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MADRAS

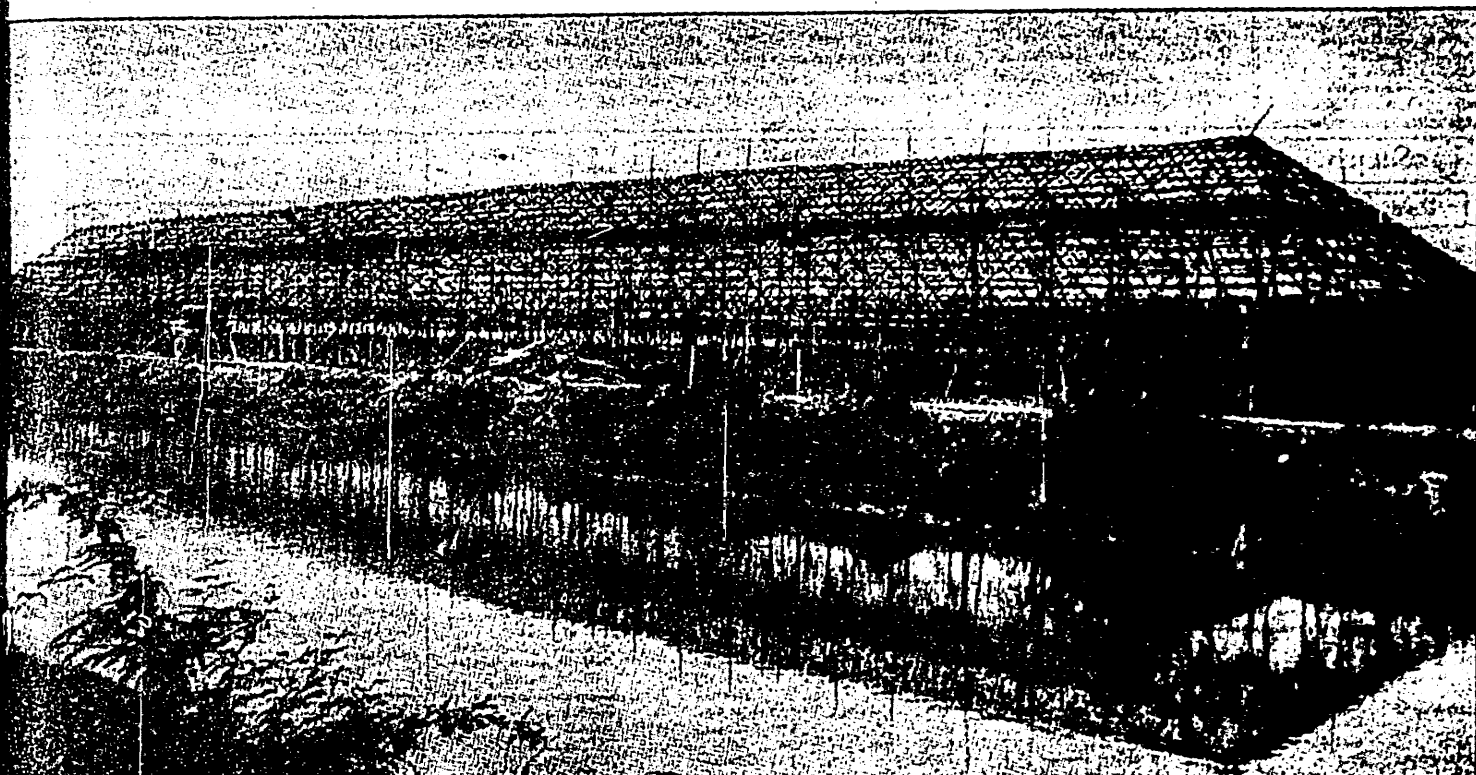
METAL  
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MUSINGS

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### Getting ready for the wedding of many a year

This dramatic picture, taken by VEDAN, appeared in the *Dinamani* on July 25th, some days before the English press in Madras woke up to all the activity going on in over 50 acres of land behind Chettinad Palace. This huge pandal is one of a dozen coming up to accommodate the tens of thousands expected to grace the wedding of Chief Minister Jayalitha's foster son N Sudhakaran and Chevalier Ganesan's granddaughter N Jayalakshmi on September 7th.

The near-hysteria and critical postures in some newspapers over the massive scale of the preparations for the joyous occasion, reminded us of the story a retired journalist had once told us of a rather similar incident he had been witness to in other times, other climes. When Sri

Lanka was once going through a severe financial crisis, and foreign exchange for even studies had been prohibited by the Government, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike made preparations to send her daughters Sunethra and Chandrika to study in Europe. The Press had a field day, but, said the journalist, he would never forget one response he got during a survey he carried out for a column he used to write. An old woman vendor, squatting beside her basket of vegetables in the blazing sun, spat in the dust and earnestly told him, "Sir, if Madam Prime Minister cannot send her children abroad for studies, who in this world can!" And there were many like her who thought in terms of an almost divine right possessed by rulers in this part of the world, he added.

We were reminded of this story, when we read the Chief Minister's statement that the expenses "will only be the normal expenditure that is incurred during the wedding of the son of any Chief Minister". Indeed, Chief Ministers are special people. So, may we wish her foster son and his bride a never-to-be-forgotten wedding fit for the *Guinness Book of Records* and a wonderful life together thereafter.

— The Editor

## MADRAS BASE FOR FORD'S?

### Answer in thirty days

(by A Special Correspondent)

In the next one month we will know whether Ford's will sink roots in 300 acres at Maraimalai Nagar, or pick Pune or Nashik, home ground of its joint venture partners. The State Government had also offered Hosur and Sriperumbudur as alternate sites for the project, but Ford's apparently prefer the township south of Madras.

The project is expected to have an initial investment of Rs. 2,000 crore. Officials say the auto components sector will also receive an additional investment of at least Rs. 500 crore if the car project is set up in Maraimalai Nagar.

Despite the reservations Mahindra's have over locating the project in Tamil Nadu, Ford is in favour of the State for a number of reasons such as

- The 'lifestyle' in Madras, which Ford feels is much better than in Pune or in Nashik.
- Maraimalai Nagar has all the necessary infrastructure, like ade-

Agreement at last on...

# Study of plans for the City

(by Venkatachari Jagannathan)

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS)-sponsored country-specific Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) to develop Madras city in a holistic way has, at last, got the go-ahead it has been looking for. The three-year-old proposal (MM, Aug. 16, '94) concretised recently into an agreement signed by UNCHS, the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu. With this, Madras becomes the first city in South Asia to benefit from the Programme.

Funded by UNCHS (US \$605,000) and IPF Sublime (US \$58,000), the SCP does not envisage building infrastructure anew nor will it invest in

improving the city's civic amenities. It is a study programme spread over 24 months, focussing on ways to improve the environment in the Metropolitan Area and the Outer Metropolitan Area. The programme will study and draw up action plans on:

- Providing housing for the urban poor, taking into account the short and long-term environmental aspects.
- Cleaning the city's waterways — the Cooum and Adyar rivers, Buckingham Canal and the Otteri Nullah.
- Providing sanitation facilities in slums and congested areas, e.g. George Town. According to a study, nearly three million of Madras's 5.5 million population lack proper sanitation facilities.
- Meeting the acute water shortage that threatens economic development in the city.
- Improving the congested road system, which acts as a constraint for economic growth.

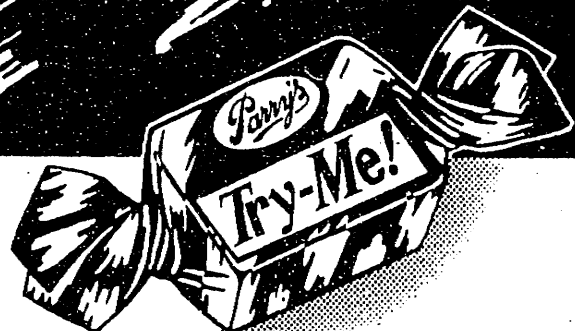
Along with the main programme, a sister project documenting the experience in Madras and exploring the possibilities of replicating the concept in other Indian cities will be implemented with funds from the International Centre for Sustainable Cities and UNCHS (Canadian \$200,000 and US \$80,000 respectively). In

(Continued on P3)

(Continued on P5)

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PARRY'S

## Ford's look at two sites

(By A Staff Reporter)

Madras Musings understands a British consultancy firm is undertaking topographical studies of two sites near Madras that have been offered to Ford's for its joint venture with Mahindra's. The sites are at Kilakkarani, near Maraimalai-nagar, on NH 45 and at Katrambakkam, near Sriperumbudur on NH 4.

The area offered in Kilakkarani is 500 acres, while 1800 acres is available at Katrambakkam. The

widened NH45 offers better access to the former, if the Tambaram bottleneck is cleared — and that can be done fast. In the case of the latter, while NH4 is in good condition, even if it is not as broad as the 'new' NH 45, the stretch from the Poonamallee junction to Kathipara Junction is a bit of a nightmare. The alternate route through Poonamallee is not much better, but offers better access to the North once it hits the Ring Road.



# Getting to know Americans who know us

The Man From Madras Musings is pleased to note that Global Adjustments, "as a result of our conversations with you and others, have begun to do global adjusting in the other direction". What that means is that Global Adjustments has made a start at introducing Indians to the American way of life, instead of concentrating on getting Americans and other expats used to Madras life (MM March 16). In pursuit of this new commitment, Global Adjustments recently teamed with the Federation of Indian Export Organisations to organise a seminar on 'The American Business Culture'. Of the 50 or so who attended, only half a dozen had been to the US, but about half were doing business with America.

During the course of the seminar, MMM and the others discovered that Americans are "proud to be Americans", believe in justice and equality, state things directly, are friendly and informal but value their privacy more, are independent and self-sufficient, are time-conscious and want everything done fast, have car, phone, fax and other new communication cultures and all want to be ever-young.

MMM also learnt that American and Indian English could be confusing to the respective speakers, that an Indian businessman should make an appointment to meet the American businessman he wants to see, wear a suit to the meeting, not expect to be provided transport for the visit, respect the American weekend and be direct in his dealings with the American, saying all he has to say straight.

On the more specific subject of business culture, MMM heard that Americans like to delegate authority and that most of the people Indian businessmen were likely to meet had been delegated the authority to say 'NO'; very few had the authority to say 'YES', may be one in a hundred, and that is the person the Indian

would eventually need to meet if 'NO' had not already been said by all the others met! Other discoveries were that there was no social contract in employment, so produce or be fired was an American way of life, and that every executive was looking to move on for better prospects, for both of which reasons you were unlikely to be meeting with the same person for many years; that American beliefs in freedom give everyone the right to speak out freely, leading to an adversarial atmosphere, which should not be taken as personal; and contracts are sacred and non-fulfilment of them could lead to litigation, Americans being a litigious society.

In all this positive portrayal of American frankness and directness, of equality and justice, there was no mention of America's several secret worlds (CIA, FBI, etc.), glass ceilings which women, blacks, Indians, Chinese and other minorities face, the influence organised crime has on business, labour, politics and the urban environment, and a whole host of other problems that may or may not affect the quality of life in America. It is precisely because these exist — most of them on much larger scales than in India — that it might be wise in such seminars in future to tone down a bit the presentations made by Americans. In fact, most educated Indians — and the audience certainly fitted that description — have read quite a bit about America's different faces; no wonder there was stunned silence from them after the first two presentations, no wonder there was a warmer response when N Kumar of the Sanmar Group later said much of the same things.

## Saying it straight

There was more of straight-talking at Global Adjustments' seminar after the break. An American diplomat, obviously influenced by the Indian penchant to scour the stars, went on to forecast the business situation in India 2001. The Man From Madras Musings found this bit of shooting from the lip painting a rather grim scenario — if MMM is permitted to mix metaphors — but was glad to be reassured that all would very likely be well by 2006. Until then, however, the diplomat left MMM with this rather gloomy vision HE has of India 2001:

- There would be bad droughts in 1996 and 1997.
- In 2001, the third coalition Government since the Rao Government would be calling for elections.
- Manmohans would still be surviving, but facing an increasing struggle.

- The growth rate would improve to 3 per cent, but still below the 9 per cent peak in the past.
- Foreign investment, especially American investment, would have slowed down.
- After Enron, the Americans would show little interest in the heavy infrastructure area.
- A result of such American withdrawal would see little progress in the power sector, with very little additional power being supplied to the grid over the next five years.
- Foreign investment in power would drop from 30 per cent to 10 per cent.
- Power and water would be major constraints to development in India.

filled with 'Long John' chairs, you know the kind, those loungers whose leg rests could be swivelled out. And it had platforms full of atmosphere, with relays of hawkers offering an unending array of goodie-to-eat on and a never-ending chorus of enticing cries.

MMM didn't have the time to find out whether the waiting rooms and restaurant of revered memory had changed, but the platforms certainly had. They were clean and crowd-free. But, worse, they were noise-free; the scores of hawkers had vanished. Only a couple of uniformed Southern Railway waiters scurried around providing coffee and breakfast. Worst of all, the ubi-

## SHORT N' SNAPPY

- Freight movement would be as bad as ever, not even the Malaysian-built Superhighways helping to solve the problem.
- Telecommunications would improve considerably.
- American investment in telecommunications and consumer goods would continue to grow.
- Japan and South Korea would be the major investors in India, in electronics, automobiles, ports and construction.
- Indian exports to the US would grow and India would move into the top 20 from the current 28th in this area.
- Textiles (40 per cent), software (5 per cent), automobile ancillaries and transcription services would be the major exports.
- There would be closer links between Indian and American educational institutions; even US campuses in India were likely.
- America would continue preferring to invest in China — which assures quality, consistency, pricing and timely delivery — than in India.

All this evoked a little better response, but to a question "Why China?", the diplomat, who had earlier cited Chile also as an example of the success which India was not, laughed, "Obviously because it's a dictatorship!" MMM, who remembers his history now and then, does recall that 'the world's greatest democracy' has always preferred to deal with, and has had cosier relationships with, dictatorships and former totalitarian states than with fellow democracies. It's nice to have the view confirmed — even with a chuckle.

Pity The Man From Madras Musings could not stay on for very much longer, but the seminar promised more such fun in the remaining hour. May be, MMM will catch up with it some other time.

## By rail & road

It's been some years since The Man From Madras Musings travelled south by train. But he had reasons to do so recently and found that in that time his favourite railway station had undergone a change — for the better, but which made it worse.

Once, this headquarters station of the South Indian Railway had a fine restaurant, with some of the best 'butter cuisine' in the country. Tiruchirappalli's large waiting rooms were clean and seemed to be

quintessentially Hindu was no longer being offered at your seat; MMM had to take a long walk to the Higginbotham's stall to pick up The Hindu and Express. Not many others bothered ... leaving MMM with the thought that the Railways weren't doing their bit to help newspaper circulations. But then, why should they, why should they help the unfriendly?

A happier incident was the horde of well-behaved students who swarmed into the first class compartments at Pudukkottai. They let down the top berths, dumped their books and equipment on them and, instead of occupying any vacant seat, opted to stand in the corridors in gossipping groups. Half an hour later, they got their things together and got down at a minute's halt and strolled out to the polytechnic across the road from the station. No one asked them for tickets on their way out; MMM does not know whether they had tickets when they boarded. But MMM noted with some pleasure their courteous behaviour and the Railways' blind eye to those who gently broke the law in a good cause — education.

Returning by road, MMM found that NH 45 keeps improving, but the sole toll collection point near Chengalpattu (MM, March 1) had vanished. Had someone protested to the politicians? Or had the cost of the bridge near it been collected? Or were they 'illegal' toll collectors ousted by the Law? Moving on, MMM found several signs on the four-lane stretch delightfully reading: AVOID DAZZLING HEADLIGHTS. It reminded MMM of a Sunday astrologer's 'copy' he used to edit and which, in half a dozen places, each week advised AVOID ACCIDENTS.

## In brief

★ By the time you read these lines, the American School, Madras, would have started, is The Man From Madras Musings' guess. But what intrigues MMM is that its start would be in six rooms in the Russian Cultural Centre on Kasturiranga Road! Truly, it would seem detente has been sealed! The school will admit expatriate students up to the age of 11 and will charge \$ 5000 a year, MMM hears. An American woman from home will be in charge and has already arrived; the rest of the staff will be from local

Americans who are better than school backgrounds.

★ The Man From Madras Musings recently enjoyed two experiences that demonstrated how nice Madras traffic COULD BE. In the first instance, he found himself as part of Union Minister's convoy — and was sheer bliss travelling on road on which all traffic moved to the side in orderly fashion and allowed the speeding convoy to pass. The other occasion was during the strike. MMM did not see any of violence that is reported to have gone with it. What he did see, however, was that WITHOUT ubiquitous autos, driving on Madras roads was so much easier, almost a pleasure, in fact. Might then solution to Madras's traffic problem be the banning of autos from City's roads, MMM wonders. Or might it be a rigorous training school for drivers that is needed?

## Business briefs

★ The recent FIEO-Global Adjustments seminar provided several tidbits just right for The Man From Madras Musings column. Such as:

- The FIEO is planning to finalise an agreement shortly on setting up a major exhibition centre in Madras, set up to international standards.
- The FIEO is conducting a study of Tuticorin Port to assess possibilities it holds for development as a major port.
- Pond's won major business mushrooms over China because the US could depend on Pond's delivery schedules, communications, business practices. But Pond's lost a shoe upon business to China, because Japan's Marubeni was more comfortable with Chinese culture, food, entertainment, etc.
- Sundram Fasteners now has over 90 per cent of General Motors' radiator cap business in just a couple of years in a single digit percentage. They ensure timely delivery at GM American plants, Sundram Fasteners have established a warehouse in the US.
- The Sanmar Group have collaborations with American firms big and small, perhaps the largest number of any Indian company.
- When Sanmar's chemical plant was being established in Madras many years ago, three Indian families lived there happily — and still keep touch with Sanmar and friends in the Mettur backwoods. Many Americans today seem to be quite as willing to live in metropolises like Madras without considering it a hardship post.
- Voice Mail and E-Mail are in-things for communication with Americans; the social Indian business houses get up to such gadgetry, the ease will be to do business with the rest of the world.
- ★ Coimbatore's first five-star hotel will be in a four-acre holding and is expected to come up shortly. The Rs. 16 crore project, The Man From Madras Musings understands, will be promoted by Tiruppur knitwear exporter A Sakthivel who has opened his luxurious Rs. 5 crore Poppys Valley Hotel in Tiruppur. Sakthivel is planning to have a five-star hotel in Coimbatore and the Bombay-based Leela Group.

# Rajputs back heritage

(by SUNIL MEHRA)

I took two foreign expatriates to start a trend that has today become a movement and a cornerstone of tourism policy both at the Central and state levels. The genesis of the Heritage Hotels scheme lies in what entrepreneurs May Singh and the two-member team of Francis Waciarag and Aman Singh started in Jaipur and Mandawa in the late 70s and early 80s respectively. Singh, a Scotswoman, married Rajput, scion of the princely royal Rajput family, and made her home in a crumbling but spacious century-old Rajasthani house in Jaipur. When the couple decided to convert their home to Bissau Haveli Hotel in the late 70s, Singh converted the drawbacks, viz., an approach road choked with open sewage, cowdung and blocked by vendors, pigs and itinerant vendors, into a USP.

The Bissau Haveli was advertised (the penultimate India Experience: Come and experience the REAL India), gushed the brochure, "its sights, sounds, smells...!" It was a clever marketing ploy. More to the point: it attracted Wide-eyed French, Germans and Americans flocked to Bissau and Mandawa. The story was to repeat itself in Mandawa in dusty Shekhawati in Rajasthan in the early 80s when Nath Singh and Waciarag, in the course of researching a film on desert water systems, stumbled upon vistas of great beauty, comfortable with havelis and splendid sites open to seed like the one at Mandawa. Excited at the prospect of refurbishing and marketing the dilapidated castle, they worked out an agreement with the Thakur owner at Mandawa and pulled off a marketing coup. Mandawa became a trendsetter. Deluxe American plants, Sundram Fasteners have established a warehouse in the US.

Which is when other Rajasthan royals and the government woke up to the immense potential of the royal rollercoaster market. For instance, the Danish Government has agreed to provide a grant of \$ 150,000 for the study of air pollution in Madras and the measures needed to reduce it.

Besides the sponsors and government agencies, NGOs, community-based organisations and women's organisations will be actively involved in the Programme, says S Dharumalingam, Chief Urban Planner, MDA.

According to the project document, the purpose of the SCP is to generate employment (read infrastructure) and technical cooperation projects that could attract local/national/international funding. The Programme will strengthen local environmental planning and management capacities. While several studies have been done in the past by different agencies for specific goals, "the SCP will integ-

numerous property-rich but cash-strapped royals this was a heaven-sent opportunity; for the government a new angle to lure the dollar-rich foreign tourist to India. The convergence of private and government interests and the successful precedent of Mandawa and Bissau led to the formation of the centrally-funded Heritage Hotels scheme in the early 90s.

A generous scheme that allows owners of properties, certified as being more than 100 years old, to avail of a government loan upto a ceiling of Rs. 50 lakh if they wish to renovate

assets and zero liquidity. They should waive this clause, compute the value of the property and accept that as collateral." Adds Brijraj Singh: "Most operational premier heritage properties have not availed of government loans or subsidies," citing the example of Mandawa and Nawalgarh, apart from his own Rupangarh fort in Rajasthan. "The government seems to like stepping in when a project is halfway to completion. Existing heritage property owners, like Mandawa and Khimsar in Rajasthan, only avail loans to extend a wing or renovate, but never to start a project," he says.

Red tapism notwithstanding, there's no denying the fact that the Heritage concept has given a new fillip to tourism in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Once owners and entrepreneurs realised there was a market waiting to be tapped, they lost no time in refurbishing their properties and, in case of the royals, even themselves, to draw in custom. The latter were perfectly happy to dress up in costume to receive goggle-eyed foreign guests, as long as the cash registers kept ringing. "We may as well admit we are as much the USP, as our properties," quips 'Bonnie' Singh of Dundlod Castle in Rajasthan wryly.

The boom continues and owners as well as entrepreneurs are jumping into the fray. Aman Nath and Francis Waciarag are planning to start a desert tent facility at Neemrana... Krishna Chandrapal Singh, ex-ruler of Karauli, has started a ten-room hotel at Bhanwar Vilas Palace. Special attractions: rides in vintage Bentleys and morning rides on pedigree horses from the royal stables. A spectacular upcoming property: the 24-acre Samode Bagh resort, 60 km from Jaipur. Star attractions: Mughal fountains and water channels, garden pavilions and outdoor dining facility apart from 50 designer tents done by Rakesh Thakore. Cost per tent: Rs. 1 lakh. Total number of tents: 50.

In Rajasthan and Gujarat they are obviously thinking big... as they direct a Raj-malazz offensive at the well-heeled. (Courtesy: Financial Express)

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

their properties and run them as hotels. A 20 per cent outright subsidy made the scheme even more attractive to would-be hoteliers.

On the face of it, the scheme has been a great success. There are no less than 52 Heritage properties — castles, palaces and havelis — functioning as hotels in Rajasthan, and 48 other property owners are looking for collaboration partners. In Gujarat, six properties have been commissioned as hotels over the past year, including the prestigious Bhavnagar and Wankaner palaces.

As always there are dissenters. Like the ex-ruler of Kishengarh, Brijraj Singh. "There's too much red tape involved if you want a loan. What we are pressing for is a single window clearance," he says. A second problem is government insistence on the promoter/owner putting up 25 per cent of the project cost. Explains Guman Singh, secretary of the Heritage Hotels Association: "The government fails to understand that these people only have



Walls at the Reserve Bank of India's Staff Training College have been 'slopped' for the giant trees on its campus (above), but 'slopes' don't prevent a giant from crashing — and when a giant crashes the damage is quite substantial (below). (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)



## OUR READER'S WRITE

### Collapse welcomed

It is good that the bridge on the Beach has collapsed (MM, July 16). It has kept the Theosophical Society beach clean, FREE from Human Excreta.

D K Oza  
1, 1st Cross Street  
Indira Nagar,  
Madras-600 020

A newly coin-box telephone is now the only hope for relatives of victims and a host of others who want to make a phone call in an emergency. Another coin-box telephone near the beach has been vandalised and another one near the male medical ward on the beach has been vandalised.

• A reader, S N from Ashok Nagar, writes: "Appropos K Ramamurthy's letter in MM Aug. 1, the above appeared in The Hindu on 24.7.95. A journalist friend tells me that the usual nightmare in newspaper offices is for the 'L' to be dropped in 'public notice' but this seems to be a new nightmare for composers and proofreaders."

Editor's Note: A retired Sri Lankan journalist to whom we showed this Xerox wondered whether the laux pas was accidental or deliberate. He remembered one nightmarish day decades ago when a

stonehand slipped a line into Page One after the page had been passed for printing. The line read "Lucking Sir John stated!" Fortunately, he adds, Sir John Kotelawala, the Prime Minister, had a sense of humour!

### Sad contrast

I had occasion to go to the Far Eastern countries recently and what impressed me most was the impeccable cleanliness and upkeep of their airports. In all the places, the airports, whether big or small, were very good. The approach, the surroundings, the upkeep, the behaviour of immigration and customs officers was very very much better and different from what we encounter in Indian airports.

Madras Airport is supposed to be the best in India — but it is no match to the cleanliness, comfort and upkeep of even a small airport like Jakarta. The customs officer was neatly dressed, carried a broad smile and politely asked me why I was carrying so many video cassettes. I told him that they were recorded cassettes of Tamil songs, dramas etc. He nodded his head in approval and helped me re-arrange my things in the box.

When I landed in Madras on my return, I could see the gulf of difference. Customs officers in shabby clothes were asking passengers, "Are you carrying gold?" and then the Immigration Officer wore a brown-coloured bush shirt, had an unshaven face and a gruff tone. Once we got over Immigration, the badly maintained trolleys showed heaps of dust, the conveyor belts had not seen servicing for ages, and there were hassles with the Customs. When I came out I sadly said, "Mera Bharat Mahan, when will we improve?" When small nations like Indonesia can do it, why can't we?

M Fazal  
Flat No. 1  
Seaview Apartment  
San Thomé, Madras 600 028.

### Total corruption

Re MMM's bit on Mr Ameer (MM May 16), may I request MMM to read Madhu Limaye's article in Freedom First, Oct. 1994 issue, wherein he had given the list of names of those politicians who had received money from Jain Bros. and questioned why the CBI, which had registered the case against the Jain Bros. in 1990 for FERA violations, had not investigated them further. All politicians, of all parties, with the exception of Madhu Dandavate, were recipients of the Jains' bounty! Confirming only that the whole nation is corrupt, since we have been practising 'mamool' from time immemorial.

C A Reddi  
57 Rundalls Road  
Vepcy  
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## MADRAS MUSINGS

### SMALLS

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# The City's Waterways

— Indicators of urban decay

It is waterways are probably the single most visible and significant indicator of urban decay and polluted environs in Madras. Old-timers recall when the Buckingham Canal was used to transport rice and firewood and the Cooum and Adyar were clean enough for bathing and washing. We've come a long way since then. The Cooum River and Buckingham Canal are today receptacles for millions of gallons of raw sewage that flow into them from sewage treatment plants (sic), pumping stations, unsewered colonies, hospitals, railway stations and industries. The

that dredging the river without first stopping its pollution is a waste of time and public money.

Officials of Metrowater and the Pollution Control Board argue that a large percentage of the outflow into the waterways has been stopped and that the effects of this effort will not be noticed until the river is cleaned. This, unfortunately, is not true. The recent Severn Trent report on the waterways records that "there are a total of 58 discharges of different types into the Adyar river and 158 river and storm water discharges into the Cooum".

• by Ramanan Laxminarayan

Adyar river is contaminated with hexavalent chromium and other toxic wastes.

The two high-profile and politically visible and advantageous projects to dredge the Cooum, undertaken in 1974 and 1983, served little purpose. By seeking to solve a problem by curing the effect rather than the cause, the Government's efforts were misdirected. Broadly speaking there are two major steps to be taken to have a clean river.

— Stop the flow of untreated sewage in to the river; and  
— Remove the accumulated organic solids and debris by dredging the river.

Of these, step A is a high-effort, low-visibility process that involves getting the city's four sewage treatment plants and 82 pumping stations in working order, exercising stricter control over polluting industries and commercial establishments and providing drainage facilities in slums and other unsewered areas.

Step B is, on the other hand, a lot easier. An estimate obtained from a local contractor of the cost of dredging the 15 km stretch stretch of the Cooum inside the city limits is approximately Rs. 3.4 crores. It would take about 18 months to complete. However, it doesn't take much thinking to realise

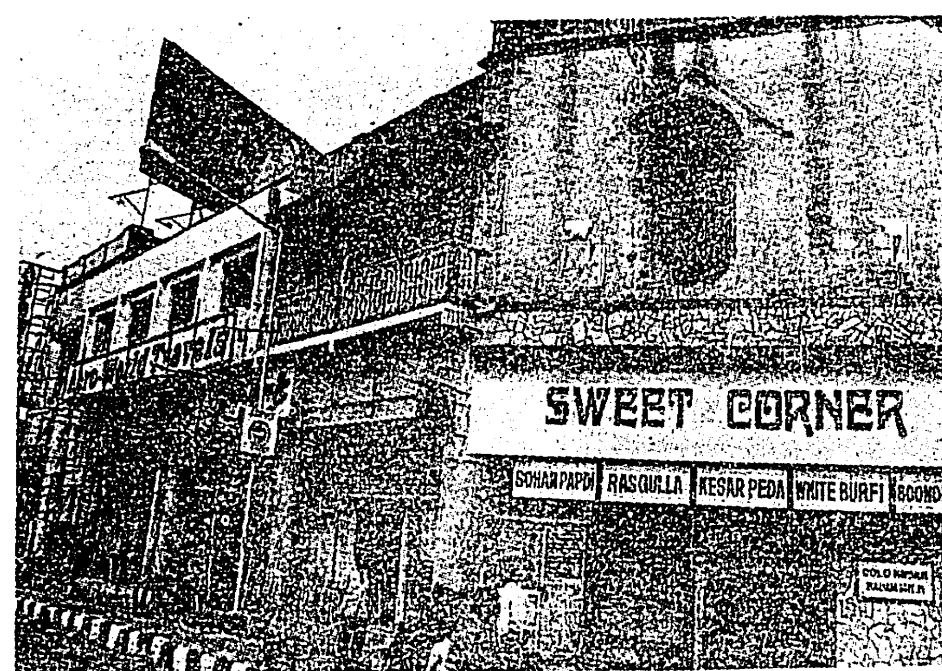
Meanwhile here are a few facts to chew on:

★ Over 50,000 litres of raw sewage is discharged into the waterways by Metrowater, every minute.

★ The average depth of the sludge (organic waste and debris) in the Cooum river is 2 metres.

★ Under an ODA-sponsored project, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (PCB) was given water pollution testing equipment worth £ 200,000 pounds (appx. Rs. 100,00,000) and 250 points were identified along the rivers where samples had to be taken every two months. How many samples are being tested every two months?

Which is not to say that the situation is irretrievable. Some citizens have, in letters to the editors of the city's newspapers, suggested that the rivers be converted into underground metros, wide roads or commercial complexes. But we must realise that even in their present despicable condition, our rivers serve certain useful purposes, such as diverting flood and storm water out of Madras and acting as open spaces in an increasingly congested city. But it is equally clear that we need a clean river system.



The Old... & the New

A quaint building that still survives Anna Salai is the 67-year-old Nam Building. Two striking features of it have always been the pillars on the ground floor which is occupied by a Khadi Board shop and the wrought iron railings on the floor.

A building long in a dilapidated state, a portion of the Nam Building is getting a new lease of life, as 'Aero W Travels' renovates a part of the first floor for its offices. The renovation DOES what can be done to an old building if imagination is used, but was it necessary to sacrifice that handsome structure of railing? Meanwhile, the restoration studiously ignores the rest of the building, which, if only restored, would make Khadi shop a pleasure to shop in.

## Speculation — lifeforce of the market

In a bid to impart liquidity to the markets and to entice investors, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has announced a revised format of forward trading, or carry-forward transactions. Analysts are almost unanimous in thinking the liquidity crisis is the prime reason of the depressed markets. They are equally certain that SEBI's move will not work, and most brokers and Stock Exchanges (SEs) have supported this view.

One of the most important reasons why this bid will end in failure is because of the restraints imposed by SEBI on the markets and brokers. Somehow the investors' watchdog has failed to fully appreciate the necessity of speculative fervour in the markets for the latter's survival.

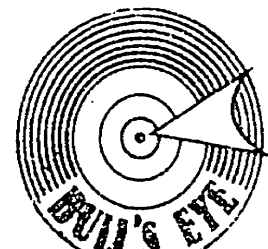
Speculation is the primer that moves the market pump. Or, to put it another way, speculative fervour can be likened to that undefinable entity that triggers our heartbeat. When the lifeforce stops, a man's body has all the organs and required blood. But just as the heart stops beating without the lifeforce, the removal of speculative activity will kill the markets. Sustenance of losses is the best deterrent to excessive speculation. SEBI should, therefore, let market forces decide who can participate in the markets, and should stop with just regulating the capital adequacy norms. This is very essential because those who continue trading, after suffering losses and falling below the capital limits, will enfeeble the markets and, finally, destroy it. In this regard SEBI's decision to enforce the capital adequacy norms and ensure that all SEs follow suit is both welcome and necessary.

However, SEBI's move seems to have misfired. Though, as of now, the Bombay and National Stock Exchanges are the only ones that can implement a carry-forward system, they, along with most other SEs, have decided not to go in for implementation. Nearly all brokers too have said that the suggested format is unworkable. The general consensus of opinion is that SEBI's bid

will neither impart liquidity nor increase speculation.

The move by SEBI reflects the change in the attitudes of the powers-that-be, which today, at least, talk of speculation, though they claim they want 'controlled' speculation. But however welcome such changes may be, they simply are not enough. SEBI has stopped with merely recognising the importance of speculation and has not gone further. In fact, by imposing restraints and curbs on brokers and SEs, SEBI has seemingly given with one hand while taking away with the other.

In keeping with the liberalisation policy, the authorities — RBI, SEBI and/or the Ministry of Finance — must adopt a *laissez faire* policy and let the



natural market forces rule unchecked. They must realise that it is impossible to tie a person's hands and then ask him to perform miracles. As SEBI has decided to review the scenario after three months, let us hope it will recognise and alter the defects in its proposed scheme.

Meanwhile, here are our selections for this fortnight:

**Odyssey Video Communications (CMP: Rs 26.25):** Promoted by the MAA Group, Odyssey Video came out with a public issue in July 1994, aggregating Rs. 2.17 cr, which was oversubscribed 16.5 times. The issue proceeds were utilised to increase its presence in domestic TV programming, enter international programming, produce corporate, training, and advertising films and install a state-of-the-art Digital Component Suite (DCT) in Bombay. The company's performance for 1994-95 fell short of its estimations as the DCT commenced operations only in March 1995, as against the scheduled June 1994. There was also no export income due to procedural delays. As such, the company derived its Rs. 2.77 cr income in 1994-95 only from local TV programmes and the corporate, training and advertising films. These had been estimated to yield

Rs 1.96 cr at the time of its public issue and, thus, the promise of a 10 per cent dividend in 1994-95 was maintained.

For the year ending March 1996, the company will earn income from all its divisions as DCT operations commenced in March 1995. Export income will also accrue, as there are five projects on hand. The company has estimated a total income of Rs 7.55 cr and a PAT of Rs 1.37 cr for 1995-96, which will yield an EPS of Rs 4.10. These should support a price of about Rs 50 for this share by the time results. The share has a good support at Rs 20-25 level. Buy with a stop loss at the level.

**Worldwide Technologies (CMP: Rs 33.00):** Worldwide Technologies manufacturing Data Modems, came up with commendable results for the year ending March 1995. The turnover jumped to 65 per cent to Rs 6.05 cr, whereas the profit spurted to Rs 1.01 cr. The company was able to improve the profit margin dramatically, mainly due to the increase in selling prices of modems and a decrease in raw material prices by a cut in the duty of integrated circuit chips. The directors have recommended a dividend of 15 per cent which is the same as the last year.

The company has increased its installed capacity at Pondicherry from 300 modems/month to 1200 modems/month. The other unit at Pallavaram in Madras is now working at a skeletal level, as the sales are high in Madras compared to that in Pondicherry.

For the year ending March 1995, Worldwide projects a turnover and PAT of Rs 10 cr and Rs 2.20 cr respectively. These seem achievable, as the demand for data modems is growing day by day and because there are very few players existing in the segment. The Indian modem market is estimated at Rs 40 cr this year, compared to Rs 25 cr last year.

The projected EPS of Rs 7.33 discounts the present price by less than five times, leaving significant scope for capital appreciation. Technically, the share price have been moving sideways in the trading band of Rs 32-Rs 38, after making a high of Rs 40. The medium-term and long-term moving averages are declining and bearish. Buy with a stop loss at Rs 32 where support exists.

K. Gopalakrishnan

## Gamblers Anonymous

Hope now for the addict

• Ravi, a high-ranking government official, left the choultry immediately after the muhartham and returned only after midnight. He found a pack of cards more seductive than his bride.

• For Raghavan, gambling was more important than his wife. The daily fighting over his gambling had made her a neurotic. The day she delivered a still-born baby, Raghavan had to be forcibly brought home from a gambling den to perform the last rites of his girl child. He immediately went back to his gambling.

• Sekhar, a widower, used to put his two-year-old son in the loft and

craving. Winning or losing is incidental. In other words, compulsive gambling is beyond the emotional control of the gambler. In short, it is an 'emotional illness', which includes addiction to lotteries, share speculation, racing, cards etc. The insatiable craving, the compulsive instinct to gamble, forces these persons to behave irrationally. But for them, every action of theirs is rational as long as it culminates in their betting. The need to bet permeates their entire thinking and every action.

Are compulsive gamblers born or made? defies answer. But researchers have divided the life cycle of the gambler into two phases — the winning phase and the losing phase.

• by Venkatachari Jagannathan

go out to raise money for his next bout of gambling. Meanwhile, lizards, cockroaches and rats kept the child in a state of terror.

• And there are many more people like these. Mahesh who donated blood excessively; Mohan who sought to sell his kidney (it was rejected; as he was an alcoholic); Suresh who began to divert capital from his roaring business; Unakar who underwent a vasectomy operation within six months of his marriage; Vasu, a factory labourer, who became a pimp for his wife; Usha who sold her body. The list is not exhaustive, only illustrative. All had one common urge which motivated them to do what they did: The need to earn a few rupees in order to satisfy their craving for GAMBLING.

★ ★ ★

Many of us have bet at one time or another. But what differentiates us from persons like Ravi and Usha is our ability to put a stop to gambling when it begins to pinch. They cannot. They are compulsive gamblers.

Compulsive gamblers resort to gambling not necessarily to make money but merely to satisfy an inner

The majority of amateur gamblers find Lady Luck smiling at them initially. This induces them to continue, for they feel on top of the world. Then comes the losing phase. The more the losses, the higher the stakes placed the next time. But the tension to win back the losses and get on the plus side results in a lack of concentration and heavier losses.

Once into the second phase, the gambler faces a host of problems, like mounting debts, loss of friends, becoming a problem to the family. To forget these problems he resorts to betting more and loses even more heavily. This goes on till the gambler's death, either through natural causes or suicide.

Though gambling results in financial problems, a compulsive gambler does not stop betting after paying off his debts. He continues with his old ways. Indeed, the problem is emotional, not financial.

Does that mean compulsive gamblers have no chance to salvage their life midway? Is there no cure for their emotional illness? The answer is that a ray of hope is provided by Gamblers Anonymous (GA), a voluntary association of compulsive gamblers driven by a common desire to be cured of their affliction. It is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences,

strengths and hopes with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from gambling.

The recovery programme starts with each member narrating his/her gambling life, from childhood to when gambling progressively affected their life and their family.

Speaking about the programme, Raghavan, who was one of the founders of the Madras Chapter in 1990, says, "I latched on to the GA programme like a drowning man clutching at a piece of straw". Few understand the mental turmoil a compulsive gambler undergoes, he goes on, and adds, "It is not sympathy which persons like me need, but empathy at the time of recovery. That is why psychiatric treatment is not effective".

The effectiveness of empathising with an emotionally sick person was evident when I attended a GA meeting and listened to Raghavan. He began gambling when he was 14 by betting on the odd/even numbers of passing cars and the number of passengers inside.

A sceptical Ravi, attending the programme for the first time, got involved in the story immediately, as he too had started betting at the same age. And when Raghavan continued narrating how he raised cash by telling lies about exam fees and purchase of books, about stealing and pawning his mother's jewellery, about how he did not finish his education, about how he had got married with the ulterior motive of selling his wife's jewellery and appropriating her salary, how he constantly quarrelled with her, how he sold the tricycle of his three-year-old second daughter and lied to her that it needed repairs, about how he stayed away from home for days ... going to the races ... dreaming of early retirement and leading a royal life after winning crores in gambling ... about losing jobs in pursuit of that dream, about the still-born baby, every member present was able to identify with one or the other of the incidents recounted.

The concept of GA's recovery programme is that the members are sick persons and their sickness can only be arrested by following simple steps. The first step is to accept the fact that every one of them is a compulsive gambler and different from ordinary people.

"There are no short cuts to recover from one of the most baffling, insidious, compulsive addictions," states a GA member. The compulsive gambler tries to stop gambling by bringing about a progressive character-change within himself.

With several gamblers around, aren't the members tempted to play cards or discuss racing or even lay a bet?

"At our meetings we confine our discussions to the problems that have affected us, and our families, due to our compulsive instinct. Secondly, the members keep in touch at regular intervals so that the tempo not to bet is sustained. Thirdly, we have realised that once we start with a small bet or even a friendly game or tip, there will

be no return for us," answers Raghavan. The camaraderie amongst the GA members is great. Once a member makes a distress call to another, expressing his craving to place a bet, the message receiver immediately rushes to him, irrespective of his other preoccupations.

Surprisingly, when gamblers suddenly stop gambling, that can have an adverse psychological impact on the family. Says Annam, Sekhar's daughter, "Ever since my father stopped gambling, he has been showering us with love pent up for two decades. And that is at times a nuisance too!" It is not easy for a wife and children to accept this entirely new person and adjust accordingly all of a sudden.

That is where Gam-Anon and Gama-Teen, programmes for the wife

## Are you an addict?

1. Have you ever lost time from work due to gambling?
2. Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
3. Has gambling affected your reputation?
4. Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
5. Have you ever gambled to get money with which to pay debts or solve financial difficulties?
6. Has gambling caused a decrease in your ambition or efficiency?
7. After a win, have you had a strong urge to return and win more?
8. After losing, have you felt you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
9. Have you often gambled until your last rupee was gone?
10. Have you ever borrowed to finance your gambling?
11. Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling?
12. Have you been reluctant to use 'gambling money' for normal expenditure?
13. Has gambling made you careless of your welfare and your family's?
14. Have you ever gambled longer than you had planned?
15. Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble?
16. Have you ever committed, or considered committing, an illegal act to finance gambling?
17. Has gambling caused you difficulties in sleeping?
18. Have arguments, disappointments, frustrations created within you an urge to gamble?
19. Have you ever had an urge to celebrate any good fortune with a few hours of gambling?
20. Have you ever considered self-destruction as a result of your gambling?

• If your answer is 'yes' to seven or more of the above questions, then you are a compulsive gambler needing GA help for recovery.

and children of a compulsive gambler, come into effect. These programmes help them to adjust with the problem person and help him in recovery. "Though the two programmes are part of GA, it is for the spouse/children to make use of it. Our concentration is on saving ourselves. We can't divert our energies to other activities," points out Raghavan.

One thing which strikes the visitor is the intelligence and the ability to convince that GA members have. They were super salespersons who sold their lies over and over again to raise funds in the past. "But now we are re-channeling our skills and have started succeeding," says Raghavan.

**NOTE:** For further details about GA contact Post Bag No. 1035, T Nagar, Madras - 600 017.

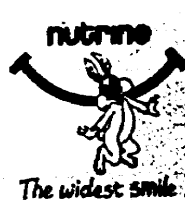


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# Madras pavement magic

Pavement shopping is one of the few pleasures left in life. And our Corporation seems intent on killing that too. Last week, our round-the-corner vegetable man was in tears because the Corporation workers came and threw everything in his shop, short of him, heller-skeller. Our cobbler and under-the-tree tailor also disappeared. Mercifully — thank God for that — they are back now. The pavement bazaar is a way of life in Madras; a part of our culture; please spare it, dear city commissars.

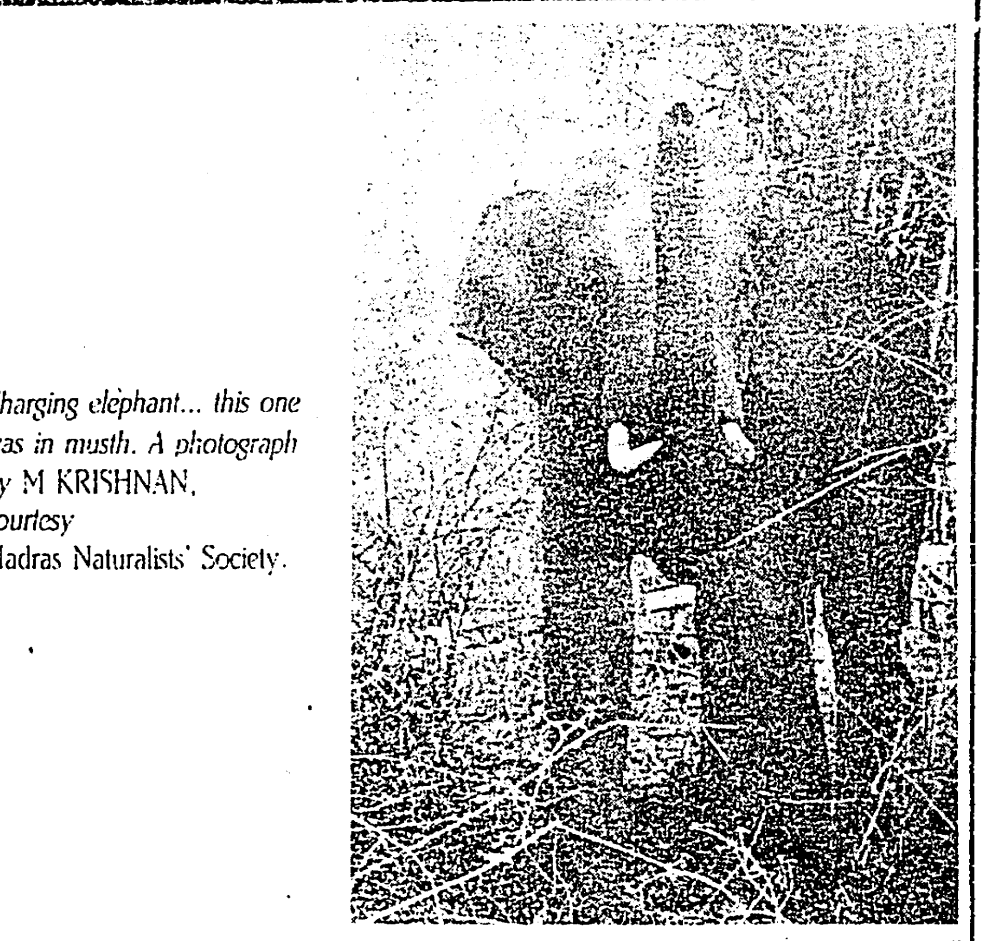
The first ominous signs were seen some years ago when Moore Market burnt down; or is it, 'was burnt down'? Madras lost a part of her heart with it. In just a few hours a shopping paradise for those on a shoe-string budget and some of the most charming secondhand bookstalls in the world — the Charing Cross of the East — were reduced to ashes.

Instead, today, we have that monstrosity of a Reservation Counter building there.

But the pavement shops survived. The best part of pavement shopping is the healthy bargaining. You try to beat him down; he cajoles, coaxes and smilingly leads you up; you meet somewhere at midpoint and the deal is clinched; you are happy, he is happy, everyone is happy!

Pondy Bazaar, Panagal Park, Parry's, Puraswalkam... these are the hot-spots on the pavement shoppers' beat. Here you can still pick up T-shirts and Bermudas at Rs. 25 a piece. Of course, it would be prudent to reinforce the stitches on a machine before giving

## Naturalists' Corner



Charging elephant... this one was in musth. A photograph by M KRISHNAN, courtesy Madras Naturalists' Society.

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### SPIC GROUP COMPANIES

it to Junior who will be sliding down banisters, jumping fences, or rolling in the mud, lest all the seams split at first-wear! But then when you discover that the T-shirt costing a hundred quid-plus at a 'propah' shop also tends to behave just the same way in hyper-Junior's hands, well, the pavement buys look rosy indeed!

Pavement 'jewellery shopping' is another delightful experience. My favourite outlets are the *korathis* who sit around Panagal Park. They have that innate tribal sense of colour and taste; indeed, the vibrant bead necklaces and chains they sell have earned me compliments galore at ultrachic functions in this ethnic-look age. Why, my twenty-rupee *navarathnamala* turned out to be a star attraction at a recent wedding reception!

Slippers are another good pavement buy. Since the average life-span of a pair of slippers in a household is about three months (not counting the ones that the dog chews up), whether they are of Bala-origin or otherwise, it seems to make so much more sense to buy on the pavement where you can get two or more pairs at Bala rates. And, of course, the local pavement cobbler can be depended upon to put in a stitch in time if need be.

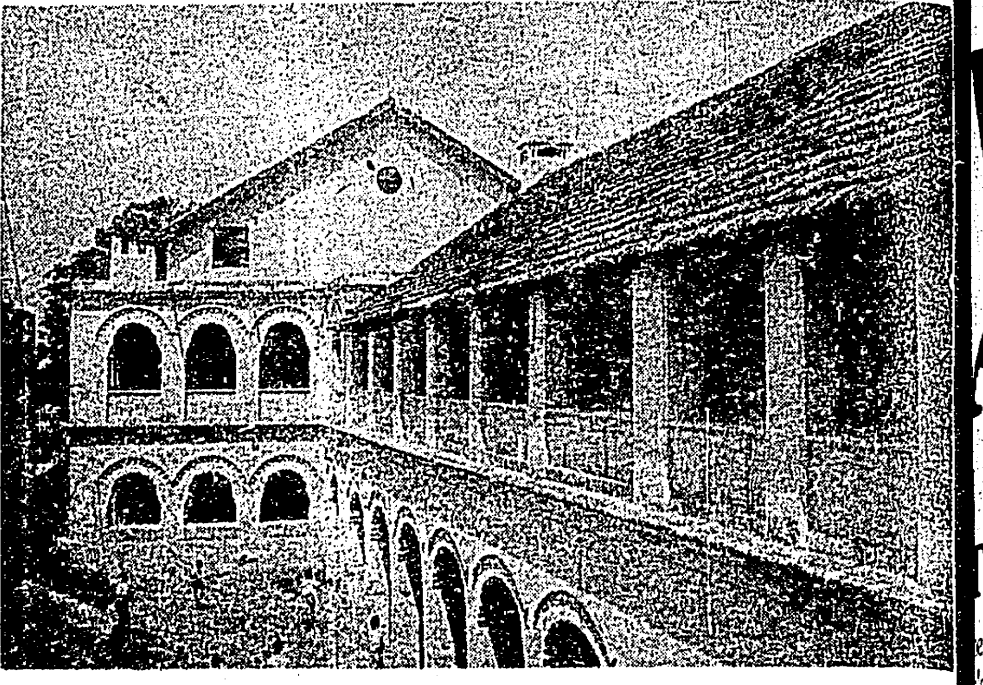
Babywear is another pavement bonanza; they are so much more purse-friendly than the ones sold at all those fancy air-conditioned stores. Moreover, no matter whether from Little Kingdom or Pavement Kingdom, baby outgrows them in no time!

The neon-lit, carpeted, design label shops with smooth-talking managers and poor, hardworked shop-assistants, who can never afford to buy the expensive wares they so loyally display, are heartless places which merely make your wallet lighter. Pavement shopping makes your heart grow lighter, and brings a smile to the face of buyer and seller. Parrot-palmists, bangle-sellers, cooling-glass sellers, sugarcane juice vendors, false-hair peddlars, handkerchief hawkers, vegetable vendors, flower ladies, 'soap-cheepu-kannaadi' sellers... they are the stuff of which Madras Pavement Magic is made. Please do spare them. O Honourable City Commissars.

**Hiramalini Seshadri**

**(Quizmaster V V RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight July 16-31.)**

- Which Madras luminary has been nominated as the Vice-President of the Federation of the International Association of Film Producers?
- Which party quit the National Front because of the latter's decision to admit the AIADMK into its fold?
- Name the route of the latest 'Shatabdi Express' introduced in Tamil Nadu on July 24th.
- Name the legendary fast bowler, the 'villain' of the infamous 'Bodyline' series, who died on July 22nd.
- Who annexed the National 'B' chess title in Madras recently?
- A Roman Catholic priest came out of a coma after the 'Kemble Hand', a 300-year-old mummified hand of a saint, was placed on his head at Hereford. Name the saint (Clue: Think Goa).
- Which Tamil savant's statue is to be installed at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies?
- According to recent computer studies at Oxford University, a famous but controversial sporting decision, made 29 years ago, was branded erroneous;



Classroom blocks at Kellet School

• 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.

## A school of ever triers

The Kellet School came into existence when Frederick William Kellet bought, for the Wesleyan Missionary Society, an Indian-run school that had been founded in 1889.

Kellet was born in 1862 to an Anglo-Irish family. His father was a gossipping Methodist priest in England. Kellet, a brilliant student, became deeply committed to religious activities and social work. After being ordained a priest, he arrived in Madras in 1892, to teach History at Madras Christian College. In Madras, he worked for 13 hours a day and, to meet his students, then regularly went to Triplicane, which paved the way for him to take over the school there. Subsequently, the school was named after him.

Rev. Cooling was the first Principal of the school and played a vital role in its development. Later, Rev. Thambusamy, who was the Principal and Correspondent for 26 years, restructured the courses and helped in the development of the school. The school grew steadily and, to accommodate many more students, the school built new classrooms.

The motto of the school is "I Have Tried", the golden words uttered by Kellet on his death bed. The school expects every student, past or present, to keep trying till he achieves success in life.

Photograph and text by **RAJIND N CHRISTY**

### Quizzin' with Ramanan

- A consortium of major Japanese constructors are planning the tallest skyscraper, a 460-470 metres structure at a cost of \$ 882 million, in 2001. Where?
- Name the England fast bowler who took a hat-trick recently, to help level the ongoing Test series against the West Indies.
- With effect from July 30th, what change has been brought about in Bombay? (Clue: What's in a name!)
- Which Indian has been awarded the prestigious 'Annual World Habitat Award' for 1995?
- Where in Madras has the government allotted four acres of land to the Blue Cross of India, to run a shelter for abandoned animals?
- Name the British poet, critic, playwright and one of the pre-eminent British writers in the 1930s, who passed away recently.
- Name the female tennis legend inducted into the 'Tennis Hall of Fame' on July 17th.
- Which eminent journalist and writer created a furore by remarking that Rabindranath Tagore was a 'writer of no great merit'?

(Answers on p. 8)

# Whirling with Anita

(Continued from last fortnight)

The Watergate scandal had propelled journalism to heady heights and the profession was saturated with eager, ent. Anita Ratnam entered the fray. What I appreciated most was the American trait of informality and directness," she recalls. "It makes life of doing business a lot easier."

In 1984, Ratnam married Giri Raj, New York-based Indian businessman whose interests included Bombay cinema, a Manhattan movie theatre that screened only Indian films. Under umbrella, she created 'Cinema-mania', whose format included interviews, arts, news, cultural and current events.

Ratnam did it all, from selling TV, producing, to hosting what became and continues to be — the most popular weekly Indian TV programme broadcast from Manhattan and syndicated in many other cities around the United States. She says she succeeded by employing the TVS philosophy: invest in good people and work with collective spirit."

By the mid-1980s, Anita Ratnam was in demand at the India Day Parade and the Miss India USA pageant, and she was consulting for major American TV networks and interviewing such personalities as Zubin Mehta, Indira Gandhi, Ben Kingsley, Ravi Shankar, Rajiv Gandhi, JRD Tata, Peter Jennings, Ismail Merchant, Princess Savarath of Jordan, and a raft of Indian matinee idols.

A new opportunity came in 1985 when Doordarshan found itself ill-equipped to cover the year-long, multi-million-dollar Festival of India's 25-city tour of the United States. Ratnam was called in, and viewers in India lapped

today is Sundaram Finance Ltd., a major hire-purchase and leasing company...

Of her own success, the woman who had become the voice of the Indian community in the United States and a star at home says, "It all happened so fast that the enormity of what I was doing didn't hit me. I'd wake up in the morning, look out the window, and feel I owned Manhattan!"

But in 1989 the demands on her time and talents, and of being a wife and mother, overtook the supervoman from Madras. Ratnam was being consumed by the very whirlwind she created. "It was a blur," she says wistfully about the deterioration in her marriage. "I sensed the end" was coming, yet I hadn't learned to step

## • by Vinod Chabra

her informed, polished, entertaining reports, which she delivered with an enthusiastic spontaneity unknown on Indian TV.

Other opportunities came her way. She coordinated David Hartman's BC-TV visit to India, and produced shows of *Indigo* — a unique series on culture and travel designed to enhance American awareness of India for TWA's travel channel.

Yet, through it all, she says she isn't awed. Perhaps that is to be expected when one considers the pioneers and entrepreneurs in her family who made it to the top in industry and public service. They include her great-great-grandfather, Sir Bhaskar Ramaswami, who was the first Indian High Court judge to be knighted; her grandfather, Chari Iyengar, India's first postmaster general; and grandaunt Sundaram Ramachandran, who was Minister of Education in the Nehru cabinet and founder of Gandhigram, a model for rural development near Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Her mother, Sela, accomplished in many fields, is the president of the Canine Club of India and the only woman juror on the International dog show circuit. Forty years ago, the women in her family pooled their money and the result

back and take a deep breath." She quit working to try to save her marriage, but it didn't work. When she divorced, she was gleefully wrung through the gossip mill.

"However, America is a 'me' society," she adds. "It gave me courage and taught me to pick myself up, and go on."

Despite the rough times, she switched tracks and began working with American choreographer Jacques D'Amboise, the National Dance Institute, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*.

With her expertise in media and skills in organisation she filled Madison Square Garden, the Nassau Coliseum and the 50,000-seat Giants Stadium for concerts by visiting Indian film stars, and organised an enormously successful Deepavali bash at New York's trendy South Street Seaport.

But in her heart Ratnam yearned to feel the earth of India under her feet once more — "the thud and thump" and soothing rhythms of Bharata Natyam dance, and the support of family. "I had to come home..." She needed to set aside time to bring up her two children, daughter Aryambika, nine, and son Shriram Narayan, seven.



In Dunthorn-directed *Under Her Breath* are Anita Ratnam (background, left), Rajika Puri (background, right), and Krithika Rajagopalan (foreground).

Anita Ratnam had come full circle. ...Back in Madras in 1990, she put her skills to good use as a marketing and advertising executive with the TVS Group. She authored the book *Natya Brahman* (The Theatrical Universe), exploring the similarities between the ancient and theatrical traditions of India and Greece. She made a video, *Bharata Natyam: The Sacred Dance of South India*, which introduced the 5000-year-old performing art to the West. She founded the Arangham Trust, a cultural and performing arts organisation to promote experimental work in drama and music, incorporating electronic media, while preserving the finer points of the traditional. Arangham helped host the New York-based Battery Dance Company's tour of India in 1994, and the two will join hands again with *Purush* in August.

Last year, she collaborated with Chicago-based dancer Krithika Rajagopalan. New York-based dancer and stage actress Rajika Puri, Singapore-based choreographer-writer Gitanjali Kolanad and American director Deborah Dunthorn in the production of *Under Her Breath*. Ratnam produced, helped choreograph, and danced in this dance-theatre interpretation of 2,000-year-old Tamil love poems translated by the late A.K. Ramanujan...

Projects continue to pour in. Ratnam produced the India segment of writer George Plimpton's *Fireworks Around The World* series for Time Inc., TV. A 13-episode serial on Indian women achievers in development has just been released. With younger sister Preetha and friend Radha Narayanan, Ratnam launched Yantra... Yantra is also giving Ratnam the chance to train Indian TV journalists on the finer points of American TV journalism, which she admires, including "the ability to recognise something that's newsworthy and turn it into a solid story within 24 hours."

With characteristic modesty, she credits her newfound success to the "media hurricane" that was poised to hit India. "It just happens that I arrived here before the hurricane hit."

— (Courtesy SPAN)

(Concluded)

# Under her direction

By Meenakshi Shedde

Deborah Dunthorn developed an interest in Asian culture years ago while a student of theatre and music in New York... Years later she was able to pursue her interests more formally when her businessman husband was posted to Singapore. There, Dunthorn spent six years taking sitar lessons... She also met Gitanjali Kolanad, a dancer-choreographer. In 1993 she moved to Madras, where her husband, Glen Bieber, is involved in an aquaculture business, and she resumed sitar lessons...

Later that same year Kolanad came to Madras to stage a poetry-reading choreography, as tribute to A.K. Ramanujan... who had recently died. The production, based on Ramanujan's English translation of ancient Tamil love poems, was well received. Anita Ratnam then persuaded Kolanad to explore further the women's voices in the poems and seek a wider audience for the dance. This led to a new version, *Under Her Breath*, that incorporated folk theatre elements, including an informal *satradhar* and humour, and reduced the elaborate gestures of classical Bharata Natyam into minimalist forms.

It also led to an offer from Gitanjali Kolanad to Dunthorn to direct the production... Several factors persuaded Dunthorn to accept Kolanad's offer. For one thing she was immediately drawn by the power of the poetry. Ramanujan's translation of poems written in the Sangam period (100 B.C. — A.D. 250) vividly brings alive the secret delights, the satiated langour, and the simmering, unbearable torments of love, which have not changed a whit in all these centuries:

Like moss on water in the town's water tank, the body's pallor clears as my lover touches and touches, and spreads again, as he lets go, as he lets go

Another reason was "the tremendous resources in these three dynamic women involved with the production, Kolanad, Ratnam, and dancer-actress



Deborah Dunthorn the director

Rajika Puri, who was the *satradhar*. "I was unafraid to direct it, even though I don't know Bharata Natyam *per se*, because there's such tremendous richness in its tradition that you're bound to get something out of it," Dunthorn says.

Ratnam, whose Arangham Trust... produced *Under Her Breath*, was partnered with Krithika Rajagopalan, a resident of Chicago spending a year in India, in the dance sequences. "Originally we had thought of having an Indian director," Ratnam says, "but an Indian director would have wanted to research it for one-and-a-half years. Deborah's lack of knowledge of Bharata Natyam was a plus point because we were neither burdened with questions like 'Is this correct?' nor limited to abhinayas..."

"We let Bharata Natyam breathe a bit," Dunthorn says. "I was confident because my formal theatre training included dance and movements of various kinds — folk dancing, tai chi, and even fencing — so I can appreciate what movements express..."

*Under Her Breath* received considerable acclaim when it was staged in Madras last November, but had a mixed response in Bombay this past March... Ratnam sees it as a "piece in progress" and made significant alterations in the choreography for the Bombay performance...

Dunthorn sees more possibilities for the production... She says, "We hope to take it abroad..." The experience has also inspired her to consider other projects... I'd like to direct Beckett's *Happy Days* in Madras". — (Courtesy SPAN)

## Dates for Your Diary

- August:** 'Artist of the Month': Radhika Vaidyanathan. Graduated from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. Spent two and a half years as research student in Tama Art University, Tokyo, Japan. Participated in group shows in Tokyo. Currently based in Madras.
- August 19:** The Madras Musical Association presents a choral concert by The Poona Musicals (64-strong). Conductor Daniel Manoharan. (Museum Theatre, 6.30 p.m.)
- August 19:** *Purush - Expressions of Man* by an all-male dance ensemble created by Anita Ratnam, Founder-Director of Arangham Trust. The programme will feature some of India's best male dancers, C V Chandrasekar (Bharata Natyam), Arjun Mishra (Kathak), Pasumthry Vithal (Kuchipudi) and Sasidharan Nair (Kathakali). Also in this programme pieces by four artists from New York's 'Battery Dance Company'. The ensemble will blur the distinct lines between East and West through their performances of traditional and cross cultural images. (7.00 p.m. at the Music Academy. Admission by invitation.)
- August 20:** All-day seminar/workshop featuring talks and performances, a painting exhibition and a film show highlighting the topic *Purush: Dancer - Actor-Hero* (Alliance Francaise, 9 am to 9 pm).
- August 26:** Annual Inter-College Debate for the Elihu Yale Rolling Shield (sponsored by The Indo-American Association, Madras). Subject: 'Can International Terrorism be Contained?' (3.00 p.m.; Women's Christian College).



# Infrastructure will be ready

## CM assures reps of SAF nations

Before the year-end, Madras will emerge as India's best-equipped sports city. It cannot be otherwise, considering the infrastructure that is being put up for the South Asian Federation Games, to be organised in the southern metropolis by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu from December 18 to 27. Championships in as many as 14 disciplines, including judo introduced for the first time, will indeed give the ancient city a unique status in the Indian sporting world.

by  
**AJAX**

Four new stadia, including a multi-purpose air-conditioned stadium in People's Park, along with the existing modern Jawaharlal Nehru football-cum-athletics stadium and the M.A. Chidambaram cricket stadium, to be floodlit shortly, will indeed transform Madras into the country's No. 1 sports metropolis. The indoor stadium, now under construction, will rob the Jayalalitha stadium at Kilpauk of some of its glamour and status. Likewise, the proposed tennis stadium at Valluvar Kottam will reduce the status of the tennis infrastructure at Egmore and Nandanam. Even so, they all will transform the sporting image of Madras as never before.

Including the construction of the Games Village beyond Aminjikarai, the total cost of the Games is certain to set a total sports record. Understandably, there were doubts about the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) rising to the occasion as it had already lost some of its status because of its failure to sanction its annual grants to a number of State sports bodies. But all doubts were cleared by the sport-minded Chief Minister, who gave her assurance to the presidents of the National Olympic Councils of the countries that will compete in the Games. They had met in Madras on August 5th to finalise the Games programme and had called on Chief Minister Jayalalitha.

Five months remain for the curtain to go up on the championships. SDAT is, however, yet to set up an organising committee, which no doubt will have a tough time seeing so many events through in so short a time. Equally difficult will be the task of the media persons covering so many international

tournaments at different venues. They all hope the committee will provide them with the necessary facilities, including transport from, for instance, the Velacherry swimming pool to the modern People's Park indoor stadium, where boxing and wrestling will be held late in the evenings.

## ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1. AVM Saravanan; 2. DMK; 3. Coimbatore to Madras; 4. Harold Larwood; 5. Ravi Hegde; 6. St. Francis Xavier; 7. Thiruvalluvar; 8. The controversial third goal by Geoff Hurst of England against Germany in the 1966 football World Cup final at Wembley; 9. Tiruchi — Perumpidugu Mutharaiyar; Karur — Dheeran Chinnamalai; and Perambalur — Thiruvalluvar; 10. M. Natarajan; 11. He introduced a cyber temple on the web; 12. System of awarding credits; 13. Shanghai; 14. Dominic Cork; 15. The name was officially changed to Mumbai; 16. Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, former U.N. Under Secretary-General and executive director of Habitat; 17. On the Velacherry Road, adjacent to the Racecourse; 18. Sir Stephen Spender; 19. Chris Mills (nee Evert); 20. Khushwant Singh.

## WE REGRET

- In last fortnight's issue, 'The Bureaucrat' was by ANAMIKA and 'The Press Ignored' was by AJAX. We regret the omissions.

— THE EDITOR

# REMEMBERING G.P.

## — the sporting diplomat

by  
**JAICI**

G. Parthasarathy, who passed away at the age of 83 in Delhi on August 1, was a unique sportsman-cum-diplomat. As a Madras cricket all-rounder and hockey centre-half, the tall, lanky, curly-haired Presidency College and Mylapore R.C. player had often hit the headlines in the late 30's and early 40's. But his sports record paled into insignificance before his achievements in the foreign service of the Union government.

G.P., as G. Parthasarathy was popularly called, acquitted himself so creditably as a versatile diplomat that he became the most trusted and successful representative of Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. It was no wonder that, from Ambassador and High Commissioner to a number of countries to the first Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, he held more posts than any other diplomat in the country's foreign service — and with distinction in every one of them!

These he achieved after his somewhat surprising decision to quit journalism, in which he had acquitted himself creditably, first as an Assistant Editor of *The Hindu* and then as chief editor and director of the Press Trust of India. He joined Government service in 1954. But in his home city of Madras, he will be remembered as much for his diplomatic achievements as for his brief but noteworthy cricket career, which lasted hardly a decade, since he made his debut in competitive cricket in 1938.

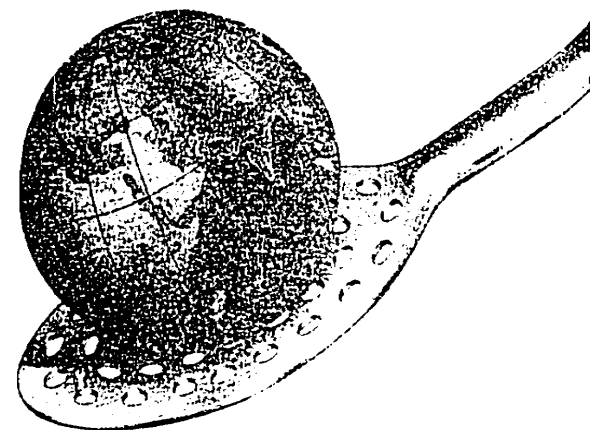
Dressed invariably in white khadi dhoti and shirt, he became an explosive character when he donned cricketer's trousers. The transformation defied description. He was a fiery, though not an orthodox or steady batsman. But he was an altogether different performer as a medium-pace leg-break and googly bowler.

Apart from his valuable contribution to the Mylapore R.C. in the City league championship, he had for long been a colourful performer in the annual Presidency match between the Indians and Europeans, which was played in a relaxed and joyous atmosphere at the Chepauk ground, then surrounded by trees and flowers, until Independence brought the curtain down on the New Year fixture. Old-timers still remember his exploits for the Indians along with such stalwarts like M.J. Gopalan, C. Ramaswami and A.G. Ram Singh. Though as a batsman he lacked steadiness, as a

leg-break and googly bowler he commanded the respect of every batsman, including the Kolar Gold Fields-born Ren Nailer, the Europeans' top run-getter for several years.

A genuine sportsman with his Oxford University background, G.P., even when out for a duck, returned to the pavilion with his

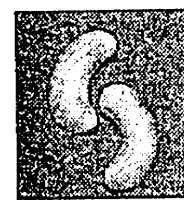
never-failing smile. His departure for Delhi was indeed sad loss not only to the numerous friends made during the usual post-match celebrations in the pavilion, though he was the lone celebrant with glass of water in his hand, but also to the only two cricket writers of the time, one of whom unfortunately died in his prime. G.P. at times gave them a lift in his car and dropped them at Round Tana before he turned left and proceeded to his Mount Road first floor flat, where he lived after his marriage outside his community.



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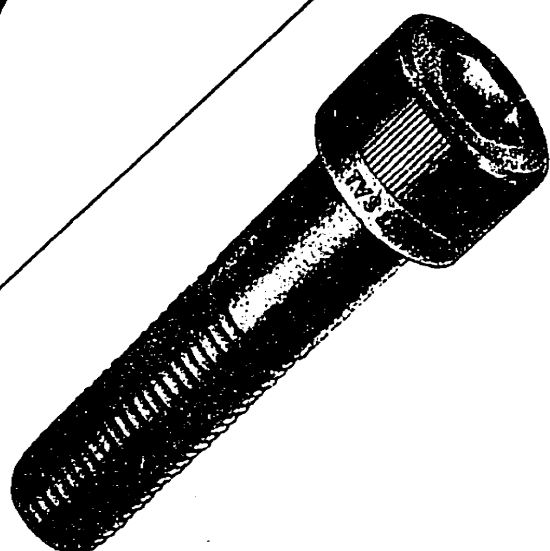
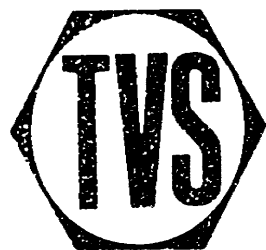
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