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# MADRAS

MUSINGS

Vol. V. No. 22

March 1 — 15, 1996

Rs. 3 only

## Sriperumbudur boom

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Tamil Nadu Government is to develop an industrial park in 1,600 acres near Sriperumbudur in Chengalpattu-MGR District. The park would be called the 'Madras Industrial Park' and have facilities for super-mega industries.

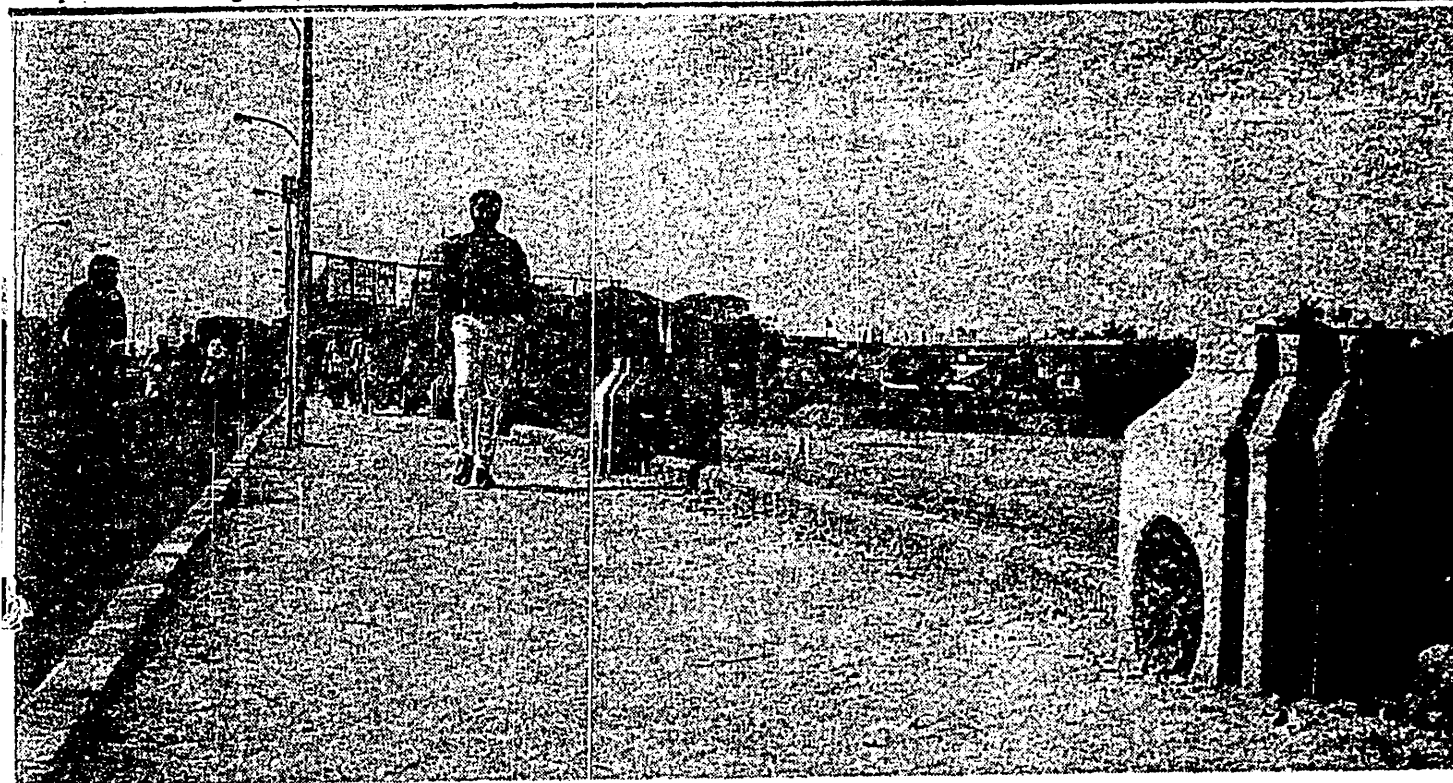
Once a sleepy little temple town, Sriperumbudur, 45 km from Madras, is today becoming a centre of industry and commerce.

The Sriperumbudur panchayat comprises 59 villages and one town

panchayat, spread over an area of 370 sq km.

The town's proximity to Madras makes it an ideal location for industry. The TVS group of companies has been expanding here; Axles India has already set up a unit. A couple of leather units — Chevro and Mican Leathers — a drug company, Unicorn Pharma, and Sona Gas, Nina Glue and Padmavathi Polymers have also established themselves here. Many others are expected to follow shortly.

Of late, other development has been taking place in and around the town which could have a significant fallout on the economy of the region. Nearly 20 per cent of the farmland has already been converted into housing plots. With Madras bursting at the seams, people have started moving here. As a consequence, land prices have spiralled. Even unapproved land costs Rs. 50,000 a ground — a far cry from just about Rs. 3000 not long ago.



The hoardings on the Marina are down. Hooray, hooray! But this is the state they have left the roadside edge of the Presidency College cricket ground. And to make matters

worse, it's become a dumping ground for building material. (Photos by RAJIND N CHRISTY). (Also see Page 5)

## Industrial growth looking up

(By A Staff Reporter)

Industrial development in and near Madras is looking up. Besides Sriperumbudur's Industrial Park, an export promotion industrial park is to be developed at Gummidipoondi at a cost of Rs. 20 crore. The existing industrial estates at Cuddalore, Gummidipoondi and Hosur are also to be expanded to accommodate more industries.

Industrial growth centres at Perundurai in Periyar District and Gangaikondan in Tirunelveli-Kattaboman District are to be developed, with the State

Government financing about Rs. 20 crore.

The total committed investment in the State since July 1991 in the industrial and energy sectors has been Rs. 84,950 crore. The State is now a favoured destination for foreign investment and it occupies the third position in the country in terms of clearances accorded by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board. Approval had been accorded for 327 foreign investment proposals since August 1991, involving an investment of Rs. 2,674.2 crore.

## SERVICES SATISFACTORY, BUT CORRUPTION RAMPANT

(By A Staff Reporter)

A study carried out in Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Pune, Calcutta and Madras, by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bangalore, has found that the

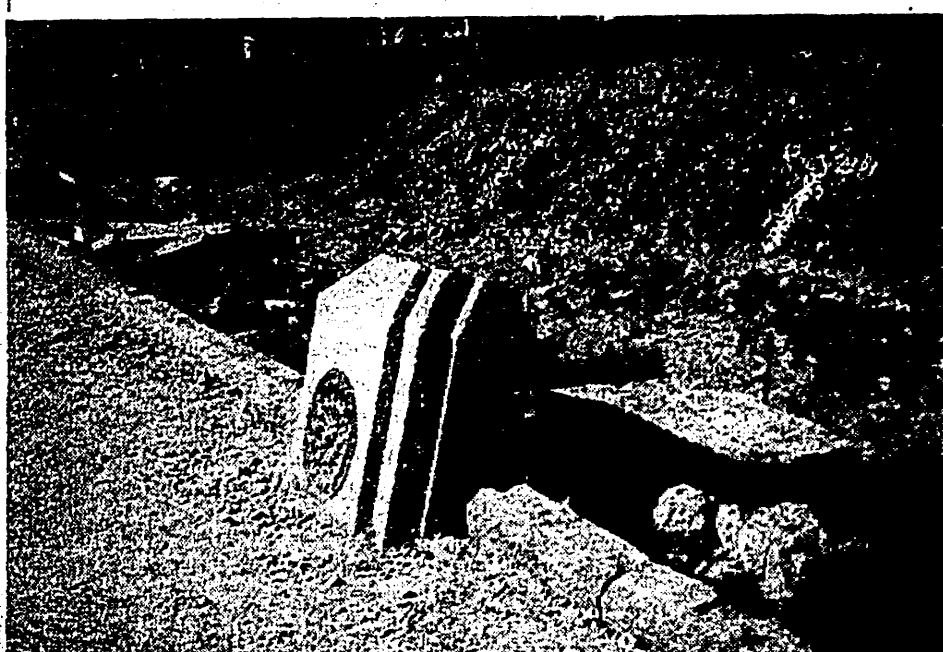
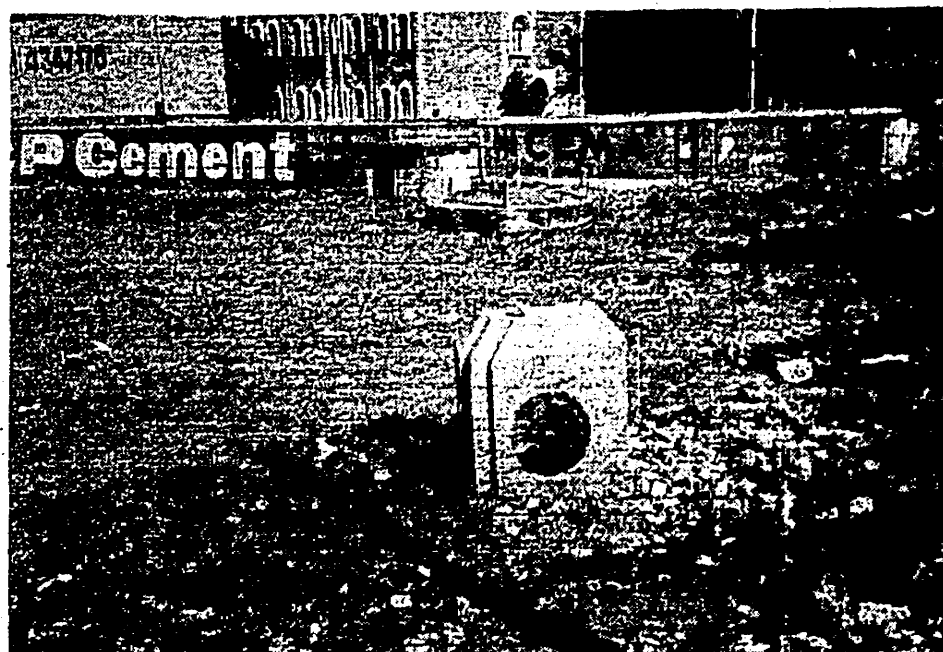
services provided by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) and Pallavan bus transport corporation find favour with the citizens of Madras.

Madras citizens also gave a good rating to government hospitals and the public sector banks. They, however, were dissatisfied with the services provided by the Madras Corporation, Madras Metropolitan Development Authority, and the Food and Civil Supplies Department.

However, the study reveals that corruption is the highest among the public services agencies of Madras. The majority of the payments are less than Rs. 50 each and are probably paid to ensure a continued level of efficiency in service, according to the study. Only 20 per cent of those interviewed are satisfied with staff behaviour of any of the service agencies.

The slum survey component of the study highlighted satisfaction with Post and Telegraph services, health and family welfare services, and electricity. But not with street lighting, garbage collection, sewerage and sanitation services.

Chronic problems with the Food and Civil Supplies Department were the supply of adulterated goods and irregular supplies through the public distribution system.



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## A sentimental occasion, remembering a revolution

**The Man From Madras** Musings doubts whether there is any organisation in India as committed to improving the lot of the common man, particularly the Indian farmer, as the MSSwaminathan Research Foundation. In continuing to work on improving the farmer's lot, Dr Swaminathan has not only invested in the Foundation all that he has earned worldwide as recognition for his efforts, but he has also been able to get the world to contribute to making the Foundation a true centre of excellence. That recognition — of both institution and man — was plain to see at a couple of major workshops the Foundation organised recently.

The inauguration of the Asian regional workshop on ecotechnology proved a sentimental occasion with three major figures of the Green Revolution sharing the head table and reminiscing about how they had helped give India a new life.

Norman Borlaug, the Chief Guest, recalled the three Ss who helped create India's Green Revolution and who, by that example, showed the rest of the developing world how to work a food miracle. Two of the Ss, Subramanian the Minister who gave his team a free rein and backed their advice with action and Swaminathan the young scientist who believed in Borlaug's miracle seeds, were present to listen to Borlaug's sentimental journey. Srinivasan, the third S — the Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture during that historic period in the Sixties — is sadly no more with us, Borlaug reminded his audience.

Subramanian recalled how they had started with 500 tons of high-yielding Mexican seed and experimented with it in 1000 plots scattered all over the country. The demonstration plots had other farmers soon asking for the seed. And that was when, after the drought of 1965, Subramanian persuaded the Government, against much opposition, to import 18,000

tons of the seed. In 1971, he redeemed his promise in Parliament that India would become self-sufficient in food. The country has not looked back since. But, he warned, this happy position is dogged by complacency. "We claim to have a food surplus of 28 million tonnes. But 20 million of those tonnes is spoilt! If only we paid attention to storage, we'd help not only ourselves but many countries in want. But no one seems to bother about storage in this country."

Both Borlaug and Swaminathan stressed another major point. Both science and technology had made tremendous strides in the last fifty years. But, said Borlaug, we keep forgetting the 700 million people in the world who are short of food because of lack of purchasing power. And, added Swaminathan, violence, ethnic strife, joblessness and new diseases, like AIDS, have all burgeoned. So have the debt burdens of several of the developing countries. The answers to these ills of the world have to be found. But where, wonders *MMM*, in a world where man alone is vile.

Moments when that wasn't holding true were when it was announced that the Tata Trust was contributing Rs 1.84 crore and the Government of Tamil Nadu was granting the land next to the Foundation for the development of the J R D Tata Centre for Ecotechnology, to which the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology would also contribute. And then the Director-General of UNESCO announced the institution of the UNESCO-Cousteau (not COUSTO, as spelt by one major daily) Chair in Ecotechnology for the Asia-Pacific region at the Foundation, with Dr Swaminathan the first incumbent. UNESCO also announced a grant of \$ 200,000 to the centre to network ecotechnology information in the Asian region.

### The 2nd step

Mahindra Ford's celebrated the second step — the laying of the foundation stone — of their greenfields project in Tamil Nadu by hosting a splendid party at the Taj Coromandel on the same evening, February 25rd. And *The Man From Madras Musings* was most struck by all the congratulations the self-effacing U S Consul-General Timothy Hauser received for all the hard work he had put in this past year to help get Tamil Nadu looked at favourably by Mahindra Ford's. Certainly no U

S Consul General in recent years has looked at South India as Hauser has done, as a place the US should put firm business roots down in. If he can sort out the touchy issue of the American — now International — School property in Kodaikanal, which is being eyed by the sharks, before his term ends later this year, Hauser's period will be remembered in Madras as one of the best in US-South Indian relations.

Hauser's counterpart was C Ramachandran, the Tamil Nadu Industries Secretary, who candidly confessed at the foundation stone-laying ceremony that even if he had spent a couple of years at Harvard doing an MBA he wouldn't have learnt as much about international business as he did during the past one year,

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

answering all Mahindra Ford's queries. But, he pointed out, as many have before him, the learning exercise was made so much easier by the Chief Minister's clear thinking, her determination to have the project in Tamil Nadu and the inputs she contributed at every step of the negotiations.

This was something enthused over by some of the Americans *MMM* met at the party. A couple of senior executives from Detroit, who have interacted with the Chief Minister over the duration of the discussions, gave her full marks for negotiating. "Her attitude to the negotiations, more than anything else, made us want to be in Tamil Nadu," they insisted, throwing cold water on *MMM*'s continuing skepticism about the project. "Chairman Trotman — he's been 43 years, all his working life, with Ford's — is totally committed to Madras. Just watch us take-off," promised another.

That take-off is going to see 40 to 50 Ford families descend on Madras in the next few months to get work on the plant and paint shop started. "And let me assure you the Americans are NOT coming! There'll be Australians, New Zealanders, Britons, Germans ... may be even a couple of Americans," a third American assured *MMM*, referring to a recent *MMM* headline. *MMM* only hopes there'll be a few Indians too around at the top!

### RR celebration

Now that could stand for 'right royal celebration', but does in fact stand for 'Rolls Royce celebration' — and it's with a Rolls Royce that M A M Ramasamy, who dominates the Indian racing scene, celebrated his recent streak of good fortune, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns.

The Supreme Court's favourable decision put the Madras Race Club back in private hands. MAM's 'Amazing Boy' won the Indian Derby (a race which should now be called the 'Mumbai Derby'), the only Classic that had till this memorable occasion eluded his owner, who has a permanent niche in the *Guinness Book of Records* for an ever-increasing number of Classic winners. And to culminate an auspicious

period, MAM decided to adopt a son — and did so to much fanfare and festivity. It was to celebrate, as much as to commemorate, his good fortune that MAM decided to treat himself to a new Rolls Royce Silver Spur, bought in London for around Rs. 1 crore.

The world's best car is the reputation the Rolls Royce has had for nearly a century. But it has been at least two decades since a Rolls Royce of any vintage has been seen on Madras roads. The last Rolls Royce *MMM* saw in Madras — and rode in — was a vintage Silver Ghost ... at least, that was the model's name, if *MMM*'s memory serves him right. It was owned by Rolls Royce-buff Geoffrey Bawa, the well-known Sri Lankan architect. *MMM*'s recollection of the occasion is of being taken in Rolls Royce splendour by

Geoffrey Bawa to see the refurbishing he had been doing at the Connemara and to offer him a name for the new restaurant. 'Kolan' was the suggestion quickly accepted — but, sadly, in less than three decades it's a name that's vanished.

Before the short spell when Bawa's Roll Royce lorded it over Madras roads, it was in the Thirties and Forties that Rolls Royces were to be seen in the city. Well-known lawyer V L Ethiraj was a figure much admired — as has been mentioned in *Madras Musings* in recent weeks — in his Rolls Royce. The legendary Dr S Rangachari, whose statue graces (though somewhat hidden) the General Hospital entrance had only one extravagance — and that was his Rolls Royce. And another with a similar extravagance at the same time was, would you believe it, a policeman! C Rangaswami Iyengar, who came from a wealthy family, was Deputy Commissioner of Police when he used to drive himself to work in his Rolls.

From three — if not more... there'd always be one in town when the Maharajah of Mysore visited — to nil was Madras's fate. Till MAM brought back a Rolls Royce to the Madras scene. *MMM* looks forward to a couple of more Rolls being seen on our roads ... that's when the real status symbol will be back and Benzes and BMWs would be given their come-uppance!

Spotting the Rolls

The story may be purely apocryphal, but it still makes a good story, the way MAM bought his Rolls. As *The Man From Madras Musings* heard it told, MAM was strolling down a London West End street with a friend when he saw a couple of Rolls Royces in a showroom.

Standing outside, he stared through the window at a Silver Spur for long. Then he turned to his friend and said, "Let's go in and have a look!" His rather reluctant friend responded half sarcastically, "Only if you're going to buy it!" "Come on, man," encouraged a laughing MAM, "where will you get an opportunity to see a Rolls at closer quarters?" And so they went in ... and out they came.

half an hour later, MAM richer by a Rolls Royce.

Watch out for it on Madras roads. It's a beauty, *MMM* promises you.

### In brief

★ In all the excitement over the decision by Australia and the West Indies not to play their World Cup matches in Sri Lanka, *The Man From Madras Musings* finds that one story from London was paid scant heed to. Lawrence Thilagar, the Paris-based LTTE politburo member and whose statements are often considered official pronouncements, told an Indian journalist LTTE targets were the Sri Lanka Government and its armed forces, not sports-persons or foreigners. "We have never threatened any sportsman," he stated, then emphasised, "We have nothing against any foreigner, and they have nothing to fear from us." This story appeared in print on February 9th and there was still time to save the situation. But *MMM* wonders whether it couldn't be saved because the truth about that situation was as Thilagar went on to describe it: "If they have security fears, they are from the Sinhalese side ... Sinhalese reactions (to the happenings on the Sri Lankan tour of Australia) have created a bitter climate and that is the main consideration behind the Australian decision."

★ When is the Revenue Officer of the Corporation of Madras, Mr Damodaran, going to take action against errant revenue collectors at parking lots, wonders *The Man from Madras Musings*. Those collectors inevitably want to collect Rs. 3 from motorists (by offering a Rs. 2 car ticket and a Re.1 two-wheeler ticket) and Rs. 2 from two-wheeler riders (by offering a car parking ticket). If you are boisterous enough about it, they accept the Rs. 2 for a car grudgingly and retreat — but not without an argument. If Mr Damodaran wants a specific complaint, *MMM* has a couple for him — but more important is ending the menace once and for all and instilling a sense of discipline in the contractors and the fee collectors they hire. If the rates are changed at any time by the Corporation, they should be prominently displayed in the parking lots — and an official card announcing the change given to each fee collector. Otherwise, Mr Damodaran, please get the fee collectors to behave.

★ Where according to you does the biggest source of worry in the years to come. The problem has already reached alarming proportions in metropolitan cities. And with these people defecating in open areas, along roadsides, others should realise that the question of sewage not being properly

disposed could have serious health problems for those living nearby.

But the main problem, I think, is our system of sanitation. Nature, in its infinite wisdom, has maintained separate channels of disposing excreta and urine within the human body. We make the basic mistake of mixing the two in the toilet and adding water to it. The outlet from individual toilets joins others in larger sewage drains which, after joining yet larger drains, is generally let into waterbodies like streams, rivers or lakes, which constitute major sources of drinking water. Very little of the sewage is actually treated.

Nitrogen in the water from human waste, along with the nitrogen in industrial pollutants, increase every day while the sizes of water bodies and their ability to absorb the nitrogen remain the same.

What could be the immediate solution for such senseless dumping?

Instead of having large treatment plants, which are designed to handle waste from several areas in a city, on-

### Business brief

★ Spotted at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of Mahindra Ford's was a team from Hyundai. *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders whether it was an indicator that the South Koreans had decided on a Madras rather than a Delhi base. They have been looking at 500 acres at Katrambakkam, near Sriperumbudur, as well as at Gummidipoondi. *MMM* hears a choice will be made any day now. Hyundai, *MMM* understands, had earlier turned down a Maraimalaiagar site next to Mahindra Ford's.

MMM

• A thought or two for sullied Madras

# Waste not, want not

How large is the problem of urban sanitation in the world today?

Sanitation in urban areas of the world has reached a crisis point. Current predictions indicate that in 20-30 years' time, a majority of the world's population would live in urban squatter colonies. These people are often not acknowledged by the municipal authorities, and the latter do not provide them with any services.

Water shortage too would definitely be a cause for concern in the 21st Century. It is already a source of worry. Under such circumstances, it is unfair to flush 15-20 litres of fresh drinking water every time you use the toilet. Problems related to urban sanitation and water shortage, like many other problems, are directly linked to population and its density.

If this is such a large problem, is not the world of scientific research actively pursuing the issue, looking for solutions to urban sanitation?

Unfortunately, it is not doing as much as it could have. Though I do not have ready figures, the amounts being spent on research would probably be around US \$ 2 million a year. The world seems to have accepted the flushing system as the most effective method of dealing with the problem. Ironically, the flushing system used today is an 18th Century technology and we are content with seeing different models and colours as 'innovations' in this field.

Where according to you does the main problem lie?

As I have said earlier, squatters will be the biggest source of worry in the years to come. The problem has already reached alarming proportions in metropolitan cities. And with these people defecating in open areas, along roadsides, others should realise that the question of sewage not being properly

Sweden's Uno Winblad was not a sanitation engineer but had trained as an architect in London in the '50s. While working in Ethiopia and Nigeria, he realised that the main problems confronting tropical housing and construction were not shortage of funds or building materials but those of water and sanitation. His book, *Sanitation Without Water*, written jointly with W Kilama, reflects his views. But he says there are no simple solutions to the problem. Rajat Banerji recently spoke to him in Delhi.

disposed could have serious health problems for those living nearby.

But the main problem, I think, is our system of sanitation. Nature, in its infinite wisdom, has maintained separate channels of disposing excreta and urine within the human body. We make the basic mistake of mixing the two in the toilet and adding water to it.

The outlet from individual toilets joins others in larger sewage drains which, after joining yet larger drains, is generally let into waterbodies like streams, rivers or lakes, which constitute major sources of drinking water. Very little of the sewage is actually treated.

Nitrogen in the water from human waste, along with the nitrogen in industrial pollutants, increase every day while the sizes of water bodies and their ability to absorb the nitrogen remain the same.

What could be the immediate solution for such senseless dumping?

Instead of having large treatment plants, which are designed to handle waste from several areas in a city, on-

site treatment, which would deal with a limited number of houses, must be encouraged. But even in this, there is a problem. The world's population can be divided into two categories; washers and wipers. While it is easier to deal with the latter category, the former are quite difficult to control, as their routine usually has its roots in tradition and taboo. India and many parts of the African continent face this problem.

In India, for example, human waste is considered utterly dirty, even your own waste. It would be an uphill task to try and convince people to alter the way they deal with it. The same goes for Africa. People's attitudes must change. That has to be the starting point.

From what you have observed, how do people in various parts of the world look upon the problem of human waste?

As I have just mentioned, in countries where taboos are strong, the municipalities and governments have a lot of work ahead. Traditionally, wipers are open to change. This was why we were able to carry out experiments in countries like Mexico and San Salvador, where, for the past four years, we have been able to successfully implement a system termed desiccation.

In the Far East, especially in China and Japan, human waste has always been considered a resource. In China, where they have been cultivating the same lands for the past 4,000 years, they have used human waste as fertilisers. Farmers who owned lands along roadways used to maintain clean toilets in the hope that travellers would use them. Urine, for example, would be mixed with water and sprinkled in their fields.

This same practice is followed in Sweden today, where urine is stored in separate tanks, and farmers collect this for use in their fields. Also, a system called *clivus multrum* has been in use. The West has understood waste to be



Uno Winblad (Photo by Arvind Yadav, courtesy CSE)

a part of a cycle, which can be used as a resource. How do the two systems, desiccation and *clivus multrum* work?

Both involve the breaking down of pathogenic organisms at different temperatures and are different composting techniques. In desiccation, solid and liquid wastes are not mixed. The humidity required is about 20-30 per cent. Pathogenic organisms are killed by solar energy and the contents get dried. The unit need not be underground, a desiccating unit can be set up in both luxury and ordinary apartments, on any floor. And the smell is no problem either.

In *clivus multrum*, household liquid waste and organic wastes are mixed

with solid human waste for composting. Here the process of decomposition reduces the heap to less than 10 per cent of the original volume. The collecting pit slopes downward so that it is easy to remove the decomposed material. Humidity needs to be maintained at 60 per cent. In Germany, a system for 800 household units has been developed. Both these are on-site systems.

While these two systems have not replaced existing sewage systems, they have been able to show planners that there exists an alternative that can be implemented. Besides, there is a financial spin-off, because human waste is also a useful product: it is organic manure — (CSE/Down To Earth Features)

not only look forward to organising more first-class matches in the future but perhaps even an international match.

## OUR READERS WRITE

T V Ramana  
Principal,  
Guru Nanak College,  
Madras-600 032

### Travelling MRTS

#### First 'first-class'

I refer to Ajax's remarks in *MM* Feb. 1. While thanking him for the compliments paid to our ground, I should mention that the Tamil Nadu-Goa Ranji Trophy Match is indeed the debut of our ground as a first class venue, for that was the first first-class match played on our ground. Buchi Babu, several inter-district and other inter-state men and women's matches played on our ground earlier are not 'first-class' matches, in cricketing terms.

In 1994, the Indian team had a practice session on our grounds just before leaving for Sri Lanka. All the media persons present on the occasion, as well as the Indian team, were all praise for our ground and the facilities offered there. If I remember right, *The Hindu* carried a story under the heading "Guru Nanak College proves to be a boon to the Indian Cricket Team".

Thanks to the munificence and continued excellent maintenance of the ground by M/s. India Cements Limited, we

are not only look forward to organising more first-class matches in the future but perhaps even an international match.

The whole world is going gaga over the inauguration of the 'Flyover Train' from Beach to Chepauk. I too had the privilege of travelling in it the first day. But how many of us have thought of the following?

a) A beautiful football ground and playing field; where I played during my childhood days, is lost in Chintadripet.

b) Another 'lung-space' near Adams Road, Chepauk, has been closed for ever.

c) The much-delayed project will not serve the purpose, unless completed in secured time, as the city is bursting at its seams with a growing population.

d) Why can't our Government think of having a closed sewerage system and clean the Adyar and the Buckingham Canal, so that water transport becomes viable. The cost for these projects would be definitely much less than what it will cost to complete the MRTS upto Luz.

M Fazal  
Flat No. 1, Seaview Apartments  
16 Leith Castle Road  
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# A school with a difference

Small is beautiful — and sensible: the school at Gedhai, which is not on most of the detailed maps of India, hammers this message home.

After a three-hour bus ride from the east into the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu, you arrive at hairpin bend Number 34 which leads you onto a jungle path. About a kilometre further, in the midst of lush forest and perennial gurgling streams, lies the school.

A name for the school would limit — and, perhaps, distort it. After all, it is only a small community of 22 girls and boys — from nine to 18 years — two anthropologists, and a couple from IIT (so publicity-shy that they refuse to have their names published). Disillusioned with the sterile and irrelevant system that passes for

agriculture, water management — besides innovation and skill in handling tools.

The challenge is not the competition and certification of formal education. It is the recapitulation of a harmonious evolution of *homo sapiens* from the hunter-gatherer-tool-user stage to the explorer of cybernetic space. The challenge is to grow in a setting that is congruent with nature. And so the community has wondered for well over a year about bringing light to the school at Gedhai.

They decided that electricity to power two nine-watt compact fluorescent tubes (CFTs), a video unit, a computer, an amplifier for their guitars and an electric fence would be sufficient — just 200 W to 300 W.

• by PETER PATRAO

education, and supported by enlightened parents, the school at Gedhai evolved a couple of years ago. The children ultimately sit for the National Open School examination, and so far have excelled academically.

In this idyllic setting, there are no classrooms, no uniforms, no examinations and no electricity. Five huts and an 80-foot-long swimming tank are the main indicators of human habitation.

Encountering nature — adapting the ecosystem, and adapting to it — is the core experience in this school of life. Community support encourages a free-flowing evolution with the minimum of rules. Reptiles and mammals, ranging from civet cats and panthers to porcupines and wild boars (the bear is perhaps the largest), co-habit the ecosystem. Along with birds, they are the despair of the community's efforts to grow their own food. Symbiotic interactions with the ecosystem form an integral part of the school's curriculum.

Farming, gathering fuelwood and cooking — survival education — would perhaps describe an aspect of the school. Nature is the main teacher and the community is in tune with nature's biorhythms. The day literally begins at the crack of dawn, and the last meal is at twilight. With only a hurricane lantern for illumination, the senses are heightened to perceive jungle sounds and movements.

Yet the school is sensitive to its children's need to garner skills required to interact with the city and the world. A video player would open up frontiers that would sooner or later have to be encountered. Computer and electronic network communication skills would probably need to be acquired in the future.

In the immediate present, the vegetable patch could do with an electric fence with high frequency pulses that would deter (but not harm) animal intruders. It would at least make fresh vegetables possible. And around such humble endeavours would develop a holistic, interdisciplinary understanding of ecology, biology, physics, chemistry,

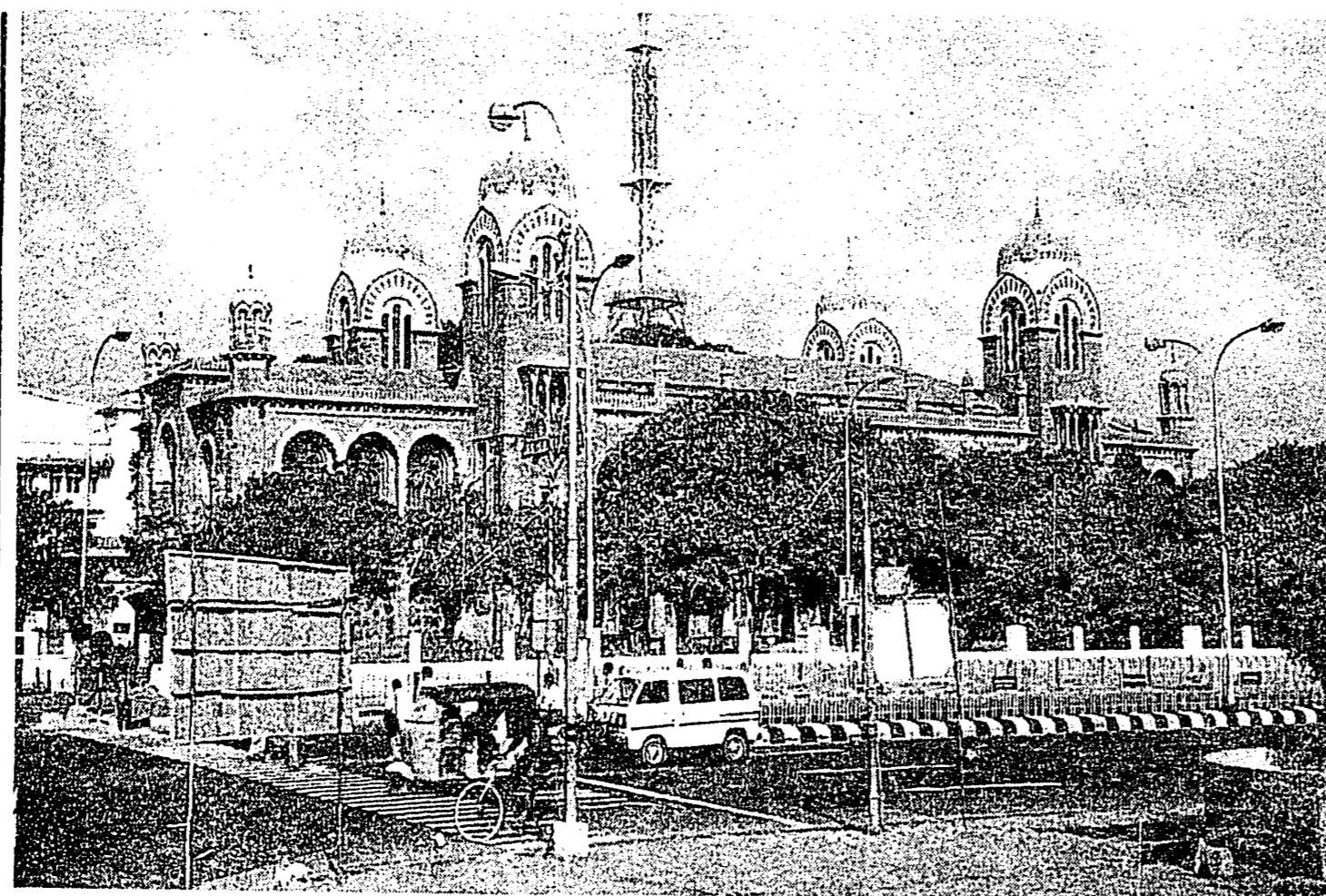
While a kerosene-fuelled genset would temporarily solve their needs, its noise would be jarring. The long-term unsustainability (and usual unavailability) of kerosene was another factor to be reckoned with. Solar panels would be capital-intensive. Linking to the grid would be even more prohibitively expensive (over 20 poles to deliver 200 W), apart from the years lost in the red tape and bureaucracy in getting a plan sanctioned.

Looping part of their stream via a 60-metre vertical 'head' through a pipeline to turn a pelton runner coupled to a generator would interfere least with nature. The spent tail waters would lead back to the stream 60 metres below. Maintenance of the system would necessitate considerations of volume, velocity, transformation of energy, principles of electricity etc. These in turn would help the students learn aspects of maths and physics, meaningfully related to a real situation.

When I left our nine-year-old daughter at the school at Gedhai, I was exposed to this possibility of micro hydel generation of electricity. Enthusiastically, I volunteered to fabricate the pelton runner coupled to a generator. This was a unique opportunity to participate in the generation of electricity at a micro level, for and with a community, with minimal interference with the ecosystem...

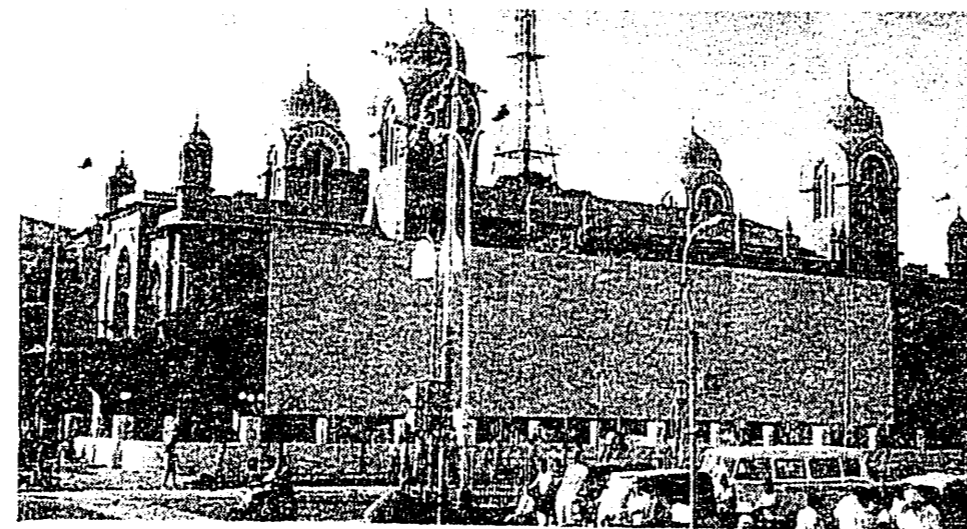
(The job done, in rural Kerala, and) awaiting the bus to take us back from hairpin bend 34, our heads were literally and metaphorically in the clouds. The magic at Gedhai had pulled me from Panchgani, Maharashtra, to participate in fulfilling a need in Tamil Nadu. The task was executed by simple folk from Kerala and Karnataka, and by children from different parts of India — and abroad. Was this national integration or international integration?

To paraphrase Neil Armstrong's message from the moon: 200 W of electricity may represent a small step. But the lessons learnt could be a giant attitudinal leap for humankind down on earth.



## THE OLD... & THE NEW

It was on January 16th that we published a strip of photographs taken twenty days earlier of hoardings that had come up and were defacing the Marina. The Hindu had just a couple of days earlier featured its own picture and story of what was going on on the Marina... leaving us regretting the fact that we were not a daily. Be that as it may, no matter whose story had a greater effect, the fact is the hoardings on the Marina have come down — and the structures removed in their entirety. Someone out there... or is it up there?... appears to occasionally listen... and we are indeed glad... and grateful. There is, however, a curious side to this story. Our OLD is a photograph taken on January 23rd and it appeared in Madras Musings on February 1. Our NEW is of the same scene, taken by RAJIND N CHRISTY on February 11th and showing Senate House visible again; the hoarding hiding it had come down



a couple of days earlier. A story in The Hindu dated February 12th read:

Some hoardings on the Marina, put up during the South Asian Federation Games, have been removed.

The billboards were erected as per a Government Order for the period of the Games. There was public apprehension that the hoardings would continue to remain on the seafront, when they were not pulled down even after the Games. However, many hoardings put up for the Games, in various parts of the city, are yet to be removed.

Now that story is what's curious about this whole affair, 'The Case of the Hoardings on the Marina'. Yes, many of the hoardings came up just before or during the Games. The hoarding that hid Senate House, however, came up long AFTER the Games. In fact, it was in the process of being erected when RAJIND N CHRISTY took his picture on January 23rd. So, whatever the Government Order said or didn't say, pulling up hoardings on the Marina was assumed as permitted by someone long after the Games! Maybe such assumptions are what Madras Musings and The Hindu's stories put a stop to.

# Are the bulls running at all?

Though the depressed index began moving up from January 25th onwards, it was only with the coming of February that the Sensex crossed the all important 3000-mark, below which it had been languishing for quite some time. On February 1st it rose by 69 points and on the very next day by 172. Suddenly there was so much action that observers and analysts alike were talking, though tentatively, of a bull-run finally coming into being.

Though such hopes were based more on wishful thinking than sound analysis, the following days seemed to strengthen their reading. In the ten trading days immediately following the 172 point lift on February 2nd the Sensex recorded the following changes: 60, (-78), 47, 178, 91, 1, 56, 53, 60 and 42. During the 178 point increase (on February 14th), the Sensex

It is possible for a community — adults and children — to make a transparent decision of its energy needs, after an enlightened discussion, discernment and consensus. Finally, a place of learning need not merely reflect the goals of a consumerist culture. It serves the community by triggering a silent revolution, in this case, of a pelton wheel — without Enron's help. (Courtesy: The Times of India's Sunday Review).

had crossed the crucial 3600 mark once, though it fell below immediately, to close the day at 3581.

On Friday February 16th, the rise slowed down and on the next two trading days, i.e. 19th and 20th, there were marginal decreases of 16 and 30

respectively. But it should be noted that, overall, the Index has moved up by 627 points from 2826 (on January 25th) to 3453 (February 20th).

The general trend has thus been bullish and many analysts, in claiming that a bull run has now begun, cite FII buying as the prime motivator for the emerging phase. This is highly debatable, as the net FII investment is but a drop in the huge Indian markets. Even at its height last year, net FII investment was only Rs 654.80 cr (in July 1995) and it petered out to Rs 40.50 cr in December.

These figures should be viewed in the context of the entire market

capitalisation in India which, as of January 1996, stood at Rs 4,14,519.80 cr. It is true that FIIs almost doubled their monthly inflow in January 1996 and that in the six trading sessions till February 8th they had pumped in Rs. 18 cr. But we must also consider the total volumes at the BSE which put these amounts in true perspective. For example, total value of trade done at the BSE on February 19, 1996, was Rs. 292.25 cr, and this on a dull day. Thus, to say that FII buying is the only, or even prime, reason for the rise in the index appears far-fetched. However we could be correct in terming FII purchases as being the trigger or the catalyst for the new phase.

For it is true that foreign institutional and corporate investors benefitted greatly from the slide in rupee values. Moreover they were aided by the bull run in US markets. Fortuitously, for them that is, just as they were becoming cash-rich, the Indian stock market presented them with sound but undervalued stocks, whose low P/E's must have looked terribly attractive, which prompted them to come back to the Indian markets.

Other factors which complemented their re-entry were the implementation of the Forward Trading at BSE and the

(Continued on P6)

# The man who would not be Premier

One of the founding fathers of modern Madras, the uncrowned leader of the Non-Brahmin Movement and, later, the Justice Party, which for a period of time walked the corridors of power in Madras, was a merchant prince of Tondiarpet. But he was a rare human being, for he more than once refused the office of the Premiership of the sprawling Madras Presidency. When all and sundry today hanker after power at any cost, a person of this calibre seems incredible and even mythical! But there was nothing mythical about this rare 'Madras'. Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetti.



Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetti (Photo courtesy RAGAMI)

that would bring the Non-Brahmin Movement to the attention of the people.

Another association, the South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF), was formed soon after, also to promote the political interests of the Non-Brahmins. Theagaraya Chetti, who signed the manifesto of the Federation in December 1916, felt the SILF needed a mouthpiece to air its views and, in January 1916, a struggling publication, *Indian Patriot*, was taken over by the SILF for Rs. 40,000 (a fabulous price at the time) and made a daily. It hit the newsstands in February 1917 under the name *Justice*. Consequently, the SILF came to be known as the 'Justice Party'.

Theagaraya Chetti was born on April 27, 1852, the youngest of three brothers. The Pitti family, from Ekathur Village, near Madras, became prosperous through textiles, hides and skins.

A voracious reader, Theagaraya Chetti pursued knowledge with missionary zeal. A good orator, he made an effective impression in college debates. He took his B.A. degree in 1876 and opted for a political career. Money was no problem, as his elder brother ran the family business. As a person with a social conscience he chose to marry a poor girl, Valli. The marriage proved happy and produced a son and seven girls.

Determined to serve the public, he joined a well-known social organisation, the Madras Mahajana Sabha, which owed its genesis to an earlier institution, the Madras Native Association established in 1864 by a noted citizen of the day, Gazula Lakshminarasu Chetti. With Gazula's death in 1864 the MNA faded, only to be later revived in 1894 as the Madras Mahajana Sabha. The MMS consisted of the cream of the city and its founder members included G Subramania Iyer (Editor, *The Hindu*), Salem Ramaswami Mudaliar (one of the leaders of the Madras High Court Bar), Sir P Madhava Rao, and Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetti.

The Non-Brahmin Movement took root during the early years of the 20th Century when it was widely believed that the Brahmin community, with just 3% of the population, dominated government service. To fight this domination, certain leading citizens of Madras promoted, in November 1916, a company, the 'South Indian Peoples Association Limited', to publish English, Tamil and Telugu newspapers

Dr T M Nair, another founding father of the Non-Brahmin Movement and the Party, was the editor of *Justice*. Simultaneously, SILF launched a Tamil daily, *Davidan*, a Telugu daily, *Andhra Prakasika*, and an English weekly, *The Non-Brahmin*. Money was no problem in the Justice Party, with leaders like Theagaraya Chetti, the Raja of Panagal and others. The Party had its own building on Mount Road, which is now the Plaza Cinema.

While Sir Pitti was Corporation President, Western style 'flush-out toilets' were sought to be introduced in Madras. The move met with violent opposition from the tradition-bound conservatives who felt that the system was unhygienic!

According to the ancient sastras, toilets should not be situated inside the house. The Orthodox Brahmin community was most vociferous among the opposition, but Theagaraya Chetti succeeded in pushing through the reform, thanks to the efforts of a Brahmin Councillor, Kayar Desikachariar. A lawyer from an affluent background, Desikachariar was highly Westernised in his lifestyle. He belonged to no party, but was friendly with the Justice Party, which did not endear him to his relatives and friends. (This writer is his grand-nephew!)

## They made OUR Madras A walk down Memory Lane with RANDOR GUY

Many men and women contributed to the unforgettable Madras that existed in the first half of this century. Statesmen... lawyers... judges... doctors... writers... journalists... musicians... film personalities... theatre-devotees... performing artists... social workers... educationists... Indians... British... All of them did their bit to make Madras the grand

city it was before the second half of the century began. In this series, you will meet many of them, the men and women who have earned their place in the history of Madras between 1900 and 1950. Come, take a walk down Madras memory lane with me and let us remember their contributions.

R.G.

Elections to the Legislative Council were held in the Madras Province for the first time in 1929 and the Justice Party swept the polls, winning 63 out of the 65 seats it contested. The Congress Party boycotted the elections. Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras, invited Theagaraya Chetti to form the provincial government as his Premier. (In those days, the head of the Cabinet was known as the 'Premier' or 'First Minister' and sometimes 'Prime Minister'. The expression now in use, 'Chief Minister', came into effect only after the country became a republic in 1950.)

A man of great ideals, Sir Pitti politely said 'No' to the Governor's offer and stepped aside making way for others. A comparatively unknown Justice Party leader, B Subbarayulu Reddier, was chosen as Premier. Subbarayulu Naidu resigned after six months due to ill-health and the Governor invited Sir Pitti once more to form the cabinet. He refused the offer

once again and the Raja of Panagal became the Premier. During the second elections in 1923, the Justice Party again swept the polls, but Sir Pitti once more refused the Governor's offer to form the cabinet. The Raja of Panagal thus got his second term.

Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetti was not merely a politician. He was also interested in the fine arts, including theatre. When the Chennai Andhra Maha Sabha (CAMS) was established in 1916, Sir Pitti was unanimously elected its first President, which office he held till his death. During his tenure he actively patronised theatre, and CAMS staged many Telugu plays performed by troupes from Andhra.

Sir Pitti was struck down by a carbuncle, then considered incurable, and passed away on April 28, 1925. The Justice Party lost its greatest leader and, according to some social historians, the end of the Justice Party really began with the death of the man after whom Theagaraya Nagar (T Nagar) was later named.

# How I lost a million

Well, many millions, as it turned out. I was prompted to recall this with grief and sadness on reading the article on Sir Bashyam Iyengar by Randor Guy in a recent issue of *Madras Musings* (Jan 16th). That illustrious gentleman happened to have been my late wife Revati's maternal grandfather. Randor Guy did not mention, I think, that a full-size statue of Sir Bashyam in genuine bronze is still to be found in the grounds of the High Court, Madras. I went there to photograph it once, but was chased out by a watchman of sorts, as though I was a stray goat, in spite of the fact that I told him I was looking for my grandfather.

But that's not how I lost all those millions. I lost them because my late wife had a relative, or the friend of a relative — my memory fades — who lived near Tiruvanniyur and we went there on a visit to him once. At that time, his house, or maybe it was one or two doors down, was the last structure of any kind, except for a few fishermen's *kuppams*, between Tiruvanniyur and Mamallapuram. Revati and I had been spending weeks looking all over Madras and its outskirts for an agreeable place to build our house, and this gentleman told us we could have all the land we wanted along there for a thousand rupees an acre.

And I scoffed! Land, I said, land! That's not land, it's just SAND! You can't build anything on sand, my dear fellow. No foundations. Tumble over. Bad place to be in heavy weather too, as sailors would have called it when I was a boy at sea. Think of those great

waves — mistakenly called 'tidal' — coming in on top of you in a cyclone. They'd turn any kind of building upside down. No, no, thank you all the same, but it's LAND we're looking for, not SAND!

And that, dear reader, is how I came to lose all those millions. Just think of it, all the sand — er, land — I wanted from there to Mamallapuram for just a thousand rupees an acre. You couldn't get four square inches for that

amount now, what with V.G.P., Silver Sands and a multitude of similar if lesser known hotels, resorts and private luxury bungalows coming up.

Mind you, that's not the only time I just missed becoming a multi-millionaire. If the truth were known, and if I ever got around to writing it, you'd find my life is one long string of episodes in every one of which I just missed becoming a multi-millionaire. No Midas touch, you see. Nothing I touch has ever turned to gold, not even the magic words that fly off my pen — er, word processor. I often wonder why....

But to return for a moment to all that sand/land, maybe it's just as well

in that particular case that I did lack the Midas touch. I'm not sure, even today, that I'd be all that comfortable living so close to the Bay of Bengal. I mentioned 'tidal' waves, just now, and question the use of the term 'tidal', which such waves are not, since they are in no way connected with tides.

Has anyone noticed that we haven't had a cyclone in Madras for a good many years now? And do people know that cyclones can occur in the Bay of Bengal, and have been recorded, in any and every month of the year, not only during the Northeast Monsoon? I have known two severe cyclones to hit Madras in the month of May, and if you go to the meteorological office on College Road (which is NOT named after the girl's college there, by the way) and ask them nicely, I'm sure they'll show you, as they've shown me, the records of every cyclone in the Bay going back a century or more.

And those records show that cyclones have occurred in every month, though rarely outside the Northeast. Still, they can happen, and I wouldn't like to be sleeping in one of those hotels or in a house on that sand/land if a big one comes up. It was in 1977 that the then Director of the Cyclone Centre, which is opposite the Reserve Bank, showed me the eye of a cyclone on his radar screen, and allowed me to photograph it. The Director solemnly tapped the screen and said — I remember his words vividly — "Mr Miller, if that comes

ashore here, this city will be wiped out".

As it happened it didn't, but only just. The 1977 cyclone 'tidal' wave came ashore at night just about 150 miles north of Madras and the great storm surge — a more accurate title for it — went fifteen miles inland. Had it been Madras, that would have taken it up to Ambattur. Many thousands of men, women, children, goats, cows, pigs and buffaloes drowned, even though that mighty wall of water came ashore in an agricultural area, relatively sparsely populated.

Well, we haven't had a major cyclone hitting Madras for years now, but you never know. There's that great new comet falling inwards towards the Sun, to be seen at its brightest and best from anywhere in India in March next year — not all that far off — and as everyone knows, comets always herald disasters of one kind or another. The very word 'disaster' means an Evil Star. Halley's Comet appeared just before the Normans conquered Britain in 1066, and only three months after Julius Caesar was assassinated. More recently, King George VII of England, Emperor of India, died during the 1910 apparition of Comet Halley, of comatomania complicated by bronchitis. And then..... well I'd better stop there. If I go on like this, *Madras Musings* will be responsible for reducing the value of all that sand/land back to a thousand rupees an acre again. And what a waste! Too late for me. I'm too old; now.

# Where the Madras buses miss

You have guests from another city. You take them out sightseeing, shopping, etc. You reach the bus stop only to find that every bus except the one you are waiting for arrives one after the other. As you curse your luck, the visitors are awed by the fact that so many buses can not only exist but also be seen on the roads. And on those rare instances when your bus does come (when Lady Luck is with you), your friends are bowled over by the ridiculously low fares. By now you begin to think that our bus service is one of the blessings of life in Madras.

Well, this was what I too believed until recently; until I happened to move around in Coimbatore and Erode. I soon found their bus services a pleasant contrast to ours, which, after these visits, seems an apology for a bus service.

Coimbatore, known for its exorbitant auto fares (most auto-rickshaws there don't have meters!), has, in contrast, government-run buses with considerable drivers and courteous conductors who welcome you, at times even pester you, to get into 'their' buses. When we arrived at the Coimbatore railway station one morning and tried to engage an auto to reach the bus stand, just ten minutes away, every driver, believe it or not,

asked for a hundred rupees. (Even the railfare from Madras was just fifteen rupees more than what the auto drivers were demanding!)

We then decided to try our luck with a bus that was approaching the bus stop. But even as we moved towards the bus we concluded we would not be able to get into such a

by R. Jaistri

crowded one, especially with our luggage. From the crowd emerged the conductor with a smiling Vaanga, Saar. When we told him about our luggage load, he not only shrugged it aside but asked us to just hand him the boxes one by one. God knows which corners of the bus he stuffed all of them into, but he did find space for them and then cheerfully asked us to get in. And even the driver did not grumble over the delay! When we reached the bus stand, the conductor was at it again, retrieving our bags from those mysterious nooks and corners of the bus. He then bid us a cheerful goodbye, even as we marvelled at his space

management and the fact that he charged a paise extra for the luggage!

All this is too good to be true, I thought. Perhaps the conductor belonged to a rare (and endangered) species. But I was soon to discover that this species is native to this part of Tamil Nadu. In the main bus stands the very sight of the buses is pleasant, with each one outshining the other. A big chunk of the mofussil services are run by private operators, so the government buses are forced to match them in quality of service and comforts such as cushioned seats and convenient overhead luggage racks (with no nails sticking out). If you linger even for a second near a bus, its conductor will all but bundle you into it. Unlike our PTC friend, he will not look the other way if you ask him when the bus will start. There is also a system wherein tickets for the next bus are given only after the previous bus is ready to start or has already started. In fact, even the doors (yes, these buses have doors that work) are opened only after a particular time to avoid confusion.

If you happen to be on a morning bus, you will be greeted with the smell

of incense sticks and flowers that adorn the little 'altars' inside the bus with their fair share of gods and goddesses. Tickets are issued at the starting point itself. For those who get in *en route*, there is no problem in getting tickets. Most buses which ply on 'crowded' routes have two conductors who ensure that no matter which corner of the bus you are in, you get your ticket in minutes. Conductors the world over have a 'professional' attachment to the change they have to return passengers, but those here are a shade better. If you remember the amount that is due to you and ask for it when you get down, he'll return it without a word, because words mean a waste of time for which he will be questioned at the destination by his bosses.

Adherence to timings is a major plus point in this part of our state. If the man in the *potli kadai* says the Tiruchi bus will come at ten thirty, come it will at that time, you can be sure. Apart from the helpful locals, every little village has timings and routes of buses painted on bright, distinctive boards at its bus stand. It must be a tremendous sense of discipline or dedicated civic sense that has prevented the pasting of posters on these boards. I made it a point to look out for even a scrap of paper pasted on these boards, but to the extent I travelled I was unsuccessful in finding one! Of course, to read and understand the boards you have to have a good knowledge of the route on which your destination is; a special course would seem essential for outsiders to understand these route boards; Also, they are only in Tamil. So consulting the helpful locals is a better alternative.

Of course, things can't always be rosy. There has to be a negative side. And that comes in the form of the painfully loud speaker systems in the buses. How could the bus operators ignore this inconvenience to passengers, I wondered; when otherwise they took so many pains to woo the passengers! I soon learnt from a local that speakers blaring out songs are a 'must' in buses if passengers are to patronise them. As if to confirm what I had just learnt, a group of passengers who wanted to board a bus *en route* first verified with the conductor "Paattu poduvengala?". Only when the conductor answered in the affirmative did they get in.

As much as songs, what also matters is the cleanliness of the bus, I found. Even if a bus has lost a little bit

(Continued on P7)

# Smiles, less cantankerousness

(Continued from P3)

will be maintained during the summer months.

— Ensuring a good quality of life for the people has been a significant achievement, and the State stands third in the country, behind Kerala and Punjab, on a composite Human Development Index.

The Chief Minister rebutted Congress (I)'s Alagiri's criticism that the Government was slow in taking action against A N Dhyaneswaran, an I.A.S. officer, against whom financial irregularities had been alleged. Certain procedures had to be followed in taking action against IAS officers. A three-member panel of senior IAS officials was studying the report of the Income Tax Department, she said. She also said that the Government was cooperating fully with the CBI in the 'Advocate Vijayan case'. Isolated incidents do not mean that the law and order situation was not all it should be.

To another charge by Congressman Alagiri, that there was extravagant spending by the Government, she said that the welfare measures for the poor were an investment in human resources development. "We cannot function like a profit-oriented private company." She also assured the House that the Jayamkondam thermal project would be implemented.

Leader of the Opposition S R Balasubramaniam viewed the attack on advocates as a blow to the judicial process. Some remarks of his were, however, expunged. When some Opposition members referred to the raids on the houses of Government officers, Health Minister Muthuswamy said that such allegations would demoralise the service. Balasubramaniam wanted a State Security Commission to oversee the working of the Police, who he said were rather slow in solving some of the cases.

When Balasubramaniam questioned Government's claims of reducing the number of people below

the poverty line, AIADMK's Aranganayagam said agricultural labour was hard to come by today despite the offer of incentives. Poverty had surely declined, he argued.

Balasubramaniam's allegation of certain irregularities, in the decision to sell the Ramanathapuram District Central Cooperative Bank's Madurai property, was refuted by Ministers Pattabhiraman and Selvaganapathy. In fact, the High Court's order with regard to the sale decision has been complied with, they stated. Selvaganapathy also maintained that no Court had passed strictures against the Government in the Kodaikanal Pleasant Stay Hotel case.

An embarrassing situation for Minister Somasundaram cropped up when the DMK's Parithi Ilamvazhuthi accused him not providing the corruption charges he had levelled against MGR in the early 1980s. Where did he give it and who had seen it, the Minister shot back. Another embarrassing moment for the Minister was when Speaker Muthiah expunged the remarks he made with reference to the attack made on advocate Vijayan. The matter was sub judice, cautioned the Speaker.

Most buying has been concentrated on 'A' group scrips, which is the reason why the surge in the index has not found an echo in the Cash group. Even now investors can move in and rebuild their portfolio, as the 'B' group will obviously be the next target of the profit-hungry FIs, both domestic and foreign. A fair indication of this shift can be found on studying the movement of the National Index which is more broad-based than the 30-scrip Sensex.

# Are the bulls running at all?

(Continued from P4)

short covering by the bears. Indian Institutions, led by UTI, had been selling their 'A' group holdings as they had been forced to raise funds for pay-outs etc. Forced to sell in low market conditions, these FIs further depressed the prices.

Here is our choice for this fortnight: **Savera Hotels** (CMP: Rs. 38.00). The depreciation in the rupee has proved a boon to at least one industry — hotels — where you can expect enhanced demand and earnings. Based on this assumption, the Madras-based Savera Hotels had accessed the market in January 1995 to expand its number of rooms from 125 to 261 at a project cost of Rs. 14.54 cr. Of these, 34

rooms become operational as of October 1995 and the next 34 are expected to be functional from this month, with the remaining being ready from July 1996. The company has been registering an average occupancy of about 80 per cent in the past. As the peak tourist season is between October and February, the company's second half is expected to be better than the first, especially after the expanded capacity comes into operation. The tariff rates have also increased, going up by nearly 36 per cent for the second half of 1995-96.

For the first half the company achieved a PAT of Rs. 1.75 cr on a turnover of Rs. 5.64 cr, yielding an annualised EPS of Rs. 5.87. This discounts the CMP only 5.30 times and, considering the industry average P/E of around 12, there is plenty of scope for appreciation.

K. GOPALAKRISHNAN

# Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period February 1 to 15)

- Who is the new Indian Ambassador designate to the U.S.A.?
- Name the famous actor, known for his role in *Singin' in the Rain*, who died recently.
- Whose birth chamber was reported found under the Mayadevi Temple in Lumbini, Nepal, recently?
- What distinction did Pritha Venkatraman, an NCC cadet from Tamil Nadu, achieve recently?
- Which country's army chief was recently conferred an honorary General rank by the President of India recently?
- Name the former Union Minister sent to Tihar Jail for allegedly harbouring Dawood Ibrahim's men.
- Name the computer which challenged and lost to Garry Kasparov, after winning the first match of the tie.
- Name the legendary speedster from the West Indies who announced his retirement from first-class cricket recently.
- What was the 'Flight of Fantasy' enacted in Madras on February 14th?
- Where was the mega-wedding of 5004 couples, in the presence of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, held?
- Name the IAS Officer and head of TAMILIN, from whose possession the I.T. Department recovered Rs. 1.65 crore in cash and other valuables.
- Who scored the first century of the ongoing Wills World Cup?
- Who has been selected for the prestigious G.K. Reddy Memorial Award for 1995, for excellence in journalism?
- In which U.S. city has the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had a road named after her?
- What is the quantum of drought relief sought by the State, in the Governor's Address at the Legislative Assembly?
- Who became only the 13th player to be ranked No. 1 by the ATP in men's tennis recently?
- Name the famous veena exponent who passed away recently.
- What pioneering 22-year-old public transport project in the country was officially declared completed on February 11th?
- What Bombay-based research institute, founded by Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, celebrated its Golden Jubilee on February 9th?
- What distinction did Holland's cricket opener, Nolan Clarke, achieve at the World Cup?

(Answers on p. 8)

# Madras Arts scene challenged

Madras is being challenged. There is excellence in classical arts available all over India now and Madras is slowly losing its appeal thanks to the way the winter cultural season is organised.

In Bangalore, for instance, there are mega-festivals being organised with all-night performances of classical music and dance. At Protima Gauri (Bedi)'s 'Nriyagram', it was Hindustani classical music on the *sarod* by stars like Amjad Ali Khan and Zakir Hussain and young artists of Kamalaka. There was light music with Raju Ananthaswamy singing popular poems by great

Kannada poets. And rock music with Louis Banks and Madras's Sivamani. All this in a place 40 km from Bangalore, where, for the all-night event in the open air theatre, a crowd of about 30,000 turned up, on a particularly cold night! Such all-night festivals have become very common in major venues in Kamalaka. Our own Marnallapuram could well become an ideal venue for such an event on a regular basis.

## BAD Company

Solo dancers are turning choreographers and are commis-

sioning dancers trained under various gurus. So a new age has begun for Bharata Natyam. Who knows, professional repertory companies may soon sprout in India. Protima Gauri proposes to start a new repertory dance company and has advertised for dancers. She calls it BAD Company (Best Advocates for Dance)!

## Artists' network

The International Dance Alliance celebrated its tenth anniversary in Madras recently. The IDA was formed in New York to help artists from different countries network. The idea was that artists would get together, celebrate an international dance week and help each other in times of crisis. Leela Shekhar is the India representative for IDA and has conducted programmes with several well-known artists over the last ten years.

Before IDA, the big dancers did not see eye-to-eye and hardly ever attended each other's programmes. IDA got the stars together and started the trend of several of them taking part in one dance piece and doing a tour around India together. IDA then started taking classical dance-dramas on American tours.

In keeping with the new trend of honouring artists in a big way, IDA recently honoured seven major artists belonging to different styles of dancing. They were Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra (Orissia), Kalanidhi Narayanan for Bharata Natyam, Sitara Devi for Kathak, Kanak Rele for Mohini Attam, Vempatti Chinna Satyam for Kuchipudi, Kottakkal Krishnan Kutty Nair for Kathakali, and Darshana Jhaveri for Manipuri.

## Two theatres

In daily rituals and the everyday chores of life as well as on special occasions, dramatic expressions always make their presence felt. One of them in Tamil Nadu is *kulavai*, a throaty, ululating sound with which women record their joy at a celebration or their grief during mourning.

'Kulavai' was the name given to a national workshop on women and theatre, recently organised by the 'Voicing Silence' theatre project of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. 'Kulavai' was chosen as the name of the project as the sound is an affirmation of women in society, and the national workshop aimed to bridge the gap between serious theatre of the artistic kind and social activist theatre of the grassroots.

Each type of theatre looks at the other with suspicion. 'Kulavai' sought to build a bridge between the two. It took its cue from 'Expressions', a Bombay theatre workshop which brought the two groups together. The 'art for art's sake' group had extremely well-trained artists, like the dancers of Chandralakha. The activist theatre group, on the other hand, looked unprepared. With no time or serious thought given to voice training, production ethics or even body language, the theatre activists did hurried jobs, as the message was more important for them. They also considered serious theatre being out of touch with reality. A meeting point still seemed some distance and time away.

— V. R. DEVIKA

# Violin prodigy as author

Subramaniam is no stranger to Madras. Before migrating to the U.S., he lived in Madras for many years. He obtained a medical degree from the Medical College here, but the attraction of music was too strong to be resisted. His whole family is musically-minded. His father, the late Prof. Lakshminarayana Iyer, was a violin teacher par excellence and trained his three sons, Vaidyanathan, Subramaniam and Shankar, in the art of violin-playing. The three brothers attained great mastery over the instrument and became renowned as the 'violin trio' of Madras. Prof. Iyer was a self-effacing person and remained in the background as he watched his sons making what may be called 'violin history'.

Subramaniam and Shankar later migrated to the U.S. and are still living there, making a valuable contribution to popularising Indian music. Both of them also hold degrees in Western classical music, a very rare distinction for Indian musicians.

Subramaniam is a 'prodigy' who was proficient in vocal music and percussion even at the age of six.

He has now achieved world-wide fame as a composer and an

expert in the field of East-West orchestral fusion. He is perhaps the only Indian violinist qualified for the task. His major symphony *Fantasy on Vedic Chants* was premiered in New York and was a resounding success. Later, he created many other works which won acclaim.

Several foreign scholars, like Captain C.R. Day, Sir E. Clements and Fox Strangeways, have written books on the same theme, so too have Indian authors like Chinnaswamy Mudaliar and Dr. Raja Ramanna. But Subramaniam's book covers many aspects not dealt with by the previous authors. It can be used by both beginners as well as by connoisseurs and teachers, it is a landmark publication... In truth, that readers will find 'euphonious'.

— T.T. VASU

# The Madras buses

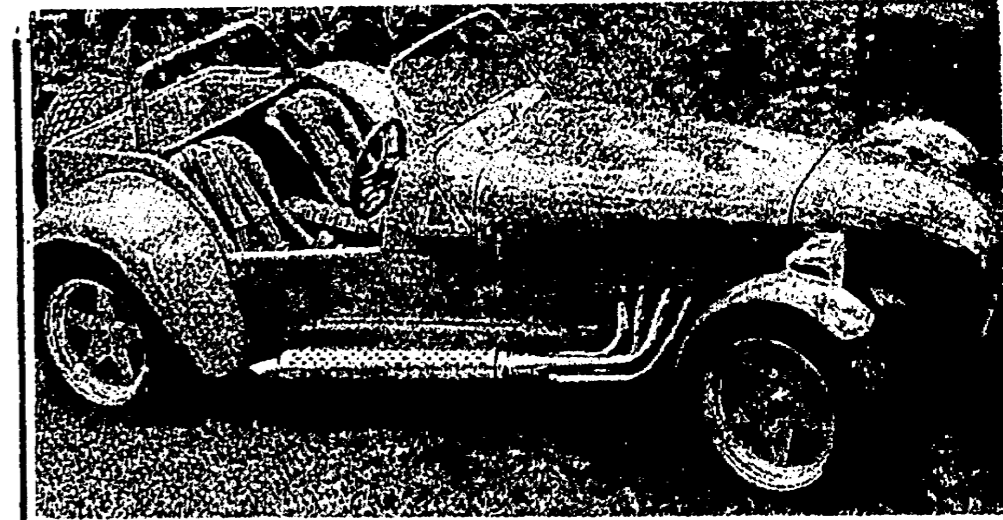
(Continued from P6)

of its sheen, it is called a *pazhaiya* bus and is looked at with contempt. Of course, the interior of the bus has to match its looks too. You won't find popcorn packets, banana skins, chocolate wrappers or the like. The buses are cleaned regularly during the day. By these standards, I thought, our PTC buses would have to go straight to the scrap heap.

Surely, we would be living in a different world if the PTC decides to take lessons from its southern cousins — if not in all aspects of bus running, at least in one of them: Courtesy, cleanliness or punctuality. Our buses should not be compared with those in Bombay, Delhi or Hyderabad and shown off to be the best in the world. They should be placed beside those in other parts of Tamil Nadu to be shown their true merit. Buses which are not

just punctual buses, but also shiny and squeaky clean buses which offer the latest 'superhit' songs ensure that the cash registers keep ringing. The PTC would do well to learn from its southern cousins the art of running buses well and earn a better 'name' than the 'good one it has now, which, in any case, is not all that well-deserved.

There is, however another side. The passengers in these mofussil areas are able to wait to get what they want. How many of us would reject a dirty bus or ask *paattu poduvengala*! All we want is to get into the first bus that comes our way and be off. Obviously we have no time for the better things in life.



The Kari-65 sports car to be launched shortly by Lakshmi Performance Cars, Coimbatore.

# Sports cars for our roads again

(By A Special Correspondent)

MGs and Triumphs, those legendary sports cars — not to be confused with racing cars — have long been off Indian roads. Now, nearly 50 years later, sports cars will be back on our roads — and they'll be Indian-made. In fact, Coimbatore-made! And they'll honour the memory of a man who died young, but who, in his brief life, demonstrated India could develop a racing car. They'll be made by a subsidiary of Lakshmi Mills, Coimbatore, which S Karivaradhan, who was killed in an air-crash last year, headed.

Karivaradhan was a well-known car racer and designer. The first two models the new company will produce would be known as 'Kari-65' after 'Karivaradhan' and the number he sported while participating in racing events. The cars would also sport the Lakshmi logo.

Four models of sports cars are planned by Lakshmi Performance Cars (LPC), formed by Lakshmi Mills, who will manufacture them at Chettipalayam, near Coimbatore. They would be priced in the range of Rs. 10-25 lakh. All of them would be two-seaters with high engine power.

Each car would be a blend of classic styling and modern engineering, based on a design and prototype from D J Sports Cars of the UK. They would be rear-wheel drive cars to give better driving pleasure.

The two models named 'Kari-65' would be replicas of the UK's Lotus-7

sports cars. One would be a 110 BHP (2000 CC) version, the other a 160 BHP (3000 CC) car with independent rear suspension. Both would have four cylinders and their body would be made of reinforced moulded fibreglass. They would be open-top models. Nearly 70 per cent of the components would be indigenous and the import content would be restricted mainly to the engines and gear-boxes. These cars would be made to order and production is expected to commence on April 14th. The manufacture would be restricted to 100 to 200 vehicles per year in the beginning.

Another model to be produced would be a replica of the 'Shelby Cobra', a 25-year-old classic still being manufactured in the UK and the US. This car would have an engine power of 300 BHP (5000 CC) fired by eight cylinders. This model, to be introduced in India by the end of the year, would be the most powerful of the four. It would give 8-10 km per litre at top gear speed. This model would have a collapsible top and would be priced between Rs. 18 lakh and Rs. 20 lakh. Production would be extremely limited, just 10 to 15 vehicles per year to start with.

The fourth model would be a replica off the Ford GT-40 (Grand Touring) car. The manufacture of this regular top model is scheduled for 1997. This car too would carry a limited-edition version and would carry a price tag of around Rs. 25 lakh.

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From Blueprints to landmarks

# A father's faith

Even after Mahesh Bhupathi had scalped World No. 20 Jan Siemerink recently to make it 1-1 in the Davis Cup world group tie in Jaipur, the odds against him over-coming Jacco Eltingh in the fifth rubber were pretty high. There was, however, one man who did not think much about the odds, a man who knows the Indian No. 2 better than anyone else — his father C G K Bhupathi.

"I am willing to bet on Mahesh beating Eltingh on Sunday, any takers?" Bhupathi asked a couple of newsmen at the official team dinner on Saturday. "Mahesh is serving and returning very well, and Eltingh has a weak forehand. I'm sure Mahesh can exploit that tomorrow," was Bhupathi's logic for his super confidence, which almost bordered on arrogance. None took on Bhupathi's challenge, but that was not because they believed that Mahesh was indeed capable of pulling off a second upset.

It did not quite materialise the way Bhupathi had anticipated, but, by matching Eltingh stroke for stroke on that historic Sunday, Mahesh did live up to the confidence his father had in him. It was certainly not his fault that the Dutchman twisted his knee and conceded the match when down one set to two, and 1-2 in the fourth.

"He (Mahesh) needed to be convinced that he has the game to beat these top guys. If he believed in himself last September, he could have given Goran Ivanisevic a tougher match," Bhupathi remarked.

Bhupathi, who is Mahesh's coach and chief adviser, believes that his son can rise very high because he has the big shots.



Mahesh Bhupathi

"Tennis is dominated by the hardhitters these days. Even on clay, you have the Couriers and Musters dominating with their powerful strokes. The key is to believe in yourself".

Quite true, but Mahesh being an Indian, it remains to be seen whether he manages to translate his talent beyond the Davis Cup stage. The root of such pessimism is Leander Paes, an enigma who has foxed experts all over the world.

Mahesh is not the overconfident type. He does mean business, though, as was evident from his vastly improved serve-and-volley tennis in Jaipur. "We'll be playing a lot of our Davis Cup matches on grass, so I have worked hard on my volleying," was how he explained his fabulous performance against Holland. "I think this tie will give me a lot of confidence when I play on the ATP Tour. I have no points to defend till the second half of the year, so my first aim is to get my ranking back to the 200s," said Mahesh, who is presently No. 344 on the ATP computer. (Courtesy: *The Telegraph*, Calcutta).

# Betting on Bhupathi

Tall and lanky Mahesh Bhupathi, all of 21 and the current national champion, is the brightest star on the Indian tennis horizon to judge by the way he helped India win its recent Davis Cup tie against the Netherlands. He was certainly the hero of that contest.

Former Indian Davis Cup legend, Ramanathan Krishnan, rates Mahesh as the most promising player in India today. "He is the youngest member of the team and has seen lots of ups and downs, but he has to hang on. He has a good, attractive game, with his height and double-fisted backhand being his main strengths. But if he has to go up in the international level, he has to improve on all aspects of his game. He is our bet now. I am keeping my fingers crossed," he avers fervently.

Not exactly getting excited over Krishnan's and the country's expectations from him, Mahesh says, "I have no specific goals ahead. I just plan to continue travelling (he now travels ten months a year), play and train (four-five hours of daily practice and two hours of running, weight training etc.). I want to make it big as a tennis player."

Starting young, Mahesh received his first tennis lessons in Madras when he was just five, from his father C G K Bhupathi, a national level player of the Sixties. He moved to the Gulf with his parents and sister when he was eight and stayed on there for about twelve years, learning and playing tennis under the watchful eye of his coach-cum-father. Studies took a backseat and he quit college in the U.S. after one year to become a full-time professional tennis player. He says, "My family have been a source of great

support. When I played the junior circuit my mother used to travel with me, but not any more. I did not go through the normal struggle most Indian players go through. Since I was in the Gulf, I travelled around but also played tournaments in India. I had the facilities and equipment to train with. But apart from my dad, I did not have anybody else to practice with. This was the only minus point; the quality of tennis there wasn't as good as it is in India." The family moved to Bangalore last year where Mahesh's father runs a tennis coaching centre.

Meanwhile, this player with an attacking game and a powerful serve is growing stronger every year. Internationally, he might still not have made an impact (he ranks around 350 in the singles and 150 in the doubles), but at home, at Number 2, he is a quieter complement to the aggressive, fire-in-his-belly Paes. "Paes," he says, "is an ideal team man. He always pumps, supports, advises and is different from the others. He is just not normal; a team means a lot to him."

As to why India is way down the international ladder, Mahesh offers this analysis: "Right now it is only Leander and me travelling in the international circuit. You can't expect just two guys to travel and make it." And no, he doesn't attribute it to the eternal Indian hang-up of the lack of a killer instinct. He states, "Everybody has it, you've just got to find a way to bring it out. I have it, otherwise I would not be playing tennis." He certainly showed it against Croatia and Holland. However, he does admit that there are major areas in his game which need improvement, like his levels of consistency and flexibility.

Tennis ace Vijay Amritraj, who knows Mahesh's father well, feels that Mahesh would have benefitted more if he had trained at an American tennis school. "He would have got tougher if he had trained in America. He needs to be a lot quicker on court. It is his one major weakness. He has good strokes and serves well. He is a bigger hitter than Paes and his strokes are better rounded than Paes too. But he is not anywhere as quick as Paes. He has tremendous potential and the right kind of game and approach. But to crack the top 100 internationally, he has to work ten times as hard," feels Vijay.

Mahesh describes himself as a "pretty quiet guy who likes to hang out with friends, listen to music, read and watch TV." Particularly MTV. (Courtesy: Savvy).

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Naresh Chandra, Governor of Gujarat;
2. Gene Kelly;
3. Gautama the Buddha;
4. She was adjudged the Best Cadet of the Republic Day Parade in Delhi;
5. Gen. D.S. Thapa of the Royal Nepalese Army;
6. Kalpana Rai;
7. IBM's Deep Blue;
8. Malcolm Marshall;
9. It was a joy-ride for underprivileged children conducted by British Airways and UNICEF;
10. Tiruchi;
11. A.N. Dyaneswaran;
12. Nathan Asle of New Zealand, against England;
13. N. Ravi, the editor of *The Hindu*;
14. Chicago, Illinois;
15. Rs 630 crore;
16. Thomas Muster;
17. Chittibabu;
18. The Metro Railway in Calcutta;
19. Tata Institute of Fundamental Research;
20. The oldest player in the competition; he is 47.

# Winning fielding and fitness

As I write this piece, India have pulled off a decisive win over the West Indies. England have lost their league game to New Zealand, fielding inadequately, and won not very convincingly against Holland, and Sri Lanka have massacred the Zimbabwean attack which had earlier nearly achieved the impossible, defending a poor total against a rejuvenated West Indies.

The rejuvenation was temporary, or so it seemed, the way the West Indies capitulated to a steady, occasionally clever, Indian attack backed by splendid fielding led by an inspired Azharuddin. The moment they lost Lara's wicket to a debated caught behind decision, the fight seemed to have gone out of them — except for a not entirely convincing Richie Richardson and Chanderpaul who promised much, only to fall to a poor shot and a brilliant catch by the Indian skipper.

The Indian reply still revolved around Sachin Tendulkar, lucky to be relieved at 12 and 22 but thereafter

blossoming as only he can into breathtaking batsmanship. Azhar played a cool, elegant innings of authority before holing out. Followed the surprise package; Kambl's stroke-filled innings, during which he came out winner against the short-pitched bowling of Ambrose and Walsh, his nemeses of earlier times. Kambl, who had thrown his wicket away in the chase against Kenya, finally justified the selectors' faith in him through a long drought.

At Colombo, masterly innings by Aravinda De Silva and Asanka Gurusinha enabled Sri Lanka to overcome a target of 229 set by Zimbabwe with 13 overs to spare! From the moment he stepped in after the early dismissals of Kaluwitharana and Jayasuriya, De Silva showed that he had regained his old touch, a hooked six by him clearly the shot of the World Cup so far. Gurusinha too demonstrated his power and inventiveness in one-day cricket in contrast to his more orthodox Test batting. With an opening spell of 5-0-8-0 and final analysis of 2/30,

Chaminda Vaas gave another immaculate exhibition of left arm seam, starting where he left off on the recent Australian tour.

Only Australia and Pakistan have yet to play a match in this World Cup. South Africa have looked a winning combination, their fielding in particular raising their game to a new dimension. They have a fine all-round attack too. Their batting is perhaps the only relatively weak link in their armoury. They overcame New Zealand quite effortlessly with some outstanding fielding and a captain's innings by Hansie Cronje.

The spinners have been very much in the news. Against the West Indies, Anil Kumble bowled a perfect line and length, hitting the stumps with some precision yorkers. Paul Strang, the Zimbabwe leg spinner, bowled beautifully to the West Indians before being hammered mercilessly by the Sri Lankans, while Pat Symcox was accuracy personified bowling for the Springboks against the New Zealanders.

Poor Raju, who bowled an excellent spell in the India-Kenya game, had to make way for Aashish Kapoor, thanks to the presence of three left handers in the West Indies lineup. Kapoor gave a good account of himself without looking dangerous. For the West Indies, Roger Harper has looked his part, varying the flight and pace of his offspin to check the flow of runs in the middle overs.

Of the Indian pacemen, Srinath has been most impressive, with a couple of new tricks up his sleeve, and a relaxed approach in the end overs, though there is still a question mark over his ability to stem the slog. Manoj Prabhakar came back gamely after poor starts in both Indian matches to finish with 3/39 versus the West Indies. Of the pacemen from abroad, the South Africans have really been the pick, with Allan Donald bowling well within himself, still securing breakthroughs at will.

This has been a good learning experience for Kenya and Holland. Both teams have shown pluck and a

great willingness to work hard. Their fielding has proved worthy of their new status, while, with experience, they will surely improve in other departments. Left arm spinner Asif Karim of Kenya was quite superb bowling to the Indians. His 1/27 in 10 overs did him proud. Steve Tikolo, with his stroke play all round the wicket, and captain Maurice Odumbe, with his calm correctness, proved they could hold their own against world class competition. And Holland's spirited 230 for 6 chasing an English target of 280 must surely be the start of something big.

The injury-prone England team may struggle to gain a berth in the semifinals — something they have done in all previous World Cups. England are a classic example of a dilemma endemic to one-day team selection: you need athleticism and fitness, but you also need maturity and experience. While Atherton's men have plenty of the latter, fitness and fielding remain a worry. An old, old story.

## World Cup Special — by V Ramnarayan