R.N. 53640/91.

This journal
is supported by
the following
organisations
as a public service
Amalgamations
Ashok Leyland Ltd
A V Thomas & Co
Bank of Madura
India Cements
The KCP Ltd.

WE CARE FOR MADRAS WE CARE FOR MADRAS MUSINGS

This journal
is supported by
the following
organisations
as a public service
Murugappa Group
Ponds (India) Ltd.
Rane (Madras) Ltd
Sanmar Group
S.P.I.C.
Sundram Fasteners

Vol. VI No. 2

FREE ISSUE

May 1 — 15, 1996

Madras First?

Getting a team together the challenge

(By The Editor)

First there was London First, an initiative by leaders of the London business community to work with civic organisations to get a better London.

The British Council helped export the idea to India and Bombay First was launched in January 1994. Madras Musings, in its February 1st and 16th issues this year, described what Bombay First was, but it is worth recalling here what S M Datta, the President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC & I), said on the occasion of the Chamber launching this private initiative.

The move is aimed at making the city one of the best in the world and a better place to visit, live, work and invest in, said Datta. Bombay First's objectives, he went on to explain, would be to "sponsor, promote, finance and support policy initiatives for the betterment of the metropolis and the welfare of its inhabitants". Bombay First, he added, would depend mainly on the business community for "its resources and motivation", but would "work in very close partnership" with the Central, State and Local Governments and the voluntary sector.

The BCC & I, which promoted Bombay First, also promoted the Bombay City Policy Research Foundation, a charitable trust, to fund Bombay First. The funding would be used to develop policy initiatives for the improvement of infrastructure and management, and conduct research on both macro and micro planning for the City, Datta stated.

Madras Musings draws the attention of its readers to the Bombay First initiative because there is in the present sponsorship of Madras Musings the seeds for a Madras First initiative.

The Association of British Council Scholars' President, D

K Oza, the former IAS man and Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram University, and the British Council have been making some attempts to get some sort of such initiative started. The MMDA has some ideas of its own under the Sustainable Cities project awarded to Madras by UNCHS. And Government must have its own ideas. Madras Musings feels none of these will get off the ground unless Commerce and Industry

(Continued on P6)



'Forest' — For how much longer?

Where do you find date palms in such profusion in the heart of Madras? And scrub jungle too? In Guindy National Park, of course. But this is a picture of a still more central park. And the granite poles in the centre of the picture show that the threat to its vegetation has begun. How long more will this park remain 'virgin' woodland? Turn to page 5 for some 'ansers'

Madras dominates leather exports (By A Staff Reporter)

A feature of India's record leather exports of a little short of Rs. 5000 crore (\$1560 million appx.) in 1994-95 was the splendid performance by Madras exporters. At the Council of Leather Exports' Awards function, the major share of the awards went to

Madras companies. And the kind of numbers these companies attained in export value were far ahead of those from any other part of India. Indeed, here was confirmation again that Madras was the 'Leather Capital of India', Kanpur's and Calcutta's days

now past.

The single most impressive performance by a Madras company was by Farida Shoes Limited, whose exports of leather footwear topped the Rs. 35 crore mark. Another impressive performance was by Chevro Leather Manufacturers

who exported Rs. 20-30 crore worth of footwear components and Rs. 20-30 crore worth finished leather. Presidency Kid Leather was only a little behind Chevro in total exports, exporting Rs. 5-10 crore footwear components and over Rs. 30 crore finished leather.

Other major Madras players were Vantage Leathers India Limited (Rs. 20-30 crore of leather garments), A V Thomas Leather & Allied Products Limited (over Rs. 15 crore leather goods), R S L Industries Limited (over Rs. 15 crore leather goods) and India Shoes (Rs. 10-20 cr leather footwear).

Chevro also received a special award for receiving royalty from Spain for its brand 'Chevro' and for the colour 'toffee' developed by it being included in the Mod Europe '96 Collection. Chevro, headed by Imthiaz Pasha, has put up 11 projects in 12 years and its 1400-person team now produces annually 12 million sq ft of goat leather, 2 million sq ft of cow leather, 1.5 million pairs of shoes and uppers and 30,000 pieces of garments. The company exports to 30 countries.

Now, it's the Italians!

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Rs. 700 crore Maharashtra-based Greaves Ltd, part of the Thapar Group, plans to invest Rs. 30 crore in its Ranipet plant (acquired from Enfield Ltd about five years ago) to manufacture tractors in collaboration with Same, Italy The company will also put up a tractor engine manufacturing plant in Ranipet with a similar outlay and a buy-back arrangement with Same. The majority stake in the new joint venture company, Same-Greaves Ltd. will be held by the Italian company.

The company would initially start manufacture of 12,000

tractors and 15,000 tractor engines a year, 15 months from now, the difference being bought back by the Italian collaborator under the joint venture agreement. Though Greavesowns extensive land in Baramati, near Pune, where it has housed its autorickshaw plant, the presence of major auto ancillaries in Tamil Nadu has made the joint venture select Tamil Nadu, said Ravi Chopra, Vice President.

Another new venture planned by the company is the manufacture of a 4-stroke petrol autorickshaw, following its successful diesel version, to take

on the industry major Bajaj Auto. According to Chopra, the petrol three-wheeler would meet the emission norms prescribed by Government. Production will commence at the company's Baramati facility within 18 months. Greaves recently introduced a diesel pick-up van and a delivery van.

"Entry into vehicle manufacturing is a logical forward integration step for us, as the company has all these years been the largest producer of internal combustion engines and gear transmission lines in the country," explained Chopra.

Was corruption the major issue? Overwhelmed by

By the time you receive this issue of Madras Musings, voting would be over. A few days from then, we'll know who our new governments are to be in the State and the Centre. In the run-up to that denouement, the Press has been full of scandalous stories, almost all of them centred on bribery and corruption. But The Man From Madras Musings wonders whether those stories — issues, if you will - were what determined the way people voted. To the have-nots, who are the votebanks in this country, is food, clothing, shelter, welfare and infrastructure the issue or is corruption the issue? It's a question that really needs no answer, yet the bank accounts of individuals make bigger news than what they have or have not contributed to alleviating the lot of the have-nots.

The Man From Madras Musings, preferring to be a iournalist asking questions and wondering about the answers rather than being a political analyst certain that compromises with principle are permissible, keeps musing about this whole issue of corruption. In Madras Musings, April 1, MMM had reported how a group of intellectuals had reacted to this issue. In a national survey whose report was published a few days after that report, the major problems in the country, according to a cross-section of the public, were water and electricity, poverty and price rise, transport, health and education, food and clothing, law and order, agricultural inputs, and corruption - IN THAT ORDER. And the magnitude of difference in perception ranged from 58 and 44.2 per cent concerned over the first two problems to 11.9, 10 and SEVEN per cent worried about the last three! Yet the major concerns of campaigning politicians and the Press remain fixed on two of those last three problems. MMM wonders why there is such a fixation on morality rather than on the basic needs of the people.

Quotable quotes

The Man From Madras Musings was struck by this once again, a little closer to voting date, when The Sunday Observer, Mumbai, filled half a page with the public's views on 'The Common Phenomenon'. The quotes from Tamil Nadu were classic, particularly in the light of what MMM has written above.

★ CHO RAMASWAMY journalist, Madras: Compared to other southern states, Tamil Nadu is the worst example of corruption. If Jayalalitha is the flood of corruption, Karunanidhi is the fountainhead.

★ IYAPPAN, doctor, Madras: I was suspended from a cooperative hospital here because my seniors demanded money which I failed to part with. Now they are demanding a bribe for my reinstatement.



Cartoon courtesy The Sunday Observer, Mumbai

★ S RAIARATHINAM, businessman, Madras: Change is always welcome. A new government may not be as corrupt as the previous regime. * S SAROJA, housewife, Tirunelveli: Corruption wil always be an inevitable part of our country — it will never go

★ RAVI PRAKASH KHEMKA, businessman, Madras: You cannot eliminate corruption if you continue to pay politicians and bureaucrats the meagre salaries they get now. We have the lowest pay scales in the world.

* MUNUSWAMY, businessman, Madras: Corruption is a habitual phenomenon in Tamil Nadu. Should we discuss any further?

Indeed. MMM too wonders whether we should "discuss any further" when the major problems of the country remain untouched. How about holding our leaders accountable for NOT solving the problems of the people and for NOT meeting their everyday needs?

A tribal 'no'

The Man From Madras
Musings can't think of a person more concerned with the farmers of India, their rights and the protection of their · traditional knowledge than Dr M S Swaminathan. But Valad Achappan Vaidyar of Wayanad in Kerala, India's first government-appointed Chief Tribal Healer, would seem to think otherwise. His view appears to be that a project of the Madras-based M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) to document 'The Traditional Knowledge on Biodiversity in the Wayanad District' might result in the exploitation of the tribals' ancient medical knowledge. "We no longer want to take a chance and will cooperate with the project only after it is studied and sanctioned by the State Government's Institute for Research, Training and Development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes (KIRTADS),'

he is quoted as saying. The MSSRF had discussed the project earlier with KIRTADS and the Kerala institute had rejected it, MMM

learns. KIRTADS' contention apparently is that it has done much of this work and that it would ensure statutory intellectual property protection for the tribals as soon as the Tribal Intellectual Property Rights (Determination, Preservation, Protection and Improvement) Bill becomes law this year. The Bill, however, MMM hears, is still in the drafting stage. Meanwhile, the Kerala Government doesn't seem to want "outsiders entering tribal areas for projects relating to research and

documentation of tribal intellectual property" without its specific permission.

The Kerala Government, it would also seem to MMM, is also leary of any project which might have a foreign component in its funding. And a KIRTADS' official claims the MSSRF project - which is a nationwide one — has German funding.

Whatever the merits and demerits of the case, MMM can't but think that this is typical of the institute vs institute, government sector vs private sector, bureaucratic 'concern' vs scientific quest rivalry that plagues the search for knowledge in India. The Man From Madras Musings has had 25 years of experience of it in another field, sitting on the less powerful side. And still Government hasn't loosened up and the people of India are deprived of knowledge that other countries have in greater detail than even the guardians of our information! MMM's only hope is that in such tussles the public should not be the loser — in the present case, the

The fruit wait

↑ fruit-lover, The Man From Madras Musings can't exactly say the Maxworth Farms' shops are his favourite destination. To be frank, they are a disappointment. But if some very impressive numbers he recently received are a pointer to fruits to come, MMM may yet revise his opinion of the chain.

The figures come from Maxworth Orchards and state that over 15,000 acres in over 150 farms in five states have been planted with 60 lakh saplings, three-quarters of which are mango, guava and pomegranate. Other saplings planted are cashew, tamarind, sapodilla, peach, grapes, leechi, nelli and ber. Over 40,000 km of drip irrigation pipelines service these farms. And to interpret all this for people like MMM who do not understand numbers, Maxworth Orchards adds, "If all the saplings had been planted in a straight line, they would extend to more than 6000 kms, which is the total distance (sic) of the shoreline of India ... (and) the total length of the pipes, if laid around the world, would completely encircle the Earth at the equator".

The bulk of Maxworth Orchards' acreage is in Tamil Nadu, around 3400 acres around Madras, 5500 acres around Madurai and around 3800 acres around Tirunelveli. Mango dominates in all the 115 farms in the State. But what got MMM most interested in all this information was the note on mangoes:

Over 250 varieties of mangoes are produced in India... Almost 900,000 mango

trees are growing on Maxworth Orchards farms across the

The variety is staggering: from the firm, robust, juicy, sweet Banganapalli mango to the tiny, extra sweet and juicy Salem Mango, known locally as the 'diamond sugar mango' for its sweetness.

... Chief of the myths is the belief that the mango is 'heatproducing' and therefore bad for the body. On the contrary, mango is high in fruit sugars, that are energy laden and easily digestible, and is therefore refreshing, energising and rejuvenating.

One of summer's little pleasures is eating raw mangoes sprinkled with salt — and this treat actually helps by quenching your thirst and

replenishing salts in the body. MMM can't wait for the season to begin! But he also hopes that Maxworth Farms shops are better stocked with better-quality mangoes this season!

In brief

* When the American International School decided to celebrate 'India Week' recently, The Man From Madras Musings found himself inaugurating 'The Week' by musing on Madras and India. If someone knows how that's done to a mixed group of 5 to 14-year-olds, please let MMM know before he next gets dragged into something like that. Having survived the questions of the forty children, MMM discovered they came

from 11 countries, the US, UK. Germany, Holland, Denmark, Ireland, Morocco and South Korea among them. They'll number nearly a hundred next year. There'll be another half a dozen countries and still more NRI children. They'll also have a full-time principal from the huge International School in Delhi instead of only a full-time administrator. And making every child computer-literate is high on the School's priorities. But what struck MMM as most curious was that while the School functions in the Russian Cultural Centre, Russian seemed to be the one nationality NOT represented. MMM wonders why. No dollars?

★ Over the last 350 years and more, there have been several Madras Firsts. The Man From Madras Musings was delighted to discover another one recently. Skycell Communications (a Crompton Greaves associate) is stated to have made the FIRST cellular call in India on June 6, 1995. But as against Skycell's ten base stations, RPG Cellular has 26 and has, thereby, captured around 60 per cent of the Madras market.

★ A model of propriety was Dr Manmohan Singh when he recently visited Madras at the invitation of the Loyola College Students' Union and the Industrial Economist. They were demi-official functions and The Man From Madras Musings is sure no questions would have been asked if he had requested for an official car to be sent to the airport. But the Finance Minister merely wanted to be picked up by his hosts — and so a Maruti 1000 from Loyola's Student President and Industrial Economist Viswanathan's Maruti 800 were what the Finance Minister and his party rode in for the trip to Raj Bhavan. Unseen, unsung. And the return trip was not very different. Would that more of our leaders were like Dr Manmohan Singh!

★ Prof N Krishnaswami has for decades been associated with the Japanese Consulate-General in Madras and the teaching of Japanese. A book by him would most appropriately have to be titled Know Japan: Know the Japanese. And that was indeed the title of the book that was recently released by the Japanese Ambassador to India, His Excellency Sakutaro Tanino, during a visit to Madras. Presiding over the function, Suresh Krishna mentioned that the Japanese were slow starters in industrial investment in new countries but were genuine stayers. He looked forward to their start. The Man From Madras Musings was delighted to hear the Ambassador respond, "We may have been slow starters in India, but we are very much in the race now. We are third ... and moving up fast!"

MMM

advertising

There's been rather a clever advert on TV recently. Have vou seen it? Yes, I know most TV ads are clever, but this one is unusual because it's an advert about advertising, telling us how important it is in our lives. When I lived in London I

must say I did rather enjoy the exuberant advertising in 'The Tube', on the London escalators, the trains themselves, the stations and just everywhere else. Some of it was dull and tedious, but many were brilliantly clever and amusing. Some were so hilarious, they almost took your mind off the pretty girls crushed against you or the pot-bellied man smelling heavily of Cologne and pipe-tobacco breathing heavily down your neck, all hazards he must face who travels by the London Underground. I really couldn't imagine a city without advertising of some kind and, as everyone knows, television, newspaper and magazine publishing is dependent for its existence on advertising. Don't let's stop it, but let's moderate it in Madras.

There are certainly limits to street advertising, and we in Madras have long passed them. I'm not thinking of vulgarity or obscenity, there's little of that I can see (and what some see as obscene, seems just downright comical to my eye), but the sheer weight and mass of it is incredible. In places banner-type ads are tied to trees, posts, projections from buildings, just anything at all that will support them, the irony being that you often see half a dozen or more, one behind the other, so that only the one in front can be seen, hiding all the others. So why waste money putting them there

Then again, the new craze is for steel structures of prodigious height rising higher and higher atop buildings already high enough for my taste. I've heard it said, or read somewhere, that the advertising people responsible pay more for the hire of the rooftops than the occupants below pay for the rent of their shops, offices or flats. You can't blame them, can you, for accepting such a gift their rent.

literally sent from heaven to pay But are those soaring structures safe? I know steel is strong, I know it will bend a bit if pressed (even steel ships bend when huge waves pass along their length), but are they authorised? Has anyone given a thought to what might happen if a cyclonic storm hits them? You'll find me at home if it does: I've had enough shrapnel whizzing around me in wartime without jagged, razor-sharp sheets of metal slicing and flying about all over Mount Road. If you're too young or have forgotten what cyclonic winds can do even to sheet steel, surely you must have seen TV shots of it in other countries? Even if the structures themselves are strong enough to withstand cyclonic

blasts, what about the roofs they

are anchored to below? Are they deep and strong enough to support those soaring frameworks? It seems to me, though I am no engineer, that the roofs would have had to be designed and built with such stresses in mind to begin with, and I cannot believe they were.

And has anyone given a thought to the men who erect

One Man's Madras — HARRY MILLER'S

them and to the quite astonishing skill of those who paint the advertisements on them afterwards? They hang at great heights with no other support but legs and an elbow or two around fragile, swaying casuarina poles, no hard hats or safety belts as would be required in other

Where do those who paint those huge advertisements learn

The article, 'Down San Thomé Way' (MM, April 1) brought back nostalgic memories.

Over the years, Norton's Dispensary became 'Norton Shop'. At some point in time, the pink fluid jar was matched on the other side of the large hall with a light blue fluid jar.

Among the residents on Palace Road was the legendary, CID Inspector, Michael, who in the 30s used to go about on a motor cycle combination and was held in great esteem by the then DIG/CID, A.F. Bulkley, who maintained his black Austin car GO 111 in immaculate condition. Between Tramore and the

Cultural Academy was a ground floor building belonging to a Muslim Trust. F.W.A. Morris, one of the last Europeans in the I C S, tenanted the place in the late 30s and with the Corporation widening the road, the 7'-verandah abutting the road was demolished. Later, this bungalow came under the Accommodation Controller and in 1957-59, as S.C. & X.B, I was privileged to occupy it. S.C & X.B stood for Superintendent, Crime & Anti Corruption. This was the highest anti-corruption post in the State till the 70s, since when it has been progressively upgraded to D.I.G., I.G. and now Director General. Does this point to growing corruption all round?

This bungalow had access to the seashore but thanks to a 100'-wide strip being in dispute between the Muslim Trust and the Archbishop, it remained blocked. However, at my request, the Archbishop was kind enough to give us access without prejudice to the dispute in Court, and this

their craft? At 200 feet up, you can hardly stand back to admire your work or judge perspective! Sometimes I do see the outlines of lettering which other men appear to be filling in with colour, but that only puts the question a step further back? Who drew the outlines in the first place, and Here's an excellent story for

an enterprising journalist, photographs and all. But beware the Evil Eye! Many years ago I found a studio where they were producing those enormous, highly coloured posters advertising films. Inside was a crowd of youths busy with various tasks, but the miracle man, and to me he was little short of that, was a middle-aged, slightly balding gentleman who was holding a solitary 8" × 10" black and white photograph of a filmstar's face in his hand, standing within inches of his canvas and, withing more than that to guide him, reproducing the face at least six feet high in all those brilliant colours with a verisimilitude that was truly miraculous.

The Evil Eye did I mention? Oh yes, I hope they never found out who or what I was, because the very next night the whole studio burnt down!



That's advertising for you, banner overlapping banner and eying with hoardings for space. (Photograph by P Justin.)

But who pays for all this advertising anyway? Why you do, of course. Have you ever paused to wonder what exactly is the value of that heavily advertised soft drink in its distinctive waspwaist bottle, or any of its competitive brands? Like it, do you? Well each to his taste, but I first tasted the stuff as long ago as 1941 and disliked it at first sip, and have never changed my mind since. Give me a good healthy fresh-lime-and-soda or a beer any

day. But I seen to be in a minority of one, not an unusual circumstance for this contributor, and only ask you once again to compare the prodigious cost of all that advertising, the cost of the bottling, transportation, retail profits and so on with the actual value of those few swallows that eventually find their way down your throat. You pay for it all, plus the shareholders' profits, remember!

OUR **READERS** WRITE

special consideration was extended in 1959 to my successor. Vincent Isaacs, who, if I remember right, was our Government's first full-time professional Architect. He later migrated to Australia and, in 1992, one of his paintings won the City of Bayswater Parliament House Art Competition. It now adorns the Parliament House

I also used to reside opposite the Rifle Range, next to Admiralty House, San Thomé, some time after those years on San Thomé High Road.

> K R SHENAI DGP, T.N. (IRtd) M 70 Anna Nagar Madras 600 102

A role model

Chamber.

was pleasantly surprised to see the picture of Dr. U. Venkata Rao's clinic at Thambu Chetty Street in MM, March 16. I lived for some years close to that clinic. At that time there were many such architecturally fine buildings in that locality. Most of these disappeared one by one, giving place to modern concrete monstrosities.

I was in a way connected with the clinic. Dr. U. Venkata Rao, was our family doctor when I was achild. His son, Dr U. Srinivasa Rao, took overduring my teens.

Dr. Rao's premises consists of three floors. The ground floor was the clinic. The first floor was his residence. The top floor was used as a study for the sons of Dr. Rao. One of the sons, Dr. U. Sreedhara Rao, was my classmate from 4th form (9th standard) to B.Sc. degree. After that our paths separated. I had spent many hours in that study with him preparing for our examinations.

I had written an article — 'The G.P's Progress' — in Madras Musings January 1, 1994. In it I depicted Dr. U. Venkata Rao as

a role model for doctors. In passing, it must be mentioned to the credit of photographer Rajind N Christy that he has taken a lot of pains to get a complete picture of the building. In that narrow, congested locality it must have

been a formidable task to capture a full view of this tall building.

> 8, II Cross Street Mahalakshmi Nagar Adambakkam Madras 600 008

M. Sethuraman

On their toes

refer to my picture of ▲Dr Ponnuswamy's cleaned-up wall and the lettering 're-booking' it, which appeared in Madras Musings, April 16th. Within a couple of days of my taking the picture, the 're-booking' symbols had been removed with another daub of pink paint by the authorities. The Election Commission's representatives, the Corporation and the Police all seem to be on their toes in this election when it comes to implementing the elections laws.

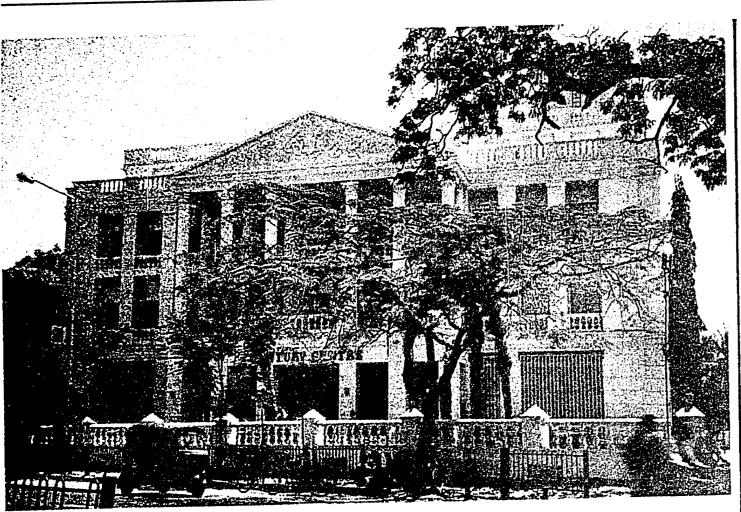
Incidentally, a few days after Madras Musings, April 1st, appeared with my picture of a hoarding on Besant Avenue, the hoarding was removed. It is to be hoped that this is a sign that Besant Avenue will be kept free of hoardings.

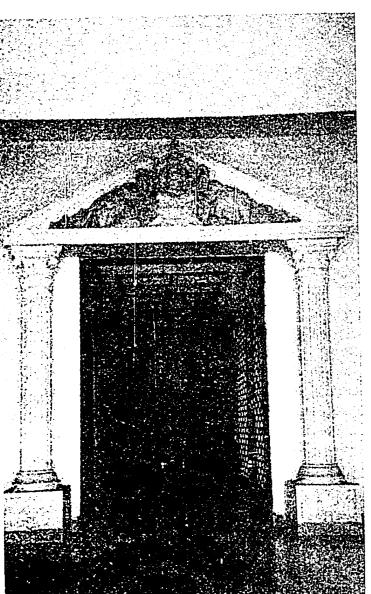
> V S Raghavan Madras-600 041

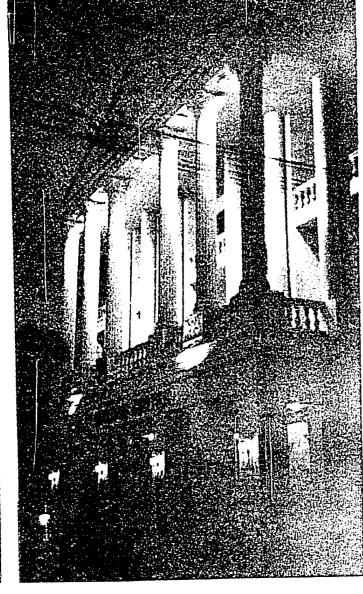
The right name **D**e. my article on the Roja Muthiah Library and

Research Centre which appeared in Madras Musings, April 1, it was **A.K.** Ramanujam who persuaded Chicago to fund the acquisition of the Library and NOT A K Ramalingam as your proof readers would have it. Editor's Note: We regret the

Rajind N Christy error. Madras-600 040







THE NEW...

... & THE OLD

Road which was much photographed by

an American architecture student

Michael Inman some years back,came

down about 18 months ago to make

way for THE NEW. That old building

was a typical art deco building strongly

influenced by Indian ornateness - a

style of building favoured in late 19th

Century, early 20th Century

Mylapore. What's taken its place,

Century Centre, harks back to an

even earlier age when the Regency style

was favoured for both public and

on each of its three floors and in its

basement, Century Centre is a

handsome building reflecting the

architecture of the Raj. Curiously, its

main entrance inside is dominated by

Gajalakshmi, who, if we are not

mistaken, was a feature of the old

bas relief scrollwork, the fluted

Corinthian pillars (the acanthus leaves

on the capitals slightly altered) and the

balustrades of Century Centre, are all

a throwback to the early 19th Century

East India Company era, before

Chisholm and Irwin made Indo-

Saracenic respectable. And so,

Century Centre is a faithful reflection

of the buildings seen in our OLD this

handsome original building of the

Madras Club, now a shell in the Indian

Express Estate and awaiting settlement

of all litigation to, perhaps, be restored

The first of the OLD is the

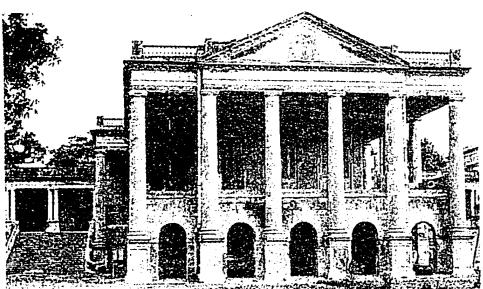
The huge pediment with decorated

With a built-up area of 5000 sq ft

private construction.

building tool

An old house, a landmark on TTK







Rs 1566 cr by the month-end. There's an unexpected rally in

the stock markets over the past few weeks. Brokers and analysts had been bracing themselves for the subdued, and, needless to say, unprofitable trend to continue until the next Budget presentation. Expectations centered on the next Government continuing with the liberalisation of the economy. Even the spurt in the Sensex during early February was considered to be an aberration rather than an harbinger of better times. But with the FIIs turning the heat on, a sustained rally ensued and



everybody has apparently jumped onto the bandwagon. The fortnight ending April 24th alone saw the Sensex jumping 400 points to reach an 18-month high at 3869.

BSE's trading volume on the 24th touched Rs. 55.0 cr, another record high, as the Sensex gained over 1000 points over the last three months. Heavy trading is gradually becoming the norm at all major stock exchanges (SEs). The Indian marketmen, who had settled themselves to spend the run-up to the elections glued to reports on the elections rather than on the market, have benefitted from the FIIs. More than Rs 4173 cr has been pumped in by foreign investors in the first four months of the current year. And the buying which has been the heaviest in April looked set to cross

as a heritage hotel. Built by developing a garden house taken over in 1832, it was around 1850 that the building took its existing form. A magnificent ballroom and smoking room and its huge portico are features of this Pantheonic-styled building that's still as solid as solid can be.

Of the same era, opening its doors in 1850, is the second of our OLD this fortnight, Pachaiyappa's Hall, modelled on the Athenian Temple of Theseus and favouring tall Doric columns. A building under threat, is survives precariously but solidly on NSC Bose Road, dominating the

Flower Bazar scene. The third of our OLD is of late 19th Century, early 20th Century vintage. Now known as Kushaldas Gardens, it was the Maharajah of Travancore's Madras Palace (Note the elephant crest on the pediment).

As in the OLD, the NEW Pediments, Greek-style pillars balustrades, Indian architecture hasn't moved very far, has it? (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY except those of the Madras Club and Kushaldas Gardens, which are by SUSHEELA

Some experts attribute this 'bull run' to FIIs pushing up the prices to escape at still higher levels. The yo-yo action in Reliance is being explained as being the direct result of its GDR prices quoting higher than the domestic equity's. It would therefore make sense for foreign investors to buy in India and sell abroad. However, there are better and fundamentally stronger reasons for this rally, reasons which reveal foreign investors having more confidence in the sustenance of democracy in India - more than their Indian counterparts themselves! It thus shows a series of favourable factors being capitalised upon at a most opportune time.

The possible factors are:

- The recently published Economic and Social Survey of Asia and Pacific predicts Indian growth (5.7 per cent in 1995) in the next two years to be ahead of the rest of South Asia (at 6.3 and 6.5 per cent).

- Upgrading of Indian weightage in the Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Index from 6 per cent to 7.2 per

- Entry of another 45 FII operators into the country. - Diversion of funds from the high-priced capital markets of the West to the lower

priced Indian market. — The possibility of one of the major political parties forming a stable Government, with or without a coalition, at the Centre and, thus, continuing the liberalised economic policies.

- And, finally, the strength of the Indian democracy, which is the world's largest and where still the ballot rules and not the bullet.

Major sellers like the UTI IDBI, etc. are slowing down anticipating better margins With frenzied activity continuing in blue chips like TELCO, ACC, RIL, unsatiated investors are moving over to midcap stocks and the market could touch yet another peak What is of major import is the possibility of the Sensex crossing the all-too-important 4000 mark. While its ehbs and flows point against this vital barrier being breached in the immediate future, a concatenation of factors, like reduced Government expenditure and benefits from the latest credit policy, could see an easing of the liquidity crunch. If such a bountiful event were to take place, the market could literally zoom upwards, bringing relief to the beleagured investors.

K. Gopalakrishnan

Scrip-tease Election by Sensex musings*

Madras Musings is apolitical. Politics comes way down in our priorities, below history, economics, literature, medicine, humour, shopping-info, the arts, sports ... say, just above the obituary column! And yet, when the election winds blow. even MM must look at politics.

First of all, let us record our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Mr Seshan for sparing us those horrendous cutouts. Thank you, Sir, for saving our Madras skyline from cutouts. The noise-pollution levels were also much less this time around. The credit for all this must go to the C.E.C. and his mates. So good a job have they done that this scribe and many others feel that if it is a 'Hung Parliament' that we get, till next elections, may be our CEC should run the country. Since he has managed to clean up to a great extent the Augean Stables of our elections, may be he will be able to do something about that Mega-Augean stable that is Government! May be we should give him a chance! Pipe dreams, did you say? Well, there is no law against dreaming, is

In Madras they say the winds

are blowing against the ruling party. Those who are pro-ruling party point out all the good done for the city — the roads are in much better shape, better lit than ever, and even storm-water drains are being put in. Why, even Fords are coming in! But those against say that the hundred-crore-wedding wiped out all the good that was done, if any was done, that is. And after five years of recurrent traffic-blockades, all two-, threeand four-wheeler users have one suggestion—the next C.M. should be housed in Fort St George itself, so that the roads of Madras are free once more for her citizens. All Z category politicians of Madras may be housed in a special barricaded fortress - say, as safe as Central Jail. All put together in one place, they will save the nation a lot of money too; no more petrol-guzzling motorcades and

less Black Cats to feed. The opposition, of course, being out of power, these past five years, has nothing positive to show. But dame luck seems to favour them as they enjoy the patronage of TWO Mr Cleans; one of celluloid vintage and Mr Moopanar who has at the moment everyone's sympathies. But on the whole, the choice, seems to be Tweedledum or Tweedledee!

Be that as it may, let us citizens of Madras put forward a people's manifesto for the respectful consideration of Tweedle? who comes to power.

1. The Chief Minister (C.M.) should be accessible

to the public. As in, say, neighbouring Kerala, it should be possible for any citizen to fix an appointment and see any minister or the

2. The C.M. should

constitute a sounding-board. cutting across party lines and consisting of leaders in the fields of education, medicine, law, the media, architecture, history, engineering, electronics and the corporate world, who should be consulted before deciding matters of civic importance. The C.M. should meet this body at least once a month. As the members of this board will not be dependent on Government for their subsistence, they should be able to voice their opinion fearlessly. The protection of historical monuments and the heritage of Tamil Nadu in general will be specially looked into by this board. Such a think-tank will be an asset to any C.M. as a source of ideas and as a source of feedback.

3. No renaming of roads, projects or places after living political figures. Names are of historic value. Why tamper with history? Let posterity judge us; let them decide to name things after us if they so desire.

4. No statues of living political leaders to be put up in public places at public cost. Let them earn their positions in our hearts through sacrifice and service.

No one can deny that our leaders provide us endless amusement, entertainment and food for lampooning. We are all indebted to them for providing a lighter side to life. And despite them, India moves on; that is the greatness and resilience of our country. Indeed, the greatest achievement of Narasimha Rao is that "he did nothing to disturb" the country's slow day-to-day progress. In obstetrics, it is said, masterly inactivity and watchful expectancy are the qualities that make an ideal obstetrician. You see, nature does the job during delivery! Likewise, India runs herself; the Prime Minister's job is like that of an obstetrician and the role has suited Rao to a T.

No one knows who is going to win this time. Not even the astrologers! Hedging your bets on any one? I know I am looking forward to seeing Prannoy Roy's post-voting preresults analysis. Until then,

— Hiramalini Seshadri

*This article was written a week before polling began

• ELECTION SIDELIGHTS

Singing the voters awake

In the hour of political Lingles, Tamil Nadu makes its own rules. Hit songs of the likes of A R Rahman and Ilayaraja can be recorded for a mere Rs. 37, the only difference being that the singers are local partywallahs and the lyrics range from the adulatory to the defamatory

Each political party in Tamil Nadu was ready with cassettes on songs to its glory months in advance of the election. All the major parties, the AIADMK, DMK and the Congrss(I) have their own singers.

When the Congress office in Madras burned after the tie-up with the AIADMK, 56-year-old Kesavan, a staunch Congressman, was there belting out a number portraying Prime Minister Narasimha Rao as a hapless victim. 'Tape' Chinnappa adds: "The minute I heard the Congress was in trouble, I came all the way from Madurai to sing and cheer the crowd."

between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100 from partymen, some of whom break into a dance in accompaniment. During the elections, a singer can make a neat Rs. 2000 a day. After the elections, he gets back to being a small-time entertainer at village weddings and other functions. Others turn into roadside minstrels.

A 'political' singer gets

Says Ponnuswamy, who is singing for the DMK's campaign: "I am neutral as far as parties are concerned and have been a singer for 15 years. I just sing the lyrics any party gives me. This time I am singing for the DMK."

Each party also has its own lyricists. The Tamil newwave poet, Valampuri John, writes lyrics for the Congress(I). An out-of-work music director, Shankar, now pens and conducts his troupe in his village for the AIADMK. And thanks to Rajnikant, the DMK has roped in the popular Tamil film director, Deva, who has rendered hit songs for the actor's last three films.

While the AIADMK has songs from MGR's films, the DMK-Tamil Maanila Congress combine woos voters with the latest Rajnikant numbers.

In a state where reel-life heroes have a larger-than-life image, political rallies and meetings are no fun without film music. But with the Election Commission playing spoilsport and banning music on loudspeakers after midnight, these live programmes are the only way to keep the starry-eyed voter glued to the meeting venue.

- Sudha G Tilak

A matter of symbolism

The Diarist writes:

'For political parties the symbol is often the substance. The Congress (T) had asked for a symbol featuring a woman whose resemblance to too difficult to gauge. The EC okayed the symbol, but changed the physiognomy. V Gopalaswamy of the MDMK, the breakaway group from the DMK, was as miffed as N D Tiwari with the E.C. He had asked for a bicycle as his election symbol, but was given the humble umbrella. Little did Gopalaswamy know how the Indian summer and

Tamil habits would happily

conspire to make his election

symbol the most potent in

Tamil Nadu.

one Indira Gandhi was not

In Tamil Nadu, summer is when every Tamil, irrespective of his favourite filmstar, sorry, ideology. carries a brolly. Gopalaswamy's election workers realised this was publicity worth its spread in gold. And free too. All DMK cadres had to do was to stress ad nauseam that the umbrella, that great protector against the elements, means the MDMK.

Proof of success has come from an infuriated DMK leadership, which has banned party workers from using umbrellas while campaigning, never mind the heat. More telling, a man attending an AIADMK rally was roughed up by the cops who thought he was an MDMK fifth columnist. All the poor soul had done was to open and shut his brolly a few times. (Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: No comment. This is the silly season for stories!



From the fringes... to the centre

All the building betwixt and between the date palms and other vegetation — especially the Metro's elevation, on right - provide a better clue to what park this is. It's Government Estate, here photographed from Adam's Road (Swami

The entire estate — a huge lung in the City, which could have been developed as a trade exhibition centre, retaining the natural ambience, is now being earmarked for highrise accommodation for MLAs, quarters for Government staff and even shops, Madras Musings understands. Surely development on more environmen looked at? Surely this beautiful park-complex needs to be restored to its former sylvan

Madras Musings hopes the new Government and its planners will take a second look at Juliure plans for Government Estate and, treating it as a heritage complex, discuss those plans with environmentalists and conservationists. If only we had a Heritage Council, life would have been simpler! (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Quizzin with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMA-NAN's questions are from the period April 1 to 15.)

1. The former President of an European country returned to his old job of electrician because he needed the \$ 120 that came as pay. Who?

2. Which Madras-based translator was awarded the third 'Yatra Award' recently?

3. The world's biggest bank made its debut on April 2nd in Japan. Name it.

4. Which cavalier batsman smashed a world record century in one-day internationals in only 48 balls?

5. Name the high profile U.S. Commerce Secretary killed in an air crash.

6. As a fallout of the disease Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Britain's business revenue has been heavily hit in the EU. How is the disease better known?

7. Why was the assembly elections in the Modakurichi constituency in Periyar District put off?

8. The Premier of which neighbouring country had her civil rights restored after nearly two decades?

9. The U.P. Government created a record of sorts by providing 'X' category security to an individual with a big criminal record. Who?

10. A powerful President of a country is to play a cameo in A Child's Wish in which he meets a child with terminal cancer desiring to see him. Who?

he had won fame as a silent film 11. Jessica Dubroff's attempt to action hero, he was well aware set a new record led to her of the potential of the medium death, thus causing dismay and its sociological uses. When worldwide.What record did the he came to Madras to direct his seven-year-old plan to set? first silent film, Anathai Penn 12. Which political leader of (1930), Subramaniam worked Tamil Nadu was honoured to with him, learning the ropes of mark the Golden Jubilee of his film-making. Raja Sandow made entry into tinseltown? several more silent films in Madras, and Subramaniam

13. Who won the singles title in the inaugural ATP Tour tennis event, the Indian Open in New Delhi, recently?

14. According to a recent report, which company was the highest advertising spender in 1995 (spending Rs 109.81 crore)?

15. Two of the more popular motorbikes, Yamaha RX 100 and KB 100, had to be withdrawn because of a new rule which came into effect from April 1st. What rule?

**

(Answers on p. 7)

Holding a mirror to society

He was a pioneer of South Indian Cinema, whose nan Chettiar, an enterprising ability to scout talent was as legendary as his organisational and managerial skills. He made several memorable Tamil movies like Balayogini, and Thyagabhoomi, but he also made the first Hindi film in Madras. He was a committed filmmaker who realised that cinema was a powerful medium which could be used as a tool of social protest to bring about changes in social awareness. Making films that held a mirror to society, Subramaniam attained fame as a writer, producer, director and studio owner. Krishnaswami Subramaniam,

a lawyer-turned-filmmaker was

from Papanasam, a small town

in the Thanjavur District. His

father was a successful lawyer in

the temple-town of Kumba-

konam and, sticking to the

tradition prevailing in most

South Indian Brahmin families,

Subramaniam too studied law

and became a lawyer. He

married into a wealthy lawyer's

family in Nagapattinam. His

wife Meenakshi had a flair for

classical Carnatic music. She

sang well and could compose

music too. In later years, she was

the music composer for some of

for a short while, but his mind

was not on it. He was drawn to

the new medium of cinema,

then silent, yet eloquent.

He joined another pioneer,

R. Padmanabhan of Sivaganga,

and they worked in Madras on

silent films. Padmanabhan

brought from Bombay another

greater pioneer of Indian

cinema, sadly forgotten today,

Sandow, though a 'Madrasi'

(he was P.K. Nagalingam of

Pudukkottai), had never worked

in his home state, but he was a

big name in Bombay. Though

worked on all them, biding his

time till he could launch out as

M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagava-

thar, the first super star of South

Indian cinema, was then a top-

flight stage star. When movies

began to talk in Tamil, with

Kalidas in 1931, Bhagavathar

decided to produce a film, based

on one of his stage hits. The

same idea occurred to a wealthy

Nattukottai Chettiar business-

man interested in movies,

Al. Rm. Alagappa Chettiar,

and his friend S.M. Lakshmana-

an independent film-maker.

Raia Sandow.

Subramaniam practised law

her husband's films.

businessman, pioneer dealer of motor cars in Chettinad, and a 'drama contractor'. Popularly known as 'Lena', he rose to become a successful film producer and, during the 1940's-50's he was a force in Madras in social and business circles. Lena knew Bhagavathar well and persuaded him to drop his plans and work for Alagappa Chettiar. When Bhagavathar was in Karaikudi staging Pavalakodi. Lena invited K. Subramaniam to come from Madras and see the play. When the two Chettiars and Subramaniam saw Pavalakodi

bestowed movie stardom on them. The debutant film-maker too attracted attention.

Pavalakodi featured fifty songs and this was advertised with pride. The composer was another legend of South Indian cinema, Papanasam Sivan (MM, March 16, '96)

Subramaniam next went to Calcutta to make Bhaktha Kuchela and Naveena Sarangadhara (1936). In Bhaktha Kuchela he introduced something new which created a sensation. S D Subbulakshmi played an unusual double role, that of Susheela, Kuchela's wife, and also of Lord Krishna. A

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

together, they decided to picturise it using the same theatre troupe. Thus began the illustrious career of K Subramaniam.

Pavalakodi (1934) was produced in Madras at Meenakshi Cinetone (now Satva Studio). Directed by Subramaniam, Bhagavathar and the popular stage actress of the day, S D Subbulakshmi, played the lead roles. Attractive and talented SDS could act, sing and dance. (Soon she married her director.) MKT-SDS were a popular pair on stage and the success of their first film

and male roles in a movie was daring to say the least, and helped make the film a success. In Naveena Sarangadhara, a song rendered by Bhagavathar, 'Sivaperuman Kirupai Vendum' became a super hit and is one of the immortal melodies of Tamil cinema.

woman performing both female

In 1937 Subramaniam turned producer with SDS and others and promoted the Madras United Artistes' Corporation (MUAC), a famous name in South Indian film history. Ever an innovator, he made MUAC's first production



Pioneering Film-Maker

(Photo Courtesy: RAGAMI)

a two-in-one film, Kausalya Parinayam and Mr Ammanji. During the Thirties, the practice was to club two or three ilms and release them as a single package. Invariably a comedy short was part of the package and Subramaniam used it with success. He built a studio in the heart of Madras -Motion Pictures Producers' Combines (MPPC) - which was for some years a beehive of activity. (MPPC Studio later became Gemini Studio and created film history under S S Vasan. This great venue of classical picture - making vanished some years ago, much to the regret of many, and today the hallowed site is a concrete

Subramaniam brought-down several Bengali technicians to settle in Madras and work for him. Thus, he helped the growth of cinema in Madras. Noted cinematographers Sailen Bose and Kamal Ghosh, audiographer lyotish Sinha, and the famed make-up wizard Haripadachandra (Hari Babu) were some of those whose contribution to South Indian cinema has been immense and memorable.

(To be continued next fortnight)

presumed dead. In fact, she had

From the South to the North — with love

(By A Special Correspondent)

kin in Madhya Pradesh. All of them are schizophrenics who had wandered far from home.

The Banyan, a home for mentally ill destitute women, started by two young women who gave up high profile jobs to help the unfortunate, has just restored to their families in North India four women who had been found wandering in Madras.

When Madras Musings drew attention to The Banyan, it was the first City publication to do so (MM, September 16, 1994) The Banyan has spread wide since then, with the help of various public personalities and institutions. Now it would seem that its spread has taken in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and

Madhya Pradesh. Recently, The Banyan restored 40-year-old Ramkumari to her home in Pratapgarh District, U.P., 26-year-old Ganga of Delhi to a family in Delhi who have 'adopted' her, and 35-year-old Meera and 38-year-old Gyan Bai to their

wandered far... Bombay and Calcutta are in her memory... before finding herself in Madras. Ramkumari, whose schizo-Local Good Samaritans led her phrenia was diagnosed eight to The Banyan. And persistent years ago, was treated at an inquiries made by personnel of Institute of Mental Health in The Banyan enabled her to be U.P. for two years and released united with her family — on the as improved. She went back to day her eldest daughter was her village but was found getting married! missing after a flood and was

(Continued from P 1) are encouraged by the others to take the lead along the lines of the Bombay First initiative.

This lead could come from the Madras Chamber of Commerce or from an informal grouping of business organisations as the one that rallied to support Madras Musings as a public service, or from the. Young Presidents Organisation, or from any other grouping of commercial and industrial

organisations. But whoever takes the lead, it needs to be. sooner than later if Madras is to be saved from gridlock.

The challenge is for all concerned to get together and support such a privateinitiative and work with it as a team. Are the governmental and nongovernmental organisations of Madras up to the challenge of backing as a team a commercial and industrial leadership committed to a better Madras?



Off to London

— To show off South India

Do you want to muse

with MUSINGS?

Thanks to the support of twelve of Madras' leading

business organisations, it is possible to distribute Madras

Musings as a FREE-MAILER again. This informal support

group would like the messages of Madras Musings to

be spread as wide as possible in the City and in Tamil

Nadu. With this in mind, we are aiming at a mailing list

of 10,000 addressees. Would you like to be one of the

10,000 addresses? All 1500 subscribers and the 1500

persons on our complimentary mailinglistare already on

the new list. Others who would like to be put on the

mailing list should fill in the form below (use block

letters/type) and post it to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press

If you would also like Madras Musings sent to a friend

regularly, fill in the form below and send it to M/s.

Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd, 62/63 Greames Road

NOTE: Overseas postage extra. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Gulf: Rs. 375

a year. US and Europe: Rs. 425 a year. Cheques payable to M/s.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by

the following organisations:

Amalgamations:

Ashok

Leyland Ltd; ● A V Thomas & Co; ● Bank of Madura;

India Cements;
 The K C P Limited;
 Murugappa

Group; ● Ponds (India) Ltd.; ● Rane (Madras) Ltd;

Sanmar Group;
 S.P.I.C.; and
 Sundram

MADRAS-600 006

Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

Address:

Fasteners.

Pvt Ltd. 62/63 Greames Road, MADRAS-600 006

The exciting news is that crafts, free outdoor perforscores of Madrasartists are mances, cuisine and a range of busy preparing for the three- educational programmes. This is week Festival of India's South the first time that there is a which starts in London on May focus on the South in London 23rd. There will be visual arts, and Gayathri Krishnaswamy, film, dance, theatre, music, who is coordinating the festival

for the World Circuit Arts of UK, is enthusiastic about how many parts of London will have the South Indian look. Anne Hunt and Laura Lang

have travelled in South India during the past year witnessing many performances. They finally chose Somu Rao and his colleagues from Thanjavur for the poikkal kudirai performance, which will be the feature of the grand opening at Covent Garden. Poikkal kudirai is a spectacle that was encouraged by the Maratha kings in their processions and has various acrobatic and entertaining aspects to it.

Somu Rao is a traditional poikkal kudirai artist struggling to make ends meet. He is the best artist we have and is greatly skilled on his stilts. He makes his own horses with papier mache and decorates them aesthetically. He has trained his wife and daughter and dances with them. Somu Rao went to Russia for the Festival of India there and is really excited about going to London with the family.

The Bharata Natyam performance will be by the sprightly Alarmel Valli, and Carnatic music will be by U Srinivas on his mandolin. There will be an extraordinary double bill by vocalist Balamurali Krishna and Chitraveena Ravikiran in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank. Both child prodigies have grown up to be very strongly individualistic and mature artists. It should be an interesting contrast, one older and adventurous, the other vounger and more traditional, both brilliant.

There will also be an exhibition of film posters from Madras and TWO film poster painters from Chandra Arts in Madras are going to London to paint some hoardings on the South Bank itself!

of Arangham Tamil literary epic Divya

Prabhandham.

The ananda

A moist afternoon in Mylapore, an intense rehearsal session concluded... perspiration steaming without, teeming unrest within... probing questions, selfdoubt... my views on dance, presentation, performance, choreography, artistic freedom and choice... words stumbling over one another in an incoherent stream. Listening patiently was my guru Madurai N. Krishnan and renowned dancer Sudharani Raghupathy. When words had been

exhausted, it was clear that what I needed to do was crystallise my strong stirrings under an umbrella that would allow my experiences in dance and media, as well the influences of my work in India and America, to find a voice. The name for this fledgling organisation, I said, needed to be one word — simple to utter by international tongues — and it had to be Tamil. It was then that Sudharani suggested the name ARANGHAM. It was perfect! Denoting a performance space, it resonated with my ideas of creating lively interactions with the plastic, visual and performing

And so it was, on the verandah of Sudharani's graceful home in Madras, that the Arangham Trust was born. To her I owe a debt of gratitude for encouraging me to publish 'Narthaki', the directory of classical Indian dance, and for goading me to fine-tune my concept and choreography in Paanchajanyam, my first fulllength ballet based on the

Many museums in London will focus on South India and there will be traditional paintings and contemporary arts exhibited in the different galleries. The Horniman Museum will host an exhibition focussing on the daily life in a South Indian village. The exhibition will cover bathing, cooking, cultivation and life cycle rituals.

A second section will cover prayer and devotion, including domestic shrines, public temples, Hindu deities and pilgrimage. And a third section will show how these customs and beliefs are continued when transferred to contemporary Britain.

A two-day conference on Kumbakonam, the ancient Tamil city, has been organised by the British Museum and Cambridge University. Dr George Michell, Dr Francoise L'Hernault and Dr Anna Dallapiccola have lived in Kumbakonam and have been working on a major interdisciplinary project to record its monuments and understand its remarkable urban culture.

- V R Devika

through Arangham have begun with an idea, a feeling or a gut instinct. Casual meetings with artistes have become full-fledged performances: an informal chat over a cup of coffee with an impressario resulted in a wildly applauded American dance tour; the reuniting with an old friend from New York culminated in an all-woman's dance festival... A blend of feeling and flexibility, passion and planning, imagination and discipline is what has

All the projects initiated

shaped the Arangham Trust. In the four years of our presence in the artscape of Madras, sculptors, poets painters, writers, musicians



Anita Ratnam of the Arangham Trust

theatre and film directors, actors, photographers, videographers and graphic designers from across India and abroad have entered our arangham (arena). Though dance-led, Arangham Trust has attempted to create dynamic relations with other art forms. In today's dialogue of contemporary movement, we have recognised the vital need for a holistic approach to the arts. From 'Narthaki' to 'Purush' it has been four intensely creative years and in the future we hope the ananda (joy) that has propelled Arangham will remain the mainstay of our artistic personality.

Anita Ratnam (Founder/Director, writing in the annual report of ARANGHAM)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Nobel Laureate Lech Walesa of Poland; 2. V. Abdulla; 3. The New Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi; 4. Sanath Jayasuriya, of Sri Lanka; 5. Ron Brown; 6. Mad Cow disease: 7. Because of the unusually large number of candidates, 1033; 8. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka: 9. Phoolan Devi; 10. Bill Clinton; 11. Youngest to pilot an aircraft cross-U.S.; 12. M. Karunanidhi: 13. Thomas Enqvist; 14. Hindustan Lever Limited; 15. The new emission

There's money in the fish tank

"Watching them relieves my mental tension and soothes my frazzled nerves," feels S Sumathi, a housewife. "It is the only silent way of having pets," advises Dimi Isaac, an ornamental fish consultant. "Unlike dogs and cats, these pets are not messy nor costly to maintain. Moreover, you do not get emotionally attached to them. If one of them dies, you throw it out of the window and replace it with another," says a

course, cost extra. Many families are beginning to take this hobby seriously and spend quite a lot on it. There are serious hobbyists who have erected a biologically balanced tub spending thousands of rupees! There are special table top models which can be erected at a cost ranging from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 35,000!

Except for changing the water in the tank, not much labour is involved in this hobby. Even the feed for the fish does

country. If the farming is done on scientific lines, this turnover could double in five years, feels MPEDA. This is supported by the fact that more than 100 small traders have opened shops in Madras in the last two years.

Almost all the inland sales in this largely unorganised trade are in the four metropolitan cities till now. The MPEDA puts the number of full-time farmers at 200 and part-time farmers at 1500 in the country. In Madras alone there are only 30 full-time farmers.

Starting its operations with a modest investment of Rs. 3 lakh in 1987, SIA expanded its business with terms loans from TDICI and Bank of Baroda. Today, its annual turnover is Rs. 60 lakh, inclusive of export earnings to the tune of Rs. 7 lakh. And business is growing at 15% every year.

The world trade in ornamental fish is estimated at 4.5 billion US dollars. The USA alone imports 500 million dollars worth of tropical fish every year, as eight per cent of its 86 million homes have fish tubs! In the case of UK, Belgium and Italy the percentage of tanks in homes in even higher. Japan, China, Australia and



Dimitri Isaac, an aquarium consultant, with the aquarium he installed at the Apollo Cancer Hospital. (Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN.)

South Africa are other countries where the hobby is popular.

Today, 80 per cent of the world's demand is met by breeders in Southeast Asia from countries like Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan and Indonesia. "Ornamental fish farming is a cottage industry there and government incentives for mass breeding have enabled them to become world leaders," says Subramaniam.

India, with its large numbers of rivers, lakes and ponds and its favourable climate, is ideally suited to become a major player in the world. Its rivers and lakes are virtual goldmines for ornamental fish. Many of the Indian species, like catfish, dwarf and giant gourami, and barbs are popular abroad and command a good premium. Apart from the freshwater fish, marine ornamental fish are also available in abundance in coastal regions. Most of the species found in Indian waters meet the criteria to be accepted as pets, namely:

- Attractive colour;

- Adaptability to living in confinement;
- Peaceful nature; and
- Adaptability to consuming varieties of food.

Another advantage of tropical fish farming, as compared to shrimp farming, is that vast tracts of land are not needed and environmental degradation does not result. "With just ten lakh rupees, you can put up a ten-acre farm with the latest technology," says Subramaniam. According to an MPEDA project estimate, a profit of Rs. 10 lakh can be earned on an investment of Rs. 30 lakh. And if done on a mass-scale, the revenue would treble.

Apart from the lack of awareness about the export potential, the main problems for a breeder in India are the lack of an uninterrupted supply of good water and the feed for the fish

by Venkatachari Jagannathan

hobbyist. Says S Vasanth, "Initially there was some opposition from the family, but later, when the fish began to reproduce and multiply the whole family got deeply interested!"

The hobby of having ornamental fish as pets is fast becoming popular in India. In fact, designing an aquarium to add beauty to a plush interior has become the 'in' thing for many a modern day architect.

You need only Rs. 150-200 to get an adequate glass tank for the fish and a couple of exotic fish to start with. Additional accessories, like illuminators, colour chips and motor, of

not cost more than Rs. 30-50 a month.

On the commercial front, trading in ornamental/tropical fish is big business now. Tropical fish farming has a good export potential. "Whether it is inland or export, the prospects for the business are good, since every room in a home can sport a tub," says M Subramaniam, Public Relations Officer, Southern India Aquarists (SIA).

According to the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), the retail/wholesale turnover of the trade in these fish in Madras alone is around Rs. 1.5 crore a year and it is around Rs. 10 crore in the

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:

READY FOR THE EXPANDING HORIZONS OF THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY



Amalgamations Group

In every vital area of national life



Ashok Leyland

GLOBAL STANDARDS. GLOBAL MARKETS



A V Thomas & Co

Bank of Madura Ltd.

Banking by Design

INDIA CEMENTS LTD.

Manufacturers of Sankar Cement and

Coromandel Cement



Group

Dr. P.V. Cherian Crescent Madras - 600 105 Tel: 8270687

Manufacture of Heavy Industrial Machinery & Cement - Design, Manufacture, Supply & Erection of Complete Cement & Sugar Plants.





EID Parry (India) Limited, Ceramics Division, Dare House, Madras-600 001



No one treats your skin like Pond's



32, Cathedral Road, Madras - 600 86.

Steering gears – Manual & Power Steering linkages & Ball joints Brake Linings & Clutch products Engine Valves & Valve guides Camshafts & Tappets

THE **SAMMAR** GROUP

- 8, Cathedral Road, Madras 86.
- Chemicals Thermoplastics
 - Engineering ElectronicsShipping Textiles
 - Property Development
 - Footwear & Exports
 - Financial Services



Group of Companies

Agribusiness • Chemicals &
Petrochemicals • Pharmaceuticals
Services

Southern Petrochemical Industries Corporation Limited, 97, Mount Road, Guindy, Madras - 600 032. Ph: 2350245; Telex: 041-8921 & 8908; Fax: 2352163



Sundram Fasteners Limited