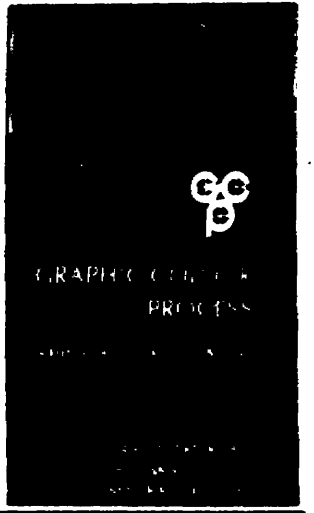


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Are Ford's coming?

(By A Special Correspondent)

That's the \$ 64 crore question — and by the time you read these lines, the answer may well be known. And the answer may be one of three this correspondent heard in the last couple weeks. Those answers have been:

- We have heard nothing, said S Consul — General in Madras Timothy Hauser, who has done his best to get the project here. He gave this answer during the course of an informal chat at a book launch function. But he promised to send the *What Home, In Madras — A Handbook*, a guide to the corporate settlers in Madras, to Ford's to add weight to the argument that Madras was the place to be if you are making automobiles.

- The most recent answer has been that Ford's will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tamil Nadu Government on January 3rd to set up the plant in Madras. This agreement, it is stated, is being reached after Ford's have had their last doubts cleared on the land and on sales tax.

- Just ten days before the December 30th information, the same sources were singing another song. Ford's will decide on the site for their factory only after the coming elections, they had stated. These sources had felt

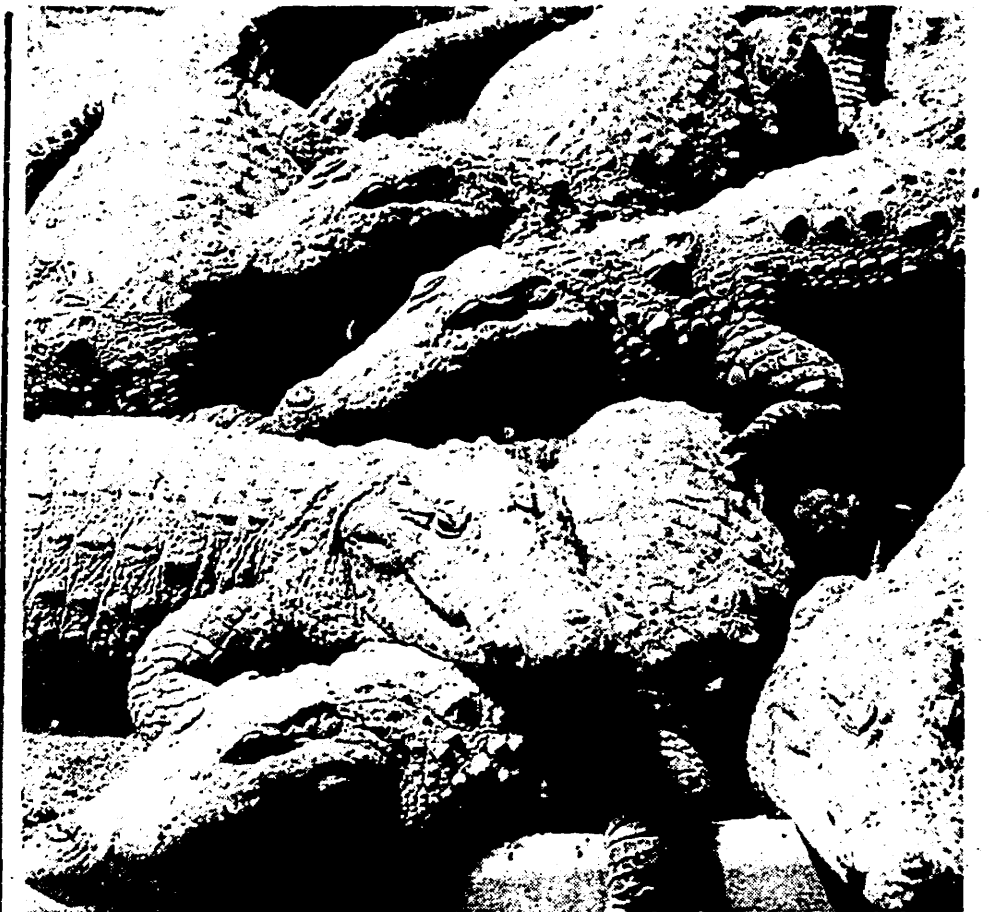
that a delayed decision would help the Joint Venture Ford-Mahindra project from facing any uncertainties due to change in government. In this context it was stated that the chances of the unit coming up in Maraimalainagar, in suburban Madras, had decreased due to two reasons. These were:

Firstly, the fear of a change in Government after the Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu. The term of the present state Government comes to end in mid-1996 and the elections for the State Assembly may be clubbed with the general elections.

Secondly, the role of the Shiv Sena if the company decides to locate the unit in Tamil Nadu. Though happy with the response from the Tamil Nadu Government to setting up the plant in the state, the unstable political scenario in the State was proving to be a major concern, these sources stated. They were unsure of the kind of support the project would get from a new Government, if the present regime failed to return to power.

Meanwhile, the Government of Maharashtra was keen on prevailing upon the company to decide the site in its favour. The Shiv Sena, the majority partner in the ruling Government in the State, had reportedly introduced an ethnic angle

to prevent the company from going to Tamil Nadu. The Shiv Sena, it was stated, felt that since Mahindra & Mahindra is based in Maharashtra, the new unit too should come up in the State.



That's how crowded the crocodiles are at Crocodile Bank. (Photo: V S RAGHAVAN).

Whither crocodile research?

The Union Forest and Wildlife Ministry has called a halt to research work on crocodiles at the farming centres in Tamil Nadu and directed that efforts be taken to rehabilitate them in the wild in view of their burgeoning population in captivity, according to S C Dey, Additional Inspector General of Forests, Environment and Wild Life, Government of India. Crocodiles bred in captivity for various purposes, including research, have not been rehabilitated for the past ten years in the State.

Nearly 20 crocodile farming centres are functioning in India, including three in Tamil Nadu: Aringnar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur; Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Mamallapuram; and Children's Park, Guindy. These farms function as research centres where marsh, estuarine and gharial species are bred. At present, an estimated 13,500 crocodiles live in captivity and another 7000 in wildlife reserves in the State. The function of the farms is to breed and release the crocodiles into places of safety. But the research activity has been overshadowed by a commercial approach. Hence the farming centres have been asked to identify sites for rehabilitation, especially in protected areas, where no fishing activity is allowed, and in the available reserve forests where fishing is restricted, stated Dey, who added that the rehabilitation of crocodiles would help in maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

Reacting to this decision of the Union Government, Romulus

Whitaker, President, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT), said that not much headway had been made in research on crocodiles, which lived to nearly 100 years. He stated the Crocodile Bank Trust would be happy to release its 5000 'surplus' crocodiles, if suitable protected habitats could be identified. In most of the habitat where the public was prepared to tolerate the mugger, restocking had reached saturation level. Villagers and fishermen were not enthusiastic about the reptiles being back in the water in large

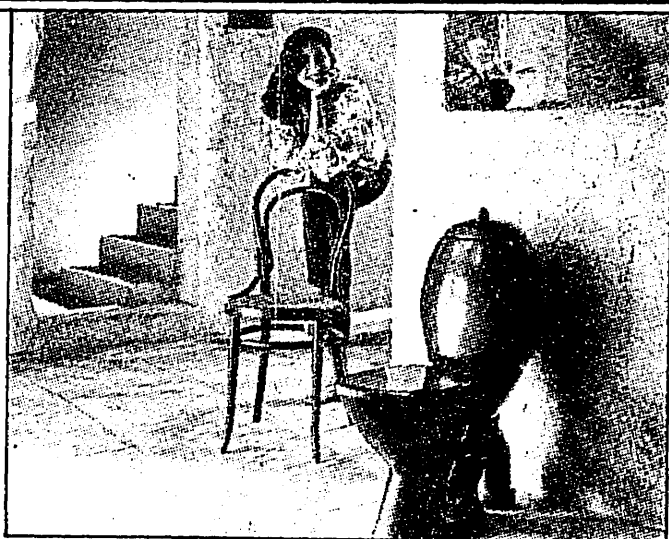
• by A Special
Correspondent

numbers. Wild life management techniques, including commercial crocodile farming, were sound measures to save the wildlife and habitat in the long-term, he felt. Though the preservation approach was laudable, it had never worked in any country where humans had to compete with wildlife for food and habitat. A standing example was India, where wildlife and wildlands continued to be depleted due to the spread of humans.

According to Whitaker, making the crocodile valuable and encouraging commercial ranching of crocodiles was the only solution to the problem. If this was done, crocodiles would become acceptable to the people and would become top foreign exchange earners.

The MCBT, meanwhile, has plans to reorganise its crocodile park at Vadanemmel, 14 km from Mamallapuram, so as to make it more visitor-oriented and educative, giving the visitor an exciting opportunity to see the crocodiles as if in their natural habitats. The plans have been prepared by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmadabad and are supported by World Wide Fund for Nature-India. The surroundings would be made to resemble the true habitat of the crocodiles, thereby helping to evoke their behaviour in the wild. The crocodiles would not be aware that they were being watched, as invisible dividers between the viewers and crocodiles would ensure that the crocodiles were not disturbed.

Apart from the crocodile display, the MCBT would continue its research on crocodiles. One of its important research findings has been that varying temperature on the eggs of the mugger could produce the preferred sex in the hatchlings. This discovery would help in regulating the male-female ratio, according to Harry Andrews, Deputy Director of the MCBT, which also breeds water monitor lizards and carries out field studies on other reptiles and amphibians. MCBT had also started a breeding and research programme on turtles after it found that 26 species of Indian turtles were endangered and that some species, like the cane turtle of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, might survive only through captive breeding. (Courtesy: Fishing Chimes).



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Gavaskar vs. Azhar, in verse

Not strictly Madras, but Madras loves cricket. And so here's the winner of the The Telegraph (Calcutta) Reader's Forum contest which had selected as its subject 'Gavaskar vs Azharuddin'

Judges Ramachandra Guha (the author of Spin and Other Turns, Andy O'Brien (Assistant Editor, Sportsworld) and Gautam, Bhattacharya (Special Correspondent, Ananda Bazar Patrika) awarded the first prize to this poem by S NIRUPAMA of Calcutta:

Clash of the titans

It's really not in the nature
Of sportsmen of their stature
To battle it out and cross swords
By indulging in a war of words.

We all believe in freedom of speech,
And "practise what you preach"
A columnist is allowed reflections,
Opinions on the game and speculations.

Gavaskar can always have his say
On "double standards" and "fair play",
But if you're ready to give your view,
You'll have to listen to others' too.

Those comments were bound to attract
A retort which would be difficult to retract,
But everyone was quite taken aback
By the captain's acerbic attack.

Now, it's no use taking sides
Weighing the issue to decide
Who was wrong and who was right,
Who shouldn't talk and who shouldn't write.

This is behind us, now, let's look ahead,
Who'll recollect what sportsmen said,
We'll think of their run or catch,
Not some personal slanging match.

It's time to get out of this sticky wicket
And get down to some real cricket.
We should forgive, forget and make up
And concentrate on winning the cup!

The birth of a mission

(Continued from P5)

to the extent of Rs. 50 lakhs were to be raised. For this purpose, it was decided to raise Rs. 20 lakhs through 200 loan certificates of Rs. 10,000 each from among members and well-wishers. M M Mathew was asked to explore the possibility of getting an institutional loan of Rs. 50 lakhs for machinery and equipment. Dr K M Cherian was requested to prepare the list of equipment.

The economics of working envisaged at the time reveal the thinking of the period. It was expected that "the income generated from the operations at Vijaya Hospital premises to be Rs. 3 lakhs per month. Of this Rs. 1 lakh would go towards interest and another 1 lakh will be needed for overhead expenses including salaries. This will leave a surplus of Rs. 1 lakh for contingencies and also for repayment". How modest the thinking was!

In 1986 it was decided to start the Institute with 50 beds, of which 20 would be in a general ward. The surgeries expected were about 600 a year and the annual income Rs. 11 lakhs. The total requirements were Rs. 60 lakh, of which Rs. 53 lakh were to be spent on machinery. However, subsequent events showed that more machines needed to be procured and on this alone the total requirement would be over Rs. 1.1 crore.

In the meanwhile, negotiations were going on for a loan from the Indian Bank. One morning, Dr K M Cherian and Verghese Eapen visited the then Indian Bank Chairman at his residence. Just as the preliminary discussions started, the Chairman

received a phone call. Coincidentally, it was about a heart patient from Calcutta who needed surgery. Dr K M Cherian took the responsibility to look after this patient. The Chairman's interest in the patient helped create sympathy for the project. In the course of the next few days he found ways and means of sanctioning the required funds in spite of various worrisome rules and regulations. He correctly assessed the potential of an organisation of this nature.

By early 1987, major equipment started arriving and Dr K M Cherian had more or less organised his team. Decisions were taken to pay the employees and doctors salaries as prevalent in good private sector companies. It was also decided that 20 per cent of the facilities should be given by way of free treatment for the poor.

On Sunday June 21, 1987, there was a special service at the St Thomas Cathedral in Broadway, Madras, at which Dr K M Cherian and Verghese Eapen spoke about the proposed inauguration of the activities of the Institute on the next day. On June 22, 1987, Dr K M Cherian did his first operation at the MMM's Cardiovascular Institute. And the Project was on its way.

Today, eight years later, the MMM has its own hospital in Madras, a landmark building in the City. Opened on December 14, 1995, medicare in the magnificent new premises will commence next month.

When the MMM's Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases started in June 1987, it had 13 doctors and 21 nurses. Today, as one of the finest superspecialty hospitals in Afro-Asia, it employees over 50 doctors, 150

A query or two on the Games

And so the curtain has come down on the VII SAF Games — and Indian sports authorities are overjoyed by the performances of Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians. *The Corner Flag* only hopes they will soon temper their joy and come down to the reality that every Gold-winning performance is still some way away from even Asian records. There's still much to be done to move up even the Asian ladder — and it is in that context that *The Corner Flag* can't help but wonder at some of the curious happenings at the Games which could lead India to close its eyes to the reality.

The most significant thing about the Games that struck *The Corner Flag* was the absence of doping tests. *The Corner Flag* had always thought that it was mandatory for doping tests to be conducted at such international meets. But does the rule book permit otherwise? If it does, no wonder several queries have been raised over quite a number of SAF Games performances. Such performances are routine in India — but they are seldom matched when the competitor competes overseas.

Another curious happening was the sudden inclusion of the Hammer Throw after it had been decided in committee NOT to hold the event. If a Maldivian 'hammer thrower' could have been discovered at the last moment to make up the numbers, surely he could have been encouraged to participate in the High Jump too, thereby giving Indian and Sri Lankan jumpers the chance to jump for gold.

nurses, an equal number of paramedical and support staff and caters to patients from over 20 countries. In the short span of eight years, over 7800 cardiac surgeries and an equal number of invasive procedures have been performed with a success rate comparable to the best in centres of the West. The Institute has created a niche for itself in treatment and surgical correction of complex congenital cardiac diseases.

The team led by Dr K M Cherian has many firsts to its credit — the first correction of transposition of great vessels; the first bilateral internal mammary grafting, the first successful triple valve replacement, the first Trans Myocardial Revascularisation in Australasia and the first heart transplant in the private sector in India. It is probably the only centre in the world offering TOTAL HEART CARE under one roof.

The Institute's new 200-bed, centrally air-conditioned hospital at Mogappair is equipped with state-of-the-art technology. It has five operating rooms, two cath labs, a 40-bed Intensive Care Unit with 20 beds for adults, 16 beds for paediatrics, two beds for transplants and two for TMR, and a 20-bed Coronary Care Unit with 24-hour DocView monitoring facilities. It also has fully fledged departments of Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery with Adult & Paediatric Divisions, Cardiac Anaesthesiology, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Microbiology, Biochemistry & Haematology, Blood Bank, Cardiac & Clinical Pathology, Cardiac Nursing, Chaplaincy & Medical Social Work Service, Transplant Co-ordinators, Medical Data Research, Biomedical Engineering & Support Systems, Dietetics & Housekeeping. This makes it probably the largest superspecialty heart hospital in Asia.

It was poetic justice the Pakistanis won the hammer gold. If there had been the High Jump, would the Sri Lankans have won that?

Then we had the curious case of the Bangladeshi football finalists having to go through an unnerving experience before they reached the football field — and it would have served the Indian football authorities right if the Bangladesh team had persisted with its initial decision not to play the final after being treated so shabbily. How is it that the Bangladesh team was not provided with a proper escort to enable it to reach the playing arena in comfort and in time?

• THE CORNER FLAG

Two other curious happenings were Pakistan's performance against India in their hockey clash and India's performance against Sri Lanka in the volleyball tournament. In both matches the losers showed glimpses of being far superior to the winners — Pakistan during the last few minutes when they with ease scored a couple of goals and India in at least one set — yet they seemed strangely lethargic throughout the rest of the game.

And then there was Usha demonstrating that her day is over — unless she begins looking at other events.

One last question. Where were Jyotirmoy Sikdar, Saramma and Molly Chacko? Has marriage taken its toll or will they make comebacks every bit as impressive as Shiny Wilson's?

To *The Corner Flag*, no matter what the Sri Lankan sprinters achieved, THE performance of the Games was Shiny Wilson's and Mrs Consistency deserved the Esteem not only of Chief Minister Jayalalitha but of every sports enthusiast.

As for Jaspal Rana's record-breaking eight golds, they showed he's among the best in Asia — but his comparatively low scores indicate a touch of inconsistency. And that is cause for concern — not dismissed with remarks like 'these things happen'.

Perhaps the most heartening performance of the Games was India's victory in football. The team clearly showed, after a long time, that it was superior to every team it played. It now needs tougher Asian competition before it can improve further. And a tour of the Southeast Asian countries would do it a world of good.

In this context, the suggestion that the best of South Asia compete with the best of Southeast Asia in every sport is a welcome idea to improve the standards of both. Another way South Asian countries can improve their standards is to compete more frequently with teams from the Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. Training camps are no substitute for competition — especially against teams slightly superior.

As for the hockey team, it's long had the talent. It's only beginning to translate some of it into goals. If that goal-hungriness increases we can look forward to still better performances. But as it is, too many chances are still being missed, behind defences that have been well and truly beaten. Their game against Sri Lanka was a disgrace. Maybe the win over a dispirited Pakistan will show the way.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Magunta Subbirami Reddy of the Balaji Group;
2. Attend a Roman Catholic service;
3. All India Indira Congress Committee;
4. The USA;
5. The youngest International Master;
6. Michael Jordan, the basketball player;
7. Sarath Kumar;
8. Central Spatial Guyana, near Kourou in French Guyana;
9. *Kurudhipuzhal*;
10. Galileo;
11. Y.C. Deveshwar, the former CMD of Air India;
12. Ernakulam District;
13. The former Prime Minister, Chandrasekhar;
14. Britain's Jonathan Edwards (triple jumper) and Gwen Torrance of U.S. (sprinter);
15. S. Ramesh;
16. *Vanam Vasapadam* by Prabanjam;
17. 'Euro';
18. Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries;
19. Dr. Christian Baarnard
20. NATO.



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