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V. No. 1 April 16 — 30, 1995 Rs. 3 only

A First Class in pollution

(By R Srinivasan)
Tuticorin has attained Class I status in pollution! It stands second only in Madras in sewage disposal in Tamil Nadu. This was revealed in a recent seminar on 'The Urban Environment in Tuticorin' conducted by the Madras Institute of Development Studies in collaboration with a Tuticorin college.

That's Tuticorin

Pointing out that the Tuticorin marine ecosystem was under severe stress, the seminar highlighted the practice of the Municipality discharging untreated sewage into the Tuticorin Bay, the colossal damage caused by the thermal power station at Tuticorin and the discharge of effluents into the sea by some of the port-based industries.

Dr N Mathiarjunan, who was behind the seminar, stated that the sea from Thirshapuram to the Tuticorin fishing harbour has already been silted by the sewage discharge and tonnes of garbage dumped by the Municipality right on the seashore beside the Collector's residence, virtually shifting the shoreline into the sea for 100 metres.

According to Manimaran, a research scientist, an average of 14,206 m³ of untreated sewage water a day used to be let into the Tuticorin sea from three major outlets in 1986. The quantity must be around 25,000 m³ now, he stated. The main Buckle Canal drains into the sea at Thirshapuram, another empties into the sea near the Coats India Mill and the

third canal carries the filth to the Fishing Harbour itself. The fish landing centres are by the side of these sewage outlets. The entire beach area is slushy and black, has a hydrogen sulphide smell and is loaded heavily with pathogens and organisms. Direct contamination from human waste also poses serious health hazards for these who consume fish.

Manimaran and Ramadhas, another research scientist, have estimated that 21,450 kg of soluble phosphorus is discharged into the Tuticorin sea annually by sewage disposal. The enrichment of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus in the sea may lead to eutrophication along the coastline, badly affecting the biodiversity of the Bay of Bengal.

With the expansion of the harbour, Pandian Island has become connected with the mainland and large expanses of mangrove forest have been reclaimed as harbour estates. The area south of the Government Circuit House and to the east of Roche Park has also become a stretch of land due to shore-building activity. "The entire sea front itself has undergone a sea change," according to D Kandasamy, Scientist of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute. (From *Fishing Chimes*)

Paging comes to town

Madras recently became the first city in the South and the third city in the country to get a radio paging service. The FM RDS paging service in Madras is being operated by Radiant Electronics Limited, a joint sector company. Delivering his inaugural address, Singh Deo, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, said; "AIR is the first public sector broadcasting corporation in Asia to introduce the paging service". Speaking about the market potential for radio paging in the city, the Chairman of Radiant Electronics Ltd expressed the hope that about 20,000 subscribers could be enrolled by the end of the year. V.J.



The 'pill-box' home viewed from the sea, near Tiruvollur.

THE 'PILLBOX' HOME

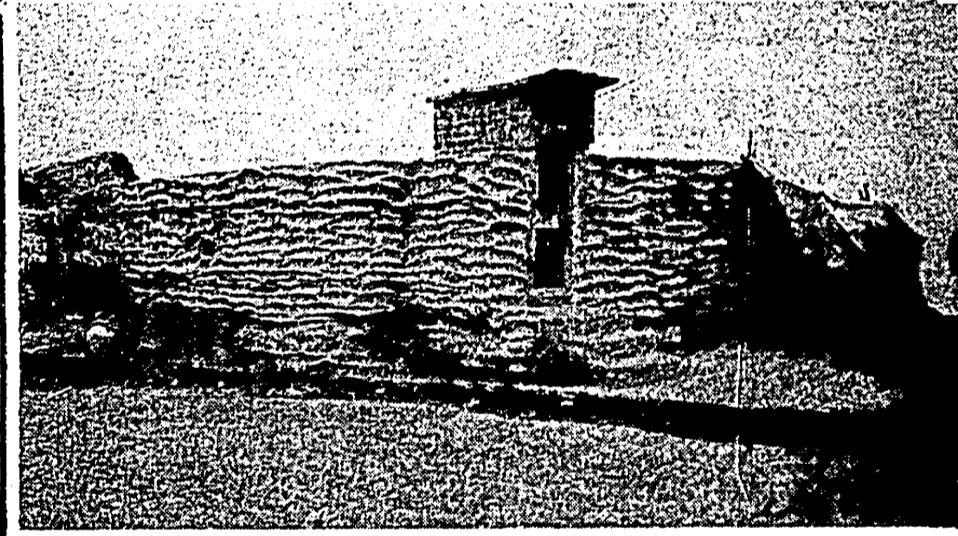
If you are the observant type — and are travelling along the badly battered Ennore Express Road — there's a sight near the United India Foods Factory in Tondiarpet that tends to bring you to a sudden halt. Midst the fishermen's huts, there's the astounding sight of a World War II 'pillbox'. And, what's more, it's occupied!

This shore 'fort', possibly one of the last relics of World War II in Madras, is home to a family who have lived in it for ten years and more now.

The 'pillbox', very close to the sea, is of solid concrete and is radial in shape. It has five small 'spotter' windows through which the surroundings could be watched. The total area of this once and former fortification is about 350 square feet.

To make it more habitable, the present residents have altered with great difficulty the entrance, to allow free passage. A wall separating two sections of the building has also been partly broken down to allow free movement inside. They have 'created' within a pooja room, bedroom, kitchen and a living room. The windows have now been covered with wirenet for safety.

Text and photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY



The new entrance to the 'pill-box' home.

'Outstanding Structure — 1994' — it's in suburban Madras

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Administrative Office Building of ECC, the construction group of L & T, has been awarded the 'FIP Award for Outstanding Structure — 1994'. The striking building on the

Porur Road was featured in the February 1, 1995 issue of *Madras Musings*.

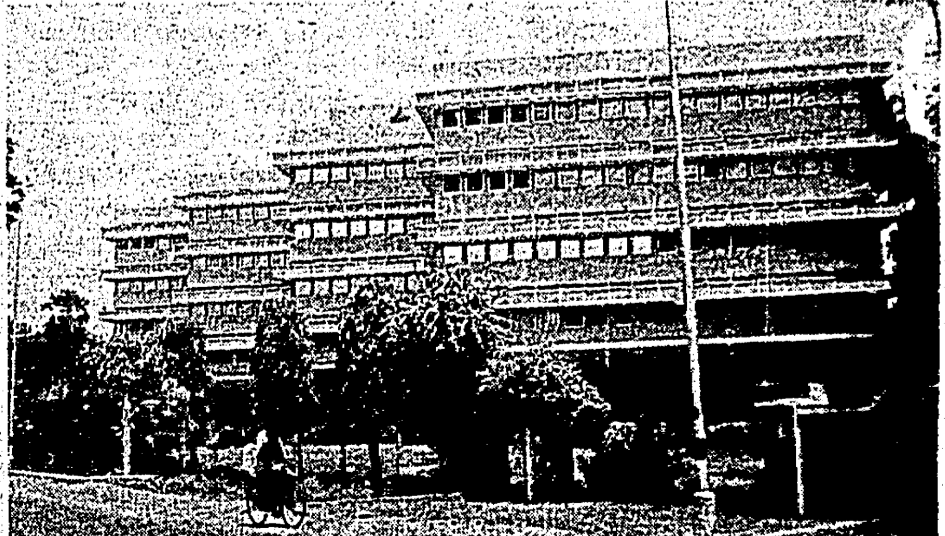
The award is made by the Federation Internationale de la Precontrainte

(FIP), an international organisation for the development of structural concrete, based in London. FIP meets once every four years to select the world's most outstanding structures for their awards.

The 1500-seat octagonal 'Sri Sathya Sai Nigamagaram', designed and constructed by ECC in Hyderabad for the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, was also selected by FIP for 'special mention'.

The awards were presented during the 12th FIP Quadrennial Congress held in Washington.

L & T's construction group, which started as Engineering Construction Corporation Limited (ECC) in 1944, has completed 50 years of construction services.



The E.C.C. headquarters building in suburban Madras.

(Photograph by RAJIND CHRISTY)

(Continued on P3)

Reviving the Yale connection

It was with a contribution of textiles, paintings and objets d'art worth £550 and books worth £600 that Elihu Yale got the Connecticut School in New Haven named Yale College in 1718, later to become Yale University. That donation, worth about £75,000 now, was made after Yale had returned to England to become the 'Nabob of Queen's Square'. He had spent 27 years in Madras in the East India Company's service, including five as Governor.

Those years were recalled on a recent occasion when former President R Venkataraman inaugurated a new international studies group, the Forum for International Affairs, and commended the group for its attempt to forge new links with Yale University. Curiously, *The Man From Madras Musings* noted, those links were being forged again with books — whose value might not have reached £600 even in today's money — and a copy of a painting of Elihu Yale, Governor. Many of the books Yale presented are still in Yale University's library and are treasured possessions. The new consignment will help Yale's International Studies Centre establish, it is hoped, a South Asian Studies Centre. The presentation to US Consul-General Timothy Hauser was symbolically made by the former President with one ribboned book: HIS memories.

Three times wete, on the occasion, commended to Consul-General Hauser to convey to Yale together with the books and painting. They are: get Yale

University to re-erect on its campus the Yale flagpole, recently brought down at Fort St George and on which Yale himself had first raised the Union Jack; get Yale to start a fund in perpetuity to maintain the David Yale memorial Elihu Yale had raised in the old Fort St George Cemetery (now a part of the Law College campus); and get the second oldest university in the US to forge regular links with one of the three oldest universities in India, Madras University. To the last mentioned suggestion, about exchanges of students, the former President advised, "Let's begin with exchanges of faculty, for, say, a year-long period at a time". A welcome idea that *MMM* hopes M.V.M. Alagappan, who is behind the Forum and who had, when in the US last year, suggested to Yale University to start a South Asian Studies Centre to commemorate its Madras links, will take a step further in the months ahead.

Speaking on the occasion, the former President wandered over a wide range of international affairs, but, concluding, he said he felt he had to say something about nuclear proliferation treaties. What need is there for such treaties if other countries had the same record as India? "As a former Defence Minister, let me tell you we CAN make The Bomb any time. We have the capability. But we have NOT made The Bomb despite that capability. And we will NOT make it." It was a bit of blunt speaking quite in contrast to what was a very long key function with a lot of erudition on display and much earnest advice on what the Forum should do in future. The only thing *The Man From Madras Musings* wondered about was the audience; what was their connection to the subject(s) on hand?

Ford's in Madras?

Tamil Nadu, anxious to get a motor car manufacturing unit established in the State, recently welcomed a high-powered team from Ford's and Mahindra & Mahindra, who are planning a new joint venture to manufacture one of the Ford range in India. The team, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands, raised questions about the availability of water for manufacturing operations and educational and housing facilities for the large expatriate force expected to come in with the project. On the plus side, *MMM* hears, they noted the

excellent port facilities, the large qualified labour pool and the State's large auto components industry.

But Tamil Nadu was not the only site Ford and M & M were looking at. They spent time in Rajasthan where the red carpet was really rolled out for them. *MMM* has been told that some in the team felt there'd be fewer governmental hassles and less unionisation of labour in Rajasthan, not to mention the facilities that go with Indian Tourism's Golden Triangle. But will these outweigh Madras's advantages? In the end, it might

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

all boil down to personal equations at the highest level.

Ford's first came to India in 1926 and gradually developed an assembly operation that wound up in 1954. Between 1969 and 1991 it teamed with Escorts to tractor manufacture. And in the 1980s it forged a link with Amalgamations for truck manufacture, but sadly this never took off.

Special schooling

A possible pointer to Tamil Nadu being successfully able to woo Ford's is the discussions being held by expatriates in Madras to set up an International School in the city. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands that the American Embassy is behind the project and that the Embassy, it is said, will help get the school started, but will ensure it becomes self-financing thereafter. Twenty acres have already been gifted to the School in Taramani, *MMM* hears. Once started, self-financing is unlikely to be difficult, considering the sums bandied about as fees etc at a recent meeting in Madras to draw up plans for the school.

The Americans are most interested in the project as they expect a large American expatriate population in Madras before long. One of the largest groups mentioned at the discussion was Ford's. So the pointer.

But what *The Man From Madras Musings* finds curious is the class level being discussed. Surely Madras has enough good schools to offer a solid foundation at a primary and junior school level. Then why is the proposed school targeting this level? *MMM* would have thought from 8th-12th — what the Americans call High School and the British the 'O' and 'A' Levels — would have been what the school would have aimed at, the differences in syllabus being what they are. But it would seem the expatriates might prefer to bring out only younger children and leave the older ones at home. Another point is that for younger children, the school could make do with academically qualified expat wives even if they are not trained teachers, whereas higher classes would require trained teachers, a proposition that could shoot up costs.

All that said, *MMM* still wonders whether international schools are really necessary in India? Considering how Indian students have been faring in American, British and Continental universities, compared to

local students, there can't be too much wrong with the better schools in India.

41 days for 100m

A money order from Madras takes two days to reach Mantralayam. That, *The Man From Madras Musings* thinks, is understandable. But *MMM* has just heard of a case where a money order took 41 days from the Mantralayam post office to reach the Sri Ragavendra Swamy Mutt just 100 metres away! What's more, the payment was made by cheque!

E Balasubramanian tells *MMM* that he sent Rs. 650 to the Mutt for a 'Rathothasavam' on 14-12-94. Hoping that the temple authorities would have made the necessary arrangements for the stay of his family and friends, he reached Mantralayam temple on 29-12-94, but was shocked to hear the temple officials tell him that they hadn't received the money order.

Off he went to the Mantralayam Post Office, where he was told his MO had indeed arrived but that they always waited till 800 money orders were received for the Mutt and then they made one payment for the lot by cheque. The post office, EB was told, makes immediate payment to the Mutt only in the case of telegraphic money orders! Is this fair on pilgrims, wonders *The Man From Madras Musings*. *MMM* also wonders whether post offices can make payments by cheque in the case of money orders.

In brief

* Who says lightning never strikes in the same place twice? It was on February 16, 1994 that *The Man From Madras Musings* wrote of the death in action in the Northeast of Lt. Col. N.J. Nair, Commanding Officer of the 16th Mahratta Light Infantry. The regiment had at the time just moved out of Pallavaram Cantonment and Col. Nair was killed shortly after, in December 1993. Now comes news from the same area that Col. Nair's successor, Lt. Col. K.S. Punicha, has been killed there, and in December too — 1994.

* Soon to be established in Madras, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, is a Madras School of Economics. Behind the institution, *MMM* understands, are former President Venkataraman and Dr Raja Chelliah. Expected to be one of its strengths is a South Asian Chair.

* 'Lakshman Sruti', a 45-member musical troupe that was started by twins Ram and Lakshman seven years ago, recently sang its way into the record books by singing 318 old and new favourites over 36 hours, broken into three-hour sessions with 15-minute breathers. Every session at the Kamaraj Hall was packed and the requests never seemed to stop pouring in, waiting to be picked out of the request basket at random by the organisers. Each session was devoted to the songs of one actor or one musician or one theme. *The Man*

From Madras Musings understands that the group is staking a claim that this is the longest non-stop musical feat ever. *MMM* wishes them luck with Guinness.

* EXNORA's Tiruchchirappalli chapters, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns, have repainted the door numbers of one lakh houses, erected street indicators on fifty important roads and introduced the first incinerators in the state in hospitals to dispose of hospital waste. To *The Man From Madras Musings* these seem a little more significant than half-hearted attempts to clean streets and not quite know what to do with the collected garbage.

Business briefs

* As liberalisation makes interchanges between Indian and international organisations more frequent and as large numbers of Indian whizkids with no exposure to the West or East travel abroad, making the new India business traveller familiar with global etiquette is becoming sound business sense. In Delhi, global etiquette is now being commercially taught, but it does not seem to have made a start in Madras. *The Man From Madras Musings*, however, hears that the Murugappa Group has two much-travelled young women putting members of the Group's staff through a short programme that will enable them to cope better with Western culture and customs. *MMM* hears the course was launched after EID Parry head M.V. Subbiah had led a team abroad and found, at a formal banquet, several of his colleagues staring blankly at the array of cutlery and glasses. *MMM* commends the idea of such courses to 'Global Adjustments' (*MM*, March 16th), who would do well to look at helping with global adjustment BOTH WAYS.

* Simpson's, the 150-year-old and more flagship of the Amalgamations Group, was the first in the country to enter the field of diesel engine manufacture, thanks to its early tie-up with Perkins. Though the Perkins collaboration ended many years ago, links between the two organisations have remained strong and Simpson's have long benefited from developments at Perkins. Now, over 500,000 diesel engines later, Simpson's has won the coveted ISO 9001 recognition from Lloyd's Register and has begun looking towards substantial export growth besides moving into new areas. One of these areas, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, is meeting the demands of several manufacturers who are getting ready to launch India's car boom in the second half of the Nineties with several new vehicles. The first engine from Simpson's for one of the new vehicles will be for the Rover Montego Saloon and Estate diesel versions to be launched by Sipar.

* A state-of-the-art flight kitchen, The Taj Madras Flight Kitchen, is to be established later this year near Madras Airport. Two companies of the Taj Group will hold 50 per cent of the equity while a Singapore Airlines subsidiary and Malaysian Airline System will hold 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. *MMM* understands.

Cultured in snow

now has always been associated with sweaters, blankets, staying indoors and, in a few cases, with sports skiing. No so in Sapporo, Japan, where, for the past 46 years, a snow festival has been held annually with the usual snow sculptures.

An international snow sculpture competition became a feature of the Sapporo festival 22 years ago and has been a great success every year. This year, India participated for the first time and the team members were from Madras and New Delhi. They were Rajendran and Natana Sabapathi from Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram. Srekala Parat and Raja Meenakshi, Bharata Nityam dancers from Madras, and Vishmikant and Biswas from the Saurya Sheraton, New Delhi. C.K. Gariyali, Commissioner of Art and Culture, Tamil Nadu, was in charge of the team whose programme in Japan was co-ordinated by Dr Poomima Astri, Department of Tourism, Government of India.

Sapporo, on Hokkaido Island in northern Japan, is close to the Arctic circle. As the city developed industrially, its industrial units determined to get it on the world map and so was born the snow festival and, later, the international competition.

Initially, when it was the only the snow festival, sculptures were carved by local sculptors and those from Japan's institutes of architecture and sculpture. Even India's Taj Mahal had

been carved in those early days by Japanese. Now, Japanese talent is served by a display section and its chief attraction this year was the Hungarian Parliament building — complete with the flag — which provided the backdrop for the Inaugural and Prize Distribution functions. Though some local Indians have over the years tried their hand at snow carving in Sapporo, this is the first official Indian team.

by R. Jaisri

The teams in the competition were asked to choose the subject of their sculpture and the Indian team chose the Vinayaka. They carved a huge 12' x 10' x 10' idol in the allotted time of three days. Though the Indian team finished third (prizes were only for the first two places), their's was the most impressive and popular among all the carvings at the competition, according to Gariyali.

The festival was an entirely new experience for the sculptors, considering that none of them had handled, or even seen, snow before. "We haven't even been to Kashmir," laughs Rajendran, an instructor at the Mamallapuram college. When they started, they could only guess at how to work with snow. It was entirely different from what they had imagined, says Natana Sabapathi, Rajendran's student. They only had a

few small instruments used for stone carving, but in Japan they found the participants from other countries with special sets of tools meant for snow carving.

Elaborating on this, Rajendran gives an example. "A chisel is an instrument ideal to work with using bare hands. But with gloves on, the chisel proved to be tiny compared to the gloves and we couldn't use it." Though the organisers provided them with tools, it took them time to get the feel of them — and even then, it was a learning experience.

As for the medium itself, they did not find it very difficult to handle. "Snow is slightly harder than ordinary sand, that's all," explains Rajendran. The difficulty, however, was having to stand at a distance while carving, as snow flakes kept falling on the sculptors and proved uncomfortable. Once they got started, however, they began sweating, recalls Natana Sabapathi.

Being used to carving miniatures where they could get a close look at what they were doing, carving such a huge image, and that too at a distance, posed some difficulties, though they were only "startling troubles", as Rajendran calls them. "In fact," he says, "when we were shown the venue where we had to carve and the huge blocks of snow, we couldn't even figure out what we were going to do. But seeing other sculpture brightened us up a bit and once we started carving, things fell into place quickly." Well, things fell into place so well that the Ganesha became slightly over-sized.



The Indian team and its Ganesha at the Sapporo Snow Festival. In the group on the left are Natana Sabapathi, one of the sculptors (seated); dancer Srekala Bharat; and Dilip Mansukhani, the team's local liaison. In the group on the right are, from left to right, dancer Raja Meenakshi; Poomima Astri the GoI's Regional Deputy Director-General of Tourism, headquartered in Tokyo; C.K. Gariyali, Commissioner of Art and Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu; and Rajendran, the lead sculptor.

when the crown was carved, taking away a possible prize.

Along with the Ganesha sculpture, the Japanese got another glimpse of India's culture and heritage through the Bharata Nityam performances of Srekala Bharat. The Government decided to use this snow festival to attract tourists to India and dance was used for the purpose. Srekala gave ten performances in Japan during the trip and also danced at the Travel and Tour Expo in Manila. For many of the Japanese, it was the first time they were seeing Bharata Nityam. After programmes, children would line up quietly to see and shake hands with her or, at times, to feel the silk costumes or touch the bangles or jewellery. Re-

calling one incident, Srekala recounts, "After one of the programmes, there was such a long line of children that all of them couldn't shake hands with me, whereupon one of the little girls started crying. I went up to her and consoled her and gave her a kiss. Whereupon many of the children who had shaken hands with me earlier wanted a kiss too. After that, none of the kids would settle for a mere handshake."

Indeed, Japan proved to be something more than a land of calculators and electronic equipment, the entire team discovered. It was so culturally alive and keen to know more about the culture of other countries, that the whole team itself was enthused.

'Outstanding Structure'

(Continued from P. 1)

Over the years, ECC has executed many prestigious projects in and outside India and has, today, emerged as, perhaps, the premier construction organisation in the country. It is now moving into new areas, such as roads, bridges, tunnels, water and effluent treatment plants etc.

One of its major projects in the South at present is the construction of the Bangalore-Hosur road section of National Highway 7. The 25 km stretch is to be built in 48 months. The project funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is valued at

Rs. 399.99 million. To ensure that a road of international standards is built in India, ECC has tied up with Colas S.A. of France.

When completed, the Bangalore-Hosur Road will consist of four lanes. The project involves widening and strengthening the existing pavement as well as construction of two additional lanes of main carriageway. Also involved is the construction of two service roads on either side of the main carriageway for a length of about 15 km. Thus, a full fledged 8-lane project is under construction with an average right-of-way of 60 m.

MADRAS MUSINGS

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TITCHMARSH, A	Gardening techniques
WATKINS, D	Urban permaculture

Thanjavur it!

The picture of the archway shown in *MM* (March 16, '95) is that of Victoria Arch found on the arterial road connecting Arch Street (Kezhakkku Veedhi) and Railway Station of Thanjavur town. The arch arch lies between two smaller arches shown in the picture.

This Victoria Arch and an adjacent clock tower formed two prominent landmarks in Thanjavur before they were hemmed by ugly highrise concrete buildings.

M. Sethuraman
8 Second Cross Road
Mahalakshmi Nagar
Madras 600 088.

Why secretive?

Harry Miller's 'Somewhere in South India' (*MM* March 16, 1995) has a photograph of an arch whose identity he doesn't want to tell. As a native of the town of Pudukkottai, a former princely state, I can recognise it to the spot. It was built in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, as we were told when young.

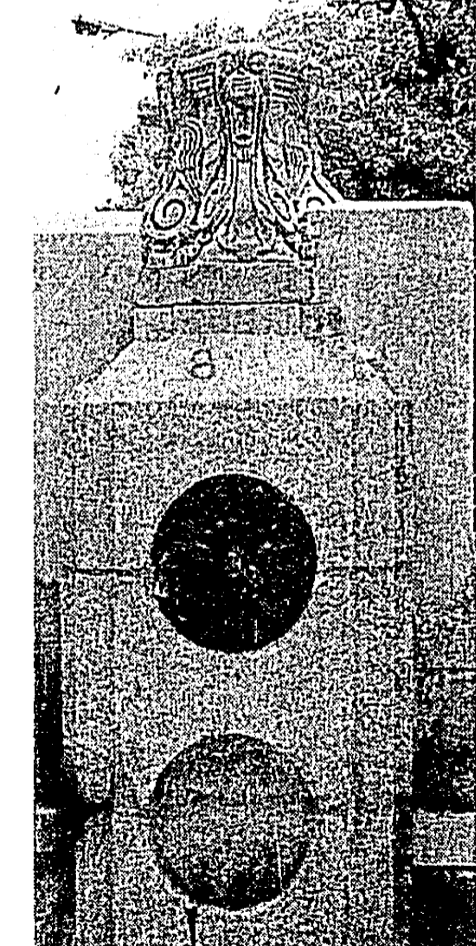
It is a landmark in the town and the locals identify it in Tamil-English as *Archu Valavu* (*Archu* for arch, *valavu* for semile). We have similar expressions in the local vocabulary, such as *paipu-kul* (pipe), *thandi-glass*, *gate-kadavu* etc.

I wonder why Harry Miller doesn't want to tell the name of the town. It is still there.

S. Radhakrishnan
13 Krishnapuri
R A Puram
Madras 600 028.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Harry Miller is being secretive because he obviously feels identification might lead to official 'vandalism' that would quickly paint the lettering out. This way, he can keep readers, like M Sethuraman and S Radhakrishnan, and Government guessing.

OUR READERS WRITE



V S RAGHAVAN writes: "Here's a postscript to my feature last week on the grills and walls of the Marina. The typical pillar-breaks of old used to be doubled in size — and decorated with TWO, not one, cast iron rosettes — when they served as entrance pillars. The pillar by the old entrance to Senate House has not only lost one of its rosettes but has been further vandalised with cementing. For tasteless workmanship this is hard to beat."

No crowd-pulling

I watched all the key matches of the recently concluded Santosh Trophy tournament sponsored by Bharat Petroleum.

The turf was green, but the standard of football was not upto the mark. Nevertheless the tournament deserved a better audience.

The MFA is to blame for the poor crowds. To popularise football and to encourage the 'cricket crazy' young to make the switch, the MFA and TNFA should have sent complimentary tickets to all schools and colleges, particularly the Corporation schools — where the students cannot afford the tickets. I live near a slum, and the slum-dwellers knock a ball on the road every evening. Most of them are from the fishermen-community. How nice it would have been if these boys had got the chance to watch once in a lifetime football matches of even a little better quality. It would have helped them to learn a new thing or two.

MFA should have opened a special counter for students, and anyone giving proof of his being a student, should have been allowed in FREE. It would have served the twin purpose of encouraging the game and of filling the grounds.

One last word. The chairs were so dirty that at least one inch of dirt was there. Can't the TNFA and MFA at least provide clean chairs when we are paying for the seats.

M. Fazal
Flat-1, Seaview Apartment
San Thomé, Madras 600 028.

Not Claw

What a very good profile Jaisri has evolved from a very ordinary subject. But I must mention one inaccuracy: Sir Charles 'Claw' is actually 'Clare' (Jewish French).

John M Davies
4 Downview Road
Sevenoaks, Kent,
U K.

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From a 'nuisance' to a 'pain'

The Congress(I), the main Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, had its first sweet smell of success "in our fight for democracy and for our rights", after months of struggle, though, ironically, it came only after its members were thrown out bodily from the lobby, in the last week of March. As others see it, there was no strategy involved. Only Speaker Muthiah's decision to keep them out, after an unruly scene in the House, brought the party into the limelight at the same time (almost) as when Governor Channa Reddy, who had praised Chief Minister Jayalalitha only

Madras when he referred to the Metro-water Board's notices demanding arrears for as many as 15 years. "Some of them have no water or sewer connections," yet Property Tax has been hiked fivefold, he said.

To his query how the New Veeram project cost would now cost Rs. 1,632 crore (against the original Rs. 350 crore), Local Administration Minister Selvaganapathy said the cost included the main works and also cost for distribution in Madras and supply to wayside villages. The cost had been worked out according to World Bank stipulations.

M.G. Ramachandran. She would not accept some persons into her party even if they touched her feet!

The House heard an assertion from the Local Administration Minister that the Government had completed its part of the work to conduct local body elections. It was now the State Election Commission's job to take up the work.

The Government's position vis a vis total prohibition was made clear by Chief Minister Jayalalitha who said she would introduce it if the Centre compensated for the revenue loss. Other points made by the Chief Minister included: The Rs. 2.5 lakh ceiling as housing loan to Government officials had been hiked to Rs. 4 lakh while the Rs. 1 lakh limit for expansion of existing houses has been hiked to Rs. 2 lakh. A pension-cum-accident insurance scheme for film industry workers was on the anvil. During AIADMK rule, 45 new industries (Rs. 10,936 crore) had been set up so far. Tamil Nadu's annual Plan has risen to Rs. 3,200 (1995-96) crore from Rs. 1,600 crore (1991-92). Unlike some States, Tamil Nadu has not borrowed from private financial institutions. A steel plant is being planned for Sambuvarayar District which would give direct employment to 3,000 persons and indirect employment to 50,000.

THE VIEW FROM FORT ST. GEORGE

a fortnight earlier, granted permission to Dr Subramaniam Swamy to prosecute her on charges of corruption.

Opposition Congress(I) leader S.R. Balasubramaniam later tried unsuccessfully to raise the 'prosecution' issue. But as the Speaker refused permission (he thought the House was not the proper forum for it), Balasubramaniam and his colleagues walked out. A week's boycott of the House and resignation by the Congress members of their seats have been announced. Their main demand is that the Chief Minister step down. But the AIADMK members and the Party are solidly behind her, with their request to her being not to oblige, as there is no need.

The differences started two days earlier, with S. Alagiri, (C-1) giving an impression that the Nehru family prospered from being Forward Caste while Gandhiji's could not, as he came from a Backward Caste. Hot retorts, like the member was a late entrant and interested only in leaves of office, flowed from the expelled Congress(I) members. There followed a tussle between the two groups the next day too, and the main group walked out after accusing the AIADMK of having a selfish strategic interest in their differences.

Hearing the commotion in the lobby, the Speaker ordered the removal of those creating the disturbance from the place. There are allegations of unnecessary force being used by the Watch and Ward and counter-allegations of attack by the Members on the Watch and Ward. Complaints from the Congress(I) to the Governor followed. The Speaker's view was that though the Congress(I) was guilty of contempt of the House, he was ordering criminal proceedings "for assault on the Watch and Ward staff". It is evident that the Congress(I), which was being considered a 'nuisance' to the ruling party, has now become a pain, as subsequent events have proved.

The House took a mournful view of the 'blackouts' being caused by overdrawal of power by Andhra Pradesh, and S. Kannappan, Minister in charge of Electricity, has threatened to withdraw the State from the Southern power grid.

RPT's Thamizharasan made a point that inclusion of caste names in Muthuramalinga Thevar and Padayachi Districts would harm the harmony among the people. Cooperation Minister Pattabhiraman's reply was that these leaders were known by their full names.

Congress(I)'s U. Balaraman voiced the grievances of the residents in

MGR ADMK member S. Thirunavukkarasu was suspended for the rest of the Budget Session, after heated exchanges, over who had touched whose feet! To the member's accusation of exorbitant expenditure on the Chief Minister's tours, Minister Muthuswamy asked, if the member's "party of five or ten persons" could have welcome arches, what was wrong with the AIADMK, with 1.5 crore members, staging a grand show, with the Party meeting the expenditure for decorations and arches.

Thirunavukkarasu said though his was a small party, it did not stoop to the level of people falling at the feet of the Chief Minister. Chief Minister Jayalalitha's comment was that she had seen the member falling at the feet of

the Government had completed its part of the work to conduct local body elections. It was now the State Election Commission's job to take up the work.

The Government's position vis a vis total prohibition was made clear by Chief Minister Jayalalitha who said she would introduce it if the Centre compensated for the revenue loss. Other points made by the Chief Minister included: The Rs. 2.5 lakh ceiling as housing loan to Government officials had been hiked to Rs. 4 lakh while the Rs. 1 lakh limit for expansion of existing houses has been hiked to Rs. 2 lakh. A pension-cum-accident insurance scheme for film industry workers was on the anvil. During AIADMK rule, 45 new industries (Rs. 10,936 crore) had been set up so far. Tamil Nadu's annual Plan has risen to Rs. 3,200 (1995-96) crore from Rs. 1,600 crore (1991-92). Unlike some States, Tamil Nadu has not borrowed from private financial institutions. A steel plant is being planned for Sambuvarayar District which would give direct employment to 3,000 persons and indirect employment to 50,000.

Finance Minister Nedunchezhiyan's budget for the year had no new taxes. At the same time, it cut the PDS rice price by Re. 1 a kg.

R.K.K.

Calculating Investment

I would think that the only branch of Maths applicable in investment is Arithmetic, as only simple (relatively speaking) addition, multiplication etc seem necessary. Not so. The more arcane theories are of equal, if not more, relevance.

One such theory is **Optimal f**. By this we can calculate the best, or optimal, mix of capital and profits for investment. Let us take investment in the stock market as an example. If we were to take out our returns every time we make some profits, we would not

capital of Rs. 10,000, if divided into ten lots, at a win/loss ratio of 7:3 and at returns fixed at 30 per cent, investing 60 per cent of our returns turns out to be the best or optimal mixture. At this mixture, even if we were to win in the first seven trips and lose in the last three, our reserves would still be healthy. The original capital of Rs. 10,000 would have megamorphed into a fabulous sum of Rs. 8.64 lakh at 30 per cent returns.

Of course, these academic studies are not replicated in actual life, as a constant 30 per cent in returns is not usually possible. Also, various factors, such as changes in the payoff ratio, a decrease in capital due to exigencies etc, invariably force constraints on us.

It can, however, no longer be denied that a more scientific analysis of our investment pattern would stand us in very good stead. There are many systems available today. From the famed Martingale Systems (popularised by James Bond) to the one developed by one Lee Gettess, these systems are applicable to gambling, speculation and investment.

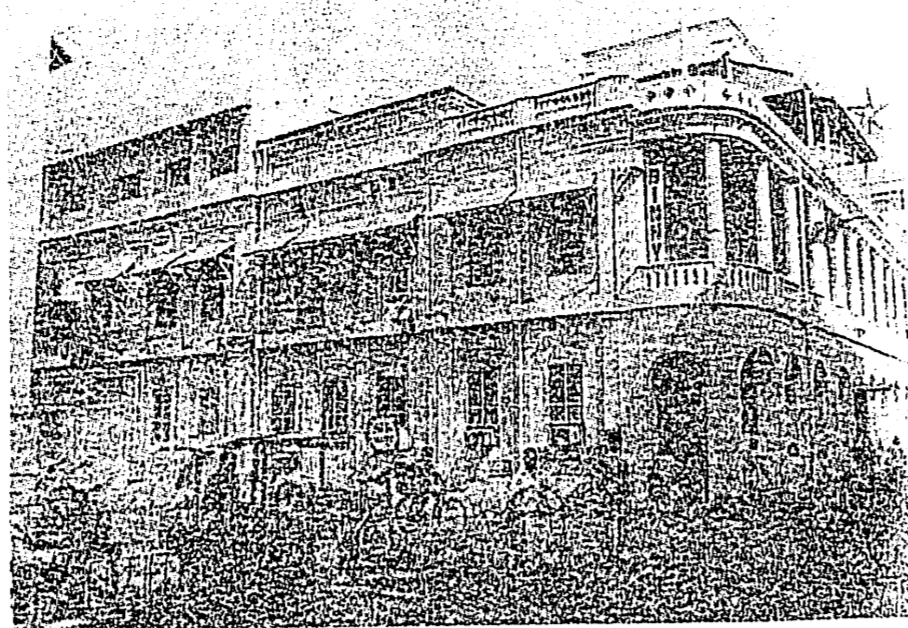
From this money management exercise, let's move on to our recommendations:

Sajjan Udyog Export (CMP: Rs. 27.00): SJEL manufactures and exports premium quality cotton woven fabrics and exports cotton yarn. It is the second largest

EEC quota holder in India for cotton textiles and fourth largest for cotton yarn. Its main product is 100% grey cloth, of the heavier variety used mainly for industrial purpose. The company exports to the European countries and Australia. It has an office in Manchester and has firm plans to set up a 100% EOU for open-end spinning, yarn dyeing and fibre dyeing units by 1995 at a cost of Rs. 25 cr. The company has marginally crossed its projections for the year ending March '95. For March 1996 we project a sales of Rs. 30 cr and a PAT of Rs. 2.25 cr. Buy for both medium- and long-term gains as the P/E is low at 6.5 for even the announced results.

Tamburampnam Diamond Dies and Tools (CMP: Rs. 19.50): The company manufactures industrial diamond dies in technical collaboration with ODIICL, Japan. With an installed capacity of 36,000 nos, it is the largest player in the organised sector. The product has a good market both domestically and internationally. Due to better price realisation, it sells 60 per cent of its production in the international market. It is reported that the accounting year has been changed to June. For June 1996, the company will announce good results and the share is a good pick on reactions for long-term gains.

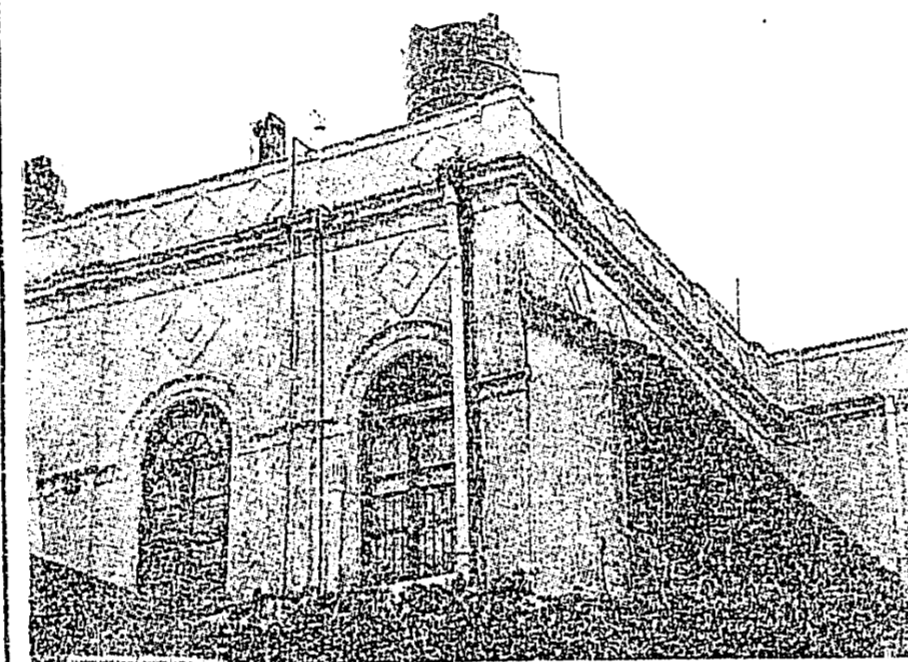
SSM Mills (CMP: Rs. 30.00): Belonging to the Tan India group, SSM came out with an equity issue at par, selling Rs. 1.85 cr to finance its Rs. 3.5 cr project for the manufacture of dhotis, lab-bluise materials, shirtings and suitings. The issue was oversubscribed 3.84 times. December 1994, it had achieved a turnover of Rs. 5.50 cr and a PAT of Rs. 0.6 cr, yielding an annualised EPS of Rs. 0.6. SSM Mills is expanding its capacity to 250 looms from the present 250 looms. capacity will add to the turnover and PAT in 1995-96, by which time the company estimates a turnover of Rs. 20 cr and a PAT of Rs. 2.50 cr, yielding an EPS of Rs. 2.50 and supporting a price of Rs. 60 for share. Buy.



Our OLD this fortnight is Binny's headquarters, a landmark on Armenian Street. A building a hundred and more years old, it is a monument to commercial and industrial enterprise in the South dating to over 200 years ago. If ever there was a heritage building, this would be one. But with no Heritage Act... and with entrepreneurs without a sense of history... this has become a threatened building, with developers for property being called for.

The NEW shows what can be done to the Old. Below is a part of an old commercial complex on Anna Salai that has been left in the sad state it is in. But below it, is the front of the same building, handsomely restored and just opened as the Annalakshmi restaurant, run by a Swami disciple who not only takes turns in cooking all the food in home-style but who also takes turns in waiting on tables and cleaning up. The pity of the restoration effort is that while a part of the OLD now looks handsome, the other half of the building provides a shabby contrast.

(Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)



K. GOPALAKRISHNAN

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What's needed before infrastructure

Are we one country? Are we ready for liberalisation? And do we have leadership necessary? These are the kinds of questions we have to address ourselves to first, before we talk about infrastructure, said Russi Mody, Chairman, Air India and Indian Airlines, while delivering the keynote address at the 1995 Annual Award Convention of the Madras Management Association held recently at the Trident. Without finding answers to these questions and without making a supreme effort to look, talk and act like Indians, India, with all the infrastructure (the theme of the Convention was 'Infrastructure Conundrum') it might build, cannot even be a mouse on the world stage. Mody alone a tiger, he quipped. A challenging question he posed to reflect this view was, "If even after 47 years

Speaking in favour of MNCs, S Venkataraman, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, said that caution had to be exercised to see that MNCs do not dictate terms. The manner in which some of them were being given the red carpet welcome was raising quite a few eyebrows, he remarked, adding that foreign capital was required only in critical areas and only in those where relevant technology was NOT available in India.

Citing the example of power, where the additional thermal capacity needed was between 2000 to 3000 MW every year (largely due to defective planning and an imbalance between hydel and thermal power generation), the MNCs' help should be sought not only for generation but for distribution as well, he felt. The same criteria applied to ports and harbours too, where there is a need for foreign technology on the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis. But there is really no need to scout for MNC help in laying roads and constructing national highways, as India had the technology to do so, he pointed out.

by Sashi Nair

of independence, we have not been able to provide drinking water to all our citizens, what is the infrastructure we are talking about?"

Without LEED — leadership, efficiency, education and discipline, aspects that are the 'software' of infrastructure — the country would not go very far, Mody was emphatic. Indeed, his frank views of India's ability to move with the changing times are certain to provide food for thought for some time to all those who heard him. And they included most of the invitees to the main Award-presentation function who stayed back after tea and coffee to hear Mody. The charismatic ex-Tata man did not disappoint them, an irritated throat and persistent cough notwithstanding.

Management books were not for him, Mody told his management audience. They only things he relied on in management were "simplicity, trust and sincerity of purpose". According to him, the public sector, with a cumulative investment of Rs. 300,000 crore, was a virtual goldmine, which has not even been tapped on the surface. What use were management books in such circumstances?

Whether people like Mody have been able to influence the Government into action or not, the opening up of the Indian economy is likely to bring about a sea-change in the way we do business. Not only have foreign investments started flowing in, but several leading foreign companies have been making a beeline to secure a foothold in the core sectors of Indian industry. The multinationals, however, are not likely to stay long if efforts are not made to improve the existing infrastructure in the country. As Mody wondered, where are those efforts?

The MNC presence

Although the economic reforms taking place in India seem irreversible, the issue of allowing MNCs almost unhindered access to the country's economy has remained one of the subjects of constant debate. And it was in one such lively debate at the seminar that some points were forcefully made which leading Indian companies and the Government would do well to mull over.

Noted economist and MP Ashok Mitra was very much against MNC participation in joint ventures in India. "We still suffer from a colonial mindset, otherwise why does the Press, for example, give more importance to what a junior bureaucrat from the US has to tell us about our economy than what our own financial experts have to say?" he wondered. "Do not be misled into thinking that the MNCs are coming with charity," he emphasised, adding, "Their aim is to gain undue advantage and leverage." Comparisons with China were odious, he said, because while that country operates from a position of strength, India does so from one of servitude.

"What evidence is there that the technology that is coming in is state-of-the-art?" he asked. "It might as well be junk technology," he was sure. Dr Mitra said that with the Government encouraging mass consumption, without really increasing purchasing power, savings and investments had come down.

Taking Dr Mitra's argument one step further, N Ram, Editor, *Frontline*, got down to detail and questioned the economic justification of the Dabhol Power Project, a deal not above board, he alleged. Without competitive bidding, without transparency of operations and adequate information, and with deliberate capital padding, the Project 'stank,' according to him.

Foreigners upbeat

Ram's and Dr Mitra's onslaught notwithstanding, the overall mood during the seminar was upbeat and encouraging to foreign investment in the country. This was evident at the various sessions on Power and Telecom, Surface Communication and Ports, Financial Resources and Infrastructure, and Human Resources. Senior executives of National Power Plc, UK, and US West International Network found the Indian business climate very conducive for foreign equity participation.

Anthony Concannon of National Power, a company which owns and operates thermal power stations with a 22,000 MW capacity in the UK,

estimated the total foreign investment in the power sector in India would be Rs. 73,000 crore. He cited the financial weakness of the State Electricity Boards, the cautious attitude of the Financial Institutions, poor risk allocation and compliance, and infrastructural problems as some of the reasons why power generation in the country still fell way behind actual demand. According to him, there was a desperate need to reduce transmission and distribution losses, tackle subsidies and identify additional revenue sources. National Power has already got off to a good start in India with a 2 x 500 MW thermal power project in Vishakhapatnam underway, in partnership with Ashok Underland.

Wayne Robbins of US West said that his company would provide superior, value-added telecom services (basic telephone and data services, cable TV and public call offices) in Coimbatore, Erode, Salem and Dharmapuri. Over one million telephone lines are expected to be installed in this area over a ten-year period, creating about 10,000 jobs in the process and raising the standard of living conditions. Fibre-optic technology would be used, instead of copper wire, to accommodate a larger volume of signals. Robbins said that once the

The muscle-builder



For the first time in its 25-year-old history, the Madras Management Association Business Leadership Award was presented to a Madras industrialist. For the shy and retiring 72-year-old K M Mammen Mappillai, of MRF, it was a well-deserved honour being bestowed much too late. In fact, when V Krishnamurthy, former Chairman of the Steel Authority of India and recipient of the award in 1975, wondered aloud why Mappillai was not given the award earlier, he was only echoing the feelings of perhaps the largest audience to grace an MMA Awards function (scores of invitees had to stand).

When Mammen Mappillai, after training at Bayer Research Laboratories, ICI and Monsanto Laboratories, UK, returned to India, MRF had its humble beginnings — in Mappillai's own backyard. It was a balloon-making unit that he and his wife started there in 1946. The first factory of sorts came up the following year in a thatched shed in Tiruvottriyur.

The husband and wife invested Rs. 10,000 in it and employed four persons to help them. The products they made included toys (rattles and squeakers), dry rubber sheets, rollers, shoe heels and soles, hoses and small-size transmission belts. In 1951, the range was expanded to include tread rubber and repair material for the retreading industry. And Stanes of the Amalgamations group and TVS Motors helped the new company enormously by buying its products.

In 1962, a year after MRF became a public limited

company, a plant was set up in Madras to manufacture automotive tyres and tubes. But the multinationals were determined to keep MRF out of the market. Their unfair trade practices included preventing wholesalers and retailers from stocking Indian-made tyres. It was during those years that the younger Mappillai steeled himself to take on the opposition and resolved to teach the foreigners a lesson. To do that he turned to export. An export office in Beirut, a peaceful city then, was set up. Success followed. The second manufacturing unit came up in Goa in 1973, followed by other units in Kottayam and Arakonam. MRF has not looked back. Today, MRF tyres are exported to the US, the very home of the world's best tyres.

Mappillai's secret, perhaps, lies in his treating every employee of his company like a partner and his inexhaustible faith in human beings. He has never forgotten the difficult times he had to face when he

was younger — when he was a chemist, accountant and salesman all rolled into one. Obviously, he was influenced by his father, the late KC Mammen Mappillai, a person who was sure of his convictions, who started the *Malayala Manorama* in 1888, a paper with a 'bravely ringing nationalistic tone' and which, as a result, was banned for several years.

Conveyer and transmission belts, rubber and braided hoses, speciality paints and finished rubber are some of the more sophisticated products that MRF has ventured into now. But it is with tyres that the Rs. 1,140 crore company's name is synonymous — tyres with muscle.

Toughness, durability and excellence are wonderfully exemplified by the logo on those tyres — the man with rippling muscles holding aloft the MRF tyre. You cannot but find shades of Mappillai in the MRF man.

S.N.

Subscriptions Due, Subscriptions New

With this issue (April 16th), *Madras Musings* enters its fifth year of publication. They have been four eventful years, focussing on the conservation and preservation of the historical in Madras, on developing a cleaner, more environmentally friendly Madras, on making Madras a better place to live in and on providing recognition to achievers in Madras and Tamil Nadu who are little noticed elsewhere. Truly can it be said of *Madras Musings* that it cares for Madras and the citizens of the city.

It was a well-nigh impossible task keeping going as a free mailer, which is what we started as. But slowly some corporate support built up, for which we are ever grateful. But it was not enough. And we were forced to become a subscription publication. We are grateful to all those subscribers who supported us in the past year. A new year begins with this issue (April 16) and we look forward to your renewing your subscriptions. Please fill in the form below and mail it to us with your cheque for Rs. 60 for a year's subscription.

We know we can count on our subscribers as old friends. But we look forward, as we begin a new year, our fifth, to very many more subscribers joining the fold. If you are not already a subscriber, become one today and join the *Madras Musings* family of THOSE WHO CARE FOR MADRAS.

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(Continued on P6)

This series is on Madras schools that are part of the City's heritage. These are not necessarily the better-known or more successful schools of today. These are the schools that helped the city to grow. Each of the schools featured is over 100 years old.

From Drew to Porter to Bentinck

Bentinck Higher Secondary School, Vepery, had its beginnings in a school founded in 1835 for girls who came from low income homes. That year, Mrs Anna Drew opened a day school in Royapuram for 25 girls and another day school in Purasawalkam for 20 girls. The next year, she founded a school in Bangalore, which opened with 13 girls. And in 1837 she opened a boarding school in her home in Vepery, which housed 21 girls in a large room.

Unfortunately, Anna Drew died young, leaving behind a three-year-old daughter. The wives of fellow missionaries kept the school going for Mr. Drew, who loved the school for his wife's sake.

In September 1841, Mrs William Porter took over the management so effectively that for very many years the school was known as 'Porter's School'. In 1852, the London Missionary Society acquired the present site from the executor of Mr. Loveless, who arrived in Madras in 1805 as the first London Missionary Society missionary in the Presidency. And Mrs Porter, a mother of five children, moved the school to the present site. Mrs Porter's mother, Mrs Bower, helped with the housekeeping, enabling her daughter to concentrate on the school. Miss Drew and her father lived in the adjoining compound and Miss Drew appears to have taught English in the school.

Mrs Porter left for England in 1856 and missionary wives appear to have done their best to keep the school going. They must have succeeded, for the school was recognised as a middle school in 1877. Then Government granted the school temporary recognition as a High School; permanent recognition came in 1898.

The school's founders believed in the importance of education for women. They also believed in the power of English. It was compulsory to talk in English in school. "You speak

in Tamil, I tell to teacher," was a threat frequently heard in the school.

The London Mission Girls' School was renamed the Bentinck Girls' High School in 1915, after Lord William Bentinck who was the Governor General of India when the school was founded.

Among the school's great Headmistresses were Miss Varley and Miss Marjorie Sykes (1930-1939). Marjorie Sykes left the school for wider horizons of service — with Rabindranath Tagore, with Mahatma Gandhi in Wardha and later, with the Sarvodaya Movement of Vinodha Bhawe.

The school was moved to Vellore and became a residential school when Madras was threatened with air raids and Japanese invasion. Mrs Rajamani Arulappan, an old student of Bentinck's and of St. Christopher's, its practising school, became, in 1945, its first Indian headmistress.

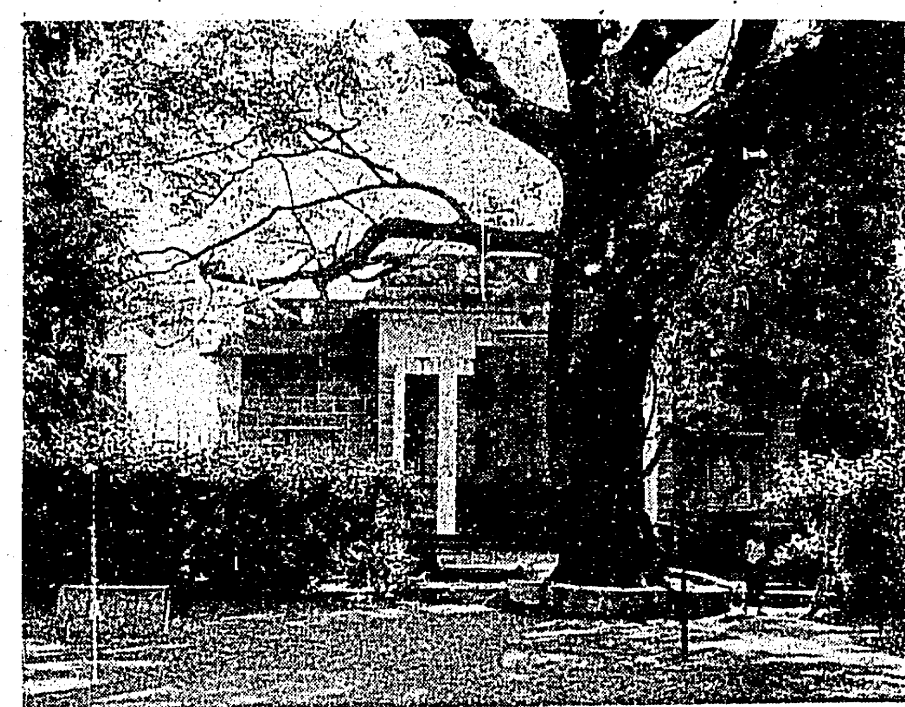
The school grew in strength and became a higher secondary school in 1978. The Parent-Teachers' Association was started in 1970 and is



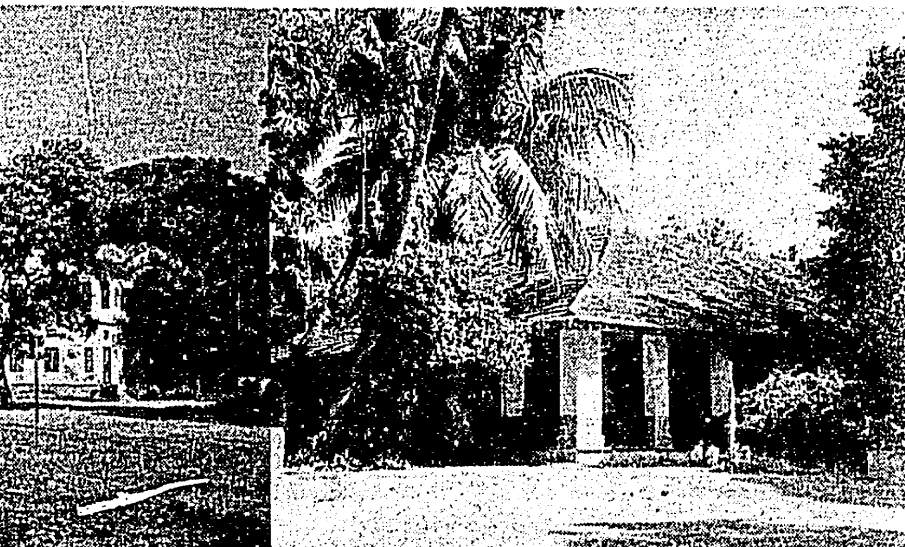
Some of the older buildings in the tree-shaded campus of Bentinck's Girls' H.S. School, Vepery.

committed to the school's welfare and progress.

The school is at present situated in seven acres of land. Mrs Prema Massilamoni is its Headmistress and she has 70 staff. There are over 2,100 students, and the medium of instruction is in English, Tamil and Telugu in the High School and Tamil and English in the Higher Secondary. The academic per-



The mandapam-like chapel at Bentinck's School.



formance of the school is good. The school offers a variety of sports and extracurricular activities, but is best known for its choir trained by Robin Daniel.

The school has hostel facilities on campus for about 40 students. There is a chapel on the campus built in 1930 and looking like a mandapam. The school also has a noon meal scheme

for its poorer students. The school mainly for children from lower income families. The criteria taken into consideration for admission is the prospect of the student's merit and the income of the parents.

Text and photographs by
RAJIND N CHRISTIAN

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quiz Master V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight March 16-31)

1. What historic first in Russian-American co-operation in Space was achieved on March 16th?
2. Why were Bhupinder Singh (Jr.) and Pankaj Dhamani of Punjab in the news?
3. Who replaced K. Karunakaran as the Chief Minister of Kerala?
4. With what dastardly incident has the Japanese cult 'Om Shintoky' and its leader, Shoko Asahara, been linked in the press?
5. The proposed 'Bombay permit plan' has created an uproar in the country. What does the plan envisage?
6. March 24th was observed worldwide as...

7. Which actor became the first in 57 years to win back-to-back Oscars, with his performance in *Forest Gump*?
8. Name the Madras schoolboy who, on March 28th, became the youngest to swim the Palk Straits.
9. Who is the recipient of the prestigious Raja Rajan Award, instituted by the Tamil University?
10. Who has been honoured with Belgium's 'Knight of the Order of the Crown'?
11. Who is the new president of the World Bank?
12. Name the city schoolgirl who won the National 'A' women's chess championship at Madras, thus becoming the first to win all the National titles available to a woman player.

13. Name the Grammy Award-winning singer, who was fatally wounded by a disgruntled fan on March 31st.
14. Who granted whom permission to prosecute Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha under the Indian Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Act?
15. Renato Ruggerio of the European Union is the new Director-General of which world body...?
16. Which Indian corporate giant's chief scored a well-publicised pyrrhic victory of sorts for the entity by stalling the moves of its major shareholder, a foreign organisation, at an EGM in Calcutta on March 24th?
17. In which major city of the State did the inmates of the central prison riot, leading to the lynching of the warden

and fury among the law and order ranks of the State?

18. A golden moment in Indian sporting history was achieved recently, thanks to the 'cerebral callisthenics' of a young man from Madras in Spain. Who?

19. Which famous Kannadiga artist's international repute was honoured by the State with a separate gallery at the Government-owned art gallery with a film on his life by noted director Girish Kasaravalli?

20. Which Madras-born, Paris-based dancer-actress was bestowed with the prestigious 'Chevalier des arts et des lettres' by the French Government?

(Answers on p. 8)

Guna creates a stir



Guna, the Malaysian Bharata Natyam and Odissi dancer trained in Kalakshetra but now disturbing Kalakshetra aficionados. (Photograph by CHU LI.)

Net Guna (Gunaagarar) in Kuala Lumpur recently. And found he was being known in Malaysia as an outstanding dancer in classical Bharata Natyam, Odissi, Russian ballet and modern dance. Guna was following in the footsteps of his mentor, Ramli Ibrahim, who is the foremost dancer in Malaysia in all these disciplines and choreographer, organiser and a link between traditional Malaysian theatre, dance, craft and *avant garde* theatre, temporary arts and crafts and traditional Indian dance.... Whew....!

Guna had created quite a stir in Kalakshetra where he was the first foreign male student. A devoted and talented student of Bharata Natyam, he made a mark by giving his hair a white streak in the middle! He would fall out of the Kalakshetra hostel at once to perform disco and Madonna dances at The Gatsby and would participate in Fashion shows as a model choreographer.

When Guna graduated and went back to Malaysia, he was faced with a bleak future until he saw an announcement that Ramli Ibrahim was looking for dancers for a new production. Guna auditioned successfully and has been assistant to Ramli for ten days now, performing in all the productions of the prolific choreographer.

Ramli found a novel way of presenting Guna in a solo production in Malaysia. He extensively interviewed Guna on his life and came up with a production called *The State of Being*. It played to packed houses in Kuala Lumpur for ten days at a stretch. When it played in Singapore, Guna faced threatening calls from some Kalakshetra fans who had misunderstood the content.

The State of Being Guna is a completely autobiographical and is the story of a young boy who wanted to dance. The production opens with two boys dancing spontaneously to music. A voice backstage asks, "Why can't you be an Engineer or a doctor like your cousins and stop coming to dance all the time?" Guna replies, "I want to dance, I have to dance and I will dance". The scene shifts to an audition with Guna dancing *Alaripu*

completely off the beat (as it really happened). A voice announces that he has been admitted to Kalakshetra. The two boys (*Bhoota Ganas* or face dancers) come on stage holding a dhoti as a curtain. Guna removes his pants on stage and ties the dhoti in the Kalakshetra style. Background voices provide the Kalakshetra ambience with its sounds of elementary dance and music lessons. The new student, fumbling through his lessons, listening to discourses and going through the Kalakshetra rigour is brilliantly depicted. "Sit lower, lower," goes the refrain, "Stretch your hands, stretch longer" As he goes through the *Varnam*, Guna suddenly chokes and lets his hair down (literally). The other Guna in him surfaces and the two *Bhoota Ganas* bring sequinned pants and shirts and Guna does a sexy number to a Malay hit tune. He gets abused in the nightclub and the music of Bharata Natyam comes back. The *Thillanna* is done in the jazzy pants!

There's nothing blasphemous in this brutally honest depiction of an individual's struggle to cope with the rigour and the discipline of Kalakshetra. That institution should be proud that Guna comes through it all to emerge as a brilliant dancer and a fantastic actor. I can well appreciate how difficult it must have been to do an uncoordinated *Alaripu* after a Kalakshetra diploma!

"This production and another called *Krishna in Guna* are the two great gifts given to me by Ramli," says Guna humbly.

"A traditional solo recital of a Bharata Natyam would have been easy for Guna," says Ramli Ibrahim. "I do not say this production is the only way to make classical dance accessible to a contemporary audience. I just wanted to show Guna's discovery of himself through dance."

The sensitivity with which Guna performed the *Asthapadi 'Hariraha'* stopped my heart for a long moment. It was truth in all its shining purity... both the production and Guna's dancing.

V R DEVIKA

Galleryview ... by S.M.

From frozen action to frozen design

She's a senior banker's wife. But her love of life and being where the action is has always been a world apart from the very propah world of British banking. And people and action and Nature are what her photographs have been about in the past, ever since she learnt photography from her father and uncle in Calcutta. Mala Mukerjee's latest exhibition is anything but that, clinically freezing as it does the geometrical designs of the Jantar Mantars of Delhi, Jaipur and Ujjain in shades of brick red, brown, grey and blue, concentrating with engineering precision on form and colour and composition and deliberately leaving the people element wholly out.

Where in these cold, sombre blocks and angles, arches and curves, triangles and other geometrical patterns are the joyous laughing and smiling Mala who once took a photograph which a score and more professionals missed? Remember that picture? It was the penultimate ball of the India-Australia Test played at historic Chepauk in 1986. India needed one run to win. Australia needed one wicket to wrap up a tie. Greg Matthews ambled in and bowled. Maninder Singh padded up. Up leapt Matthew in appeal. And up went the umpire's finger. Not another photographer, professional or amateur, clicked the historic moment. But a Mala Mukerjee laughing her way to the bank froze for newspapers and magazines round the world that fleeting moment of a bowler reaching for the skies in joy and a batsman bewildered by fate.

That was when Mala, who lived a while in Madras and taught Photography at KFI, captured the faded glory of Madras for environmentalists and embellished the travel glossies with pictures of the South. Then, in 1990, when Padma Narasimhan of the TTK family wanted to do a book on Sri Dayananda Saraswati, Mala agreed to do the pictures for it. And off she went to Rishikesh... and returned with a portfolio of pictures that made the story of the Swamiji a rich coffee-table volume. On her way to Rishikesh and back, she had stopped in Delhi... and been drawn to the geometric patterns the Jantar Mantar created in space. Five years later, and a spell of England in between, the spell the Jantar Mantars cast on her was there to see on the walls of the Sakshi Art Gallery. Very, very trained-professional... but not the Mala Mukerjee who loved the warmth of life and people. Come back to Madras, Mala, come out of the cold...

The mill ground slowly but powerfully

Indeed, the *Mill on the Floss*, ground slowly but it ground powerfully and fine, enabling not-so-large Madras audiences to share a rich experience of true professional theatre that seldom comes our way.

Splendid were both sets and presentation, brilliant some of the concepts, and the spectacular climactic storm made up for all criticisms mouthed through chattering teeth caused by an overcooled TTK auditorium. The

magic that was wrought with a single set dominated by a bridge-like mill and changes on the move, the magnificently imaginative concept of three incarnations of Maggie Tulliver always being around to present Maggie's mental storms and the vortex of her passions, the brilliant choreographed movements, all made the *Mill* extraordinary theatre. But some questions remain:

Did the *Mill* have to be so long and so slow, especially in the first half?

Did accents have to be over-stretched at the beginning, leaving most of the audience lost? (Curiously, accents improved as the play went on and helped to increase enjoyment of it.)

Did Maggie in her third, tightly corseted 'professionalised' incarnation, waiting to burst, have to be the least inspired not only of all the Maggies but of the whole cast as well?

And what was the significance of all that crooked furniture and props?

With no answers, and with senses almost frozen by the air-conditioning (kept cold for the players, I was told; but then, do they want a less enthusiastic audience?), the mill ground less surely, even if it ground powerfully.

Backing U.S. Indians not Madras Indians

For all its American hype, the grandiloquent 'world premiere' that was used to describe Pauline Hahn's *Sacajawea* was a bit much for a production that was shockingly amateur in several aspects. That *The Hindu* sponsored this effort to the tune of nearly Rs. 200,000 at the expense of its local 'new plays' festival was rather unfair by local talent.

In 1993, *The Hindu* encouraged local talent and sponsored the production of the

three prize-winning plays whose staging should have all been described as 'world premieres'. The sponsors, I later heard, were not exactly enthused with the quality of the plays or of their production. But were prepared to give it a second try last year. There were differences of opinions over the quality of the plays received, but *The Hindu* decided to drop the contest. Instead, it appears to have backed this 'local American' production that, in many ways, was no better than what local talent had attempted and produced in the past. Surely this was no way to encourage local triers! In fact, what *The Hindu* might have thought of, with Broadway-experienced Pauline Hahn in residence in Madras, was to have got her to have worked with the three best plays and helped with their production. Everyone would have been a little better for that.

As for *Sacajawea*, whatever its merits as a play, these were quickly dissipated by acting of the school play type, which came nowhere near even local amateur standards. The fact that the wavering voice of Pauline Hahn as the 93-year-old Sacajawea did not carry most of the time did not help either. What came across was the professional production — sets, music, multimedia presentation etc. But that's expected of a producer with long Broadway experience working with the best of local talent. The casting and the playing, on the other hand, were certainly not expected.

With *Sacajawea* the elder inaudible, with the nonacting with another cold auditorium (the Museum Theatre this time), everything seemed to drag. No wonder people kept walking out and others spent their time giggling with each other. But even if all this had been better, would *Sacajawea*, a fascinating true story, have proved a

(Continued on P8)

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Programming the future

Before infrastructure

(Continued from P5)

project takes off, the consumers would be able to get a telephone connection within two days of application.

Robbins looked forward to deepening his company's involvement with India. He remarked that every dollar spent on telecom services would add \$3 to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He welcomed the idea of setting up a Telecom Regulatory Authority to monitor tendering processes and to guide transmission.

C N Ramdas, Secretary, Ministry of Surface Transport, said that there were plans to convert single lanes to two and two lanes to four on National Highways, to strengthen weak road surfaces and to construct bypass roads. He estimated the money requirement to be Rs. 45,000 crore, against a Government allocation of only Rs. 800 crore (Rs. 200 crore for maintenance). A shocking gap! Whither infrastructure?

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The widest smile

Tamil Nadu still shows the way

(By A Special Correspondent)

Sixteen-year-old S Vijayalakshmi and 22-year-old Ponnuswamy Konguvel defeated the defending champions in the recent Chess Nationals to write one of the most shining pages in Tamil Nadu Chess history. Their first-ever national successes were in keeping with the status Tamil Nadu chess has long enjoyed.

From India's first International Master, Manuel Aaron, to the country's first Grandmaster, the one and only Viswanathan Anand, now poised to challenge Anatoly Karpov for the Professional Chess Association world

title, Tamil Nadu has produced more National stars than any other Indian State. Now Konguvel and Vijayalakshmi proudly follow in their footsteps, the first time in Indian chess history that the men's and women's titles have been won by players from the same state.

Konguvel, an Anna University student, became Tamil Nadu's 8th International Master. In addition, three Tamil Nadu players figured in the first six in the championship and will be directly seeded in the next National 'A' Championships. They will also repre-

sent the country in international tournaments abroad.

Surprisingly, the size of the crowd that turned up for the prize distribution function was not at all in keeping with this status of Tamil Nadu chess. It was perhaps a sad commentary on the organisers' salesmanship. Anyway, those who stayed away were lucky, in as much as they did not have to sit through the monotony of long, prosaic speeches.

M Gopalakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Bank, and president of the Tamil Nadu Chess



S Vijayalakshmi, India's 16-year-old women's chess champion.

(Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN)

Association, came in for much commendation at the prize-giving which he could not attend. Speaker after speaker said that it was only due to him that the TNCA was able to stage both the men's and women's 'A' championships almost simultaneously in an efficient manner.

A stadium for Tennis Assn.?

The Tamil Nadu Tennis Association's annual day function, held recently at the Hotel Savera, was an unforgettable occasion, packed as never before for an over-a-cup-of-tea function. To many, the long list of prize-winners, both players and clubs, was an eye-opener, revealing the number of annual tournaments and inter-club competitions the TNTA had conducted in the city. It emphasised the sport's popularity in Madras, which was in tune with the record number of players the southern metropolis has contributed to national squads over the years.

N Murali and Dr S Srinivasan, the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association president and vice-president, respectively, K P Pemkumar, its secretary, N Sankar, the All-India Tennis Association vice-president, and, above all, chief guest M A M Ramaswamy all played their parts in making the function the success it was.

MAM rose to the occasion pleading for a better deal for Indian players, whose "earnings were peanuts compared with what their counterparts in other countries get". He also emphasised the need for the TNTA to have its own stadium. MAM expressed his readiness to lead a TNTA delegation to meet "out sport-loving Chief Minister" to impress upon her the need for a stadium.

Time alone can tell what is in store for his stadium dream, but he surprised a good many in the gathering with his emphatic statement that "tennis is and will always be my first love".

JAICI

Guindy left way behind

The Jayalalitha Government's Department of Racing would do well to take immediate steps to halt the deteriorating standards and steady fall in the popularity of the ancient turf at Guindy. The decline in the status of the country's oldest racing centre had been clear to Guindy regulars for quite a few years. But it has never before been more blatantly exposed than during the 1994-95 season just ended.

The eclipse of Madras horses in all the Guindy classics, the virtual blank the Madras contingent drew at the Invitation Cup week-end in Calcutta, the average size of the jackpot pool, which never went anywhere near the Rs. one lakh mark that was the order until a few years ago, the fall in attendance, which apparently forced the DOR to hold its fixtures on the off-course betting days of the Bangalore, Hyderabad, Bombay and Calcutta

racers, even if those were working days, and the average size of the fields for the races for the higher class horses all emphasised the nosedive the Madras turf had taken. While fields of four or five, so unlike those at other centres, were the order for Classes I and II horses' races, the average size of a field for a lower class horses' race was about 20! Not long ago, a godfather to both the Bangalore and Hyderabad clubs, Guindy has now been left way behind by them.

AJAX

Nothing indeed emphasised Guindy's decline in a more humiliating manner than the size of its classic fields and the beating its runners took in all its five classics. The fields were exceptionally small, as nearly all the runners hailed from champion Foley's stable alone. They all proved no match for challengers from Bangalore. It was perhaps the first time that Guindy drew a classic duck.

It was virtually the same story at the Invitation Cup week-end. It was left to India's leading owner-trainer combination of M.A.M. Ramaswamy and Robert Foley to save Madras from a whitewash. After the blank it drew in its home classics, Guindy's eclipse in the country's most prestigious race, the Classic Indian Turf Invitation Cup, was a foregone conclusion. Unfortunately, even in its two supporting events, the Stayers' Classic and the Sprinters' Classic, Guindy could not field worthwhile challengers.

Since A.M. Muthukaruppan Chettiar's great Mount Everest won the inaugural Invitation Cup race in Bombay in 1963, three other Madras horses, Mr and Mrs A.V. Thomas's Esquire in Madras in 1965 and M.A.M. Ramaswamy's Own Opinion in Bombay in 1979 and Own Beauty in Hyderabad in 1988, have won the 32-year-old 'National Championship'. But over the years, other Madras contenders have been in the running; never has there been an eclipse like the one Madras suffered in Calcutta recently.

Out of formality, of course, the DOR had nominated four runners each for the Invitation Cup and the Stayers' Classic and three for the Sprinters' Classic. Ironically, they all remained mere nominees, and it was left to M.A.M. Ramaswamy's Foley-trained pair of Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Brave to save the Madras turf from a total Invitation Cup week-end eclipse by winning two comparatively minor Cup races.

If any further proof were needed to expose the Madras turf's decline and fall, it was provided by the record-shattering one-way traffic Foley's stable enjoyed during the recent season.

The exceptionally wide gap of over half a century between the champion and his runner-up, K.S. Mandanna, was yet more proof of the unchallenged run

Foley's stable enjoyed. As a result, tame racing was more or less the order, and so were the money-back tote dividends, all of which underscored the urgent need to make racing at Guindy as competitive as it was until not so long ago. It is for the DOR to find ways and means to prompt affluent turfites to join the owners' list, and also to pave the way not only for the return of some of the leading owners of the recent past, who quit the world of the horse for various reasons, but also for the return to their home centre of some of the Madras owners, including a member of DOR Committee of Management, who race their horses at other centres.

Galleryview

(Continued from P7)

winner? Perhaps we'll know if Pauline Hahn gives us a more 'professionally' acted and more audible 'world premiere' some day. But even then I'll wonder whether Sacajawea's relationships with (Red) Indians, half breeds and whites have been got quite right. And how can we get rid of the impression the production creates, of an advertising agency's audio-visual presentation to a client, with the Account Head keeping out of the limelight?

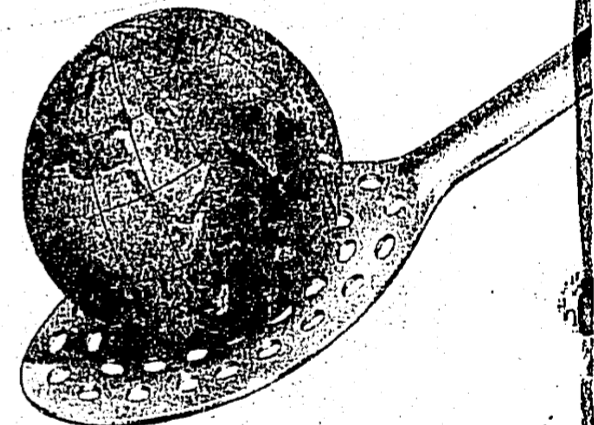
Naturalists' Corner



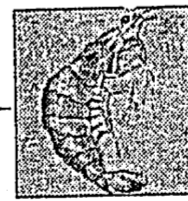
A Nilgiri tahr and a jungle crow have a chat. A charming picture by Suresh Elamom. (Photograph courtesy Madras Naturalists' Society.)

ANSWERS

1. A Soyuz spacecraft carrying an American astronaut, Norman Thergad, docked with the MIR space-station. Thergad became the first American to go up in a Russian craft; 2. They set a world record partnership of 460 runs for the seventh wicket in first class cricket during the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Delhi; 3. A.K. Antony; 4. The 'Sarin' gas attack in the Japanese 'tube' railway network; 5. It is a proposal by the government in Maharashtra to introduce entry permits for those legally permitted to enter Bombay and deport the so-called 'illegal migrants' from the megapolis; 6. World Disabled Day; 7. Tom Hanks; 8. The 8½-year-old Arun Balaji; 9. The poet Suradha; 10. The industrialist A.C. Muthiah; 11. James Wolfensohn; 12. S. Vijayalakshmi; 13. Selena; 14. The Tamil Nadu Governor Dr. Channa Reddy to the Janatha Party president, Dr. Subramaniam Swamy; 15. World Trade Organisation; 16. The ITC chairman, K.L. Chugh, over BAT industries; 17. Madurai; 18. Viswanathan Anand; 19. K.K. Hebbar; 20. Nirupama Nithyanandam.



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