WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAL.

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MUSINGS

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Re-inventing the wheel?

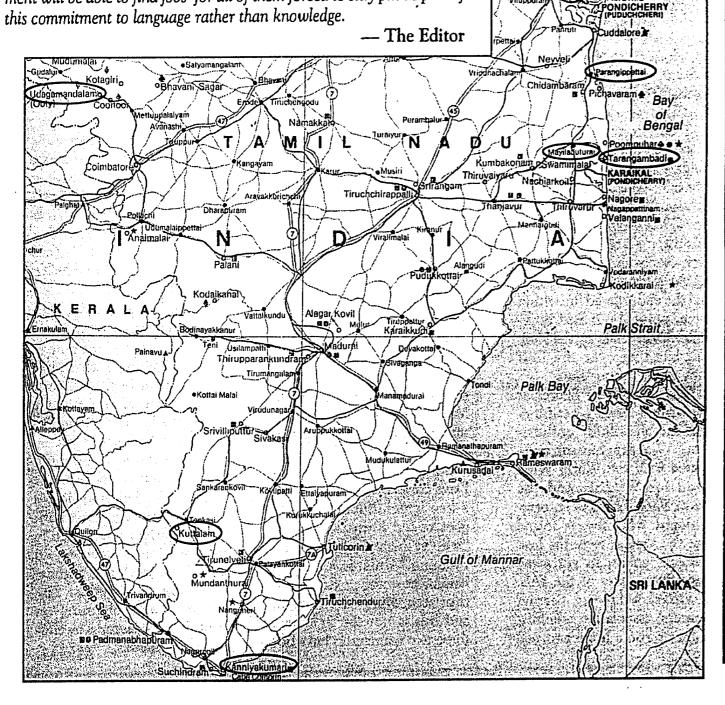
Must those whom we elect to power constantly re-invent the wheel to keep themselves in the limelight? Must they keep treading the beaten track while pronouncing they're beating a new path which is intended only to capture the headlines?

Fresh from making Madras 'Chennai', there's now talk of Tranquebar becoming 'Tarangambadi', Coleroon becoming 'Kollidam', Porto Novo becoming 'Parangipettai' and Mahabalipuram becoming 'Mamallapuram'. These scans of maps from India's most comprehensive atlas — published in 1990 — however, show all these 'new'-namesthat-are-old already in place! In fact, it's only because we couldn't find an atlas a decade-or-so older that we are unable to show here that these names were already in place in the Seventies — accepted as the official names of these towns by the Survey of India. 'Thoothukudi' alone awaits acceptance.

As for the suggestion that towns like Srirangam and Srivilliputhur should have their 'Sri' changed to 'Thiru', we wonder whether the ancient Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras weren't "pure Tamils". After all, the records show that these names were freely used in their times without the felt necessity of 'Thiru'. Are we becoming "pure Tamils" only now, after centuries of living with names beginning with 'Sri'? Come off it, Ministers, surely there are more important things to do in the State than 'Tamilising' what's already Tamil.

And as a matter of curiosity, what language is 'Vedaranniyam', which is to be made 'Tirumaraikudi'?

As for Anna University's decision to teach certain courses in 'Tamil only', well that's one way of making certain that our engineering graduates do not migrate ... even to the rest of India. We hope the Government will be able to find jobs for all of them forced to stay put as part of this commitment to language rather than knowledge.



Waiting for the Canal

Another study says 'Go'

(By A Staff Reporter)

Yet another study on the Sethusamudram ship canal project, first mooted a century ago, has once again established the economic viability of the project. Over that period, many proposals have been formulated both by the State and Central Governments and these had repeatedly established the viability beyond doubt. But action has not been forthcoming. Will things be different now!

At present, all ships going from the east to the west coast of India, or the other way, have to round Sri Lanka, adding 400 nautical miles to the voyage

and wasting over 36 hours of ship-time. The Sethusamudram Canal scheme will provide a short cut through the Palk Bay. Like the Suez and Panama Canals, it would also usher in industrial growth in the Indian hinterland along the course of the sea-canal.

The updated study estimates the cost of the canal at Rs.685 crore for a 30-feet draft, Rs.760 crore for a 31-feet draft and Rs.1,200 crore for a 35-feet draft. The project cost has escalated Rs.282 crore since 1983.

The latest report says that, even at these costs, the Sethusamudram project has become more viable due to the steep hike in petroleum prices and rising costs of shipping operations.

According to the study, the project will earn foreign ex-

S. African consulate for city?

(By A Staff Reporter)

A proposal for the opening of a South African Consulate in Chennai has been cleared by the South African Government and action on this can be expected soon.

The importance of Tamil Nadu for South Africa is underlined by the fact that as many as 7,00,000 of the 1.3 million South Africans of Indian origin are Tamil-speaking.

The plan to expand to Chennai has also been necessitated by the fact that South African High Commissioner Matsila has been accredited to Sri Lanka as well. This makes a South African presence in South India all the more important.

change of Rs. 35 crore through toll collections from foreign ships (50 per cent of the ships using the canal) and will reduce the petrol import bill by over Rs.40 crore (at March 1996 rates) in the initial years. This is bound to increase by at least four-per cent. The boost to coastal and foreign ship traffic will establish Chennai and Tuticorin as nodal ports. And the social benefits to the backward districts in Tamil Nadu's south will be immense.

A vehicle for every 6 persons!

(By a Special Correspondent)

utomobiles are a major Acontributor to air pollution in and around Madras, says Econews, published by the C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre. The total number of vehicles in Madras city itself indicates the threat posed by automobiles to the environment. The table below gives information on the number of vehicles in the city. The situation has only grown worse as we come to the end of 1996. Has anyone got answers to how air pollution can be decreased as the number of vehicles keeps growing?

TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES

in Madras city as on 1.4.1995 (Source: Office of the Transport Commissioner, Madras, Tamil Nadu)

to the second se
COMMERCIAL
Vehicles Total Number
Buses 2571
Autorickshaws 21,845
Meter Taxis 423
Tourist Taxis 5067
Tourist Vans 1442
Omnibuses 148
Private Service Vehicles 178

(Continued on Page 3)

seem to agree on one practice:

Rushing with the announce-

ments of decisions where oth-

ers fear to tread. Indeed, many

of Chidambaram's policies

have not exactly pleased his

teammates or even his party,

the TMC. He's not even been

able to do that in his own vil-

lage, Kandanur, where the

candidate he had backed for

the Kandanur panchayat

chairmanship was defeated by

an achi the village backed. It

does not pay to be national or

secular, it strikes MMM as a

lessson Chidambaram needs

★ The Muttukkadu-Mamalla-

puram stretch is a bit of coast

that the Centre would like to

develop as a major beach re-

sort destination. The Man

From Madras Musings hears.

There won't be any difficulty

in finding the private invest-

ment for that, MMM is sure.

But the investors would like to

be sure of several things too.

Namely, will the West Coast

Road be allowed to develop as

a new highway, will a helipad

be permitted, will the coastal

zone rules be relaxed and,

above all, will the decades old

Mamallapuram Master Plan

be implemented, keeping out

traffic, vendors, beggars and

construction from the core

area and allowing visitors to

enjoy the monuments in

Mr Kalyanam will be wel-

comed by Madras Musings.

Meanwhile, MMM wonders

why he has to hear Madras

news from the BBC. And not

much more even after that. It

seems very much like hearing

about wicketkeeper Healy's

injury from Sydney, NOT

*Proving very popular, The

section is also planning on

monthly guest lectures by emi-

nent personalities. MMM

from Bangalore!

to catch up on.

Rain! Rain! Remember we need a drain! seen eye to eye. Though both

nain! Rain! Remember we Nneed a drain! could well be a more pertinent refrain in Chennai these days than asking it to go to Spain, The Man From Madras Musings would think. MMM hopes His Worship the Mayor and his Corporation remember this before people are forced to ask the Rain Gods to ease up because of the lack of this necessity.

It's been years since our roads in the City have been as badly flooded as they have been in every spell of recent rain. Even a sharp shower sees severalroads impassable with particular areas in them getting flooded. Yet, a year ago, even several days of rain at a stretch did not see such flooding in the heart of the City. MMM wonders what the Corporation authorities have been up to this past year that has led to this unhappy situation. In fact, knowing when the monsoons were due, what were the Corporation authorities doing this past Summer instead of readying the stormwater drains for the rains-to-come?

With the monsoon rains likely to be with us in spells over the next six weeks or so, the first task of the Mayor will have to be finding even temporary answers to a problem which threatens to paralyse the City every time there's even just one heavy shower!

A tragedy

One of the tragedies during the rain-swept Ayudha Pooja weekend was the death of two young men in the T' Nagar canal. In the last couple of years, the roads near the canal have been seeing progressively worse flooding each year. And nothing has been done to alleviate this situation in T'Nagar, MMM finds.

The latest tragedy started with a boy slipping into the canal in the pouring rain. Two young men jumped in to rescue him — and while the boy to be rescued reached safety, the rescuers perished.

No clear picture of the tragedy has emerged. But there are some features of the tragedy that need to be noted. The drainage canal in question is one of the worst clogged canals in the City, The Man From Madras Musings has noticed. The rains virtually flow over the morass, making the bog even more dangerous. It was over this canal that the Australian group, determined to help Madras see Vision 2000, laid over 800 metres of concrete, on either side of Theagaraya Road, and created a healthcare centre, a volleyball court and a children's playground. Welcome though their enterprise was, here was yet another example of Western solutions not working in Indian conditions. With the covered canal, there was no way of spotting what problems the rescuers were facing, even if there were people watching the effort. In the end, the concrete had to be broken in stretches so that the canal

Eventually, it took over 24 hours before the bodies were

could be inspected.



A part of the concrete drain-cover the Australians built... showing what had to be done to it to find the bodies of two young men who lost their lives beneath it (see story below). The operation complete, the authorities have left it in a state where both opening and iron rods pose a threat to life and limb the next time the area gets flooded. (Photograph by RAJIND N. CHRISTY.)

discovered and removed from the entrapping mud. What will be the next step in the interest of public safety, MMM wonders.

The early years

Denguin India's lineage, Susan Ram's nationality and Jasper Utley's conviction that English literature was nowadays being written by more non-English people, all ensured that the release of The Early Years of R.K. Narayan would be at the British Council, even if another place might have been a more comfortable venue for what Utley called "the biggest crowd I've ever seen in the Council". That SRO crowd not only heard the story of the writing of the biography but listened to a moving reading of excerpts from R.K. Narayan: Early Years 1906-1945 by Susan. The Man From Madras Musings hopes that the book will prove as moving as the reading, when he gets down to it.

That reading was a reflec-

tion of the fond relationship and close bonds Narayan and the Rams have forged since Susan first met the GOM of Indian English Literature in 1985. The man who wouldn't give interviews to most journalists not only gave Susan scores of interviews for the book but also for Doordarshan and the BBC's Channel Four. And then there were all those dinners they'd form a threesome at — the Taj's 'Mysore' a favoured spot - not to mention the 'After Ten Club' that would meet at his home. The result sounds like a very human and warm biography that will give the lie to that grim and forbidding picture the photographs always seem to capture (ED. NOTE: See Page

The book, 11 years in the preparation, with several ups and downs, was started by Susan and has mainly been written by her, Ram revealed. He came in when much research of the background was needed and then came the coauthorship. Much of that research was, rather surprisingly, at Boston College and its great rival, Boston University, in the capital of Massachusetts where many of Narayan's letters, especially those to Graham Greene, and his early manuscripts have wound up. The family of Graham Greene, who 'discovered' Narayan and became a good friend, and The Hindu's 'Index' (read, library) also helped considerably in making the book possible, the latter having a lot of the varied writings Narayan contributed to The Hindu, from the 1930s. A second and a third volume will make the biography complete, MMM agrees with many in the audience, but the Rams leave it on an uncertain note

with the words "that will be a

formidable task". The only ragged notes in a delightful evening were the 'excitement' caused by trying to find room for US Ambassador Frank Wisner and US Consul-General Michelle Sison on their late arrival, which slowed Susan down in mid-sentence, and when she was brought to a dead stop for her autograph as the Ameri-

conservationist and, once, manager of wildlife in the Nilg', 18. Both the Nilgiri Tahr and the South Indian elephant owe much to him, MMM was told. And fellow-student at Law College, Appa Rao, has long shared a passion for wildlife photography with Davidar. The unholy nexus which

makes Man threaten forest and wildlife, the negligible research being done on animals by marauding 'Jeep' researchers flush with foreign funding, and, most important of all, the genetic threat to the Indian elephant by poachers targeting only the tusked bulls have all been drawn attention to in Davidar's book, Vijayaraghavan pointed at. He only wished that Davidar had paid as much attention to them and the tribals as he did to the story he wove, Vijayaraghayan stated, adding that he hoped Davidar would move on to non-fiction and focus on these points in his next book.

Davidar, however, enjoys being a story-teller, it would seem. The elephant lore, that is a part of the book, he had first learnt in the jungles of the Western Ghats, he recalled, where he had followed rogue elephants in the old days, killing one and losing a few others

cans got up to leave a few minutes later. Diplomats, MMM had always thought, were supposed to handle such situations more gracefully; but then they were in India, weren't they, where VIP's have extra-special status?

Jungle tales

Yet another book release function The Man From Madras Musings attended was a quieter occasion but significant in its own way. When Penguin Editor David Davidar did not want to handle uncle ERC (Reggie) Davidar's jungle thriller, the author found EastWest Publications, Madras, only too willing to publish The Lord of the Jungle. You'd have to read the book to find out whether the 'Lord' is an elephant poacher and sandalwood smuggler, a muni, Ganesh the elephant who does not forget, a 'supercop' or a Jim Corbett-type, but what is significant are the various signposts in the book indicating the sad state of our forests and the endangered life within them, pointed out B. Vijayaraghavan in releasing the book and handing over the first

copy to M.S. Appa Rao. The three chief figures at the Madras Book Club function are all wildlife enthusiasts. Vijayaraghavan, connected with the World Wide Fund for Wildlife and the Snake Park Trust, is an ornithologist who always found that the jungles were the best place to go to, to get away from the rigours of the IAS. Davidar, a lawyer turned planters' association administrator, is also a hunter turned

when they crossed into neighbouring states. He described how close an elephanthunter had to get to make a successful 'kill'. And that he believes that there are more things on heaven and earth than are dreamt of was revealed by his muni stories. At 'Jungle Trails' in the Mudumalai forests, which is both home and a guesthouse the Davidars run, there has appeared a floating flame several times under a nearby banyan tree. A couple of people have been killed by elephants near it and an old woman drawn to the flame twice was burnt on the third occasion and died.

flects these experiences and promises a thrilling story, much jungle lore and a greater appreciation of why forests need to conserved and their denizens protected, MMM concludes from what the speakers merely hinted at at its

In brief

★ Industries Minister Murasoli Maran is a man in a hurry. He wants the country thrown open to the consumer goods sector, The Man From Madras Musings hears. And he'd like much of that new investment to come to Tamil Nadu - in the manner Prime Minister Deve Gowda is ensuring many a key appointment in Delhi goes to old Karnataka hands "who've been looked over". Finance Minister Chidambaram, however, is not as enthusiastic about the hurry... and this is not the first time

these two teammates have not

peace? If all these are not done, the stretch in question can never be developed as a major beach resort, MMM is ★ Listen carefully to the BBC and ye shall hear. And this is what The Man From Madras Musings heard recently. A whole horde of Mahatma Gandhi's letters, notes, jottings etc. are to be auctioned in London shortly. And they are expected to fetch a small fortune... when it comes to fortunes, MMM tends not to hear the numbers, though it did sound like a million pounds. What he did hear was that the treasure was found "in an old cupboard in Madras". Now where could that be, MMM wondered. And later heard it was in a 'Mr Kalyanam's' cupboard. Any further details from

The Lord of the Jungle rerelease.

> Man From Madras Musings (Continued from Page 1) hears, is the Connemara School Buses Library's Talking Book Centre

recently set up by the National Association of the Blind's Tamil Nadu State Branch. (Lorries) The Braille-cum-Talking Book section has a variety of audio cassettes on subjects ranging from fiction to biography as will as several periodi-Two-wheelers cals in Braille. The Talking Motor cars Book section is open on all days of the week and permits Tractors borrowing of cassettes. The

Nothing appears to have changed in 300 years, writes V.S. RAGHA

VAN, after taking these photographs

of the old Corporation of Madras's

Council House in Fort St. George (see

MM, Oct. 16th for a comparison). In

fact, thanks to a modicum of care by

the Army - whose Station Head

quarters it is — the building seems to

be in as good a condition as it ever was,

these photographs was kindly granted

by the Area Commander, but we wish

the Army would make life easier for all

by allowing its local Public Relations

Officers to readily grant such permis-

sion - or, better still, do away with

any permission at all in the case of

buildings of historical importance or

tourist interest which it still occupies.

The Army's secrets, we are sure, are

not kept in such public buildings — so

why doesn't it unbend a bit in such

cases of public interest?

Editor's Note: Permission for

adds Raghavan.



Not us!

W/e strongly refute the allega-W tions of Dr. G. Krishnamurthy, Vice Chairman, Cancer Institute, Madras, in regard to the purported pollution by CLRI.

CLRI is not an industrial unit engaged in any manufacture, resulting in pollutants being let into the Buckingham Canal. On the contrary, CLRI is a premier research institution engaged in research and development of leather and allied products, in which process measures are taken to prevent emission of pollutants and toxicants. The Metro authorities are aware of our steps in this direction.

CLRI has established a fullfledged effluent treatment plant to treat laboratory waste and has remitted Rs.56 lakh to the Metro authorities to dispose of domestic wastes in the main sewer lines. Our commitment to the social cause is total.

The problem of odour in the Buckingham Canal may originate from different sources, as the Canal is well known to be a cesspoor over the decades. In fact, steps taken by earlier governments to cleanse the Buckingham Canal ended in futility.

V.K. Parthasarathy, Public Relations Officer, Central Leather Research Institute, Adyar, Madras 600 020.

Unintended good

D.C. Narayanan has been a witness to the 'Beach Tragedy' (MM, Sept 16) enacted by the affluent 'Philistines' who ride expensive two-wheelers/cars and disturb residents in and around Besant Nagar by playing loud music and driving their vehicles at breakneck speed, in the dead of night. The

residents of this area have to spend sleepless nights as the flowers in their well-maintained garden disappear in the early hours of the morning due to 'Predators' taking over duty from 'Philistines'!

I, however, see some unintended good from these late night and early morning activities of the goons. Their presence prevents the slum-dwellers from using the entire beach area as an open air lavatory! The residents close to the Beach

A vehicle for every 6

Ambulance and Fire Vehicles Goods Carriers Tractors with Trailers Light Carrier Vehicles 3516 NON-COMMERCIAL 5,62,722 1,35,433 6275 Others Total

7,67,146 That's one vehicle for every six persons, believe it or

not! Can our 100-year-old roads handle such traffic, is another question to be asked - who'll answer it?!

The suspended particulate matter (dust), well above permissible limits, could be controlled by certain evergreen plants (peepal, teak, sal, arjuna, mango, etc.), grasses and epiphytes like orchids, says Econews. That's asking for more greenery. Could we see that as another priority, Mr. Mayor?

Also needed is regulating traffic, especially lorry traffic, and proper maintenance of

Time to move the hands of the clock

Allahabad in the U.P. and

Rajahmundry in Andhra. As

for the time factor, there's a dif-

ference of more than three-

quarters of an hour between

the extreme western and the

extreme eastern tips of the Re-

public. Observant people who

visit Bombay (I shall never be

able to bring myself to mumble

that absurd new 'Mumbai') will

notice that it stays light slightly

but noticeably longer there

than it does in Madras (I have

the same problem with

One Man's

Madras -

HARRY

MILLER'S

idea to move that awkward de-

gree of longitude a little further

to the west? Not only would

that enable us to divide India

equally, but it could rid of us of

that extra half an hour we are

Might it not then be a good

Chennai!).

Have you ever wondered why Indian Standard Time is 51/, hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or Universal Time as it is now generally called by scientists? Take a look at a map — a child's school atlas will do and you'll see that Indian Stan dard Time is based on Longitude 82.5 degrees east of Greenwich. Still with that map in hand, ask-yourself why three-quarters of the Republic of India is on the western side of that degree of longitude and only a quarter is on the eastern

The answer lies in both history and geography. Remember that at its height the British Indian Empire included what is now Pakistan, the Republic of India, Bangladesh and Burma (now. Myanmar) — an impressive piece of real estate if ever there was one. I've never understood why tiny Ceylon, Sri Lanka as it is now called, was never included in that vast Empire but remained what was technically called a Crown Colony right up to Indepen-

But when you add Burma to the others, that 82.5 degree longitude begins to make more sense, since it divided the entire pre-1930 Empire neatly in two. It was only in 1930 that Burma began to be administered and governed independently. But with Burma out of the picture, that 82.5 degree longitude doesn't divide India equally any more.

You will find from the atlas that the degree of longitude on which Indian Standard Time is based passes very close to

should thank the intruders on this

opposed the beach-beautification,

forgetting the fun provided for the

children and the amenities offered.

name of the area, though it should

remind us of the glorious memory

of Dr. Annie Besant, means

WITHOUT PEACE! Be Sant in

In a letter in MM, October 1,

'printer's devil' repeated again.

I find the misuse of the term

a printer's mistake. A 'printer's

devil' was the term applied to small

boys employed in printing establish-

ments who were so frequently cov-

ered with black ink they never

troubled to wash it off. Just like the

little boys who were perpetually

covered with soot from the insides

of the vast chimneys of stately

homes in Victorian England which

they had to climb inside to clean by

hand, just like the little boys called

powder monkeys who used to carry

gunpowder up to the firing deck on

A 'printer's devil' was and is not

K. S. Kandhaswamy

Damodarapuram, Adyar

28/6, Main Road,

Madras 600 020.

Hindi means lack of peace!

Common error

Seen from a different angle, the

It is regrettable that the writer

count alone.

ahead of the Greenwich Meridian, which was established at a time when Britain was the world's leading and most powerful maritime nation. Five hours difference is so much more convenient for all manner of purposes than $5^{1}/_{2}$. Six would be even better. As Arthur C. Clarke says in a letter to me recently, "An enormous amount of inconvenience is caused by the odd 30 minutes difference from an integral time zone and this has

old-time warships, and just like thousands of small boys employed in the innumerable car repair workshops scattered all over Madras today and who are always so covered with dirty grease they never bother to wash it off.

become even more of a nui-

sance with the developments

in international communica-

tions, phone calls, satellite TV,

Harry Miller 3A, Satyananarayana Avenue, Boat Club Road, Madras - 600 028.

Temple improvement

The Kapaleeswarar Temple 1 committee members have done a good job in renovating the temple. The temple now presents a pleasing and spotlessly clean pic-

Previously the walls of the temple used to be adorned by portraits of gods and goddesses. They may have been executed by very good artists, but what a clustered atmosphere! What a refreshing sight now, after the pictures have been removed. It is to be hoped the walls are kept blank but restored to their old beauty.

> N. Shankar No.1, 2nd Trust Cross St., Mandaivellipakkam, Madras - 600 028.

surdity of this to every administration (in Sri Lanka, where he lives) since 1970, and also to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi when I delivered the Nehru Lecture in New Delhi in There's also a powerful economic factor involved in the

way we allot our time so arbitrarily. It was the British who not only laid claim to the Prime Meridian, which they placed with supreme accuracy at Greenwich on the Thames, but also dreamt up the clever idea of saving power — and therefore money — by advancing their clocks by one hour during the months of summer. That was first put into practice during World War I and it was of such profound benefit to the economy that in the even harder times that were to follow at the outbreak of World War II they added yet another hour and had British Double Summer Time. It was then light enough to read a newspaper out of doors at 11 p.m.! By such simple means the British economy benefited by billions of pounds, and the war effort, as it was called, benefited in many more subtle ways too.

The secret of success in fiddling about with our clocks like that lies in the fact that human activity is far greater in the early evenings than it is in the early mornings.

The saving of electrical

power by so simple a means would be of prodigiously economic benefit to India. Those of us who live nearest the Equator (Madras, for example, is only 13.02 degrees north) find it gets dark, and that artificial lights are necessary, soon after six in the evenings. By switching on an hour later, we would save on the use of electrical power. And if the practice were put into effect over the entire nation, from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin, the economic saving would be virtually incalculable. Those who think that the benefit is cancelled out by an extra hour of darkness — or at least twilight — in the early mornings are wrong. Human nature being what it is, we are far less active then than we are in the evenings.

If you have lived at any time in higher latitudes, such as Europe or North America, you will already be familiar with the pleasant experience of going out at nine or even ten o'clock in the evenings to find the sun still shining. Because we in Madras live in the Tropics we can't expect as much benefit as that, but even so, the nation would reap substantial economic benefits by so simple a measure as moving the hands on our national clocks!

The man from

Malgudi

Living with a large and affec-

tionate joint family, he did not

really feel the necessity to earn

a living, although he made neg-

ligible amounts as a reporter of

EDANDS GARRES

The Best Of R.K. NARAYAN

meetings and murders for a

Madras newspaper, and

through occasional contribu-

tions to various publications,

including one to Punch. Mean-

while he finishing writing

Swami and Friends and sent it

to England for publication.

Though rejected by several

British publishers, the manu-

script eventually reached the

hands of Graham Greene who

was sufficiently impressed by it

to recommend it to Hamish

Hamilton for publication

Greene found publishers for

Narayan's next two books, The

Bachelor of Arts and The Dark

Room. All of them came out be-

Then came World War II

(and) the central, tragic event

of Narayan's personal life... In

1933 he fell headlong in love

with Rajam, an attractive girl in

tween 1935 and 1938.

brooding and writing...

Nov. 1-15, 1996

In 1942, when I was reading

Ifor my degree at Madras

Christian College, the Rev. Dr

IR Macphail asked me if I had

heard of R K Narayan. I should

have... but I had not. Dr

Macphail said that he had read

a book called Swami and Friends

by Narayan during home leave

and found it exceptional in its

treatment of theme and its use

of the English language. He

asked me to get him a copy as

he wanted to suggest to the

Board of Studies that the book

should be prescribed for non-

detailed study for the B.A. de-

gree. With all the brashness of

a 16-year-old I wrote to

Narayan himself, asking for a

copy. He referred me to a friend

of his in Madras from whom

borrowed the book. But noth-

ing came of Dr Macphail's ef-

forts as the book simply was not

available — it was learnt later

that most copies of Narayan's

early novels were destroyed

during the Blitz. I eventually

met Narayan in person during a

balmy spring in New York in

Rasipuram Krishnaswami

Ayyar Narayanaswamy — in

his early years he signed himself

R K Narayanaswamy, in the

Tamil fashion, but at the time

of the publication of Swami and

Friends, he shortened it to R K

Narayan on Graham Greene's

suggestion — was born in 1906.

He grew up in his grand-

he entered his teens when he

went to Myscre to live with his

parents, his father being the

headmaster of a prestigious

school there. Narayan was not

a particularly good student and

he took longer than most of his

peers to get a B.A. degree. But

he was a voracious and eclectic

reader (he can quote Omar

Khayyam with the same facility

as he can Macbeth), and he

seen drawing water from a

street-tap. Against tradition,

against gloomy astrological pre-

dictions, and — let it be added

- against a none-too-bright fi-

nancial future, Narayan stood

his ground, and married the girl,

of his choice. It was a happy

marriage, Rajam blending in

well with Narayan's joint fam-

ily, and helping to run the

household efficiently, with

Narayan contributing whatever

little he earned towards domes-

tic expenses. The couple had a

baby girl who constantly dis-

tracted Narayan from his writ-

ing. The happiness was not to

last long as Rajam died of ty-

phoid in 1939. To say that he

was shattered would be an un-

derstatement; he went about

like a zombie, doing nothing

relating to nobody except his

three-year-old girl who was his

For a change, he went to

Madras to stay withasister,and

there he had (a) psychic expe-

rience... Life and death began

to hold a new meaning for him,

and he returned to Mysore, a

man in control of himself. He

began writing again, and the

result was The English Teacher

(entirely autobiographical, with

just a few details changed)

which Graham Greene as a di-

rector of Eyre and Spottis-

woode, published in 1944. The

novel was an exercise in self-

exorcism, though perhaps it

was not consciously intended to

be so. From here on, Narayan's

works do not delve into his per-

sona, though his writing gets

richer, more broad-based and

complex. He continues to use

materials and characters expe-

rienced and explored person-

ally, but he is always on the out-

easily told. He produced and

continues to produce novels on

signment — that of covering

The rest of Narayan's life is

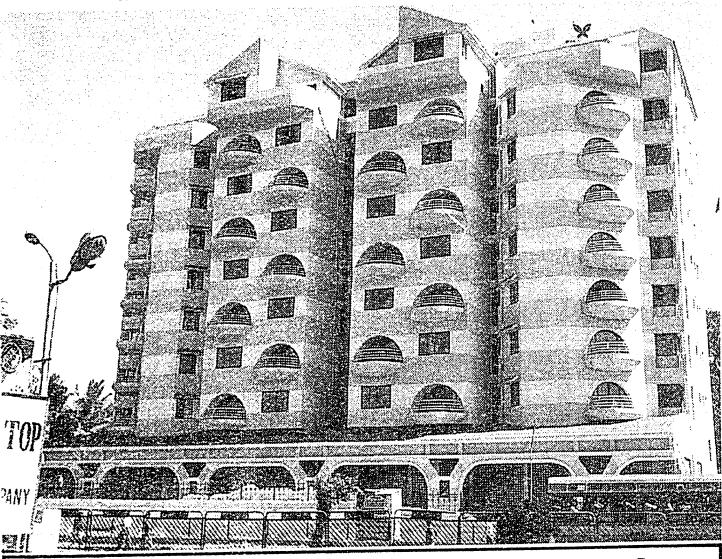
side looking in.

only solace.

Virtually next to each other 'on' Poonamallee High Road are these buildings built over eighty years apart. The OLD, typical of early 20th Century construction in the 'Mylaporean' art deco style, features pediments, pillars, balustrades, bay windows and roofed, monkey-topped and wrought-iron railinged balconies. About twenty years ago, this building was donated to the Christian Mission Service which, with German assistance, runs a home for poor, destitute children of age

THE OLD... 5-10. About 170 children are given food, clothing, shelter and education here and are looked after by a staff of 15. The children, educated in nearby ...& THE schools, have their progress monitored by their 'foster parents' and those who NEW have done well in school have gone on to higher education. The Home has sent out into the world a number of doctors, engineers and nurses.

The NEW, with its semi-circular balconies resembling bird cages, or 'flying saucers', depending on your viewpoint, catches the eye with this feature and its entrance arcade. Seen together, the two buildings reflect Madras and Chennai, the older building curiously, more Indian in style, the newer one very definitely drawing from Western highrise as adapted in Southeast Asia. Appropriately, Chennai Ford's has a showroom in it. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Business briefs

— from The Man from Madras Musings

looking at an investment of around Rs.200 crore.

Vasu's best efforts - and Ban-★ Oriental Hotels, an associgalore is the winner. But The ate company of the Taj Group Man From Madras Musings whose flagship is the Taj wonders whether French Coromandel and which has Consul, and FICCI President prime properties in Fisher-Deepak Banker's efforts will man's Cove, Taj Malabar in bring the Renault project to Kochi and Taj Residency in Chennai. Renault are plan-Vizag, is now looking at small ning a truck-manufacturing facility and the Tamil Nadu upmarket properties in the smaller but industrially boom-Government has offered land ing cities of Tamil Nadu. The by any of the three main highways that are likely to be soon Man From Madras Musings understands the Company is clogged with industrial devellooking at a 100-room hotel opment: NH 5 — near for Coimbatore, at an invest-Gummidipoondi — NH 4 -ment of Rs.20 crore and to near Sriperumbudur — and open in 1999; a 40-room ho-NH 5 — near Maraimalaitel in Tuticorin, at an investnagar — all sited around 45 km from Madras. Meanwhile, ment of around Rs.8 crore and to open in 1998; and similar Escorts too is looking at hotels in Tiruchchirappalli these locations for its new tractor factory, with which it and Kodaikanal.

* We missed out on the

Volvo, despite Consul Stina

hopes to add 12,000 tractors a

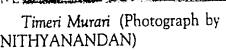
year to its present production

capacity of 45,000 a year. It is

★ ESSAR is coming home ... or, at least, a part of the indusShipping Corporation joint

trial giant is returning to Madras where the Ruia family started off and began to grow. And, The Man From Madras Musings notes, they are coming back with a business in which they took their first steps of growth — shipping. ESSAR Shipping — which is an associate of South India Shipping, in which ESSAR took a major stake three years ago — is to make Madras its headquarters and may well absorb SIS next year, when ESSAR Shipping plans to spend Rs.1000 crore on new vessels, particularly Very Large Crude Carriers. ESSAR and the Tamil Nadu Government are, incidentally, partners in a firm called ESSAR Chennai Shipping which is an ESSAR Shipping-Poompuhar

A adras's own Timeri N. VI Murari, among the few Indians writing fiction in English to be published in London in the period between Independence and the 1990s, is getting ready to leave for London again. His film, The Square Circle, is to be shown at the London Film Festival. At the Toronto Festival, Tim got enthusiastic appreciation for his original screenplay, and the film, directed by well-known actor Amol Palekar, was well reviewed. Tim may be its coproducer, but he does not have



Corning full

a copy of the film to show friends. Let us hope he comes back from London with a copy as well as accolades.

Tim Murari, who is from a Telugu Naidu family which donated land to Loyola College for a huge library, has lived outside India from the time he went abroad for his studies. But he has been back eight years now and lives in the same house he was born in, in Kilpauk. The sprawling house is now hidden behind modern buildings on Landon's Road, but Tim remembers the days when its

bitter cold and the rain and practised robbery and being mean as a form of living. They knew he was writing on them and so did not bother him at all. Later, in New York, Murari went around with the cops to write a novel called Shooter. He learnt what it meant to be a New York policeman and what a tough life they led with danger lurking around every corner. The irony of it was several tough young delinquents becoming cops and having their best friends in the underworld!

They had nowhere to go in the

by V.R. Devika

huge garden stretched right up to Poonamallee High Road!

There was a film studio, 'Citadel', opposite it and there vas always a film crew 'shooting' in his garden. Murari has seen the young MGR and Sivaji and Gemini Ganesan working in the garden. Films have fascinated him ever since. That grandfather Vasu Naidu, a landowner, had an interest in the studio only fuelled that in-

The young Murari was brought up on books, films and, of course, cricket, which his father played rather well. He also got in a bit of studies at Good Shepherd Convent, Madras, Bishop Cotton's, Bangalore, and pre-university at Loyola. He went on to do Electronics Engineering in England and got to writing for The Guardian, Manchester, while in college there. He soon discovered his vocation was not engineering. So he moved to McGill in Montreal to study Political Science and History. Murari continued to write for The Guardian but went on to do more.

Timeri wrote his first novel in 1973. Called Marriage, it was his first attempt at fiction and explored the problems of Indian immigrants in England. He then wrote a non-fiction work on the life of the tough boys on the streets of Liverpool and called it New Savages. To research for it, he lived on the streets — for half a summer with the white boys and the other half with the black boys.

In between there was a futuristic novel, The Oblivion Tapes which looked at the industrialised world in conflict with a fast-industrialising Third World, and a highly successful novel on a woman's love, Lovers are Not People. This is going into production as a Hollywood movie next month.

Amongst the assignments Murari has enjoyed the most are making three documentaries for Thames TV, London: on the American dream; exploring the myth of the cowboy; and the remigration of the blacks of the South from North America. To do the last film, he followed a young family going from Boston to Alabama. The film also resulted in a book, Going Home. Then came Field of Honour, set in the post-Independent India of the mid-Fifties. Graham Greene wrote that he was very impressed with the book and Murari started a correspondence with him. Greene always wrote back and allowed Murari to use his comments in his next

Timeri met his wife Maureen in London in 1980. An Australian, Maureen was in the film business in New York at the time and had come to London to discuss a script with an English publisher, "If he too had not been living in New York at the time, we may never have got married," recalls Maureen. Timeri has dedicated most of his books to Maureen, (Continued on Page 5)

the heart of Madras. is now available again in India Most of Timeri's novels have help his father but there was

also an offer of an exciting as-

the elections in India after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Tim Murari, Appan Menon and photographer travelled through the length and breadth of India staying in tiny hamlets and large towns — and Tim found that India beckoned. "But wasted five wonderful years in litigation over the property, rues Murari. No way will he live the nightmare again by writing a book about it, as has been suggested by friends. "I only want to write well enough and entertainingly to keep my reader interested," he says. " am not a super message writer. The world is too complex for messages."



The Hindu

their sustained quality and workmanship, short stories and essays, and retold myths and legends from the Indian background... The best-known Indian man of letters, Narayan

• by S. Krishnan

now divides his time between Mysore and Madras...

The English Teacher in quick succession made an international reputation for Narayan, appearing not only in English but also in a number of foreign languages, ranging from Hebrew to Japanese, proving abundantly that his works have a universal appeal. Most of them had their core in an incident or a personality, developed into a full-fledged novel through Narayan's artistry.

The locale of all Narayans' novels and most of his short stopare him with William ous and is sustained by no more worlds and moved surely in them. Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Country, peopled by individuals with a sense of sin and horror underlying their lives, is a far cry from Naravan's

Malgudi, a placid little back-

water full of gentle and gently

For the Narayan aficionado

Malgudi is a real place with

which, as Graham Greene says,

"we have been as familiar as

with our own birth place. We

know, like the streets of child-

hood, Market Road, the snuff

stalls, the vendors of tooth-

paste, the Regal Haircutting

The name Malgudi, Narayan

has said, made its appearance in

a sentence that suddenly

Saloon, the river, the railway

eccentric persons.

● In October 1996, India's best-known man of letters. R.K. NARAYAN, was 90. And he's still going strong. We celebrate with a feature today and two more over the next two fortnights.

flashed in his mind when he was working on Swami and Friends: "The train stopped at Malgudi." As it happened, the train did not stop at Malgudi in Swami, except at the end, though it does so in several later stories, notably in The Guide and The English Teacher...

The Guide won the Sahitya Akademi award, the Government of India decorated him with a Padma Bhusan, and nominated him a member of the Rajya Sabha for a term. In Britain, the Royal Society of Literature gave him the A.C. Benson medal, while in the United States he received the English Speaking Union's award, and was made a Fellow by the prestigious American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, only one of two Indians to be so honoured.

Graham Greene, his staunch supporter and friend of more than fifty years, once comparing Narayan to Turgenev and Chekhov, saying: "Narayan (whom I don't hesitate to name in such a context) more than any of them wakes in me a spring of gratitude, for he has offered me a second home. Without him I could never have known what it is like to be an Indian." To which it can be added that even to Indians born and bred, he performs a similar service by revealing truths about ourselves we have not been aware of.

(From Malgudi Landscapes published by Penguin India, 1992, with the kind permission of the publishers.)

Montessori trom Kalakshetra

(By A Staff Reporter)

Lifty years ago, Kalakshetra L'Publications brought out Education for a New World by Dr. Maria Montessori. It was KP's very first publication, and the beginning of a long and historical association with the Montessori movement. It was also one of the factors that led to the spread of the movement in India.

Over the years, KP have

her late teens whom he had a regular basis, remarkable for spent his time taking long walks Coming full circle

well. They include The Imperial

(Continued from Page 4) acknowledging the role she has played in their success. "I did nothing but read them after he had finished them," Maureen laughs off her contribution.

After they married, Tim brought his wife to the Taj Mahal and while telling her its story realised there was much more to the Taj than history books teach us. So Murari began to read whatever was available on the Mughals in New York and wrote Tai, which became an international bestseller and got translated into nine European languages. The book

— at Indian prices. gone into several translations as

Agent, The Last Victory and Enduring Affairs. He's also written stage plays, The Inquisitor, Lovers are Not People and Prisoner of Legend, and screenplays, Stolen, Field of Honour and The Square Circle. Murari's latest novel is Steps from Paradise, which is almost autobiographical. It is the story of a powerful Naidu family, who lived in a huge house in a vast estate in

Murari came back to Madras for good in 1988. His father had not been well and there were property matters that had gone to court. Murari returned to

R.K. Narayan at 90 ... as seen by

The novels which followed

ries is Malgudi, the mythical town with which his name is inextricably associated. Two general assumptions must be immediately countered. The dusty small town of Malgudi has no physical resemblance to princely, palace-filled Mysore. What is a fact is that Malgudi takes its contours from the sleepy little South Indian towns of those days, among which the inner city or the core part of Mysore can also be included The other statement usually made about Narayan is to com-Faulkner. The link is very tenuthan the circumstance that both writers created their own

added 13 Montessori books to their list of publications. And they are books familiar to Montessorians the world over. All of them contain pictures and charts as conceptualised by Dr. Montessori in the early

The actual cost of the entire set of books is Rs. 1565. However, to celebrate its Golden Jubilee, Kalakshetra Publications are offering a special price of Rs. 1250 for the full set of these books published in the interest of children everywhere.

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMA-NAN's questions are from the period October 1 to 15. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Who is the second recipient of the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize (awarded a few weeks ago)? 2. A new megaserial on a legendary warrior, titled Mritunjaya,

On whom is the serial based? 3. Who is the new chief of the Intelligence Bureau?

started on DD on October 3rd

4. According to reports, which Asian country has refused to host major international events, sporting and social, over the next ten years in order to concentrate on economic development?

5. Which Indian has been elected vice-president of FIDE, the governing body of world chess? 6. Which prominent Indian was

given honorary U.S. citizenship recently? 7. Name the Pakistani teenager who smashed the fastest century

(off only 37 balls!) in one-day internationals.

8. Which prominent Janata Dal leader quit as his party's spokesman citing 'personal' reasons?

9. The most decorated regiment in the Indian Army celebrated its 150th anniversary. Which regi-

10. Which eminent painter was severely censured by the Maharashtra Government for depicting deities in an 'obscene' man-

11. Which Indian-born writer has won this year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize?

12. Justice M.N. Venkatachelliah is to succeed Justice Ranganath Mishra as the chairman of?

13. Bishop Carlos Beto and Jose Ramos Horta are the winners of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. They are activists in which part of the world?

14. The father of the 'supercomputer' died recently. Name.

15. 'The Crocodile', one of the 'Four Muskeeteers' of French tennis, passed away recently.

16. An easy one. Who is the

* * *

Mayor-elect of Chennai? 17. Which industrialist was posthumously honoured with the Order of Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver, by Emperor Akhihito of

18. Tina and Rita are two of the latest sniffer dogs inducted into the Forest Department. What are they trained to sniff out?

19. Where are four automatic traffic signal systems due to come up?

20. Who is the latest recipient of the Dr. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Birthday Commemoration Award?

(Answers on p.8)

• The new fad

Baby's date with the stars!

In a land where astrologers de-Ltermine Prime Ministerial movements, Caesarean births synchronised to astrologically auspicious hours should be no surprise. At present, a fad restricted to well-to-do couples who want to give their newborns a stellar advantage in life, it is a practice fast gaining popularity with private nursing homes willing to oblige. Most private nursing homes find Caesareans far more convenient and less laborious than the natural way. They also see a quick buck in it.

In fact, a specialist at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) complains of a "Caesarean epidemic" sweeping the country. "Today, roughly one in three babies is delivered through Caesarean section and not all these cases can possibly warrant the procedure," the specialist points out, adding that it is not unknown for an obstetrician to advance a delivery so s/he can go to a party. "So

amniocentesis and female foeticide. Deliveries timed for non-medical reasons — such as the astrological — represent yet another interference with nature," the specialist muses.

Faith in the influence of the stars over human destiny was compelling enough for Abhay and Sangita to overlook the hazards of a Caesarean section Caesarean deliveries also hinder development of mother and child bonding, interfere with normal breast-feeding and require the mother to be placed under strong sedatives and antibiotics. Despite such problems and

temporary paralysis of bowel

and excretory functions.

private maternity homes fast gaining a 'knife-happy' reputation, Sangita's obstetrician feels that the wishes of the parents should be given consideration.

According to Sangita's obstetrician, the knife is still the

by Devraj Ranjit

and ask their obstetrician to deliver their baby at a 'birth mahurat' computed by the family astrologer. Although the obstetrician found little difficulty in obliging the couple, she says she did warn them of the risks involved and advised against it as a matter of professional eth-

Potential difficulties for the mother arising from a Caesarean section include bladder and kidney infections, severe bleeding from the uterus, and

most accurate way of timing a birth, but even this requires meticulous planning ahead of the due date.

"There are also many advantages to Caesarean section, such as reduced trauma and reduced risk of a slightly misshapen head for the baby, common in normal deliveries," the doctor adds.

The disappointments of

'elective deliveries', as the medical professions calls them, revolve around the often pre-

Seeing stars in the medical world! (Illustration courtesy: Nexus.)

cise requirements of astrology. For parents who consult an astrologer along with their obstetrician, the real risk is whether the ancient science is all that accurate, since there are several schools and not all of them agree. There is, for example, a 15-day difference in the Western and Indian zodiac. Astrologers are also undecided on the exact moment of birth. Others say the moment of conception is equally important, which may lead to more ridiculous attempts at interfering with-na-

Besides Caesarean sections, modern medicine has an array of hormone-based drugs which are less risky and which can advance or delay birth, but precision of any sort cannot be guaranteed. So, for the moment, elective births by Caesarean operation are bound to catch on, given the fact that most Indians prefer to consult an astrologer for anything from fixing a marriage date to moving into the Prime Ministerial residence. (Courtesy: Nexus and United

News of India)

ooking Usha Bail

> LIVER ONION FRY (serves 6).

250 g liver 4 onions 4 tomatoes 6 flakes garlic 1 cm ginger $\frac{3}{1}$ i tsp salt

1 1/2 tsp chilli powder / tsp turmeric powder / tsp garam masala powder

2 tbs coriander leaves (chopped) 2 green chillies (slit)

Method

Wash liver and cut into small pieces. Grind one onion. ginger, garlic, turmeric powder, chilli powder, garam masala powder and tomatoes into a fine paste. Chop the other three onions into lengthwise

Heat two tablespoons of oil in a pan, add the onions and the liver pieces, and sauté over a low flame till the onions turn light golden in colour and the liver is cooked. Remove from pan and keep aside.

Heat the remaining oil in the pan, and fry the masala on

a slow fire, till the masala is well fried and the oil starts seeping out of it. Add the fried onions and liver, the slit green chillies and salt and sauté for a few minutes till everything blends

Serve hot, garnished with coriander leaves. This is a dry dish and tastes good with rice or rotis.

CHICKEN DELIGHT

(serves 6)

2 cups milk 11/2 cups cooked flaked chicken 1 cup cooked peas 6 bread slices 3 eggs 2 tbs butter 3/4 tsp salt 1/4 tsp pepper powder

Method

Cube bread slices and fry in a mixture of oil and butter, till the bread pieces are golden brown in

Beat the eggs with salt and pepper powder, add the chicken pieces, peas and milk and mix well. Fold in the fried bread pieces into the mixture.

Grease a pie-dish, pour the mixture into it, and bake in a

moderate oven till crisp and golden brown on top. (If a knife is inserted into the baked dish it should come out clean.)

Serve hot with any salad.

KHEEMA ROLLS

l tbs oil 1 tbs cream 1/2 the cornflour 3/, the salt 250 g mutton mince 2 eggs 4 green chillies 6 flakes garlic 1 onion 1 cm ginger

1 1/4 cups milk

8 tbs flour (heaped)

Method

Make pancake batter by mixing the eggs, flour, milk and quarter teaspoon salt into a smooth batter. Keep aside. Chop onion. Grind ginger, garlic and green chillies together.

Heat oil in a pan.Add the onion and fry till it is light gold in colour. Add the mince and fry till the mince is half cooked and all water dries up. Put in the gingergarlic paste and fry till the raw smell of garlic disappears. Add the remaining half teaspoon of salt, tomato sauce, cream and cornflour. Fry well till the mixture becomes dry. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Make thin dosa-like pancakes on a tava using a little oil. Put a tablespoon of the kheema filling on each pancake and roll. Make all the rolls the same way and serve. The rolls can also be heated in an oven with a sprinkling of tomato sauce and cheese



Till December: The work of three young artists — Ramachandran (painting), Suresh (sculpture) and Anamika (printmaking) all final-year students from the College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. The exhibits will comprise a selection of paintings, graphics and sculpture. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan).

November 6th: With over 60 events in six Indian cities, 'Australia-India New Horizons' is a multidimensional programme that will bring the two countries closer together. Amongst other events in Madras is the Bangarra Dance Theatre's Ochres, an Aboriginal experience. (At the Music Academy, 7-8.20 p.m.).

November 7th: Doing Business with Australia. A presentation. (At the Connemara).

around Rs 2000," says Dr. Srini hole blood is never supplied at Jeevan!" That's the startling announcement that greets a visitor at Ieevan Blood Bank, Nungam-"Not many people realise that whole blood transfusions unnecessarily burden the heart

1 esting blood at the Jeevan Blood Bank... which recently celebrated its first

anniversary with the knowledge that it is doing something differently and well.

Lifeline of

excellence

— the right components are all that are required," explains Dr. Srinivasan, Managing Trustee, Jeevan. "Indeed, no other blood bank in Madras has a 100% component facility like Jeevan or is licensed for this as yet," adds Dr. Saranya Narayan, Member Trustee.

People who need blood suffer from different problems. Component supply ensures that

Nov. 1-15, 1996

Indira Jayakrishnan

their individual requirement is met, making optimal use of available blood as well as dramatically increasing the shelflife of blood.

Set up last September, Jeevan Blood Bank stands out as a unique non-profit unit that offers high quality service. With sophisticated equipment, like the Sebra, Hereus and Calora, Jeevan maintains a 24-hour blood component supply that is absolutely safe. "We follow the strictest measures in our testing and separation, meeting all the rules of the American Association of Blood Banking," says Dr.

Saranya. Test samples of donor blood are screened for Hepatitis-B virus, Hepatitis-C virus, HIV virus and Cytomegalo virus, in addition to malaria, filariasis, syphilis and the liver enzyme ALT. "Few blood banks today follow such exhaustive testing standards before storage," states Dr. Saranya.

Before components are supplied, further tests are carried out. The recipient's components are tested by a full panel cross match, identifying various red cell antibodies to ensure accurate matching. "This takes about an hour. In case of emergencies, we make do with ABOD compatibility testing and inform the family of this. she adds.

"The total expense incurred

vasan. The income from this one donor would, however, be only around Rs 1300. "We charge Rs 600 for RBCs, Rs 450 for Plasma and Rs 500 for Platelets. This last comes down to Rs 250 due to the short shelflife of platelets, resulting in less than 50% utility," he explains.

The Bank also makes available an autologous transfusion facility, where a person can store his or her blood in advance before a planned operation. This service is not offered on a regular basis by other blood banks in the city. "People still seem to have

many fears about donating blood. When asked, a first-time donor told us that he had never donated blood so far because nobody had asked him before!" smiled Dr. Srinivasan. At present, Jeevan gets only about 20 voluntary donors on a good day, although they can handle upto 40 donors. "We hope more people come forward that way, we can save the lives of three patients through one single donor," the doctors ap-

Of devadasis and 'Mother India'

Iniversity of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is one of the best universities in the world. Situated in park-like surroundings spread over thousands of acres, UCLA is a small city in itself. But a verdant one. International in character, students and professors from all parts of the world, including ours, come to study and work

An Indian enjoying the rank of 'Professor' whom I met was from Theagaraya Nagar, Madras. Avanti Madurai is an attractive young woman who teaches Women's Studies. Her special subject is Indian culture and, in particular, the classical South Indian dance forms, Bharata Natyam and Kuchi-

Avanti — she belongs to the well-known.Tanguturi family - is the grand-niece of that. successful lawyer who gave everything he owned for the cause of India's freedom -Tanguturi Prakasam Panthulu — and who held high office after India became free. She spent her early life in her family house on Rajabadar Mudali Street in T'Nagar. As she grew up, she attained high standards as a Bharata Natyam dancer and earned considerable acclaim.

Like must ambitious youth, Avanti moved on to the United States for higher studies, but she did not neglect her work in the traditional dance forms. After graduating, she joined UCLA and rose to become a professor.

ambitious project, a book on the devadasi system of Thanjavur and its contribution to Bharata Natyam. Her focus, she told me, was the renaissance of Bharata Natyam in South India which Rukmini Arundale initiated. Pioneering work on this subject has already been done by a Punjabi professor based in Delhi, who is married to an artloving South Indian. Amrutha

> by. Randor Guy

Srinivasan's work has already

received recognition from Cambridge University. I met Amrutha in Madras a couple of years age for a lively discussion on devadasis, Bharata Natyam and Tamil movies.

But to get back to Avanti, she is digging deep into the contributions made by pioneers like E Krishna Iyer, Kumbakonam Bhanumathi and Rukmini Arundale. Avanti has been awarded a handsome grant by UCLA for her research and she plans to visit Madras next year to meet people and gather material for her book. In spite of her rigorous

schedule as professor and research scholar, Avanti still dances on occasion. Recently, she gave a scintillating Bharata Natam performance at the Venkateswaraswami Temple in Malibu. Popularly known in LA as the Balaji Temple, it is in picturesque surrounding in the

Malibu Hills, some 40 miles. from the city.

A couple of archakas from Tirupati are in charge of the temple which, unlike most temples in India, is kept neat and dirt-free. When I visited the temple on a pleasant June afternoon, I saw a noticeboard which read, "Please, do not break coconuts, or burn camphor inside the temple!". Telugu kirthanas of Annamacharva, rendered by eminent musicians, are played all day long over the temple's sound system. Behind the temple, at a slightly lower level, a shrine dedicated to Anjaneya is being built. I was told that Hollywood star Barbara Streisand had make a generous donation to the Balaji Temple. On the drive back from the

Balaii Temple along the exciting Pacific Ocean Highway, we made a detour to visit a small town named Topanga. Here there are many Indians, mostly from North India. Their usual rendezvous is a place called 'Mother India'. It is a department store, with goods from all parts of India, and an Indianstyle restaurant attached. The restaurant, which serves idlis, vadais, and, of course, masala dosai, among other items, has a videoscope with a large screen and shows sequences from Hindi movies all day. The shop is owned by an elderly Punjabi woman who is known locally as 'Mother India' and to whom was introduced in that grand manner!

On the Bookshelves

ne of India's most celebrated writers, R.K. Narayan, turned 90 in October. In a fitting tribute to the creator of Malgudi, Susan Ram and N Ram have recounted his early days in R.K. Narayan: The Early Years 1906-1945 (Penguin India, Rs.495). In this volume, the authors provide a close insight into the first four decades of Narayan's life and may well have readers asking for more. Also to commemorate the birthday, Penguin India has published a special limited edition of Narayan's autobiography, My Days (Rs. 300).

A nother literary tribute of Asorts is Peter Hopkirk's Quest For Kim (John Murray, to process one donor's blood is £5.95). The author probes into

the inspirations which led to the creation of Kipling's most memorable characters and locations in the novel. Though Hopkirk follows the trail of Kim through India and Pakistan, this is less a travel book than a literary detective story. * * *

Cilipe Fernandez-Armesta's L'Millennium (Blackswan, Rs.420.75) traces the history of our planet over the last one thousand years. The author traces the course of civilisations and cultures, revealing the historical initiative as it shifts from one part of the world to another, and back again. Critically acclaimed on publication, it was shortlisted for the Duff Cooper prize. * * * Vitch Doctors (Heine-

 $W_{\rm mann, £5.00)}$ by John Micklethwart and Adrian Wooldridge is the first critical assessment of the 'Management-Gurus'. Sorting through the muddle of modern management theory, the authors explain in plain English the various doctrines of the gurus and assess the usefulness of these in running a business.

* * * ife's Grandeur (Cape,

£7.95) is Natural History writer Stephen Jay Gould's latest collection of essays. In his characteristically iconoclastic and original way, Gould argues that progress and increasing complexity are not inevitable features of the evolution of life on earth.

N. Dixit's tenure as the Foreign Secretary of India witnessed a series of dramatic national and international events. In My South Block Years (UBSPD, Rs.395), Dixit as-

with a difference. Satrupa Banerjee's The Workerholic's Cook Book (Penguin, Rs.150) provides quick and easy recipes for working professionals. The author also provides tips on time management, food storage, organising your shopping, kitchen gadgets and ways to

sesses India's foreign policy as

well as provides behind-the-

scenes anecdotes culled from

* * *

↑ nd, finally, to a cookbook

his years in office.

Savitha Padmananbhan

cope with unexpected guests at

dinner time — and much

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Dolphins in search Adras is one of the few places in India which has nost a year-round favourable mate for swimming, one of basic sports that also pro Dolphins in search search dedicated to the training of the swimmers. As swimmers the have been National medallist and as coaches they have been appointed as coaches and officials for the SAF and Asia-Particular in the safe and t

Madras is one of the few places in India which has almost a year-round favourable climate for swimming, one of the basic sports that also provides healthy exercise. More pools are required all over the City (as stated in MM, August 16th and October 1st). It is not just pools, but operating them in an orderly/organised manner - with lanes marked for beginners, intermediates and advanced swimmers, as is found in many other countries — that is necessary. With more pools there will be more participants and from the larger pool of talent more champions will come.

Meanwhile, let us look at the facilities we have. The Olympic-type facility at Velacherry, if and when opened to the public, would be suitable for daily practice only for children in and around South Madras. Other students would find it practically impossible to spare the one-hour commuting time to the pool in the mornings and 11/, hours in the evenings! In West Madras, there is the Shenov Pool for common practice. At this pool, students barely get 11/2, hours in the morning, and 2 hours in the evening to practice. Since only one lane is allotted to a team, the coach has to be versatile enough to effectively train in that single lane about 20 stu-

dents, ranging in age from 7 to

With these restricted training facilities, The Dolphin Club, nevertheless, won the overall team championship at the recently concluded Senior State Meet. The Dolphin girls also secured the women's championship. During the last six years, a good part of the State team has been composed of 'Dolphins', who have also

bers a time when the Dolpin Club swimmers used the Sterling Club swimming pool, among other pools, when the Anna Swimming Pool on the Marina was closed.

Nair remembers the Dolphins using the Sterling Club pool twice a week, on fixed days. When other youngsters were probably asleep, Dolphins, most of them children, would be at the pool well in time for

by V. Suhas Pandit

brought in many medals and points for the State and University teams.

The Dolphin Club, Kilpauk, was started in 1983 and is the oldest continuously running swimming club in Tamil Nadu active in competitive swimming. Besides training competitive swimmers for Nationallevel competition, the Club conducts "Learn-to-Swim" classes, advanced coaching classes for beginners, and also a "Masters" programme for Seniors.

S K Nair, who retired from the Southern Railway, remem-

practice, he recalls. Even before the arrival of the coach, they would start their warming up exercises. With the arrival of the coach, the tempo of the daily schedule would increase. Whether the sun was up or it was pouring, they went through their programme of training under the coaches with a discipline and an enthusiasm rarely seen anywhere nowadays, except in the defence forces, Nair observes.

Its coaches are the backbone of the Club. They have not only achieved excellence in their own right, but they are totally

dedicated to the training of the swimmers. As swimmers they have been National medallists. and as coaches they have been appointed as coaches and officials for the SAF and Asia-Pacific Games, coaches for all-India camps, for all-India Railway teams, and for the Tamil Nadu State teams.

The coaches treat all the swimmers alike and without partiality. This has been their hallmark, so much so that most of us bring our children to the pool, leave them there and engage ourselves in other activities, certain that the training that takes place will be in a disciplined manner.

All this has brought its rewards. The Dolphins have seen their names and photos in the papers, they have been admired by teachers and fellow-students, they have received sports scholarships, admissions in schools and colleges through the sports quota, and also job offers in the Railways, Services and Police Departments, even before they have completed their studies.

But what next? It is now necessary to have facilities and build infrastructure for the Club. The Club is at present generating funds to have some gym and health club facilities for the swimmers as well as a library of current technical literature. But, one day, the Club would like to have a pool of its own, which it can use not only for competitive training and advanced coaching, but also for basic training. This would be in contrast to what is seen in most of our pools, which are primarily recreational, where many come and use the pool in a totally unorganised manner, with no guidance, criss-crossing one another or children just throwing a ball to one another — uncontrolled activities which are not seen on any other field or court, whether it is tennis, badminton, hockey, cricket etc!

Dolphins can dream, can't they?

Answers to Quiz

1. A.T. Arivaratne of Sri Lanka; 2. Karna; 3. Arun Bhagat; 4. China; 5. P.T. Ummer Koya; 6. Mother Teresa; 7. Shahid Afridi; 8. Jaipal Reddy: 9. The Sikh Regiment; 10. M.F. Hussain; 11. Rohinton Mistry; 12. National Human Rights Commission; 13. East Timor in the Indonesian archipelago; 14. Seymour Cray. 15. Rene Lacoste.

16. M.K. Stalin; 17. M. V. Arunachalam, former chairman of EID Parry; 18. Sandalwood and snake skin; 19. Ashok Pillar in Ashok Nagar, Udayam Theatre, Kasi Theatre and Jaffarkhanpet-Kodambakkam road intersection; 20. M. S. Subbulakshmi.

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