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MADRAS



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Only 42 heritage buildings?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The MMDA's II Master Plan dwells in detail on several aspects of urban development, but only brief mention is found on a subject which is dear to this journal, namely, conservation of historical buildings.

The Plan agrees that no efforts have been made to evolve a system for conservation and regeneration of "old housing stock". For the purpose of protecting heritage buildings, the Plan calls for separation of development potential of the land from the land itself and making available to the owner of the land. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Through TDR, the owner of such a site/building who is deprived of development potential, may be compensated to a certain extent by allowing proportionate credit of FSI in other appropriate areas.

The II Master Plan has listed 42 buildings as having historical and architectural interest, including seven samadhis/memorials and 17 places of worship. While these places will not be brought down by the hammers of building contractors, the real threat to genuine heritage buildings is left unanswered.

The buildings listed by the MMDA as having historical and architectural interest are:

Museum and Art Gallery, High Court Campus (including Law College), Central Railway Station, Egmore Railway Station, PWD and Revenue

... And here's willingness to preserve more of 'em

(By A Special Correspondent)

The first construction company to announce a policy of "getting into the restoration of old buildings" — making new old — is MAC Industries' Properties and Civil Engineering divisions.

No details were spelt out by Chairman Ashwin Muthiah, making this announcement; but Madras Musings would undoubtedly welcome any attempt to restore the DGP Building as a first step.

The MAC Group's interest in old buildings and the early schools of European architecture is reflected in the family's homes in Madras and the new family home in their village which, with its imaginative Regency adaptation, seems a bit different from the traditional and palatial kottais of Chettinad.

Board Building (Arcot Palace), Senate House, Engineering College (main building only), Presidency College, Southern Railway Office (old building

only), GPO, Rajaji Hall, Government House, State Bank of India (Rajaji Salai), Dr. MGR Samadhi, Ripon Building, Arcot Nawab Palace, Valluvar Kottam, Kamaraj Memorial, Rajaji Ninaivalayam, Gandhi Mandapam, Fort St. George Museum and St. Mary's Church, War Memorial, Library in the Theosophical Society, St. Andrew's Church, Anna Samadhi, San Thomé Church, St. George's Cathedral Church, Armenian Church, Wallajah Big Mosque, Thousand Lights Mosque, Kandaswamy Koil (Rattan Bazaar), Vadapalani Andavar Koil, Kapaleeswarar Koil, Mundagakanni- amman Koil (Mylapore), Pandeswarar Koil, Marutheswarar Koil, Siva Vishnu Temple, Kalaiyamman Koil (G.N. Chetty Road), Cave Temple (Zamin Pallavaram), Parthasarathy Temple, the building at the rear of the Govt. Arts College for Women (opposite Connemara Hotel), and Madras Club.

EDITOR'S NOTE: While welcoming the inclusion of all these buildings in a Heritage List, Madras Musings still feels there are scores of buildings more that need to be on that list. Why doesn't the MMDA appoint a Heritage Committee to help it draw up that list?

A London festival to promote the South

(By A Staff Reporter)

A 'Festival of South India' is to be held in London in the middle of next year to attract tourists to this part of India. This will be the first time that a festival will be held abroad to focus on the richness of South India's art and culture.

Around 85 artistes are to perform at the festival, of whom 30 will be from Tamil Nadu.

The Department of Tourism, Government of India, together with the tourism ministries in South India, will help to conduct the festival. The festival will be coordinated by World Circuit Art, a London-based organisation involved in tourism development. Other British tourism promotion bodies will also be involved.

WCA will finance the programme to a large extent. The other funding institutions include the Government of India and some Indian private sponsors. The total budget outlay is yet to be finalised.

Protest against DuPont plant

(By A Special Correspondent)

A dozen small but committed organisations with interests in politics and the environment have expressed opposition to the grand plans of the nylon 5.6 project of Thapar-DuPont to set up a shop in Tamil Nadu. At a meeting held recently in the northern Madras suburb of Gummidipoondi, representatives of the organisations called upon the State and Central Governments to stop the project.

The Thapar-DuPont project had moved from its first chosen site, in Goa, to Tamil Nadu, following prolonged agitations there by environmentalist and NGOs. Now environmentalists want the project to move out of Tamil Nadu!

Some 25 village committees, it is reported, have decided to oppose the construction at the proposed site in the SIPCOT industrial estate in Gummidipoondi. They talk of forming a Joint Action Committee (JAC) in Gummidipoondi to request mandatory environment clearance of the project by the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests and to the request the Tamil

(Continued on P6)

THE CITY GETS ITS FIRST FRANCHISED TELE-EXCHANGE

Madras Telephones' first franchisee, Aries Telecom Centre, Aminjikarai, has just commenced operation. This is "the first franchise of the Telephone Department in the whole of India," claims C T Arivalagan, an engineering graduate, who had been running a public call office till he applied to Madras Telephones in May 1994 for a franchisee license to run a private automatic telephone exchange under the Group EPABX Scheme. In less than a year, he had a 256 lines exchange functioning in Aminjikarai.

The automatic exchange unit was inaugurated on February 27th. In two months, it had 150 existing connections operating from the exchange. Aries Telecom Centre gives telephone connections to applicants within a fortnight of receipt of applications; in some cases, even within 48 hours!

Arivalagan plans to go in for a 500-line exchange capacity next, then increase it to 1000 lines capacity in Aminjikarai.

The terms and conditions for telephone connections through the franchisee outlet are an initial booking deposit of Rs. 1000, to be adjusted against the security deposit of Rs. 2500 when the connection is given. There is also an installation charge of Rs. 800. Compare that with the Telephone Department's OYT connection which costs Rs. 13,000! The charge per unit call is Rs. 1.25 plus a surcharge of 5%. The monthly rental is Rs. 100. Billings, payments, bookings, registrations and complaints are all attended to at one centre.

All connections given by Aries will also be listed in the telephone directory issued by Madras Telephones. How-

ever, the one disadvantage a customer may face is if he moves; the telephone can be shifted only within a half-a-kilometre radius in a given area.

If there is a demand for a minimum of 200 lines in a specific area, Arivalagan is willing to start an automatic exchange unit there.

Arivalagan's future plan is to have a number of franchisee outlets for flat promoters. With each exchange unit costing about Rs. 7 lakhs, Arivalagan sees good business potential in these units. "It is better to have a central exchange unit for each apartment complex, from which each and every flat gets its independent connection simultaneously with its completion," he says.

(Courtesy Anna Nagar Times)



The Queen among Maries



ART/PCU/975

# The sad state of our libraries

James Nye, Bibliographer of the University of Chicago's South Asian literary treasures and the man responsible for the Roia Muthiah Collection in Kottaiyoor, Chettinad, being saved, is busy in Madras, as these lines are written, supervising the cataloguing of the collection and getting it ready for a soft opening early in the New Year. The *Man From Madras Musings* who had tried hard to get the collection saved by the Nattukkottai Chettians is happy to note that the University of Chicago and a local trust, Mozhi, in which that pathbreaking Tamil publisher 'Cre-A' Ramakrishnan plays a major role, have succeeded in doing what the Nagarathar failed to do for what was essentially an important part of their history. *MMM* hears that the University of Chicago has not only put into the project enough money to do the cataloguing — after it paid for the collection — but it has also decided to allow the collection to sink roots in Madras, in Mogappair. Once roots are sunk, it will be up to the local trustees to find ways and means to keep the facility going and enable researchers to study at least one aspect of the Indian diaspora — its second wave.

What the University of Chicago has been doing in India is quite in contrast to what India is doing to its literary treasures. And Nye minced no words about this when addressing Madras librarians the other day. Describing Indian librarians today as little better than "peons" — rather unfortunately ignoring several pockets of excellence, but finding many who thought like him among the many non-librarians in the audience — Nye appeared to imply that it is they who have been responsible for the sad state of the country's libraries.

## MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

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#### Select List of Recent Additions

Author	Title
ALLISON, K	The wild card of design
BARBER, D	Daily Express network marketing
BREARLEY, J	Counselling and social work
CANNON, T	Corporate responsibility
CROFT, L	Management, 2nd rev. ed.
DARLING, P	Clipper programming by example
DAVIS, P S (ed.)	Nursing the orthopaedic patient
ENGLISH, J P	Comic transactions
FOALL, G R	Consumer psychology for marketing
HIGGINS, S J	Biochemistry for the medical sciences
LISTER, A M	Fundamentals of operating systems, 5th ed.
LITTLE, J	Gender, planning and the policy process
NIVEN, J	The psychology of nursing care
PATTERSON, W	Power from plants
SELU, D	Practical personal computer
WHEATCRAFT, S	Aviation and tourism policies
FICITION	
FERRARS, E	Sealing is believing
HOWATCH, S	Absolute truths
KENEALLY, T	Jacko

The *Man From Madras Musings* was rather shocked to hear the statistics he gave in support of his sad assessment of Indian libraries. The national Bibliography, whose compilation was made possible by scholars from each Indian language stream, consists of only 55,000 titles from the beginning of printing in India till the late 1950s! Of these, only 4500 are in Tamil, yet the Connemara Public Library — a national repository of books — has only 4 per cent of these titles, the Tamil Nadu Archives 15 per cent and Maraimalai Adigal library 29 per cent! The Jaffna Library, which had a better collection, was one of the worst casualties of the ethnic war in Sri Lanka, but no Tamil individual or institution had offered any help to rebuild what had been a centre of excellence, pointed out Nye.

The records of most other states in India were no better, *MMM* was sad to hear. The best records were those of the Bombay University Library and the Khuda Bux Library, Patna, which each had 49 per cent of the National Bibliography's list. But even better were the records of private collectors who, Nye thought, were the only hope for the preservation of India's literary treasures. One collector in Hyderabad, who started life as an auto mechanic, has 70 per cent of the Urdu titles listed in the National Bibliography and this is one of the highest percentages in any language. In fact, the Urdu collection nearest in extent was one in Karachi which settlers from India had painfully reconstituted over the last 40 years.

### Out with them!

The Tamil Nadu Archives, one of the most helpful government institutions *The Man From Madras Musings* has found over the years, figured in a rather roundabout defence of the Indian librarian's role, the defender beginning his defence with the thought that "peons would feel badly hurt by Mr Nye equating them with librarians!" Be that as it may, this impassioned defence had *MMM* wondering what manner of Administrative Service officers our governments appointed to supervise these treasure houses.

In the case of the Tamil Nadu Archives, *MMM* learnt with regret that its 250,000 books collection had dwindled because one officer wanted some 10,000 or so engineering publications, with plans etc., discarded. Another wanted as many medical books culled. And a

third felt that materials in the other Southern languages and Urdu had no place in the Tamil Nadu Archives and offered them to the respective states speaking these languages — only to find not too many acceptors! So out they went too. The result of all this activity to make way for new records had made the Tamil Nadu Archives, the oldest in the country, much less an institution of importance than it once was.

With officers like this, what hope was there for librarians? That was a cry from the heart that prevailed over everything else at the Madras Librarians' Association meeting.

### What ostentation?

Ostentation? What ostentation? How can you have a major event like the wedding of the son of a monarch, crown-

## SHORT N' SNAPPY

ed or uncrowned, without a bit of a splurge? When Charles and Di got married after a fairytale romance, they had a wedding in fairland seen around the world, didn't they? And who spoke of ostentation then? Which of the commentators making loud noises now spoke of the ostentatiousness of Charles' and Di's wedding? And they didn't even on that occasion take down the decorations immediately after the wedding, as has been done with splendid alacrity on the latest occasion!

So it's all right for crowned royalty to organise bashes like this, is it? If it is, what's wrong with uncrowned royalty, but an even greater representative of the people, organising what can only be called "the wedding of the century"?

Come off it, all you sports. Didn't you, like all the most vehement critics, take the kids out to see fairyland? And if you missed it, but heard others' kids enthuse over it, didn't you wish the decorations and the entertainment had stayed in place for a few days more?

*The Man From Madras Musings*, always game to witness any expression of the joy of life, took the kids out to see the crowds — and the lights. And all he and the tots agreed on was that Madras had never been like this since the Park Town Christmas Fairs and couldn't it always be like this, please? The lighting and the decorations were ingenious as they were tasteful. Thotharani had done his work well — and the best set man around demonstrated why he's an even better artist in creating sets that no one could say were loud. The lighting of Chettinad Palace, the festoons of lights hanging from the trees, Madras could do with much more of this. If all the cutouts were sore points, how many of you noticed the ingenuity of some — they moved! They were making V-signs to symbolise two leaves, they were making namastes, they were smiling! And what a joy it was to see Anna and MGR back in stature high!

What if a Hindu wedding celebration concluded with non-vegetarian feasts? What if it was an exclusive reception for 20,000, who had been invited with silver and finery? Come off it, it was a wedding to remember. And to vote for again?

What an unpredictable thing democracy is!

POSTSCRIPT: It's truly a pity, *MMM* feels, that such an imperiously joyous occasion should have caused a moment or two of sadness. In the home of *The Hindu's* columnist S Krishnan and his wife, who've known the great orchestrator of this extravaganza for over 40 years — from when she was a child — and their journalist daughter who had played with her, danced with her and been great friends with her. Was it a momentary failure of the system that their invitations did not arrive or was it because when little girls become big girls they go their own way, especially when the call of politics leads them one way and that of the pen another. Now if only *MMM* hadn't heard that story, he'd be thinking what a happy family occasion this had

In fact, what struck *MMM* while Hariharan was talking was the thought that so much officer and military babu time was being wasted on pondering over such deletions and in making manual squiggles that changed India's land and sea boundaries every day, instead of being better utilised in genuine Intelligence gathering, analysis and evaluation. With 16 insurgencies in the country, with our neighbours not exactly our best friends — as one lady pointed out — the Great Game that began in 1909, with forays into Afghanistan and Tibet, needs to be better played. Col Hariharan, *MMM* is sure, would echo that thought. Or, rather, did, if that's not letting out a SECRET that might contravene that Act.

### In brief

★ Burma, or, rather, Myanmar is opening up. And one of the first Indian business houses to look at opportunities there is MAC Industries, who are tying up with Singapore entrepreneurs, to establish cashew plantations there in a joint venture with the Government. This move of the MAC group to take the lead in Myanmar strikes *The Man From Madras Musings* as most appropriate, for the great-grandfather of Ashwin Muthiah, head of MAC Industries, built the family fortunes in Burma, among other eastern climes. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar not only was the biggest landowner in Burma, but he received his titles for his contributions to the development of that country. The three generations of his family now involved with the MAC empire seem determined to build on those contributions.

★ The American School got off to a good start at the Russian Cultural Centre, welcoming at the same time its new principal, an American lady from 'home' who had taught in American schools in several countries for many years. But *MMM* was startled to hear that she quit within a couple of days of that welcoming celebration. Was it Madras? Was it the Russians? Or did she think the school was too small for one of her experience? But the school survives without her — and flourishes, *MMM* hears.

### Business brief

★ Is the Ford-Mahindra Rs. 2500 crore project coming to Madras? *The Man From Madras Musings* notes the arrival of more Ford missions to Madras but is none the wiser about the location of the project. Meanwhile, the two partners have sought the Foreign Investment Promotion Board's approval for a 50-50 joint venture which will begin assembling Ford Escorts from the middle of next year in Mahindra's Nashik factory and build up production slowly to fill a 25,000-cars-a-year capacity. Work will simultaneously start on a 'greenfield' project — in Madras, *MMM* hopes — which will, by early 1999, begin turning out the small Ford Fiesta. The new plant is expected to have a 100,000-cars-a-year capacity. The Fiesta is expected to take on the Fiat Uno (to be manufactured by Ashok Leyland? wonders *MMM*).

# An artist's homecoming

I visited Karaikudi recently after many years and took a little time of to visit neighbouring Kottaiyoor.

I have very fond memories of this small town. My granduncle, a doctor, had built a big bungalow (not quite a mansion like the many found in this area called Chettinad) and I lived there for a year in 1943-4. The compound was full of trees and shrubs. Even today, if I smell crushed *narthankai* leaves, memories of Kottaiyoor flood my mind.

My parents celebrated my seventh birthday in 1943, around the same time Alagappa Chettiar celebrated his daughter's wedding in an awe-inspiring manner. Sitting on a *jamkalam* not far from the podium, it was at this wedding that I saw Subbulakshmi Amma and heard her *kalchery* in person for the first time.

My father, who was a doctor, used the neighbouring house, a small but neat little tile-roofed building as his dispensary. There was a single movie house in which we saw countless MKT/NSK movies among others. Soon after we moved out, my granduncle died and the property was sold and the house was demolished.

As the car entered Kottaiyoor, I wondered whether I would be able to



The lion still remains.

spot the site of my granduncle's house? My college classmate Gnanasekaran (and a friend for forty years), who accompanied me, encouraged me in my effort. But the odds were stacked high against my finding the site. In the first place, the house had been demolished, way back in the late 1940s. And then with my impaired vision, I could hardly see anything from a moving car.

Kottaiyoor, like all other towns, has changed beyond recognition. My one clue was that the site was near a movie house. But what with the population

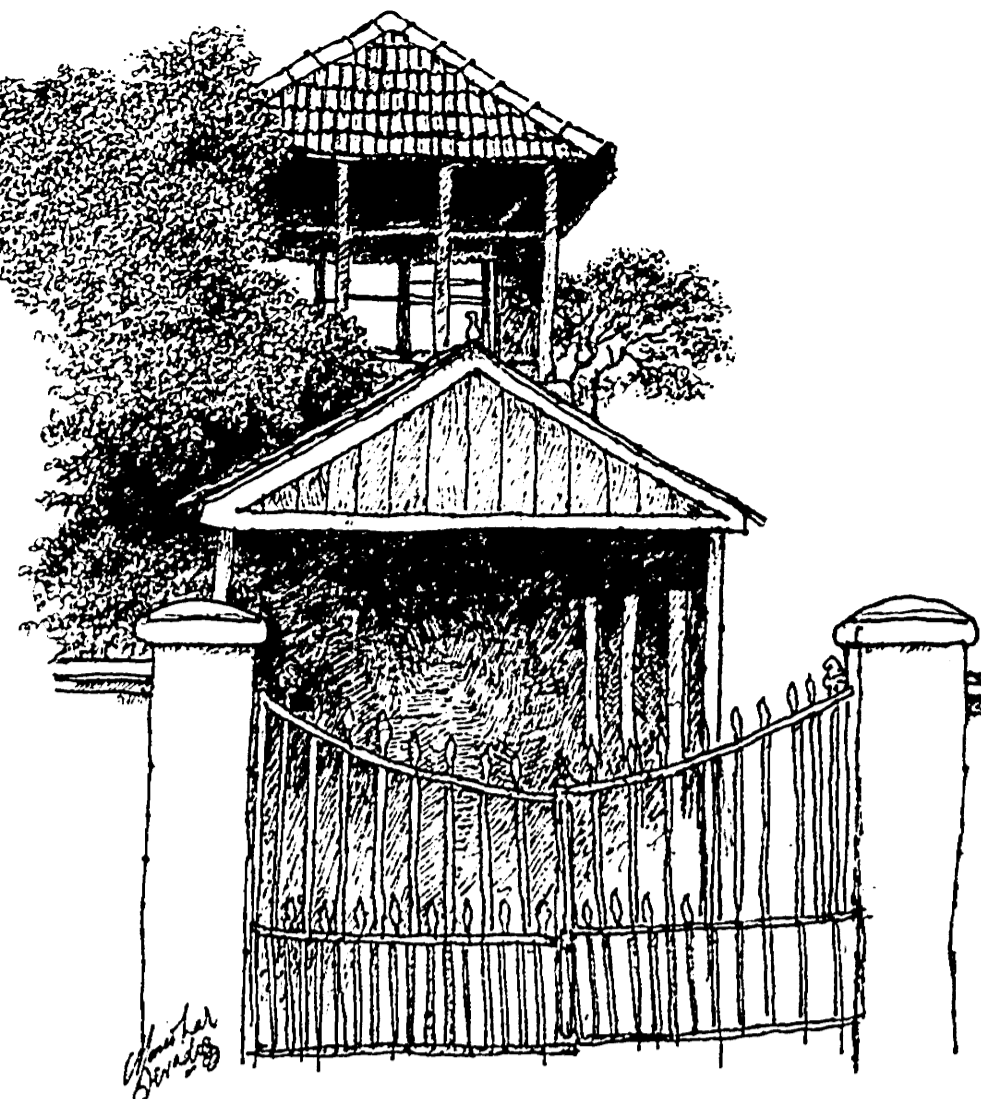
explosion and our society being cinema-crazed, I was sure that this town would now boast four or five movie halls, if not more. Which of these would I choose as a landmark? I asked the driver, "How many movie theatres are in Kottaiyoor now?" To my utter surprise, he replied, "None".

"But there was a theatre..." "Yes, but they've closed it down a few years ago..."

"Can you take us to the closed-down *kottagai*?" asked my friend. The driver turned the car this way and that for a while and then stopped it with a lurch. An old man materialised. Yes, I was standing right in front of the *kottagai*, the old man assured me. It was built in 1937 and was in disuse now. Was I interested in buying the property?

"No, no, I want to know about a doctor's house — which was not far from this theatre..."

"There's no doctor's house near the theatre," he replied emphatically. However, he added, as an afterthought, "But sixty years ago, one Dr. Maruthanayakam Pillai lived in that property over there. His house was demolished soon after he died."



I could have jumped out of my skin. The first native of Kottaiyoor I had talked with after a gap of 52 years remembered my granduncle! Indeed, I thought of my granduncle only as 'Kottaiyoor Thatha' and his actual name had, over the years, eluded me till the man pronounced it with the usual syllable-switch (*Marutha* - for *Malthura*). He informed me that the compound wall was still the same and one stylised lion still sat on one gate pillar.

"When I lived here," I observed, "we seldom used the gates. We went inside the premises using an U-shaped entrance through which cows could

enter." The man said, "It's still there." I went to this entrance at its corner and touched the low wall. It seemed that I had walked through this miniature only the other day as a seven-year-old. I walked a little further. To my joy I found that the tile-roofed neighbouring building, which was my father's clinic between the summers of '43 and '55, was more or less in its original shape if not in its original state. The rediscovery of Kottaiyoor was a veritable homecoming. What a pleasure it was to later sketch what I had seen.

Manohar Devadoss, San Thomé

### More focus needed

I read with interest the article 'The City's waterways' in *Madras Musings* (August 16, 1995). I hope you will continue to highlight this issue. Hopefully, a Citizens' Committee will be formed and, finally, something concrete will emerge to clean up and beautify our city's waterways.

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### Flyover Vision

Madras urgently needs, among other things, several flyovers. Several crores of rupees (MP's quota of Rs. 1 crore each) are lying unutilised with the Madras Corporation for this very purpose.

Some of the important places where flyovers are urgently needed (this list is by no means exhaustive) are:

#### ANNA SALAI

Teynampet signal; Nandanam signal; Anna Statue; Thousand Lights — Peter's Road and White's Road junction; SIET College junction and Cenotaph Road junction; Periyar statue — as the MRTS overbridge is already there, a flyover parallel to this, connecting Adams Road and Arunachala Road.

Even a half flyover, i.e. flyover over only on one side of the road, will do at Thousand Lights and SIET College junction. The cost advantages of a half flyover are tremendous and this must be tried out.

#### OTHER PLACES

Junction opp. Central Station — Vehicles coming from Pallavan Salai should be able to enter Central Station directly; Chamiers Road — Cenotaph Road

The most important parameters to be taken into account are the density of traffic (particularly in peak hours), the type of vehicles and the surrounding area. For example, the Central Station junction should be given importance from the point of view of minimising pollution to the patients in GH. Every time a vehicle comes to a halt and restarts, the engine of the vehicle has to overcome inertia and, therefore, emits maximum smoke. This can easily be seen by

## OUR READERS WRITE

any keen eye. (I close all the windows of my car whenever I have to wait for the green signal at Nandanam signal — till I move away — to avoid inhaling the poisonous smoke from all the mighty diesel vehicles.)

The problem of pollution needs to be looked into. Unless urgent and stringent methods are adopted, we are all going to suffer. I wonder why traffic policemen, who have to inhale the poisonous gases MOST, do not take action! The biggest culprits are PTC and other State-owned buses, police vehicles and private trucks and 2- & 3-wheelers.

#### Advantages of a Flyover

1. Reduces the maintenance costs of vehicles which will not have to brake, idle and restart.
2. Reduces traffic congestion. Attempts to go through gaps or overtake wrongly, speeding up unnecessarily etc. will also be avoided.
3. Removes avoidable irritation to those who drive vehicles (particularly on days of processions which are becoming too frequent).
4. Avoids waste of time for thousands — even on non-procession days.
5. Reduces cost of operation and maintenance of traffic signals and of policemen to look after them.
6. Reduces fuel consumption.
7. Most importantly, reduces pollution. If — and only if — required, a part of the cost of these flyovers could be collected by a reasonable increase in the Road Tax, which vehicle owners would gladly pay.

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# Madras has much untapped tourist potential

VISITING less developed parts of the world can offer some unique joys. One is the illusion of time travel. Another is the mental exercise of visualising a place's potential for development in tourism.

I recently experienced these two pleasures during a three-day lightning visit to Madras...

As I walked through the town, I felt almost like being in parts of Serangoon Road about 15 years ago.

But even in Madras, modernisation has washed much of the past away. At Pondy Bazaar in T. Nagar, an area with lively roadside stalls lining a busy and dusty street, I found fewer local products, such as multi-coloured curry powder and sari cloth, than expected. Instead, it was mostly fruit, common household goods, kitschy knock-knacks and other items one would have found at the *pasar malams* (night markets) of yesteryear in Singapore.

A visit to Fort St George, a fortification built by Sir Stamford Raffles' East India Company in 1650, offered a mental foray back to the colonial era. In the run-down Fort Museum, coins, documents, weapons, uniforms and oil paintings of kings and queens from the early 17th century onwards are on display. The artworks, especially, were in very good condition.

But my "time-travel trip" was somewhat unsatisfactory because most of the items were without accompanying notes to say what they are, and where and when they were found.

Another disappointment was when the security guard allowed me to go up to the rooftop — for a small tip, of course — only to get an uninspiring view which showed the fort's beach-

(Notes KOH BUCK SONG of *The Straits Times*, Singapore, after a visit to Madras)

front occupied and polluted by shipping industry.

Still, I was left feeling some regret when I compared the museum's already modest contents with what has been preserved of the colonial era in Singapore.

Here, comparatively little is on public display, largely because the British presence was some two centuries shorter.

Also, the Japanese Occupation must have disrupted any effort to save the memory of British rule.

If my time travel in Madras was limited, my effort at entrepreneurial visualisation was perhaps more fruitful.

Some travel guidebooks describe truthfully, but somewhat uncharitably, Madras as "a non-event" in terms of tourist attractions.

Many fine colonial old buildings have been left to decay or converted to other uses, such as to house schools or offices.

Even revered religious structures, such as Kapaliswarar Temple in the Mylapore area, could be better maintained.

Because not enough attention has been paid to such sites, Madras has been ignored by most tourists or used only as a stopover to reach attractions a few hours away, such as the restful hill resort of Ooty and the beautiful stone carvings of Mahabalipuram.

Nonetheless, perhaps having read too many media reports calling on

Singaporeans to imbibe the entrepreneurial spirit, I found myself again imagining what the place could be once its potential was harnessed.

At the top-floor Chinese restaurant of the nine-storey Chola Sheraton Hotel, the view of the flat coastal terrain was nearly as commanding, relatively, as that from the 70-storey Compass Rose at the Westin Stamford here.

Everywhere, even my untrained entrepreneur's eye could see much untapped tourist potential.

For instance, the 13-km long Marina Beach boasts many times the amount of fine sand available here.

I estimated the stretch from the Kamarajar Salai coastal road to the surging waters of the Bay of Bengal to be about 400 m broad, surely one of the widest in the world.

With a few umbrellas, ice-cream and hot dog stands, and a few chaps serving Corrective Work Orders to help spruce up the place, already fringed with palms and casuarinas, who knows how much more business one could draw?

Despite the claims of conservationists, I am sure development will bring more good than harm.

Much has been made of the desecration of old world charm in such traditional parts of Singapore as Chinatown, and more recently, Little India.

But charm left to disintegrate — as it has mostly been in Madras — is often not as pretty a sight as it could be.

Renovation is not all that bad, if a refurbished place can gain a fresh new beauty of its own in time.

The question is: How many citizens of Madras, if given the choice, would stay exactly where and how they are! for the rest of their lives? I wonder.

# India's loss is also Kashmir's

When G Parthasarathy, or G.P. as his large number of friends and admirers in India and abroad knew him, passed away recently, at the age of 83, all newspaper tributes referred to him as "a distinguished diplomat and academician". Almost none, and certainly not one in Tamil Nadu, referred to the 50-year association he and his family had with Kashmir and the fact that no one understood the Kashmir situation and its complexities better than they. In his death, India has lost a vital asset it had in any negotiation over the troubled state.

The contributions his father and he had made to the India-Pakistan-Kashmir triangle were many. He and Sheikh Abdullah engineered a summit meeting in 1964 between Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayub Khan, which, unfort-

unately, never took place due to Nehru's sudden death. Had that summit taken place, the situation in Kashmir today might indeed have been different, as one of the peace proposals then envisaged was the recognition of the Ceasefire Line (Line of Control) as the permanent international border between India and Pakistan. It's a solution being advocated again — this time by the Sheikh's son, Farooq — and is believed to have India's tacit backing.

Later, G.P. was the co-author of the 1975 Kashmir Accord (one that is looked upon even now as the most likely remedy for the malaise affecting the northern State), when he brought about a rapprochement between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah.

For G.P. the Kashmir link started early, right from the time when his father, Gopalaswami Aiyengar, was the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir before Independence, when Maharaja Hari Singh ruled. Willingly or unwittingly, father and son became involved in some of the critical twists and turns that took place in the then 'paradise of earth', now a political hot-spot.

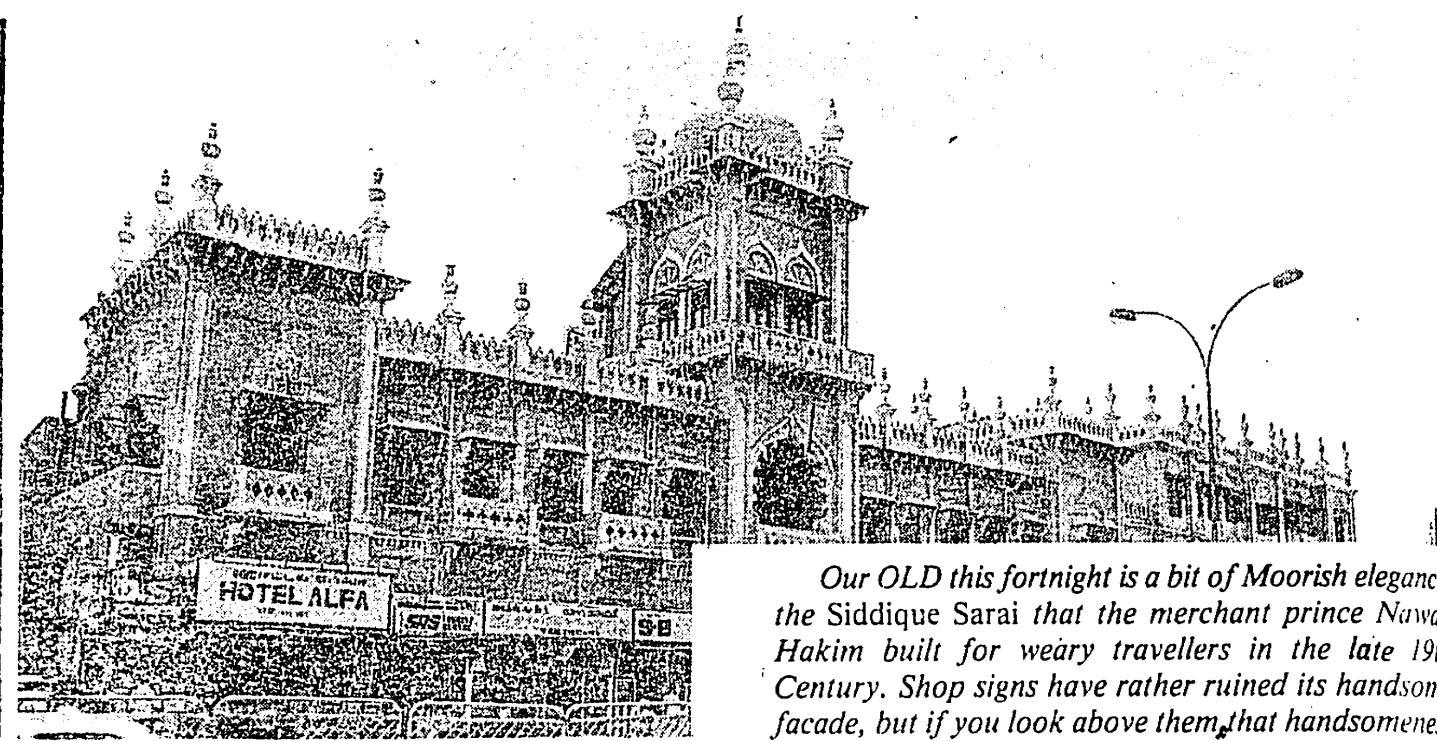
It was as High Commissioner in Pakistan that G.P. found himself right

in the midst of the hurly-burly of Kashmir politics. Sheikh Abdullah, after his release from detention, had, at the instance of Nehru, visited G.P. in Karachi in 1964, to broker a peace accord which never came about. But eleven years later, G.P., as Indira Gandhi's emissary, successfully tied up the Kashmir Accord, after two years of hard negotiations with Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg, Sheikh Abdullah's representative. The accord saw Abdullah's return to the national mainstream and brought into focus the now much-maligned Article 370 of the Constitution of India which gives Kashmir a special constitutional status — internal autonomy.

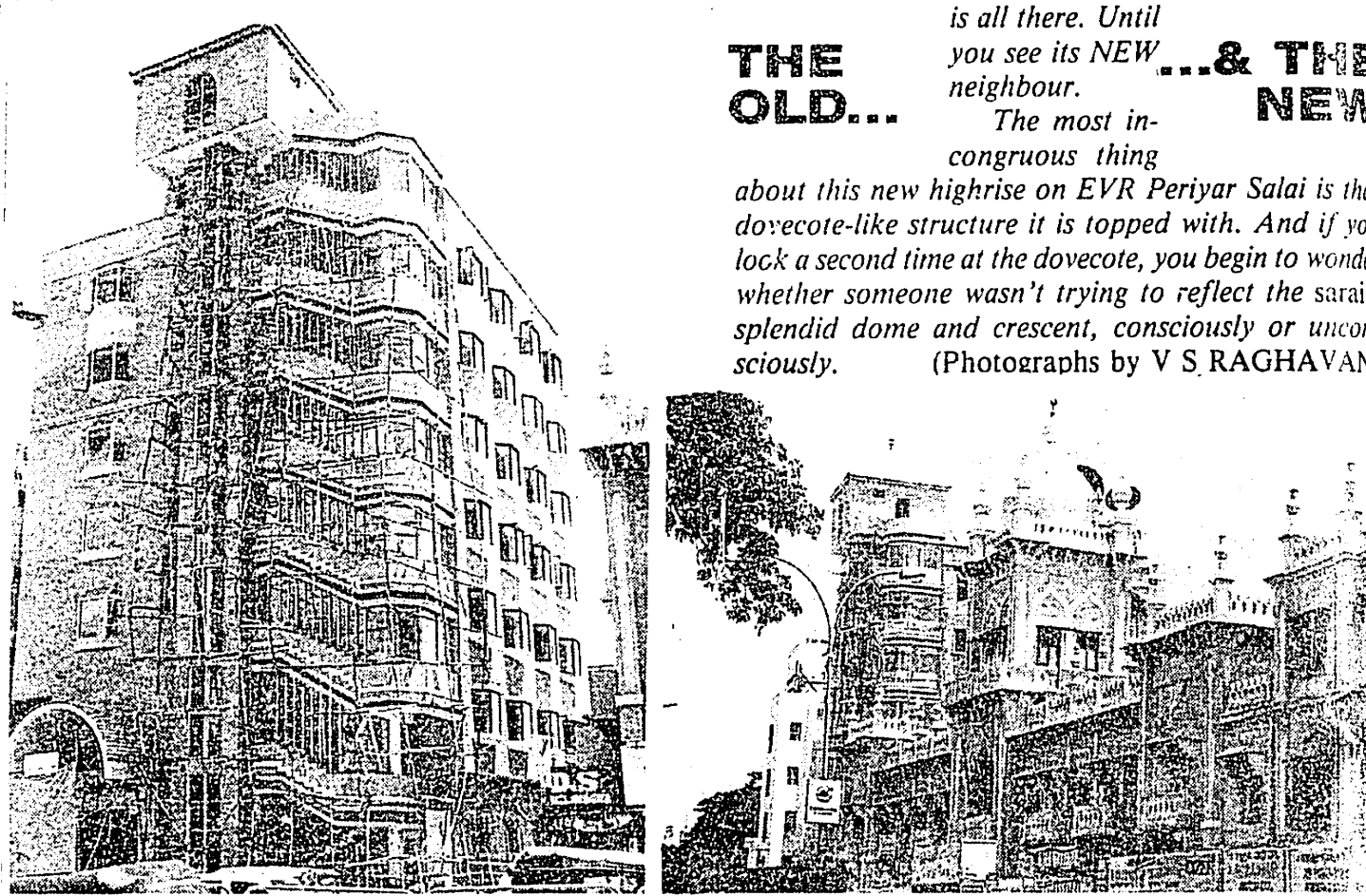
To resolve the Kashmir dispute, G.P. had taken the cue from none other than his father. It was Gopala-

swami Aiyengar who, as a member of Nehru's Council of Ministers in 1949, had supported the demand for a special status for Kashmir, although he incurred the wrath of many who accused him at the time of being soft on Kashmir. Aiyengar, who was India's representative in the UN in the early 30's, was charged with the responsibility of presenting India's case. Many in India later felt that he had made a weak case for India because he had, as Kashmir Prime Minister and later, felt a plebiscite should be held in Kashmir. His moderate approach to the growing popular movement in Kashmir, despite what many critics felt, did help to soften Sheikh Abdullah's tough stand. It was ironic that, nearly 20 years later, his son took a tougher stand in the UN — though at home he offered several constructive inputs that he hoped would decrease the militancy. As India's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations in 1965, G.P., along with Sardar Swaran Singh, kept Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and team at bay, and ensured that Pakistan did not make any noticeable gains on Kashmir.

Yes, more than anyone else, it will be the people of Kashmir who will sorely miss G.P., the honest broker.



Our OLD this fortnight is a bit of Moorish elegance, the Siddique Sarai that the merchant prince Nawab Hakim built for weary travellers in the late 19th Century. Shop signs have rather ruined its handsome facade, but if you look above them, that handsomeness is all there. Until you see its NEW neighbour.



The most incongruous thing about this new highrise on EVR Periyar Salai is that do:ecote-like structure it is topped with. And if you look a second time at the dove:ote, you begin to wonder whether someone wasn't trying to reflect the sarai's splendid dome and crescent, consciously or unconsciously. (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)

## ARM THYSELF!

"God helps those who help themselves." This fortnight's column is closely related to this pious and pithy cliché, as investment circles (not unlike racing ones) are filled with self-anointed know-alls who always seem to have the 'tip of the decade'. Following such tips or rumours is one of the surest ways to having your nascent portfolio wither and die. In fact, ensure that all your investment/disinvestment decisions are supported by fundamentals.

You don't have to be an Equity Analyst to check on the basics of a company. All you have to ensure is that the company is neither a loss-making organisation nor a failure in the marketplace vis a vis its products. It would help a great deal if you are able to read balance sheets and other statements of accounts, but this is not essential.

A company's fundamentals can be checked by a visit to the organisation and seeing whether the workers are happy or surly. Does the management handle your requests for information in a positive manner? Have they added a shift recently? Even if you are unable to go to the plant or office, as they are too far away, the company's success can be gauged quite accurately by seeing how well their products fare against the competition, whether the after-sales service network is efficient enough and so on.

In the case of industrial products, where you cannot check on the product's brand equity, you may have to rely on media reports. Even in such cases, no single publication should satisfy your need for knowledge. As far as possible, you must absorb the widest possible range of journals and magazines. Analyses can, thus, be accessed easily and investment made only after you find concurrence amidst the majority.

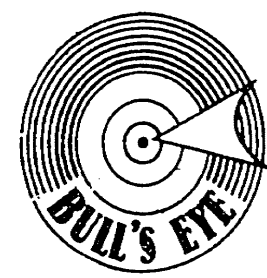
There must be a clear strategy as far as your building a portfolio goes. There must be clear goals as to how much capital appreciation is needed and how often you want income to flow

in. That is why those who have retired and pensioners prefer Mutual Funds, as it is much more secure than Equity, though returns are not commensurate. There is no failure with adequate preparation. Formulate a trading strategy and list the markets to be watched. Have a plan of entry and a plan of exit. If the markets behave according to plan, hold the trade. Otherwise sit back and observe their behaviour. Discipline in the implementation of strategy is important. Never permit speculative ventures to turn into investments and vice versa. You must differentiate between invest-

**Hindustan Domestic Oil and Gas** (CMP: Rs. 10.25) This OTCI company promoted by Dharmendra Singh was incorporated in May 1993 and was originally into trading Superior Kerosene Oil and LPG. It came to the public to raise Rs. 3.60 cr to set up LPG bottling plants in Khopoli and Pune in Maharashtra and Betul in Madhya Pradesh. The Betul plant has commenced production with a capacity to bottle 32,000 cylinders/m., working an 8-hour shift. It can bottle an additional 15,000 cylinders/m. by working 12 hours. The plants at Pune and Khopoli are fast nearing completion. The company is also setting up plants at Nasik and Kolhapur. It is also setting up four more plants in the South, for which civil works have already begun. All these nine plants will be fully operational by December 1995. The company has tied up with Vitol (Maunius) and Naltoner (Greece) to source LPG. Its group company, Hindustan Aegis LPG Bottling Co., is setting up a storage facility. Once this storage facility is available, the company will stand to benefit. The company is setting up a dealer network covering about 400 subdistricts to market its LPG and it is targeting a clientele of about 3,00,000 households. Its future plans are to set up about 20 bottling plants in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan, to be floated under different companies in association with the State Development Corporations.

For March 1995, the company achieved sales of Rs. 11.56 cr and a PAT of Rs. 2.18 cr. With stiff competition from HPCL and BPCL and other players in the private sector, the company's marketing effort is the vital factor on which success will rest. The projections for March 1996 show sales of Rs. 14 cr and a PAT of Rs. 3.50 cr, with a resultant EPS at Rs. 5.40. The share at the current level is a good buy for both medium- and long-term gains.

**Maruti Industrial Carbohydrates** (CMP: Rs. 17.00): This Madras-based company came out with a public issue at par in January 1995 to finance the manufacture of pure grade sodium carboxymethyl-cellulose (CMC) and CMC-coated micro-crystalline-cellulose (CMC Coated MCC). The issue was quite popular, being oversubscribed 47 times. The products find application in the pharmaceutical, food processing, paint and cosmetic industries. The project, expected to go on stream by



ments and speculation, as they differ in terms of objectives, time duration and the amount of capital invested.

Above all, remember that you have to rely upon yourself. Make your decisions and stand by the results. While it may be trite to warn against changing horses in midstream, it nevertheless is very true. You'll be surprised how many people there are who have 'gone against better judgment' and sold because 'I listened to X even when I was sure that Company ABC was all set to touch record highs'.

These rules may sound too simple to be true and you may even think of such rules as being simplistic. But it is surprising to discover how many people forget the basics and are enamoured with high falutin' terminology. Invariably they lose. Stick to the basics and you'll be pleasantly surprised to find that you are in possession of a sound portfolio that not only pays off but gives you peace of mind.

(Continued on P7)

# Madras again — on cookbook shelves

Yet another woman from Madras has had a glossy cookbook published abroad. Flavours of MADRAS, A South Indian Cookbook, by Rani Kingman, has been published by Garnet in the UK and follows in the footsteps of Chandra Padmanabhan's phenomenally successful Dakshin, published by HarperCollins, Australia. Flavours of MADRAS has just gone on sale in Madras. An attractive-to-look-at book, it was printed in war-ravaged Lebanon!

Unlike Dakshin, which was entirely vegetarian, MADRAS is a medley of veg. and non-veg. recipes that mother Anne Rebecca Arumainayagam and grandmothers Ponnammal Arumainayagam and Charlotte Elizabeth Rengaswamy cooked for Isabel Rani Arumainayagam and her siblings. Rani, who moved on from SIET to Malaysia and Brunei, married Bob Kingman there and they settled in Northumberland, UK, where she not only uses the Arumainayagam recipes to cook Indian for her two sons but also uses them in adult education classes and cookery demonstrations throughout Northumberland.

The 130 recipes, a couple of which we give below, seem inviting, but we leave Khoshed Wadia Ezekiel to pass judgement on them. The Introduction appealed to us, offering as it did much to justify the emphasis on MADRAS in the title. But what we found intriguing were the 'English' names of the recipes, many of them personalised, and their Tamil equivalents, the anecdotal introductions to each recipe and the little boxes of 'spice' on many pages. We offer some of them below and leave the reader to be as entertained as we were by 'Stuffed Crisp Pancakes' for 'Masala Dosais', 'Rice Pancakes' for 'Appams' and 'Steamed Dumplings' for 'Tidli idlis'. We also present below a British journalist's view of both writer and book.

— THE EDITOR

FANCY a spot of tiffin? Not the Sydney James variety immortalised in that 'Carry on' classic, Carry on up the Khyber, but the traditional sweet and savoury dishes of Southern India, sold from coffee shops, mobile carts, sweetshops, and cafes on every street corner in Madras.

For the Tamil custom of tiffin — the delicious sweets and savouries eaten between lunch and dinner — is just one of the many traditions captured in Isabel Rani Kingman's fascinating cookbook Flavours of Madras.

An English literature graduate and talented cook, Isabel, who lives at Haydon Bridge, wrote the book in order to capture the history and culture of Tamilian cuisine — and she's managed to do just that.

Having grown up in Madras, Tamil Nadu, she's drawn upon the "surf, spice, and magic" of that land of temples to write a book that's as fascinating to read as it is to create the masalas, Irikadels, and vindaloo dishes it contains.

The Tamilians like all Indians have their own ancient customs of hospitality and these, as Isabel explains, are closely

## Masala Potato Kelanga Ghashashi

Tamilians are friendly people and company is always welcome, especially during the religious festivals of Diwali, Pongal, Ramadan, Bakrid, Christmas and Easter. This recipe has been a popular one since my grandfather's time. As an army chaplain he was always entertaining British guests — officers and soldiers, as well as missionaries and members of their congregations. All the English visitors enjoyed masala potato, perhaps because it has both a touch of home and of the country they had come to call home. Now that I live in England, I feel much the same way about it. (The best potatoes for this recipe are fairly new, waxy ones.)

- 1 lb (450 g) medium potatoes
- 1/2 pt (300 ml) water
- 2 medium onions
- 1/2 inch (1.5 cm) fresh ginger
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2 fresh green chillies
- 1/2 lime
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp oriental poppy seeds
- 4 stalks of fresh coriander leaves
- Ghee
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp chilli powder
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp cumin seeds

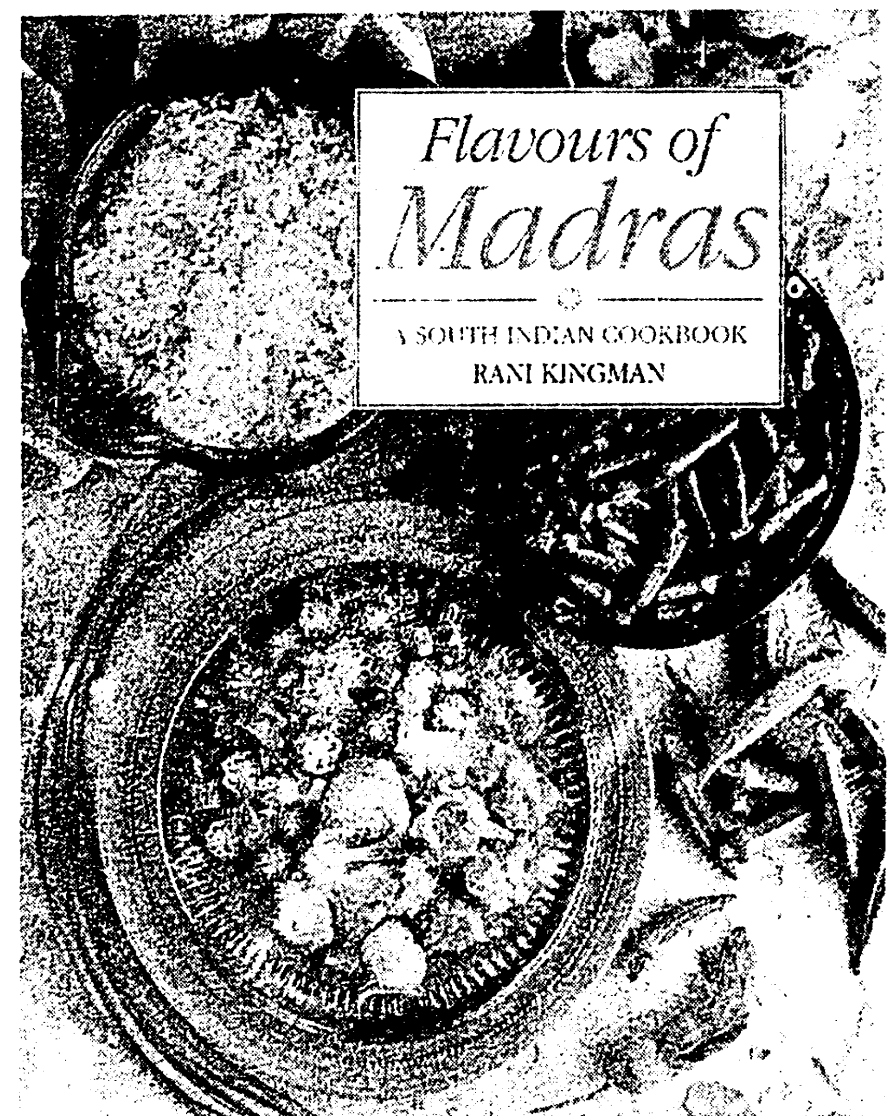
1. Wash the potatoes. Boil them (in their skins) in a saucepan of salted water until three-quarters done (time will depend on size). Drain, then peel and dice them.
2. Peel and slice finely the onions, ginger and garlic. De-seed and slice the chillies. Squeeze the juice of half a lime.
3. Heat a heavy-based pan and roast the sesame seeds and poppy seeds until golden — keep them on the move so they don't burn.
4. Grind the fresh green chillies, garlic, ginger and 2 stalks of fresh coriander leaves in a food processor. Leave to one side.
5. Heat 2 tsp (10 g) ghee in a heavy-based saucepan. Fry the onions until soft. Then add the ground ingredients and keep frying over a medium heat until an aroma arises.
6. Next stir in the turmeric, chilli powder, ground coriander and salt to taste. Fry for another 2 minutes before adding the potatoes. Make sure the potatoes are well coated with the ingredients in the pan, then stir in the lime juice.
7. Cook uncovered for another 5 minutes and then add the roasted sesame and poppy seeds and the cumin seeds. Sauté for a further 5 minutes. Serve garnished with the remaining fresh coriander.

## Andaman Prawn Curry

Andaman Erra Kutta

The Andaman Islands are officially part of the state of Tamil Nadu, though they are out in the Indian Ocean. These islands are the home of exotic orchids,

(Continued on P7)



Another Madras cookbook on the world's shelves.

# Book captures magic of Madras

linked with excellent food and gracious service.

Food is traditionally served on thal or thali platters, individual to each member of the family, with guests given

One story from Madras tells of a young heir who wanted to find the perfect wife. He decided that any woman who could produce a complete meal with two pounds of unthreshed rice would surely have all the qualities he desired, so disguising himself as an itinerant astrologer he set off in search of a bride. During his travels he was shunned by many, but still he persevered, and one day he met a beautiful maiden whose parents had lost their wealth. Though he fell head over heels in love, he decided he should

fresh banana leaves to ensure the cleanliness and purity of the plate. The dishes are also traditionally eaten, while seated on woven mats or jamakalams, cotton sheets of many

nonetheless put her to the rice cooking test he had planned, for he knew that an act without circumspection inevitably leads to regrets.

Ponni, the beautiful maiden, accepted his challenge and, the story goes, succeeded (though with a little help from her mother and servant). The servant washed and dried the rice, then Ponni, using the soles of her feet, separated the husks from the dried rice and sold them to the jewellers to use for polishing. With the money she received for the husks she sent

colours, and eaten with the right hand only. Many dishes have particular meaning, sweetmeats are symbols of welcome, love and hospitality, while

her servant to buy firewood which she used to cook the rice. The ingenious young woman then sold the unburnt wood as charcoal, and bought vegetables, ghee, curds and tamarind in exchange.

As the day drew to a close the young man was served a feast of rice broth, vegetable pulao and spiced yogurt, with fragrant cool buttermilk to drink. He finished his dinner a most satisfied man, and the pair were duly married. Ever since then, this long-grain rice has been known as 'Ponni'.

water lilies, peacocks and flamingoes, and the warm crystal waters supply a variety of seafood. These days most of the prawns caught here are exported to Western countries.

In this recipe from the Andamans the prawns are cooked in a creamy coconut sauce that has a little chilli fire and a touch of cooling tamarind.

1. Peel the onions and chop finely. Peel the garlic and chop finely. De-seed the chilli and slice lengthwise.
2. Infuse the tamarind in 4 tps (60 ml) hot water 5 minutes, strain and put the liquid to one side.

3. Heat 1 tps (15 ml) oil in a pan. Fry the neem leaves for a minute, then add the chopped onions, garlic and the peppercorns. Fry until the onions and garlic are soft. Then add the mustard and cumin seeds.

4. Mix in the tamarind juice, coconut milk, chilli powder, turmeric, salt and sliced green chilli. Simmer covered for 10 minutes.

5. Add the prawns and simmer gently until they are cooked (3-10 minutes, depending on size of prawns and whether they were precooked), then serve with rice.

## Grandma's Lamb

Nandanam Bharjita, or Ding-ding

My grandmother taught me this recipe. I serve it with drinks, as an appetiser. This is an old recipe, and would have been offered to passing travellers by herdsmen, showing their hospitality. It may have been used as a preservative (then hung outside for a day to dry), but our recipe calls for the lamb to be salted overnight. Cooking is by the fast apakava method — deep frying.

1. Wash the meat, slice very thinly (1/4 inch/2 mm thickness) and cut into pieces about 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches (2 x 4 cm). Dry thoroughly with kitchen paper. Sprinkle evenly with the salt and leave to marinate overnight.
2. Blot any moisture with kitchen paper, then place in a large bowl, sprinkle with the chilli powder, turmeric and sugar, and mix well so the meat is evenly coated.
3. Deep fry the lamp strips in hot oil until crispy and dry (2-3 minutes). Drain well on kitchen paper.
4. Serve immediately, or allow to cool and store for up to a week in an airtight jar or container until ready to be used.

Flavours of Madras  
A SOUTH INDIAN COOKBOOK  
RANI KINGMAN

the Tamilians believe food in general should have both a warmth and a quality of coolness, a tradition that is two thousand years old.

Because Tamilian recipes are handed down from generation to generation, mothers passing them on to their daughters, Isabel has also looked at the spices, aromatics, and cooking techniques of the Tamilians, and it's a surprise to learn that, like other Indians, they don't use curry powders. Instead they rely on spices such as chilli, turmeric, coriander, and cumin to flavour their dishes, using sweet seasonings such as citrus juices, honey and coriander leaves.

The result — simple rice dishes, platters of Kotogari chicken seasoned with chilli powder and turmeric, and bowls of Masala potato that have your mouth watering just glancing through the recipes.

Logical Isabel has divided the book into chapters dealing with breads and pancakes such as the simple flat bread chappatis, and the rich white bread rofi, and there's a chapter on vegetables, the basis of the Tamil diet, and cooked as only they know how with the traditional methods of braising and steaming to retain the flavour and crispness of the vegetables.

Because the fresh fish and seafood of Madras is now known and exported throughout the world, no book on South Indian cooking would have been complete without a chapter on such recipes. Thambi's crabs, masala lobster, and monkfish in coconut are all here, together with a tempting dish that even Isabel hails as a 'delicious masterpiece', fish in tamarind sauce.

There are chapters on meat and poultry — if you dream of cooking a tandoori chicken or beef vindaloo, this is the book for you — and of course tiffin, the savouries, sweets, desserts and drinks of an Indian afternoon.

Each recipe is headed by a brief description or recollection from Isabel's childhood, while many also begin with an historical explanation about the dishes used at special festivals.

Also dotted throughout the book are informative panels recounting the customs of the Tamilians, and the foods associated with each occasion and celebration, from moving house to getting married.

A Tamil woman's main role is that of a mother, and women who do not bear children may be scorned by society — newly married Tamil women are given young coconuts by their mothers and mothers-in-law, as a symbol of fertility.

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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 temple school

N Sama Rao, a Marathi-speaking Madhwa, founded the N Rama Rao Primary School in 1892. The school originally functioned in Nagji Rao Street, behind the present premises. It was co-educational and started with 120 students. The wearing of caste marks was compulsory then.

When Sama Rao fell ill, his wife Rangu Bai administered the school and even took classes.

Sama Rao was childless and willed the building to the Sri Parthasarathy Temple with the proviso that it should always house an educational institution. Thus, the school became a 'ward' of the temple. The school went through a lean period at this time. When it was thought the school would have to be closed, N K Thirumalachariar and his friend Ramiah Chettiar took over the management, recruited capable staff

and converted the school into a higher elementary school with parallel classes for boys and girls. The school was shifted to the present site in 1920 and re-started in a thatched shed. In 1940, the upper classes of the school were converted into the National Boys Secondary School and in 1941 a girls school was founded. Students still continue their higher education in one of these schools.

After the death of NKT, the school was taken over by a retired Headmaster of National Boys School and, with his rich experience, he helped the school develop further. The school had the honour of being recipient of a shield for the highest admissions of students.

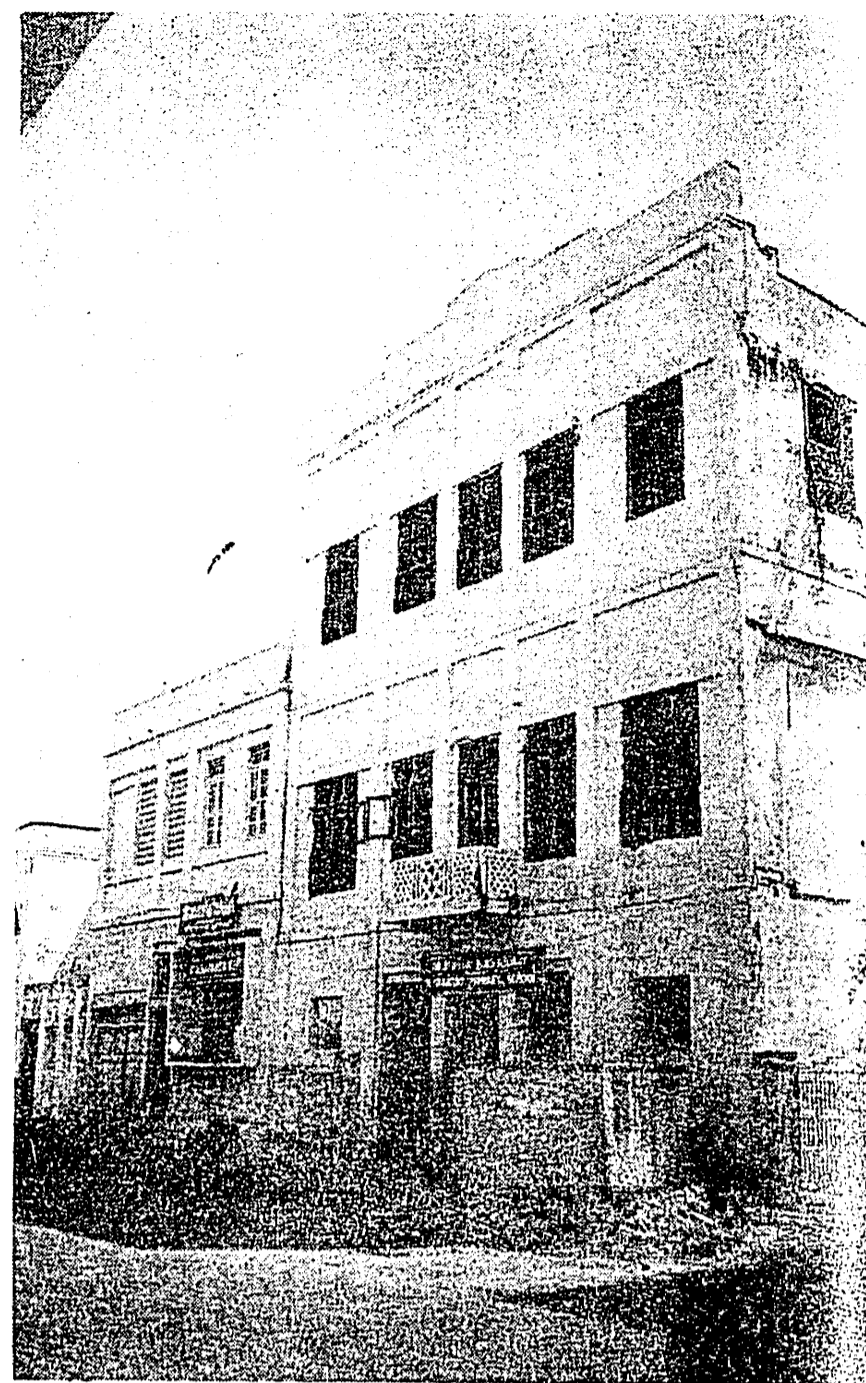
From the beginning, the school has been blessed with dedicated teachers and able headmasters and headmistresses. During Smt. T V Kalpakam's 18 years as headmistress the school

reached its peak, with an enrolment of 1600 students and 40 teachers. Today, there are about 1200 students and 35 teachers. The classes, from I to V, function in a three-storeyed building at No. 4 Singarachari Street, Triplicane. The present Headmistress, Mrs Sundaravalli, is from a family of teachers and is an old student of this primary school.

The school, which pays a rent to the temple, caters to the poorest of the poor in the locality. Many leading organisations help the school with donations of cash and furniture.

The lack of a sports ground has not inhibited the students from sporting activity. The classrooms are used for their annual sports meet!

Photograph and text by  
**RAJIND N CHRISTY**



N Sama Rao Primary School in Triplicane.

## DuPont plant

(Continued from P 1)

Nadu Pollution Control Board not to issue interim environment clearance in the meantime.

K E Bhaskaran, a prominent leader of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) has

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said that "the negative impact of this project will be evident even in children born after the project comes up". Echoing this, V Karuppan, a retired IAS officer and a Dalit leader, felt the project would bring many serious health problems and would not in any way benefit the common man. And T R S Mani, Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress, wants Thapar DuPont to give foolproof evidence that its operations will not affect man and the environment in Gummidipoondi.

Thapar-DuPont contend that there is no opposition and that many villagers have approached them to create a model village in the area and develop the basic amenities. They also state that the plant will come up on a concrete pad and, as there then will be no contact with groundwater, contamination will not be possible. They also state that no toxic materials are used in the plant. Work at the site, meanwhile, goes on.

## Cordially invited

Once upon a highly auspicious day I came home drenched in rose-water, daubed with lashings of *kum-kum* and sandalwood paste, clutching wilted flowers like a latter-day Ophelia, not to mention a tummy rumbling with too much rich food eaten too quickly. As well as laden with booty of coconuts and *paan supari*, the odd blouse piece and the odd toy mirror and comb set (why?). No marks for guessing that I'd come, not quite unscathed, through the merry maelstrom of a mad Madras wedding season — six weddings in a day, with forays, albeit unintentionally and with no malice afloresht, into two uninvited weddings as well. Where, I might add, we were welcomed in with gracious elan, made to partake of a sumptuous dinner with many smiles, photographed with the young couple, had taken part enthusiastically in the post-nuptial ribbing of the young couple, and had just got into the act of tying the proverbial lucky shoe to their getaway car, when a chance remark made us realise... But let me begin at the beginning.

It was a second cousins' brother-in-law's daughter's wedding of the parties of the first and second part, oops, neither of the principals about to embark on matrimony being known to us by sight. My husband and I had been invited to the wedding, in the highest traditions of Indian hospitality, to partake of the festivities, keep the peripheral family banner aloft and to swell the crowds which seems to be a prime function of Madras weddings. So there we were, on a balmy February evening, sashaying into Palmgrove Hotel, being welcomed touchingly by sundry unknown people, photographed with the beaming young couple, pressing the mandatory Rs. 501 or whatever into the efficient hands of a gentleman ("I am the girl's uncle. Are you groomsman or bridesmaid? You can leave presents on my backside etc. etc."). It was after we'd downed a mouthwatering dinner and were nodding blissfully to a flautist's notes when an odd thought struck me. How come

we hadn't seen a single familiar face during the entire evening — surely hordes of cousins, aunts etc, some of them known to me, should have "graced the occasion" like us? Were we, horror of horrors, at the wrong wedding?

I nudge my husband urgently and convey my anxiety to him. His predictable reaction is, "Don't be silly!" I hiss back that we'll look a lot sillier if we miss the family wedding and advise him to look pronto at the invitation tucked in his back pocket. At the third nudge, my husband takes the invite out, shines his pocket torch on it and announces in his best parade ground voice (old soldiers' (voices) don't necessarily fade away!) that "We are at the wrong wedding. This invitation says 'Behind

• by  
**PUSHPA CHARI**

Palm Grove Hotel'. Before his less-than-whispered remarks can attract more attention — already a few heads are swivelling — we make a hurried getaway. Past the beaming newlyweds, past the uncle with the Rs. 501 (alas!), past coconut bags being thrust on us our way, take guilty. And we are on our way, praise be, to the right wedding at the back of Palm Grove Hotel...

Back in the car, and on to the last wedding of the evening, amidst a flaming family fracas I accuse my husband of deliberately sitting on invitations, of not reading them properly just to make me look foolish and of leading me up the garden path generally. He seems to feel it's all my fault; apparently it's my wifely duty to know the face of each of his cousins, cousins' brother-in-law's nieces and other assorted kissing cousins' nephews, their fathers, grandfathers and such like. And on this note of connubial bliss we reach the *Kalyana Mandapam* aglitter with faery lights and, hopefully, the correct one, this time, I add icily. "No mistake at all," my husband assures

me. "Why just yesterday my friend Goel told me he'd coughed up one grand for this hall on Pantheon Road..."

Again a shower of rosewater by pretty ladies, lovely strains of *shehna* in the air, and helped by turbanned ushers we become part of the glitzy crowded wedding reception. I am vastly reassured to see some friends around, and allow myself the first icecream — and smile — of the evening. Time to relax and catch up on gossip, admire the jewellery and saris of the beautiful people, and even get a long hard look at the "nip and tuck" job behind Ms A's ear while kissing the air past her cheek. This is beginning to be fun! We join the serpentine queue to bless the newlyweds, dodge the dinner ushers successfully and finally make our way out — Whew!

It is as we are walking towards the car park that the flaming, flower-festooned banner displayed at the entrance of the *mandapam* opposite catches my eye: it reads "Goels and Guptas Welcome You" in red, green and gold coloured bulbs. But hadn't we just come from the Goel-Gupta combine? I notice that my husband too is staring intently at the twinkling message. In fact his jaw has dropped considerably. "Good God!" we say in the same breath. "We've been to the wrong wedding again!"

(PS: Perhaps it would be best not to record for posterity how we got to the Goel wedding and back. But since that significantly hectic day, I've often wondered if Madras city has professional gatecrashers at weddings. Does it?)

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**MADRAS MUSINGS**

## There's no need to claim more...

Anita Ratnam is helping to make Madras known. Her *Purush* festival on male expressions brought in critics from all over India and I believe her press conference had one of the largest attendances in Madras. Unlike Chandralekha, who has made her name by showing her work outside Madras, Anita is getting everybody in Madras to see it and then taking off from here.

Anita is very hardworking and ambitious. She seems to be doing a Mallika Sarabhai of Ahmadabad in

art in education had resulted in Aayana '92 and '94! Anita took part in Aayana '92 as a narrator and was one of the financial supporters for Aayana '94. During that time, Anita was busy with *Under Her Breath* and had no time at all to help in the production of Aayana. And Arangham Trust was formed after Aayana '92.

Anita is well loved in this city for her poise, friendliness, her hard work and for her courage. Surely, Anita, there is no need to claim more.

### Loved and hated

In contrast to the *Purush* festival, Gitanjali Kolanad's *Night* had only a small audience. This was original work that had quite a few bold scenes that might have been banned by the Shiv Sena in Bombay. But Madras was able to take it.

Padmini Chettur and Pashupathy worked with Gitanjali Kolanad in this production that had verses and a sculpture by Valsan as a prop. There was sincerity in the production and brilliance at moments. Sets and lights by Natesh also contributed to the success of the production. There were people in the audience who loved it and some who were repulsed.

### Theatre festival

The Sangeet Natak Akademi was in Madras organizing a theatre festival of Tamil plays. The scripts had been selected in a competition by the Akademi and it was a rare opportunity to see mofussil directors from Thanjavur and Madurai showing their work in Madras. But Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh's tragic death resulted in the plays being cancelled at the Museum Theatre and having to be staged together on one night at the Rasika Ranjani Sabha in Mylapore two days later. Strangely, a very distinguished crowd had come to see the plays at the Museum Theatre and they had to go back disappointed. Sad, to say the least.

## Magic of Madras

(Continued from P5)

Finally there's a glossary of spices and other ingredients detailing their origin, use, and history, and ranging from aniseed to *Urud dhall*. Don't be concerned if many of the ingredients sound a little too exotic to be stocked by your run-of-the-mill English supermarket. Isabel has carefully recorded

### Bull's Eye

(Continued from P4)

the end of this month, has been promoted by technocrats, one of whom has been associated with some user industries for nearly three decades.

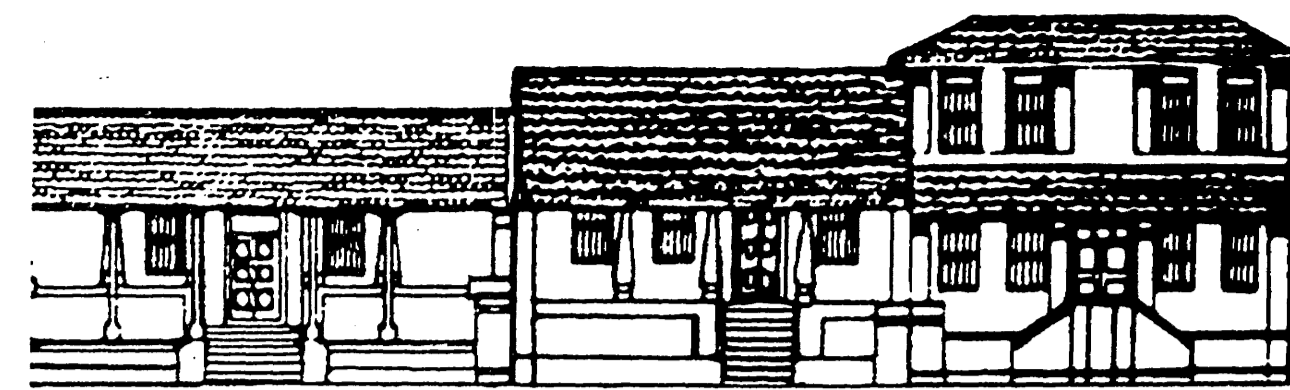
The company proposes to export 60 per cent of its production and the balance will be sold domestically. It has also got a firm buying order from Crystal Chemical Corporation, USA, for 50 tonnes a month

and tested all of the recipes with ingredients which can be bought in England.

*Flavours of Madras*, rich in the ancient culture of Tamil Nadu, the dishes so evocative of that country, and the warmth of Isabel's vivid recollections of her homeland, really is much more than just a cookbook.

of each product. The results for 1995-96 would indicate only seven months working by technocrats, one of whom has been associated with some user industries for nearly three decades.

K. Gopalakrishnan



Remembrance of buildings past.

## Another look at Dakshinachitra ... which opens this fortnight

Dakshinachitra, the dream of Deborah Thiagarajan and Gita Ram, who founded the Madras Craft Foundation, has been designed to introduce the visitor to the cultures of South India. Besides aiming to preserve the traditional skills and create an awareness among the public, it also aims at the promotion of craftpersons and performing artists.

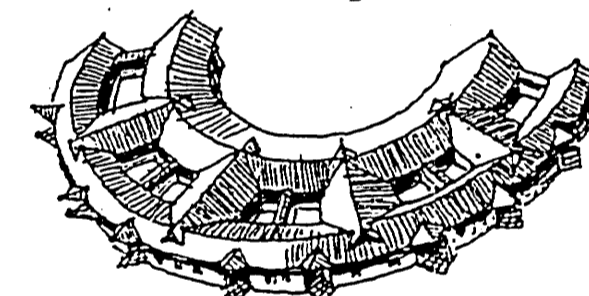
The Tamil Nadu State area contains 'prototypes' of a typical merchant house from Chettinad (circa 1895), an agriculturalist's house from Mayavaram District (circa 1847), a typical weaver's house from Kanchipuram, and an early 20th Century house from Tiruvellore which includes a workshop for a potter who will live there. The technique of compressed mud blocks used in this house is one that MCF hopes to introduce to villagers. Another building on the site is the Ayyanar shrine, with figures. Other aspects of the state shown

Dakshinachitra's preview will be on September 22nd.

The history and culture of the Tamils will form the theme of the exhibition in the Chettinad house on the Tamil Nadu street. The influence of the five traditional ecological landscapes of *Kurunji* (hillsides), *Mullai* (scrubland), *Marutham* (riverine tract), *Neythal* (coast) and *Palai* (wasteland) on the social, economic and cultural life of the people will be brought out. The agricultural house will feature crafts and practices related to agriculture. The Tirunelveli

houses will be made into a gallery and will display religious craft, wooden carvings, bronze items and the musical instruments of Tamil Nadu. The Kanchipuram house will show the complete silk-weaving process and will have a weaver working at his loom. Other craftsmen working at the site would include a potter and a basketmaker. The textile exhibition hall will have textiles of diverse textures, colours and weaves from the different weaving centres of the State and will show both old and contemporary designs.

Apart from all this, there will be a restaurant and open rest areas, an open air theatre, a craft shop and, later, a library and archives. (Courtesy: Financial Express)



Latha Srinivasan

Laurie Baker's sketch of houses for craftsmen in Dakshinachitra, are a textile exhibition hall, a shed for a chariot, and a series of double storey village town houses from the Tirunelveli area.

At present, the Kerala section has only one house, an early 19th Century wooden home typical of the houses of the Travancore area. Kerala will eventually have a large *taravad* from Malabar and a tiled-roof Malabar house for the bellmetal worker. Shrines of Bhagavati, St. Theresa and a small mosque will be built to represent the religious harmony of the State.

For Karnataka, Dakshinachitra will concentrate on the stone architecture from Northern Karnataka, a Bangalore bungalow and an agricultural house from the coast. Andhra Pradesh architecture will feature styles from Telengana, Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra Pradesh. The plan for each state area is preceded by two years of documentation of the local architecture by the MCF.

Another aspect of Dakshinachitra will be the special craft exhibitions which will promote the standard of living of the craftsmen and also create wider markets for their work.

Apart from the architecture and craft exhibitions, the folk performing arts will also be an attraction. Some of these folk performing arts will initially be the *Devarattam*, *Karagam*, *Poikkal Kudirai*, *Villupattu* and *Tappattam* of Tamil Nadu and the *Padayani Theyyam*, *Kummatti* and *Kalaripayattu* (martial arts) of Kerala. Others forms to be presented are shadow puppets.

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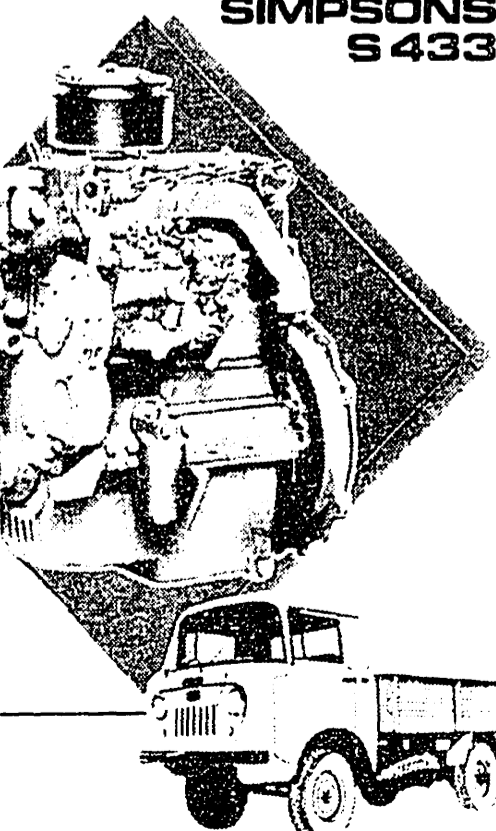
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# Golf resort planned near Mudumalai

Two Florida businessmen-cum-golf professionals — Jim White and Tom Dubois — were in India recently to discuss plans for the construction and management of a 60-hectare golf resort near the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary in the Nilgiris. The golf facility will be part of an eco-friendly resort — replete with stables, health spa, tennis courts, French cuisine, and croquet lawns. It will also host a 12-month golf academy to develop Indian talent and will offer free training to promising young golfers from poor families.

"I'm excited about the opportunities in Mudumalai and that it will be my second home," said Dubois. "It will probably be the only golf course in the world fertilized by elephants!"

White predicted that India would have more than a million golfers and produce world-class pros by the turn of the century. "We're coming in at the very beginning of the golf boom that's about to sweep India," he said. "(Golf) is taking off everywhere in Asia, and is temperamentally perfectly suited to India," he added.

Until a year ago, White and Dubois, who run a golf-club assembly company, Custom Golf Crafters, in Gainesville, Florida, knew India only on a map. Then, in November 1994,

Asia America Marketing Inc., a Florida-based company that finds markets for American products and services in India, negotiated a deal between the American company and the Maini Group to supply components for 400 golf sets and to set up an assembly plant near Bangalore. Their plant has been operational since mid-March this year.

During their visit to India, White and Dubois conducted golf clinics in several Indian cities, including Coimbatore. (Courtesy: SPAN)

Vinod Chhabra

# More sportspersons for police

— But will they remember Francis?

R. Francis, who died over a decade ago, was Tamil Nadu's and Tamil Nadu Police's greatest-ever sportsman, inasmuch as he was the lone Indian to have kept goal for three successive, victorious Indian Olympic hockey teams. His unique achievement came to mind when W.I. Dewaram, Additional D.G.P. (L. and O.), recalled it at a recent press conference at which he hailed Chief Minister Jayalitha's gesture, of allotting 10 per cent reservation for sportspersons in all future recruitment to the State's Police, as unparalleled in any other Police force in the country.

His reference made veteran hockey fans recall Francis's performances, highlighted by his sense of anticipation, technical wizardry and daredevil rushes to

ionship. After his premature death, suggestions were made to the Tamil Nadu Hockey Association, as well as to the City Police R.C., to find ways and means to perpetuate the memory of the India's most successful goalkeeper by naming a tournament after him or introducing a Best Player's Award in his honour. Unfortunately, they all fell on deaf ears. It is now up to the rejuvenated Tamil Nadu Police Force, rejuvenated by Chief Minister Jayalitha's latest gesture to sportspersons, to rise to the occasion by honouring the greatest-ever sportsman it had turned out.

by  
AJAX

foil an attacker, not only for India's Olympic teams but also for the City Police Recreation Club in Madras tournaments and the first division league champ-

# Marina in the morning

What a crowd there is of a morning every day on that stretch of Marina from the lighthouse to the Labour Statue! Everyone seems to be in search of a healthy body and healthy mind. And so they come to stroll, to walk, to jog, to exercise, do yoga, even Suryanamaskara.

There are ministers who go for a stroll in the morning. There are those from the film world, more carefree than usual because they are not much noticed here. Nagesh, the Tamil comedy actor, G Venkateswaran, film producer/distributor, and Prathap Pothan, the actor/director, are some of the regular walkers. Mrs Y G Parthasarathy, the Head of Padma Seshadri School, walks sedately with a Walk-



Anand and his roller-skater charges and Sri Kandananda Swamy and his yoga disciples... early in the morning on the Marina. (Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)

After they finish their walks, they relax a while together, discussing the matters of the day.

Talking to some of them, you find out that walking plays an important role in reducing mental stress. A brisk walk for about 30 minutes, they say, results in both mental and physical agility. And is also good for the heart.

Then there are the sports lovers. A group of Marwaris play tennicoit and throwball till about eight in the morning. Roller skaters and gymnasts ignore fascinated viewers. Anand, a professional roller skater, coaches children at Adarsh Vidyalaya and on weekends on the Marina. There are about 25 enthusiastic children learning the sport on the beach. The BAT boys of the Britannia Amritharaj Tennis Academy turn up regularly in a Matador van for rigorous warm-ups.

Near the Sweet Memories mobile shop, there's a crowd of children with their parents. It's bread and jam for them and the other walkers.

A large number of men stand in a queue near Gandhi Statue every morning. They believe in Naturism, says Raghupathy, who is said to have pioneered this concept. Raghupathy is the head of the Narikuravas of Tamil Nadu. Immediately after the physical exercises, drinks containing caffeine are not healthy, he says. So he offers fresh juices like pumpkin juice, arukampul juice and plantain stem juice at reasonable prices to those in the queue (there's even coffee/tea for those who prefer them!). One of these juices on an empty stomach nourishes the whole system, says Raghupathy, who advocates this treatment, which he calls 'Naturopathy', for asthma, hypertension, diabetes, urinary tract infections, cervical spondylitis, arthritis and even for infertility. He claims that Naturopathy is gaining importance today, as drug dependency, side-effects

advises walking and jogging barefoot. Sri Kandananda Swamy, a disciple of Yogiraj Vedanta Maharishi, concentrates on the mental aspect for those visiting the Marina of a morning. He teaches Yoga in a simplified form to develop the 'life force' — the soul — and keep the body in shape. He seeks a greater response than what he's getting.

Obviously, with enthusiasts like these out on the Marina, Madras is awake and fresh long before dawn.

Padmaa Thyagarajan

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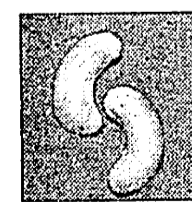
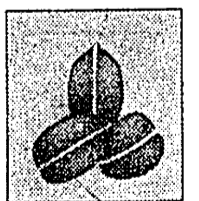
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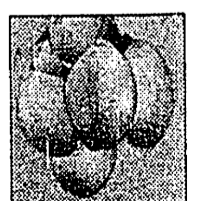
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