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MUSINGS

Vol. III. No. 7

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

July 16 — 31, 1993

Hark! And it's action!

(By Our Film Correspondent)

The disagreements among film stars, producers, distributors and the rest in the Madras film world are over. Or so it has been officially announced. And film-making has started again in the world capital of film production. But while the official pronouncements have talked of theatre maintenance, government largesse, committees to settle disputes, etc., there's not a word been heard about the main issues that had paralysed film-making.

Was that peace-making conference that Chief Minister Jayalalitha convened only to talk about cabbages and kings? It certainly was not meant to be. But apparently that's what it turned out to be, because the Chief Minister did not give room for any cross-talk. Apparently she opened the conference by laying it on the line: **STAR RATES ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.** Whatever rate anyone sought, the others were free to pay it or to refuse to accede and pick anyone else they wanted who'd accept

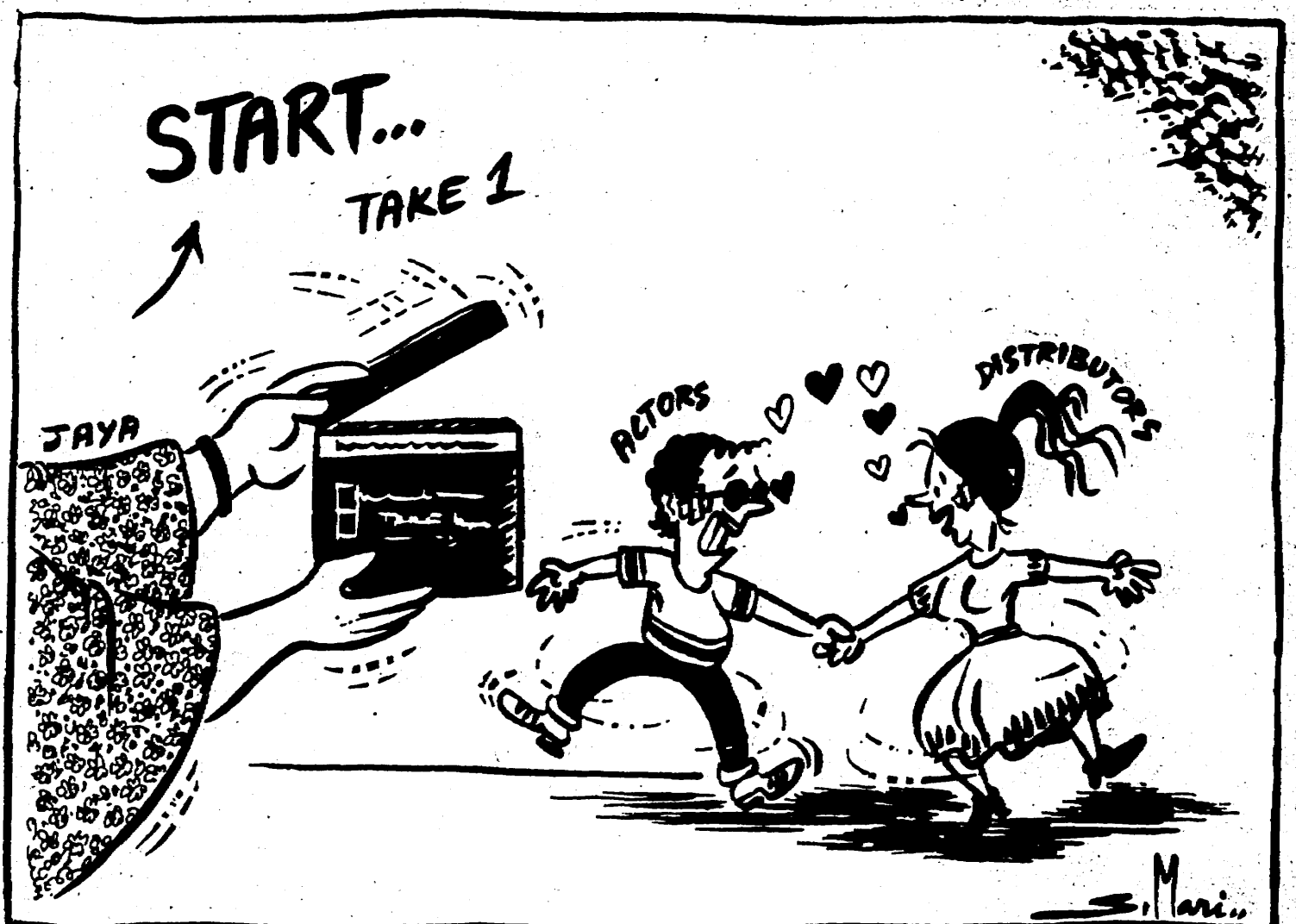
their offer. It was each one's own business. That understood, let's get the show back on the road, she is believed to have firmly suggested. And no one disagreed.

Obviously the best way to settle an issue is to lay down the law and brook no argument. It makes friends, influences people and shores up your image as an Iron Lady. Negotiations do not leave room for any of that.

And, fittingly, the first film to be released after this momentous discussion was a Rajinikanth starrer made in defiance of the ban by the B Naji Reddy Family. Launched under their new banner, the Chandama Vijaya Combines, *Uzhaippli* is no winner, but it has an edge because little else has been produced, with the majority conforming and accepting the ban till the issue was settled.

Now, on to film-making again.

(For further comment, read **Moviemani** on page 7)



This cartoon from News Today says it all!

All's well with English!

(By Our Education Correspondent)

All's well with English in India — and especially in the South — to go by a recent ranking list of British Council libraries round the world. Of the 144 libraries ranked, eight of the first 15 are from India and, of the eight, four are from the South. And Madras tops the South, though overall it is fourth.

The libraries were ranked in order of importance and effectiveness and, overall, Bombay topped the list followed by two surprises, Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and Colombo. Madras was followed by Calcutta (5th) and Pune (6th). But the South fared best, overall, in India, with Bangalore 9th, Hydera-

bad 11th and Thiruvananthapuram 13th.

Where Madras fared best was in the 'enquiries received'. Its 19,958 enquiries edged out Bombay and topped the Indian list. But it was a figure that faded out in comparison with the 59,514 enquiries received by the Athens branch, which was only 15th overall. In fact, several other branches received very many more enquiries than the leading Council libraries in India.

By far the largest number of members anywhere was, you won't believe it, in Addis Ababa, whose

44,377 members was more than double the next ranked and more than three times the four thereafter. Bombay has 20,700 members, Calcutta 14,319, Madras 13,258, Colombo 13,057 and Pune 12,430. All the rest are in four figures and below. Bangalore has 9477 members and only 3049 enquiries, Hyderabad 9709 and 2894 and Thiruvananthapuram 6792 and 1928.

Madras, however, fared well in loans of books and other library lending material, totting up 333,898 loans, trailing only Colombo's 392,589 and Bombay's 376,082. Bangalore's loans were 197,953, Hyderabad's 181,190 and Thiruvananthapuram's 195,716.

The library on which most money is spent in India is Bombay, £ 379,282. Calcutta follows with £ 262,364 and Madras with £ 242,924. For all Addis Ababa's membership, only £ 272,623 is spent on it. The highest expenditure is on the Paris branch, £ 600,749. £ 173,645 is spent on Bangalore, £ 177,896 on Hyderabad and £ 124,448 on Thiruvananthapuram.

That South India performance has everyone beaming at the British Council's South India headquarters, off Anna Salai, where they are in the throes of redoing the office interior — following on the library, which was elegantly refurbished a couple of years ago — while, at the same time, preparing for a major British books exhibition to be held in the City next month.

Police force being strengthened

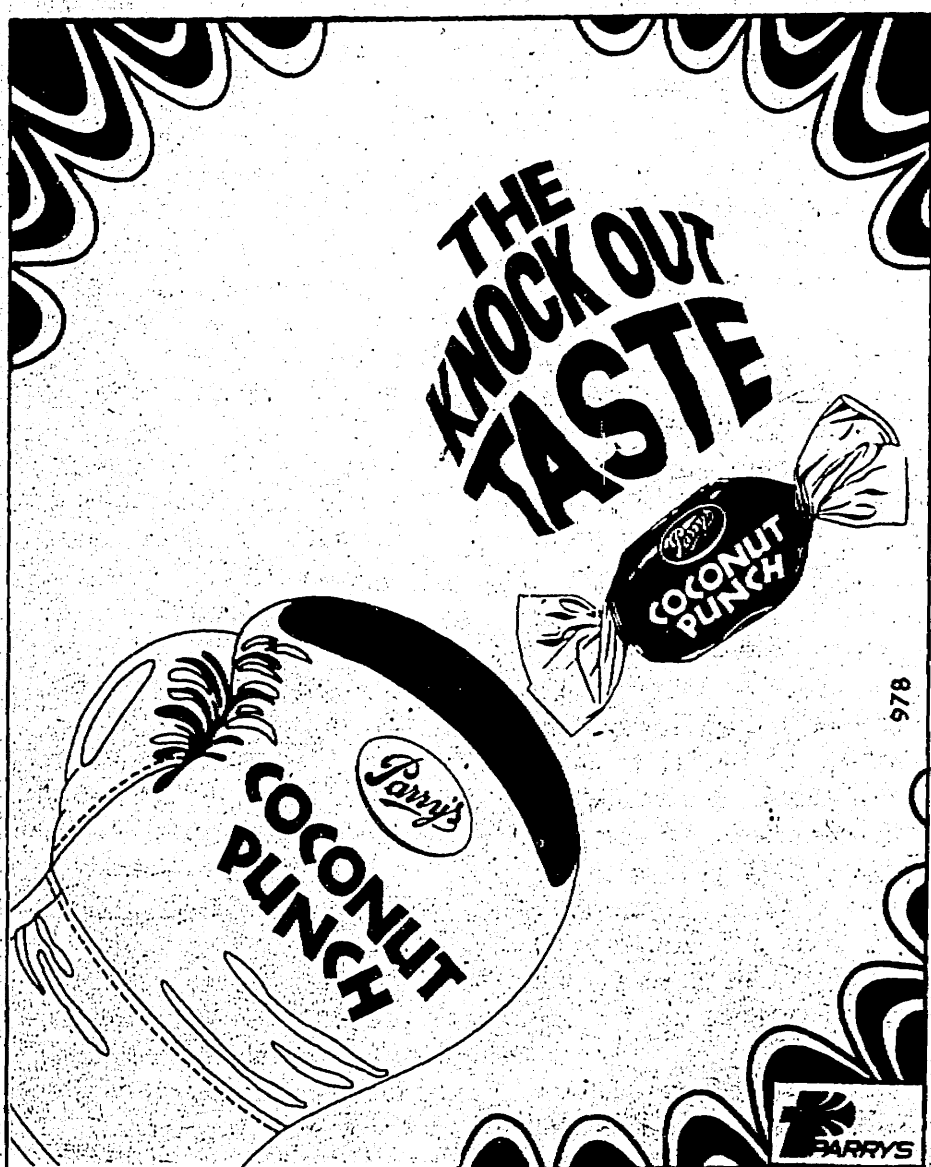
(By A Staff Reporter)

Four thousand five hundred police constables are in training for the Tamil Nadu Police. And they are being joined by 5000 more who have just been recruited. But given the increase in VIP security duties and the pressures it has caused, resulting in less patrols and greater crime, the Police had sought 10,000 recruits during that second recruitment. They could not get their wish due to a court order.

The 5000 selected were chosen from 72,000 applicants. After written

and physical fitness tests, much of it computerised, 11,790 were selected and then 10,000 chosen for training. But the Court Order only allowed 5000. And so the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services will still remain 5000 short.

But despite the shortfall, the patrol situation is likely to be much better next year than it has been in over a decade. Will it be too much to expect to meet the beat policeman doing his daily rounds again?



THE DIGNITY OF THE HOUSE

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

New Model

The Man From Madras Musings has been discovering a new style of integration that has been going on quietly in the City. And that is the proliferation of journals — usually annuals — being brought out by the City's numerous residents' associations. By getting residents — and usually their children — to contribute, these journals have been able to establish a degree of good neighbourliness in each association's ambit and there has certainly been better integration of the community as a result, even in a small area.

One recent journal that landed on *MMM*'s desk is called *Krishna* and has been

published by the Krishnapuri Residents' Association, Srivasa Avenue, Raja Annamalaiapuram. Attractively laid out, its chief attraction is the fact that almost all the contributions — short stories and poems in English — are by the 8-15-year-olds in the Association. While the material was quite readable, what struck *The Man From Madras Musings* as most interesting was the following announcement which he was not quite sure was a bit of fun or a genuine invitation or an ad, till he noticed no address, no mention in the list of advertisers and a place for it in the 'Contents' as an anonymous contribution:

NEW ARRIVAL CARD

Mrs Swetha Dayalan and Mr Dayalan announce the arrival of their second child — a bonny boy this time.

Product Designer : Mrs Swetha Dayalan
Product Executor : Mr Dayalan
Technical Advisor : Dr Shyamala Ravindran
Technical-Supervisor : Sister Josephine
Finance Provider : Mr Suchindran F/o Mrs Swetha
Public Relations : Mrs Suchindran M/o Mrs Swetha

FEATURES OF THE MODEL

High Lung Power
Free Squealing
Water Cool Base

We have decided to discontinue the production of further models. However, our existing models will continue to be serviced by us. New model at display at our house from November 2, 1992. Visitors will be provided lunch and refreshments.

In brief

★ The ladies are to be congratulated, both of them who took on a VIP soon after the dinner hour one night on the Marina. The VIP's car, confident in the power its flag attested to, rather rashly negotiated a gap in the traffic and dashed against the car in which the two ladies, their driver, an elderly gentleman who might have been their father or father-in-law and the young son of one of them, were travelling. Fortunately the worst damage was a bump on the boy's head and a dented fender. But the ladies were not prepared to let accidents pass like ships in the night. As the VIP's driver roared and their driver and their elderly kin rushed them, the two tigresses roared back, till the VIP got out of the car and apologised. But that was not enough for them; "let's go to the police station," they shouted... and that's when *The Man From Madras Musings* left them, the last he heard being the VIP pleading that they be good sports and let minor accidents rest in peace.

★ That well-known Madras group that had a shot at taking over the Bank of Madurai appears to have decided to lie low for a while before making another attempt to getting into banking. This group, with a heritage solidly rooted in the banking business, had been toying with the idea, it is said, of establishing what was to be called the 'Chettinad Mercantile Bank', after its unsuccessful bid to make the Bank of Madurai the Chettinad Bank. But with a key figure in these plans rather hogbound by RBI directives, all plans seem to be on hold at the moment, awaiting more propitious times.

★ The Ministry of Environment and Forests has identified 15 mangrove areas in the

country which it will protect. A National Mangrove Committee has been set up to advise on conservation measures, and action plans are being drawn up. Two among the mangrove areas to be protected are in Tamil Nadu: PICHAVARAM and POINT CALIMERE. Tamil Nadu's tourism corporation has had facilities for some years now in Pichavaram, but aside from offering accommodation — at sometimes a meal — the Corporation has not done anything for the mangroves. As for Point Calimere, this being a favourite landing place for the Tigers from Eelam, little was possible to ensure mangrove safety. With the Centre deciding to take a second look at these mangrove stands, there perhaps is yet hope.

★ Standard Motors, still facing labour problems and with production and offtake not what were expected, are nevertheless not buckling under. They're still trying to get a car line going that will suit the Indian market. And, with liberalisation, they have, the word is, been talking to Daihatsu of Japan whose Charade has been described as "perhaps the best among the small cars to come out of Japan." Another Japanese small car being considered for the Indian market is the Mitsubishi 663 cc, one of the most sophisticated cars in the world. Eicher, it is said, have been negotiating for its manufacture in India and if the deal comes through, Enfield's, Eicher's Madras partners, may also have a fair share of the manufacturing operations.

★ The road from Tindivanam to Pondicherry via Auroville is likely to be declared a National Highway. But if that happens, much work will have to be done on that road to make it worthy of the new description.

MMM

All said, it was, perhaps, Chief Minister Jayalalitha's best public address. The occasion was the inauguration of a symposium in the city on 'How to Raise the Level of Debate in the House'. The symposium concluded the Presiding Officers' Conference. Urging participants in the debate not to treat the legislature as an ordinary public speakers' platform but as a prestigious place of dignity and honour, she

said it was time to reduce the political wrangling which went on in the House and which was the root cause of acrimony.

Members, she said, "by their thought, word and deed must uphold the dignity of the House. Whatever is said or done during the debate which is not in consonance with the standards of good behaviour will not be in consonance with the dignity of the House". Speaking of the

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TRANSLATION

For German translations contact: Madhavi, 83 Ellamman Colony (Behind Stella Maris College) Madras-600 085.

Portuguese & German Translation & Interpretation Services: Veeraraghava Mukkalla, Tel: 569481.

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Attention parents/married couples who are yearning to have only male child. Please contact Professor Bhagwan to master the natural sexology. Write to Box No. 25 C/o. Madras Musings, Madras-600 006.

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Art & Chanting classes for children at Parampara from July 1, 1993 onwards. Contact 38 Kasthuri Rangan Road, Madras-600 018, Tel: 451516.

Attention IGNOU/CWA/CA Students! Do you require personalised guidance in Mathematics, Statistics, Econometric Research Methodology? Call/Contact: Prof. H.K. Lakshman Rao, 33 Krishnapuri, Madras-600 028. Tel: 8371779.

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Large valuable collection of STAMPS for immediate disposal contact, Balaram, 24 MRC Nagar, Madras-600 028. Tel: 838257, 838613.

Summer sale of paintings — "Nettovanje '93" at Sarala's Art Centre, 25 Chin-C Road, with never-before-prices Tel: 827008.

MATRIMONIAL

For rich Muslim. M.B.B.S. doctor aged 23 years, 177 cm. tall, handsome, suitable charming girl studying or employed in States or in Australia or UK. Please send details and horoscope to Box No. 77 Madras Musings, 62/63 Greaves Road, Madras-600 006.

Wanted God-fearing, good-looking bride, educated, employed/unemployed for a bridegroom, Vadama, Kousika, B.Com, Magam, 40 years, employed in a Pvt. Ltd., company drawing Rs. 1800/- No Dowry — Sub-sets no bar. Apply Box No. 9, Madras Musings, Madras-600 006.

Craft on city's roadsides

Distinctive Rajasthani pottery, vases, ornamental chandeliers and other handicrafts are now regularly found for sale on the roadsides in several parts of Madras. The artisans selling these beautiful wares are near-illiterate nomads from Rajasthan. They travel from place to place for about six months, selling their handicrafts, and then return home. Back in Rajasthan, the men work at stone carving and as sculptors. The women do ornamental decoration on pots and model clay. Their skills have been handed down from generation to generation.

A typical travelling 'family' consists of eight to ten men, five to eight women and several young children, making a group of about 25 in all. These family groups are to be found in Anna Nagar, Adyar, Greenways Road, St. Thomas' Mount and a few other localities in the city, living in low huts they put up on the pavements.

The groups are of two types. One sells factory-made ware like flower vases, light shades, flower pots of different sizes and attractive colours. The other group sells models of Lord Krishna, Saraswathi, vases and animals

that it has moulded on the spot from plaster of paris. The moulded plaster is carefully painted by the women using oil paints.

The factory-made handicrafts exhibit exquisite designs of plants, flowers and folk symbols. Gold and platinum are used as lines and bands to enhance the appearance of these wares. The handicrafts of the highest quality are decorated by hand. The best quality gold is always drawn by hand. Other methods include printing by silk screen and stamping with a gelatine pad on which the design has been incised.

These Rajasthani nomads sometimes sell two to three thousand rupees worth of handicrafts a day. But there are times when they sell nothing for days. They canvass sales door to door, besides selling outside their roadside homes. They also undertake polishing of handicrafts in homes they visit.

They find Madras a pleasant, friendly place, but their lack of Tamil makes bargaining by buyers difficult and helps them get better prices.

— RAJIND N CHRISTY



Some of the Rajasthani pottery on the Madras pavements (Photo: Rajind Christy)

OUR READERS WRITE

be told that explosives are sold farther down the road.

Li Gen I S Gill
31 South Bank Road
Madras 600 028.

Sloganeering

Apropos Dr Pai's letter regarding "Motivating slogans" (*MM* June 16-30), here are some I would like to share with Dr Pai and other readers.

1. "Blood is meant to circulate. Donate generously!"
2. "Cancer cures smoking!"
3. A hoarding near a church in Colaba, Bombay: "Way to Heaven: Turn right and go straight."

M Chandran Nair
Shriniketan,
No. 2, 1st Street
Raghava Reddy Colony
Ashok Nagar, Madras 600 083.

Another garden goes

The gardens in our city are slowly decreasing giving rise to highrise buildings. The latest under this threat is Dr MGR Gardens which belonged to the late Chief Minister. A two storey building has come up there which is going to house a school for the deaf. MGR had, even when he was Chief Minister, been growing crops in his garden. Now that has stopped. The generation gap has made the agricultural land where food was grown for MGR, a place growing mere grass and some flowering plants around a two-storey building that's been waiting for a year to be opened.

S R Krishnan
Rampapuram
6 Mount Poonamallee Road
Madras 600 089.

Blasted gelatine

Iam the retired soldier who left my friend *MMM* confused about gelatine (Short 'N' Snappy, June 16-30).

"Blasting gelatine" is rather different and the milder explosive, gelignite, is the one in common use.

I have noted that the next time my wife tells me to pick up a packet of gelatine from 'Amma Nana', I should not be surprised to

Mar. 1), what about Lilke's activity in India; he may be unearthing talent in India which can pose serious challenge to his country. What if England contracts a few good spinners from India (who are world class but could not make it to the National team due to overpopulation) to give them training in England? I think the objection is pointless.

S Rajagopalan
14 Anandam Street
Madras 600 017

Coromandel Coast

Iam a regular reader of *Madras Musings*. I would like to know the original meaning of the word "Coromandel".

M Prabhakar
33 Main Road
Sriram Nagar
Madras 600 041

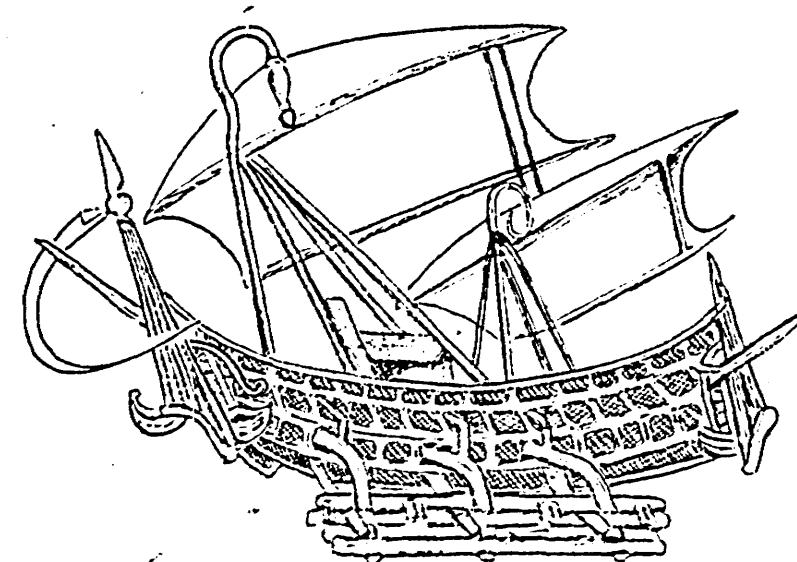
EDITOR'S NOTE: The coast from Ganjam in Orissa to Point Calimere is generally called the Coromandel Coast and from Point Calimere to Kanniyakumari the Fisheries Coast. *Madras* discovered says: "India's Coromandel Coast had, for centuries, been sought by traders from Rome and Greece, Araby and Cathay. And after the great 'Age of Exploration', the Dutch and the Danes, the French and the English followed the Portuguese."

"This much sought after coast is the Choramandala of the Portuguese, the Choramandal of the Dutch and the Chola-mandalam, the fifth province, of the Vijayanagar Empire. It could have derived from the village Karimnal (black sand) near once Dutch Pulicat. Or it could be from the Telugu *Kharmandalam* (Khara — hot) or the legendary village of Khara."

Why not separate?

The new telephone directory has been released. It shows how many new connections are added, so the volume of the directory naturally increases. Now it is two, but why don't the concerned distribute the alphabets and yellow pages and make it a two-volume book? Let the alphabets be in volume I and the yellow pages in volume II. I find many companies have bound the book in this manner for practical use and also for easy identification. Will the Telephone Department do this in its next release?

R Srinivasa Prabhu
117 CPWD Qtrs.
Besant Nagar
Madras 600 090



They sailed from India's shores

With reference to *Madras Musings*' articles on the lack of ship illustrations anywhere in ancient sculpture, I enclose a sketch of an ancient ship done by me, based on a 7th Century Buddhist bas relief from Borobudur (Java). The printed reproduction of the sculpture is also enclosed.

I also enclose a photo-copy of an ancient ship drawn by the eminent artist K C Aryan in his famous book *Rekha*. Note the similarities between the two ships.

The Borobudur bas relief is from *UNESCO Courier* of June 1956, and the text says:

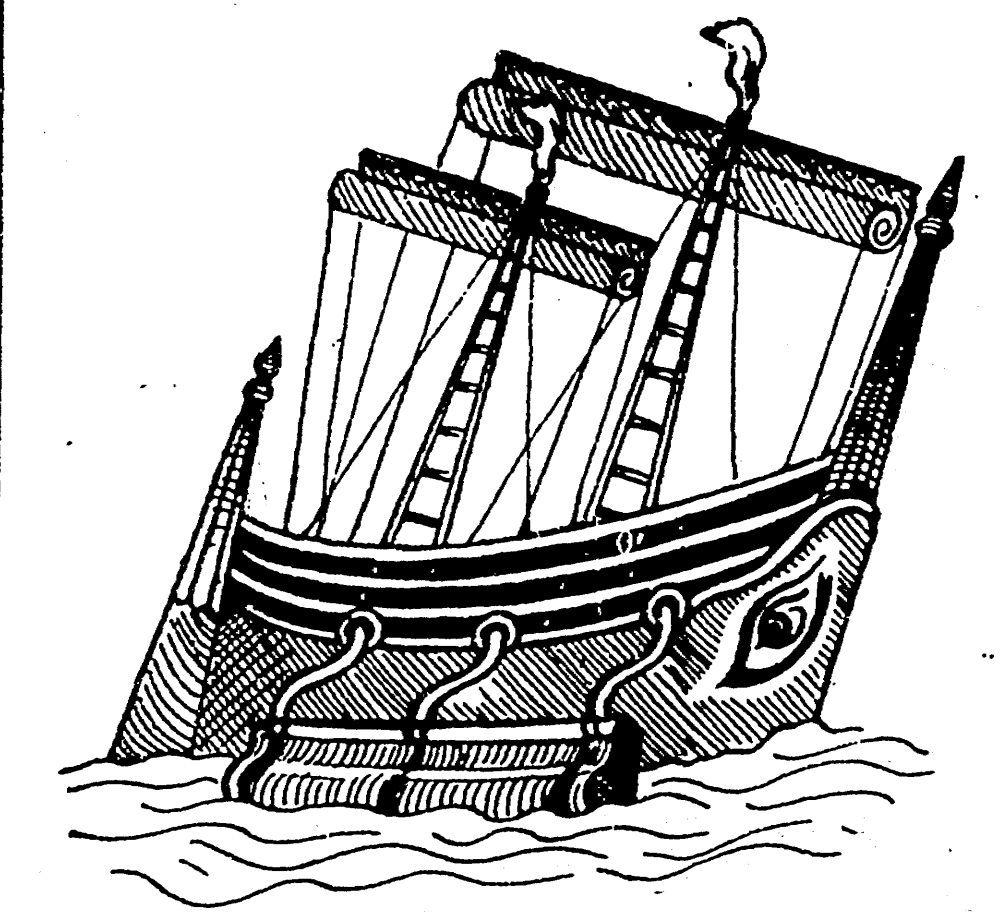
"From India, Buddhism spread in the first century to almost every part of Asia. Wherever it took root, it brought artistic inspiration and stimulated much of the greatest art that Asia has known. One of the most noble monuments of Buddhist art is the gigantic sanctuary raised from 750 A.D. onwards at Borobudur on the island of Java. Details, shown here, from one of Borobudur's hundreds of bas reliefs, relate one of the 'avadanas', the Buddhist legends of saintly deeds. According to this particular legend there existed in the time of Buddha a realm called Roruka ruled by a Buddhist king named Rudrayana. One day, a tremendous storm buried the kingdom, but the king's minister, Hiru, managed to save its treasures and escaped by sea. After a long and perilous voyage, he finally reached a friendly land and founded a great city."

Rekha, by K C Aryan, is a book on the art and anatomy of Indian symbols. It was published by Rekha Prakashan, New Delhi.

K Srinivas

1, 7th Street, Dasarathapuram,
Saligramam, Madras 600 093.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The illustrations sent by K. Srinivas are published above and below.



A letter from a homesick Madrasi Be courteous, you're warned!

Dear.....

I landed at Changi Airport, a bride, quite starry-eyed and filled with wonder. The airport terminal was perfect and, as I was to discover later, exactly like the rest of the country, with one exception. But I did not know of it at that time. So, to come back to Changi. It was impressive, all glass and marble, spit (sic) and polish.

The place lacks officials just waiting for a chance to talk, like we have 'back home'. However, to compensate for the lack of officials, there are a profusion of signs telling you where to go, how to reach there and what to do and what not to do.

At the Immigration counter you are faced with the grimmest of the Chinese

you meet in the lift are not interested in you. In fact, you feel they have not even noticed your brown presence. But the audible sigh of relief when you step out dispels that notion.

An enjoyable stay in Singapore entails an avid interest in shopping and a gourmet sense of delight in food. There are designer classics like Gucci, Yves St. Laurent, wherever you may go, but your presence will definitely go unnoticed. There are numerous others like Yachen, Metro and C.K. Tang. These are more likely to suit the average Indian pocket. The various plazas are a shoppers' delight. They also have cafeterias and fast food joints in them. So you can spend the whole day in just one of the shopping arcades. But

• by Nimi Kurien

species. They scrutinise your passport in micro-detail, turn it over and over, look into all the pages and even go over the small print. It may be your nationality or the look on your face that warrants such intense study.

Once out of the airport, you are not greeted by the familiar 'sar, sar, autova taxiya?' as in Madras. Instead, there is absolute silence and you are waved into the first of a disciplined line of cabbies. The taxicabs are run with efficiency, you never need to haggle or quarrel over the fare. Cab drivers are tutored to be friendly with ALL their passengers. So mine says in his Singh (Singapore-English), "From India, eh?" After you have mumbled "Yes", he quickly switches on his car radio which loudly belts out Chinese pop.

Our first home was on the 13th floor of a highrise building. Apartments in general, and this one in special, are large, well-planned and totally utilitarian. Everything planned to help you attain your highest level of efficiency. And in these apartments, you are quite successfully shut out from the rest of the world. The only intrusion to your privacy are crank calls that keep coming, regardless of day and time. Being on the 13th floor you have no option but to use the lift. The people

the most interesting shopping is in the market.

They have a 'wet market', where fresh food is available at reasonable rates. But the trouble is getting through the crowds and often haggling over the prices with vendors who claim to have no knowledge of the English language. The rates of the various kinds of seafoods and vegetables are elaborately listed on boards that are placed prominently in front of the shop. So what's the problem you ask? Well, the signs are in Mandarin. And you pay the price for your ignorance by forking out your hard-earned dollars. The ones in the know, cough, smirk and turn away.

Similarly, the great variety in eating places is mind-boggling. So much so, every true Singaporean eats just one

(Continued on P6)

Nothing's been proved yet!

The nation was stunned by the grave charge levelled by Harshad Mehta that he had paid Rs. 1 cr to the Prime Minister, in two instalments of Rs. 67 lakhs and Rs. 33 lakhs on November 4th and 5th, 1991, for political patronage and blessing. However, the tapes produced as evidence at the second press conference do not appear sufficient to prove the veracity of Mehta's claim. The onus, in fact, is now on Mehta to prove his allegations with conclusive evidence. In view of this, the IPC has rightly shelved its decision to summon the PM, but has issued summons to Mehta, the CBI and the Central Board of Direct Taxes to give further evidence.

Mehta's accusations have gained considerable credibility, no doubt, on the grounds that elections in a democracy anywhere in the world involve huge sums of money. Added to this, there is also a widespread public belief that the monstrous scam could not have taken place without the connivance of politicians. While political corruption is not unique to India, it must be acknowledged that the bringing to light of the whole imbroglio is a healthy sign of democratic vitality. This goes to

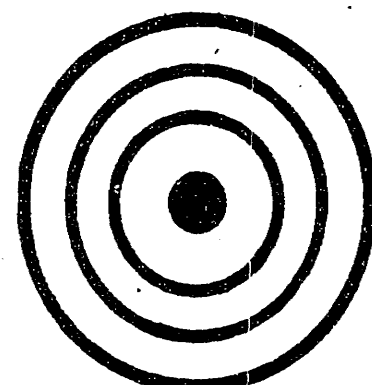


Our OLD and NEW take another twist this fortnight. The Old you might recognise as the central dome, over the main entrance of Egmore Railway Station. The station was built in Indo-Saracenic style in the 1910s by T Samynada Pillai, a leading Bangalore contractor who had done considerable work for what

was then the South Indian Railways at its headquarters in 'Trichinopoly'. Samynada Pillai later went on to build the Madras and South Mahratta Railways headquarters building in Madras, the handsome Mysore Palace-like building that is now the Southern Railway Headquarters. The Egmore Station building was completed at a cost of Rs. 17 lakhs on the site of what was once the old Egmore Redoubt, a small fort that guarded the Poonamallee approaches to Madras. The building was expanded in the 1930s and still further added to in the 1980s. But we feature it today as 'signboarding'. Look at the lettering carefully for the elephant crest and you will find S.I.R. still emblazoned in bas relief. It was only in recent years that the 'I' was white-washed. But retaining it, instead of chipping it out, is a nice touch

of conservation and shows that the Railways does occasionally show a sense of history. Now it's time for it to show the same kind of sensitivity to the oldest railway buildings in Madras, the first railway station in the city and now the Royapuram railway station. Another bit of intriguing 'signposting' is our New. What is an American — or is it 'Red'? — Indian totem pole doing in the heart of Madras, on Mowbray's (NOT Mowbray's) Road? The colourful traffic-stopper points the way to a dress boutique called 'Mona Lisa'. But neither Mona Lisa nor Mowbray are likely to have seen anything quite like this ever! The privilege, apparently, is left to today's citizens of Madras, many of whose close kin see America as the Promised Land — but are unlikely to see a totem pole like this even there! But then, we are getting to be more tribal, aren't we?

(Photographs: The Old — SUSHEELA N. The New — V S RAGHAVAN)



BULL'S EYE

as the estimated requirement of contractor rigs for ONGC for the next five years is placed at 21 against the present number of 14. For the year ended March 1994 we anticipate an EPS of Rs. 12, which supports a price of around Rs. 220. Buy for medium-term gains.

GIN Textiles Ltd (CMP Rs. 120.00): GIN Textiles, the flagship company of the GIN Patodia group, is one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of cotton yarn in India. Pioneer in exporting cotton yarn from India to Japan and Italy, GIN's exports now reach Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and West European markets. The company's

K. Gopalakrishnan

Once there was a fort!

It is not always wise to try to travel on land as the crow flies. Follow the road north out of Madras along the coast and you will see why. Past Royapuram, Tiruvotriyur and Manali, the atrocious road leads eventually to Ponneri. The last bit is just as bad as any other part of this stretch, but there are no lorries, the air is as clear as can be and all is quiet and calm.

After Ponneri there is little more than a sparsely tarred carttrack to Pulicat, a town so small, scruffy and insignificant that it is impossible to imagine how it could ever have been one of the most important centres of the Dutch East India Company's trading empire that stretched across Southeast Asia.

The kutcha road leads past a few cubicle shops, in the distressingly common blinding colours, to the shores of Lake Pulicat, an extensive lagoon, which no doubt attracted the sea-faring Dutch. Just off to the left is the Dutch cemetery, thieves' den and open latrine



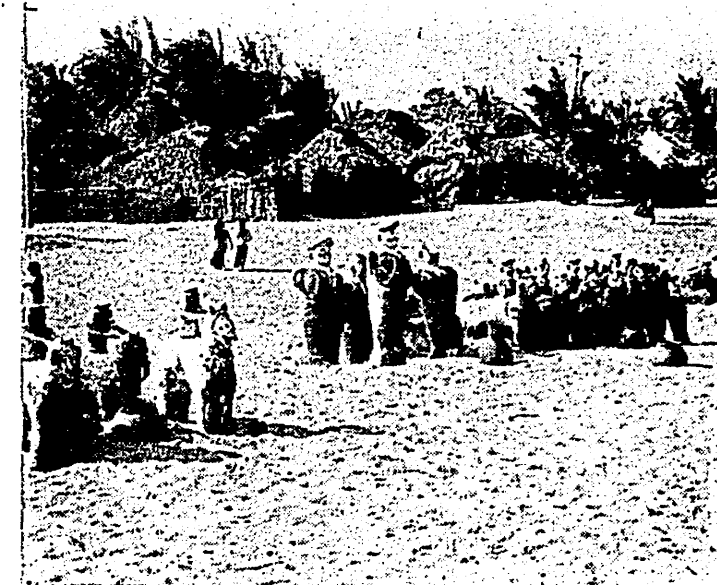
Traditional fishing craft at anchor in the Pulicat Lagoon. Note the poles to catch shrimp.

Coromandel Coast and its environs, who was born in the town of Gent in 1620, died at Palakkatta on the 5th November 1679. He was 59 years, 8 months and 12 days old."

Caulier's tombstone is, like all the others, in Portuguese style, a flat slab of black granite, with a border and engraving. The elaborate quartered coat-of-arms suggests that Caulier was



Entrance to the Dutch Cemetery, Pulicat.



Clay figures of 'saamis' on the Pulicat beach.

Sorry! No Tigers!

Don't stop and ask the locals on the way for 'Pulicat', you might get blank stares. Ask for 'Palaverkadu' and you will immediately be given directions.

Most people might be forgiven for believing that the name Pulicat derives from the two Tamil words *puli* (tiger) and *kaadu* (forest). Obvious though the connection might seem, it is not so simple a matter. The original name for the village, used to this day, is Palaverkadu. European tongues managed no more than Palliacatta (Portuguese) and the Dutch spelt it 'Palakkatta'. The British, of course, outdid everyone else when it came to taking liberties with foreign names, and 'Palakkatta' was reduced to 'Pulicat'.

The 'u' in this word should therefore be pronounced like the 'u' in 'dull', and not as in 'pull'. Current spelling practice in India would require that the name be spelt 'Pallicat', if the anglicised version is to be used. S.M.

seven league boots and a holstered pistol, astride a horse, the forelegs of which are raised. This is perhaps an indication that Caulier died honourably in battle, perhaps in one of the numerous skirmishes with the Portuguese at San Thomé, or even the English who were by now firmly established at Fort St. George.

What is of considerable interest is the depiction of cherubs, birds and animals on the slabs. The cherubs may have short, curly hair, but the features are pure Indian. The birds tend to be parrots or short-tailed peacocks. Obviously, the workmanship, which is exquisite, is local, the work being done to European order and taste. The fine workmanship and high-sounding titles on the tombstones suggest that ordinary soldiers were buried elsewhere, probably in the churchyard at the end of the lane.

All that remains to remind the visitor that Pulicat once had a fortified structure, *Castel Geldria*, is an engraving on one of the tombstones. It shows a battlemented wall, enclosing a large building or two and a few huts in the background. The perspective is flat, but the detail reveals many interesting features, such as finials on the roofs, water spouts and three guns!

Castel Geldria was built in 1613, by Wemmer van Berchem, General Director of the Coromandel Coast, after the Portuguese destroyed Dutch Pulicat in 1612. He named the fortified structure after his home province, Gelderland.

Where did *Castel Geldria* stand? To the east of the graveyard, which would place it where now stands a dispensary in an old, real bungalow, set in a



A representation by the author, of Castel Geldria, as found engraved on a tombstone in the Pulicat cemetery.

perfectly square plot that slopes gently down to the lake about fifty metres away. The site affords a marvellous view all round, out to sea and across the lake north and south. At the lake's edge there is always a small group of people, either just coming in on one of the ferry boats or waiting for one.

While you wait for a leaky boat, the beauty of the place overcomes you. Calamarians with wind-filled sails of brilliant blue and black plastic sheeting glide over the calm, gently ruffled

Beyond the lighthouse wall is a wide beach which holds more surprises. Between the fishing village and the sea are dozens of terracotta figures of horses, or men on horseback, highly stylised and painted in attractive folk colours and styles, all facing east. None of them is more than about three feet high, and they appear to be some sort of *ayyanar*, or local village deity. I was told the "Saami" were some form of local deity, placed every year on the sands, and left there undisturbed, which custom explains the large number of figures in various stages of weathering.

In groups along the inner shore of the spit are clusters of bamboo poles, looking like frames for wigwags waiting to be clothed. Each pole had its owner's name cut into it (in English!), and each man seemed to own about two dozen. These poles, some with bamnades stuck to them, are pushed into the soft bed of the lake, and have creels attached to them to catch prawns. There is lot of fresh sea food at Pulicat, but the prices quoted to casual visitors make five star restaurant prices seem definitely low!

Back in 'town', on Big Street, all of fifteen feet wide and one of (apparently) three streets, there are still some rather dilapidated, Indian-style houses built with colonial overtones. There is no sign at all of a street of "white Muslims with blue or grey eyes", descendants of the Dutch and local people, as claimed by some historians. Whatever infusion of European blood there was must have long since been completely absorbed; and there has been no European presence in or near Pulicat for over a hundred and fifty years.

All that remains is the cemetery.

Where Madras Musings is available

Copies of *Madras Musings* can be picked up at the following places from the 2nd and 17th of every month.

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MANALI RAMAN...

"So much more?"
"Yes. Anna! The severe water shortage, you know!"

IN MAD. MAD MADRAS

Auto anybody?!

Like the 19th Century English traveller and humorist Edward Lear, who divided humanity into "them that has (seen the Taj)" and "them that hasn't", I'd separate the men from the boys from among my fellow citizens of Madras into "them that has (ridden in a city auto)" and "them that hasn't!"

I'd go further and make an auto ride a mandatory urban ritual, guaranteed to endow the initiated with nerves of steel, shock-proof soul, the hanging-on powers of the iguana not to mention a touching faith in the miraculous powers of the auto as it hurts itself and you in the chaotic jungle of Madras roads. There to plunge itself with manic-glee into the milling traffic, leap Houdini-like over gaping potholes and reclining cows, squeeze its 3-feet frame into 2-foot spaces, sideways and on two of its 3 wheels while you hang desperately to the overhanging strap, looking helplessly at a world turned dizzily askew.

Mostly, though, the auto courses along sweetly on the straight and narrow, but never become too complacent; it might suddenly decide to take on the most wicked looking truck in a no-holds-barred race, turn skittish and miss Eskimo-kissing a burly bus by a hair's breadth or even turn a playful somersault if the roads are wet. Alas,

• by Pushpa Chari

this happened to me once when I landed on the road in a rather ungraceful curve with my face firmly embedded in the lemon soufflé dish I was carrying. Needless to say, I had rather a lot of soufflé that evening, but that, as Kipling would have said, is another story.

I am a great fan of the Madras auto, no mistake about it. Which other vehicle would gamely whistle out of nowhere, rain or shine and no matter how unholy the hour? Where else would one get to ride with Kamala-

hasan or Kushboo, enticingly stuck to the sides of the auto? And where else would you get piped Tamil pop songs as an added bonus? Then there are the auto drivers who are driving encyclopaedias of local politics and happenings from whom you can pick up such fascinating tit-bits as the real state-of-heart of certain film stars or politicians, why

that crocodile caught in Thiruvannamur must have been a disguised LTTE agent and why we all must pay Rs. 3 extra to all suffering auto drivers!

While you are chatting, it is advisable to train a gimlet eye on the meter, lest it trip you up, to your disadvantage. Also never get into an argument with your auto driver while he is driving. I once thoughtlessly apprised mine of an evil-looking bus bearing down on us, whereat the auto driver turned around to face me and delivered a

thundering lecture on how he loved life too, how he too had a mother, sister and wife, and how I could get off if I doubted his capabilities as a driver etc. And all the while, head turned full-till towards me. The driver apparently steered his machine with the back of his head — Whew!!

He (also) travels fastest who travels in a Madras auto. My recent experiment shows that while it takes a boring 45 minutes to do the Chelput-Adyar route by car at peak traffic time, your spunky auto does it in 35 minutes with its usual zing, bravura and its scattering, whizzing and flying tactics. No doubt about it, the auto takes you places (and how!) as well as adds a dash of colour, mild fun and character to the Madras streetscape. I often wonder what that indefatigable traveller Paul Theroux would make of Madras as seen through an auto. Perhaps "Madly Mobile In Madras" or even "The Great Bone-Rattling Bazaar"?

A meal with a difference — a *pilau* with prawns, *dhal* made with whole *mung*, a tomato-potato curry and *vadai* made with mixed vegetables. An unusual, tempting meal.

Add the prawns. Fry for 5 minutes. Add the rice and fry for 2-3 minutes.

Transfer the whole mixture into a pressure cooker, adding six cups of water. Cook till done. Garnish with fried onions and serve hot.

PRAWN PILAU

- 4 cups basmati rice, washed and drained
- ½ kg prawns, cleaned and deveined
- 7 or 8 green chillies, slit sideways
- 3 onions, sliced fine
- 2 onions, deep fried to a golden brown (for decoration)
- 10-12 pods of garlic } ground to a paste
- 4" piece ginger }
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped fine
- 1 cup mint and coriander leaves
- 1½ tablespoons *dhaniya* powder
- 1 pinch saffron
- 2 tbs ghee
- 2 tbs oil

Garam Masala

- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 6 cardamoms
- 6 cloves
- 3 bay leaves

Method

Heat oil in heavy bottomed vessel. Add the bay leaves and *garam masala*. When they crackle, add the sliced onions and fry till light brown.

Add the ginger-garlic paste, fry for a minute or two. Add *dhaniya* powder, green chillies, chopped coriander, mint leaves, tomatoes and saffron. Fry a little more.

Mrs P Raghupathy

MASALA MUNG DAL

- 1 cup whole *mung*, soaked overnight and pressure cooked
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped fine
- 2 tsp *dhaniya* powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp *garam masala*
- 2 tbs tsp of milk (cream)
- 3 tbs ghee
- 1 tsp jeera
- 1" piece ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 small bunch of coriander leaves, chopped fine

Method

Heat ghee, add the cummin seeds. When they splutter, add the onions and fry for a minute. Add the chopped tomatoes, *dhaniya* powder, chilli powder, turmeric powder and grated ginger. Fry for a minute or two.

Add the cooked *mung*, salt, some water and simmer till well blended. Add the *garam masala* and simmer for another minute or two.



Finally mix in the cream. Blend well. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves and serve hot with a *pilau*.

POTATO-TOMATO CURRY

- ½ kg potato, boiled, peeled and chopped to ½ inch pieces
- 3 or 4 tomatoes, chopped fine
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1" piece ginger, scraped and grated
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 1 teaspoon *kasoori methi*
- 3 or 4 tbs oil
- 2 tsp *garam masala*
- 1 small bunch coriander leaves, chopped fine

Method

Heat oil, fry the chopped onions, grated ginger till golden. Add the chopped tomatoes, turmeric powder, red chilli powder and salt. Fry for a minute or two.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Add the chopped potato. Fry for a minute. Add the *kasoori methi* and fry till everything blends. Finally add the *garam masala*. Mix well. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot.

VEGETABLE MASALA VADAI

- ½ cup bengal gram *dhal* } soak in water, for 1 hour, and grind to a paste
- ¼ cup black gram *dhal* }
- 1 tsp *maida*
- 1 tsp fried gram *dhal* (*bhuna channa*)
- ¼ cup chopped carrot
- ½ cup chopped cabbage
- 4 — 6 green chillies chopped fine
- 1 small piece ginger, peeled and chopped fine
- 1 onion, chopped fine

A few curry and coriander leaves
Salt to taste
Oil for deep frying

Method

Mix all the ingredients with the ground paste. Heat oil and fry *vadai*s till golden. Drain on absorbent paper and serve piping hot.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Be courteous, you're warned!

(Continued from P4)

home-cooked meal — the rest of his meals are eaten outside. They have eateries to suit every purse, serving Chinese, Malay, Indian or expensive palates and fast food joints for the mediocre. Finally, there are the hawkers' centres. They throw up a wide range of food under one roof. Often, you can watch your meal cook. The food is tasty and hygienically prepared, although the smell of various cooked food lies heavy in the air. The staunch vegetarian may find his consternation that his 'vegetable fried rice' was cooked in pork fat.

I sent my son to a play school run by a Christian organisation in the fond hope of instilling in him strong Christian values. He was the only Indian in the school. And he earned the nickname 'Indian John' to distinguish him from Johns Chang, Wang, Lang, Foo and Tan. He was a constant source of

wonder to the children. They could not comprehend how he opened his eyes so wide.

There are well-laid-out, beautiful gardens to relax, jog, exercise or take your children picnicking. You could enjoy your time in Singapore provided you adhere to all the rules laid out. Singaporeans need constant reminders, what to do and what not to do. Strict and expensive punishments are meted out to miscreants.

The *Straits Times* is a relaxing way to begin your day. You can rest assured that your day will not be marred by news items of militants, insurgents or dowry deaths. The biggest headlines would be "Mr. X, aged 70, fined for urinating in the lift".

Besides all the do's and don'ts listed, you are constantly being reminded to 'be courteous' — a sign, you have a strong suspicion, which goes unread and unnoticed. Maybe a hefty fine levied on the discourteous would provide better results.

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight June 16-30th)

- Who is the new Chief Justice of the Madras High Court?
- Name this year's recipient of the state's Bharatidasan Award for distinguished service to Tamil development.
- In what way has Cornwall cricketer Ian Harris made cricketing history?
- Which is the latest group of subjects made part of the UPSC's papers for the IAS?
- Name the Somali warlord whose neighbourhood was badly pounded by UN forces recently.
- Which deceased MP's name has been quoted by Harshad Mehta as the intermediary in his alleged pay-off to the PM?
- What is common to actress Lakshmi, music maestro T.V. Gopalakrishnan, cricketer Mohinder Amarnath and journalist Rusi Karanjia?
- Over what structure will the French firm Campenon Bernard Sge build a concrete sarcophagus?
- Name the 1983 Nobel Laureate for Literature who passed away recently.
- The first-ever auction sale of an Oscar award to a major star went for \$ 68,500. Whose award?
- Henry Leon Ritzenhaler recently created news around the globe. How?
- Name the recently launched Tamil film with the longest title?
- Which newspaper closed down literally overnight, creating 'news' all over the country?
- Name the godman whose body was forcibly cremated by Police in Calcutta after a 56-day stand-off with his devotees.
- Who won the Challenger Cup at the recently concluded MCC-Lifebuoy hockey tournament in Madras?
- The centenary of which legendary economist and statistician was celebrated recently?
- Where was the rare conclave of the four Sankaracharyas held during the week ending June 26th?
- Dr. Andrew Wiles of Princeton University apparently supplied proof, on June 24th, to a 300-year-old theorem. Name the theorem.
- Which DMK party stalwart was expelled for anti-party activities? The Party is having second thoughts on the expulsion.
- A historical moment was enshrined into the IAF's history on June 21st. What? (Answers p. 8)

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Achievers all, come back, come back!

While congratulating Mr B V Jagannathan, formerly of the Indian Railways, on his little grandson's achievement and the recognition the boy has received in the U.S., I'm sad that Mr Jagannathan wants all his children to live in the U.S. permanently. What about all of us, the other 800 million Indians? What shall we do? Do we also run away to another country where, recognition and easy living apart, we are not wanted and have to live the lives of second class citizens?

In all my tours I have only felt sad for friends trapped in the glittering life of a world away from India. Like that Bharatha Natiyam great, Kamala, who travels on the underground, only to suffer more as she gives dance lessons to extremely Americanised young Indian girls. The Indians I saw there are even more clannish than in India: an Iyer wants to know if you are a Vadama or a Brihacharam! The

ayanam thread, Bharatha Natiyam, silos of Amara Chitra Katha books have become symbols of home culture.

A man who'd lived in the States for twenty years was here recently hunting for a bride. I asked him why he did not look for one among the Indians there. He said he wanted someone brought up with Indian values; he then went back to India bashing, the favourite sport of expatriates. What then are the Indian values the man is talking about?

I met a Mr Narayanan the other day who has come back for good after 11 successful years in the U.S. He says he is now earning at least 30 times less than what he was getting there. Mind you, he is into social work and fringe politics here! He goes and lives in the slums. His American experience has

made him more confident to face life, he says, and not run away from the reality that is 'my country and my people'.

Should we not live here and look the challenge in the eye? My salutes are for the people who come back and try and change life for their own families, if not for others around. But those living abroad are not interested in helping effect those changes. They only speak loud about the state of affairs in India, but when it comes down to brass tacks each one of them is interested only in his life in the West.

Coming back will change the outlook of such self-centred people. Yes, go out and learn from the world, but come back, I say, come back to an India, wars and all; don't run away.

Ayodhya reactions

A group of high profile creative artists and intellectuals met at the Sakshi Gallery the other day to discuss the biggest wart of them all, Ayodhya. Delhi-based SAHMAT brought a very impressive slide presentation on Ayodhya and invited artists, performers, architects and intellectuals(?) to interact with each other and react specifically to Ayodhya as city, as symbol, as metaphor, as myth, as architecture, as topography, as pilgrim site, as history. They are planning a big event in Ayodhya on August 15th. How many from Madras will participate? Meanwhile, these artists against

communalism are going round the country asking for responses. The meeting gave a new perspective to Ayodhya as the city where Buddha lived for six years, as a place visited by Mahavira and a place where

four Thirthankaras were born, where Guru Nanak passed through, a place visited by Fa-Hsien in AD 410, by Huen-Tsang in 672 or 692 AD. Ram Rehman showed pictures of the site of the Ram ki Pairs ghats, wonderfully

The view from the wings

• by V.R. Devika

restored by architect Ravindra Bhan and giving a completely new picture of Ayodhya.

SAHMAT asks for reactions to Ayodhya from anyone interested. You can make a picture, write a poem, weave a fabric, record a song or plant a tree, and write about it to them at 8, Vithalbhair Patel House, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110 001.

There were many ideas floated at the Madras meeting. One was that each one writes a postcard to anyone they know, conveying their feelings about the communal problems.

Carving stories

I had a chance encounter with an unusual artist the other day in Madras. Jayakumar, the Koothupatturai actor, told me about this person he had met in the suburban train. So I went looking for this man who carves on neem trunks and tells stories.

I found him near the Tambaram Sanatorium area. Virat Lakshmana Shastri is an old man who belongs to a traditional family of goldsmiths. He was a Pallavan Transport driver, but now has this hobby of carving wonder-

ful little things on the trunk of a tree or on a branch and relating anecdotes on health, environment and other concerns of modern life.

His carvings are simple, contemporary and quite delicate. A simple man, he keeps laughing to himself as he talks about the things that trouble him. A few theatre people later met with him at Sittirangam and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Inventing dialogue

'Magic Lantern' is a group of young people who are busy rehearsing excerpts from *Pinocchio* with lots of music and dance. It will be staged in different schools in the City during the last week of July.

Oh, what fun fusion was!

It was indeed an East-West fusion concert at the Music Academy recently. As violin virtuoso L Subramaniam conducted the evening's performers — a mixed bag of Indian and Western musicians, on instruments as varied as the mridangam, tabla and kanjira, and bass, drums, guitar and keyboards — he skillfully wove his dulcet violin notes into the tapestry of the music, setting the mood for each piece. The violin seduced the audience, transporting it into a rapturous world far removed from humdrum reality.

What I really appreciated was the splendid rapport the musicians shared on stage. The complicated beat, the complex rhythms, the two styles of music all blended into a harmonious whole. It was clearly evident that the musicians were enjoying themselves thoroughly, with the Western musicians practically 'jigging it up' on stage.

Although I am no expert on musical technique, as a layman with an ear for music I sat back and loved each minute of the concert. But what was almost as interesting as the mix on stage was the motley crowd milling around the Academy that evening.

Downstairs, where the 'elite' sat, I spotted traditional Mysore *maamis* in their Kanchipuram silks keeping *thalam* with the music. There were the usual scattering of the *kurta-pyjama* clad types. And there were the classical music aficionados who were able to reel off the *raagas* and *thaalams* of each piece.

The scenario upstairs was quite, quite different. There we had our Nike-Reebok clad youth turning up in full strength in their faded jeans, miniskirts, punk hairdos and what have you! They swung to the beat, clicked their fingers, stamped their feet, cheered and whistled in mad abandonment, clamoured stridently for a 'bass solo'. Their instinctive response to the music transcended boundaries of East and West, Carnatic and Jazz. Their's was a response from the heart to the magnetic pull of L Subramaniam's music.

East is East and West is West
And never the twain shall meet...



Virat Lakshmana Shastri

The players invented dialogue as they went about rehearsing the play, which has some ten children and some funny guys in the cast. With Pravin directing, it should be fun, especially if they keep inventing more dialogue during the show.

There will be two free shows for the public some time after they finish the school round.

was a cliché that was proved untrue on this enchanting evening. Sitting next to me was an octogenarian *maami* whose actions fascinated me as much as the *tanasha* on stage. The drumbeat had her delightedly clicking her fingers and virtually boogeying in her seat; she was, indeed, 'tripping' to the music! Upstairs, the young closed their eyes in ecstasy as L Subramaniam's violin wove its magical notes, and they sighed and shook their heads as if in a trance.

The unique and original music was an unqualified hit and what contributed to the success of the evening was the wholehearted response from a delighted audience of classical and pop music lovers. The fusion was never more apparent than in the confluence of these two varying kinds of listeners. Fusion it was, in more than one sense.

Congratulations to the Madras Musical Association for organising a splendid show in their Centenary Year. May you treat Madras listeners to more shows of this calibre throughout the year.

— Vinitha Nayar

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Till July 21: — 'Directions-I', an exhibition of representative and figurative art works by Shilpa Chaudhari, Eleena Banik, Sali Sahani, Pavanivel, Ratnakar Ojha, Rawad Tamkanal, Nagarajan at The Gallery. (11.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.)

Till July 24: — 'A Mosaic of Cultures' — Photographs by Stephen F. Dachi, Director of the United States Information Service in India. The 61-photograph exhibit captures vignettes of life in several countries and cultures that Dachi has travelled through — India, Pakistan, China, the Caribbean and Latin America. Dachi has been praised by both press and visitors for his sympathetic eye and his keen ability to transform the mundane with humour, insight and warmth. On display at the Vimonisha Art Gallery.

July 29: — Dr Susan G Haddon, Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, speaks on 'Consumer Protection' (6 p.m. American Center).

Till July 31: — 'Inscapes', an exhibition of paintings by S G Vasudev. At the Sakshi Gallery, 11 Khader Nawaz Khan Road (11 am to 6 pm except Sundays).

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Cricketing brouhahas

By the time you read these lines, India's cricket tour of Sri Lanka would be underway. And *The Corner Flag*, faced with divided loyalties, wishes the Indian team well and hopes it continues its winning streak. But, at the same time, he wonders whether it was necessary for any groundwork to be laid by Skipper Azharuddin in

• THE CORNER FLAG

anticipation of a tour that might be anything less than successful. That's what it seemed, those stories about Percy the Barracker and Azhar's welcoming of the idea of neutral umpires.

The Corner Flag agrees that Percy the Barracker is a bloody nuisance. But then so are parts of the crowds in the cauldrons that pass for stadiums in Indian cricket. In fact, in some Indian centres — and, sadly, Madras is becoming one of them — the amount of stuff thrown at visiting players on the field is not inconsiderable. And some of it is downright dangerous. *The*

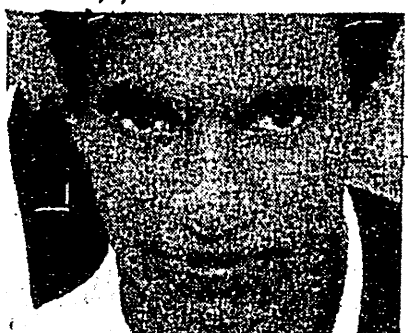
Corner Flag does not remember reading anything as forthright on this subject from the Indian skipper or manager, like asking the unruly to desist.

If Azhar feels his team is capable of playing undisturbed midst the raucous roars heard in the Indian cauldrons, then surely they can handle Percy the Flag-waving Barracker. And so long as Percy does not transgress the rules of cricket — such as strolling on to the field or escorting players to the wicket — no Indian player should have a complaint. Nor an excuse for losing his wicket.

As for Duleep Mendis's snare which the Indian leadership got entangled in, surely it was not wise of Azhar and Wadekar to endorse just one part of the Sri Lankan Manager's views without commenting on the other half. VISITORS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BLAME LOCAL UMPIRING IN CASE THEY LOST! The answer to that is 'We can win with ANY umpires' or 'It doesn't matter who the umpires are; WE ARE NOT SQUEALERS'. Instead, we ignore Mendis's reasons and accept his suggestion, which the Sri Lanka Board



Jayananda Warnaweera



Muttiah Muralidharan

promptly turns down, and the Indian team is left looking unhappy on two counts — one being Percy the Barracker who's not going to be muzzled and, two, the umpires who are going to be Sri Lankan, and whose backs are going to be up, now that the Indian team has expressed the view that it prefers neutral umpires to them.

And though this has not been mentioned in the Press lately, there's yet another excuse we might hear — if necessary — before the tour is over. And that is the bowling actions of spinners Warnaweera and Muralidharan. No doubt, the English, New Zealand and Australian clippings are being kept handy, if the need arises.

Meanwhile, *The Corner Flag* just hopes that none of these excuses will be necessary — and India will return with rubber wins in both the Test and One-day series.

Election surprises

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) elections are over — and though the excitement did not reach the pitch it did last year, when senior office-bearers resigned because their nominee lost one of the ballots, there was enough wheeling and dealing going on to make it clear that all those chosen do not necessarily have the goodwill of the entire house. What that will do to Tamil Nadu Cricket, *The Corner Flag* does not know, but, then, Tamil Nadu cricket, for all its talent, has been so long in the doldrums in recent years that any repetition probably no longer will matter to those in power.

The highlight of the election, from all reports, apparently, was two

QUIZANSWERS

1. Justice K.A. Swamy; 2. Poet P.A. Ilanchezian; 3. The MCC has ruled he can use a runner to run his singles at all times. Ian Harris is a one-legged league cricketer; 4. Medicine; 5. Mohammed Farah Aided; 6. The late Satpal Mittal; 7. All have joined the BJP during its recently concluded national meet; 8. A stricken fourth reactor at Chernobyl; 9. Sir William Golding; 10. Joan Crawford's statuette for *Mildred Pierce*; 11. He recently made public the fact that he is Bill Clinton's half-brother; 12. *Rajadhi Raja*, *Raja Kulothunga*, *Raja Marthanda*, *Raja Gambhira*, *Karthavaraya Krishna Kamarajan*; 13. *Navbharat Times*, Lucknow; 14. Balak Bramachari; 15. ASC, Jalandhar, beating SER, Calcutta; 16. Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis; 17. Sringeri, Karnataka; 18. 'Fermat's Last Theorem'; 19. 'Nanjil' K. Manoharan; 20. The first ever batch of women officers were commissioned into the IAF.

• Shri Lanka tour

A hard road ahead

N Sankar, Chairman, India Cements, and Vice-Chairman, Chemplast, gained a unique distinction on July 2nd, when he entertained the Indian cricket team, now on its scheduled tour of Sri Lanka, to dinner at the Connemara. It was only on June 27th that he was elected President of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, and when he hosted the dinner to Mohammed Azharuddin and his team, the soft-spoken industrialist had become the first head of a State cricket association, or, for that matter, of any Indian sports body, to entertain a National squad less than a week after he had assumed charge.

The dinner was well attended. And everyone took the opportunity to personally wish Azharuddin and his squad the best of luck. They certainly need all the good wishes, for they are poised to take on an up-and-coming foe with the advantage of playing at home, with the psychological advantage of having beaten India in the last home series in 1985, of having vanquished England and New Zealand in their latest home series and with the vociferous support of fans headed by the one and only Percy Abeysekera.

The Sri Lankan summer is hardly likely to pose any problem to the tourists, especially

with a cent per cent fit and trained-to-the-minute team that left Madras for Colombo on July 9th. But how the Indian basmen will stand up to the Island's medium-pacers like Champaka Ramanayake, Dilip Liyanage and Pramodya Wickremasinghe and the youthful fastish off-spinners like Jayananda Warnaweera and Muttiah Muralidharan only the next few weeks can tell. Warnaweera and Muralidharan played star roles in the Sri Lankan victories against England

by
AJAX

and New Zealand, which gave the Island cricket its biggest boost since 1985, when Sri Lanka recorded their first-ever win over India by beating Kapil Dev's team 1-0 in the three-Test home series, with the other two Tests drawn.

Well as Sri Lanka would seem to have a bowling edge over India, barring Aravinda de Silva and Asanka Gurusinha, they have no runmakers of the class of India's Tendulkar, Kamble and others. But so well equipped are Sri Lanka in every other department that there is already a feeling in knowledgeable Indian circles that the tour could turn out to be a dusty, hard road for India. This was evident from the numerous statements Madras newsmen elicited from Azharuddin and Cricket Manager Ajit Wadekar. Neither was fully confident that the full might of the biggest cricketing country would annihilate the challenge of the tiny island.

Azharuddin, for instance, would say nothing more than that "our batting is our strength. The bowling, too, is pretty good. The only sphere where we need to improve a bit is fielding. We have to take our catches to win". But the skipper's main worry, surprisingly enough, seemed to be the continued presence of Sri Lanka's famed one-man cheer squad, Percy Abeysekera. "I will not allow my game to be affected by any acts of the most prominent Sri Lankan fan," Azharuddin said after recalling how, on the 1985 tour, Abeysekera's actions along the boundary line were not checked despite repeated requests by the tourists.

From all accounts, the Indians will have to cope not only with Abeysekera and his like, but also with patriotic Lankan fans who still remember Kapil Dev's verdict after his team's 1985 loss that Sri Lanka "will never win away from home". It is no wonder that the tour, just a few days old, is being followed with unprecedented interest throughout India, especially in Madras city, where the Indian conditioning camp was held.

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Can TNSDA deliver?

The Jayalalitha government hit the sports front with the construction of the Rs. 40 crore modern football-cum-athletics Nehru Stadium at People's Park. Though "Asia's best-equipped stadium" is yet to wake up from its slumber since the Nehru Gold Cup international football tournament was held there to mark its inauguration over six months ago, the State Government has done Tamil Nadu sport another good turn by merging the State Sports Development Corporation and the Directorate of Sports and Youth Services into the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority (TNSDA), with Chief Minister Jayalalitha as its President.

The State government is, apparently, determined to raise the overall standards of Tamil Nadu sport. Ironically, Tamil Nadu standards in football and athletics, the two world disciplines for which the stadium was put up, have virtually hit rock-bottom, and so have the State's hockey standards. Will the TNSDA be able to change that situation?

As only to be expected, the TNSDA is packed with Ministers and top government officers. An exception is B Sivanthi Adityan, the IOA President. The government did well to appoint him Vice-President as he has, for long, been closely associated not only with the Olympic movement but also with such disciplines as volleyball, basketball and boxing, the three sports in which the state has been making a

mark in recent years. Other non-official members include Eric Prabhakar, former Olympic sprinter, P L Reddy, former Tamil Nadu Tennis Association Secretary, and Mrs Devi Palani-swamy, the well-known badminton official.

But the government seems to have missed the bus as far as football and hockey are con-

by
JAICI

cerned. These two sports cry out for reforms locally more than any other discipline. It is indeed difficult to understand how the government could have failed to include in the TNSDA a knowledgeable soccer official like C R Viswanathan, the MFA President, and an experienced hockey star like V Bhaskaran, former Olympic captain.

How many of the Ministers and government officials are experienced enough to find ways and means to raise Tamil Nadu standards, time alone will tell. But the average fan knows that none of them has kicked or hit a ball, or donned a track suit, or wielded a racquet, in major competition. Despite that, can they deliver the goods?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since these lines were written, Viswanathan has been nominated to the TNSDA, justifying JAICI's comments. Now, will Bhaskaran be next?