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# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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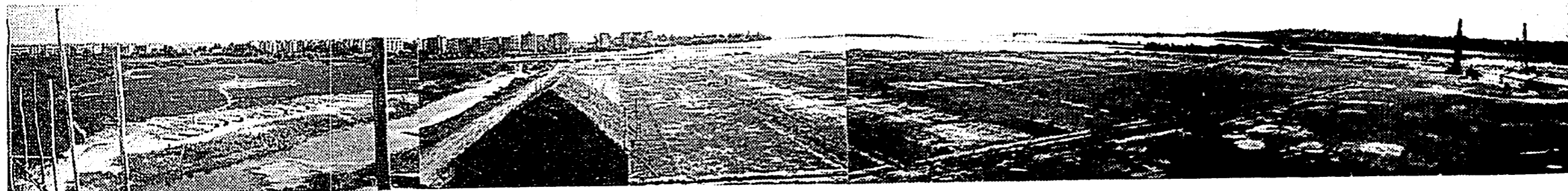
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This 'spread' of the protected Adyar Estuary Area, where construction work is going on by the Adyar River's south bank (on the right), was taken several weeks ago. The 'finger' of estuary water on the left once used to flow almost up to Greenway's Road; now it is blocked near where the bamboo poles are seen on the left. The site on the left bank of this rivulet is where both the construction workers and a fishermen's group (who have been using this waterway and the waters of its mouth) have built thatched homes. Both the waterway as well as the home-building led to violence recently.

## NO ACT

### — and so a bit more heritage is lost!

(By the Editor)

On December 16, 1995, *Madras Musings* had pointed out (with photographs) that on the land where the then Chief Minister J Jayalalitha had held a wedding-to-remember, and on a large adjacent plot, developers were building luxury apartment houses and a hotel. *Madras Musings* had wondered how this was possible on land which was part of the Adyar Estuary Reserve (protected zone) and was also within 500 metres of the coast.

It was on this building site that, a couple of weeks ago, fishermen fought a pitched battle with a gang let loose on them by the building interests. The fishermen were aggrieved that not only were they being pushed out, but that the backwaters in which they traditionally fished were also being filled in by the builders.

Whatever the rights and wrongs in this dispute, whether permission had been granted for building or not, whether the MMDA was once again bending its rules or not, the fact remains that such building and the violence that followed would not have happened if a Heritage Act was in place.

This journal has for several years now campaigned for a Heritage Act. Even a model Act was published in these columns (*MM*, Sept. 1, 1994). But few have paid heed to these words. And in this instance,

building has gone on apace along the coast, on land which is in effect part of a natural reserve. And, ironically, the luxury flats are meant for NRIs who sing loudest of the splendid environment and conservation laws of their adopted homelands.

*Madras Musings* is glad to find that in the past few weeks a couple of other civic groups have raised their voice and asked for the protection of the City's natural and built heritage. Sadly, neither of them have made these pleas the primary focus of the petitions they propose to make to the new Government; nevertheless, heritage is very much part of these petitions.

In one of these petitions it is succinctly stated:

“Ultimately the socio-economic development of the metropolis rests to a large extent on the environmental qualities that are created in the city. We have inherited several resources from the past and their proper development/conservation is a vital necessity.

Conservation and preservation of historical monuments and areas have unfortunately been identified as 'elitist' instead of being perceived as the rightful pride of people in their history and heritage.

In an urban environment, to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony, it is also essential to preserve the open

## Here's a Corporation that's taking up heritage work

### WHEN WILL WE?

At last, says GUNVANAATHI BALARAM of *The Times of India*, Mumbai, heritage conservation has made it to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's agenda. A heritage conservation cell has been set up to document and restore the 23 heritage structures owned by the BMC. There are 633 such listed structures in the city.

The cell, which was mooted by additional chief secretary Sharad Kale (while he was municipal commissioner), has been allotted a budget of Rs.10 lakh for restoration work in 1996-97. The budgetary allocation will continue, and be increased if necessary, for the next five to seven years. “This is about how long it will require to restore all the structures to their original glory,” according to BMC officials.

The BMC headquarters was restored during its centenary in 1993. The BMC spent Rs. 1 crore on conserving this Grade I stone structure. Apart from the neo-Gothic BMC building, the structures to be spruced up include the Crawford Market building (1869); Bombay Water Works building (1920s); the Kurla stone ENT municipal hospital (1908); KEM hospital (1925);

Gowalia Tank Fire Station (1920s); the Municipal Commissioner's bungalow (1920s, Colonial-style tiled house); and the Mayor's Bungalow (1930s, vernacular style).

Also on the list are the Gateway of India and several roundabouts and gardens such as Five Gardens complex in Matunga (1930s); Khodadad Circle (1930s) in Dadar surrounded by its squat buildings with arched balconies; the Horniman Circle (1865), with its semicircle of splendid colonnaded structures; the Veermata Jeejabai Udyan with its colonial clock tower and the Bhau Daji Lad museum.

Eight fountains and *piyaos* (drinking water fountains) are on the list as well. There is the great Flora Fountain (1867) made of imported Portland stone — now vandalised with white oil paint. And the Wellington Fountain (1865) opposite Regal cinema — also painted and with its surrounding space cluttered with cars.

Of the 23 structures, ten have already been inspected by the BMC squad. Work will commence as soon as the total cost of the phased programme of repairs is finalised. The re-

pairs will be carried out after a scrutiny of old plans and photographs of the structure. The guidance of conservation architects and city historians will also be sought.

Apart from structural repairs, wiring and electrical connections will also be redone. Old, worn-out wiring systems have seen a lot of the city's built heritage going up in smoke, most recently a section of John Begg's Indo-Saracenic GPO. The BMC heritage squad seems keen on preventing such accidents in the future.

Another welcome development is that the BMC squad intends to strip the city's finely carved stone fountains (including Flora Fountain) of their paint — “but only if it will not damage the stone”. A cardinal principle of conservation — which BMC ward officers and many of those sponsoring the “maintenance” of traffic islands, public fountains and sculptures are woefully ignorant about — is that dressed stone should NEVER be painted. It not only obliterates the beauty of the stone, but also damages it by getting into its pores and causing it to chip during removal.

spaces, water bodies and coastal zones, if any, for the enjoyment of all.

These steps are immediately necessary:

1. Listing of heritage buildings and areas, and adequate measures to ensure their safety and preservation.
2. Development of the beach for recreation and prevention of incompatible uses on the coastline.
3. Safeguarding of catchment areas and waterbodies
4. Development and exten-

sion of parks, forests and open spaces throughout the metropolitan areas, and incorporating in these plans the extensive tank systems which Madras is blessed with and which are perpetually under threat.

For this purpose, an efficient and effective environmental quality monitoring system has to be instituted with the active participation of the State Pollution Control Board, MMDA, Metrowater, NGOs and Citizen Groups.

Environmental management is the most vital area in the sustained development of our cities and this aspect must be strengthened at all levels.

*Madras Musings* endorses these words wholeheartedly and calls on the Government to immediately enact legislation which will assure protection to the four areas listed above. Meanwhile, can it look forward to a review of what is happening in the Adyar Estuary area?

# Media make waves, cause a tidal

This is a quote from a news report from Madras, dated June 20th: Ms. Sasikala's husband, Mr. Natarajan, and four henchmen attacked over 100 photographers, newsmen and TV cameramen gathered outside the enforcement directorate this morning. Five against a hundred... sounds to *The Man From Madras Musings* like David taking on Goliath or Horatio going on the offensive at the bridge. Only in this case the five were the 'cruel villains' who took on the 'heroic one hundred'. In fact, it was only the Natarajan family and their cohorts trying to throw a protective ring around their Queen Bee.

Those who were present on this rather unfortunate occasion have been unanimous that what happened shouldn't have happened. If only Sasikala and company had not been secretive and had informed the Enforcement authorities of their ETA, arrangements could have been made for an adequate police force to ensure her unhindered entry. If only the police had been keeping an eye on both the media crowd and Sashikala's movements, they had enough time to move in and provide enough men to prevent any eventuality. As for the media, it is appreciated that they have a job to do, but MMM wonders whether that involves coming on like a tidal wave to, mixing metaphors, create a circus.

With the proliferation of TV newsmakers and the mushrooming increase in newspapers and magazines (certainly demonstrating that all is well with democracy in the country), with this media boom, the number of journalists, photographers and TV cameramen at major news events is certainly overwhelming. And with every one of them wanting an 'exclusive' in the midst of a crowd, the scene often seems only short of mayhem. In these circumstances, it would seem to MMM, that it might be more valuable for the various journalists' bodies to get together and ponder over how such ugly situations might be avoided in the future. Rather than rushing to court and winning petty victories, it would seem more meaningful if the journalists' organisations drew up a code of conduct for themselves which would prevent the need for waging such heroic battles in the race for news.

In the present instance, it might be remembered that Chief Minister Karunanidhi promised that he would allow the law to take its course without in any way getting involved. He has kept his word. The media could well act as dignified and gain much more from it than by creating a Roman circus or setting up a trial by media. At the same time, those in the news have to live with those trying to get the news. Both parties seemed to appreciate that the next day when former Chief Minister Jayalalitha went to visit Sasikala in jail. MMM wonders

how things went off so peacefully on this occasion and pictures obtained. Maybe in the answers to that lie the indicators for the evolution of a code of conduct.

## US contribution

Leaving Madras this month there three American families that have contributed much to the growing American, nay, foreign investment presence in the City. Consul-General Tim Hauser, his Political Officer who took a greater interest in the business scene, Jim Huskey, and his Commercial Officer Mike Keaveney all say goodbye to Madras at the same time — and *The Man From Madras Musings* feels the simultaneous departure will leave rather an unfortunate gap in South Indian-US commercial relations that will take some time to bridge.

All three worked closely in increasing the American software presence in Bangalore, in introducing it in Kerala and Hyderabad and, above all, in getting Du Pont's and Ford to pick Madras, a choice which has led not only to other American firms looking at Tamil Nadu but industrial organisations from other countries also putting down roots here. Hyundai of South Korea the biggest of them. Their 'hard-sell' of the South to American investors will be hard to match in the years to come. MMM can only say, "Thank you, gentlemen, on behalf of Madras" — and he hopes the rest of Tamil Nadu industry will endorse that vote of thanks.

But it was not only Hauser, Huskey and Keaveney who made a contribution. As they used to say in 19th Century Madras, "their ladies" did too. Sandra Rowland-Hauser had much to do with *At Home*, in Madras, that handbook that introduced the City to the new settlers, Martha Keaveney was instrumental in setting up the American International School and Joanne Huskey not only took over the running of the School from Keaveney but also took *At Home* one step further by establishing Global Adjustments with Ranjani Manian to not only brief the families of potential foreign investors but, thereafter, to help them settle in as well. And she added voice and presence to the Madras Players (ED.: See page 7). As Joanne says 'Goodbye', her happiest thought could well be that the School will be growing from 30 to 150 next year.

It's been a long time since the U S Consulate-General's office has made such a significant contribution to Madras, MMM is inclined to think. And it will be a tough act to follow for the young woman who arrives as Consul-General from an Ivory Coast posting (a country from which former USIS head Miriam Guichard once made waves throughout West Africa). The first Black American to be Consul-General in Madras, the lady from Abidjan was re-

cently married and will be accompanied by her husband — who will be one of her Vice Consuls in Madras!

## Two farewells

In the past couple of weeks, *The Man From Madras Musings* attended two completely different kinds of farewell functions. The first was in five-star splendour and with virtually no speeches, except a couple of brief toasts to Oxford University Press, India's outgoing Chairman and Managing Director, Neil O'Brien, and to his successor Manzhur Khan. At the party, attended by all the English language publishers in Madras and the leading book-

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

sellors, it suddenly struck MMM that Khan was the sixth head of OUP in India that MMM has known. But it was the four between R E Hawkins and Khan that MMM had a close working association with over the last 25 years.

O'Brien, whose father had taught in Kerala and Calcutta before becoming a Professor of English at Benares Hindu University, has long been a leader of the Anglo-Indian community. For several years their representative in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, he turned down the nomination for MP at the Centre, not wanting to leave Calcutta. But when he was made head of OUP, India, after having been General Manager, East, for years, he couldn't say no to Delhi. But throughout his years in Delhi what he must have missed most was the conviviality of Calcutta's Dalhousie Institute and the frenzied quizzing atmosphere in Calcutta, which he, as the 'Father of the Indian Quiz', helped to create and which his three sons still sustain there. He'll soon be back in his stride there again with them. With more time on his hands, Neil O'Brien will also turn to writing. Already he's got columns going in the Calcutta and Delhi papers. But it's an anecdotal tome on quizzing trivia that MMM awaits before long.

## Mrs. Chips

Quite a contrast was a 'Goodbye MRS Chips' function that MMM attended in a tiny village (pop. appx. 2000) in the back of beyond of Tamil Nadu. Here there was a large audience of students, parents, teachers, educationists from the surrounding towns and villages, officialdom, leading citizenry and the founders and trustees of a school that pioneered girls' education in that backward area. There was tea, music, a stage, three hours of speeches and a concert — five hours in all!

But what amazed MMM was the discovery that the retiring headmistress was an

Economics gold medalist from Madras University, had SIX Master's degrees ranging from English to Tamil, had won several awards in sport, for work with the Bharat Scouts and Guides and for teaching — and, despite this brilliant record, had willingly and happily spent 30 years in this wilderness, apart from being far from her husband in Mysore! She could have gone on to teach in any college in the country and would no doubt have by now become Head of Department. Yet she chose to make her contribution to India in a village school! It struck MMM as a unique example of service to others, especially the needy, before self.

What also struck MMM on the occasion was that the eight or nine headmasters and headmistresses present on the occasion from schools in the neighbouring villages were as dedicated. They may not have been as highly qualified, but in their eloquence and their conversation they were marked as persons of ability who had decided that it was in the rural schools they could make a significant contribution to the state and country. Unanimous in wishing Premila Vijendra well in her retirement with her son in the US, they seemed as concerned with how they were going to organise district school activities without her in the days ahead.

One example of her drive cited on the occasion was how she developed a high school into a higher secondary school. That she could not make it a college must have been her one regret, it was pointed out. In the higher secondary, she introduced Nursing — the first school to do so in this part of the state. As a further example of her drive the story was told that for Nursing to be permitted as a subject by the Education authorities, a hospital with at least ten beds was necessary in the same town, in order to ensure practical training. The hospital in the village had only eight beds. By the time the girls are ready for practical training, there'll be ten beds in that hospital, she promised the educational authorities. And by the time the officers came around for inspection, the hospital had not ten but twelve beds — all in place through her drive.

When MMM wondered how she was going to fit into California after 30 years in a village in Tamil Nadu's Deep South, she laughed, "My son too came from one of the village schools here and he hasn't done too badly. And like him, I've already done all sorts of computer courses!" Would that India had many more like this Marathi Brahmin from Tamil Nadu.

## In brief

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* is pleased to note that the Karunanidhi government

has restored reservation in universities in Tamil Nadu for genuine Sri Lankan refugees. MMM had raised this issue in this column in the June 1st issue of *Madras Musings*. He now looks forward to the other half of this issue being addressed; that is, the issuance of work permits to genuine refugees educated in Indian educational institutions.

★ *Valluvar Kottam*, *The Man From Madras Musings* notes, looks a mess again — and following attention being drawn to this fact, "renovation", rather, cleaning-up, has been initiated. But it should be pointed out that when *Madras Musings* drew attention to the building's sorry state a couple of years ago, it was "renovated" by the last government and made to look most handsome. Now it will be made to look handsome again — but MMM guarantees that in a year it'll be back to the present condition. With the elements and the visitors conspiring against it, *Valluvar Kottam* needs DAILY maintenance — and that is what it is NOT getting. Such maintenance, better, untearable materials for the *thorana*, and improved means of evacuating rainwater are what it needs, NOT mere cleansing.

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* is delighted to hear that the "police patrol system (is) 'to be revived' ". MMM had referred to the need for patrolling in his April 16th and June 16th columns...not to mention earlier. MMM now looks forward to this fresh promise being kept. But his only concern is that what is being talked about is mobile patrols... which at present seem to be parked patrols or speeding patrols, nothing in between. Neither will be effective. What will be, is what MMM has been talking about — FOOT PATROLS as of yore. Can we look forward to them?

★ Mohammad Ameer Deeb Habib, who is better known as Ameer Bhai, has recently been released on bail by a Hong Kong court even before India's CBI could move for extradition of the man wanted for his alleged involvement in several hawala cases. Ameer Bhai, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told, not only looks like former smuggler don Haji Masthan but, like him, is from Keelakkara. Ameer Bhai was a gems dealer in Mumbai who operated from *Pancharatna*, the building that is the nerve centre of the Indian diamond industry. He is said to have business interests in Dubai, Hong Kong and Bangkok. The lean, thin-moustached Ameer Bhai, who in police descriptions is stated to speak with a stammer, is said to have been a frequent traveller to the countries where he ran businesses as well as to Antwerp, Zurich, Madrid and Singapore. Haji Masthan was quite happy with what was Bombay in his time!

MMM

# Madras student on U.S. jury

(By Venkatachari Jagannathan)

Ravi Sivasankaran (23), of Madras, now studying at the University of Chicago, is the first Indian student to be included in a US jury panel. As a member of the Illinois Jury Commission, Ravi will be eligible to serve on the 12-person juries which decide on criminal cases argued in the courts of Illinois State.

Talking about US jury panels, this MS (Electrical Engineering) student says, "It is like our film censor panel. The jury panel consists of people from different walks of life. Further, the jury is briefed by the judge before the arguments commence to familiarise its members with the provisions of law". Ravi, however, has one advantage of most jurors: he has some legal background. His father, N Sivasankaran, is a practising lawyer and his sister, S N S Mahalakshmi, is a legal adviser in a private company in Madras.

Would his studies be affected by jury service? He replied, "I have asked the authorities to summon me only during November and December, when I won't have much of University work. Also, seeing the chargesheet, I'll be able to get an idea as to the approximate time the case would take before judgement is passed". A jury member is not expected to socialise with friends during a case in which s/he is one of the jury and in many cases have to stay in a hotel. Jurors are paid a nominal fee by the State.

Ravi, a polylinguist who, apart from Tamil and English, knows Telugu, Hindi and Oriya, is also the President of the 200-member Indian Graduate Students' Association, University of Chicago. The Association helps Indian students hoping to join the University by sending them in advance a detailed list of do's and don'ts and the persons to be contacted immediately on arrival in Chicago for help.

## Getting more than one copy of Madras Musings?

Due to duplications in mailing lists being received by us as well as duplication of requests, you may be getting more than one copy of *Madras Musings*. If you are, and are passing on the extra copy/copies to a friend/friends, we thank you for the thought. But if you don't need the extra copy/copies, kindly mail us the wrapper and the address pasted on it of the copy/copies you do not require. Such a gesture by you will enable us to place more accurate print orders and help make every rupee received from the sponsors go a longer way.

To keep you up-to-date, we are pleased to announce that this fortnight we are distributing 8000 copies of *Madras Musings*, up 5000 copies from April 1st's 3000 copies.

M/s Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd.  
62/63, Greames Road, Madras 600 006.

## Gave respectability

Rukmani Devi Arundale gave respectability to Bharata Natyam which was once the sole preserve of the *devadasis*. People were loathe to learn the Art because of this and it was anathema for girls!

She was instrumental in creating an awareness about Bharata Natyam among the people and removing the stigma attached to it by herself learning the Art, popularising it and by establishing Kalakshetra. Certainly the present popularity of this Art is not a little due to her efforts in those turbulent and orthodox days, when she defied all criticism and rancour. But for her bold initiative, it is doubtful if this Art would have flourished and spread even to foreign countries.

T M Sundararaman,  
19, Nallappan Street,  
Madras-600 004.

## A flat life!

The building frenzy goes on apace (MM June 1 and Feb 16, 1996). All those fancy blocks of flats, offices and shops are made of concrete, the most unsuitable substance for building in the tropics that can be imagined. All through the heat of the day, the concrete absorbs the heat of the sun, all through the night it radiates it back. Global warming is one of the major international topics of our times, but we in Madras have been at it on a metropolitan level for decades, with outstanding success.

I have never been inside one of those fancy new flats in my area, but looking up at their windows in passing I often wonder whether the

## ICE AND WINE ...

# Oh, for music & cheese, too!

(Continued from last fortnight)

Readers of this column, the author of which is an Englishman who has lived in Madras for forty years (most of his life), might be interested to know that good wine (which I wrote about last fortnight) is one of the only three things I genuinely miss in India; the second, cheeses of the soft, creamy kind, like Gorgonzola, Stilton, Brie, Camembert or Roquefort (but definitely not that stuff tasting like chewing-gum we get from the Nilgiris!); and the third is 'live' Western classical music. Oh, yes, electronics do

fill the lust for that to a great extent, but there is nothing like the thrilling atmosphere of the concert hall, the ritual of orchestral tuning up — always started by an 'A' on the oboe, since that is the orchestra's most sensitive instrument, which all others must therefore tune to — the arrival of the leader of the orchestra, who is also the principal First Violin, the magnificently staged entrance of the conductor, in his white tie and tails, and, finally, of the soloist, if there is to be one. And, of course, the applause, dying away, hushed in the expectation of a memorable occasion about to begin.

I have an excellent collection of Compact Discs of my favourite music, and a good system on which they may be played. On occasions that are becoming rarer, as I grow older and more feeble, I may astonish intruding servants by leaping from my bed (the music apparatus is in my bedroom), seizing one of the plastic chopsticks purloined on even rarer visits to the Chinese restaurant at the Taj (as a guest, of course, I hurry to add: my modest resources do not run to five star hotels) and, using it as a baton, conduct like mad the music from my Compact Discs. Singing too, sometimes, if the music



OUR  
READERS  
WRITE

the city, they shouldn't be there at all. But they are.

Harry Miller  
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## Help a hospice

'Jeevodaya', a hospice for terminally ill cancer patients, is located in the village of Mathur, near the Manali complex in North Madras. The environment here is ideal for the sick patients.

'Jeevodaya' is run by the Franciscan Clarist Congregation and is maintained by Christian sisters. All the services here, including food, are free. No partiality is shown to caste or creed. At present, there are about twenty beds in this hospice. Additional rooms are being constructed to increase the capacity to forty beds.

'Jeevodaya' also conducts cancer awareness programmes and screening camps in urban slum communities, rural areas, industrial settings and educational institutions. Referral and follow-up services are also rendered. It focuses

on cancer prevention, early detection and treatment. Ever since its inception in 1991, 'Jeevodaya' has conducted more than 30 cancer education programmes. Nearly 2000 persons have been screened for cancer and 65 patients have been referred for treatment. Suitable follow-up action is undertaken by its social workers.

Supporting services, including case work and counselling services, are part of the domiciliary services rendered by 'Jeevodaya'. Its volunteers visit the homes of advanced cancer patients and extend supportive services to the patient and to the family.

This unit is in need of help from philanthropists and well-wishers. The hospice does not own even a very essential item — an ambulance.

A/C payee cheques/Demand drafts may be drawn in favour of The Treasurer, Jeevodaya Hospice, Mathur, Manali PO, Madras-600 068. All contributions to Jeevodaya are exempted under section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

V Rajasekaran  
12/11, Manali New Town,  
Madras - 600 103.

## M for an N

A common mistake is to misspell the name of the great Indian mathematician as Ramanujan — 'Ramanujam at Cambridge' (MM, June 16). Interestingly, the letter that you have published carries the correct spelling, Ramanujan.

B. Gautam  
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Madras 600 002

Editor's Note: Mea culpa!

One Man's  
Madras —  
HARRY  
MILLER'S

As for the cheese, that comes even more rarely, and when it does I am reminded of, and cannot resist repeating to the increasingly fewer number of friends patient enough to listen to my interminable chatter, one of my old favourites.

This was of a nervous foreigner in a British train who had an intimidating passenger sitting opposite who constantly stared sternly at him and, then, suddenly leaned forward, tapped him on the knee and asked, 'Do you love Jesus?' to which the startled visitor replied, 'Ah yes, but most of all I love zee beeg round Dutch cheeses'.

Ice, wine, cheese and music! Well, isn't that a change from the interminable "leisurely essays dissecting the minutiae of shifting political alliances", to quote a foreign critic? Yet these four subjects relate to leisure of one kind or another, and there appears to this observer to be altoo much leisure in this part of the world as it is. India has more public holidays than any other country, Singapore, with only two, the least — perhaps one of the reasons for its prosperity. I write on the day when the death (sorry, 'passing away') of Thirumati Janaki Ramachandran was announced, and, of course, like the drop of a hat, we all had to have yet another holiday.

I write in the last half of May. Do you recall how the month began? April 25th and 26th were holidays. April 27th, a Friday, was celebrated as Id, Saturday no one bothers much about at any time, Sundays are always off for most people, Monday was the first of May, and therefore May Day, a national holiday, and there followed two days allowed for everyone to vote. The entire nation was therefore on holiday for a complete week. Leisure indeed!

# The reporter and his responsibilities

The article 'A Journalist's Duty' by Arvind Kala (MM, May 16th) was reasonably critical. But all is not black and white, for there are grey areas, with questions that remain unanswered, if not unanswerable. The answers, if any, are also likely to be ambiguous and unhelpful.

For one thing, a 'journalist' is, in popular conception, almost totally identified with a reporter or a correspondent. But there are other categories of journalists—the leader-

not only in degree but in quality. One is the category of self-immolation of an Anand Margi. To which can be added the burning of a Buddhist monk in Viet Nam, hara-kiri by a Japanese hero, sati in Rajasthan etc. According to the Indian Penal Code, they all come under the class of 'suicide', which cannot be punished, though an attempt at suicide is punishable.

Strictly speaking, suicide is not a crime in certain religious traditions, especially the Hindu and Jain and, maybe, Buddhist.

• by D. ANJANEYULU

writer, the political analyst, the literary critic, the cultural commentator and so on. They may not give much of hard news, but they do shed light on complex problems.

A 'journalist', i.e. a reporter, as it is taken for granted here, believes that he has absolute freedom of expression and can write for publication whatever he has observed. He does not seem to realise that neither he (or she), nor anyone else in the world, for that matter, can enjoy absolute, unfettered freedom. (See G. Bernard Shaw's talk on 'Freedom'.) He doesn't seem to remember that a journalist (be it in the print media or the electronic media) is a citizen first, and a professional only next, like any other professional.

It is also noticed that journalists talk mainly, if not solely, of their rights, and only occasionally of their duties and responsibilities. The reading public is not aware of the fact that in America the freedom of the Press is statutorily guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. In India, it happens to be a part of Judge-made law.

In the examples given in Kala's article, the interview with the sandalwood celebrity, with all the gory details, may be bizarre and blood-curdling, but is, frankly, useless in terms of social purpose. It may be a daring exercise, but not purposeful by way of impact on society. For whose benefit was it, then, done? Had it anything to do with tilting the political balance? That the media group did not reveal anything secret to the authorities is a different matter.

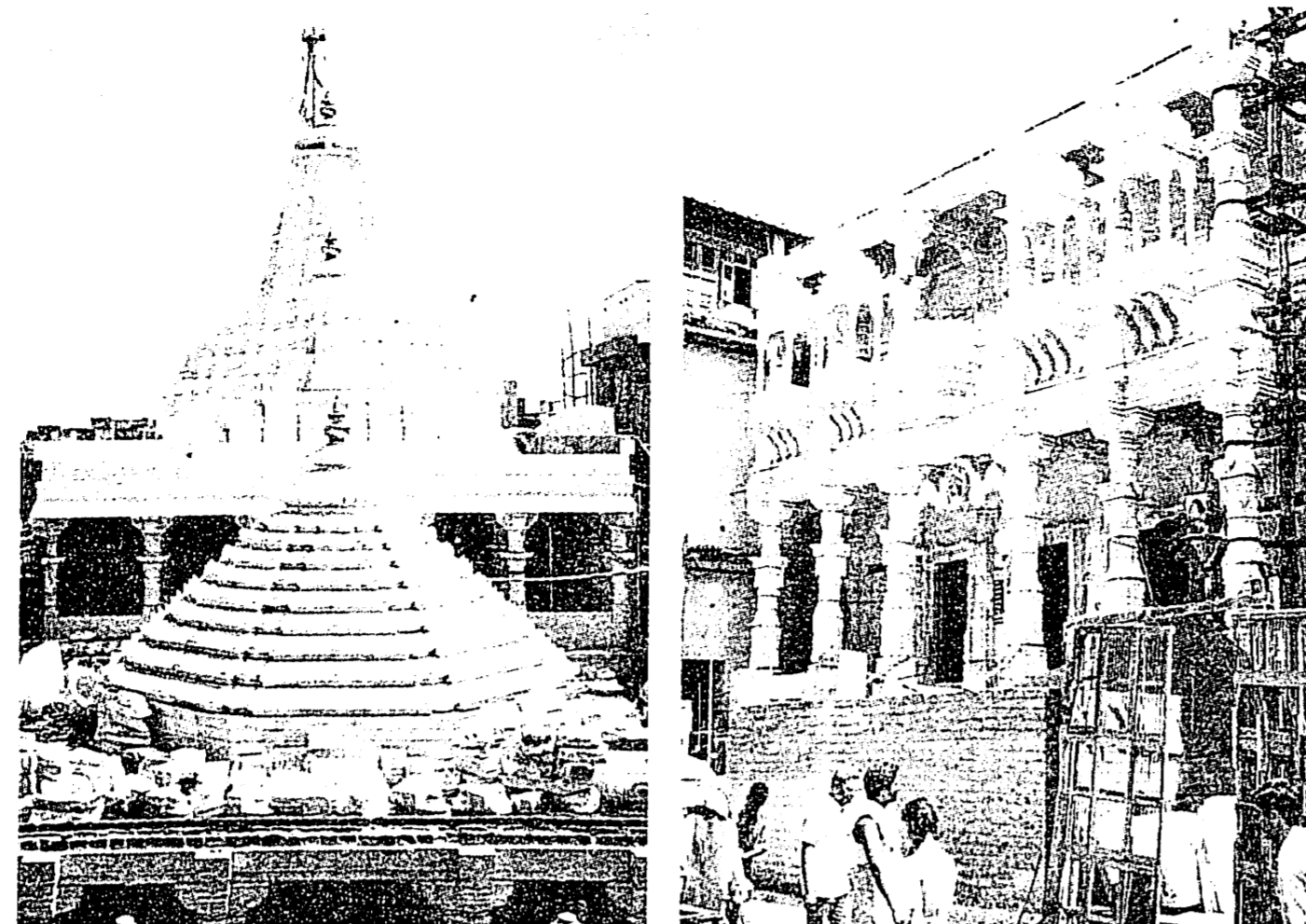
Among the other examples given are two that are different

Jain munis abstain from food and drink till life goes out of the body. There is no stigma attached to it. On the contrary, it is looked upon with respect. In the Hindu tradition, we are familiar with the story of Bhishma lying on a bed of arrows, with no food or drink for several days, till his chosen day after the advent of the sacred period of Uttarayana. It is called *prayopavesa*. In our own time, there was Acharya Vinoba Bhave, who denied himself all nourishment in his last days (a couple of months or so). In these cases, there was clearly no need to dissuade the persons from doing what they had decided to do, or to inform the authorities in charge of law and order.

Among a modern school of liberal thinkers too, there is a movement in favour of voluntary death (euthanasia), originally called 'hemlock', now renamed 'exit', in terminal cases of incurable disease or incapacitation because of extreme old age. (This does not apply to disappointed young lovers or frustrated youth.)

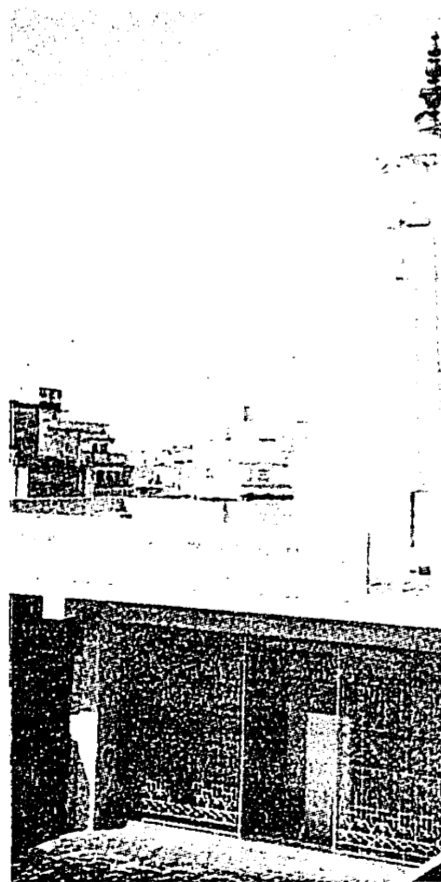
But there are situations in which a reporter cannot afford to be content with his professional function as an 'observer' but has to remember his duty as a citizen. Suppose a news reporter happens to see a group of schoolchildren playing on the Madras Beach about to run into the water, where the sea is either too deep or infested with sharks. His first duty is to warn them against the hazards they are facing, not to wait till the worst has happened and write a picturesque story with a couple of voyeuristic photographs.

Rajiv Goswami, who set himself ablaze as a protest against the Mandal Bill on Res-



## THE NEW... ...& THE OLD

For nearly two centuries, Sowcarpet in George Town has been the home of the Jains from North In-



ervation (during the regime of V.P. Singh), may have done it on youthful impulse. For, though he sustained serious burns, his parents, as I remember to have read, removed him to a hospital and saved his life. They could not possibly bring him back to normal, though. But it was obvious that the youth regained his natural desire to cling to life. It would have been better to save him the cruel, avoidable ordeal.

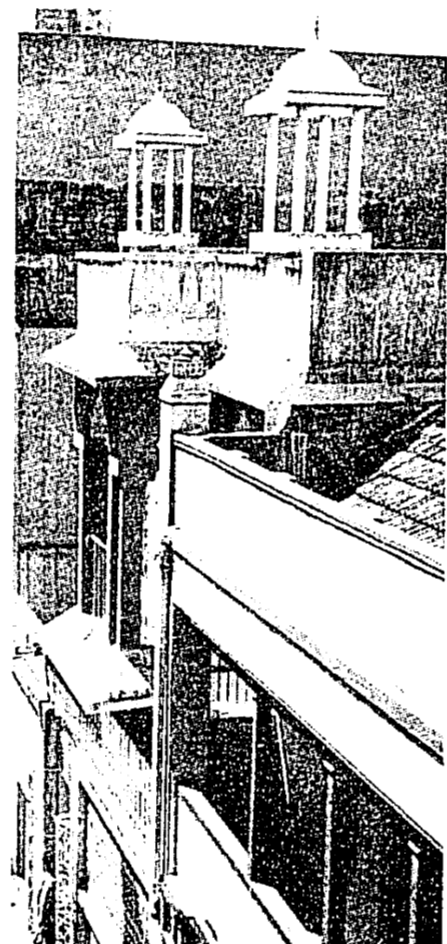
dia who made Madras their home. In the last few years, much building work has gone on to renovate or build anew their shrines in this area.

Our NEW this fortnight are the entrance and the gopurams of the gleaming white Sri Chandraprabhu Naya Jain Mandir at 142 Mint Street. Reflecting the ancient temple architecture of Mt. Abu and Palitana, this 81-foot tall shrine of white Makrana marble is a beautiful example of Jain temple architecture. Work on it began on the site of a 90-year-old Svetambar Jain Temple and the consecration took place in 1994. A three-storied structure, with a mandap on each floor, its most striking feature, apart from the gopurams, is the Meghnad Mandap on the first floor.

The OLD is the 'Shree Chandraprabhu Bhagwan Jain Svetambar Temple' at 107 Mint Street that was being used while the new shrine was being built. Reflecting its almost residential-like entrance is the Sri Mahavir Swamy Digambar Jain Temple in nearby Chandrapra Mudali Street. Work on it started in 1975 and the shrine was consecrated in 1978. This temple has a much more conventional North Indian gopuram, but the towers at the entrance strike an unusual note.

The three-storey Digambar Temple has a hall for discourses on the

ground floor, on the first floor are idols of Mahavir and some of the Jain saints, besides various scriptures for reading and reference. And on the second floor are the idol of another saint and footprints of the revered. (Photographs and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Border line instances threatening the security of the State and the safety of its citizens are multiplying. Quite recently, there were two major explosions — one in a market place in Delhi, the other in Rajasthan, resulting in the loss of many lives and serious injuries to many.

It is no pleasure to see the photographs of these calculated exercises in inhuman destruction. The hard work put

in and the risk run by the reporters and photographers in recording such events are no doubt commendable. But if they happened to know in advance something about the perpetrators of the crime, it would be far more important if they thought of themselves as citizens more interested in the safety of the people and welfare of the State than as mere 'observers' of events and reporters in search of exciting 'copy'.

# Swiss offer new life to Nilgiris Railways

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Nilgirimountain railway is drawing up plans for a new lease of life — once again using Swiss knowhow just as it did when its track was first laid in 1899. When its centennial is celebrated, it could well be using four new locomotive engines made by the same organisation that manufactured its first engines, the Swiss Locomotive Machine Company.

The locomotives now in use are 50-70 years old. Two steam locomotives run between Mettupalayam and Ooty. A diesel engine connects Coonoor with Ooty. These locomotives will last for another 20 years, Madras Musings learns.

The Swiss Government's Federal Department of Economic Affairs has hired a Swiss transport and logistics consultancy firm, Prognos, and De-Consult, a German railway consultancy, do a study on the Nilgiris railway. The ideal situation, Prognos feels, would be to have four locos for the Mettupalayam-Ooty section and one for the Coonoor-Ooty section. Each of the new locomotives would cost Rs. 10-12 crore.

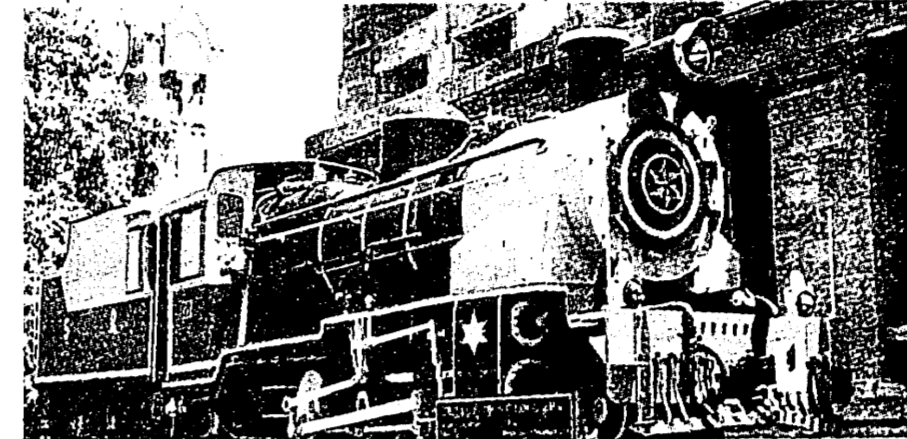
The proposed funding would be by a grant by the Swiss Government and a consortium of the Swiss Government and Swiss banks.

Though the new engines would be diesel-powered, they would also produce steam which would be eco-friendly and appeal to the locals and travellers. The essential character of the quaint, very British

stations should also be maintained, but services should be upgraded, Prognos has advised.

Research by Prognos has shown that the train is used mainly by tourists. Since it is an important tourist attraction,

the railways could charge a higher rate on the Mettupalayam-Coonoor section. The Coonoor-Ooty section is used mainly by commuters and could have a lower fare, it has been recommended.



Remembering steam at the Southern Railway Headquarters in Park Town. On left is NG LOCO ZP 4, a Narrow Gauge loco built by Nippon Sharyo Seiko Kaisha Ltd. Japan. This Rs. 2.85,226 engine was commissioned by the South Eastern Railway on April 24, 1955 and transferred to the Southern Railway in 1965. The engine weighs (empty) 45.48 tonnes, has a hauling capacity of 200 tonnes and a maximum speed of 40 kmph. It last worked on the Yelahanka-Bangarpet section and was withdrawn from service on January 1, 1990.

On right are front and rear views of Passenger Locomotive PL 991, manufactured by Keer Stuart, England, in 1900. The engine was put into service in



One of the last steam engines in South India huffs and puffs its way up the Blue Mountains to reach Ooty. (Photograph courtesy Southern Railways.)



1902 and worked on the Narrow Gauge (2' 6"). The weight of the locomotive is 19.5 tonnes, with a maximum hauling load of 90 tonnes and a maximum speed of 32.2 kmph. This engine served the Naupada-Parlakimedi-Gunupur sections of the South Eastern Railway till it was withdrawn from service on April 23, 1992. PL 991's real number was PL 691. When the engine was brought to Madras the number '6' fell off. Whilst restoring it, the '6' became '9' and so it has remained!

Both engines were installed near the two gates of the Southern Railway headquarters a year and a half ago and stand gleaming amidst pretty landscaping. (Photographs and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY)

# The last days of steam

The days of the steam engine in India are numbered. The huffing, puffing warhorses which formed one of the world's greatest fleets of steam engines (there were 10,820 steam engines in India in 1962) and which, in many ways, were a catalyst for India's industrial revolution are now, after an innings of 145 years, rapidly "steaming unsung into oblivion", to quote the headline of a recent *Times of India* report.

Only around 200 steam locomotives run in different

parts of the country today, most of them on the metre gauge tracks in the Western Railway division and on the narrow gauge in the Northeast sector. By next year, only those in the Northeast and the Hill Railways will still be in operation.

In the Southern Railway division, the last steam shed, Madurai, closed down last year, bringing to a sad end a 140-year-old romance with train journeys and steam engines in South India. However, a few steam locomotives still con-

tinue to work in the Nilgiris Mountain Railways division and, if they continue to run there, they will in 1999 complete a century of fascinating travel in the hills. Meanwhile, the Division is looking at the possibility of improving the design of these locomotives and working them by firing oil instead of coal, to increase their speed from 30 kph to 50 kph.

The Southern Railways' romance with steam engines began with the first train journey in the South. The year was 1856 and the train covered a distance of 160 km between Royapuram and Wallajah Road (Arcot). This was five years after the first steam locomotive arrived in India in Bombay, in December 1851. Thereafter, steam locomotives were to set the pace for the rapid expansion of transport of passengers and goods in India.

In its halycon days, the Southern Railway (formed through the merger of the South Indian and Madras and South Mahratta Railways) had as many as 1251 steam locomotives — 774 in the broad gauge section, 461 in the metre gauge, five in the narrow gauge and 11 special locomotives for the Nilgiris Mountain Railways. These locomotives were fed on 7726 tonnes of coal every day, the coal being transported from the collieries in the north. Maintenance of these hardy locomotives were carried out in running sheds in Arakkonam, Bangalore, Arsikere, Erode, Quilon, Raichur, Shoranur and Villupuram. Major workshops for overhauling the locomotives every three or four years were set up by the Railways in Perambur, Mysore and Hubli.

With the increasing cost of transportation, bringing coal

all the way down from the north became costlier. Scores of wagons were engaged in moving coal, which meant that they were not available for transporting other essential commodities. In 1980, the Railways decided to phase out the broad gauge locomotives. Maintenance sheds were closed down and the railwaymen working in those sections were transferred to other departments.

In the metre gauge section, however, steam locomotives continued to work alongside diesel locomotives until a few years ago. But as their numbers shrank, steam loco sheds were closed down one after another — on the Southern Railway, Bangalore (1986), Tirunelveli (1987), Madras Egmore (1990), Mysore (1992), Tiruchirappalli (March 1993), Villupuram (August 1993) were followed by the last to be closed down, Madurai, in February 1995.

As with most things of the past, there is more than a tinge of nostalgia associated with the passing of the steam engine, especially for the drivers, firemen, railway mechanics and engineers who together fed the steam engines' bellies, fussed over, nurtured and worked them on the plains and up in the hills, and who now have had to sadly endure the ignominy of their gleaming lovelies being reduced to scrap in the name of economy.

Once, these 'iron horses' ran on the broad gauge at speeds of 110 kph and on the metre gauge at 75 kph. Soon, all that will be left will be the toy trains of the mountain railways which you can hop off at any time and walk alongside as they chug their way up and down the Nilgiris and other hills.

— Sashi Nair

# THE ROYAL INDIANS NEXT YEAR

(By A Staff Reporter)

To run India's first private luxury tourist trains, the Madras-based Sterling group has entered into an alliance with the Indian Railways and the British company, L & R Leisure group, which runs six luxury trains in Scotland. The Indian trains are expected to be operational late next year.

L&R will help the Sterling group to build, market and operate the 'The Royal Indian' trains. L&R is the owner and operator of 'The Royal Scotsman', one of the world's most exclusive trains and providing luxury tours through Scotland and England. The Royal Indian will be based on the Royal Scotsman concept and will operate according to the same five-star standards.

The Royal Indian will be primarily marketed in the US, which accounts for 60 per cent

of the Royal Scotsman's clientele. But they will not compete with each other in the world market as both trains are aimed at different market segments. While the Royal Scotsman is aimed at the uppermost market segment, the Royal Indian will target the mid-level market segment.

The Royal Indian will operate on two circuits, one in the North and the other in the South. The 1320 mile (2110 km) southern route begins in Bangalore and takes in Mysore and Madras. It then continues through Kodaikanal to Kanniyakumari, Land's End. From there the train will travel along Kerala's coastline to Kochi before returning to Bangalore via Ooty. The 1,445-mile (2310 km) northern circuit will begin in Delhi and move on to the Taj Mahal at

Agra, Jaipur's City Palace and to the massive cliff-top fort in Gwalior. The journey also includes a visit to Varanasi, and stops at Lucknow before returning to Delhi. Both tours will be spread over two weeks and carry a price tag of about \$800 a package.

"The trains will be created to provide very high standards of service and quality," says Steve Borgia, general manager of Sterling Resorts (India) Ltd. "We will allow the tourist to become a part of India — to soak up her culture and slip on the fabric of her being," he adds. Tourists will be exposed to the intricacies of local arts and crafts, and could pick from a complex mix of ethnic entertainment — from vibrant folk dances and lilting classical music to the experience of yoga and meditation

(Continued on Page 7)

## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period June 1 to 15. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Madras past and present.)

- Who holds the key portfolios of Defence and Finance in the new United Front Government?
- Name the former President of India who passed away on June 1st.
- Name the leader of the Likud Party who has been elected the Prime Minister of Israel.
- An epoch-making frigate of the Indian Navy was decommissioned after 24 years of glorious service. Name the craft.
- A new variation of chess, with the major pieces in the back ranks reshuffled, has been developed by an all-time great. Who? And what is the game called?
- Which prominent temple in Madras had its Kumbabishekam, its first since 1982, on June 6th?
- Name the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge who was declared dead by his group recently.
- What remarkable feat did Sanjiv L. Sanjay Thapar become the first Indian to do?
- Who are the new French Open Tennis Champions?
- Name the former AIADMK Minister remanded to custody in the assault-on-Advocate-Vijayan case.
- Why is the Turkish company Karsan under CBI scrutiny?
- Story of an Escape tells the escapades of one Kartar Singh (an assumed name of a national figure) who fled from police custody. Who?
- Which Southeast Asian leader has been awarded the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for 1994?
- T.N. Parameswaran of Tamil Nadu regained the National crown after 17 years. In which sport?
- According to a recent survey by Business Today-Gallup, Tamil Nadu is the third best State to invest in. Which are the top two?

16. Name the Armenian who built the Maraimalai (Marmalag) Bridge in Saidapet.

17. It was built in 1913 by P. Loganatha Mudaliar at a cost of Rs. 7,50,000, is 252 feet long and its clock tower (132 ft. tall) used to have the Westminster Chimes. Name the edifice.

18. The oldest press in the city, founded in 1761, is at Vepery. Name it.

19. The Tirupati umbrellas taken to Tirupati from Madras are traditionally kept for a night at a temple in Perambur. Name the temple and the Gujarati family which built it in 1805.

20. What road is named after a historical building and gardens developed in 1798? (HINT: Culture centre.)

(Answers on p.7)

# Litter... Litter... Litter...!

(Continued from last fortnight)

Leave the beach. Look at the airport.

At the Anna International Terminal of the Madras Airport, built quite recently, there are a number of rows of chairs in the arrival and departure halls for the convenience of the passengers and visitors. For each row of chairs, a beautiful stainless steel litter collector is placed. But, alas, under each chair there are disposable tea/coffee cups, empty cigarette boxes, matchsticks, waste paper... It is nasty to walk along the row of chairs. Why this lamentable state? Every Hindu believes that there are last grade servants, sweepers, employed to clean up after them and they feel it below their dignity to carry their waste and put it in the bin specially provided. When this is the fate of the International Terminal of the Airport, the beach cannot expect better treatment.

Take the southern headquarters of Sulabh International, a non-governmental voluntary organisation devoted



The dirt that piles up at a fishing kuppam at Elliot's Beach. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY)

to the improvement of sanitation in the country. It has an air-conditioned office, yet in front of its very gate, tourist buses park and their occupants cause all sorts of nuisance on the road.

Then there's another set of people to add to this chaos: lovers of pets. They take their pets for an evening stroll or for a morning walk. These dogs are looked after by their masters better than a vast majority of our countrymen can afford to look after their children. They give their pets the best food,

bathe them regularly, keep them clean and tidy, and call the Doctor to attend on them at the first sign of the slightest discomfort. I can understand their affection and appreciate their love. But should these pets be allowed to urinate and excrete all along the pavement and footpath, making the entire stretch filthy? Their masters ensure the desecration done by their pets is in public places, not in their houses or their sit-outs or their lawns. What does it matter if dirt affects someone else?!

— D. Srinivasan

## COOKING with Chandra

Mix all the ingredients for the powder. Add a little water, mix to a smooth paste.

Heat oil and deep fry the potatoes till golden. Set aside.

Heat the 2 tablespoons oil. Add the sugar and fry till it browns. Add the cumin seeds. When they splutter, add the ground paste and sauté for a few minutes. Add the powder paste and fry till the oil separates.

Heat the ghee, add the garam masala to it. When bubbly, add to the dum.

Garnish with chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot with pooris.

### BAKED FRENCH FRIES

6 large potatoes  
6 tbs butter  
Chilli powder  
Salt to taste.

#### Method

Peel the potatoes and chop into half-inch strips. Arrange in a baking pan. See that they don't overlap.

Pour the melted butter over potatoes. Sprinkle the salt and chilli powder. Bake in a hot oven at 450° F for 30-40 minutes or till done. Keep turning occasionally.

Serve hot as a sidedish or a snack.

### POTATO BALLS

3 medium-sized potatoes  
1/4 cup maida  
2 tbs butter  
1 egg, beaten  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Oil for deep frying

#### Method

Pressure cook the potatoes in their jackets. Peel and mash well. Add salt, pepper and butter. Stir till well blended.

Add the flour and the beaten egg. Mix well. Make 1-inch balls. Fry in hot oil till golden.

Serve hot as a snack or a sidedish.

### POTATO RAITA

2 potatoes boiled, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch pieces.  
1 1/2 cups fresh, well-mixed curd  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
1 tsp cumin seeds, dry roasted and powdered  
2 tbs chopped coriander leaves  
Salt to taste.

Method  
Add salt to the fresh curd. Beat well and set aside.

Arrange the chopped potatoes in a bowl. Pour the curd in. Mix well. Sprinkle the red chilli and cumin seeds powders.

Garnish with chopped coriander leaves.

Serve chilled as a sidedish.  
— Chandra Padmanabhan

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# A Western view of Indian dance

Nataraja: does he have a leg to dance?" was the title of an article by Joan Erdmann in the *Economic Times*. Joan was in Madras during the last December season and presented a paper on Uday Shankar. In the article I am talking about, she gives an overview of the dance scene in India, presenting, of course, a very superior outsider's view. She talks of the middle class dancers, the Westernisation of dance and the "new dance" in India. She says, "Only now, nearly 50 years after Indian Independence, is a critical approach to dance scholarship emerging." She quotes Amrit Srinivasan's dissertation on 'Temple prostitution and community reform: an examination of the ethnographic, historical and textual

context of the Devadasi of Tamil Nadu, South India', in which it is argued that the Sadir Nautch of Tamil Nadu was transmuted into Bharata Natyam in the 1930s amidst nationalist, reformist, Theosophical, revivalist and purist goals and issues which were missionary-driven and concerned with temple administration.

Joan Erdmann says, 'To Indians at home, 'oriental dance' was an art admired by native Westerners and Westernized natives in performances promoted by Western dance connoisseurs, something from Europe, not from India...'

Predictably, Erdmann praises the new energy for inventive choreography shown by Chandralekha and others.

She says that these dancers have questioned the antiquity theory being legitimacy for dance, and asserts that there are provocative questions to be asked, like: How do India's dancers and dances from India's people articulate their identities? Must they continue to use Western discourses to describe their art? How can we create dialogues which present and prove the ever-increasing intricacies of cross-cultural dialogues?

Erdmann wants a replacement of the myth of antiquity with histories of modernity and says that this requires new research in arenas not always seen as relevant, like newspapers and journals. Erdmann also calls for new thinking about what is seen as appropri-



Malavika Sarukkai who goes to New York State's Jacob's Pillow Festival this year. (Photograph courtesy SUDHIR RAMACHANDRAN STUDIO.)

This article by Joan Erdmann raises valid questions, but it also reflects that typical air of superiority that North Americans have about their scholarship. I think dancers in Madras should read the article and air their opinions. It is criticism like Erdmann's that can bring about greater nationalistic feelings.

Opposite approaches  
I feel that, in Madras, Padma Subramaniam and Chandralekha stand out as contemporaries in the new thinking on dance. If one talks about dance as the imitation of animal movements and primal energies, the other talks of spiritual quest. Both have been responsible for debates on dance and both have been recognised by the Japanese who are said to recognise the ultimate in simplicity. If Chandralekha has just left for Japan to tour with her work there, Padma Subramaniam received the Fukuoka prize for her contribution to dance.

Chandralekha had last year gone to the prestigious Jacob's Pillow dance festival. This year, the honours go to Malavika Sarukkai, who represents the opposite approach to dance. There are obviously several theories and every point of view is valid.

Malavika Sarukkai will present a work called *Shrinkhala*, based on traditional choreography, for the 10th anniversary celebrations of the International Women's Association in Madras before leaving for the U.S. for the Jacob's Pillow festival. The celebration will also present a new dance creation called *Global Unity*, specially choreographed for IWA this year by Anita Ratnam. Incidentally, a new magazine on art, *Ramasanjari*, published from Delhi, has Anita reporting from Madras. And her column is called 'Madras Musings'!

— V.R. Devika

## Saying 'Goodbye' with a laugh-filled evening

It was almost like dinners at the Connemara in the swinging Thirties and early Forties where more than half the crowd in the Ballroom would be White Sahibs and their ladies and the rest were the Brown Sahibs and their overdressed ladies, with not a Black in sight, unless he was with the band. The only differences on this recent evening was that it was the Park Sheraton and not the Connemara, it was informal wear and not black tie, it was sumptuous Italianish buffet and not a splendid bit of served-at-table Anglo-Indian cuisine. For the rest, the nappery and the cutlery were out of the Connemara's past, the wines and other 'long bar' offerings demonstrated once again there was a world apart from Scotch and beer, and the near voluntary segregation pointed to a new era of the Raj beginning, with a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for the new venturers from the US, UK, Australia and a dozen other countries.

The biggest difference was that instead of a band playing fox-trots and swing, with an occasional waltz for a change, it was 'supper-theatre' on offer. And what better appetiser for supper than Plaza Suite in which Neil Simon has you in stitches as he savages the institution of marriage. That the laughter rang louder than ever was entirely due to the splendid performances director Bhagirathi Narayanan drew from the leading couples in the two playlets.

The *Man From Mamorneck*, which I'd rather call 'His Shapely Secretary Drops in on an Overworked Boss's 24th (or is it 23rd?) Wedding Anniversary', had a harassed, figure-conscious Jasper Utley spar with a brilliantly regal Vishalam Ekambaram determined to celebrate their tomorrow's anniversary today (or is it the other way around?) till his secretary drops in and offers him two sets of figures to play with in office. When he makes his choice, Vishalam once again demonstrated why she is the best actress on the English stage in Madras. In Utley she found a foil who was a 'natural'. It's been a long time since I've seen a couple on the Madras stage who made you forget everything else around... sets, lights, audience reaction and what have you.

Visitor from Forest Hill might have been better titled 'Mummy and Daddy Wait for Their Daughter, the Bride, who has Locked Herself in the Bathroom!' Joanne Huskey and P.C. Ramakrishna were hilarious as they tried to get their daughter out of the bathroom and to march down the aisle, while taking time-outs to blame each other for all the things couples have blamed each other for from the beginning of time. Joanne was the 'natural' here, the All-American mother-of-the-bride as worried about the run in her stockings as she was about her exasperating daughter in the bathroom, while 'P.C.' donned the mantle of a pompous, rich father with little time for his family, in the Wodehouse manner born.

The laughter-laced bitterness of Neil Simon's plays was just right for the occasion: Global Adjustments and its friends saying goodbye to Joanne and Jim Huskey on an evening sponsored by RPG Cellular and made fun by the Madras Players. A hall-full

audience that filled the hall with laughter and still had a moment to shed a tear or two would have pleased the Huskies well. But seeing all those White Sahibs there, seeing them over the last couple of years think about Madras, test the waters here and settle in Madras, to which they both contributed much, would have made the Huskies happier still. Will they be coming back to Plaza Suite, Turnbull's Road, Madras? SM

## A date with a happening

The non-profit Madras Craft Foundation's *Aayana* (A Happening) '96, a special programme of dance, music, drama and craft, will be held at the open air theatre of I.L.T., Madras, on July 11 and 12, 1996. For the third time, several well-known creative personalities in Madras have volunteered to help MCF put together this unique programme.

The theme for *Aayana* '96 will be "To Dream is to Live". The performance will consist of several stylistically different presentations of

## Theatre Club's plans

The Madras Players' Theatre Club, which recently presented its first production, *Mangalam* by Polie Sengupta, has announced its second programme for July 4, 11 and 18: Readings of extracts from translations of eleven Indian novels recently published by Macmillan and Co. The productions will be at the British Council.

The Club hopes to do two more productions this year. It also plans a series of rehearsed readings of Indian plays translated into English — one a month from August to

short stories written by Velu Saravanan. The subthemes will be 'Diversity is Strength', 'Friendship is Divine', 'Freedom means Responsibility', 'Why Brain Drain?', 'Sharing is Joy', and 'What is Integrity?'

*Aayana* '96 will have a cast of about 1000 children from ten schools, some school dropouts, child workers with diverse financial backgrounds, and children with physical disabilities and handicaps. This programme is a continuation of MCF's work with schools

December. Those interested in participating in the readings, please contact one of the persons mentioned below.

If you haven't already paid your membership fee of Rs. 200 for this year, please send your cheque in favour of 'Tejaswi' to Bhagirathi Narayanan, 4/7 Urur Olcott Kuppam, V Avenue, Besant Nagar, Madras - 600 090 OR Anuradha Rao, 'Shireen', 95 Santhome High Road, Madras - 600 028. Subscriptions can also be paid at any of the Club's programmes.

## THE ROYAL INDIANS

(Continued from Page 5)

"High-spending tourists from the US, Europe and Japan, who are interested in Indian culture and tradition, but don't have the time nor the background to travel around India, will be the main focus of our marketing drive," Borgia states.

The Sterling group has identified inbound tourism as a strategic area of growth and is setting up a wide range of facilities to cater to the needs of the foreign tourist. "We have embarked upon a plan with an investment of Rs. 2.1 billion to present India's rich heritage to tourists through recitals by leading exponents of dance and folk art, food festivals, village fairs and multimedia presentations on how to explore India in all its diversity," Borgia says.

I was deeply moved. Tears flowed from my eyes. It was with difficulty that I controlled a sob. Who would have thought an Indian cricketer would care so much about the poor?

The cricket correspondent of *The Hindu*, writing from Edgbaston, mentioned that Indian captain Mohammed Azharuddin wears Giorgio Armani suits which cost £5,400 (around Rs 2.5 lakh), and writes (or signs endorsements and cheques) with a Mont Blanc Pen. A Rolex watch priced at Rs 2 lakh adorns his wrist and his feet are encased in Bally shoes. He wears nothing but Oakley sunglasses. Thus, if Mohammed Azharuddin is auctioned at Sotheby's, the going price may be in crores.

Yet, it is the same Indian captain who, according to *The Hindu's* cricket correspondent, is deeply concerned about the plight of the poor. Like French queen Marie Antoinette who wondered why her subjects did not eat cake when they could not afford bread, Mohammed Azharuddin is of the view that the Indian masses should eat fruit.

That was very noble of him. But Azhar did not mention what kind of fruit they should eat. But then, who bothers over such details?

Azhar is unhappy with the Calcutta spectators not because of what they did to him and his team when they lost to Sri Lanka in the Wills World Cup semi-finals. The Calcuttans, he complained to the cricket correspondent, threw fruit at the players. "There is so much of poverty in the country, yet people throw fruit at the players," he stated. The correspondent was also moved to tears and gave up eating fruit for some time.

It warms my heart that the Indian captain feels so much for the poor of India. Mohammed Azharuddin did not stop at making state-

ments about the plight of the Indian poor, but has come out with concrete suggestions on how they can be helped. Particularly on the issue of fruit consumption.

The Indian captain, his manager Sandeep Patil and the cricket correspondent of *The Hindu* have already put forward earth-shaking proposals to the Board of Control for Cricket in India on how to use the fruit thrown at the players for improving the nutritive value of the food consumed by the poor in India.

The gist of the proposals is as under. Spectators will be permitted by the security personnel to bring as many fruits as they want inside the stadium. Just before commencement of the match, Azhar will make appeals through loudspeakers to the spectators to be generous and throw as many fruits as they can inside the ground without targeting the players. Every evening after the match ends, the fruits will be picked up, stored and distributed to the poor in the city.

Just to show the world that he bears no ill-will towards anyone, the picking of the fruit, according to Azharuddin, should be left to players like Kapil Dev, Manoj Prabhakar and Navjot Singh Sidhu. This will make them involved with cricket in India and also improve the calorie intake of the Indian poor. These players who will no more don Indian colours can still

repay something to cricket. What better way than to collect the fruits thrown at the players and distribute them to the poor?

● V GANGADHAR, one of the few successful satirical writers in English in the country, was so moved by the piece that R. Mohan of the *The Hindu* recently wrote in defence of Azharuddin, that he was compelled to offer his two paise's worth in this *Sunday Observer* article.

The Azhar-Patil-*Hindu* correspondent scheme has several revolutionary concepts. The focus will be on the nature and the quality of the fruits. Hard fruits like apple, pomegranate and certain varieties of bananas can be thrown straight-away into the ground. But the softer varieties of fruit like grapes, peach and plums should be well wrapped before they are slung on to the ground.

The trio also appealed to leading fruit merchants in the country to do their bit in improving the diet of the Indian masses. For instance, they could open fruit stalls outside

the grounds on the day of the matches and sell them to the people free of charge or at heavy discounts. But the spectators should be told that the fruits are not for personal consumption but for throwing on the ground so that they can be collected later and given to the poor.

The Indian captain would prefer fruit merchants trying their hand at sponsoring the game in India. He explained to the correspondent of *The Hindu* that before his day of retirement came, he would love to sport logos of apples and mangoes rather than Wills or Benson & Hedges cigarettes.

The cricket season in India also will have to undergo certain changes. For instance, when the mango season is at its peak, not much cricket is played. So how can the Indian poor sample this delicious fruit? In future, some of the one-day internationals will be played during the summer months so that the mangoes thrown at the players can be handed over to the poor.

The BCCI, I learnt, is favourably inclined to Azhar's proposal. In fact, this will take the heat off the Sidhu controversy. One of the BCCI officials told me, "The plan only reflects the nobility of Azhar. Look, the other cricketers are making money through endorsements, doing commentaries or writing columns. Which one of them had thought of such a unique scheme to help the poor through fruit?"

The Azhar Phal Yojana will also receive official blessings from all over the country. Despite their major differences on most national

and international issues, Bharatiya Janata Party leader Atal Behari Vajpayee and former prime minister Narasimha Rao have already composed poems in Hindi and Spanish, respectively, on the fruit theme and these will be read out in the House during the monsoon session of Parliament.

The Azhar fruit scheme will be introduced during the first one-day international against South Africa. Sangeeta Bijlani will symbolically throw the very first fruit into the playing arena. In a rare act of reconciliation, Navjot Singh Sidhu will collect the fruit and hand it over to a poor child. The entire event will be telecast live by international TV networks. Sponsorship of the event is expected to fetch the Azhar-Sangeeta duo a cool Rs 5 crore.

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Mulayam Singh Yadav and P. Chidambaram respectively; 2. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy; 3. Benjamin Netanyahu; 4. INS *Nilgiri*; 5. 'Fischerandom', invented by Bobby Fischer; 6. Kapaleeswar Temple; 7. Pol Pot; 8. He skydived over the North Pole; 9. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (men) and Steffi Graf (women); 10. S.D. Somasundaram; 11. It is the foreign partner of NFL embroiled in the Rs. 133 crore urea scam; 12. Surjit Singh Barnala; 13. Dr. Mahatir Bin-Mohammed; 14. Chess; 15. Maharashtra and Gujarat.

\* \* \*

16. Coja Petrus Uscan; 17. The stately *Ripon Building*; 18. Diocesan Press; 19. Kasi Viswanathar Temple in Perambur, built by the Tawkers; 20. Pantheon Road, after *The Pantheon*.

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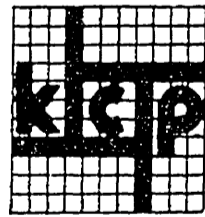
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