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CONCORD
pips
PAKKT?

(By Sashi Nair and Venkatachari Jagannathan)

Is the North once again proving that it can move faster than the South? Was last year that the Confederation of Indian Industries, Southern Region, and the Academy of Management Excellence, Madras, teamed together and, based on the theory that man-made boundaries mean little today, argued that what is necessary for industrial progress in the South was a spirit of mutual cooperation and understanding between the states. So was born the concept of PAKKT (the acronym for Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu) in April 1994.

PAKKT, however, has turned out to be a non-starter, or, at least, a sluggish starter. Changes of Chief Ministers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala have undoubtedly slowed down the whole process. Meanwhile, the later starting North appears to have got off to a good start.

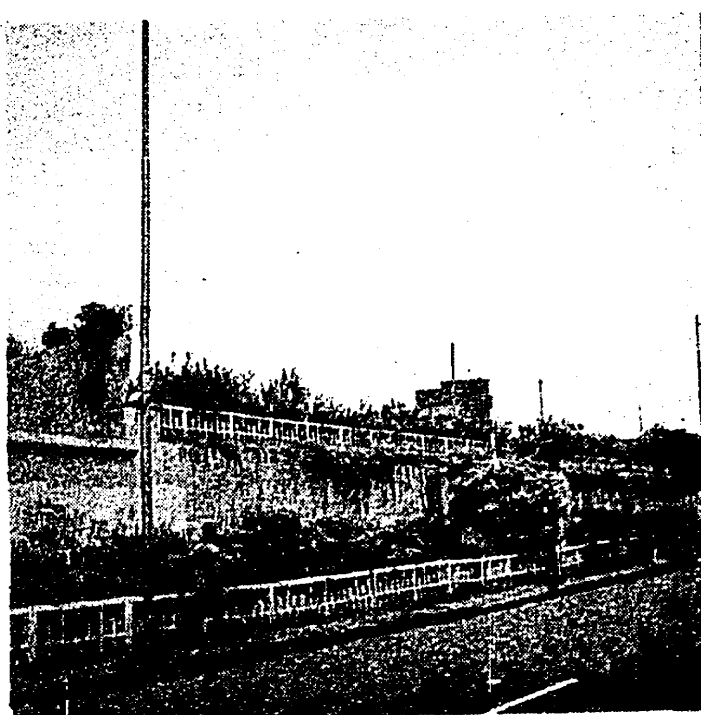
With CONCORD (the acronym for the Council of North Indian States for Cooperation and Regional Development) starting operations from May 1, the North has yet again underlined its ability to get things off the drawing board faster. Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh — all neighbours — have come together

to set the scene for regional coordination, cost-effectiveness and optimum utilisation of resources, engendering healthy competition.

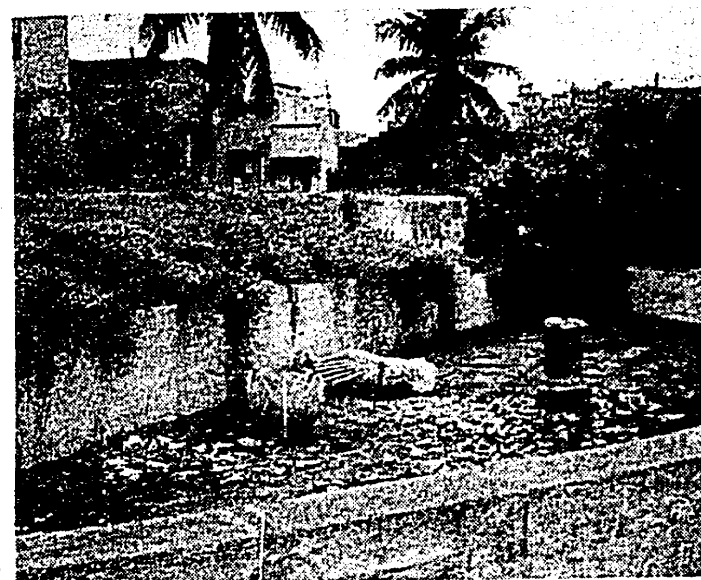
CONCORD's objectives are not very different from PAKKT's, but appear better balanced. While both agree on the need for a rationalised sales structure and free movement of goods without octroi, CONCORD's strategy is more issue-specific. It believes in providing member states equal access to a common port on the west coast, construction of an inter-state transport network, cold store and retailing chains for equitable distribution of agro products, setting up of interlinked tourism circuits in the area and arranging for joint manpower training.

For several years now, the sharing of water and power has remained a contentious issue in the South. Lack of a result-oriented approach, more than anything else, has led to the much-talked-about Telugu Ganga project 'hanging water' and the recent Tamil Nadu threat to delink itself from the southern power grid (because of excessive withdrawal of power by Andhra Pradesh). Such trends are, to say the least, disturbing and would seem to indicate that PAKKT's ambitions to set up southern gas, power, telecommuni-

(Continued on P5)



'Madi Poonga', the park developed on the old town walls that Paul Benfield built. The park is in a sorry state, its Ashoka Pillars neglected, its fountain and statues in shambles. These pictures were taken about six months ago, but nothing had changed as on May 10, 1995.

What price our parks
— even when protected!

The Hindu recently focussed attention on the sad state of the parks of Madras. Though budgetary allocation for improvements of parks of the Madras Corporation had risen over the years, maintenance of the "lungs of the city" are far from satisfactory, it said. The report added:

• In 1991-92, the allocation for parks and playgrounds was about 30 lakhs, which was the highest amount set apart till then. In the original Madras Vision 2000 outlay of Rs. 135 cr for the four-year period, parks and playfields did not have any separate allocation. But when the outlay was revised to Rs. 435 cr, Rs. 9.75 cr was earmarked for improvement of parks and playfields.

Of this, while Rs. 3 cr was spent in 1993-94, Rs. 5 cr has been slated to be spent this year and Rs. 1.75 cr for 1995-96.

The Corporation maintains 88 parks as against 175 in 1973. In 1993-94, ten parks, including the Thiru Vi Ka Park (Shenoy Nagar), Sriramulu Park (Broadway), Gill Nagar Park (Kodambakkam), Sathyamurthy Park (Chetput), Terrace Garden Park (Royapuram) and Sharma Park (T Nagar) were taken up for improvement and maintenance as star parks.

But if the present condition of these parks are any indication, it seems that

improvements have either been abandoned halfway or the exercise is progressing at snail's pace.

The parks were to have landscaped gardens, provision for water supply and compound walls. Though many of the parks now do have walls around them, cattle-guards and some even have provision for water, most of them are prone to heavy waterlogging during the rains.

There are 21 parks in the city, including the legendary My Lady's Garden, Panagal Park, Dr Natesan Park and Thiru Vi Ka Park, which have been identified as "most flood-prone". The Dr. Natesan Park on Venkataranarayana Road, T Nagar, was the first park to be taken up for improvements and is still among the best maintained parks in the city. The Corporation had spent about Rs. 25 lakhs in recent years on sprucing up the park.

The 'Madi Poonga' in Ebrahimji Sahib Street, Washermanpet, which has been developed on the Fort Ramparts, occupies the relics of the old Madras wall, a place of archaeological importance.

And it is the 'Madi Poonga' (Terrace Garden, Royapuram) that is featured above in Rajind N Christy's telling photographs. This was the scene a few months ago. Things have not improved since.

This park was developed on the Old Town Wall (not the Fort Wall, but the wall built to protect 'Black Town'). The wall was built by Paul Benfield, notorious in his financial dealings, but who, as a building contractor, built to last. Other constructions of his are much of Fort St George and Chepauk Palace.

The Park and the remains of the Old Town Wall are Protected Monuments under the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act. But few take notice of that fact.

The Park was declared open in 1957 by Justice P Rajagopalan.

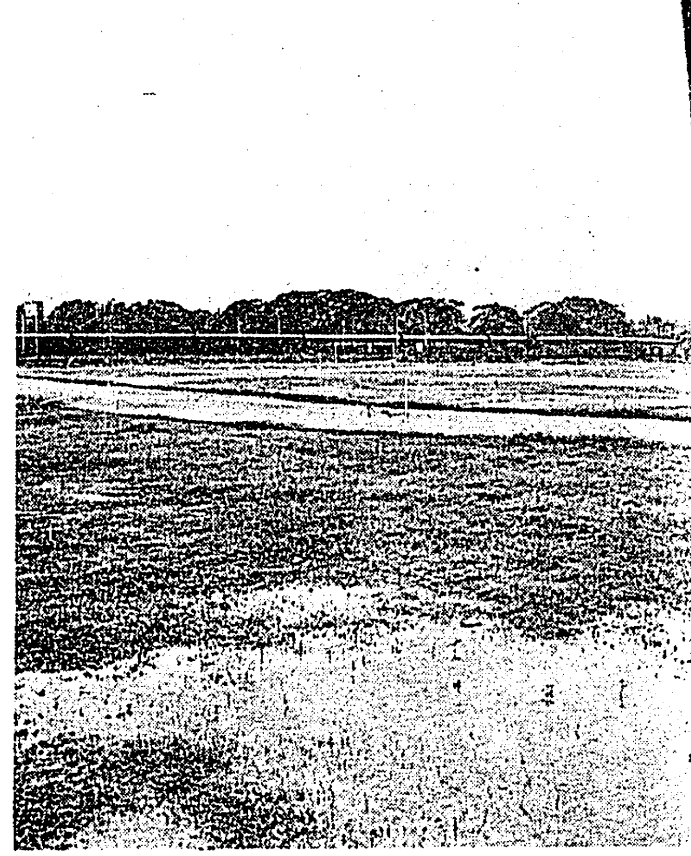
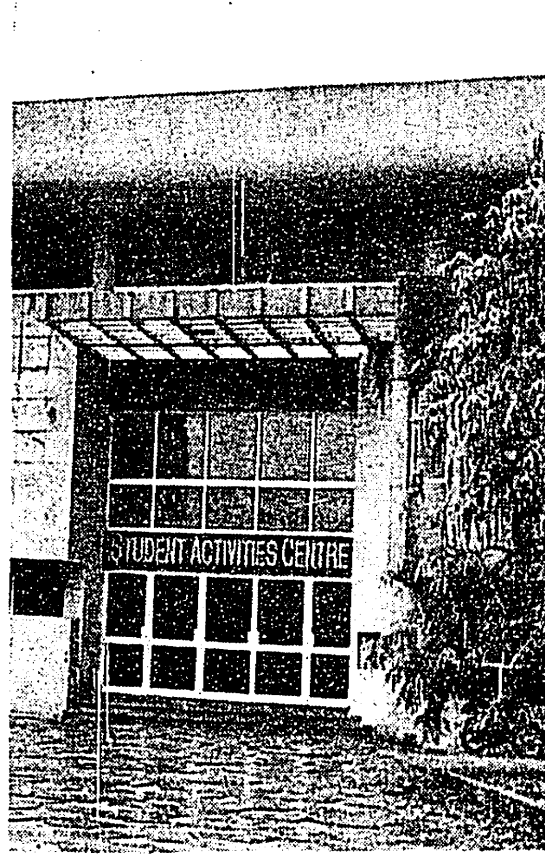
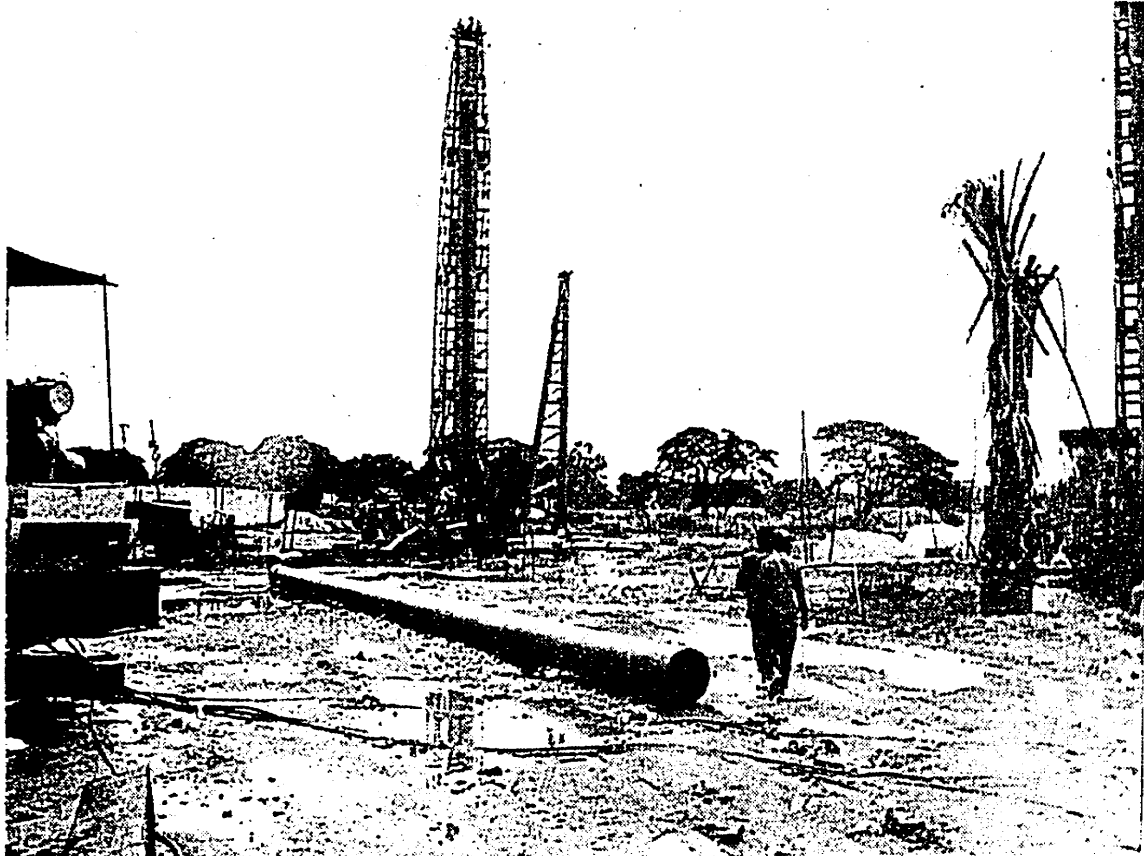
When I visited the Park, I saw an empty pond, two neglected Ashoka Pillars and the green areas in a sorry condition. The surroundings were filthy. No wonder it was deserted! That was in December. It was the same in May.

Text and photographs by
Rajind N Christy



WALK IN. BIKE OUT.

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More progress on City's Games' sites

Here's more 'progress' for you on the various venues for the different competitions to be held during the SAF Games come December.

Work has just started on the new Indoor Stadium in the old zoo area. Boxing and Volleyball are to be held in this modern facility, which has to be put up from scratch in less than six months. The rains have not been helping progress any.

The Student Activities Centre at IIT, where Gymnastics is to be held, is a splendid facility amidst the trees of Guindy National Park. A little bit of sprucing up and it'll be ready for the Games.

The picture on the right is the water-soaked pitch at the Sports Authority of Tamil Nadu's grounds by Nehru Park in Kilpauk. Kabbadi will be played on the football ground here, between the railway tracks and the sports complex's administrative block. A makeshift mini-stadium will be created round this pitch with casuarina poles coming back in fashion.

Shooting events will be held at the Sivanthi Adityan shooting sports complex in the Police Commissioner's Office campus, Egmore. The range will host some 12 different shooting events during the Games. But before that, the present range, which is built with an East-West orientation, will have to be turned around to face North-South, in line with international shooting regulations. A common butt wall will divide the two 50-metre ranges, one for rifles and the other for handguns. The existing indoors 10 metre range will also be updated to International Shooting Union specifications. Trap and Skeet, otherwise known as Clay Pigeon events, will be held at the Alamadi Shooting Range beyond the old Sholavaram airstrip. This is on Sivanthi Adityan's farm and is his private range which he is readying now for international competition.

Text and Photographs by
V S RAGHAVAN

New athletics records — in training plans!

The Amateur Athletics Federation of India is going full steam with its plan to get Indian athletics ready for the South Asian Federation Games in Madras in December. Though six months remain for the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu to organise the Games in cooperation with the Indian Olympic Association, the AAFI has already launched three coaching camps at Patiala, Bangalore and Thiruvananthapuram (T'Puram) for nearly 150 athletes, in the hope that those finally selected don't get surprised by athletes from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

While no less than 14 events have been allotted to Patiala, Bangalore and T'Puram camps will coach in only three events each. Whatever may be the outcome of the camps, and however many of the record number of trainees make the grade, the AAFI will have set records of doubtful worth in its bid to bolster Indian athletics on the eve of one of the biggest inter-

national championships to be held in India.

Never before, for instance, have so many probables been named, or so many camps been run simultaneously at so many different centres. Whether they will vindicate the amount of time

by
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and money spent on them, only the Games will tell. But the question being asked not only in Madras but throughout the country is how a camp was not allotted to Madras, the hosts who could have run it at the Games' venue, the Nehru Stadium, where the probables would have gained valuable experience, such as the feel of the track.

Athletics takes pride of place at every international meet, where nothing boosts a nation's stock more than its track and

field gold medals tally. It is to India's advantage that the Games' athletics is to be held at the Nehru Stadium, which would have been an ideal training centre for the country's probables if only for the fact that even a brief camp there would help them enter the fray with a clear home advantage.

No information was available at the time of writing how Madras came to be ignored by the AAFI, if the Tamil Nadu State Amateur Athletics Association was consulted in the matter, and if it was the AAFI's plan to bring only the selected squad to the Nehru Stadium for a final coaching session. Whatever may be the AAFI's plan, I suppose Tamil Nadu fans should be grateful for the AAFI including six Tamil Nadu athletes among the Games probables. They are Jenny Verghese, Anand Natarajan, T. Sheja, K. Solaimathi, Ancy Phillips and Angela Lincy. It is to be hoped that the camps will transform them into stars capable of making the best of the Nehru Stadium track.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Chrar-E-Sharif; 2. It ruled that parties who have solemnised their marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act remain married even when the husband embraces Islam to marry again; 3. Aung San Syu Kyi of Myanmar; 4. It shows a batsman driving, with the follow-through forming a fan of 12 colours representing the participating countries; 5. Ashok Row Kavi; 6. Between Lokur and Danishpet on the Jolarpettai-Salem line; 7. The Aga Khan Cup; 8. First to climb unaided and without oxygen; 9. Table tennis; 10. Manpreet Brar; 11. Felix Savon; 12. 'Victory in Europe Day', the day when World War II ended in Europe; 13. Imran Khan Niazi; 14. Jacques Chirac; 15. Pt. Mallikarjun Mansur; 16. It was his 200th Classic win, a world record; 17. The Ebola virus; 18. Madurai Kamaraj University; 19. It is reportedly the first time in the Catholic Church's history that the priesthood has been conferred on a married man, thus breaking a Canonical tradition; 20. The Non Proliferation Treaty on Nuclear Weapons.

The forgotten of Tamil Nadu

Congratulations, Sachin Tendulkar! Being chosen *Sportstar's* 'Sportsperson of the Year' couldn't have happened to a nicer person! But *The Corner Flag* never thought such selections had anything to do with niceness. He'd always thought that they have something to do with achievement.

Not that Sachin Tendulkar's achievements are anything to be sniffed at. But they've been in a sport in which there are less than a dozen major national teams and a couple of dozen minor national teams. They've also been mainly on home pitches. Surely Viswanathan Anand, whose field is closer to a hundred nations, whose competitors train far more than cricketers, who has played against all of them mainly **away** from home, and whose international ranking, No. 2 or No. 3, is not subject to parochial opinion, deserved the 'Sportsperson of the Year' title more? Or do you have to become world champion to win such recognition if you are not a cricketer? In which case, why not recognise weightlifter Malleswari, who is our only world champion at the moment?

Whatever the reasons for ignoring two more deserving cases, the cricket-crazy editor and staff of *Sportstar* — who fill half of each issue and more with only cricket and tennis — are doing a signal disservice to the rest of Indian sport. Looking at it more parochially, all sports journalism in Tamil Nadu, led by *The Hindu* and *Sportstar*,

Nadu. After long years, we have a couple of Tamil players — Sabir Pasha and Amalraj — playing football for India. But do we take note of their selection here? No, they're just a couple of more members of a forgettable team. No wonder when national football coach Rustam Akramov spotted Felix Eduardo, "a young Tamil Nadu goal-

for a four-nation tournament, *The Corner Flag* finds goalkeeper B Ramaswamy, full back Ravi Kumar and forwards Paul Kribakaran and Prabhakaran among the 39 probables. *The Corner Flag* wouldn't be surprised to hear questions being asked as to where these Tamil Nadu players come from.

Athletes Solaimathi and Anand Natarajan, swimmers Nisha Millet and Saravanan Subramaniam, chess players Konguvel and Vijailakshmi, the volleyball and basketball players, both men and women, sundry boxers and weightlifters, are all national champions. But what's their recognition in the local press? When even Anand Viswanathan has to bow to King Cricket, what chance do the others have?

• THE CORNER FLAG

the bulk of whose circulations are in Tamil Nadu, are doing little by way of encouraging sportspersons in Tamil Nadu. In fact, not even young cricketers — like spinner Balaji — get the kind of encouragement a budding sportsperson needs from the Press. Sad to say, even the only Tamil sports magazine, the bulk of whose readers are likely to be in other sports, follows this same route.

The Corner Flag was driven to such thoughts by a couple of news items of no more than a para and one of which has still to see the light of day in Tamil

keeper", and described him as a "Yashin in the making", the talent spotting was ignored. In fact, *The Corner Flag* wouldn't be surprised to hear the question "Who's Felix Eduardo? Who's he play for?"

Rather similar is the case of some of the State's hockey players. Mohammed Riaz slipped into the national team as a permanent fixture with no local fanfare or recognition. Prabhakaran was the star of the 'A' team's tour of Australia and is now in the running for a national berth. Meanwhile, as another 'A' team trains

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