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Tamil
shorthand
dying
slow death

(By V. Jagannathan)

Even as the State Government talks vociferously of promoting the Tamil language — its latest proclamation making Tamil compulsory in all schools — the art of Tamil shorthand is dying a slow death in the State. Interestingly, it was in 1917 that the (British) Presidency Government introduced Tamil shorthand at the Police Training College in Vellore.

"Despite teaching Tamil shorthand free of cost, student enrolment is very negligible," says S V Ramaswamy, Secretary, President, Stenographers Guild, Madras, referring to the classes the Guild runs. The cause for this, he explains, is the "non-use of Tamil shorthand in most government departments and the non-availability of a textbook".

The Tamil shorthand textbook has been out of stock for the last four years. After 1988, the book was not printed. It is learnt that the Tamil Development

Corporation had sent a note to the Secretariat on this, but nothing further has been heard.

Meanwhile, students take photocopies of the book owned by the Guild for their use. "That is of no use, as the differences between the light and dark strokes are not clear in the photocopy," points out Ramaswamy.

The Guild, which was started in 1937, is meanwhile slowly widening its activities. Apart from teaching shorthand, it has recently introduced computer classes, with the most recent software programmes.

Ramaswamy told *Madras Musings* that the Guild plans to install 25 shorthand computer machines. "The keyboard is like a telegraphic machine. The punched signals are converted into words by the computer and the transcript can be printed after editing very quickly," he said. Each machine, costing US \$ 2500, will be supplied by Stenograph Inc., USA.



The nuns in action... and woe unto eve-teasers! (Photograph by D. Krishnan)

Nuns learn karate
to defend themselves

(By D. Krishnan)

Fortyfour saree-clad nuns of St. Anne's Convent, Madhavaram, are probably the first nuns in the world to have graduated in karate, under a scheme sponsored by their own organisation.

A second batch of nuns is getting ready to undertake 26 classes in which they will be taught ten basic techniques of self-defence.

"The idea is not to get them a brown belt or field them in competitions... Their requirement is limited to defending themselves in times of danger," explains Shihan Husaini, their instructor. Husaini, the only Indian to obtain the 5th Dan in two types of martial arts, undertook the assignment after being approached by Sister Inego of the convent.

"We were worried by the growing attacks on nuns throughout India. Some of our sisters who organised self-employment schemes for women in Tamil Nadu were also threatened by loan-sharks. And in many cases, there were attempts to molest them. The murder of nuns in Uttar Pradesh and Kerala made us realise the need to protect ourselves. And when we found schoolgirls learning karate, we asked ourselves why not us," she explained.

The best of the trainees, outspoken Sister Leema hoped the nuns would be able to pass on the techniques of self-defence to the rural girls when they went to work in the districts. "They need it as much as we do," she felt.

Nuns in the age group of 16-69 years have enrolled for the course. And of them Husaini says, "Having lived a peaceful and tranquil life, they were surprised by the power lying deep inside them. Many were surprised they could go this far in karate. It is wrong to underestimate them... After all, karate was invented by Buddhist monks who did not harm a fly. And

now, the nuns are actually re-discovering it," added Husaini, as he watched in admiration a group of sisters bring down knife-wielding opponents, who, by the way, were also nuns.

As news of the training spread, other convents and institutions training nuns have been contacting St. Anne's. And soon there'll be many more nuns following the course.

Sea snakes' aquarium
for Madras

(By a staff Reporter)

A Sea Snakes' Aquarium is nearing completion at the Snake Park, Guindy, Madras. It is being constructed at a cost of Rs. 1.5 lakhs with 50 per cent assistance from the Central Zoo Authority of India, New Delhi. The aquarium will be open to the public shortly — as soon as the sea snakes are captured, for which permission has been sought.

There are about 60 varieties of sea snakes the world over and 20 of them are found in India. About 12 Indian species will be displayed in specially constructed, large-sized glass tanks filled with seawater.

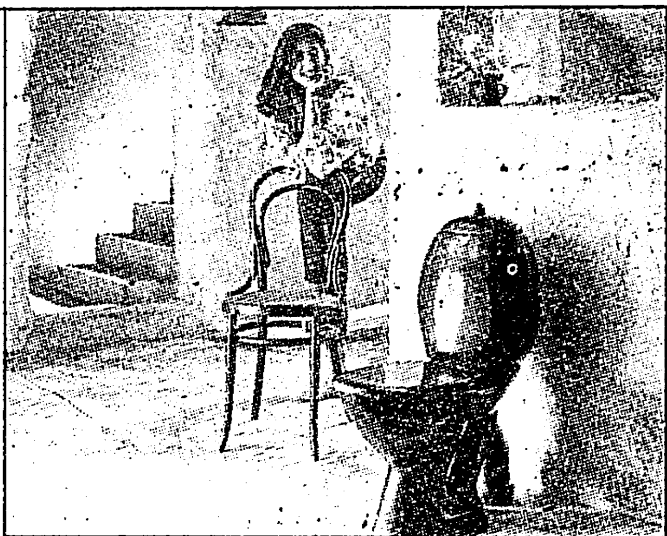
All sea snakes are extremely poisonous, the venom being four to eight times more powerful than the cobra's.

A LOT OF WIND

A set-up which will test and certify wind turbines is likely to come up at Kayathar, in Chidambaram District, Tamil Nadu, shortly, the first of its kind in the country. It will also standardise the functioning of windmills. The Danish International Development Agency will help the Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources and the Tamil Nadu Energy Agency (TEDA) to establish the station.

The station will be set up on a two ha government wind farm. The station is the outcome of a proposal by TEDA to set up a Wind Energy Centre (WEC) in Madras. The installed capacity in the wind energy sector is today around 200 MW, and measures are afoot to increase it to 1,000 MW during the Eighth Plan period.

(CSE/Down To Earth Features)



PARRYWARE

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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.

The school the debaters founded

The Madras Progressive Union was started in April 1880 as a debating society. The school with the same name owes its origin to the zeal of some of the most prominent members of the Union, who felt it should do something more than just hold weekly debates. So, a school was started with two boys on September 1, 1888, at 4 Chinnathambi Mudali Street, George Town, a property belonging to Thirumanam Annamalai Mudaliar, a member of the Union. The fees were low and the lone teacher was paid Rs. 5 a month.

Soon, as the school grew, a separate committee was appointed to look after its affairs, with Doraiswamy Mudaliar as the Manager and M. Thiruvengada Mudaliar as Headmaster on a monthly pay of Rs. 7.

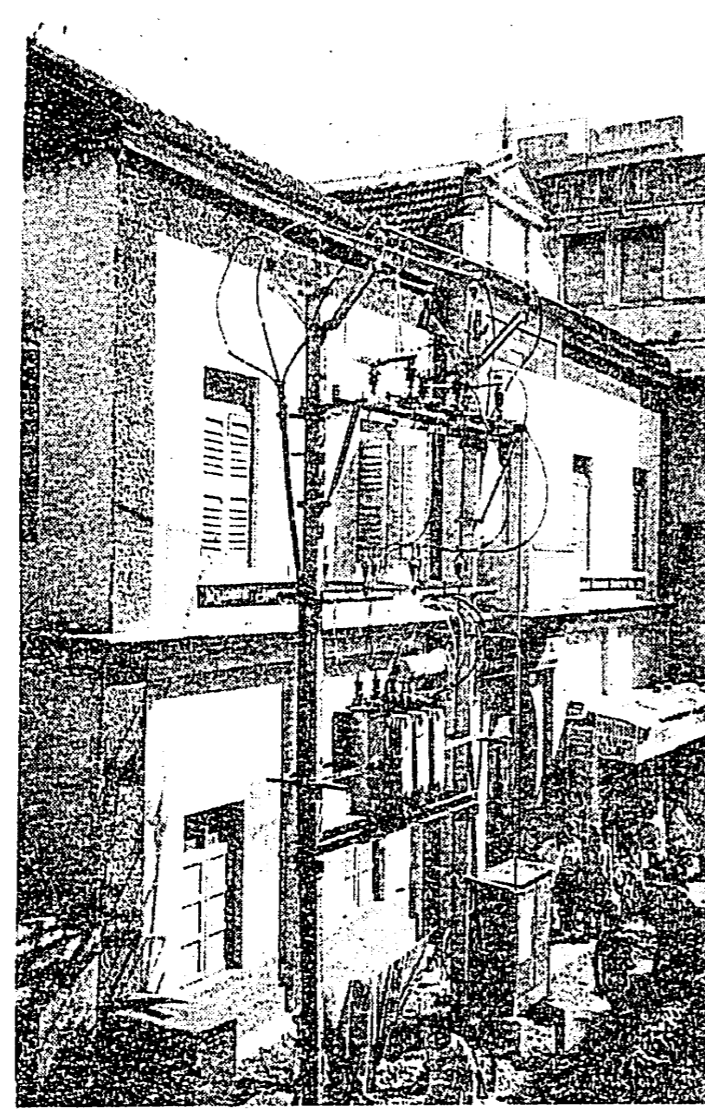
When the accommodation was found to be insufficient, the premises at 1 Vinayaga Mudali Street were made use of. And when the strength further increased, the shift was made to the present premises in Audiappa Naicken Street.

The philanthropic work done by the Union attracted the public and many were the contributions received. Bhaskara Swamy Sethupathy, the Raja of Ramnad, the Holkar of Indore and Raja Sir Ramasamy Mudaliar were among those who gave donations to the school. The Raja of Ramnad, who was then at Madras Christian College, became the Patron of the Union in

1890 at the request of his friends and classmates who were members of the Union.

When the school needed a bigger building of its own, the site the old school building stood on was bought in 1895 with the Union's funds and through the generosity of its patron, the Raja of Ramnad, who gave a donation of Rs. 5000. Temporary alterations were then made. The accommodation was further enlarged with the purchase of the adjoining building. The management then seriously took up the work of reconstructing the old building to suit the requirements of the school. With a grant-in-aid from Government of Rs. 5000, the work was commenced. The work was completed in 1908. When the management was unable to meet the entire expenditure, Rao Bahadur Thirumanam Annamalai Mudaliar, the then manager of the school, donated Rs. 5000 towards the building fund and, in recognition of this, the hall on the first floor was named the Thirumanam Annamalai Mudaliar Hall. Later, four houses were purchased to increase the accommodation still further and they were temporarily altered to accommodate the school.

The school became a middle school with a strength of about 800 students. The middle school became a high school in 1947. The school presented



The Progressive Union's School in George Town. A transformer — with all its attendant dangers — hides the school's entrance in the picture on left. On the right, an interior view of the school.



its first batch of students for the S.S.L.C. examination in 1948.

The four houses in the backyard that had been temporarily altered to suit the school's purposes were then demolished and a new block for the high school, with eight rooms, was constructed with aid from the Government and donations. The school was upgraded into a higher secondary in 1978.

Today, the school is a full fledged higher secondary school with S. Prabhakar as Headmaster. He is assisted by 38 teachers. There are about 750 students, but with the school being in a busy commercial area, the number

of students has been decreasing. Every year, about 300 poor students are admitted to various classes. The school organises night study classes for poor students who do not have the basic amenities to study at home and the classes are supervised by teachers living close to the school.

The school has a formidable team in kabaddi and an old student of the school is the present State coach. The school also provides facilities for volleyball, badminton, cricket and football. The Law College grounds are utilised for its sports activities.

The school starts with daily morning pujas and the newspaper

headlines, which are read out for the benefit of the student community. Identity cards are issued to the students and teachers, who have to wear them during school hours.

The school is situated in ten grounds of space. An electric transformer has recently been erected in front of its entrance, and all representations to move it elsewhere, for safety reasons, have gone unheeded by the authorities.

Text and pictures by
RAJIND N CHRISTY

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

- Who is the new Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh?
- Name the actor who attained worldwide fame as the screen 'Superman' and who was recently paralysed after a riding accident.
- Woven masterpieces by the physically disabled in Tamil Nadu will be used to adorn a global attraction in Asia. Where?
- Name the well-known writer on natural history, wildlife and environment who has been awarded the UNEP's prestigious 'Global 500 Award'.
- Name the Tamil film which has bagged this year's Indira Gandhi Award for the best first film of a director.
- What form of gambling has been banned in Tamil Nadu from early June?
- S. Haridas of Thrissur is all set to enter the Guinness Book of World Records because of something he did in 8 seconds flat. What?
- Name the British Chancellor of the Exchequer who visited India recently.
- Well-known film-maker Shyam Benegal is making a film on Gandhiji's life in South Africa, the first Indo-South African venture. Name the film and who plays the Mahatma.
- Diane Sawyer recently interviewed, on ABC, a famous couple who have been attracting both admiration and controversy worldwide. This first interview of theirs was on June 13th and was transmitted round the globe. Who were they?
- The prophecy, as inscribed on a stone slab of a temple, came true, when its *samprokshanam* was performed 322 years after the last consecration by the Nayakar kings and in the presence of an eminent woman. The woman was the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. What temple?
- Captain Scott O'Grady created news around the world for his survival techniques and determination. How?
- Which famous industrial family of Madras is to set up a sports foundation in Madras later this year with initial emphasis on hockey and cricket?
- Name the British ship whose crew, while on a stop in the city, helped Australian volunteers to clean up a part of the Mambalam Canal.
- Name the three former Chief Ministers who were inducted into the Union Cabinet recently.
- The first edition of which famous children's classic, signed by the author (the protagonist child's father), fetched a record £6750 at a Christie's auction recently?
- For whose works did the Tamil Nadu Government pay Rs. 75 lakh as interim royalty recently?

(Answers on p. 8)

Quizzin with Ramanan

The politics of presentations

Astad Deboo was in town recently, for a private show at the Taj. The modern dancer from Bombay has not had much opportunity to perform in Madras, not having a 'political' platform other than his work to support him. Which made his visit all the more welcome.

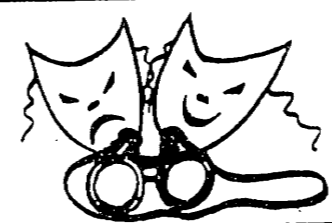
In Madras, only traditional dancers are patronised by the mainstream, which asks them to make great sacrifices to be able to get on stage. The

organisations presenting them. Astad says he will have none of it. Dance to him is a profession and a passion and it cannot be trivialised. So he prefers to stay away from the politics of presentations.

Supporting change

Experimentation in Indian theatre and dance have, till today, thrived on the largesse of the foreign cultural organisations in the city, like the Max

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



dancers fuel this trend by performing in Madras for a pittance and in pitiable conditions. Dancers contribute to the corruption by paying huge amounts to

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

July 11: The Madras Musical Association presents The Long Island Youth Orchestra — a 100-strong symphony orchestra, from New York. At the Music Academy, 6.30 p.m.

Mueller Bhavan, Alliance Francaise, the British Council, the USIS and the Russian Centre. Anita Ratnam has been trying to change that scene by giving artists without a platform a stage. Using her clout, charm and intelligence to find alternate spaces for performances, she has opened up the scene for experimentation.

Anita's Arangam is organising a *Purush* festival for male performers in August at the Music Academy, where dance and theatre experimentation, involving the male body, will be the theme.

We welcome the first steps to THE HERITAGE ACT

We look forward to its enactment and implementation

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From Blueprints to landmarks

Cartoon animation done locally, soon on Channel I

(By A Staff Reporter)

Efforts are being made to beam a cartoon animation series for children by S.K. Ramanujam, better known as RANU, on Channel-1. This, the maiden attempt at cartoon animation in India. But he is quick to point out that it should not be compared with Walt Disney films, "as we are yet experimenting in this prohibitively expensive field".



Cartoonist Ranu... now an animated film-maker.

He points out that about 600 technicians work on Walt Disney cartoon animation pictures, while he has been able to engage only ten technicians to prepare the two series of cartoon animation films. All the drawings needed for the series, some 30,000, had to be drawn by him. The artists engaged by him could only give peripheral assistance, as they could not draw to his expectations. There is a dearth of artists in India in this field, Ranu says.

The two series to be shortly telecast are *Proud Lion* and *Flying Horse*. Both are based on stories earlier published in his children's magazine *Kutty & Kundu*. He is confident that the two films will receive a great welcome from rural audiences, though urban audiences, used to seeing Walt Disney films, may feel that there is much to be desired.

Ranu has been striving to promote cartoon artists in Tamil Nadu since 1986. His *Kutty & Kundu* has been organising every year, from 1986, drawing competitions for children. He has also conducted over 200 classes for children in a television series titled "How to draw cartoons easily".

A SAFE AVENUE AWAITS

(Continued from P4)

Disclosure Norms: This imparts transparency to the operation of the fund. An investor should look for the frequency of NAV publication, and the quantum of portfolio exposures. In India, Mutual Funds, generally, disclose their top twenty exposures on an annual or semi-annual basis. But the open-ended Alliance 1995 has set a worthy example by disclosing its entire portfolio for its first quarter of operation. Such disclosures enable the investor to know how and where his money lies invested.

Objective of the Scheme: Those who are risk-averse and prefer regular income, should opt for income schemes (i.e., dominated by debt instruments). Investors who prefer higher returns can opt for equity-dominated schemes.

The above norms are only broad guidelines and should be used in conjunction with other facts like overall scenario of various industries in which the Mutual Fund has invested, market movements, launch time and other qualitative facts like composition of Board of Directors in the Asset Management company, reputation of the sponsor etc.

Our recommendations for this fortnight are:

M M Forgings (CMP: Rs. 60.00): One of the leading manufacturers and exporters of forgings in South India, M M Forgings came out with a public issue in April 1994 to part-finance its expansion from 6,000 tpa to 15,000 tpa. It is likely to post good results for the year ending March

K. Gopalakrishnan

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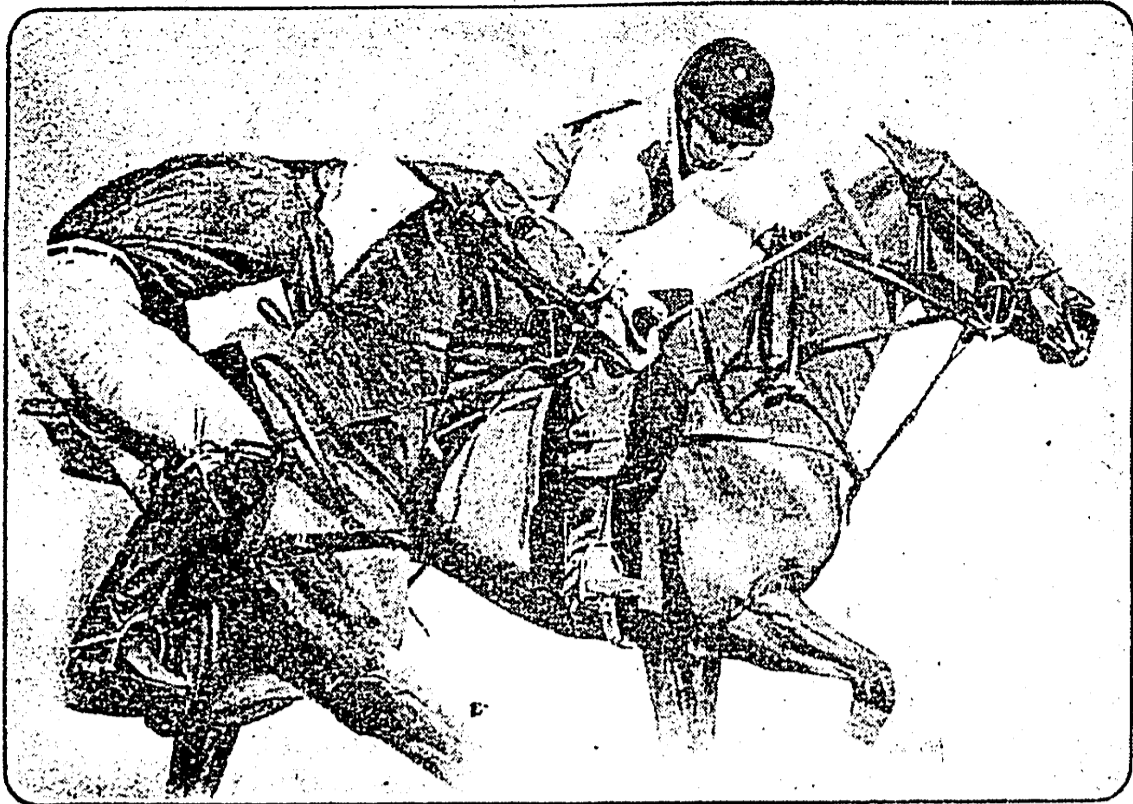


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The widest smile



A few of Sabrina Siga's water-colours. From left to right, 'The Blue Devils' in action on the polo field; Pesi Shroff riding in a winner; and Sir Lester Pigott in action.

The horse beautiful



Sabrina Siga, who gratefully remembers the late Mavis Durairaj, her teacher at St. Hilda's, Ooty — who kindled talent into a passion — and Gowri, art lecturer at Stella Maris, Madras — where she graduated in Fine Arts — is India's sole equine painter.

The fluency, accuracy and freshness of her paintings instantly create an emotional reaction, transforming the casual eye of a beholder into an almost transfixed gaze. Sabrina's pictures blazon a technique honed and perfected by acute observation, tender feel and years of painstaking draughtsmanship, besides innate aesthetic talent.

Nature, flowers in particular, ships, scene-scapes... all fascinated her initially and were subjects she chose to dabble with. With an eye that rarely missed

● by Kalyani Davidar

out on anything beautiful, Sabrina's deft daubs could well have drawn from any area that lent itself to representation in form and colour on paper, but her marriage to a naval officer — and a

keen polo-player at that — determined the course her art would take.

The dawn hours that John Siga spent schooling polo-ponies may not have seemed too appealing to the young wife who accompanied him each morning, but the equine exposure taught her more than just a thing about contour and muscle, tack and snaffle. Intensely, Sabrina would watch the stallion, bridled, saddled, muscle rippling in taut tension beneath the silken coat, standing still and soundless or in dramatic action with rider or colourful jockey astride. The rich gamut of browns and blaze of jockey hues

would be her palette, she decided. Sabrina's tryst with equine art had begun.

Her first horse sketches, 16 of them, were sold even as they were exhibited on the walls of a dance-floor at a prestigious club in Bombay. With orders for more, her brushes knew little rest.

A holiday in the U.K. in '83 introduced the artist to Robert Cox, dealer in sporting art. Cox and Co., with its network of outlets, agreed to being her distributors in U.K. and Ireland. Commissioned to do dogs, Sabrina produced pet canines which proved to be a canophilist's delight. To date, Cox and Co. continue to be her patrons.

Her water-colours are, in a manner of speaking, certainly on the right walls. She has exhibited her work in Europe and U.S. Patrons who desire to have their favourite horses perpetuated in art are not wanting and among the list of champions that Sabrina has painted are 'Shergar', winner of the Epsom Derby in 1982, 'Affirmed' with jockey Steve

Cauthen winning the triple crown in the U.S., 'Seattle Slew' also winner of the triple crown in 1977, Camino winner in every classic race in the Indian season, and Track Lightning well-known to every punter.

Her style that portrays the sensitivity and subtle nuances of an animal dear from time immemorial to royalty and racers is amply testified to in her paintings of both trailblazers and polo ponies. Flash, the champion polo pony is a favourite.

Horses... dogs... birds have all given her joy, as the greeting cards done by her for the Bombay Natural History Society reveal. Though water colour has been the more-used medium, she is equally adept in oils too.

The backdrop is deliberately left uncluttered by irrelevant details. Says Sabrina: "I have eliminated facts in the background of my painting that do not express the subjects, so as not to detract from the primary object, the horse..." — (Courtesy: Sunday Deccan Herald)

No answer to sorry state of Tamil Nadu cricket

The readiness with which the Wills World Cup Indian Organising Committee (INDCOM) allotted a quarter-final to Madras was in keeping with the status the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association has earned by organising internationals in an efficient manner at its headquarters at Chepauk. TNCA President A C Muthiah has said the TNCA will modernise its M A Chidambaram Stadium at Chepauk so that the day-night match scheduled to be played on March 11, 1996 can be gone through in a manner that will vindicate Indcom's choice of the

ancient venue for one of the two quarter-finals to be played in India. One question that should be asked, however, is how did Mohali, near Chandigarh, a new venue, become a semi-final choice in preference to hallowed Chepauk.

Be that as it may, there is no mention of INDCOM's choice or

by JAIGI

the TNCA's decision to modernise its stadium in the TNCA's annual report presented at its annual general body meeting held on June 25th. Equally surprising was the absence of any discussion at the annual meeting of the urgent need to revitalise the game in the State. The report admits that "the performance of our State team in the National championship this season (1994-95) was not as (?) in the past". But there is no mention of any plan to give Tamil Nadu cricket a new look.

The State's record in the 60-year-old national championship is, perhaps, Indian sport's biggest irony, nay, joke. In no other State is the game so popular, better organised or played throughout the year, even in heat-waves, and yet the Ranji Trophy has come to Madras only twice, in 1955 and 1988. While Bombay has had a virtual one-way traffic, even such smaller states as Holkar and

Baroda have left Tamil Nadu way behind.

Tamil Nadu cricket indeed cries for reform and it will need a full measure of wisdom and toil to give it a National championship record in keeping with its popularity and the record number of annual tournaments the TNCA organises. The problem is not unsolvable, considering the sponsorship it gets from nearly all the top industrial establishments in the State. How the TNCA could not draw up a scheme to better the State's national championship record and present the same to its members at its annual meeting is a surprise indeed.

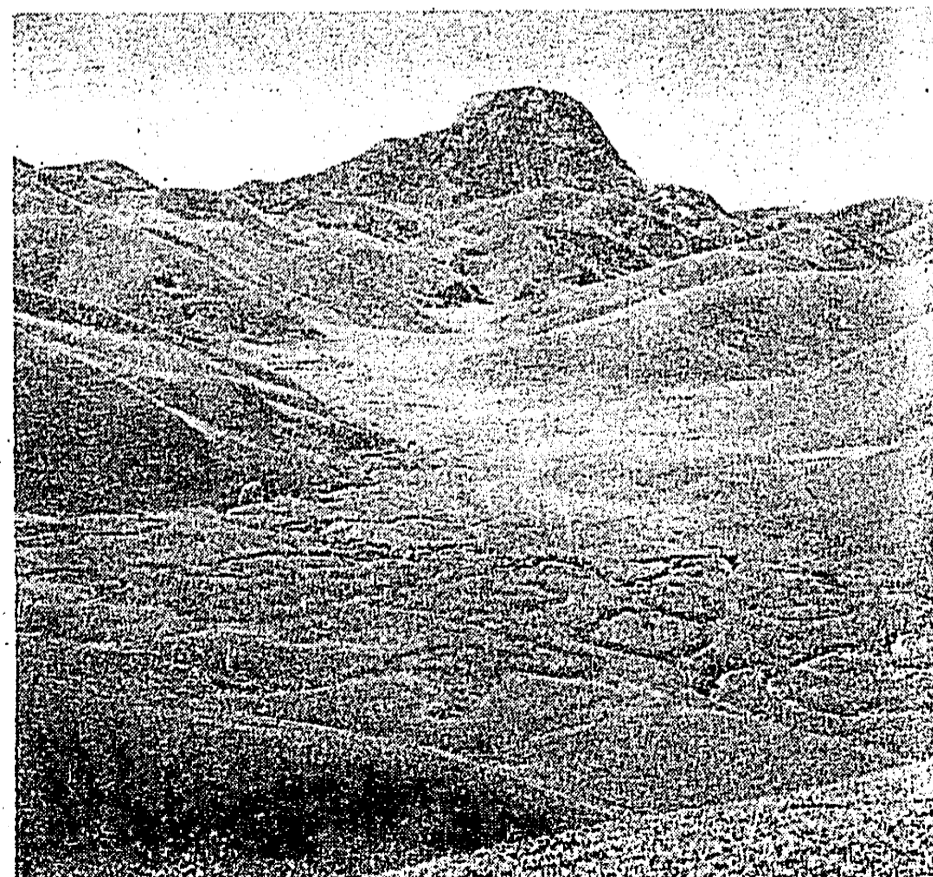
Yet another surprise is the scant attention paid to the language of the annual report. S. Sriraman, the late TNCA Secretary, used to enlist the honorary assistance of experienced journalists while preparing the annual reports of his time. The present executive perhaps felt there was no need to seek such assistance. Perhaps nothing exemplifies the literary quality of the report more strikingly than the statement on change of sponsorship. Which reads:

● Till last year Dunlop India Ltd. were the sponsors of sponsoring the local league matches. From this year onwards, after Dunlop withdrew from sponsoring in the last minute, MAC Industries came forward to sponsor the local league tournament has readily helped the TNCA in the larger perspective. ●

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Ms. Mayawati; 2. Christopher Reeve; 3. The Great Wall of China; 4. M. Krishnan; 5. Mogha Mul; 6. Sale of single digit lottery and instant lotteries; 7. He calculated the 101st root of a 250-digit number, beating a computer which took 11 seconds; 8. Kenneth Clarke; 9. The Making of the Mahatma and Rajit Kapoor respectively; 10. Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley; 11. Sri Rajagopalaswami Temple at Mannargudi; 12. He is an F-16 pilot, who was shot down by a Serbian missile in Bosnia but managed to survive in hiding for a week on insects and rainwater; 13. The Indian Ocean; 14. Desertification; 15. Sivanthi Adityan; 16. The M.A. Chidambaram family; 17. HMS Sheffield; 18. Messrs. K. Karunakaran, Jagannath Mishra and A.R. Antulay; 19. Winnie the Pooh; 20. C.N. Annadurai.

Naturalists' Corner



Eravikulam National Park with a splendid view of the highest peak in South India, Anaimudi. (Photograph by ROM WHITAKER courtesy Madras Naturalists' Society.)

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