to have served as a godown of the East India Company in the 1860s. The building was purchased from the British by P Rangiah Chetty,



and his son Subbiah Chetty runs one of the oldest bookshops in the city in it. The building, little changed since the Company days, is now owned by M/s Noor Mahomed & Co, who were purveyors to the Aga Khan at one time. The building is occupied by...&THE OLD... NEW

several tenants of Noor Mahomed & Co, including Hale & Co, one of the oldest firms of chemists in the city. Curiously, the building is topped by a tower and turret on one side alone; has a tower on the other side been pulled down? And there's still the skeleton of a coat-of-arms surmounting the building. But whose is it?

Our NEW is how a tower block with several tenants in shops, offices and apartments, looks today. This T'Nagar block, with elegant stone facading and checkered parapets that are rather distinctive, is dominated by the stairwell that is enclosed in darkened glass panels. Towering above the building, it would appear to be a sleek tower of the times, contrasting with the more ornate towers of an earlier era.

(Photos: Old: RAJIND N CHRISTY; New: V.S. RAGHAVAN)

WHAT NEXT?

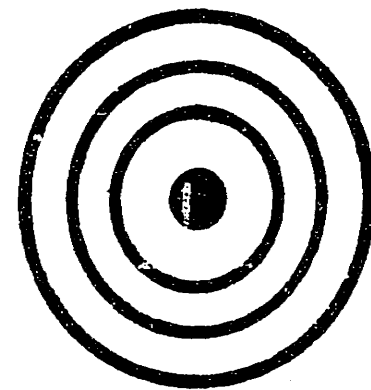
are: Nagarjuna Fertilisers, Torrent Gujarat and Mardia Chemicals, who barely managed to limp through, with promoters resorting to post-issue private placements.

The investors, too, wised-up and stoutly rejected issues that did not rise up to the mark or were seen to be overambitious in their pricing. Merchant bankers, themselves part of the game, gave high price estimates to woo the clients and companies automatically gravitated towards those bankers who could give them a better deal. Both not realising all the while that investors have long memories and seldom forget a company that tries to fleece the public.

Whatever be it, the fact of the matter is that depression has seeped into this segment. However, it is crisis that forces the dawn of a new culture. And this depression is the catharsis for a market caught in the grip of evolution. The various marketing fundas adopted by the companies reflect the changing need of the times.

Talking about these, the case of Ballapur Industries, with its promise of 'safety net', and the Godrej issue, which saw a large young crowd wearing T-shirts with logos emblazoned on them, are only a taste of more to come. Hordes of specialised institutions will inevitably crop up to do the hard selling. We, therefore, counsel investors to stay liquid, as this is a good time to

pick up some good issues that come along. And in the current scenario, you stand a fairly good chance of being one of the lucky allottees. Market savvy often lies in defying the market sentiment. Make resourceful moves now, before the scene hots up again.



BULL'S EYE

Meanwhile, here are three good scrips that have recently opened quote on the bourses:

ICNET (CMP: Rs. 22.75): ICNET Ltd has introduced the Electronic Mail Network in India and is the only company licensed by the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) to do so. Out of the connections between 25 cities, 14 are already operational and the remainder are expected to begin operations in the next couple of months. The company has managed to enlist 100 subscribers and has set itself a target of 6000-7000 subscribers in the first year of operation, viz. 1993-94. The company's targets seem achievable and for Mar 1994 it can post a profit of Rs. 18 cr. This will give an EPS of Rs. 4.8, which will support a price of over Rs. 30.

Innovative Marine Foods (CMP: Rs. 41.00): This company in the lucrative business of quality seafood exports is promoted by The Amalgam Foods Group which has over 15 years of experience in this field. Set up as an IOU, the company also sells 75 per cent of its total production as value-added, cooked, raw marine products using the "individual quick frozen" (IQF) technology and has five foreign sea food companies participating in its equity. There is also technical and marketing agreement with the leaders in the seafood industry worldwide. Only 42 per cent stake is with the public. The company expects a turnover of Rs. 47.51 cr for 1993-94. The resultant EPS of Rs. 4.19 on the equity of Rs. 12.50 cr easily supports a price of Rs. 50. With promoter's proven experience and assured offtake by the collaborators, the scrip presents an excellent investment opportunity. The share will no doubt be a ten-bagger in the long term.

Gee Gee Granites (CMP: Rs. 15.00): The use of granite as a building material has shown an unprecedented rise in the last decade. India has 30 per cent of the world's reserves of granite, but its share in the market is only 9 per cent. Realising the potential, Government has encouraged 100 per cent IOUs in this field. Gee Gee is a recent entrant, with an equity base of Rs. 4.30 cr. It is progressing on the project on schedule. M/s. Gem Granites, the leading exporters of polished granite in India, have provided the company technical and marketing tie-up. The shares traded at around Rs. 15 will yield considerable gains.

K. Gopalakrishnan

The great Builder

Who built those grand Indo-Saracenic buildings that once graced the Madras skyline and which still survive as living monuments to a grander age? The architects are remembered, Robert Chisholm and Henry Irwin are taught. But what of the builders? How many have even heard of that great engineer, architect and contractor of the 19th Century, Dewan Bahadur Thalikonda Namberumal Chetty?

Among the many splendid buildings built by him in Madras are:

- Madras High Court;
- Madras Law College;
- National Bank (now demolished);
- National Art Gallery;
- YMCA, Esplanade;
- Connemara Public Library;
- General Post Office;
- Madras Museum and Theatre; and
- part of the General Hospital

Whether it was Robert Chisholm's Indo-Saracenic style or Henry Irwin's Jaina-Jaipuri or Mughal-Jaipuri designs, Namberumal Chetty built them precisely as they were on their drawing boards. The leading contractor in Madras during the latter half of the 19th Century, he also built many garden houses for the British residents, including homes for the executives of Parry's. These garden houses were painted white, while the government buildings were in red.

Born in 1855, son of T Ramachandra, a leading hardware merchant, whose ancestors had come to Madras from Thanakonda in what is now Andhra Pradesh, Namberumal graduated from the University of Madras. He also became a Sanskrit scholar. Instead of stepping into his father's shoes, Namberumal ventured into the construction business soon after college and his first work was the construction of a drainage system for a slum — Jagannathan Cheri in Chetpet. In the days, when cement was an

unknown material, Namberumal prepared his own plastering mix with jaggery, egg white, kadukkal, neem oil cakes and limestone. This special mix protected the buildings from the elements for years. The special red bricks for his buildings were burnt at his own kiln near the present Pachaiyappa's College.

A man with traditional values, Namberumal never started construction before performing the bhoomi puja. He also made it a rule to receive the first brick from his mother's hands with her blessings. And he would often say, "I am satisfied with two annas out of every rupee I earn as profit; the rest should go to the workers".



Rao Bahadur Namberumal Chetty

As his business prospered, Namberumal acquired scores of acres of land in Madras. He bought Holloway's Gardens — bounded by the river, Casa Major Road and Pantheon Road — and Jarryd's Garden — the Chetpet area upto T B Hospital on Spur Tank Road. At one time he owned over 2000 grounds of land in Madras, much of the area bounded by the river, Pantheon Road, Casa Major Road and the railway line upto about Pachaiyappa's. He owned 99 houses



Crynant, the home of the great builder of Indo-Saracenic Madras.

and refused to buy his 100th, saying it would be unlucky.

In 1905, he decided to shift to Jarryd's Garden from his ancestral house Anand Bhavan in George Town and bought the sprawling mansion Crynant, built on 64 grounds. Crynant had been built in 1858 by a British officer. Anand Bhavan, in time, became Mysore Café. When he shifted to his new home the entire area came to be known as 'Chettiar Pettai' and Chetpet was the British corruption. He built many palatial garden homes for the British in this area and even now some of them survive on Harrington Road.

Though he deserves to be remembered for the handsome buildings he built, there is another reason for Namberumal to have a permanent niche in Madras history. That is because of his association with the mathematician Ramanujam. It was at Crynant that the mathematical genius stayed on his return from London. The Dewan Bahadur treated Ramanujam as his third son and when the ailing Ramanujam felt Crynant was an ill omen, as it had the word 'cry' in its name, Namberumal made available another of his bungalows, Gomitra, to Ramanujam, and there, across the road from Crynant, the mathematician breathed his last.

Not confining his activities to Madras, Namberumal started the first timber saw mill in South India at Trichur. In the old princely state of

Cochin, he built the buildings of Maharaja's College. Closer home, he ran a monorail service from Avadi to Thiruvallur meant only for 'lyengars' to reach an ancient temple there. Later, he ran a double line from George Town to Thiruvallur and all the earnings from that service were ploughed back into

by Venkatachari Jagannathan

the company. It was his avowed principle not to indulge in money lending or to insure his life.

An ardent horse lover, Namberumal galloped to his construction sites or drove his own chaise to them. He was an expert in ashwa sastra and his expertise in selecting the best horse was utilised by his European friends. His stables, near the brick kiln, always had

20-25 horses and whenever a new shipment of horses arrived in Madras from Persia, Namberumal always got the first choice. As horses gave way to cars, Namberumal also began making the change. In 1901, he became the first Indian in the Madras Presidency to own a car — a French Dideon. Its number was MC-3. He later added a Dorak to his garage.

The Government honoured him with the title of Rao Sahib in 1901 and, later, with that of Rao Bahadur. In 1923, at the 'darbar' of A.R.Cox, Collector of Madras, he was conferred the title of Dewan Bahadur. Dewan Bahadur T. Namberumal Chetty was nominated as a member of the First Legislative Council of the Madras Presidency. He was also a member of Cottage Industries Committee and Committee on Town Planning. He was also nominated as the first Indian Director of the National Bank and was a founder member of the Cosmopolitan Club.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

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Dates for Your Diary

June - July: Artist of the Month: SWAPNA CHERIAN, who works in her father's portrait painting studio, Madras.

June 26 - July 7: 'Images' — an exhibition of paintings produced during the Indo-German Artists' Camp 'Faces of Man' at Sakshi Gallery 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. The title 'Faces of Man' was proposed by SG Vasudev, painter and participant, who wanted to draw attention to the fact that "man" (not excluding woman, of course) is more of an object of his own, man-made history, a result of events more than a creator. Thus, the paintings, the "results", range from 'Faces of Man' in a concrete sense, to pictures where the human figure is only present in the power lines of colours or even hidden under the thick layers of colour/resp. material. The Artists: Tina Juretek (Düsseldorf, Germany), Manu Parekh (New Delhi), Gargi Raina (Bangalore), V Ramesh (Vishakhapatnam), Rekha Rodwitiya (Baroda), Gerhard Schamhorst (Braunschweig, Germany), Vasudha Thozhur (Madras) and S G Vasudev (Bangalore).

June 28 - 29: Dr John Henry Huber will speak on "The Role of the Government in Privatization", "Financial Management", and "Attracting Foreign Investment". He was with the World Bank until recently. (American Center).

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MANAALI RAMAN...



"...but, mummy, my teacher says water is colourless and odourless?"

IN MAD. MAD MADRAS

Creme de la cream

Predictably, all Madras has made the prickly transition from the frying pan into the fire — in terms of degrees Celsius. Equally predictably, the number of ice creams consumed rises in direct proportion to the dizzying rise of the mercury and whole herds of dedicated ice cream eaters call down blessings on the sundae — acknowledging unknowingly a debt they owe to Evanston, Illinois, during the last years of the 19th Century.

The predominantly puritan population in this small American town frowned on the frivolity of the favourite of the period — ice cream with soda — and forbade its sale on the Sabbath. They were stunned speechless (probably by a paroxysm of rage) by the repartee — the confectioners served ice cream with syrup instead and with snide wit aimed at the holier-than-thou attitude of the puritans, gleefully called the new confection Sunday. The 'y' was later changed to 'e' for obvious reasons — and a culinary fantasy was here to stay. None of which has any

relevance to the ice cream parlours of our city — indeed, the sundaes turned out in them would consider it beneath their dignity to have their lineage pointed out, which is all very well, since the bourgeoisie (that means us) have overrun Madras. But one humble branch of the family tree is the now seemingly antediluvian ice

FOODS & FADS

cream churn. Remember the wooden slatted bucket, those layers of salt and ice, the metal container with the creamiest ice cream in the world and that aching arm? A solution to the last, however, is to be found in POPPAT JAMAL'S — an electric churn with this difference from the traditional one: You just plug it in, and relax. And for Rs. 800 and odd only, you can dish up the mother of all ice creams (sorry, the journealese is catching!) with very little trouble!

ginger and the slit green chillies. Cover and simmer till the fish is done. Serve hot with rice.

Gita Ravi Prasad

FISH RELISH

Ingredients

- 1 pomfret
- ½ onion, grated
- 1" piece ginger, grated
- A few curry leaves
- 1½ tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 3 or 4 green chillies, slit sideways
- ½ coconut, grated
- 1 tbs tamarind pulp
- 2 tbs oil
- ½ bunch coriander leaves
- ½ lime
- Salt to taste

Method

Clean and cut fish into medium pieces. Apply turmeric powder and salt. Sprinkle with lime juice. Keep aside. Grind together coconut, coriander leaves and red chilli powder. Set aside. Heat oil. Add curry leaves and the ground paste. Fry for a minute or two. Place the fish pieces neatly and add the tamarind pulp and a little water. Cook for 5 minutes. Turn the fish pieces carefully. Add the grated onion,

TOMATO PULAO

Ingredients

- 1 cup basmati rice, soaked in water for half an hour and drained
- 8 ripe tomatoes, pureed to make 2 cups of juice adding water.
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped fine
- ¼ cup shelled peas
- 6-8 beans, chopped fine
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 large cardamoms
- 2 small cardamoms
- 2 cloves
- 1" piece cinnamon
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbs ghee or oil
- 2 tbs fried cashewnuts (optional)

Method

Heat oil, add the bay leaf, large cardamoms, small cardamoms, cloves and cinnamon. Fry for a minute or two.

Add the onions and sauté. Add the peas, beans and carrot and fry for another minute or two. Add the drained rice, fry for a minute. Add the

Et tu, Brute?

I'm sure Caesar and even Cleopatra could offer a few constructive suggestions to the dupatta crazy female of the species. I mean, a touch of the toga here, a couple of Orissa motifs there, lots of tussar silk and lots of mercerised cotton, and drape the result a la Julius. Only, the recent Dupatta Exhibition at RASI's did a Brutus with the rates (how's the Lira doing anyway?) and stocked dupattas costing Rs. 300 and more! And if these fabulous prices for these far from one of a kind designer creations did not touch you in the most tender of spots (read moneybag) not even a stab in the back would have.

The moral? The moneybag oft proclaims the apparel! Which prompted the indignant all-Madras mother of three dupatta fiends to say that it worked out cheaper to buy a saree and chop it in three — shades of the curtain-clad kids in *The Sound of Music* and, nearer home, *Wagle ki Duniya!*

A debt acknowledged

The past decade has seen a number of high brow bakeries, patisseries and ice cream parlours open up in Madras. So much so that the older generation of bakeries now cater to a greatly diminished clientele. But they hang on indomitably, and I know no better example of this than the BANGALORE IYENGAR BAKERY phenomenon.

Why Iyer, Iyengar, and not and why only 'the garden city' merit mention are imponderables, but the plethora of bakeries with the same nomenclature dotted all over the city sell the inimitable puffs and cookies that very nearly duplicate that home-made taste. Try the ginger and coconut chip cookies, and everything else that you have never heard of before — and you'll probably be appeased enough to concede that all of Bangalore is not the snooty city you think it is!

— Bhavana Kay



tomato juice and salt. Cover and simmer. Place a tawa under the pan and continue cooking till the rice is done and all the liquid is absorbed. Garnish with fried cashewnuts and serve hot.

RAJMAH

Ingredients

- 2 cups kidney beans (rajmah), soaked in water overnight
- 3 onions
- 1" piece ginger
- 4-6 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp cummin seeds powder
- 2 tsp dhaniya powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 cup well mixed curd
- 4 tomatoes, blanched and chopped fine
- 1 small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine
- 2 tbs oil
- Salt to taste

Method

Pressure cook the soaked kidney beans, adding salt. Set aside.

Heat oil and fry the ground paste till the oil separates, adding cummin seeds powder, chilli powder, turmeric powder, dhaniya powder and chopped tomatoes. Grind half a cup of the cooked rajmah into a coarse paste. Set aside.

Add the well-mixed curd to the gravy and fry for a minute or two. Add the cooked rajmah. Simmer till well blended.

Add the ground rajmah. Mix well. Add chopped coriander leaves and serve hot.

MIXED VEGETABLE RAITA

- 1 cucumber, peeled and chopped fine
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped fine
- 1½ cups fresh well mixed curd
- 1 small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine

Salt to taste

- 1 tsp cummin seeds, roasted and ground

Method

Combine all the chopped vegetables except the coriander leaves with the curd. Mix well, adding salt.

Sprinkle the ground cummin seeds and the red chilli powder.

Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve cold.

Chandra Padmanabhan

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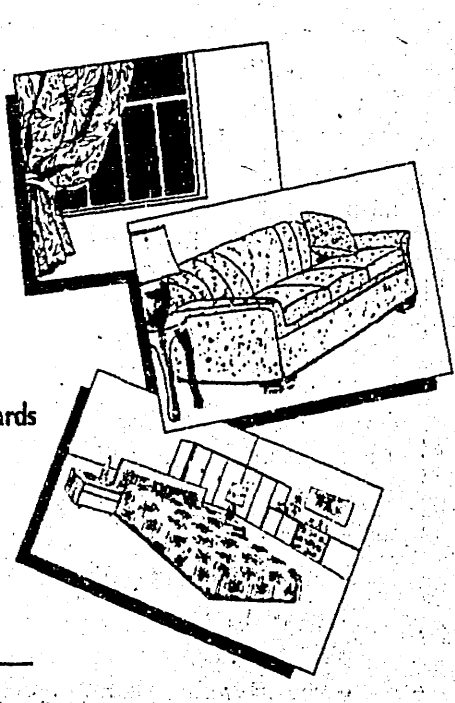
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Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizzmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are all from the fortnight May 16th-31st.)

1. Of which state was Dr. Channa Reddy the governor before being transferred to Tamil Nadu?
2. Name the magazine whose editor, Mr. Sait, was hacked to death in Madras on May 17th.
3. What is the estimated value of the biggest narcotics haul in South India, made near Salem recently?
4. Where in Germany did Rightwing extremists kill five Turks recently, leading to mass protests nationwide?
5. What is the new name of the rock group 'Rock Machine'?
6. After the recent reshuffle of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet, which district has the maximum representatives?
7. Name the US Navy's new stealth vessel that is capable of avoiding enemy radar.
8. For what is the Sudirman Cup awarded and who retained the title this year?
9. Mr. Blaise Campaore, who recently made a state visit to India, is the president of?
10. Name the company from which the Government of India has decided to buy 30 high-tech locomotives, despite the controversy over the purchase.
11. According to the recently released 'Human Development Report, 1993' of the UNDP, what is the index rating of India?
12. What historical decree was recently passed by the Jamiat Ahle Hadith, an apex body of Muslim religious scholars?
13. How much has the former table tennis international, V. Chandrasekhar, been awarded as damages against Apollo Hospitals Ltd.?
14. May 17th was celebrated around the world as...?
15. Who is the new Chief Government Whip in the Tamil Nadu Cabinet?
16. Name the 52nd African nation. It was born on May 19th.
17. For what achievement was Miss Yanyanara Torres of Puerto Rico in the news?
18. Name the tent town at Amethi where the aborted AICC session on Panchayati Raj was to be held.
19. Name the new cassette launched by HMV to mark the centenary of the Kanchi Paramacharya.
20. At which film festival was the Palme D'Or for the best picture shared by *The Piano* and *Farewell, My Concubine*?

(Answers on p.8)

Regular venues for 'little theatre'



The Trio - from left to right, Shobhana, Radhika and Gayathri. (Photo: AVINASH PASRICHA)

We know how experimental and amateur theatre groups have problems not only of space for rehearsals and performances but also of patronage. Nevertheless, Madras has a couple of regular venues for them.

Koothupatturai, the Tamil theatre group, has been working at Siltrarangam, the beautiful small theatre housed in the Trade Fair complex near the War Memorial. They have been staging plays every Friday there, but the location of the theatre has been a problem for the audience.

Pareeksha is a theatre group headed by Gnani (the journalist, theatre enthusiast and film-maker who had video-taped the VP Singh meeting in Madras at which Sivasaran had conducted the dry run for the Rajiv Gandhi Ministry). Gnani has been presenting a very interesting serial for children on the second channel on TV and his Pareeksha has been presenting experimental plays in Tamil at the Narada Gana Sabha mini-hall every Thursday. Tickets are only Rs. 5 each. Gnani says the response has been quite good.

Some days there are twenty people and sometimes seventy. They present a play for four Thursdays and change. Gnani says he has Narada Gana Sabha's Krishnaswamy to thank for this.

The view from the wings

• by V.R. Devika

Pareeksha recently presented Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*. At the end of this month, they are presenting a feminist play.

Dance Festival

Dr Francis Barboza S.V. is a devout Christian and a dedicated Bharatha Natyam dancer. He has been creating waves with his high quality Bharatha Natyam pieces based on Christian themes. He has invented quite a few *mudras* in Bharatha Natyam to depict Christian symbols. He has been applauded, wherever he has performed.

A forgotten bit of theatre history

How many of today's citizens of Madras remember the famed Wall Tax Theatre, not far from the Madras Central Railway Station?

Years ago, this 'drama theatre' was situated on busy Wall Tax Road in Park Town. At that time, buildings were put up only on the eastern side of the road and there was no construction on the west, except for a long wall (which gave the road its name). That's why this road is known in Tamil as *Otra Vaadai* (one row!).

Beyond the wall was a vast open space, popular 'People's Park'. Central Station and its sprawling complex did not exist then. The main railway station of the Madras & Southern Mahratta Railway (M & SM) was at Royapuram.

The Wall Tax Theatre was known in Tamil as *Otravaadai Theatre* but was better known in the colloquial as *koothu kottakai*! If you wanted to travel by rickshaw or *julka* to P.R. Square (an aristocratic part of Park Town in those days), all you had to instruct was, "Koothu kottakai edhir sandhukku pakkathu sandhu!" Such was the fame of the Otravaadai Theatre.

Decades ago there were few places in the city for professional troupes to stage plays in, on a regular basis and the most popular was OT. (In an interesting case of clear-cut class distinction, no amateur theatre group would ever dream of staging its play here. Where did such troupes go? Well, that's another story). Those were the days when 'Boys' Companies' dominated Tamil theatre and they hired this auditorium for long periods.

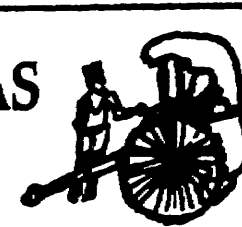
At first there was only a play a day, commencing at 9 p.m. In later years, there were two shows a day, and even a matinee on weekends. Mondays were weekly holidays when the players attended to their chores or went round the city. Legendary troupes like TKS Brothers... Nawab T S Rajamanickam's troupe... Madurai Original Boys' Company... MR Radha's troupe... N S Krishnan's group played here. When the legendary comedian NSK was in prison for 30 months during the

along the pavement. It was a popular pastime for boys resident in the area to walk up and down the road counting the number of cars and making a mental note of the makes. The more adventurous would place bets on the number or the make of a particular car!

Pathi Bhakthi, a family melodrama by T P Krishnaswami Pavalur, was one of the hits to be staged at this theatre. With stage and screen star MK Radha (of *Chandralekha* fame) as hero, this play ran for 100 continuous days in

GOOD OLD MADRAS

Remembered by RANDOR GUY



sensational Lakshmikanthan Murder Case, his star wife T A Mathuram did a play, *Paithiakaaran* (Mad Man), here to raise funds for the defence of her husband.

The Otravaadai Theatre was situated away from the road and parallel to the railway lines. (Whenever viewers were transported to a world of saints, kings, queens and gods, the train-whistle nearby jerked them back to the 20th Century!) Built by a wealthy family of landowners of Park Town, it was a modest hall with no frills or even proper acoustics, but theatregoers of yesteryears did not care. Normally, Madras Society would not be seen in the Wall Tax Road area, but on 'play days' at OT, rows and rows of cars of every kind, made in USA, Germany, England, France, Italy, even Japan, would be seen parked

the early 1930's. Other plays which were big hits included TKS Brothers' *Avvaiyar* (TK Shammugham played the legendary Tamil saint-poetess with such realistic brilliance that many thought the role was done by an old woman!). *Ratha Kanneer* by M R Radha was one of the biggest hits in Tamil theatre. And *Naam Iruvar* (We Two) by NSK Nataka Sabha was seen by movie mogul A V Meiyappan and he acquired the screen rights on the spot. His film version created movie history.

Otravaadai Theatre retained its glory and lustre till the 1960's. For many a reason, it lost its importance when the scene of theatre activity in the city shifted to Triplicane, Mylapore and Mambalam. Today, the memory-rich Otravaadai Theatre rests in silence, its doors closed for ever. If only its walls would speak and sing!

the rigours of Kalakshetra tradition and training. They make a pretty pair too, these two good dancers.

Krishnaveni Lakshmanan of Kalakshetra presents a performance with some of her students on the 24th. Kalarani and disciples from the Nityanjali Academy, Madurai, perform on the 22nd. Kalamandalam, Calcutta, with Thankamani Kutty and disciples, and Salyavathi, Gunavathi and their brother Harish of Tumkur, Kamataka, will perform on the 24th. Rama Vaidyanathan of Delhi and the Venkatesha Nitya Mandir of Radha Sreedhar from Bangalore will perform on June 25th. The inauguration will be at the Narada Gana Sabha, while the performances from the 23rd to 25th will be at the Bharathi Kalachar.

ABHAI is trying to get Madras audiences to PAY for the performances. Dance in Madras has become so abundant that invitations were going begging during the December season; in fact, some *sabhas* were **charging** for the music programmes and offering **free** admission for the dance performances. It is only when there are no more free programmes that the dance scene in Madras will improve. ABHAI is trying to get some land to build a theatre complex with residential facilities and recording studios etc, but has not succeeded in getting even an appointment with the Chief Minister to discuss the matter with her.



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The grey area of adoption

(Continued from P4)

Debunking the myth that most Indian babies are adopted abroad, she stated that in the 32 Y.C.A.-affiliated Children's Homes in Tamil Nadu, more than 50 per cent of the children were adopted by Indian parents.

It was the shortfall in The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act which drew particular attention at the Workshop. The Act does not make the registration of the "giving and taking" deed mandatory. V N Nagaraja Rao, Advocate, Madras High Court, made a fervent plea for court registration of the "giving and taking" documents, since such registration would make the adoption impeccably legal, give the child the right to know his roots and

identity, as well as avoid legal hassles at the time of inheritance of family property and assets by the adopted child. A change to this effect was urgently needed in the Adoption Act. Both Rao and J S Bajaj, Additional Director of Social Welfare, expressed the need for a universally applicable Adoption Law to be framed after extensive discussion with all religious groups.

Are Indians aware of the "Hows" and "Wherefores" of adoption in India? Mrs Anuradha Dixit, Social Worker from Bharatiya Samaj Seva Kendra, Pune, felt that the need of the hour was communication in the form of newspaper and magazine articles, first-person stories by adoptive parents, audio-visual clips featuring "before and after" stories of adopted children, "open house" visits by the public to adoption

homes and orphanages, displays of posters lauding adoption and so on. However, Mrs Uma Narayanan of SOS Village felt that parents should actually be demotivated and that the need to adopt a child should come from the deepest recesses of one's heart and not looked upon as an act of charity.

What can you and I do to help foster adoption awareness? By referring prospective parents to registered adoption agencies, by handing over abandoned and unwanted babies to them and by giving financial and voluntary help so sorely needed by them. And to fight, each in one's own way, for the right of every abandoned, unwanted, destitute and orphaned child to find a caring home where alone can the true bonding, fulfilment and flight of the human spirit begin.

An unfortunate bit of pessimism

by
JAICI

If Ramanathan Krishnan, the former Indian Davis Cup skipper, has been correctly reported, he has rendered the current National tennis squad, captained by none other than his son, Ramesh, a disservice by virtually writing off its chances against France in their forthcoming World Group Davis Cup quarter-final.

Only a month ago, Ramesh Krishnan and Leader Paes had combined to give Indian tennis an unprecedented boost by beating the fancied Swiss in the pre-quarter-final round. Instead of giving them and the rest of the contingent now preparing to take on France a word of encourage-

ment and advice, and wishing them all the best, Krishnan is reported to have said that India's chances were "rather bleak" because of France's slow clay courts and the disadvantage of playing away.

It is impossible to believe that Krishnan, one of the most experienced and knowledgeable internationals, has been so indiscreet as to virtually condemn India to doom so soon after

they had scaled the heights against Switzerland, and at a time when they needed all the encouragement the country could give them. But, according to a Bombay daily, Krishnan made his estimate while releasing ITC's Wills tennis video at a colourful function ITC organised at the Hotel Chola Sheraton in Madras on June 1st.

At a Press briefing ITC held before the video was released, Krishnan, the

chief guest, praised ITC for the major role it had played in helping Indian sportspersons improve their standards as well as their social status, and said he had no doubt that the Wills tennis video would be of great value to promising young Indian players. "Watching the great players in action on a video like this will certainly help our youngsters," he said, and then answered questions by pressmen. None asked him what he thought would be the outcome of the India-France duel, for it was, frankly, out of context.

According to the Bombay daily, Krishnan expressed his Davis Cup views while releasing the video. Not so. This was done at a cocktails-and-dinner session which followed the Press Conference and which was held at a different hall that came to be packed with Tamil Nadu Tennis Association officials and their families. A journalist, after having had his fill, ran into the soft drink-sipping Krishnan and, in keeping with the cocktails-conversation atmosphere, casually sought his views.

The former champion dismissed the questioner with his "rather bleak" comment in an informal manner, least expecting the reporter to quote him. But the damage was done. The former India skipper, a gentleman to his fingertips, unwittingly allowed himself to be labelled a pessimist.

It is a lesson the former champion will not easily forget, the lesson of keeping media persons at a safe distance at a cocktails session.

A tournament with a difference

It is a tournament with a difference. Indian sport has never had, and will perhaps never have, a competition like the 25-year-old Basheer Ahmed Khan Memorial Trophy All-India hockey tournament, conducted annually by the Basheer Ahmed Khan Hockey Society on the Madrasa-I-Azam ground, a gravel patch in the heart of Madras city.

For one thing, it is not a sponsored tournament, and, for another, it has no gate. Yet, for every tournament, the Society entertains a minimum of six outstation teams, even contingents from distant Delhi and Jalandhar, and also puts up, at considerable cost, temporary stands for the comfort of fans who turn up in their thousands for every match.

To crown it all, the Society has introduced prize money. It did so for the Silver Jubilee tournament, held last month. The winners (Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd., Bombay) collected Rs. 25,000/-, and the runners-up and third-placed teams became richer by Rs. 10,000/- and Rs. 5,000/- respectively. In keeping with the Silver Jubilee celebration, the Society also presented monetary awards and valuable gifts to the Best Disciplined

Team, the Player of the Tournament and other leading lights.

The Society went one step further. On May 28, 1993, it presented to the publishers of *The Hindu* a memento in recognition not only of that daily's contribution to the growth of the game in the country but also of the paper's gesture in presenting, on an identical date way back in 1952, the Ranga-swamy Cup to the Indian Hockey Federation for the National championship. The cup presentation was made by the late K. Srinivasan, the then Managing Editor, and the Society deserves a pat on its back for having remembered and honoured the date 41 years later.

The Society's contribution to the growth of the sticks game in Madras City has been well appreciated not only by the hockey-loving public but also by several industrial and business

establishments. They readily display their banners and hoardings all around the ground and, thus, help the Society foot the bill to run a tournament that has come up from scratch to be almost on par with such famed competitions like the Bombay Gold Cup and Calcutta's Beighton Cup tournaments.

Mainly responsible for its phenomenal growth has been Dr Mohamed Ismail, a more dedicated and knowledgeable tournament director than whom Madras has not known. Ironically enough, he was conspicuous by his absence during the entire Silver Jubilee tournament. A patented reply to inquiries was that the doctor was now fully devoted to his profession. The truth is he had never neglected his profession. Whatever might have been the reason for his absence, the Silver Jubilee tournament was the poorer for it. So was the special awards presentation scene on the final day. None indeed deserved to be honoured more than Dr Ismail, the main architect and builder of the tournament. His absence, at the final Silver Jubilee scene was, indeed, a sad commentary on the Society's sense of fair play.

by
AJAX

Catching them young

Citibank, after making its sponsorship debut in Madras with a junior cricket tournament in January, has now invested a substantial amount on table tennis. It played the role of chief sponsor of the fourth annual summer coaching camp of that unique sports body in the City, the Table Tennis Players' Parents' Association.

The fortnight-long camp was held in the Madras University Indoor stadium. Over 70 selected teenage boys and girls, including small contingents from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry, had the benefit of coaching by former National champion

G Jagannath as well as former National athletics champion M S Sreedharan. The well-attended concluding ceremony, on May 16th, was fittingly presided over by Citibank vice-president Sunil Kaul, who was mainly, if not solely, responsible for launching the US-based bank into sports sponsorship in Madras. He complimented the TTPPA on the excellent manner in which it ran the camp and assured the audience that Citibank would help every worthy cause.

From V Sivaraman, T Thiruvengadam and Jagannath to M S Raman, the current title-holder, Madras has

produced more National table tennis champions than any other Indian metropolis. Whether any of the 70-odd boys and girls will add to Madras City's list of champions, time alone will tell. But it should be noted that budding champions like T Pradeepa, India Junior Girls No. 3, and N Senthil had attended previous camps.

Messrs. M K Ramaswamy and Stephen Pragasan, the TTPPA president and secretary, respectively, assured the gathering that the camp had done the trainees a world of good. They also expressed their gratitude not only to Citibank and the two co-sponsors, Enterprising Enterprises of Madras and Mittal Corporation of Delhi, but also to the dozens of Madras business establishments who had displayed their banners at the stadium. It is now up to Messrs Ramaswamy and Pragasan and other office-bearers to take full advantage of the patronage they receive and make the annual camp a real breeding ground of champions. They could, perhaps, do that by extending the camp by a fortnight, for many felt champions could not be turned out in just two weeks.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Rajasthan; 2. Sigappu Ratham; 3. Rs. 66 crores, in the international market; 4. Solingen; 5. Indus Creed; 6. Periyar District, with four ministers; 7. Sea Shadow; 8. World Team Badminton Championship and South Korea respectively; 9. Burkina Faso; 10. Asea Brown Boveri; 11. A low

134th; 12. The pronouncement of three 'Talaqs' at one sitting is invalid and ineffective; 13. Rs. 17.37 lakhs; 14. World Telecommunications Day; 15. S. Jayakumar; 16. Eritrea; 17. She was crowned Miss Universe recently; 18. Rajiv Gram near Kathaura; 19. Satabdi Samarpan; 20. The Cannes Film Festival.

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