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## MUSINGS

Vol. III. No. 10

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

September 1 — 15, 1993

South India reciprocates by offering...

# A helping hand with tea

(By A Special Correspondent)

Up in Coonoor in the Blue Mountains they are, this 14th, 15th and 16th, commemorating a planting century. The Prime Minister, the Chief Ministers of the three southern states where the planting industry is entrenched, the Minister for Plantations from Sri Lanka, the Indian Minister of Commerce and the British High Commissioner in India are all expected to be there to mark the occasion when 22 men, good and true, representing 12 district planting associations met in Bangalore on August 23, 1893, and agreed to form an Association of Associations, the United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI).

Coonoor, in the heart of the planting district of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, is an appropriate venue, for it is here that there has been for several years now the headquarters of UPASI in the beautiful Glenview campus. But even more appropriate will be the presence of the Sri Lanka Minister, the British High Commissioner and some three dozen former British planters who had spent the best years of their lives in the rugged Western Ghats.

Without the Sri Lanka — then Ceylon — and British connections it is unlikely that the planting of coffee, rubber and tea — and even traditional spices — would have made much

headway 150 and more years ago. It was British planters who, taking a leaf out of their compatriots' planting log in the Ceylon highlands, opened out the elephant-patrolled, malaria-ridden, leech-infested Western Ghats for coffee. And when the coffee blight wiped out the Ceylon coffee planter and laid waste the southern planting districts of India, it was the Ceylon response to tea that encouraged the British planters in South India to find hope in a new crop. And, in later years, the Ceylon planter also showed the South Indian planter the way with rubber. In spices alone, South India has remained self-learning.

For over a hundred years, South India followed where Ceylon led. The 'Ceylon Planter' was the preferred breed in the early days of opening up and planting in South India. Many of the early planters' homes were built by 'Singhalese carpenters' and the opening up facilitated by Indian *maistries* who'd followed their *Peria* or *Sinna Dorais* from Ceylon.

With the nationalisation of the planting industry in Sri Lanka about 25 years ago, things began to change. And with greater professionalism in management and a greater faith in science in India, the change became almost revolutionary. As the Sri Lanka plantation industry slipped back, the South Indian industry, now entirely in

Indian hands, forged ahead. Today, South Indian tea and rubber yields are among the highest in the world. And as Ceylon, worried about the state of its estates, began to privatise, it encouraged South Indian planting companies to lend a helping hand.

Today, Tata Tea, Harrison's Malayalam, A V Thomas's and Parry-Agro have all teamed with Sri Lankan companies to introduce South Indian tea planting practices in the Island. And all of them have started work on putting up factories to manufacture the largest selling teas in the world, those teas

(Continued on P7)



Clearing the jungle for coffee (on top) in the 1880s. The Ceylon scene drawn by a planter, Stewart Fasson, in 1881, was repeated many times over in South India during these years. Above, the new Glenview building, UPASI headquarters in Coonoor.

## IIT considers centre to help conservationists

(By A Staff Reporter)

A materials testing and advisory Centre that will help in the conservation of buildings and monuments is something the Building Technology and Construction Management Division of the Civil Engineering Department of IIT would like to establish. And the shape the Centre should take was the subject of a recent workshop the Division held on the campus. All participants — many from the archaeological surveys and the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board — were in favour of such a Centre.

It was pointed out that when a recent study was made of *Rajaji Hall* (the once and former magnificent *Banqueting Hall*) there was need to test the wood. But though the tests could have been done at the IIT Division, it was necessary to go to the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun, as that was the only institution whose testing was formally acceptable to the Government. A testing centre set up at IIT for the whole of the South, and with Government's blessings, would go a long way to meet the needs of conservationists seeking endorsement of their findings during such studies as the *Rajaji Hall* one.

Another case cited was the magnificent dome of St. Andrew's Kirk in Egmore. Cracks are endangering this splendid piece of architecture. But investigation into the material reason for the cracks has had to be sought in Britain. The suggested IIT centre would perhaps have been able to help if it was in existence.

The loud and vivid colouring of temple *gopurams* was also the subject of discussion during the workshop.

### Ship from T.N. intercepted on high seas

(By A Staff Reporter)

A French ship, the *Ville de Vega*, sailing from a Tamil Nadu port, was recently intercepted by an Egyptian Navy vessel on, it is believed, a US request, and turned back before it could reach a West Asian port with a cargo for Jordan, destined eventually, in American minds, for Iraq. How's that for a problem for students discussing the international law of the sea?

The cargo aboard was hydrofluoric acid manufactured by the Madras-headquartered Birla Group company, Tanfac Industries' factory in Cuddalore. The chemical is used in detergent manufacture and is not a banned export item.

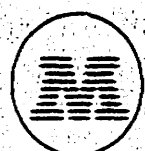
The Americans, however, think it "can be used for the enrichment of uranium".

Did someone mention "the, big stick"? Who said Bill Clinton looked like Teddy Roosevelt?

Why weren't traditional practices of leaving the stone uncoloured or uncoloured with herbal dyes followed? The louder the colours, the greater the political grace, appeared to be the answer. But a matter of concern expressed was that the use of such commercial paints as at present would shorten the lifespan of these beautiful towers considerably. The proposed IIT Centre would, in such circumstances, be able to come up with alternative, safer paints if it could not change the tastes of politicians and politicised trustees.

K S Shanmugam, Principal of the Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram, wanted greater interaction between his students, who were being trained in traditional practices, and those of IIT and the engineering colleges. Pointing out that the temple builders and constructors of great *anaicuts* of yore were great engineers — for all those were indeed engineering feats — he said their building and architectural practices were being taught at the college, besides sculpture. Interaction between the students of these traditions and those used to more modern ways would immensely benefit both.

These and various other ideas discussed at the workshop will be incorporated in its report on 'The Preservation and Restoration of Monumental Structures' and out of the report, it is hoped, will emerge a more concretised proposal for a Centre to help and encourage conservation.



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# The Law and the Politician

How does one get back one's property in this city — or this state or this country, for that matter? How does one have a tenant, who refuses to leave, evicted?

In a case *The Man From Madras Musings* recently heard of, a tenant who refused to vacate a property and who had a long history of abusing the landlord-tenant relationship was taken to court. The court ruled in the landlord's favour. And the tenant promptly appealed. The High Court too ruled in the landlord's favour. And yet the tenant refused to budge. An appeal was made to the court.

And so the bailiffs swung into action. On the appointed day, not so long ago, a Chief Bailiff and his assistants, together with three policemen and several men to carry the tenant's possessions

out, turned up with the landlord at the tenant's place. And still the tenant refused to move. But he was not the only impediment.

A call from the landlord to a local politician immediately brought on the scene a gang that spelled muscle. And together they took up the chant that if anyone touched the tenant's property there'd be murder and mayhem. Whereupon the policemen vanished and the bailiffs advised the scholarly landlord, to whom this was a whole new world, to beat a tactical retreat and live to fight another day.

The necessary complaints have now all been made, at all the right places, but getting the tenant out seems to be a process that will take as long into the future as the litigation has taken in the past. In the circumstances, to whom does the landlord

appeal for justice? The Speaker? The Chief Minister? The Governor? The Prime Minister? Or the President? Suggestions are welcome, but *MMM* is afraid most of them will be like Mr. B V Jagannathan's: It would be best to cut your losses and get out of the country!

Meanwhile the thugs have been visiting the landlord and offering, on behalf of the tenant, the politician and themselves, a settlement and vacant possession on receipt of a few lakhs!

## Gyping the Prof.

The venerable old Professor is perhaps the doyen of all those teaching that rather nebulous course called Public Relations. Certainly, *The Man From Madras Musings* has known him as taking Public Relations classes these past 20 years or so and, more importantly, propagating the idea of Public Relations being a PROFESSION and one which could benefit from formal instruction.

In the pursuit of this dedication, the Professor has compiled and written several books on Public Relations. Many of these books have been used by various institutions teaching the subject and the Professor has looked to the royalty from sales as being his main income. Imagine, then, his chagrin when he finds a major university in this state playing plagiarist and hurting his revenue!

The University in question runs a very successful correspondence course. And for its course material, it has been using whole chunks of the Professor's material without so much as a "by your leave". In a letter to the institution, the Professor claims that "two-thirds of the 331-page contents are copied from my book, and the funniest thing is... printed on the cover page... (are the words) 'Copyright Reserved'." He goes on to state that, as a result, sales of his book have been affected.

The Professor also adds in his letter, more in resignation than angry sarcasm, "Had there been no provision for your Directorate to pay an Honorarium to a Public Relations Expert to write the lessons, you could have contacted me; I would have served this noble cause, so dear to my heart, by accepting only my out-of-pocket expenses..."

As in all such cases, the poor Professor has still not received a reply at the time these lines are being written (six weeks after his letter) and the University is undoubtedly growing rich at the expense of this sad individual. Who does one go to for justice in THIS case?

Cinema of the South — and hope they can trigger a revival of better film tastes.

Something that might help in this is undoubtedly Ranga Rao's fabulous collection of records. There are over 37,000 records in that collection. And, as he says, where else can you hear

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

5000 voices under one roof? Those voices range from the great singers of the South to the leading political figures of yesteryear.

Here is a national treasure that needs careful preservation and accessibility. How is that to be made possible? That's a subject that Vintage Heritage might discuss at one of its forthcoming meetings.

## In Brief

Is Rajnikanth entering politics? He's never said a definite 'Yes' nor a positive 'No'. The last time he was asked this question was at a function to mark the silver jubilee week of his starrer, *Yajaman*. Evasive as ever, he replied, "I have an answer to your question in my film *Valli Vandachu* to be released on August 15th". And, he added, "I have clearly brought out my feelings in it through a character in the film". Well, August 15th has come and gone, but *The Man From Madras Musings*, for one, is none the wiser. But then, he's no film buff; perhaps someone who's seen the film will put him out of his misery and tell him who'll be the next film star to enter politics.

Apropos this column's remarks on Spencer's and 'butler cooking', another reader who prefers anonymity sends *MMM* this quote from a then 20-year-old J L Benson, a planter who had worked on the Brooke Bond estates in South India till World War II. Benson arrived in South India from Ceylon in 1928 and, after making the ferry-crossing, boarded the train and made his way to the dining saloon for "my first taste of a proper Victorian breakfast". Remembering the meal in the 1990s, he writes: "There was no nonsense about a bowl of cereal and a cup of

Nescafé — this was a proper meal which I think of with considerable nostalgia. Not only was it remarkably good, but I was, remarkably, capable of eating it. The light and elegant repast as I remember it stretched to a mere seven courses as were proper for a hot climate — porridge, fish, veg. curry and rice, bacon and eggs, mutton chops, toast and marmalade, mixed fresh fruit with coffee, tea or cold drinks. Never ever anywhere else had I had a seven course breakfast. I always thought highly of the South Indian Railway after that." Pity he doesn't go on about Spencer's lunch. Now that was something, *MMM* remembers!

And so you've been wondering that Justice V Ramaswami has still not resigned and returned to these parts. Well, it seems he has a whole heap of leave and he's enjoying it before calling it a day. By then, it'll be almost time to come back honourably, the Delhi grapevine has it.

A five-year-old girl was playing in the courtyard of the famed Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur. She is said to have suddenly vanished from sight. During the long search for her, a 60-foot deep well was examined. And there she was, SITTING at the bottom, unharmed and unconcerned about the fuss in the courtyard. It is all well and good to say her miraculous escape was due to God's mercy, but if the story reported is indeed true, what was the Archaeological Survey of India, under whom this historic temple comes, doing, allowing an open, unprotected well to exist in a public courtyard where children are numerous?

The Trade Unions in Madras might not be happy about liquor baron Vijay Mallaya's way of handling the affairs of Best and Crompton in Madras, but he's now being described as the 'Beer Badshah' in his adopted home, Britain. With the acquisition of the Wiltshire Brewery company in the UK, Kingfisher Lager is making its presence felt in hundreds of pubs in Britain. And 1800 Indian restaurants in UK are getting ready to stock not only Kingfisher Lager but also Calcutta Dry Gin, Bagpiper Whisky, East India Rum and a host of other Indian brands. All of which has not stopped Mallaya expanding his paints business internationally as well. — *MMM*

## SUPPORT THE RESTORATION OF SENATE HOUSE

Over Rs. 1 crore is needed to restore and thereafter maintain *Senate House* (the first building of the University of Madras), according to the study and conservation plan prepared for it by INTACH.

All donations are fully exempted under Sec. 80(B) of the Income Tax Act. Bank drafts/Cheques to be drawn in favour of *The Registrar* (Senate House Conservation Fund Account), University of Madras-600 005.

INTACH calls all graduates of the University of Madras and other members of the public to support the worthy cause of conservation.

(Space donated by: TAMARAI MILLS LIMITED)

## Sound of Music

Heard of an organisation called Vintage Heritage? This Kodambakkam-based organisation, founded with the blessings of that Madras trio dedicated to popular films and pop film music, V A K Ranga Rao, Randor Guy and 'Film News' Anandan, is trying to revive interest in the 'Golden Oldies' of South Indian Cinema. They screen such music-oriented films as *Chinthaamani*, *Sakunthalai*, etc. and hold meetings where the music from old films is played or discussed. They also have several other programmes linked with the Old

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Save that Building

Your front page article (*MM* Aug. 1) on historical conservation makes interesting but sad reading. It shows the difficulties in the maintenance and improvement of the aesthetic quality of the City. The organisation EPOCH — which stood for Environmental Protection and Conservation of the Historic Places in Madras — mentioned by you could not make much headway for lack of adequate public support. INTACH has come into this field and has been able to mobilise action on several important environmental problems in Madras, including conservation of the historic places. But its voice is yet to be fully heard. It is, however, heartening that MMDA is at last incorporating historic conservation aspects in its new master plan.

The MMDA's intentions and objectives in this regard will be tested by its actions in relation to the newly proposed DGP complex on the Marina where one of the old historic buildings exists. MMDA should take action now.

Given that our widely read Chief Minister is committed to give Madras a better deal, it should be easy to evolve a design for the new building in sympathy with the existing one. Lack of public support to the cause of conservation is the main impediment in Madras. INTACH's role could be strengthened if eminent citizens of Madras and sponsors and readers of *Madras Musings* could come together and chalk out a programme of action to save this beautiful building from extinction and to plan the city's future development, keeping intact the historic heritage of Madras.

### Brain Drain-I

This is in response to V R Devika's call, "Achievers all, come back, come back!" in *Madras Musings* July 16. A little reflection will show that this invitation, although well-intentioned, may not be in the interest of both the returnees and those stuck here with no escape routes. The author herself agrees we are a nation of over 800 millions and still increasing in number every day. The waiting lists in our employment exchanges, queues at our bus stops, railway stations, ration shops and other public amenities are already so long and overflowing that it is better not to add imported manpower, without increases on the supply side.

There is no dearth of brains in this country. In fact, judging from the number of advisers, journalists, authors and other experts, the country is overflowing with brain-power. There may be many brains in the drain, making the so-called brain drain inconsequential. NRIs settled abroad will be doing a greater service to the nation by staying there, earning valuable foreign exchange, and repatriating as much of it as possible for the benefit of importing crude oil, gas and other essentials to keep the hearths burning at home and keep the wolf from the door in many a household.

Everyone agrees that there is a lot of social work to be done in India. But, for this, we will have to fall back on our resources and emulate the work ethic of some of our forgotten leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi. He did not mind constructing toilets and keeping them in good shape. And this is a facility which is very much in need in many parts of Madras city to improve its sanitation, not to speak of its aesthetic appeal and tourist attraction.

V V Krishna

B-6 Snehasadan

96 Santhome High Road

Madras 600 028.

### Brain Drain-II

There is no denial of the fact that brain drain in our country is on the increase. Hence the clarion call of V R Devika (*MM* July 16) to all achievers to come back to India is well-timed.

But once our people taste the life style of foreign countries, they hesitate to come back. In the same issue (*MM* July 16), the letter from a homesick Madras describes the life in Singapore. Singapore has become a

paradise amongst paradises in the world. I stayed in Singapore for some time. The Singaporeans strictly adhere to Rules and Regulations. But we Indians we follow the breach of Rules as the order of the day. Singapore is the cleanest city in the world. But alas India is dirtiest with all sorts of noise pollution, air pollution, water pollution, not to speak of adulteration in everything. On the National Day the Singaporeans right from the one year infant to the oldest citizen sing the National Song in one voice and that too with beaming smiles large on their faces. We Indians never sing the National Song.

Corruption has become part and parcel of our life. Unless one greases the palms of the authorities he can never get his work done. Right from the lowest paid to the highest paid, everybody expects money, we want to amass money and that too cheap money without any efforts.

What is the fate of the topost officers who exhibit honesty, integrity and straight-forwardness? They are sent out unceremoniously. Then how can we bring down brain drain?

Who is responsible for this sorry state of affairs? The blame can squarely be placed on our politicians who talk with two tongues. This situation drives the honest citizens to go abroad and lead a peaceful life.

Is there any way out for our country to prosper? As things stand, no light could be seen in the tunnel. Time alone should give the answer.

C R Thiruvengadathan  
Srirangam  
Trichy 620 006.

### Terminal Cancer

I refer to my letter, in *Madras Musings* July 1. Several letters have appeared in your columns commenting on it, and I would like to make my submission as a matter of explanation and elaboration.

When I referred to 'quality of life', it was not in the context of a luxurious or glamorous style of living. In their avocations, the expatriate Indians have to struggle extremely hard, further circumscribed by the very limited number of holidays and leave that can be availed of. In general, most of them enjoy professional satisfaction, and in a large measure due to absence of interference from others — political or administrative.

This is in direct contrast to the situation in India, where not only the professional, but also the personal life, is subjected to various pulls, pushes, constraints and mental suffering. A working person, in addition to his official or professional work, has to struggle without respite for electricity connection, telephone connection, LPG connection and supply, ration card, reservation of journeys, approval for house construction, and admission for children to schools and myriad other things. The amount of time wasted and suffering endured in balling administrative lethargy and corruption, instead of engaging in creative and productive work, is stupendous. On the other hand, corruption at the lower levels, in the U.S.A. and UK, is insignificant, and does not affect the common man even a little bit, and a person is able to obtain essential conveniences, without any exertion or difficulty.

We are apt to blame the shopkeeper for the high prices or an individual clerk for administrative delay (A lorry driver transporting goods across different states or within the states in India, has to carry bundles of currency notes for distribution like bit notices to the check posts and policemen on the way. Where do these costs go? Similarly, the efficiency of the clerk and the administrator is a reflection on his background and recruitment gained by corruption). We have, therefore, to look beyond the apparently proximate causes for the prevailing situation.

In addition to the fabulous perks enjoyed by the legislators, they are gifted with quotas for telephone connections, for admissions to colleges, and their recommendations are informally mandatory for permissions, approvals, licenses etc. granted by the Govt. This open and insidious infiltration of politically inspired venality and corruption reaches out into the everyday life of the people, without their realisation.

We have cases here, every other day, of M.P.'s and ministers holding up flights to suit their convenience. Not long ago, a scheduled Indian Airlines flight bound for Madras from Delhi was diverted to Hyderabad as the majority of the passengers who were M.P.'s and MLA's desired to proceed to Hyderabad. The political hijacking of a scheduled flight is unheard of elsewhere. Bill Clinton's haircut created such a furore in the media all over the U.S.A. precisely for the reason that it was an exception and not the rule.

Despite the fact that politicians have been bandying corruption charges against the ruling as well as opposition parties, during the last three decades, there is not a single instance of any politician having been prosecuted and convicted for corruption, as the commonality of all parties converge. Things have deteriorated, not steadily, but by leaps and bounds during the last two decades. We should realise that politicians have marginalised the administrators, journalists, educationists, intellectuals and legal luminaries, and every other section of society to their personal advantage. It has become a question of Politicians versus The Rest in all walks of life.

A reader has been charitable enough to ask 'Why am I here?'. I would like to ask: 'Why are we here?' If 800 million Indians cannot make themselves heard above the din of the politicians' cacophony and cannot, or would not, even try to change the state of affairs, we might all go elsewhere. If the symptoms suggest that what has been discussed are only warts on the body politic, we can all relax. The prognosis, however, appears to lead to a case of terminal cancer.

B V Jagannathan  
23 Ramachandra Street  
T Nagar, Madras 600 017.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This correspondence is now closed.

### Chance for poetry

This is in response to your article 'No Poetry in Madras' in *Madras Musings* August 1. I was taken aback, or rather abashed, by this article. I am quite sure that there is sufficient poetic material in Madras which, given an opportunity, will flower in your publication.

Zaheer Ahmed Sayed  
9, Seshadri Road  
Alwarpet, Madras 600 018.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are basically a news and news-feature journal; we are not a literary journal and so do not feature poetry unless it is topical. Sorry about that.

### Successes & failures

Your article 'No Poetry in Madras' (*MM* Aug. 1) made interesting reading. Madras has more lake poets than anywhere in India who have been conferred with

'doctorates'. There's one person who claims that his poems have been published in more than 50 countries. He has a network of postmasters around him, some of whom are his close associates who entice unsuspecting writers to him for doctorates which he confers for a price — and there is a 'cut' also for his agents. But deservedly serious poets, critics and publishers don't have a chance in Madras.

T K Abdul Majeed  
2, Gulam Abbas Alkhan 5th St.,  
Madras 600 006.

### Great debates

Rel *Madras Musings* July 16. May I suggest that you look up the proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council of Nov/Dec 1923 and of Feb 1924?

The 1923 motion read: "That a humble and dutiful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor submitting that the Ministry, as now constituted by him, is against the weight of the verdict given by the country in the general election and does not possess the confidence of the House."

The motion was against the Raja of Panagal Ministry.

The 1924 Motion was for adjournment of the House.

The 1923 and 1924 debates on the No-Confidence Motion, and Issue of Whip were the first of their kind ever to be debated in India, under the Dyarchy.

I am sure you will agree that they were indeed great debates, after reading them.

In those days, the daily session was from 11 a.m. to 5.30 or 6 p.m. and every member was present throughout the day.

C A Reddi  
57, EVK Sampath Road  
Vepery, Madras 600 007.

### Two-wheeler menace

The way two-wheelers are increasing in Madras in recent times is alarming. Coupled with their frequent use by owners even for walkable distances, they create noise pollution, traffic jams etc. The worst they do is pollute the air. Can you inhale clean air in Madras?

Why don't we, as responsible citizens, reduce the use of vehicles — using them only in unavoidable circumstances. If using them, why not put off the engine at signals? Why not use public transport more?

By being a responsible citizen, we can at least make the world healthier for future generations.

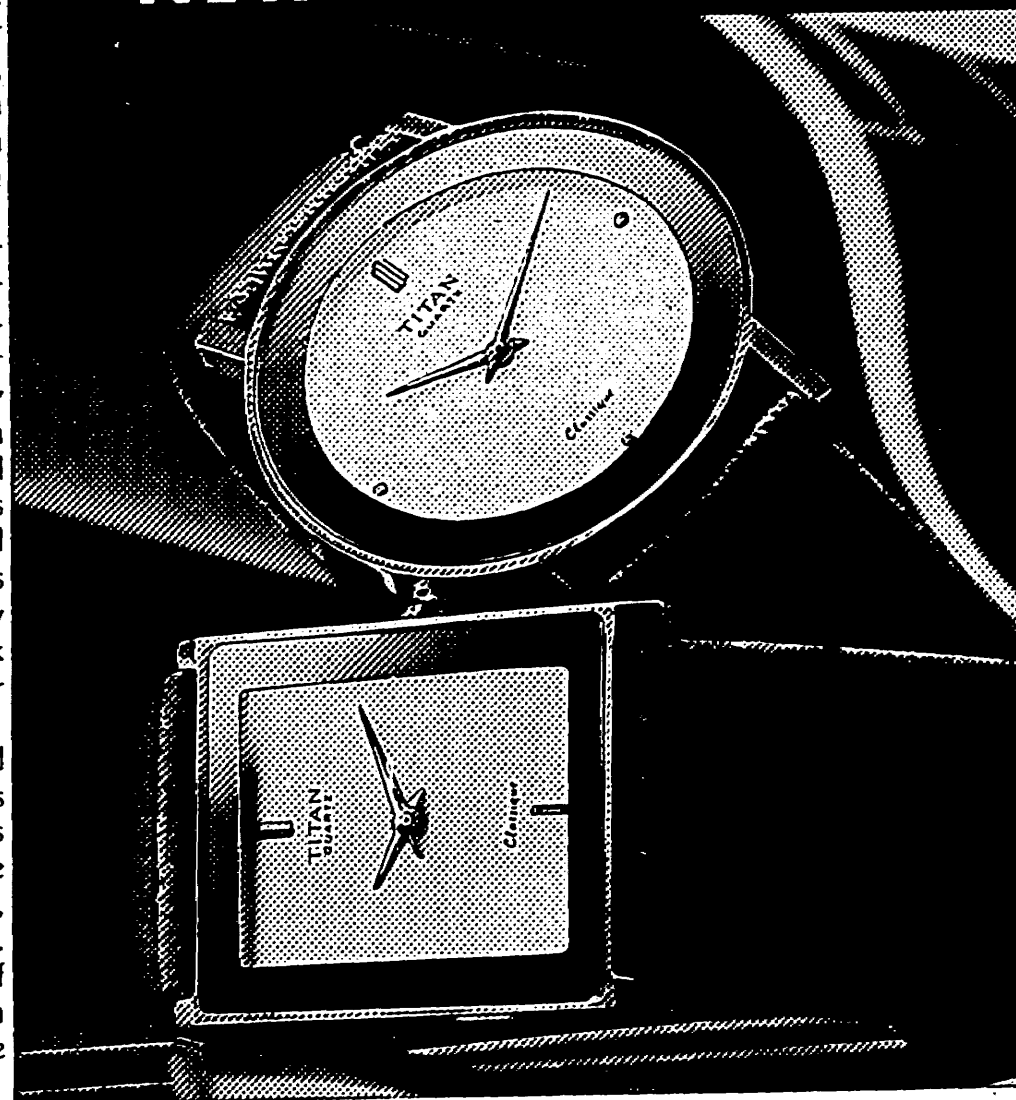
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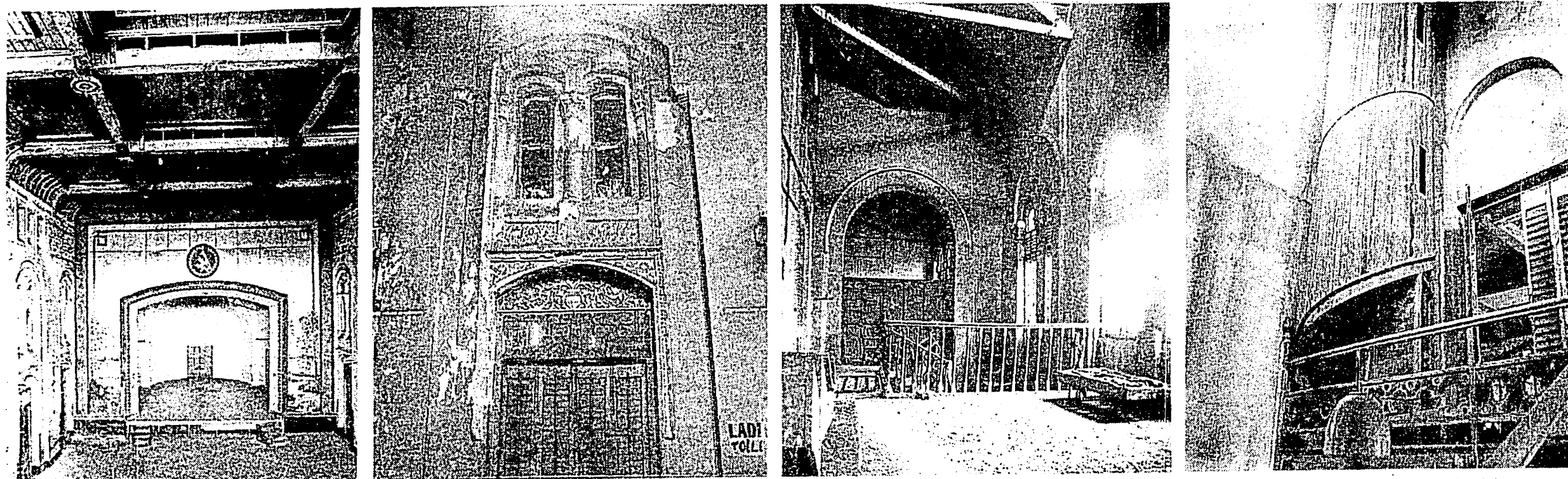
## EDUCATION

Attention: Civic Organisations, Schools and Colleges in Madras! See page 3 of *Madras Musings* August 16-31 on use of FEED to reduce air pollution in the city. Organisations, Associations and Institutions interested in knowing more about FEED, may kindly contact Prof. S. Raghavachari, Consultant, Energy Device Technology (India) P. Ltd., No. 4, IV Main Road, Indira Nagar, Madras-20. Phone No. 411776 for talk-cum-demonstration titled 'Let's clear the air'.

## British Council Library Recent Additions

Author	Title
BAGSHAW, C R	Muscle contraction. 2nd ed.
BLODGETT, H	Englishman's diary.
BRUCE, D W	Inorganic materials.
CRAFER, R C	Laser processing in manufacturing.
DOBBS, M	To play the king.
EGELSTAFF, P A	An introduction to the liquid state. 2nd ed.
FATTI, J	Physiology of the eye. 2nd ed.
FLUDE, R	People for business.
GATER, D	Practical novel writing.
GREEN, P	Quality control for print buyers.
HOBHOUSE, J	The furies.
LINKLATER, M	Anatomy of Scotland.
HOOPER, N M	Lipid modification of proteins.
HUTCHINS, D	Achieve total quality.
MCCABE, P	The butcher boy.
MILNER, A	The Ashford book of dyeing.
MORT, S	Professional report writing.
NUNAN, D	Language teaching methodology.
SANDERSON, I	Management of quality in local government.
RITCHIE, W K	Telecommunications local networks.
RYLAH, L T A	Critical care of the burned patient.
SEYMOUR, G	The journeyman tailor.
STEWART, K	Marketing led sales driven.
TERRY, C J	Engineering system safety.
VERYARD, R	Information modelling.





## THE OLD...

From left to right: Victoria commemorated above the Victoria Public Hall stage, but a hall bereft of chandeliers and fans and bits of the ceiling; The state of the walls, doors and fanlights in VPH; An excreta-ridden VPH corridor and an exit stairway in smilhereens; The stairs up the VPH tower with much of the protection rotted.

# Let's get our Town Hall back

By The Editor

Even before work has started on the University of Madras's Senate House, work on saving another Madras building has begun. But there is a long way to go to save Victoria Public Hall, once the city's leading theatre, and Sheriff Suresh Krishna would appear to be able to use all the help he can get.

Sheriff Suresh Krishna's enthusiasm has resulted in a part of the ground floor and half the main staircase being restored. He is now drawing up plans to restore the rest of the ground floor and the splendid theatre above, in which once played the leading actors and

actresses of the Madras Tamil, Telugu and English stages and where many of the silver-tongued orators of yesteryear addressed various public assemblies.

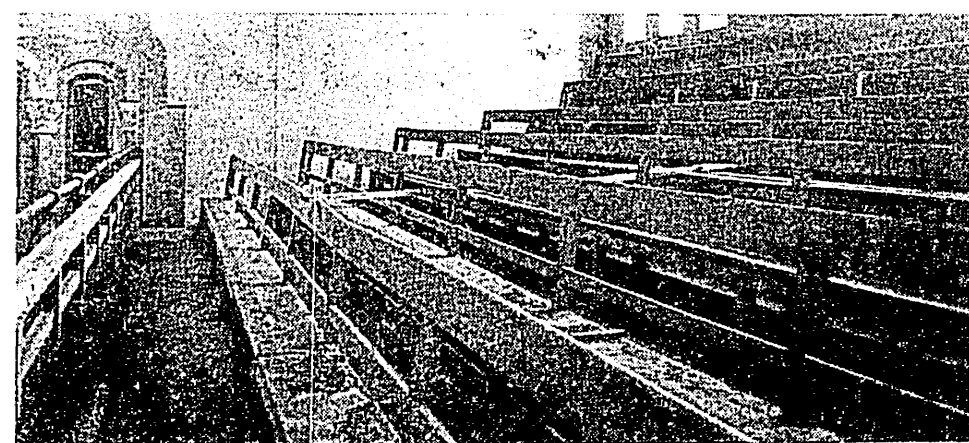
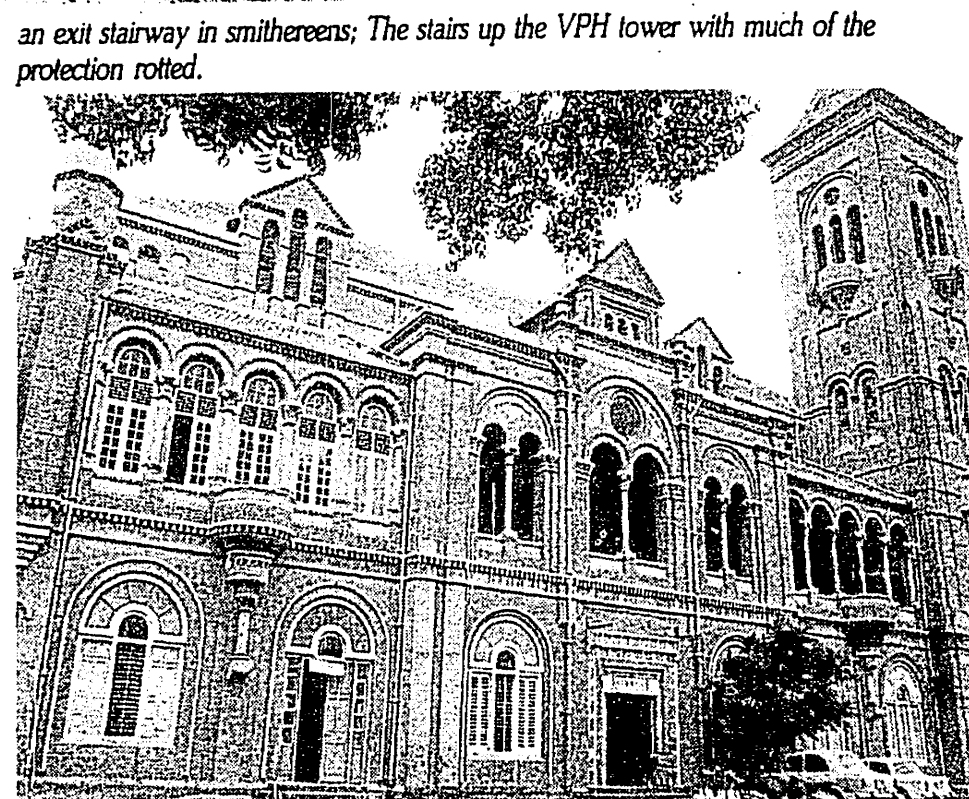
The famed hall in Park Town, next to the Corporation, was conceived of as "a Town Hall for the Town of Madras" by the leading citizens of the city, who gathered at Pachaiyappa's Hall on March 17, 1882. Thirty-two of them subscribed Rs. 16,425 for a start to be made. Their resolve was backed up by three resolutions in the Corporation, on 21.2.1883, 3.9.84 and 24.9.85, agreeing to lease

57 grounds of land in People's Park and fronting Poonamallee Road for the purpose of constructing a Town Hall. The lease rent agreed was 8 annas a ground, or about Rs. 28 a year for the whole property, for a period of 99 years! The lease was to become effective from 1.4.1886.

Several curious things happened around this period. Sir Ananda Gajapathi Row, the Maharajah of Vizianagaram, had laid a foundation stone in the property as early as December 17, 1883. But for some reason no work appears to have commenced. In fact, there appears to be no record of the start and the finish of this magnificent building that is part of Madras's cultural history.

What is on record is that a public meeting was convened by the Sheriff of Madras on January 25, 1888, at which it was decided to call the Town Hall 'Victoria Public Hall' and "to erect upon said site... a Hall... to be called Victoria Public Hall..."

The decision to name the Town Hall the Victoria Public Hall was taken at a time when the echoes of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations were still reverberating. To mark the 1887 occasion, the Victoria Technical Institute was founded to promote handicrafts and it was decided to build a handsome home for it in Pantheon Road where the handicrafts could be displayed and sold. As the VTI building was likely to take some years to build and as there was no tangible commemoration of the Golden Jubilee in Madras, A.T. Arundel, President of the Municipality and a Town Hall Trustee, is believed to have persuaded the Sheriff of Madras to convene another public meeting to push through the work on the Town Hall and name it the Victoria



The handsome exterior of the shell that is Victoria Public Hall, built as Madras's Town Hall (on top). And above, the sad state of VPH's balcony today.

Public Hall as an affirmation of loyalty to the Crown. That's the meeting that was held 105 years ago.

It is also recorded that the building was completed mainly through the munificence of the Maharajah of Vizianagaram, whose Rs. 10,000 led a list of 35 donors. In fact, Maharajah Gajapathi was to save the Hall in 1908 for its original purpose by paying Rs. 185,000 to redeem the mortgage on it. But that's getting ahead of the story.

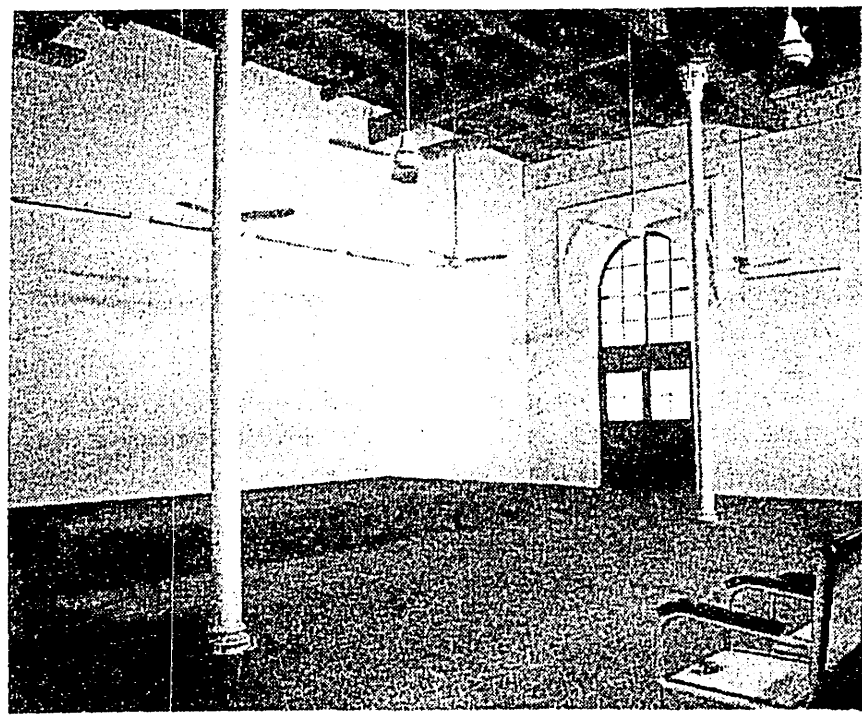
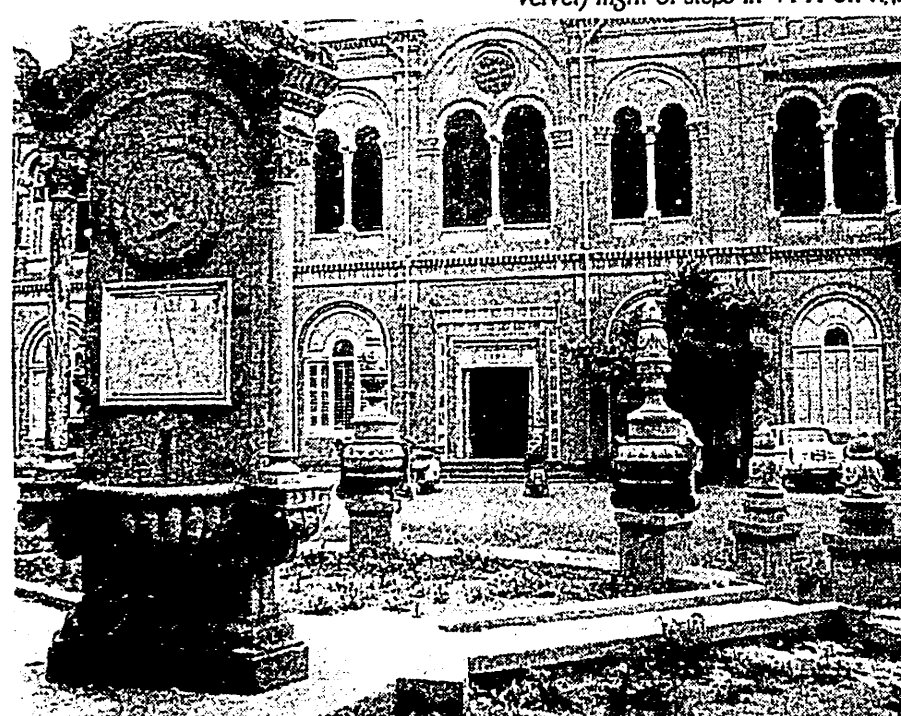
Also on record is the fact that the hall was declared open by Sir Montagu Grant-Duff, Governor of Madras from 1886 to 1890. So the building was probably completed some time between 1888 and early 1890.

The purpose of the hall was for "any public or private meetings, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, dinners, balls, theatrical or musical performances, naughties or other entertainments and as reading, writing and newspaper to it at VPH."

(All photographs by V S RAGHAVAN).

## ...&amp; THE NEW

From left to right: The ornamentation surrounding the Trevelyan Fountain in front of the VPH, restored by Ganapathi Sthapathi; A red-carpeted (coir, not velvet) flight of steps in VPH on right, and the rest of the flight, uncarpeted and



## The VPH and its neighbours

(By A Special Correspondent)

The 57 grounds granted to the Victoria Public Hall Trust on lease, a lease whose renewal needs to be finalised once and for all, are now occupied by the Hall, a ground floor portion of which is, in turn, occupied by the South Indian Athletics Association of revered memory but finding life a struggle these days. Its occupancy is much like that of the man who came to dinner — and its move out is likely to come only if an alternative is offered.

To the west of the Hall is the Picnic Restaurant which started as the VPH's canteen and developed — with its own buildings — as a separate entity paying lease ground rent. And to the north is the Chennapuri Andhra Mahasabha in buildings all its own, and, too, paying lease

ground rent — but of the most nominal sort. Next to it is a vacant plot that could help the VPH with extra parking space, but which could also be sold to the SIAA to solve its problems.

And on the east, the old Guzili Bazaar of Moore Market still thrives, squatting on much land that's the VPH's. Making it short of parking space.

If the VPH is ever developed as Town Hall, a covered way from Nehru Stadium would ensure it more than adequate parking facilities.

And if properly developed, maintained and monitored, what a magnificent complex could develop here, including in it the Town Hall, the New Moore Market and Nehru Stadium. There's a challenge for someone with 2000 vision!

## Let's save Town Hall

(Continued from P4)

Today, it is a shell of the once-proud building designed by Robert Fellowes Chisholm, the great propagator of the Indo-Saracenic style Paul Benfield and George Mant pioneered. And it was built by that greater builder of Indo-Saracenic Madras, Namburumal Chetty.

The paint has peeled, walls have cracked, louvred windows hang smashed, the benches of the balcony are broken, staircases are splintered, the chandeliers are missing, the arms for the fans signal empty, and everywhere dirt abounds. The VPH's 57 grounds are occupied by a restaurant and the

Chennapuri Andhra Mahasabha's building, both paying nominal rent. And the South Indian Athletics Association occupies a part of the ground floor. The rest of the surroundings were a scrub jungle till the recent clearing.

Among the various vicissitudes the VPH has gone through have been several changes in the constitution of its Trusteeship, though the objects of the hall have remained the same. The most recent change followed a court decree in 1961 which ordered the Sheriff of Madras and the Commissioner, Corporation of Madras, to serve as Chairman and Secretary of the Board of Trustees respectively during their terms of office. The majority of the trustees are representatives of designated organisations/families.

Over the last couple of decades, the Trustees have seldom met and they've achieved even less. With the appointment of Suresh Krishna as Sheriff and the subsequent extension of his term, new life has been breathed into the corridors of Victoria Public Hall. The property has been clearly demarcated and fenced in, the jungle outside has been more or less cleared, the Trevelyan Fountain, commemorating Sir Charles Trevelyan, Governor of Madras, developer of People's Park and later the administrator who laid the foundation of the Indian Civil Service, has been restored with the help of Ganapathi Sthapathi, and one portion of the building has been cleaned up and given a new lease of life. At least one flight of stairs can now be climbed in safety and there is at least one room

big enough for a large press conference or a committee meeting. But there is much more to be done.

Not only do others occupying portions of the building have to be moved, but the entire building has to be brought back to what it was — one of the premier theatre halls and meeting venues in Madras. But that can only be the beginning. Ways and means will have to be found to ensure the building is kept alive thereafter by getting theatre groups, sabhas, musical institutions to all come together and make regular use of the building. Such an active theatre hall would well serve northern and northwestern Madras which lack such facilities as the halls that thrive on both sides of Mount Road on what was once the Great Choultry Plain. To achieve that, there has to be commitment to this building by the Sheriff's office.

Will, as a first step, the Sheriff convene a meeting of the various theatre groups, sabhas, musical institutions etc to find out their commitment to using the building? And if that is there, there are several international agencies who might be willing to fund restoration for cultural use. But without daily use and maintenance, all the effort to save what should be renamed 'The Town Hall' will be of vain. A restored but empty building will not survive.

Sheriff Krishna might also like to look into what has been done in Colombo to make a similarly ancient theatre, the Old Tower Hall, one of the most active and attractive cultural centres in the city.

## Guidelines for market-makers

SEBI has come out with guidelines for market-makers. A market-maker, to be duly authorised, will undergo strict scrutiny on his erstwhile background and experience in the share-trading business. On eligibility, he would be required to handle a minimum of five scrips with a further compulsory minimum shareholding of 30,000 per scrip. A scrip would be handled by two market-makers and would require a continuous two-way quote with no variance in a quote on any day.

These guidelines have come as nothing short of a godsend. Due to the lack of liquidity in scrips, the investors, so far, have been forced to sell at less than the prevailing rates and buy at more than market prices. On the other hand, even with spreads sometimes

ranging from 10-15 per cent, a broker's costs and stakes were high, while attempting to keep the market for any scrip going. The new institution of market-makers will assist both these market participants. Apart from precipitating liquidity in the market by allowing market-makers to provide price support by cushioning the rise or fall in the share prices, it would provide

potential in the aquaculture industry and the Government priority accorded to shrimp exports, the scrip will no doubt be fancied in the market. Buy for long-term gains.

**Fishing Falcon** (CMP Rs. 35.00): Fishing Falcon, a 100% IOU in technical and financial collaboration with Tae Eun Corporation, South Korea, for tuna fishing, has made its first catch — 300 tonnes of high-value Bigeye Tuna worth Rs. 7.20 cr. Tuna exports account for only a marginal share of the total marine exports from India. However, with fast expansion in Japan's demand for the *sashimi* grade and the decline in the fleet of traditional leaders (due to increasing vessel and labour costs), ITI's realisations will increase. Assuming even a conservative catch of 600 tonnes for the whole year (ITI estimates 1000 tonnes), a turnover of Rs. 16 cr is likely. This would give an EPS of Rs. 2.70 on the present equity of Rs. 9.56 cr. The scrip has jumped to Rs. 35 from Rs. 22 in just two trading sessions. The company has announced a 1:1 rights at par, which will double the equity to Rs. 19.12 cr. Buy on reactions only for long-term gains.

**Tamarai Mills** (CMP Rs. 72.00): The company's strategy of upgrading its plants and concentrating on the international markets has paid well and, today, its exports constitute over 30 per cent of its turnover. During the year, the company diversified by taking over a spinning unit and a weaving unit. It has also acquired three auto-coners, thereby ensuring knot-less yarn, which is an essential criteria for exports. The effect of the take-over of the two units will be reflected in 1993-94. With the company's thrust on exports and modernisation and a good cotton crop leading to softening of prices, we expect a turnover and PAT of Rs. 37 cr and Rs. 2 cr respectively. The resulting EPS of Rs. 10 would support a price of Rs. 100 at that time. Buy.

K. Gopalkrishnan

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Till September 5:** British Book Fair at Sri Sankara Hall, 267 TTK Salai, Madras. Leading importers of books, booksellers and British Publishers' Representatives in India will participate. Books on all subjects, including children's books, will be on display.

**September 3-4:** 'Music Teachers Workshop' organised by the Madras Craft Foundation, and conducted by S Rajam Iyer, Chitraaveena Ravikiran and Dr K S Subramaniam (3rd: 2 to 4 pm; 4th: 9.30 to 1 pm) at Alliance Francaise.

**September 11:** Barenberg, Douglas and Meyer Trio concert. 'Newgrass' or 'alternative country', 'hillbilly jazz' or 'new age', no matter what you call it, is the music of these three gifted musicians. Not bluegrass, nor folk, and not quite jazz, it's a fresh and thrilling new idiom which fuses country, bluegrass and jazz with pop and classical music. Guitarist Russ Barenberg, bassist Edgar Meyer and dobro-player Jerry Douglas are from the home of America's rural musical traditions, Nashville, 6.30 pm, Narada Gana Sabha. Tickets for invitees at U.S.I.S.

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It's great to be a hundred — II

# And the MMA sings along

(Continued from last fortnight)

Continuing the quest for the Madras Musical Association's hundred-year-old history, the next bit of it I caught up with was at the Santosham Hospital on Egmore High Road. Dr Ravi Santosham leaned back in his swivelchair and chuckled in amusement, "Yes, yes, I take care of the library". In fact, since he became President in 1990 he has been trying, to put the scores in order. The annexe with its private entrance on the ground floor of the hospital has been converted into the MMA library. It holds most of the orchestra music from the Governor's band, a lot of opera scores for choir, the famous oratorios, madrigals from the British Council... One of the better music libraries the country has.

Unfortunately, the files hold nothing of the first nineteen years of the MMA. Oral history confirms that the choral group first came together formally in 1893. At the time, they were basically a group of European executives and wives who worked for Binny's, Parry's and the B&C mills. They used to gather round a piano in the evening to sing together and, eventually, became the MMA, singing under their Italian conductor, Signor Aloisio.

On Saturday, March 30, 1912, in their 18th season, the MMA gave a performance of Handel's Oratorio 'Judas Maccabaeus' at the Museum Theatre at 9.30 pm! The playbill was printed courtesy *The Madras Times*. It was conducted by "Mons E Stradiot with Mr F V Rushforth at the piano". The programme ended with 'God Save the King'.

By the 34th season, 1929-30, much had changed. The Choral Recital

by  
**ELIZABETH  
ROY**

at St Andrew's Church on March 4, 1930, was held at 6 p.m. and announced that first Indian member — the to-be one-and-only Victor Paranjoti would be accompanying the choristers on the organ. The programme was Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise'. The conductor now was Mrs Florence Craven. The 12-page brochure (printed at the Addison Press, Madras) made no reference to 'God Save the King'. Instead, it detailed along with the programme the patrons and the committee. All correspondence and

enquiries were to be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, 'Lieut Col. J M Skinner, I.M.S. Blacker's Gardens, Mount Road, Teynampet, Cathedral PO'. The chief patron was (and continues to be) His Excellency the Governor at that time Rt Hon. Sir George Frederick Stanley, P.C., G.C.I.E., C.M.G.

Alternate pages of the brochure carried advertisements. When you had finished leafing through the tidings from Spencer & Co, Massey & Co, Indo-Foreign Sports Co, Eastern India Agency and others, a collection for the St Andrew's Church Organ Fund, awaited the audience. Did the fabulous pipe organ breathe its origin there? There is no one around who knows for sure.

In the music season of 1946-47, MMA broke new ground with their first musical production — *The Gondoliers* by Gilbert and Sullivan at the Raja Annamalai Mandram. Handel Manuel, who conducted the musicals, remembers, "Benjamin Britten happened to be in Madras at that time, holidaying. In spite of the fact that he was not a Gilbert and Sullivan fan, he was coaxed into coming with the British Deputy High Commissioner to the show. Britten stayed the whole evening and



On top, the Madras Musical Association, a hundred years after the choral group was founded. Present livewives Drs. Ravi Santosham and Samuel Grubb are at the extreme right, front row. And above, it's the MMA putting on My Fair Lady.

spoke to the cast. 'I had to come all the way from Tokyo to see the *Mikado* in Madras. Jolly good show,' he said. He was surprised, because the majority of the cast was Indian! And MMA has continued to thrill the city with their musicals since then. *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The King and I*, *Hans Christian Andersen*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *South Pacific*, *Ratna Killick*, Samuel Grubb, Joseph Baynes, Rita Saldanha and others had all come in as young voices. They set the standard of Western Classical music in the city.

Ravi Santosham would love to organise more musicals, but it is

virtually impossible to do anything without 'big' sponsorship. "Even if only the basic minimum is spent, it will cost 1½–2 lakhs. Even if you fill the Music Academy twice over, you are not going to make a lakh." Conductor Dr Grubb joins in, "Most of the time we break even... The idea is to present a show. Loss or gain does not matter... MMA finances began to look up after Santosham took over as President in 1990.... If a programme is co-sponsored and if it gives us the gates, then we make some money out of it. And that hasn't been happening."

(Continued on P8)

## Commercial Agro-Forestry: A new dimension in development?

Part I  
(This article will appear in three parts)

Over 2,000 km south of New Delhi, a remote village going by the name of Veeravanallur in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu is in the throes of an economic upheaval. Not too long ago, this dusty village was not worthy of any special mention. Just a place surrounded by acres and acres of waste and fallow land. For most of the thousand families that lived in the village, life was a struggle.

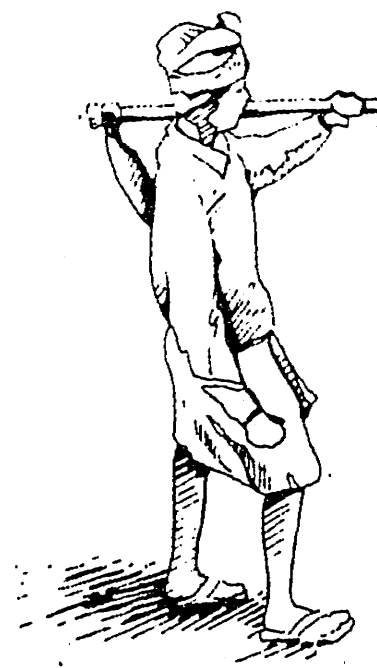
The average breadwinner used to be employed as an agricultural labourer for just 45 days in a year. In the space of 12 months, the destiny of the small population of the village has taken an upturn. An upturn riding the boughs of teak trees planted by Sterling Tree Magnum (India) Ltd. Today, at least 150 families can look forward to a steady wage at the end of the day. Many more are being absorbed by those who are replicating the Sterling techniques to raise other crops and trees.

The emerging teak country now holds out a promise that goes beyond direct employment. Soon enough, the village will demand

support services like roads, transportation and trade. A groundswell of wealth generation is underway. A prosperity that would not only arrest the migration to cities, but divert the flow of money to the countryside, where it is most needed, where the real India lives.

That is the power of agro-forestry. But the social change is only one of the beneficial fall-outs. Besides putting the valuable but wasted land resources to good use, agro-forestry or commercial afforestation also helps in achieving the national goal of increasing the total forest cover from the current 19 per cent of the total land area to 33 per cent by 2000 AD.

The need for building our forest wealth should not be understated. Exploitation of forest resources and deforestation are issues that the nation is coming to terms with gradually. To reach the target of 33 per cent set by the National Forest Policy, a huge chunk of the 175 million hectares of wasteland must be brought under forests. In these days of resource constraints, the most effective vehicle to reach this goal is commercial forestry —



tapping public savings and investing it in trees.

But tapping public money is nothing new. There are ever so many instruments in the market that vie with each other for this pie. How do you attract money for commercial forestry? By undertaking to grow trees that will return much more than other kinds of investments.

Various studies show that the teak tree is the one that satisfies this vital criterion. This species of tree, which goes under the biological

name of "tectona grandis", is one of the most valuable of timbers. It draws its value from the diversity of applications that it can be put to — a range that includes furniture, construction, ship-building, bridges, panels, poles and piles. There are other reasons too. For instance, it offers the highest value of return from an investment on a small piece of land. A teak tree grown under near ideal conditions will yield about 40 cubic feet of high quality timber after a period of 20 years. Today, the price of one cubic foot of teak timber is about Rs.520. Twenty years hence, it would have risen manifold making teak a most promising proposition.

Over the last year or so, many teak investment schemes have emerged. Basically, investment in a teak tree works thus: when an investor buys a tree, the proponent of the scheme plants a tree in his or her name. This tree is nurtured for 20 years at the end of which either a predetermined volume of timber or its sale proceeds is given to the investor.

Compare the rate of return that

teak promises with the conventional investment tools. Rs.1,275 invested in a teak tree will fetch Rs.62,000 at the end of 20 years. A similar amount placed in a fixed deposit account in a bank will fetch Rs.11,165 at the end of the same period. A company deposit will gross to Rs.25,134 and a debenture will yield Rs.40,065. Investment in the Units of UTI under the Units 64 scheme would have returned Rs.25,897 totally.

The cumulative yield from the investment in a teak tree far outweighs that from the other comparable investments. Add to this features of transferability and nil tax liability and you have a very attractive instrument.

But such high returns do not come easy. Like all other tools, the teak tree also demands a lot of attention. In fact, more so considering that in this case, the time-frame needed to realise the return is about twenty years.

TO BE CONTINUED

## A helping hand with tea

(Continued from P1)

made by the CTC (cut, tear and curl) process. This tea, favoured for the tea bag and by the local *chaiwallah*, enables greater plucking and less concentration on the Shri Lankan credo of "two leaves and a bud".

A member of a Shri Lankan delegation that visited the South Indian estates last year, returned home and wrote in the Press:

● The tour... was indeed an eye-opener to us Shri Lankans. What we saw there proved beyond any doubt that Shri Lanka is more than a decade behind the achievements of India in the tea scenario and that we have only ourselves to blame.

Indian management staff are... absolute professionals in their subject and know what they are doing, why, when and how to do it...

Tea Research at UPASI shows the vast accomplishments their scientists have achieved... utilising far less funds and facilities than their Shri Lankan counterparts and achieving results of research to benefit the producers, since they fund the institute. This applied research on problems identified by the planters, has put their knowledge and practice at a much higher level than we find locally. They are bemused and

amused, as they remind us that, 10 years ago, they were trekking up to the Tea Research Institute (TRI), Talawakelle, to find out how we did the thing and, now, we are sending our men to India... for the same purpose.

... Indian research has resulted in a cleft grafting technique being perfected, enabling a vigorous, deep rooting, drought-resistant root stock to be grafted with a scion of choice, for high yield, good quality, resistance to pests and diseases etc., at very low cost. Grafted tea plants are now used on the commercial scale and have helped the estates to overcome their massive problem of deaths from droughts which are more severe than our own...

... Another major advance in India is that their TRI tests soils and recommends fertilizer mixtures and dosages on a field by field basis, annually, on almost every estate for an insignificant fee of Rs. 60/- per field... Hence their very high yields...

The production of CTC teas (Cut, Tear, Curl) is another highly controversial matter on which the public has been treated to varying shades of opinion, depending more on vested interest than on national priorities. An objective analysis brings out some interesting facts...

Many of the consuming countries have shown a marked preference for the Tea Bag, for which CTC tea is essential... It is not generally known that 65 per cent of Sri Lanka's export of tea goes to the Arab world, as the Arabs have developed a special preference for the Ceylon character in Orthodox tea; but this special taste for our tea is fast waning due to the Arabs rapidly adopting the Western life style... The sheiks now want the Western style Tea Bags too...

The net result is, if we do not switch to CTC teas in double quick time, we shall have to find an immediate market for 65 per cent of our tea exports, or dump them in the sea like at the historical Boston Tea Party... Fortunately, President Ranasingha Premadasa on his recent return from Pakistan, insisted on the acceleration of CTC tea in the national interest...

But while the Indian companies are meeting the Shri Lankan management, scientific and industrial needs in the plantations, the one thing that might nullify all their efforts is the Labour. Curiously, all this labour went from Tamil Nadu from the 1850s on and settled in the Island. Their kin work the South Indian plantations. But what a difference there is in performance! The politicising of the Shri Lankan plantation labour, its single union character making it a major vote bank, is the major cause for its low productivity. Getting that labour to produce is going to be the major test of Indian ingenuity in its ventures in the Island.

The changing world of English... as seen by The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary

## A bargain at the Book Fair

(By A Staff Reporter)

Very likely the best bargain at the British Book Fair, on at the Sri Sankara Hall till September 5th, will be 'The World's Classics' that Oxford is offering at very special prices ranging from Rs. 60 to Rs. 85. These paperback books with colourful covers are priced in the UK at prices varying from £ 2.99 to £ 6.99.

Oxford University Press (OUP) is offering 93 titles at the Fair, ranging from Hans Christian Andersen to Virginia Woolf, with Chaucer, Defoe, Doyle, Goethe, Kipling, Ovid, Poe and Verne, among others, in between. Each book has the complete text and an introduction and many have footnotes. Together, these books have the making of the foundation for a fine classical library.

The *Times Educational Supplement* reviewed the series in these terms: "On all counts admirably suited to meet the needs of relatively impecunious students... an addition to the library of anyone setting out to either study or merely to read" the world's literature in English.

Other Oxford paperbacks, including reference books, at possibly even lower prices, are expected to be launched in the Indian market during the course of the year.

Also hoped to arrive in time for the Book Fair are the two volumes of the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* — also at very special prices. Described as "the most comprehensive guide to the English language with the exception of the 20-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*", it includes 220,000 words and over 500,000 definitions in its 3,800 pages. The total number of words of text in the dictionary is 7.5 million!

The longest word in the dictionary is:

*pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis!*

But do you know these other new words in English?

academic	palimony	tonto
buppie	peekapoo	tubular
crack	pinstriper	Ultrasuede
detox	posse	up-tick
dockminium	retardee	Valspeak
factor	sado-maso	veejay
giveback	scrungy	wack
gonzo	sellathon	waitron
mega	shim	walk-on
Melungeon	slammer	winterim
Op-Ed	sysop	yumpie
outpsych	Taser	zing
palapa		

Happy browsing!



## PLEASE USE WATER WITH CARE!

Activity	Method Adopted	Qty used Ltr.	Method to be adopted	Qty. required Ltr.	Qty. saved Ltr.
Brushing Teeth	Running tap for 5 min.	45	Tumbler or Glass	0.5	44.5
Washing Hands	Running tap for 2 min.	18	Half filled wash basin	2.0	16.0
Shaving	Running tap for 2 min.	18	Shaving mug	0.25	17.75
Shower	Letting Shower run while soaping; staying under Shower too long	90	Wet down, tap off, soap up, rinse off	20.00	70.00
Flushing Toilet	Using old-fashioned large capacity cistern	13.5 or more	Dual System short flush liquid waste; Full flush solid waste	4.5	4.5 or more
Watering plants	Running hose for 5 minutes	120	Water can	5.0	115.00
Washing floor	Running hose for 5 minutes	200	Mop and bucket	18.0	182.00
Washing Car	Running hose for 10 minutes	400	Buckets (Two)	18.0	382.00



## The Sindoori Hotel



# The light of other days

It's a long way from Madras to Denver, but they happen to be sister cities. And the only place you are likely to be reminded of this is in the DASAPRAKASH, where an engraved plaque in the lobby commemorates this almost forgotten sorority members from which are due in Madras this fortnight. But no right thinking Madrasite would want to travel all that distance just to see a bit of metal, unless there is something else on offer. And once the Dasaprakash offered much. But what's happened to it now?

The long hospital-like corridor leading to the restaurant is dirtier than ever and Dasaprakash remains the only place in Madras where you enter the restaurant through the wash-room! But a decade or so ago, these minor inconveniences were more than made up for by the food, hot and inviting, and service by courteous, almost obsequious waiters.

It's different now. The facade is still intact — gaudy bead curtains, 'Soda Fountain' still cryptically splashed on the walls, unsupported by any evidence from either the menu card or the ice cream parlour. The latter offers strings of aggravating flavours that do not exist. The brutal choice is *dosa*, *rava dosa*, *butter masala dosa* and *uthappam*.

When big spending finally came to Madras, something had

to give — and genteel restaurants like these that were patronised by the teeming not-filthy-rich populace became the unlamented casualties. But the house of Dasaprakash isn't finished yet — just take a look at AVM Dasa and the other restaurants under the same umbrella which flourish —

## FOODS & FADS

contributed to, of course, by our own versions of Veronica Lodge and the Poor Lil Rich Boy, who ensure we definitely have all those links with 'the US of A'!

## No blues here

If the most crowded lunch spot qualifies for being the most popular, JEWELBOX, the restaurant of the BLUE DIAMOND (Poonamallee High Rd), certainly qualifies. Finding a table during the lunch hour can be quite a task — and when you're seated, this not very big restaurant enables you to observe a variety of eating habits at quarters too close for comfort. Loud-voiced gesticulating humans apart, there are the kids who make up a stupendous orchestra of squabbles and also beat tribal tattoos on plates, play the occasional knife-and-pepper-cellar castanets and a couple of other noisy variations as well, and all from the vantage point of little high chairs available on request.

The soups are by and large tasty, with perhaps the exception of the Hot Consommé which tasted like admirably flavoured hot water and offered a few revolting grease globules on the surface as garnish.

Around us great bowls of noodles were being polished off

with vigour, the vegetarians enjoying their version of it too, and waiters scurried around with platters of chicken *tikka* that were being speared with tiny toothpicks at rates calculated to make Nimrod himself feel inefficient! An astonishingly good *sag paneer* with Kashmiri *Pulao* bursting with *kishmish* left me surreptitiously undoing a button or two. The desserts go all the way from the refreshingly simple to the elegant — a serving of jelly with sweet whipped cream added that touch of lightness to the end of a meal. The real trencherman however can dig into the Hot Fudge Sundae or the Banana Split for a quick trip to, well, cloud seven at least!

A satisfying dining experience minus the frills — the crockery is chipped, but looks clean (it usually does!) Definitely the place where the Madras cousin of R K Laxman's Common Man might be seen mingling with a few from the higher, rarified heights of society!

Bhavana Kay

## Different strokes

Like to possess an authentic coin issued by the Royal Mint in the reign of Tipu Sultan? Or, if numismatics is not your cup of tea, would a bowl of chirpy-looking fish clothed in tropic intensity be more like it? The plain academic types will probably prefer the fibreglass replica of the human eye, or a full length leering skeleton for starters. You'll find all this and more in the unassuming, untidy looking little shop — INDIA'S HOBBY CENTRE, in Royala (or Rayala — They haven't made up their minds) Towers, 781 Mount Road.

All kinds of unlikely merchandise cram the shelves — teaching aids, roller skates, aquarium accessories, including packets of colourful marble veined pebbles, and armfuls of soft toys. Polythene packets, neatly classified and labelled, each with an ancient coin to be had for a price, xylophones and abaci are perched atop board games. And if playing around is not to be thought of in this serious world, there's a specially made soft rubber ball — that, besides bouncing harmlessly off the million breakable surfaces in a crowded flat, improves handwriting too — it can be used for finger exercises!

Bhavana Kay

## Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V V RAMANAN's questions are all from the fortnight Aug. 1st-15th)

1. Name the much publicised cultural amity programme organized by Sahmat at Ayodhya on August 14th-15th?
2. What are the five channels of DD which were inaugurated on August 15th?
3. Which Madras policeman was this year awarded the 'President's Medal for Distinguished Service'?
4. The Rs. 450-crore Boeing 747-400 aircraft inducted into Air India on August 14th has been christened....?
5. For which NRI's brutal murder has Rodney Solomon of the US been convicted?
6. Name the mascot of the 4th World Athletics Championships which commenced on August 14th in Stuttgart, Germany?
7. What astronomical event, billed as the 'greatest meteor shower', turned out to be a near damp squib on August 12th?
8. At which pop group's Wembley show did Salman Rushdie make an unexpected public appearance, surprising many?
9. Who is the new PM of Japan?
10. What is common to Vichitra Narayan Sharma, Chandrakanta Bahan Shah, Harvilas Bahan Shah and Dinkarao Pawar?
11. The Tamil Nadu State Headquarters of the RSS, which was rocked by a powerful bomb on August 8th, is located at?
12. What important event in British Royal history was witnessed recently?
13. Which Indian spiritual leader passed away recently in the US?
14. Name the first automotive manufacturer in India to get the prestigious ISO 9000 certification?
15. Name the TDP MLA killed in a gruesome bomb attack on August 7th?
16. The 30th anniversary of the 'crime of the century' was observed on August 8th by both the policemen and criminals concerned. What was crime?
17. How did 2-year-old Jessica de Boer make legal history in the US?
18. Who is the new US Consul-General for South India?
19. Who has been nominated for this year's state award for best Tamil writer?
20. The son of which Indian cricket 'great' of Madras was recently crowned a National Boys Champion?

(Answers Page. 9)

# Guindy's first woman 'jockey'

A petite young girl mounted 'Cabella' on March 26, 1993 at the Madras Racecourse — and proceeded to make history. Off with the gun, Hema Bindu (21), the South's first professional woman jockey forged ahead as if her whole life depended on winning that race. And when she won it she became the first woman to win a race, for professional riders, in Madras Race Club history. It signalled the arrival of Hema Bindu, the country's second woman jockey.

There had been no one in this dimple-cheeked, slip-of-a-girl's family interested in racing. The only remote connection she had had with horses was through her grandfather, who as a zamindar in Andhra Pradesh, owned four horses and used to ride them. Then how did Hema get interested in riding?

"I read an article about India's first woman jockey, Ayesha Captain, who was successful in Bombay and Pune in the Eighties, and decided to emulate her," responded Hema. To fulfil her ambition, Hema, then 13, approached Dharma Ebenezer, a senior Stipendiary Steward who, in turn, put her on to B K Amanulla Khan, the Principal of the MRC's Riding School in Madras. Under him, Hema learnt the rudiments of riding and, two years later, trainer Rashid Byramji, the country's leading trainer, asked her to train under D M Hill in Bangalore. As racing was banned in Madras in 1986, she applied for her licence in Bangalore. When it



Madras's first woman jockey, Hema Bindu (Photo V S RAGHAVAN)

her Matric and started working as a stenographer. But the urge to ride would not go away.

When her family shifted back to Madras last year, Hema decided to pursue her ambition — after a gap of four years. She immediately got in touch with trainer Huma Malik, to whose stable she is attached now. The years of inactivity had not blunted her riding skills. Obtaining her licence in March '93, she created that record and went on to place second once and fourth twice at last season's races.

But despite the promise she showed, success did not smile on her at Ooty this year. Hema was off colour; it was the first time she was away from home in four years. She also "expected at least forty mounts, but got only twenty". Moreover this was "also my first trip to a hill station and the sudden change in climate affected my riding," she explained.

After finishing third and fourth once, Hema broke her collar bone in a freak accident while training and came back to Madras. Now fully recovered, Hema is raring to go again. Her confidence has not been shaken by the fall. "Life is a risk every second and it is foolish to be afraid," she says philosophically. For her, every fall from a horse is a new lesson to be learnt and a mistake to be corrected.

Says Amanulla Khan, "Hema, is a good rider, but unfortunately the accident at Ooty did not enable to prove her worth. She needs to ride in many more races". And Hema's aim is to ride in those races to complete forty wins so that she can become a full-fledged jockey.

Hema starts training in the early hours of the morning at the stables and

rides till eight. In the evenings, she starts again at 4 and continues till 6. Apart from her riding skills, Hema has also acquired 'horse sense'; she can now tell the moods and attitudes of the horses in her stables.

Weighing 45 kilos, Hema fears whenever her weight increases. Does she miss food? "My ambition is to become a top class jockey and I will do all that is needed to get there," she answers confidently. Her frugal lunch is a couple of threapin biscuits and dinner is two *chappathis*. And her whole family, mother, an elder sister, and an uncle also starve their taste buds for her sake. "I'm indebted to all of them for the way they've been supportive of my career," she says fervently.

Hema has yet to break even on what she's spent on equipment. She gets Rs. 350 per mount in a race and 7½% of the prize money if she wins. With her record, she's yet to strike it rich. But she's confident that even if she doesn't become rich, she'll still become a recognised jockey on the circuit.

**TAILPIECE:** Incidentally, Tamil Nadu licensed a second woman jockey a little after Hema, Mrs. Silva, an Italian. And she had quite a good Ooty Season, but Bangalore was a disappointment. Madras will see her vying with Hema for the top woman jockey's crown.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Hema Bindu, Imran Khan and Mrs. Silva are all apprentice jockeys and, strictly speaking, not professionals as yet. But they are 'full-time', riders attached to stables and they ride against professionals. So what do you call them but jockeys?

# The country's youngest riding 'pro'

He is the crown prince amongst Indian professional riders at an age when boys of 13 get excited riding a bicycle. Imran Khan, the country's youngest riding pro, participates in the 'Sport of Kings'.

Missing becoming the youngest professional rider in the world by a few months, Imran is the darling of punters, owners, trainers and even of his fellow jockeys. He was one of the leading riders at Ooty this past season, winning five races, besides figuring in the placings several times. With 48 mounts till date, Imran has six wins to his credit and is galloping towards the coveted forty wins needed to become a full-fledged jockey.

Born into a family of trainers and jockeys, it was but natural for Imran to take to riding. His father, B K Amanulla Khan, is Principal of the MRC's Riding School in Madras and was a jockey in his younger days. Imran's uncles, B K Harshad and S R Shah, are leading trainers in Bangalore. Watching the students ride under his father's watchful eye at the School, five-year-old Imran got interested in horses and started riding ponies. Within a year, he had graduated to horses.

The young Imran surprised his father when he asked to become a jockey. Though Amanulla Khan had some initial reservations, Imran's "good seat and better head convinced me that he had it in him to become a jockey". Once assured that his studies would not be affected because of riding, Imran was permitted to ride seriously. And he donned silks at the Madras Gymkhana races when he was just eight. He tasted success for the first time when he, appropriately rode, at age nine, 'Sweet Success' in a Gymkhana meet. He obtained his licence as an apprentice in March '93 in Madras and won the Leading Owner's Cup before going on to Ooty.

In a sport fraught with risks, Imran has had his anxious moments. Once, at the Bangalore Gymkhana races, he had to ride in the 55 kg category, and he weighed only 28 kg. He used a small racing saddle with lots of leg room. Unfortunately for him, the saddle slipped as the horses got off. Undeterred,

Imran proved his mettle by taking his mount to the outside and rode it out, with his knees gripping it, to finish second! "Had the saddle not slipped I would have finished first," Imran muses.

But the pointer to a champion in the making is Imran's abhorrence of using a whip while riding. "A jockey's main tools are his hands and heels and Imran uses both effectively. Too much reliance on a whip is counter-productive and a jockey could forget the other aspects of riding," says Amanulla Khan.

Imran, however, has another reason as well for not whipping his mounts. "I love animals in general and I hate whipping the animal which I love most," he explains. "May be that is why one of Imran's favourite horses, Detroit, even ate bread from his hands — and horses generally don't like bread," laughs the father.

Imran, who rides F M Khan's horses in Madras, is a freelance rider on other turfs. His favourite stable is that of actor-cum-trainer Irfan Ghattala who allows Imran the freedom to choose his ride. Though Imran has raced in Bangalore, Madras and Ooty, his favourite course is Madras.

Imran's day starts at 5.30 a.m. with exercising the horses till 7.30. Then it's school, a couple of more hours in the stables and it's studies again. "Racing is just a hobby for me," he insists. "What I really want to be is a doctor". A student in the 8th Standard in a city school, Imran's as a good student as he's a jockey.

Imran has no problems with his weight. He weighs only 35 kg and eats whatever he likes. But he knows that this cannot go on for more than a couple of years. After that he'll have to be careful with his diet. But he's willing to sacrifice anything to become a top class jockey like his idol Aslam Khader. And that he wants to become before medical school grabs him. May his dreams come true.

by Venkatachari Jagannathan

was turned down on account of her sex, she went, on Byramji's advice, to Bombay, obtained her apprentice licence in 1987, and donned her silks there.

Hema's debut in professional racing was far from sensational. She participated in 18 races and failed to win even one. But racing on the Bombay turf, the toughest in the circuit, gave her valuable experience. She was also adjudged the best amateur rider there. That was when tragedy struck. Her father, who had gone with her to Bombay, suddenly died and the family was in dire straits. Discontinuing her riding, Hema and her family shifted to Andhra Pradesh where she completed

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Mukta Naad; 2. Business News & Current Affairs; Entertainment; Sports; and Music channels; 3. S Hirunayathas; Add DCP, Intelligence Section, Madras City Police; 4. Konark; 5. Ms. Pamela Basu; 6. Runny, the bunny; 7. The Peresid Meteor shower left by the debris of the Comet Swift Turtle; 8. UZ; 9. Morihiro Hosokawa; 10. They are the recipients of this year's prestigious Jannal Bajaj award; 11. Chetpet, Madras; 12. The doors of the Buckingham Palace were thrown open to the public for the first time; 13. Swami Chinmayananda; 14. Madras-based Ashok Leyland; 15. P Siva Reddy; 16. The legendary 'Great Train Robbery' of nearly £2.5 million from the Glasgow-London Mail; 17. The Supreme Court made a ruling that, though she was legally adopted, she legally belonged to her genetic parents; 18. Timothy Hauser; 19. Dr V. Muthukannappan; 20. Vikram Venkatraghavan, son of former Indian skipper, S Venkatraghavan. The young man won a tennis championship.

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# The MMA celebrates a hundred

(Continued from P6)

It is not all smooth sailing for Grubb who has been a member of the MMA for over quarter of a century. The rigours of the old guard have dissolved into the glory that was. The new generation of singers need to be handled in a different way. Their interests are different and they require a different kind of motivation. He has had to "bend rules" to accommodate young interest — and go for hitech tracking for musicals.

The MMA now has a regular children's choir (conducted by Rajeevan David) which meets at Doveton Corrie School every Saturday at 3.30 pm. They will give their first full concert this October as part of the centenary celebration — *The Magic of Music*. Some of the other centenary events planned are Handel's oratorio *Samson*, the Paranjoti Academy Chorus (Bombay) and MMA singing together in November, and the South Carolina University Chorus in December, before

they close the year with the annual 'Carols by Candlelight'.

Music is music and in the long run it must stand or fall by its ability to move us. Ravi Santosham spoke on behalf of the MMA when he said, "I strongly feel music can be used as a very good medium to bring about peace, especially in this country." It's great to be a hundred years old. That the MMA has held together all this while in this highly volatile world is one more reason for hope and celebration.



# Scribe helps double prize money

The prize winners of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's Indian Bank-Buchi Babu trophy all-India tournament just ended must feel grateful to a veteran sportswriter for the size of the purses they received. It was on a suggestion made by him at the TNCA Press briefing on the tournament that M. Gopalakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Bank, more than doubled the prize money originally offered.

The correspondent, the senior-most active journalist in the country, pointed out that the advertised prize money was not at all in keeping with the status of Indian Bank, one of India's leading

by  
JAICI

banks and sports sponsors, and the Chairman of the Bank showed rare sportsmanship by readily agreeing with him and giving the prize money a big boost.

But for IB's sponsorship, many a tournament would indeed have died a natural death. The latest to avert the tragedy, was the Tamil Nadu Women's Hockey Association's South Zone championship. Thanks to IB's sponsorship, and co-sponsorship by the Rotary Club of Madras East, Chandrakala Ghatala, the TNWHA president and her executive committee were able to revive it after it had undergone an exceptionally long eclipse of 14 years.

The big hand Gopalakrishnan got as he went out to preside over the prize-distribution function at the Radhakrishnan Stadium was indicative of the city fans' acknowledgement of the role he had played in bringing inter-State women's hockey back to life in the city. In keeping with the occasion, the host team received the Indian Bank-Rotary

Club trophy from the chief guest, Tamil Nadu having a few minutes earlier toppled favourites Karnataka in the final. Not to mince words, it was a shock tie-breaker victory. Tamil Nadu scored after having been at the receiving end for the most part. Mrs. Ghatala and her TNWHA would do well to take note of the poor show by the Tamil Nadu girls and take early steps to improve the standard of women's hockey in the State.

Before the curtain was brought down on the women's hockey scene, the women were again in the news, as the Madras Gymkhana Club links at Guindy reverberated to the driving and putting in the SPIC-sponsored South India championship. Like the commoners' tournament, the affluent women's event provided a needle finish. Unfortunately, while Tamil Nadu weathered a veritable storm to bag the hockey title at Guindy, the state's hope, Lalitha Balasubramaniam, went down fighting to the defending champion, Simi Mehra of Bengal, losing by the proverbial whisker.

Madras has not had a more gifted, yet unassuming golfer than Lalitha, and the sizable crowd that followed the golfers in the third and final round thought her finest hour had come as she wiped out a four-stroke deficit and overtook the leader, Simi. But in an unforgettable finish, the youthful Calcutta girl, much younger than the evergreen Lalitha, had the last word to receive the trophy from Kalavathi Santhanakrishnan, wife of A. Santhanakrishnan, SPIC Executive Director.

It was a finish worthy of a well-patronised tournament, with champions from Calcutta, Delhi and other centres in the fray, and it was well-organised too. Credit for its smooth and efficient running must go to the tournament committee, headed by Sumi Nanaiya.

# The million rupee tournament

Madras sport has seldom had a more crowded fortnight than the one just ended on August 31st. The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's Indian Bank-Buchi Babu trophy tournament, the ITC Scissors Cup soccer competition, the Indian Bank-Rotary Club Madras East's South Zone Women's hockey championship and the SPIC-South India women's golf championship were all packed into it to give sportswriters a hectic time.

Top priority was understandably given to the Scissors Cup competition. For one thing, it carried a record Rs. 10 lakhs prize money, and, for another, it brought the modern Nehru Stadium back to life after it had been dormant, nay, under lock and key, for eight long months since the Nehru Gold Cup tournament was held there to mark its inauguration.

The Nehru Stadium proved a worthy venue for the Group 'B' matches and the final of the country's richest-ever tournament. The winners collected Rs. 2,50,000/-, the runners-up Rs. 1,75,000/-, the losing semi-finalists Rs. 75,000/- each, and

the winners of every group match Rs. 35,000/-. No other tournament could have wakened the Rs. 40-crore stadium from its long slumber in the manner in which the Scissors Cup did.

Whatever P P Lakshmanan and Derek D'Souza, the All-India Football Federation secretary and coach, respectively, had to

by  
AJAX

say about India's success in the inaugural SAARC tournament at Lahore in mid-July, every intelligent fan will admit that Indian soccer is sorely in need of rejuvenation. After all, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan were the countries India overcame at Lahore. They are all pygmies before such Asian soccer-minded nations like South Korea, who humbled India 7-0 in the 1993 World Cup qualifying round, exposing India's bankruptcy as never before.

ITC sponsorship of the annual tournament may indeed

prove to be a turning-point in India soccer history. For, unless and until the Indian footballer's living standards are bettered, and his social status enhanced, the world's most popular sport will remain as stagnant as ever in our vast country. It is in this context that ITC's sponsorship has been hailed by the Indian soccer multitude.

It came in for special praise at the recent Press briefing in Madras at which the AIFF announced a surprise change in the Scissors Cup group line-up which placed Dempo (Goa) and I.T.I., Bangalore, last year's winners and runners-up, respectively, in Group 'A'. Whatever might have been the reason that prompted the controlling body to make the last minute change, it made it a laughing-stock, for never before had the winners and runners-up of a tournament been placed in the same half of a group. The Press briefing will also be remembered for the unwritten understanding between the powers-that-be and the media that India's World Cup qualifying round drubbing by the tiny nation of South Korea would not be raised at it.

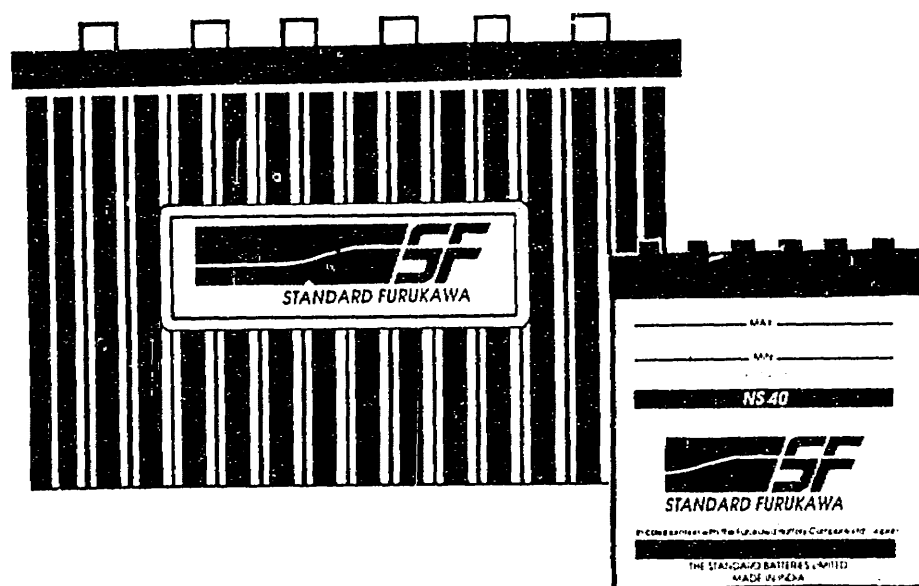
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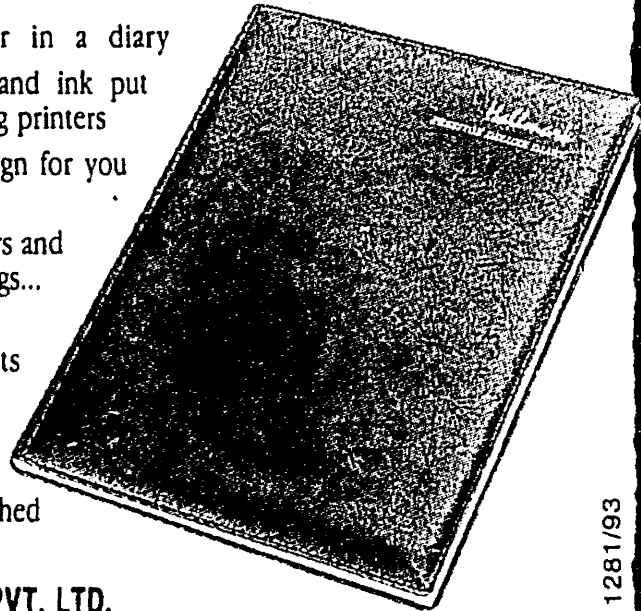
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