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MADRAS

MUSINGS

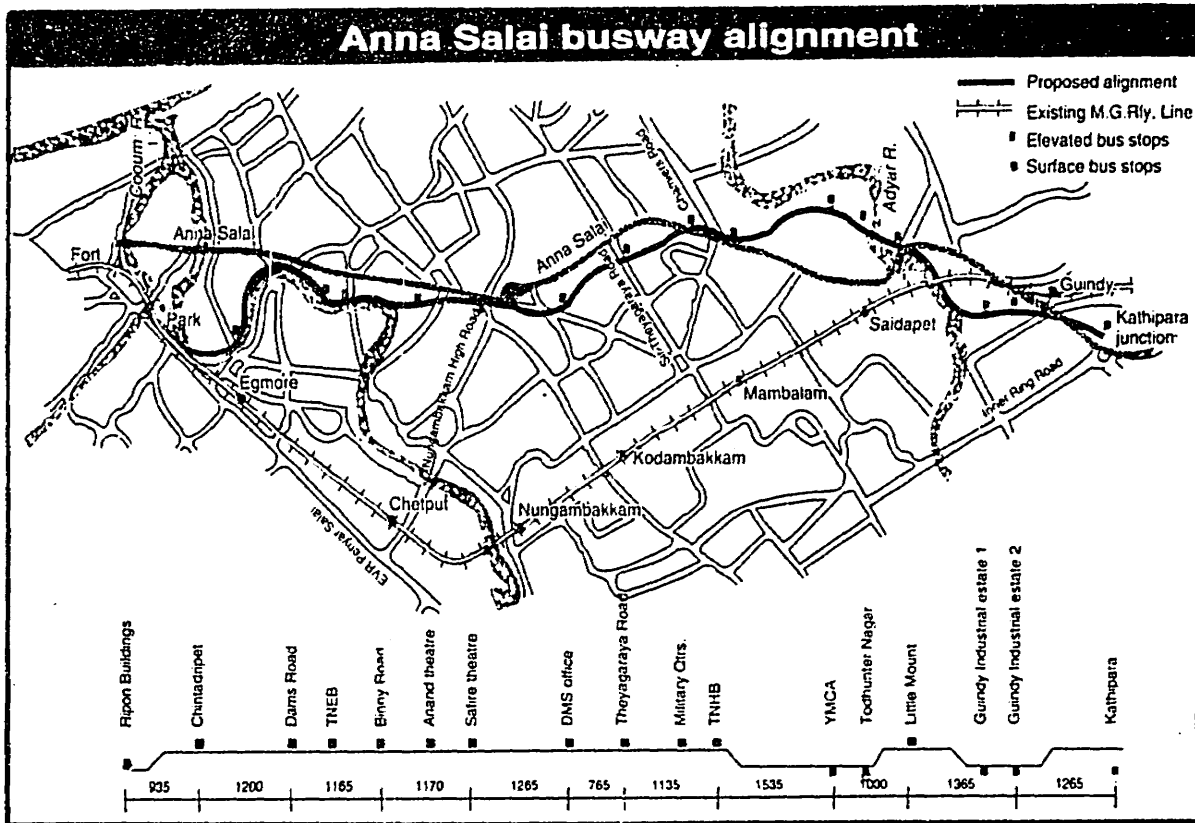


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The Anna Salai 'skyway' alignment. The shaded line running through the city is Anna Salai, and the solid, thick line slightly below is the proposed 'skyway'.

(Reproduced from a plan in Frontline)

Another sky corridor?

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA) has completed plans for a 12.8 km-long elevated busway for Madras, most of it alongside the arterial Anna Salai (Mount Road). It will link Kathipara, near the Airport, to Park Town, near the Fort. The corridor will be exclusively for buses initially.

The project, according to MMDA sources, is an improvement on an earlier proposal. That proposal included

pillars blocking space on Anna Salai. The new proposal seeks to minimise project costs by using government land along the Cooum. Nevertheless, it is expected to cost Rs. 168 crore.

The first 8.8 km will start from an elevated bus stop near Ripon Building and will be an elevated roadway upto Nandanam. Most of the remaining portion will be on the surface. Phase I, from Ripon Building to Chamiers

(Continued on P6)

Low spending, but dissatisfied — that's Madras

(By A Staff Reporter)

A 1994 survey in the four major metropolises and three other major southern cities — Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi—revealed that Madras is where the average monthly expenditure was lowest (Rs. 4073) among a graduate, 25-45 years age group earning more than Rs. 5000 a month. The average for the seven cities was Rs. 4868 and the highest monthly expenditure in this group was in Bombay (Rs. 5628).

But, significantly, only 48 per cent were dissatisfied with their local State

Government in Bombay. In Madras it was 57 per cent — but even this considerable figure was less than the rest of the cities, highest dissatisfaction being 86 per cent in Kochi.

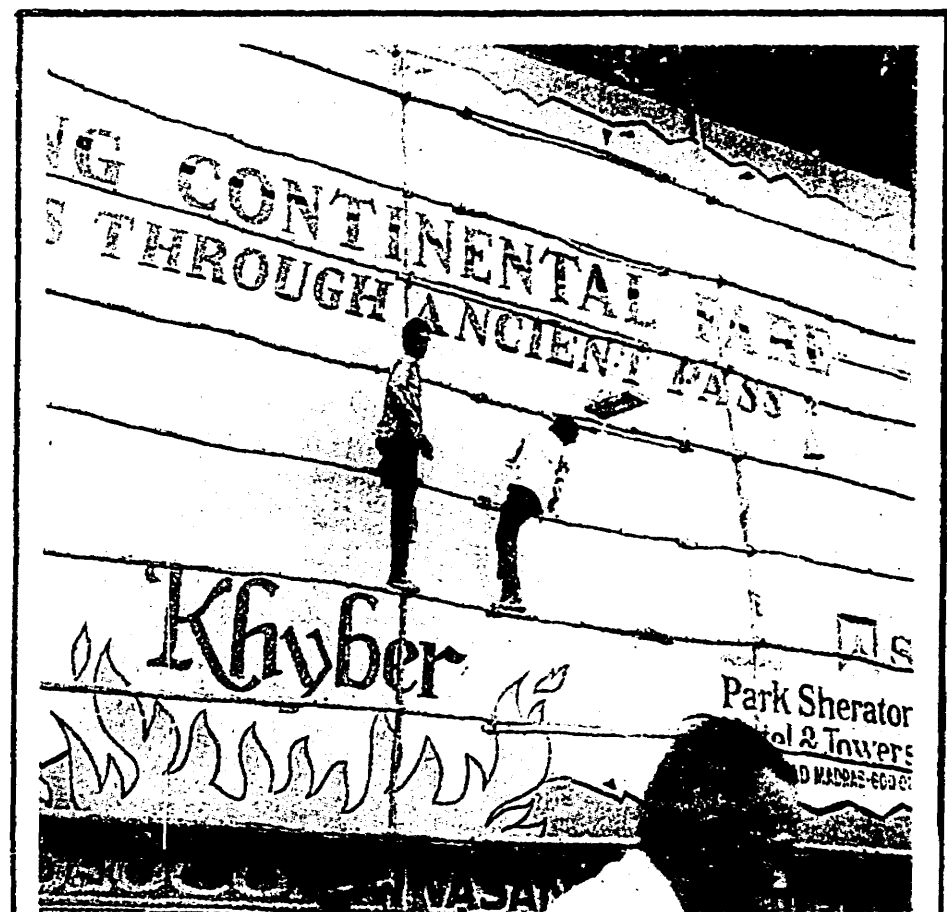
The average monthly expenditure in the seven cities were reported as being divided as follows: Groceries 36% (with Madras at the low end of the scale), rent (19%), children's education (13%), local travel (12%), entertainment (8%), house-help (6%) and books and periodicals (4%), with

Madras in the medium to low range on all these counts.

Surveying purchase intentions of consumer durables, the survey recorded that choice in order of preference in Madras would be a washing machine (14%), cordless telephone (11%), vacuum cleaner (11%), credit card (9%), two-wheeler (7%) and refrigerator (7%). In the less than 5% category were TV, answering machine, timeshare, dish antenna, water filter, microwave, PC, car and VCR/VCP. Significantly, mixer-grinders and audio systems were on no-one's shopping list in Madras - probably indicating saturation. The Madras shopping list was not too different from the national list, which had washing machines and cordless telephones in the lead and TV at the other end.

But for all Madras's advantages on the consumption front, it nevertheless seems to have major disadvantages. And the following indicators were cause for concern: After Calcutta, Madras has the highest percentage of people dissatisfied with living conditions in the city (22%). In dissatisfaction with the city's infrastructure, it is only Calcutta again that Madras (62%) trails. And in Madras, 60 per cent of those surveyed were not very happy with the city's health system.

The cost of living might be Madras's best feature, according to the survey, but it is a city which could do much more to make life easier and better for its citizens, the survey would appear to indicate.



UNSUNG HEROES

Madras is certainly ad-mad: every square inch of space, whether of public, private or unknown ownership is plastered with not just one but often several layers of advertising posters, and now that every square inch has finally been commandeered in this manner for the benefit of an indifferent if not hostile population, advertisers have taken to the latest fashion of slinging banners from trees and lamp-posts, evidently not considering they might have any other function. Then there are walls and genuine authorised advertising hoardings to be painted, though who authorises them and why they should so often be placed where they obstruct pedestrian and motorised traffic is not known. But what is obvious to this writer, though not apparent to many, is the down-right heroism of the craftsmen — I can think of no other word — who actually paint them, offensive to some though their work may be. Unlike photographer P. JUSTINE, those of us who pass by on the other side scarcely spare them a glance, let alone a thought, but consider: these men often work high above traffic or pavements, standing in the hot sun on nothing more substantial than rough, slender casuarina poles, yet, without apparent effort, manage to paint perfectly executed lettering and illustrations of many hues and designs. Most artists like to stand back at intervals to study their work or judge perspective. Our hoarding heroes can hardly do that. It's like the airplane passenger, irritated by his companion's noisy children, advising them to go outside and play!

— HARRY MILLER

Waiting for the New Indian Express

The Man From Madras Musings understands that peace has been brokered in the warring *Indian Express* family through the good offices of well-wishers like Pandit and Gurusurthy and the outcome will be the emergence of a *New Indian Express* within three years. The paper taking the new identity will be the southern editions of the *Indian Express* which have fallen to the lot of Manoj Sonthalia. He also gets the southern language papers and Sterling Publications (which publishes *Gentleman* and a couple of other magazines), the latter to be nursed by TJS George who also nurses the Goenka institution set up in Bangalore to train journalists. The *Financial Express* goes to Vivek Goenka who also gets the more successful northern editions of the *Indian Express*. It was this division which ensured that, on the day after Tamil New Year's Day, *MMM* got his *Financial Express* and NOT his *Indian Express* whose new avatar is in the planning stage, the first step of which plan would appear to be to put news on Page 2 and have you search for the almost non-existent 'Smalls'!

Where does this leave Saroj Goenka, the heir apparent's widow? Apparently she holds on to the Madras and Delhi properties, both prime real estate, and *MMM* hears she's already started asking for more rent for both. *MMM*, however, hopes that with this property settlement finalised the handsome, but now sadly dilapidated and desolate buildings of the Madras Club in the *Express Estate*, Madras, will be developed by her into something more that a lot for film shooting. The first home of the 'Ace of Clubs' is a heritage building that needs to be made a model of conservation — and what better development than as a 'Heritage Hotel'?

Meanwhile, Saroj Goenka's legal battles with Vivek Goenka continue — particularly over his adoption. A share in the prime Bombay property could hasten a settlement. *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, as would at least the southern editions of the *Financial Express* which one of her daughters — who runs an Indian weekly in the U.S. — had her heart set on.

There's a three-year time-frame for all the i's to be dotted and the t's to be crossed and while changes are slowly made, from time to time, both groups of papers will enjoy sharing several features and facilities, including Editors, the *Sunday Express* and printing facilities. Whether what emerges out of all this, three years down the line, is an improvement only time will tell.

Hindu growth

Speaking of the Press, *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard that *The Hindu* is drawing up grand diversification plans. Of course, most others also know of the first step — 'Just Picked', the chain of vegetable shops. That chain, *MMM* hears, is due to grow and offer organically grown vegetables as its speciality. *The Hindu*, *MMM* also hears, is spreading its acreage of vegetables under organic cultivation.

An even bigger project on which work is underway is a 500-acre golf resort south of Madras. *The Hindu's* owners have always had a soft spot for such elitist sports as racing, tennis, golf and cricket — and with the worldwide boom in golf tourism they see an opportunity in something they've long been interested in, an elitist sport.

The course with its subsidiary courses is being laid by an international expert and will feature what is now being described as "environmentally friendly grass". This grass, it is hoped, will still the voices of the environmentalists. Cottages, recreational facilities and all other necessities for an international class resort are being established. With *The Hindu's* reputation for management excellence and doing well in whatever it undertakes, this could well be the best Indian golf resort when it opens later this year.

Light on heritage

The Man From Madras Musings understands that Government has started looking seriously again at a Heritage Act. It has been almost a year since there was some bestirring on this issue, but there's been much

more action on a Heritage Act in the past few weeks than in all the preceding weeks, *MMM* hears.

June 15th, *MMM* is told, is the deadline for submission to Government of a rough draft of a Heritage Act together with a suggested list of buildings for protection and conservation and a list of names of experts to be considered for a Heritage Committee with whom the proposed legislation will work. There are to be four separate lists, *MMM* hears, to be prepared in the first instance: the public

SHORT N SNAPPY

buildings throughout the State to be prepared by the PWD; the Corporation buildings, private buildings and zones in Madras, to be prepared by the Corporation; already protected archaeological monuments and additional monuments that need to be protected, to be prepared by the Archaeological Survey; and a general list to be prepared by concerned NGOs. The final list, to go with the final Act, will be prepared by the end of June, *MMM* hears.

If legislation follows shortly thereafter, ensuring (1) conservation of buildings of whatever age but of historical, architectural and social significance, (2) protection of heritage zones in urban areas, and (3) safeguarding important natural features and particular lifestyles, the Government would have taken a major step to preserve the State's heritage and would deserve a loud cheer.

Expat colonies

A former Indian diplomat, disillusioned with the way India has been going in the post-Nehru and Indira Gandhi eras — eras when India was a respected voice in the councils of the world — ruefully commented on *The Man From Madras Musings'* announcement last fortnight of plans for an American-sponsored 'International School: "This is only the beginning!"

Exclusive schools would only be the beginning, he went on. It won't be long before there'll be exclusive residential areas, exclusive shopping centres etc. for them, he added. And concluded, "They won't be called 'ghettos', they'll be called 'enclaves'!"

The Man From Madras Musings hopes that what's coming up near the Guindy end of Mount Road, the Rayala Sriram Corporate Enclave, is not part of this exclusiveness and is just a staff housing colony — like the one in the grounds of the SBI's *Underwood Gardens*.

In brief

* Shobana Jayasingh, dance-educated in Madras, has been creating waves in Britain since 1988 when she started a company which worked on a 'fusion' of Bharata Natyam and Western dance-drama choreography to present to European audiences a modern version of Indian dance-drama. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands that, later this year, she'll be making her first visit to perform in India since she formed her dance company and captured British headlines. The

British Council-sponsored visit will feature her latest production, *Raid*, a dance-drama inspired by kabaddi, where "raiders are creative in someone else's territory". Winner of the £100,000 Prudential Award for the Arts in 1993 and made a Member of the British Empire this year for "enriching dance culture", Shobana Jayasingh's other productions include *Orientalisms*, *Correspondences*, *New Cities Ancient Lands*, *Making of Maps* and *Romance with Footnotes*. Whether this Sussex University English major, artistic

director and choreographer will wow Indian audiences as she has British ones with these dance-dramas is to be seen; in fact, *MMM* wonders whether Madras will get to see her perform on this tour, or whether that'll have to wait till she's more confident of the reaction of this conservative citadel of the classical to one of its own 'straying'.

* MAM Ramaswamy, leading owner of the Indian Turf, is bound to score his double century of Classics winners before the year is out. When that happens, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands, he will be a major feature in a leading London daily which had in the past featured such all-time racing greats as the Aga Khan and the Maharaja of Baroda.

* 'Takeover king' P Rajarathinam, who continues to acquire others' businesses, is all set to do something different, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands. He plans to team with Pritish Nandy, who's acquired the title, to resurrect the 120-year-old *Illustrated Weekly of India*, which Nandy once unsuccessfully edited. Rajarathinam is apparently willing to invest Rs. 60 crore in this project, including setting up a state-of-the-art printing facility in Thane, near Bombay. Aiming at a five lakh circulation at a cover price of a mere Rs. 2, Rajarathinam and Nandy, who, *MMM* hears, is to be given a free hand, hope to make it a "multi-coloured, megasized quality publication" that'll be a major success within three years. With Nandy's record in the various sections of the media, after he quit house journals, Rajarathinam, while starting something from scratch for a change, would nevertheless appear to be playing his usual role: backing a loser. *MMM* hopes he has as much luck with this joint venture as with his others — if only for the sake of an old favourite, the *Illustrated Weekly*.

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Business briefs

* Spencer's, once the leading department store owners in India, are planning to return to the retail selling game again, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears. From sounds most curious to *MMM*, for it was the new owners of Spencer's, the RPG Group, who saw in the greater possibilities for real estate than as a department store and made of its flagship store in Madras yet another local super-market. Instead of doing something with its Madras store, Spencer's is planning to set up a 4000 sq ft. store in Madurai. And, sadly, is still thinking in "supermarket" NOT department store terms. Spencer's, who still run eight sleepy stores in South India, hope to wake its retailing activities up with the Rs. 40 lakh Madurai store. It may be "Madurai's first real super-market", but will it live up to the glorious Spencer's name of the past? That's *MMM's* concern.

* Has Tamil Nadu lost another opportunity, wonders *The Man From Madras Musings*. *MMM* hears that a Singapore group of companies, including Singapore Airlines (SIA), has decided to participate in the development of a new airport in Bangalore after its offer to develop Madras was not responded to. The group *MMM* understands, is tying up with the Tata Group on this project, an understandable alliance considering that Tata and SIA are teaming on establishing a model domestic airline in India. Curiously, the new airline plans to headquarter in Delhi and develop Madras as its main base for the South. But, wonders *MMM*, will this change after the new Bangalore airport is developed by virtually the same team?

* By the time Madras Vision 2000 is realised, Madras might also have a couple of modern expressways passing through it, a proposal by a Malaysian firm is accepted by the Government of India and completed within the scheduled decade. Eight major traffic corridors have been identified in India for development as expressways and two of them pass through Madras: Calcutta-Madras (1635 kms) and Madras-Bangalore-Bombay (1315 kms). These expressways are expected to boost economic growth by reducing travel time. Renong Berhad of Malaysia will construct and maintain the expressways. A toll will be levied by the builders on those using the expressways for 20-30 years, after which the expressways will be transferred to the Indian Government. — *MMM*

Fleeced at the Fair

Every year, the All India Tourist and Industrial Fair is conducted by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department. When I visited the Fair this year, I noticed the following: Districts had put up stalls, but NO district had given comprehensive information about itself. This does not require any specialisation, only simple information board with the essential information furnished — e.g. area, important rivers, mountains, hills, valleys, irrigation tanks, area under irrigation, unutilised area, forests, sanctuaries if any, population (men/women/children), schools, colleges, important tourist places, number of villages, number of taluks, transport facilities etc. A standardised information board should be installed in district stalls not only in this Fair, but also in whatever fair the district administration participates. An entrance fee of Rs. 2 is charged for all, including children. Can't the entrance fee for children upto 12 be reduced to 50% of the adult charge? Thousands will benefit.

OUR READERS WRITE

deplorable standards

The deteriorating standard of written English in Madras is reflected in these paragraphs from *The Hindu*:

1. Police said it was clinically confirmed the tanker involved in the three-way collision at Sunguvarchathiram near here recently, contained "benzene," a highly flammable liquid.

2. Stressing that the Finance Minister restrict himself to the specific issue of budgetary support to the sick undertakings and regular payment of wages and other statutory payments, the Opposition members are on their heels.

Clinical examination of industrial chemists and opposition members on their heels. You please!!

T S Rekhi
97-A Peters Road
Gopalapuram
Madras 600 086.

Golden Jubilee

What a reunion we had, those of us who had passed out of P.S. High School in Mylapore in 1945! N S Partharathy, one amongst us, was the convener

of this gathering and, through his tireless efforts, the addresses of 93 students (out of a possible 288) could be traced; 53 finally attended the function — as many as five from outside Madras!

What an exciting day it was! There was a lot of hugging and hand-holding, as though long-lost lovers were meeting! Spouses had been invited and the nearly 20 women who turned up watched with condescending smiles their better halves behave like kids!

Over the 50 years, we were fortunate to have three of our teachers still living, though only one could grace the occasion. They had all been teachers who mingled freely with the boys, evinced keen interest in their well-being and taken great pains to impart the best.

When I visited the school after 50 years, there was no change in the scenario — it looked as though it was only yesterday that I had been there. The atmosphere was the same and I felt it was my own place. Probably this was due to the feeling of belonging that was nurtured by our teachers.



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Inside the Fair, a lot of food stalls are put up by private entrepreneurs. They do enormous business, but at exorbitant rates. There is no control over the rates. Even a glass of ordinary sugarcane juice costs Rs. 3, whereas it is only Rs. 1.50 outside. Even ice-creams and *palgova* of Aavin are sold at exorbitant prices. The prices of food sold inside the Fair should be the same as offered outside, if not a subsidised rate. As things are, the prices charged at the Fair are according to the sellers' own wishes, and the sufferers are the great majority of citizens, the lower middle class.

There are several facilities for entertainment, especially for children, like the mini-train, aeroplane, ship etc. Here again, tickets are charged exorbitantly, and there is no concession for children. Rates range from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10. Essentially, these enter-

tainment facilities are meant for children visiting the Fair. Surely charges for them should be more reasonable? Incidentally, in many cases, the tickets issued do not bear the charged amount, date etc. This could lead to Government losing by way of taxes.

The parking lot for vehicles entering the Island Ground from the Mount Road side is deplorably maintained. Walking across the lot is virtually impossible, for people have defecated all over the place, especially near the bicycle stand. Surely, Government can provide a good environment for such a Fair and enjoyable fare (foodwise and entertainmentwise) at reasonable cost! Surely such fairs are not meant for profiteering! May rates be fixed by the Trade Fair authorities and may they keep the entire environs cleaner next year!

Just note this galaxy of greats that had passed out of P.S High School — J Krishnamurthy, M Bhakthavathsalam, C V Narasimhan, C R Pattabhiraman, Alladi Kuppaswami, Alladi Ramakrishnan, General Candeh, K.S. Shelvankar, G Parthasarathy, Shivraj, Prof K Swaminathan, Dr K Sanjeevi, M.A. Chidambaram, A.M.M. Arunachalam, M V Arunachalam, A Sivasailam, M A M Ramaswamy, G Narasimhan, G Kasturi, M Narasimhan, Dr Sadasivam, T B Balagopal, Venkataraghavan — just a few of the personalities who covered themselves with glory in different walks of life!

The Golden Jubilee celebrators brought their get-together to a close by donating a tidy Rs. 60,000 to be held as corpus for various endowments for prizes and scholarships. Another donation of Rs. 10,000 was given by the family of the late M M Muthiah, who was our batchmate.

And so came to an end a day that was too short to relive completely all the nostalgia. But we vowed to meet again — and more often!

Cdr. R Ganapathi, I.N. (Retd)
116, Defence Colony
Madras 600 097.

Indoor stadium

I refer to 'Comer Flag's' article '250 days to SAF Games' (*MM* April 1). He has mentioned there that "A modern indoor stadium in People's Park is expected to take care of most of the rest of the events". I wish to state that a multipurpose indoor stadium on the campus of Santhome Higher Sec. School had been selected for Table Tennis and Gymnastics. Due to the untiring efforts and dynamism of the School's principal, Br. George, and the generous contribution from sports-loving bodies like the Indian Bank and others, a huge stadium (the biggest in S.E. Asia) with wonderful capacity is about to be ready.

As a parent, I wrote to Dr MAM also to extend his helping hand, so that the wooden flooring is completed in time. I suggest MAM visits the stadium and helps

Press releases

For a 'Soundarya Sowcarpet'

The residents of Madras's central business district, the Sowcarpet area of George Town, have suddenly woken up to the need to clean and beautify their environment. To make this possible they recently formed 'Exnora Innovator Club': George Town Branch' with S.R. Damani as President and Mrs Nirmala Dugar as Vice-President.

At the inaugural meeting organised by Mahaveer Bhanjali and Nirmala Dugar, the latter said that their ultimate goal was to make Madras one of the most beautiful cities in the country and the club planned to start with the improvement of the Sowcarpet area. The worst problems faced by this area are garbage piling up, stray cattle move-

to complete the stadium, which will be the pride of Tamil Nadu.

M. Fazal
Flat No. 1 Sea View Apartments
San Thomé, Madras 600 028.

Closed gates

For the past six months, the main gate of the Connemara Library has been closed. One of the artistic grill gates joined to the column was damaged. The authorities must be waiting for Government's approval for the repairs. Many visitors enter through a big hole in the compound wall and some use the entrance to the Museum Theatre.

S. Velumani
72, IInd Street
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ment, noise pollution, lack of green areas, traffic congestion and an affected drainage system.

Ten days later, the Club organised a rally to spread its message. The rally, lasting for about 2½ hours, started at 8.00 a.m. from the Jain temple in Mint Street. The office-bearers showed the way by cleaning streets, collecting the trash in baskets and transferring it to tricycles. Members and onlookers soon joined them.

Later, B Nirmal, the founder president of Exnora, said he hoped that what they had started would lead to the creation of a 'Soundarya Sowcarpet' (beautiful Sowcarpet) with the help of local residents.

Focus on smaller businesses

Vectra Systems and Solutions Pvt. Ltd (VSS) has been appointed its first regional channel partner by Front-line Solutions (Bombay) Ltd., a HCL group company focusing on the business and home computing segment. VSS has been promoted by professionals with over two decades of experience in the industry.

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"We believe that small and medium-sized business houses do not get the required focus from national companies to realise return on investments made by such businesses in computerisation. By focusing on their specific needs, we hope to be able to bring together solutions that work for the customer and add value to their business," says S. Mohan, Director, VSS.

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ALDER, J	Constitutional and Administrative Law. 2nd ed.
BEAN, D	Injunctions.
BIRDS, J	Modern Insurance Law.
CHIA	Business Law.
CRACKNELL, D G	Torts.
DENHAM, P	Law: Modern introduction.
GARNSA, M	How to write a will and gain probate. 4th ed.
HALSTEAD, R R	Managing intellectual property.
JONES, C A G	Expert witnesses.
JOWELL, J L (ed.)	Changing institution. 3rd ed.
LORD-SMITH, P J	Avoiding claims in building contracts.
OTTEN* L A	Women's rights and the Law.
PIERCE, A	Demand guarantees in international trade.
ROBERT, B (ed.)	Rights of citizenship.
ROZEMBERG, J	Search for justice.
UFF, J	Construction, law and the environment.
WHITEHOUSE, C	Revenue law.

The big Indian holiday

I was an overseas visitor who drove home the point. Said Bill of Anglo-Welsh extraction, on his first visit to India, "Yours is not just a holy land; it is a holiday land!" And not without reason.

For one coming from a land whose holidays are fixed, few and far between and totally predictable, i.e. New Year, Easter, Bank Holidays, Christmas, Boxing Day — Fullstop, this first week in India was a revelation.

Sunday was, naturally, a holiday. Monday started out in right earnest, but by that fateful Monday evening, Morarji Bhai, who had just scored a century, was declared out. "Tomorrow will be a holiday!" screamed our eight-year-old. "How's that?" was Bill's puzzled enquiry. New to the Indian political scene as he was, this elicited a lecture on post-Independence Indian history from our 11-year-old. She explained to him that Morarji had been our 4th or 6th P.M. (depending on

whether you counted Gulzarilal Nanda or not). Bill was amazed, because no Prime Minister, however great, could have added a holiday to the British calendar on his departure! I hastened to explain to him that in Morarjibhai's case it was ironic because he was one who had vehemently opposed this business of declaring a holiday whenever any VIP keeled over. Anyway, Tuesday passed; and then Wednesday was a holiday again! Bill couldn't believe it when we said that it was our second day's mourning for the departed one!

On Thursday morning he expected the kids to go to school. But Thursday was a holiday in honour of Mahaveer Jayanthi. So Bill got a lecture on Lord Mahaveera, on non-violence, on wearing a mask lest one breathed in helpless little organisms, and on the unique Jain custom of feeding ants on the Marina beach in the mornings. Friday — well Bill KNEW this one; here was at last

a holiday he was not ignorant of, he thought, thinking of Good Friday. But his joy was short-lived as the children insisted that the holiday was in honour of Dr Ambedkar's birthday. A lively debate on which of the two merited a holiday more ensued. By then we realised that it was Vishu and Tamil New Year's Day too! So a 'three-in-one' holiday it became.

Explaining Vishu to Bill made him get curiouser and curiouser. "So you have an English New Year, a Telugu New Year and a Tamil New Year! Three New Years!!" Bill was simply bowled over. Bill's pointing that out made us also sit up and take note of the unique holiday-rich heritage of our land.

Saturday dawned and at last some activity began. Children of course continued on their holiday spree. But Bill finally managed to cash some traveller's cheques and the adults trotted out to work, almost enjoying the change from the continuous holidaying.

On Sunday it was back to the holiday mood. "Any more holidays coming up?" Bill cautiously enquired. "Summer holidays," exclaimed the children joyfully and we added, "Well, there's May Day and then Id and then..."

"Damn it! I should have been born here!" declared Bill. "Life in India is one big holiday!" And so say all of us.

HIRAMALINI SESHADRI

Another stormy session

The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has been turned virtually into a battleground, with political wars being fought using cerebral skills. The latest in the series of confrontations between the Congress(I) Opposition and the ruling party centred on the alleged attack on Governor Channa Reddi's convoy at Tindivanam when he was on tour.

When the issue was raised by the Congress(I), it was Party leader SR Balasubramaniam's point that there

are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests.

The surprise of the fortnight, however, was the scathing attack on *The Hindu* by Chief Minister Jayalalitha, who commented that the Opposition seemed to carry more weight for the paper than her government's positive achievements.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha claimed that the Police had succeeded in curbing major crime. When compared to other States, Tamil Nadu had the

THE VIEW FROM FORT ST GEORGE

was a situation when the security of the Governor was threatened. The Speaker, refusing permission to raise the issue, said that making the Governor a subject of debate was against the rules. But if the member agreed to have the Governor the central point of a debate, he would have no objection.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha denied any incident as alleged. The Speaker said the member had been insisting on an immediate debate, without waiting for the next day when the issue could be taken up. The Congress(I) members walked out and when, on the next day, the issue was taken up, there were protests from Balasubramaniam that the Governor was being dragged in as a subject of debate. Amidst shouts and countershouts, Speaker Mulhiah suspended the member and another, Congress(I)'s Alagiri, for the rest of the session.

Fury was unleashed on another occasion when Opposition leader Balasubramaniam shouted at the Chief Minister as she began to speak on the budgetary demand for the Police. She was facing corruption charges and should resign, Balasubramaniam thundered. A melee followed, with even a microphone being wrenched off its stand. The situation was brought under control only after the Chief Minister waved her Party members to their seats. The ruling party is conscious that many in the Opposition Congress(I) seats would never have reached the House without its help, and the latter is equally aware that, in politics, there

least number of dacoities at 124. The Police have been highly effective in putting down crime, achieving a 10.3 per cent increase in detection rate, she said. She also expressed surprise over frequent demands for CBI inquiry of any major crime, an unwarranted reflection on the competence of the State Police. A policy note on the Police mentioned, among other things, the formation of a 'Police City' in Madras with 3000 residential quarters exclusively for officers and personnel. A Rs. 20 crore State Police Academy is also to be set up.

Other points included: A new 'Victims Assistance Fund' to help victims of violence with medical treatment is to be operated by the Government. An Anti-dacoity cell is to be created, as well as a State Narcotics Control Board. By December next, three tmc of Krishna water will be available for Madras City. To increase agricultural production, the first phase of the World Bank-aided Water Resources Consolidation Project would begin soon. Four hundred buses are to be purchased from the funds sanctioned by the World Bank. And women would be heading 5000 new ration shops.

Keeping the 'toy train' running

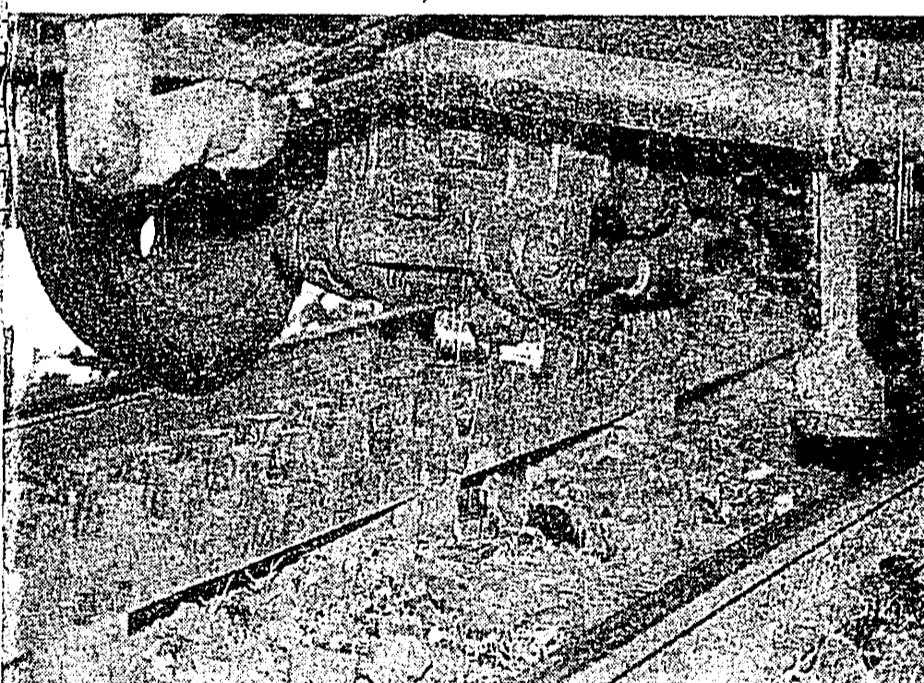
As the holiday season begins, we take a look at the 'toy train' to Ooty, which, though running at heavy cost, is a cherished legacy, a bit of heritage that has a strong people focus.

The narrow gauge train takes about five hours to cover 45.9 km at an average speed of 13 km per hour. It is time-consuming and boring it may sound. It isn't.

Anyone who has travelled by the Nilgiri Mountain Rail (NMR) from Mettupalayam to Udhamandalam (Ooty) over the past 95 years, will tell you that the steep journey from 330 metres mean sea level (MSL) to 2200 m SL is a fascinating one.

Another in our series on how Indian cities are beginning to look at their heritage

Started way back in 1899, initially between Mettupalayam and Coonoor before being extended to Ooty in 1908, the NMR is one of the legacies left us. But in patronising the legacy on popular demand (empirically maintained a white elephant), the Indian Railways (IR) really maintains a white elephant. An Anti-dacoity cell is to be created, as well as a State Narcotics Control Board. By December next, three tmc of Krishna water will be available for Madras City. To increase agricultural production, the first phase of the World Bank-aided Water Resources Consolidation Project would begin soon. Four hundred buses are to be purchased from the funds sanctioned by the World Bank. And women would be heading 5000 new ration shops.



The two rack bars between the rails, and the toothed gears fitted on every coach, enable the trains of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway to climb, step by step. (Photograph courtesy Southern Railway)

Dasarathy. But the IR is planning many innovations to accommodate the popular demand. "In our efforts to continue the service, we are trying to cut down the operational costs and make it a viable proposition," the divisional manager says.

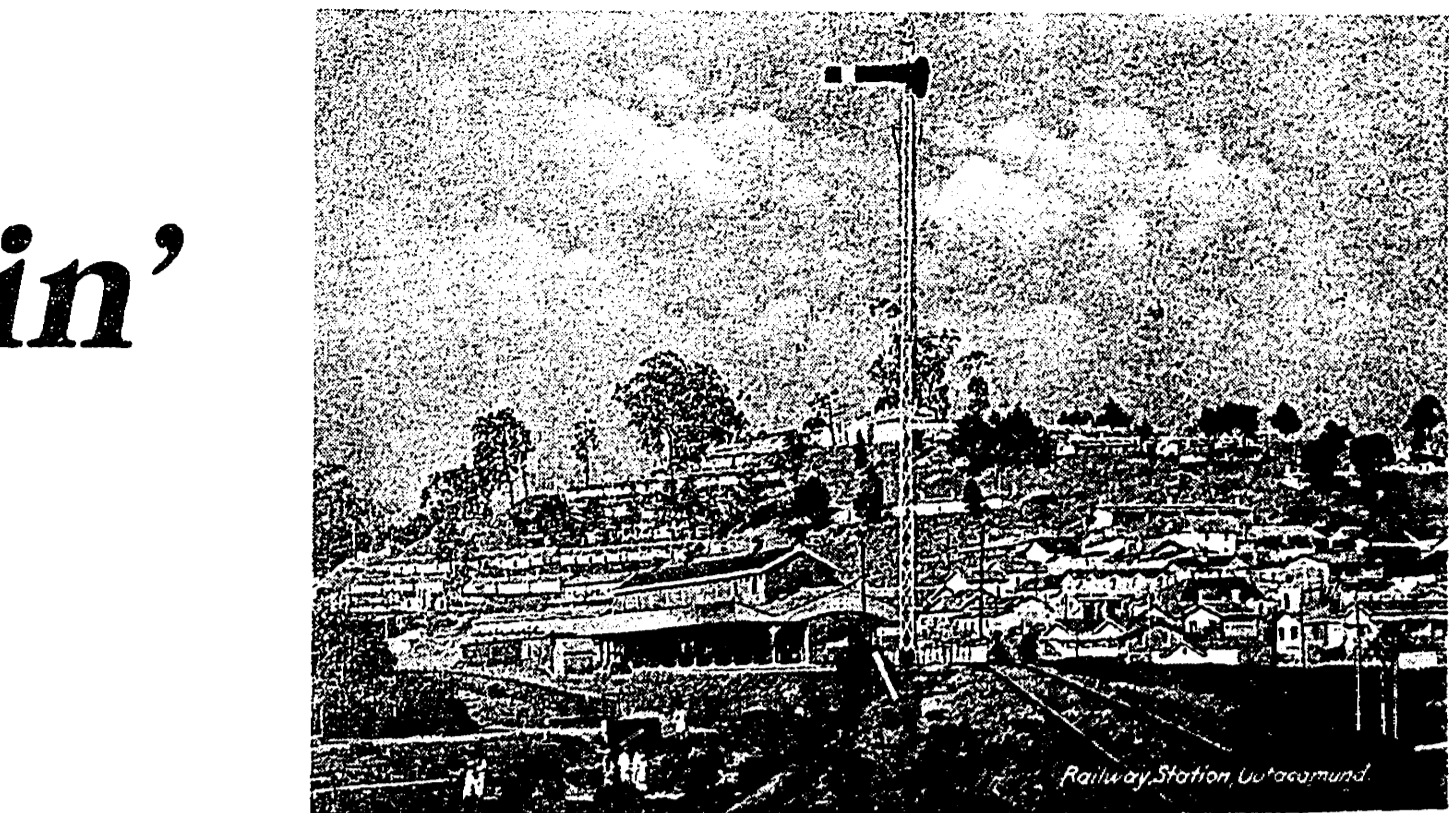
The steam locomotives used here were manufactured in Sweden. Each weighs 48-50 tonnes and has a high-steaming capacity producing horse power energy equal to what is produced by a 220-tonne steam engine, he says. IR spends Rs. 2,500 per tonne of coal to operate them. Of the eight locomotives operating in the sector, four were built in 1925 without the rack and four in 1952 with the rack. Engines with rack have two sets of

wheels, with one operating the track, he says.

In order to cut down costs, the IR has experimented with diesel but it has damaged the tracks. The IR has now renewed rails and sleepers, inserted over 10,000 special tiebars to reinforce the track and diesel engines are all set to run again from Coonoor to Ooty. A major advantage of the diesel locomotive is that it can cut fuel costs considerably, as it hardly uses 150 litres of diesel for a round trip between Mettupalayam and Ooty.

The diesel engine has been reconstructed at the IR's Golden Rock workshop in Tiruchirappalli after it was abandoned following a mishap in 1987. A steam locomotive has also been modified by the locomotive workshop in Perambur near Madras for oil firing, so that either diesel or furnace oil could be used instead of coal. Dasarathy says, adding that oil-fired engines are more environment-friendly than diesel ones.

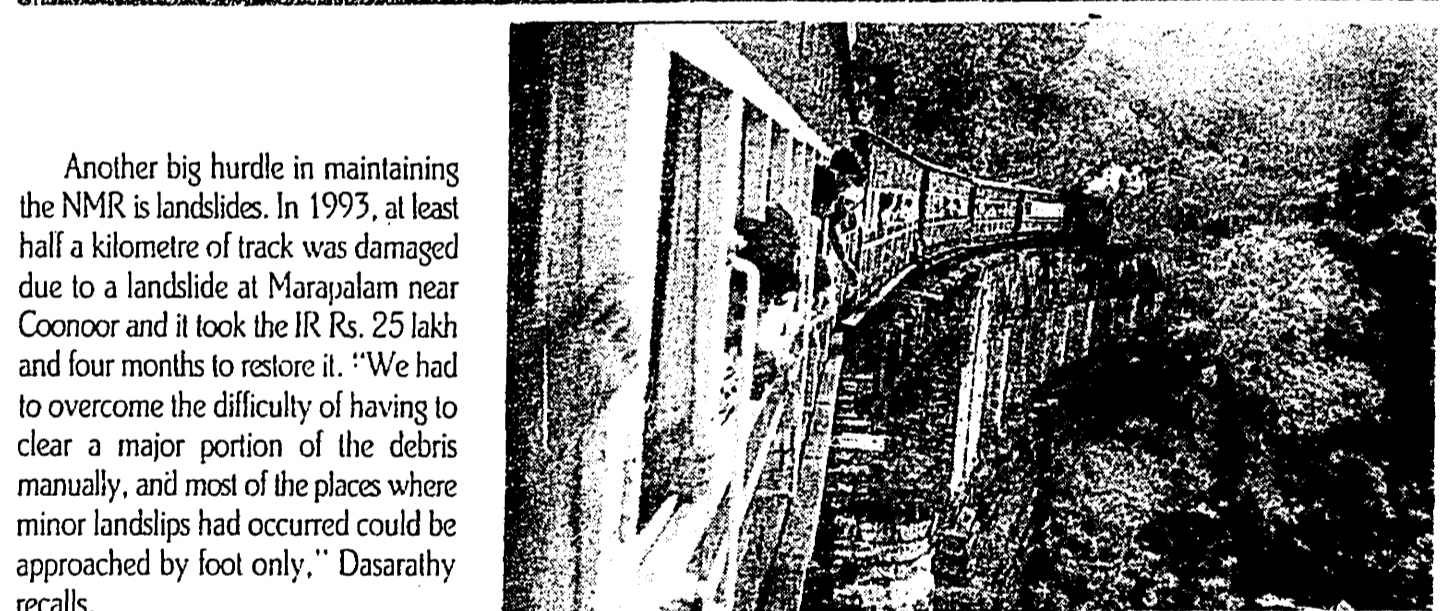
A special feature of the NMR is the rack railway, unique in Asia. The rack controls a wheel in an inclined plane and is not only necessary to apply the brakes but also for stopping wheel rotation to prevent it from sliding down. Toothed gears are fitted on every locomotive and coach and rack bars are provided centrally between the rails to enable the teeth on locomotives to mesh with the bar teeth. Since there are two bars out of step with each other, it helps the pinions of the locomotive and coaches climb like a person climbing a ladder. This is known as the alternate biting teeth (ABT) system and no costs can be cut on this count.



Our GLD this fortnight are from the postcard collection of P SAMBANDAM and come to us courtesy of his son S KANAKARAJ. The two postcards, printed in Germany for Dinshaw H Hazary of Ootacamund, show what the Ooty and Coonoor railway stations and their surroundings looked like in 1937. Faintly seen in the Coonoor picture is the train to Ooty chugging in (smack in the centre of the picture).

THE OLD...

That train, the 'toy train' of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, has not changed very much to this day. The Southern Railways' photograph featured below shows the train crossing a river in the Nilgiris on a bridge that can only be described as 'elevated'.



Another big hurdle in maintaining the NMR is landslides. In 1993, at least half a kilometre of track was damaged due to a landslide at Marapalam near Coonoor and it took the IR Rs. 25 lakh and four months to restore it. "We had to overcome the difficulty of having to clear a major portion of the debris manually, and most of the places where minor landslides had occurred could be approached by foot only," Dasarathy recalls.

Since the IR cannot do much to cut costs in maintaining the track, it has opted to modernise the coaches in order to make them lighter and accommodate more passengers. As buying new coaches was considered expensive, the IR has gone in for reconstructing the coaches with lighter material.

The first modernised coach, which was received last September, is about 1.2 tonnes lighter than the originals

built in 1914. In the next stage, two more tonnes would be reduced. More coaches have been got ready since, the construction cost of each being Rs. 5 lakhs. IR is now looking at — Running a second train in peak season so that tourists' waiting time to catch connection trains would be minimised;

— Beautification of all the stations on the way; — Running a picnic train from Ooty to Runnymede to provide tourists a "welcome change", allowing them to trek and lunch out; and — "a sort of saloon coach for foreign tourists". (Courtesy Press Trust of India).

The ways to the cleaners

Pavan Sachdeva, in misrepresenting facts and artificially rigging his company's share price, may have unwittingly done this country a service. His company, MS Shoes, dominated the nation's attention recently, with news ranging from rigging the share's market price using bank borrowings to collusion on the part of some SEBI officials. The scale of fraudulence is so wide that some good is bound to be achieved before the end of this sorry tale of greed and misplaced priorities. More importantly, SEBI has finally become aware of the fact that it has a long way to go before it can finally say that the markets are regularised. For it is a sad fact of life that most investors who play the markets are often unaware of the dangers that lurk in the corridors of power and boardrooms that are mistakenly assumed to be the high road to wealth.

The ways to the cleaners are as numerous as they are devious. The past few years have revealed the tendency on the part of many promoters to treat public funds as easily accessible loans, interest for which may or may not be paid in the form of dividends. There have been many cases where promoters have decamped with the family jewels, leaving aside 'minor' details like allotment and listing, let alone paying dividends.

Let us consider the overcrowded scenario in the primary market. Not a week passes by without scores of companies announcing expansion-cum-diversification plans and all these are exclusive of the new corporate entities that are being formed by the dozen.

The markets are wooed ardently to help finance this mushroom culture that has become all-pervasive in the corporate sector. More disturbing is the fact that, of all those seeking funds through the public issue route, a minor percentage of companies finally do not even get listed. The poor investors who had sunk their savings in these never-to-be-

listed initial public offerings become poorer with no means of recourse or succour.

Going to courts is an extraordinarily expensive affair in India and moving suits against companies (and in some cases promoters who have pulled off 'The Disappearing Trick') requires a lifetime of patience and effort. In the event of a broker defaulting, arbitration is done by the concerned Stock Exchange and the claims of the investor are placed at the end of the priority list, after the claims of the Exchange's

Bull's Eye

clearing houses, the Exchange itself and opposite contracting parties and brokers. As most brokers use client money for working capital purposes, the clients of the 'bankrupt' broker are penalised for no fault of theirs.

As in most cases of white collar crime, what drives the crooks forward is greed, callousness, insensitivity and an utter disregard for the law. And the most tragic part of these instances of malfeasance is the levels to which those in authority stoop. For it is quite impossible for dishonest promoters to be successful without active collusion on the part of those who have been empowered by law to protect the investors. Take the cases of the Security Scam, circa 1992, and the MS Shoes imbroglio more recently. In both cases, the greed of Messrs Harshad Mehta and Sachdeva were fuelled by the active role played by some low-minded officials.

The dangers do not stop with these instances alone. Private placements, which are not closely monitored, and where investors have no access to verification of claims made, are the latest fad today. Unverifiable claims in the prospectus are the bane of an investor. While SEBI has made certain disclaimer clauses, there is, unfortunately, nobody to make sure that all

the claims made are backed with hard facts. At least the lead managers could take a more active role in seeing that facts, and not fiction, are published.

Talking of publishing, it may shock you to learn that the disclosure norms are yet to reach an optimal stage. Investor protection should not be considered, as it is now, in this step-motherly fashion. Unless investors are safe, a healthy market can but be a distant dream.

Our recommendations for this fortnight are:

Vasparr Eng. (CMP: Rs. 57.50): Manufacturing metal and plastic containers, this company increased the capacity of the former to 15.5 lakh units from 9 lakh per annum by taking over a partnership concern. For the first half of the current year, it reported a PAT of Rs. 1.82 cr on a turnover of Rs. 17.12 cr. The company has tied up with M/S Battenfeld Fischer of Germany for the manufacture of 210 ltrs L Ring type HDPE barrels. This project, which will be financed by internal accruals, will have an installed capacity of 2.21 lakh containers per annum. The company expects to report an EPS of Rs. 8.70 for the year ending June '95, which should support at least Rs. 90. The share is now moving sideways. Buy for medium-term with a stop loss at Rs. 55.

Divya Enterprises (CMP: Rs. 12.50): Divya Enterprises, a manufacturer and exporter of cotton Terrytowels, commenced its project for expansion of capacity of its Terrytowels from 267 tpa to 890 tpa in September 1994. It came out with a public issue in December 1993 for this expansion, as well as set up an in-house processing plant, which has been commissioned recently. The company enjoys an excellent order book position. Divya has posted an income of Rs. 1.25 cr and a PAT of Rs. 11 lakhs for the first half of 1994-95. With production commencing in the second half, and the prices of Terrytowels, improving in the international market, it expects to post an income of Rs. 5 cr and a PAT of around Rs. 1 cr. It plans to put up a spindle spinning unit (which will render it a fully integrated Terrytowel unit) for which it is to come out with a rights issue. A good long-term buy. **K. Gopalakrishnan**

We welcome the first steps to THE HERITAGE ACT

We look forward to its enactment and implementation

Space donated by TAMARAI MILLS

R.K.K.

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.

Out of the financial woods at last

Christ Church Anglo Indian School goes back to 1842, when a proposal was made to the East India Company to start schools in the Mount Road area to cater to the educational needs of the locality. The reply to the memorial to Government for financial aid was not encouraging. A T.P. Waller then stepped in and generously offered the present grounds for the construction of a place of worship and a school.

The Rev. R Carver established two day schools, an English medium school and a Tamil medium school, in these premises in 1844 and the schools were designated the Mount Road District Schools. The girls and boys were taught separately and there were four classes for each. The upper department for boys was under C Dumford, the Headmaster. The fourth form was taught Scripture, Catechism, History of Greece or Rome, Composition, Writing, Dictation, Syntax, Bookkeeping, Mental Arithmetic, Hindustani and Tamil. The upper department for girls was under Mrs S Sanderson, the Headmistress.

The school was in a bad position financially from the very beginning and when, in 1864, the Rev. W Welsh arrived from England to take over the chaplaincy of Christ Church a determined effort was made to obtain government support. A grant in aid was

ultimately received. The schools were ranked by the Government as Middle Schools. In 1871 the government introduced its scale of fees but few could pay it, and attendance never went above 60.

In 1872, on Canon E Sell's suggestion, the school was reduced to a lower school. In 1874, the Inspector of European Schools reported that what was needed for the Mount Road District was a poor school requiring no fees in which the poorest children could receive an elementary education. A house in Narasingapuram was taken at a monthly rent of Rs. 16 for a poor school, but this measure seems to have had the effect of closing the boys' school in the church compound. The Rev. J Barton, chaplain of Christ Church, brought it to the notice of the Vestry that there was a considerable number of boys in the district who would gladly attend a school offering a higher standard than the existing poor school. And so the school was reopened.

In 1880, consequent to further financial crises, the boys' and girls' schools were reformed into a mixed school under a headmistress, three assistant teachers and a matron. A house was brought in Narasingapuram at a cost of Rs. 7000 to house

the 'Indian School, which remained there till 1924.

The A.I. school, with Miss Thompson as its headmistress, came to be recognised as a European Middle School in 1905. In 1911, the parish hall was built to serve the needs of both the parish and the school. But crises continued. The Bishop of Madras, Dr. E H M Waller, took a sympathetic view of the situation and made a handsome contribution from the Diocesan funds, and the Cathedral did likewise. The school was thus kept going.

With the arrival of the Rev. A Forman Cox from England in 1926 a new era began. He coaxed grants from the Government and the European Schools' Improvement Association. And a new block was built in 1928 at a cost of Rs. 40,000. No more would classes have to be conducted inside and on the verandah of the parish hall!

The constant lack of finances had its effect on studies too. The Inspection Report for 1935-36 commented on the deplorably low percentage of passes — hardly one per cent of the candidates sent up for the Middle School exam in the preceding 25 years had passed — and said the management should seriously think of reducing it to a Primary School instead of wasting public and private funds trying to run it as a Middle School. The Rev. Dan Walters and the Vestry thereupon reorganised the staff and at the next Middle School examination the school produced excellent results. The school has maintained this record.

The school came to be recognised as a High School in 1947. With the closure of St. George's Cathedral School, its 400 students were added to the Christ Church School's rolls together with its headmaster and 14 members of the staff. The Higher Secondary was introduced in 1985.

The school is situated in 28 grounds on busy Mount Road and now caters for about 700 students. The Headmaster of the school is W G Shepherd and he is assisted by 22 teachers, of whom four are old students of the school. The school has a good choir which is managed and trained by the Headmaster who is an able musician.

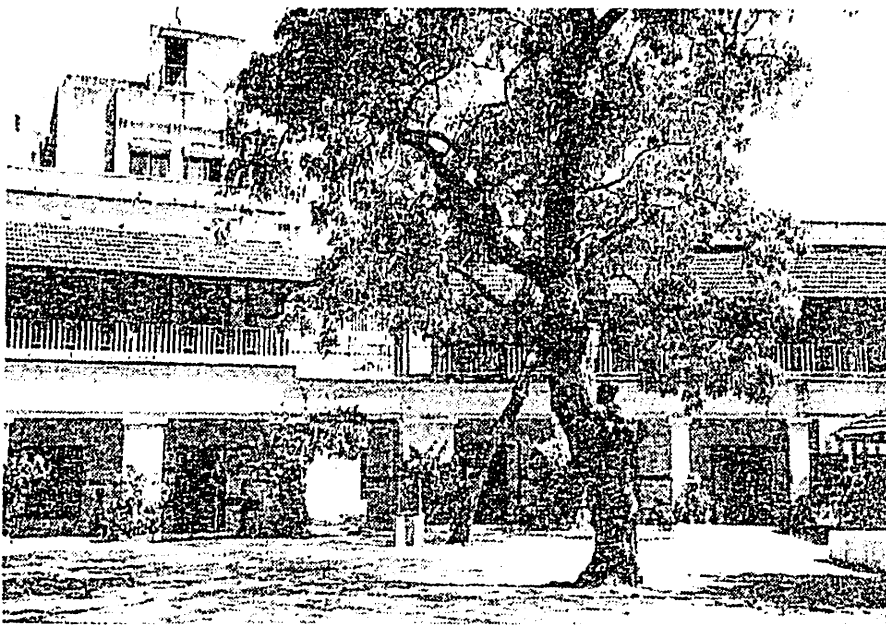
The school offers a Gold Medal, presented by the Christ for Every Soul charitable trust, to the student who has done consistently well from Standards 1 to 10.

The school took its present name after the consecration of Christ Church (also known as the Mount Road Chapel) in its premises in 1852. Initially, the church catered for the poorer Eurasians. The Church is now under restoration at a cost of Rs. 25 lakhs and work is expected to be completed by June.

Text and photographs by **Rajind N Christy**



The Christ Church parish hall (above) and some of the Christ Church school classrooms (below).



Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight April 1-15)

1. What public utility in the city was inaugurated, six months after completion, by Union Commerce Minister Chidambaram on April 2nd?
2. Name the Madras collegian who had a double celebration by becoming India's latest International Master and annexing the National chess crown in Madras?
3. A trivial one. Guenter Knapp of Plorzheim, Germany, won the world championship for having nurtured something on himself. What did he do?
4. Name the two non-English cricketers chosen as Wisden's 'Cricketers of the Year'.
5. U.S. Senator Jesse Helms made a serious faux pas when he introduced Benazir Bhutto to the Senate. What did he do?
6. Name the first non-Congress PM of India and a centenarian who passed away on April 10th.
7. Name the Indian business tycoon who is on the run, after being served an arrest warrant by a Singapore court and Interpol for alleged cheating.
8. What further radio first was achieved on April 14th by AIR, Madras?
9. Name the Indian, the first to be appointed Managing Director of the World Bank, who visited India recently.

(Answers on p.7)

Another sky corridor

(Continued from P 1)

Road in Nandanam, is expected to be ready in five years. The rest may take a further five years.

The 8-metre-wide busway will have three approach ramps to enable feeder traffic to move in and out. There will be 17 bus stops, 11 of them elevated. With more than 150 standard and vestibuled buses, the bus service, when fully operational, will maintain a frequency of a bus every 22 seconds in the peak hour (off-peak frequency, 32 seconds). This will enable handling 30,000 passengers during peak hours.

MMDA sources say trains are also to be allowed to use the skyway by the year 2011. This facility, with fewer stations, will move 50-60,000 pass-

engers an hour in the peak-hour direction — almost double the number moved by buses along the corridor. The trains, with two main and trailer coaches each, will have a maximum capacity of 2,400 passengers per train. The cost of enhancing the system would be Rs. 376 crore (1993 prices). The State Government is reportedly to be considering several options including the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) concept using private investors (foreign investors from Malaysia and some other Southeast Asian countries have evinced interest), loans from multilateral agencies (the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank), and non-resident Indian

Leading Koothupattarai's challenge

Pasupati, an actor with Koothupattarai, is preparing for a trip to many at the invitation of the Max Muller Bhavan. He is recognised as an actor of international standard and now emerging as a director to be reckoned with too. His play *Challenge*, staged in Madras several times and at the Thanjavur Tamil Conference, has made him quite a bit. *Challenge* is a story of the actors of Koothupattarai. The pain of being an actor, being a Tamil actor with an interest



Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight April 1-15)

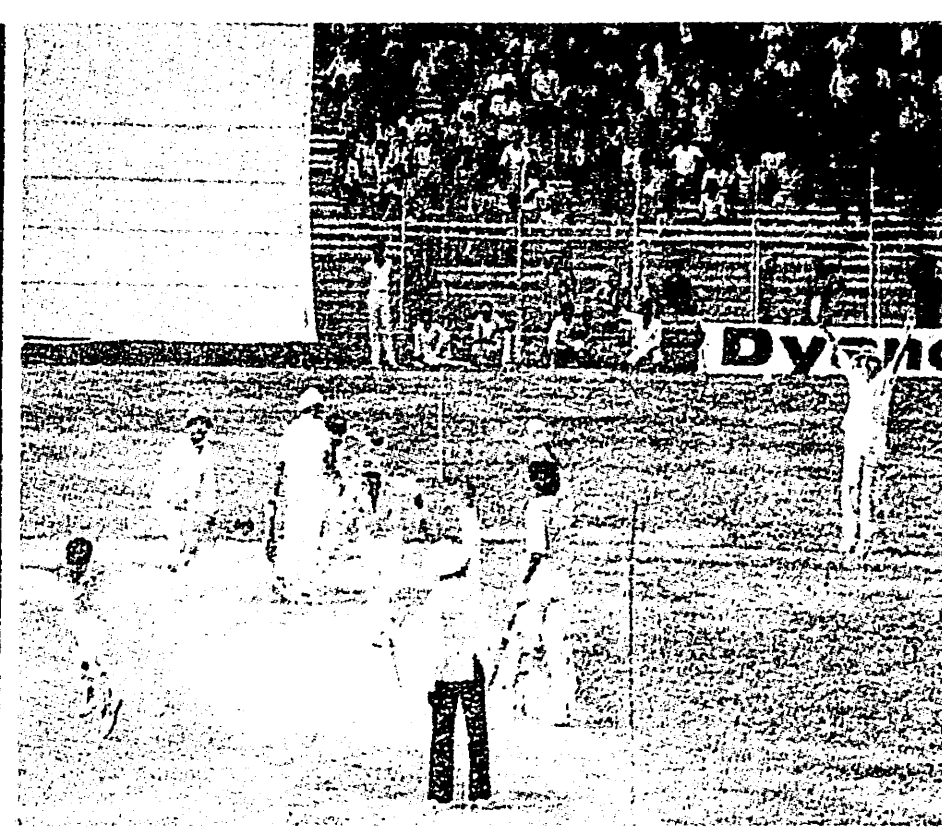
10. P.S. Sivaprasad of Coimbatore released on tape a path-breaking recording, the first in the subcontinent. What?
11. Why was the high profile business man Pavan Sachdeva in the news?
12. Which world-famous 'Madras boy' is the challenge Koothupattarai's actors have had to long face. 'Dinanath Pratishtan' award by whom?
13. Which organisation's State HQ in Madras was ripped apart by a power cut on April 14th?
14. What world record was set at and during the Pakistan-India cricket match on April 7th in Madras?
15. What environmental friendly measure was adopted in the city on April 1st?
16. Name the legendary 'colourful' group which rocked Bombay recently.
17. Which building in Madras has been awarded the coveted 'FIP Award Outstanding Structure - 1994'?
18. Name the American play, sponsored by *The Hindu*, that had its 'premiere' in the city recently.
19. India's new permanent envoy to the UN in Geneva, replacing S. Chandra, is?
20. Which team has won the Palayam Shield, the symbol of supremacy in the First Division of the MACT league, this season?



A scene from Challenge. (Photograph by S ANWAR)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The 30 km broad gauge line between Madras Beach and Tambaram; 2. P. Anuswamy Koniguel; 3. The best of Kepler Wessels and Brian Lara; 4. Keptel Wessels and Brian Lara; 5. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao; 6. Morarji Desai; 7. Rajan Pillai, former chief of Britannia; 8. 24-hours service; 9. Gaultam Kaji; 10. The calls of birds of South India, especially those of the MD of MS Shoes and was staged for allegedly cheating the investors during his company's rights issue.; 12. M.S. Subbulakshmi; 13. The Hindu Munnani; 14. Sharjah became the centre to host the most number of One-Day Internationals, its 86 matches surpassing Melbourne and Sydney; 15. The marketing of unleaded petrol; 16. Deep Purple; 17. The Administrative Office of Larsen & Toubro - ECC; 18. Sacajawea; 19. Arundhati Roy; 20. Sridhar CC (India Cements' team).



Galleryview ... by S.M.

What a change!

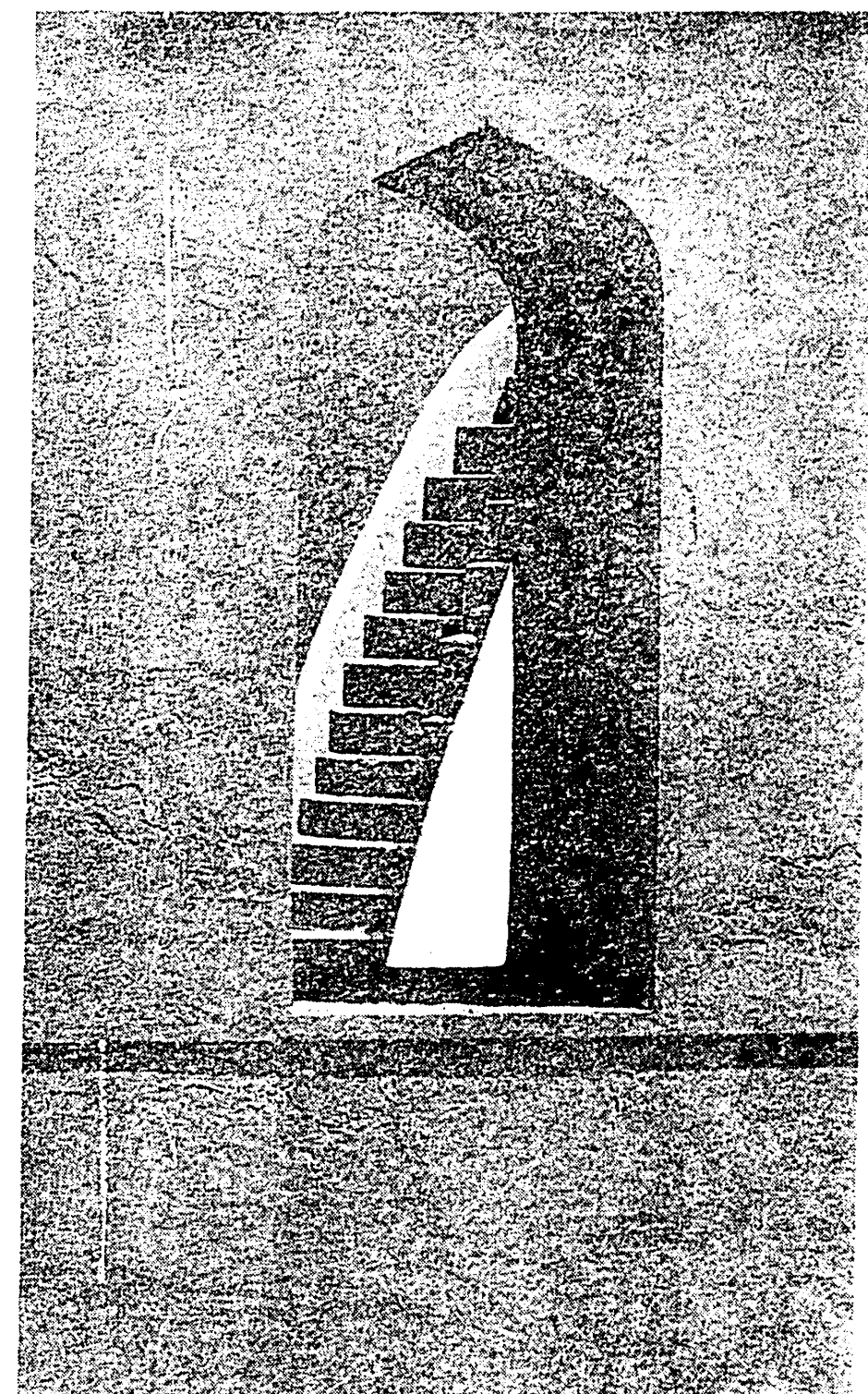
Mala Mukerjee's picture which went around the world in 1986, after the famed India-Australia 'Test' played at historic Chepauk, did not reach me in time for last fortnight's issue of *M.M.* But now that it's with me, it deserves to be featured, this record of Maninder Singh wondering what it's all about, Ravi Shastri trying to hold back time, an umpire as certain as certain can be about his decision and the Australians exulting over having done the impossible. That's the picture that only a Mala Mukerjee featured in another picture here, the life's fun Mala, could have taken. It's Mala the artist wanting to be taken seriously who took the third picture in this grouping — one of the best pictures from her recent exhibition on the geometry and design of the Jantar Mantars. What a change there's been in Mala Mukerjee's approach to photography over the last ten years!

Rocks of ages

The reclining woman was huge. She was the eternal woman, the rock of ages anchoring generations of families. Now she'll grace the foyer of Dr Mohandas' ultra-modern orthopaedic speciality hospital fast coming up in Ramavaram on the western outskirts of Madras. And as someone said the other night, he hoped carrying her in would not land the first patients in the hospital!

Well, whatever the effect she might have on those carrying her in or on the patients and visitors gawking at her, there's no denying she was the star of Raj Thiagarajan's recent exhibition of sculpture at the Lalit Kala Akademi gallery. And she vied for that slot with the 'peacock woman' at the entrance. In fact, picking just two pieces out of the 24 for special mention seems almost unfair, for almost every one of the Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000 sculptures was something special. If only for the fact that Mamallapuram rock had never seemed so sensuously smooth to the touch or so curveable to the chisel as in these greenery sheltered pieces.

Which raises the rather off-debated question, which was debated the other night again when discussing Ramavaram's latest acquisition. The background to that question is that management expert, lecturer, industrialist and bank chairman Raj Thiagarajan, of typically unartistic Chettiar heritage,



suddenly discovered he had artistic talent. Resting and recuperating at home after an illness a couple of years ago, he began twisting plasticine into various shapes and found he was creating exquisite little 'sculptures'.

Bitten by the bug, Thiagarajan began taking a new look at sculpture wherever he went and he began catching up with tribal sculpture fast. The result was still better plasticine miniatures. And the thought that he could turn these maquettes into beautiful sculptures, if he could get the craftsmen of Mamallapuram to hew them from granite. So began a relationship between Thiagarajan and the chippers and chisellers of stone in Mamallapuram. The end results were the beautiful forms that graced the Thiagarajan home and Bank of Madura headquarters in Madras till someone persuaded him to 'show' in Bombay. The reception there made it inevitable that Madras would one day catch up with Thiagarajan's rhythms in stone. And that brings us to the debate based on these details published in *Inside Outside*: "...he takes (the miniature models) to the workshop at Mahabalipuram and explains the



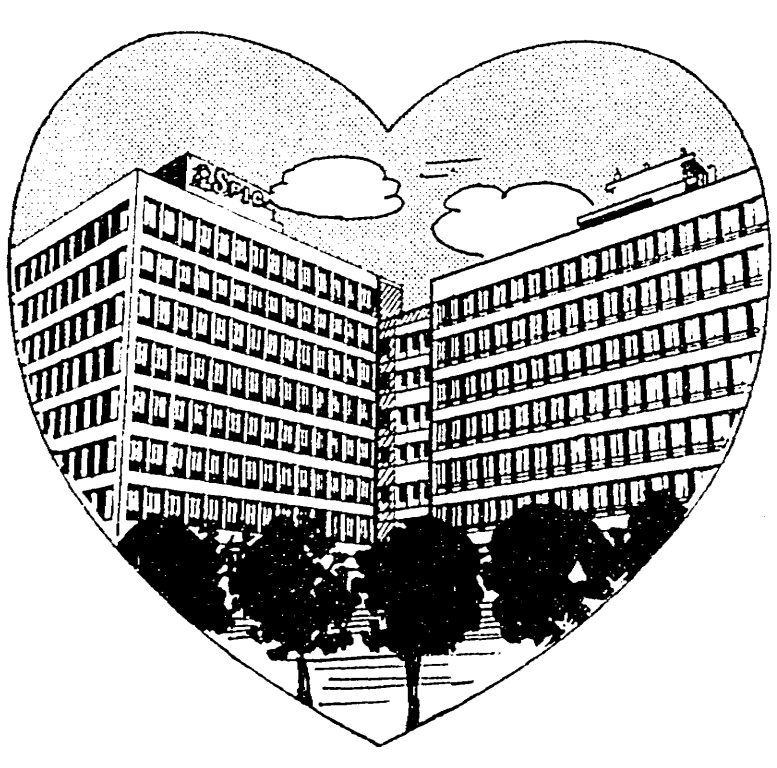
Galleryview ... by S.M.

proportions to the brothers (Ramu and Rajendran). They size up the piece and, if necessary, do a drawing on stone. The process of rough cutting is next... The piece is then brought to Raj's home (where he supervises) the final touches and finishing...

"I ask Raj about the interaction he has had with the craftsmen. 'Their ability to transfer the softness, the plasticity on stone is a great achievement...' Slowly, with a power-saw I got them, we have got better control over the process."

The question is whether THEIR contribution to his "discovery of a part of himself", of his immense creativity, should be acknowledged by name. Henry Moore, Stephen Cox whom Mark Tully took to task, all do it the same way and do not acknowledge the help, say the experts. A few like Tully feel differently. Whatever the merits of the arguments, what Raj Thiagarajan exhibited were works of beauty that emerged from a rare artistic imagination AND the wonderful skills of talented stone sculptors. Together they make stone live and heave in emotion.

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PROFAD

Aiming for Gold

(By The Sports Editor)

Eric Prabhakar's athletic feats have almost been forgotten in India. In the mid-1940s this Madras Christian College product dominated the 100m in the undivided subcontinent and went on to represent India at the London Olympic Games in 1948. It was during this golden period that he went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and won his Athletics Blue, receiving it from that immortal athlete (now Sir) Roger Bannister, who captained Oxford and during that captaincy went on to become the first man to break the 4-minute barrier in the Mile.

During his subsequent years with Burmah Shell, the TI Group and UNESCO, Prabhakar lost touch with competitive athletics but never with what was happening in the most basic sport of them all. It was no wonder that a couple of years ago he was asked by the Chief Minister to draw up a grassroots plan that would help Tamil Nadu athletics — and, subsequently, other sports — develop. That plan, based on the Chinese grand plan for sports mastery and with inputs from the U.S. and the former East Germany, should be now well underway, but bureaucracy has well-nigh strangled what was a Jayalalitha dream.

A frustrated Prabhakar then decided to make his contribution to Indian athletics in a different way. Spending ten months in the U.S., he returned with a manuscript that suggested the way to Indian athletic gold. Prabhakar's



Rhodes scholarship — academic excellence and moral uprightness — show in the literary flavour and the underlying message. But what is most important in *A Way to Athletic Gold — A training manual for Indian athletic excellence* is the detailed discussion of training for 22 events and the training schedules to be followed for them in Indian conditions. These instructions, stated in simple English, will prove invaluable to any dedicated coach not hung up with ego problems and to any athlete willing to work hard at achieving excellence.

The Government of Tamil Nadu might be slow on Prabhakar's grassroots scheme, but, till it gets going on that, it should make this meticulously prepared volume available on all school and library shelves and then go about getting Tamil translations of it into the hands of young athletes throughout the State. By following Prabhakar's advice, perhaps a few of them will develop into that class of athlete who can dream of Olympic Gold.

A well-produced book, *Athletic Gold* also offers several detailed illustrations that make the training and technique messages clearer.

Made-in-Madras racing cars soon

• THE CORNER FLAG

As India gets set for the car boom, and Madras looks for a bit of the passenger car pie, a RACING CAR is what Tamil Nadu is likely to manufacture first. *The Corner Flag*

learns that Akbar Ebrahim, India's only motor racing driver on the international circuit, has floated the Armaan Racing

Research Foundation (ARRF) to team up with Renault of France and manufacture in Coimbatore the 'Form Renault Car' for the Indian circuit. ARRF has also signed with Renault to sponsor a six-round 'Indian Championship', which will feature five meets in India and two in Sri Lanka.

The Corner Flag understands that in a three-party agreement, Weyl Race Preparations (WRP) of UK has signed with Renault to supply ARRF all the technical specifications for all cars to be built in India. The engine, gear box, steering rack, brake parts etc. about 60-70 per cent of the car, will be supplied by them. WRP and ARRF will jointly own the design and drawings of the rest of the car. ARRF has tied up with Lakshmi Car represented by Karivardhan (another fine racing driver) of Coimbatore to manufacture the car. ARRF will make the machine to drivers and teams in India and abroad, for it will have world rights. ARRF proposes to present the Ron Tarmac-designed car in the first week of June in Madras. Renault is offering this package deal at a cheap price to promote a racing championship in India.

WRP is one of the three British international teams that has offered Akbar Ebrahim a driver's contract. He has offered him a place on its F3 Championship team. So have Manse Madgewick and Team Pacific Grand Prix. The latter has also offered him an F1 test driver contract, an offer also made by La Rousse of France who also want him as an F3 driver. Ebrahim, an exciting Tamil Nadu Ranji Trophy batsman, switched from cricket to motor racing after the cricket selector began to play games with his career. Racing these past 15 years, he has begun making a mark on the Asian circuit during the last two years besides racing in the minor leagues in Britain.

City to get another sports academy

(By a Sports Reporter)

Shortly joining the Britannia Amritraj Tennis Foundation, the Royappa TI Cycles Tennis School and the MRF Pace Academy will be V Chandrasekhar's table tennis academy in Madras. Ramanathan and Ramesh Krishnans' tennis coaching clinic and a football academy will follow, *Madras Musings* learns.

Former national table tennis champion Chandrasekhar, whose career was cut short by medical misadventure in 1984 — for which he won damages after a ten-year-long legal battle — has, besides being on the road to recovery these past couple of years, been slowly trying to find a niche for himself in the game he's loved so long. With his movements impaired, he's been finding the answer to those dreams in coaching. And when he took over the Tamil Nadu women's team and helped coach its M S Mythili to

the national title it certainly seemed he had found his future.

Now he plans to make that contribution something more significant and hopes that the training academy he intends to open in the next couple of months will help get India back among the top-rungs of table tennis-playing nations, where it once was. The residential academy that Chandrasekhar has drawn up plans for will be sponsored by a major Madras institution, probably the Indian Bank, *Madras Musings* hears.

Trainees will be selected from all over the country for the proposed academy, which will be a year-round institution. There will be 15 tables available for practice and Japanese training methods, which Chandrasekhar considers "the best in the world", will be "strictly followed".

BAT and the MRF Pace Academy have already made major contributions to Indian sport and have shown the way for similar institutions being established elsewhere in the country. It is to be hoped Chandrasekhar's table tennis school will do as well — and there is no reason to doubt that, if Mythili's winning ways are considered a demonstration of what he has already been able to achieve.

Stirring up a response

The Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority (TNSDA), which is to organise the South Asian Federation (SAF) Games in Madras in December this year in cooperation with the Indian Olympic Association, has for long taken it easy. It was left to *The Corner Flag* of *Madras Musings* to awaken it from its virtual slumber to the dire fact that hardly eight months were left for it to stage the exhaustive Games, the biggest-ever meet to be held in South India.

The popular fortnightly's sports-writers had already brought the urgency to the notice of the joint organisers. But it was left to *The Corner Flag* to hit the

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bull's-eye, as it were, with facts and figures and appropriate pictures in his '250 Days to SAF Games'. He underscored the urgent need for the TNSDA to wake up. The report obviously

caught the imagination of the IOA president, B. Sivanthi Adityan. For he lost no time in issuing a Press statement that work was progressing satisfactorily on the construction of the required infrastructure and the renovation of the old ones, and that everything would be ready in time.

Adityan said his optimism was based on the "frantic pace" at which the construction work was going on to get such infrastructure as the multi-purpose indoor stadium at Peoples' Park and the aquatics complex at Velachery ready in time. Money, of course, will not be found wanting even for the round-the-clock construction work, the State Government having already allotted Rs. 120 crore for the Games. It is no wonder people are made to "work continuously", to quote Adityan, obviously to beat the monsoon.

The non-stop, 24-hour work will, no doubt, have all the infrastructure ready before the monsoon sets in in October. But whether the products of a desperate construction will be in keeping with the international standards required for the Games is the question that is being asked on all sides. Time alone can tell. It is no wonder City media persons are looking forward to the day they will be invited to have a look at all the new infrastructure put up at "frantic pace"

Naturalists' Corner



Two wild dog (dhole) pups 'captured' by S. DINAKARA PANDIAN. (Photograph courtesy Madras Naturalists' Society).

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