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Slums: Is there an answer?

(By A Special Correspondent)

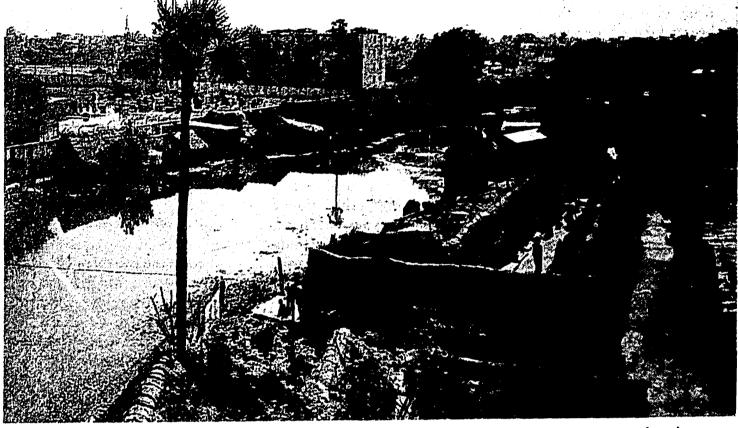
The ugly side of Chennai is that, out of its five million population, nearly seven lakh people live in the 1300-plus slums in the city while another 2.5 lakh dwell in 400-plus slums in the City's suburbs.

What is more, surveys in slums in the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) indicate that the slum population is growing at about 4.5 per cent every year — a major reason for the 42-lakh plus slum population in Tamil Nadu.

Slums are part and parcel of a city's demographics. But the issue here is one of providing better living conditions to slum-dwellers, who provide an unhealthy face to any urban conglomerate. Governments, therefore, need to relocate slum dwellers by providing them houses or flats with minimum basic facilities. Minimum infrastructure for one relocated family is estimated to cost about Rs. 26,000.

The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) took a step towards this Herculean task when it sought a special grant of Rs. 100 crore from the Tenth Finance Commission, an amount that would just be enough to relocate a little more than a fourth of the slum population of Chennai.

Improving living conditions in slums may be an alternate way of doing away with the City's ugly scars. But this may not be possible in Chennai, where many of its slums are on the banks of the Adyar and Cooum Rivers, the Buckingham Canal and Otteri Nullah, along the coastline (where about 60,000 families dwell) and on



One of the City's waterside slums — this one by the Cooum. It's only the rains that make this picture less gloomy. (Photograph by Rajind N Christy.)

the sides of the railway tracks, especially in north Chennai.

Whether it is slum improvement or relocation, the task before the state government is stupendous — acquiring new sites where housing units can be built, laying pucca roads, ensuring a steady supply of water, setting up electricity connections and providing sanitation and hygiene requirements. Other problems involved in relocating slums are that the 'squatters' are not prepared to be relocated, either fighting the officials who come to evict them or even getting court stay orders against their removal. With World Bank aid being sought, its stipulations have also to be complied with.

Slum clearance is also not a one-time exercise. As long as people from the rural areas of Tamil Nadu (and adjoining states as well) keep pouring into Chennai in search of a livelihood, the problem will remain. Reduction of employment opportunities is the only way to stop migration. But that means the need to improve living conditions in the state's rural areas, bring prosperity to villages and make them self-sustainable units.

Funds from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation and the World Bank hardly allow any improvements.

The December Season

With a nip in the air and a misty dawn,
The thrum of the tambura, the throb of the drum,
Rhythmic anklets jingling, arpeggios a-scaling,
The Music Season is on IN OUR CITY.

Early morning bhajan singers walking the streets, Hill-bound devotees carrying lamps and iru mudis, Carol singers serenading by twinkling X'mas trees, The lights of devotion are on IN OUR CITY.

Relatives visiting, hotels and roads teeming, The gloss and glitter of sabha-hopping, American twangs and Australian drawls, The tourist invasion is on IN OUR CITY.

Lectures and demos, dissertations on music theory, Exhibitions, sales and consumer durable rebates, Gossip and innuendo, reviews and mud-slinging, A media blitz is on IN OUR CITY.

Mufflers and sweaters, woollens and shawls, Shimmering silk sarees with diamonds a-dazzle, Veshtis and jibbas with flyaway angavasthrams, Our city is dressed, ALL FOR ITS SEASON,

Padmini Natarajan

Skill-training the need of slum children

Pearly 80 per cent of the bread-winners of the families in Chennai's slums are in the age group 18-45. This suggests that the children in the slums are not engaged in child labour and are, probably, being sent to school for education, at least to high school level.

But what is shocking is that half the labour force from the slums is unskilled and untrained in any field of work. This large unskilled labour population earns little monetary benefit, with the result

that those in the slums still suffer low standards of living, health and hygiene, and increased poverty.

There is a need for schools and educational institutions with large slum-children enrolment to concentrate more on vocational education and job-oriented courses in order to create skilled labour, say NGOs working in the slums. Industry-based training and small-scale industry-oriented courses should also be incorporated in the curriculum, they urge.

MADRAS MUSINGS

wishes all its readers and well-wishers
A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

with Sabu but because we were

both of exactly the same age;

when I first saw the movie, I

was just thirteen, Sabu's age

too, and, by coincidence, it was

Sabu was an instant success

on the screen in the Western

world and was quickly snapped

up by Hollywood, which was

ultimately to prove a tragedy.

He became an American citi-

zen and was decorated for brav-

ery in World War II when he

saw action in the American air

raids over Japanese targets.

Needless to say, his money, his

celebrity, his good looks all

conspired to spoil him, for he

was, after all, a simple Indian

village boy. If Flaherty had not

made that film and used young

the year Kipling died.

We're rather overdoing overkill better. Even to a layman it was

With regular sports correspondent JAICI laid up after an encounter with one of those lords of the road, our ubiquitous autorickshaws; with The Corner Flag involved in a couple of research projects, in one of which he has had to put in extra time convincing Doubting Thomases; with a couple of regular sports correspondents preferring to spend their time in the business world rather than the sports world whose return might be predicted with both worlds moving towards becoming one in many an instance - Sport has been taking a back seat in recent issues of Madras Musings. But with a couple of recent incidents on the Chennai sporting scene rather dimming the City's fair name, The Man From Madras Musings feels something needs to be said about them. And with the experts not around, it's fallen to his lot to be the pinch-hitter.

A couple of months ago, MMM bumped into a senior member of the Madras Race Club, who was bubbling over with joy that the Club was back in 'public' - or did he mean 'private' - hands. "It's entirely due to MAM," he enthused. "At one time I wasn't his greatest supporter, but I must say what's happened is ENTIRELY due to him. The whole expense in fighting the case against the Government takeover was met by him. And now you will see how Madras racing thrives!" Which sentiments have been duly appreciated, MMM finds.

But MMM hasn't seen the kind of progress the speaker had promised. Unless one owner winning seven out of eight races a day instead of five or six is considered progress. Elsewhere on the scene, fields continue to be small; outstation owners continue to win the Classics, except when their horses, favourites at that, are found doped; and the crowds continue to prefer betting on races in other centres.

Progress, however, has been made in meting out punishment. Imagine a one-year punishment for allegedly being "untruthful and misleading" and for "dangerous riding"! In the weeks since that punishment was handed down to Classics champion Pesi Shroff, MMM has been noticing that the punishment given in other centres for "dangerous riding" has been ONE race meeting. If you add another for the first charge, did jockey Pesi Shroff warrant anything more than a twomeet suspension? This is not merely overkill, this is overdoing it too.

Jockeys & stewards

The racing tradition worldwide in the 'King of Sports', The Man From Madras Musing realises, has always been a case of jockeys - and even trainers — tipping their caps to owners and a couple of times

more to the Stewards. If The Times, London, once upon a time published cricket scoreboards with Amateurs honoured with a 'Mr.' preceding their names and the Pros left unhonoured, the traditions of Racing have always been even more class-conscious.

But not only is that day slowly vanishing, but you are beginning to find riders like Pesi Shroff, a man of independent means and one from the socially upper middle class (Chennai's own contribution to this changing pattern is a Futnani), becoming professionals and discovering how badly most of their fellow-professionals are being pushed around. The Pesi Shroffs of this world are born to fight; they don't have to bulldoze their way into winning races that are not their be-all and end-all in life nor do they have to take being pushed around lying down; on the other hand, the Establishment, by tradition, will not take fight from any jockey. So, in many ways this confrontation was inevitable. Whatever the jockeys

may say, whatever owners may hold divided views over, whatever that Owner Supreme M A M Ramaswamy might have to say, this is overkill even if Shroff is guilty of what he has been accused of. But in the event an INDE-PENDENT inquiry holds Shroff not guilty, what are we to say of those who handed out the punishment: that they have been "misleading and untruthful"? Whatever might be said, one thing that will not easily go away is the overkill for whatever reason; such punishment for a jockey of a winning horse is not the done thing anywhere, particularly when it has been seen fit NOT

(NOTE: These sentiments were written some time before the appeal was heard on December 28th. MMM has let them stand, regardless of what transpires at the appeal, because they do illustrate what overkill is doing to life around

to disqualify the winner.

Missing player

Another recent case of overkill in the Chennai sporting scene has been the dropping of all-rounder D Vasu from the State's Ranji Trophy team. Surely last season's most successful player and the winner of so many matches could not have - before playing even one match this year been found to be on the wane. To have selected him, seen a couple of poor performances and then dropped him would have been reasonable; to drop him without a single Ranji Trophy game this season is overdoing things a bit. And such unreasonableness, The Man From Madras Musings would think, is what causes

Whether this is the fall-out of inter-corporate rivalry or player rivalry or a personality clash or whether this is an attempt to keep a player out of the national eye, by dropping Vasu it is these very issues that have been brought into focus. And it is these issues that Krish Srikkanth spoke of the other day as undermining player confidence in Tamil Nadu cricket and not allowing the State's true cricketing talent to flower. Where does Tamil Nadu cricket go from

here, MMM wonders. To reconciliation, he hopes.

Trial by TV

In any case, not only must iustice be done, but it must seem to be done. It certainly does not SEEM to have been

time Frost changed tactics to become a polished interviewer, seen by all as fair. MMM hopes that a similar change comes about in private channels of Chennai TV; justice will then be a totally believable justice.

Road havoc

It was a bright and sunny Imorning that followed a night's downpour in Chennai during which The Man From Madras Musings' car had struggled on some waterlogged roads in the city on which he had rather foolishly ventured. As the rains seemed to be over with that sun, he decided to head South for a few days, taking National Highway 45.

Except for a stretch that seemed a series of waves in

Tambaram and the occasional

nothole or washed away sur-

face, it wasn't a bad ride up to

Villupuram. But then it

started, as abruptly as if a line

had been drawn near the

town's railgates, and went on

for another 80 kilometres or

so to another invisible line

from where sanity began

again. It was a nightmare drive

on that stretch, potholes im-

possible to dodge, surfaces

eroded, vehicles crawling. It

was three hours for 80

kilometres on a roller-coaster

that jarred every bone of the

body. This clearly demarcated

stretch of NH 45 was what the

wayward cyclone that had

weakened into a storm had

passed over — and MMM

could only imagine how much

worse it must have been

nearer the coast 50-60 km

not very heavy rain later,

MMM drove the same stretch

in the opposite direction. This

time the nightmare was worse.

It lasted four hours and driv-

ers had to negotiate stretches

where there was no road on

half the width, stretches which

were worse potholed than ear-

lier, stretches of bumps

stretches down to gravel,

stretches where swift-moving

water crossed the road and

forced vehicles to wallow

through. And then they were

free again — till they hit the

Tambaram waves, now higher

still... before there was a rea-

State are going to need care,

but that 80 km wide stretch

from the coast till about a bit

more than halfway across the

State, will need NEW roads.

And The Man From Madras

Musings hopes the new roads

talk to people who know roads

and have seen them and snow

and rain across the world, and

they'll tell you that much of

the damage was avoidable if

only the road-laying had been

The storm was bad, but

will be better than the old.

Yes, roads in the whole

sonably clear drive home.

Four days of persistent but

done in the two cases The Man From Madras Musings has referred to above. But overkill in a third case, it seems to MMM, is creating an atmosphere that will make it impossible for justice to be SEEM to be done even when it is done. And this overkill has been entirely by those investigating the Jayalalitha cases and the media they have welcomed into their midst.

MMM wonders whether it is the business of investigators to show all they find to the media? Is this what is meant by transparency? If it is, is it the job of the media to be snide about all that they have been This is particularly true of

television. When Sun TV started, not only did its programming win acclaim, but, despite its political links, no one really thought it UNFAIR in its comment. It was never linked with the raucous papers and magazines political parties luxuriated in. But in its coverage of former Chief Minister Jayalalitha's possessions, it has gone to town. As much in terms of what it has shown as in what its commentators said and the way it was said.

- MMM has in recent days met several people, many of them women, and none of them had a good word for the former Chief Minister. Yet all of them felt a tinge of sympathy for her. It's the sympathy felt for an underdog, especially if it is felt that an element of bullying is involved. There is a feeling that the former is being TRIED by the media, particularly TV, and that's gener-

ating sympathy for the bullied TV channels indulging in such overkill might take a page out of the David Frost manual. That interviewer began as a 'soft' interviewer and bacame a ruthless, vicious bully in many of his interviews. It didn't take long for there to be more sympathy for the interviewee than acclaim for the interviewer. And over

obvious in less damaged portions of the highway that bad roadbuilding was the culprit. MMM hopes the Storm of 1996 will result in better built roads for Tamil Nadu, not patchworked highways. In brief ★ Chief Minister Karunanidhi emphasised his commitment

to heritage when he promised a memorial plaque to Bentinck's Building inside the new Collectorate that has come up on the former's site on North Beach Road. But in promising that, he also added that when it was decided to demolish Bentinck's Building in 1990 it was because the structure had deteriorated. The Man From Madras Musings, who noted the overa-year-long period it took to demolish an allegedly unsound building, not only disagrees with his view but can cite several non-governmental authorities who feel Bentinck's Building could have been saved and restored. MMM hopes that this justification of the demolition here and the sop to heritage-lovers of a plaque are not indications of things to come as far as the DGP Building on the Marina is concerned. With no action there on the Chief Minister's promise of restoration when he halted its demolition, MMM and other conservationists are getting a bit concerned about the fate of a building they had fought to save. As Madras Musings has long said, what Chennai needs is a Heritage Act and greater dialogue between Government and heritage conservationists. Would the Chief Minister make his love for tradition manifest by making this

★ The Chennai Season, the season for the world's largest programme of classical song, dance and lecture-demonstration, is December 15th to January 15th, with some spillover, most sabha leaders in the City are agreed. Taking advantage of this music-mood and the holiday season — is a newcomer, The Man From Madras Musings notes. And that's POP! With an all-star cast, 'Pot Pourri' has planned a three-night programme at the YMCA Grounds in Nandanam — and then plans to take the show to other parts of India. See what Chennai's music season can do for other music too in changing times!

Business brief

★ Two Chennai firms looking at putting down roots in Sri Lanka are Apollo Hospitals and MRF. The former has started negotiations for a giant hospital in Colombo, while the latter has held talks with several potential partners, The Man From Madras Musings hears.

MMM

Indians in Hollywood

Jan. 1-15, 1997

Sabu, first to make a mark

D andor Guy may well be Correct in saying (MM, November 1st) that only one Indian has made a name for himself as a film-maker in Hollywood, but his hero Jag Mundra is certainly not the first Indian to make his mark in Hollywood. The credit for that must go to a 12-year-old Bengali Muslim boy from Mysore, known to all the world as Sabu, the 'Elephant Boy', whose picture (taken when he was a lot older and autographed for me) appears alongside today. But what, you will want to know, would a Bengali Muslim boy be doing in Mysore?

Around 1950, when I was still working for The Hindu but had returned to London after a two-year stint in Pakistan, Sabu came there from Hollywood on contract with the British movie magnate J. Arthur Rank, better known as the power behind Alec Guinness, Sophia Loren and the immortal Ealing Studio comedies. Sabu was living in the Mayfair Hotel when I went to interview him for The Hindu. We bumped into each other on a few other occasions thereafter and became friends.

tract with J. Arthur Rank to make several films, Sabu took an apartment just off Park Lane, where I was a frequent and always welcomed visitor. I soon found he had a penchant for variety in his choice of lady companions but not in his taste for food and drink, which were Chinese and Scotch respectively. I did not mind the food, but preferred my own tastes in the other two commodities, though that in no way marred our companionship.

It was in 1933 that Robert Flaherty (pronounced Flahty), the British movie director, came to India to make Kipling's delightful short story Toomai of the Elephants into a movie. Flaherty was one of three early movie-makers who transformed the medium into the art form it can sometimes be today. The other two were D.W. Griffith in America and the Russian genius S.M. Eisentein (1898 — 1948), best known for his masterpiece, The Battleship Potemkin (1925). Flaherty's name was already revered as the director of a film of life in the Arctic and one on Samoa in the Pacific, and now he had come to use his talents on an Indian theme. His producer was Alexander Korda who had

already bought the film rights of Toomai of the Elephants from Kipling himself. It is not often remembered that though Kipling was every bit a Victorian and was born (in Bombay) in

1865, he died only in 1936. Flaherty and his team quickly found Mysore the right location and the Maharajah could not have been more helpful, though in her book Frances Flaherty petulantly remarks that His Highness "obviously did not distinguish us from any other film-making group" What they lacked and could not find for months was the star, the boy to play the title

I am the proud possessor of a copy of a rare, long-out-of-

• by Harry Miller

print book Elephant Dance, an account written by Flaherty's wife Frances (published in 1937) of how the boy was found after a desperately long search and how the film was made. The book contains many stills from the classic movie itself. It is of particular value to me not only because of my friendship

OUR

READERS

Scholars all

In his letter, titled 'Scholarship

LScarcity' (MM, December 1),

D K Oza writes: "No American

President or British Prime Minister

has ever claimed to be a scholar,

though Churchill, who never took

a University degree, rightly won the

Nobel Prize for Literature." Oza's

statement is amenable to an inter-

pretation not quite favourable to

American Presidents or British

PMs. Churchill was not the only

PM with literary competence and

scholarship to his credit. He was a

dropout from Harrow, let alone

university, though he had a rare gift

for writing. There were a number

of other Prime Ministers (in the last

century and this) whose claim to

scholarship rests on solid ground —

literary productivity as well as aca-

demic record. Many of them were

brilliant products of Oxford or

The great Liberal PM W E

Gladstone was a Classic scholar,

from Christ Church. Benjamin

Disraeli, his Conservative rival, was

educated at home, but authored

many books, of fiction and non-fic-

tion, including Sybil, Coningsby,

Cambridge.

WRITE

Sabu as its star, he would have spent the rest of his life as a stable boy and, later, as a mahout in the elephant stables of the Maharajah of Mysore, which is where many years later I was to find his family and discover his origins.

It was in 1969 that the National Geographic Magazine

the Classics. His contemporary and

Conservative rival, A J Balfour

(1902-1905), was an amateur phil-

osopher who had an original thesis,

The Problem of Philosophic Doubt, to

his credit. Harold Macmillan

(Balliol, Oxford), R A Butler (Trin-

ity, Cambridge), who would have

been PM and who was Master of

Trinity, and other PMs have left

autobiographies and memoirs of

Among American Presidents,

Thomas Jefferson (1801-09) was a

sound Classics scholar and eminent

intellectual, whose stature was

recognised not only in the U.S. but

in Europe as well. He drafted the

Declaration of Independence, re-

flecting his deep knowledge of John

Locke and other political philoso-

phers. After retirement, he helped

found the University of Virginia.

His lifelong interest was in science

and philosophy, arts and architec-

scholar, who taught jurisprudence,

history and politics at Princeton

and became its President, before

plunging into an active political ca-

reer. His 'Fourteen Points' at

Versailles bear testimony to his

depth of erudition as a political phi-

losopher no less than as an idealist.

Woodrow Wilson was a noted

ture, besides other subjects.

considerable merit.

Irrespective of their claims or Vivian Grey, Tancred and Lothiar. their absence, all these politicians Lord Rosebury (Liberal) authored and statesmen were widely rea good biographical work, Napoleon spected for their scholarship. - the Last Phase. H H Asquith (1908-1916), of Balliol, was res-D Anjaneyulu pected for his close familiarity with

Scholarship scarcity

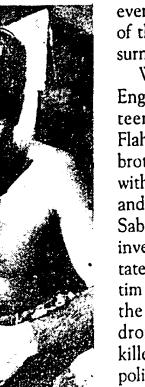
14 Mandavalli Street

Chennai - 28

It is difficult to agree with D K Oza's ill-informed observations (MM, December 1). To cite an example, during the heroic age of Indian scholarship — that is, in the first four decades of this century undivided Bengal was noted for its scholarship. Scholars like Sir Jadhunath Sarkar, R C Mazumdar, Radha Kumud Mukerjee and Radha Kamal Mukherjee made major contributions to historical and sociological scholarship.

Again, Oza says rather condescendingly, that "no American President or British Prime Minister has ever claimed to be a scholar". Surely he must have heard of Woodrow Wilson, a great Princeton University-based political philospher and scholar, and Arthur lames Balfour, a philosopher who belonged to the class of Bertrand Russell and A N Whitehead.

> A Ranganathan 852 Poonamallee High Road Chennai 600 010.



An autographed gift from Sabu to

the author. commissioned me to do a photographic feature on the last of the famous Mysore kheddas, the round-up of entire herds of wild elephants and their subsequent domestication. I learned then that there was a community of Bengali Muslim elephant people living there, who had originally been brought from Bengal by a British forestry officer called Sanderson.

The khedda technique of capturing wild elephants in herds had long been perfected in Bengal, but though wild elephants were, in those days, plentiful in South Indian forests no one had ever been able to successfully use the khedda method to catch them. Sanderson apparently knew how it was done, but could not find local forest officers or tribals who could understand him or follow his instructions. He therefore brought from Bengal several families of the elephant people familiar with those techniques, and they had remained there ever after. Sabu came from one of those families and bore the surname Daştagir.

When he was brought to England, Sabu was only thirteen, so, to look after him, Flaherty also brought an elder brother who eventually went with him to the United States and who successfully handled Sabu's financial affairs, wisely investing his capital in real estate. The brother became a victim of what became known as the 'innocent bystander syndrome'; he was accidentally killed in a shoot-out between police officers and thieves attempting to rob a store.

On cable T.V. here in

Madras last year I saw a documentary on Sabu, ending with a tearful graveside scene with his sobbing children putting flowers on his tombstone, and one of them mournfully telling of how their famous father had died at the early age of 35 from a heart attack. There was, understandably, no mention of alcohol as a factor in his early demise. I hadn't known he was married: the last I had heard of him concerned an English girl who had followed him back to the United States when his contract had expired and who filed a paternity case against him which, incredibly, she lost. If genetic finger-printing had been known in those days I'm pretty sure she would have won. I knew the girl. Pamela and I had put her in a taxi more than once after an evening out in Soho with Sabu.

Poor Sabu! In terms of plain human happiness, how much better off he would have been if that celebrated English film director had never read Kipling's Toomai of the Elephants!

Customer's right

y scepticism about the con-IV I sumer-friendliness of the Inmammoth, SPIC.

In June, I made a booking for SPIC Jyoti Gas and, contrary to the advertised policy of SPIC, faced some harassment at the hands of the distributor, including demand for an excess payment of Rs.500 for so-called documentation charges. I paid up, but make a complaint to

SPIC marketing executives came to my help, promptly and effectively. The gas connection was given to me instantly on the intervention of the SPIC staff and, subsequently, after a delay of three months, no doubt due to the dillydallying of the distributor, the excess payment on account of socalled documentation charges was refunded to me.

My thanks to SPIC for its awareness of the consumer's right to quick redress and full satisfac-

T.G. Ramamurthi

dian private sector was happily belied by my recent experience with the Madras private sector

the SPIC Petroleum Division.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi 110 002.

Jan. 1-15, 1997

Lor two years on the trot Γ now, heart specialists have been making a beeline for Chennai that is Madras. Last December it was the big do organised by Dr. K.M. Cherian of the Madras Medical Mission and this year it was the Asian Pacific International Cardiologists' meet convened by APIC President Dr. Mathew Kalarickal of Apollo Hospitals; and though the weather-gods were not too kind (the cyclone welcomed the cardiologists to the City), going by post-conference chats, it was a thumping suc-

Some of the best of the world's interventionalists came tional cardiology and creator of the world's foremost update cardiology courses, himself acknowledged that the Conference and course were splendidly done. He said he could not believe that he was in India, reports a delegate: he felt the course was on par with the best courses conducted back home in the USA.

A lot of credit for that must go to Alfred Selvaraj and his boys at Picture Productions who, liaising with DD, did a fantastic job of the live videocoverage of the various interventional procedures done during the conference at

by Hiramalini Seshadri

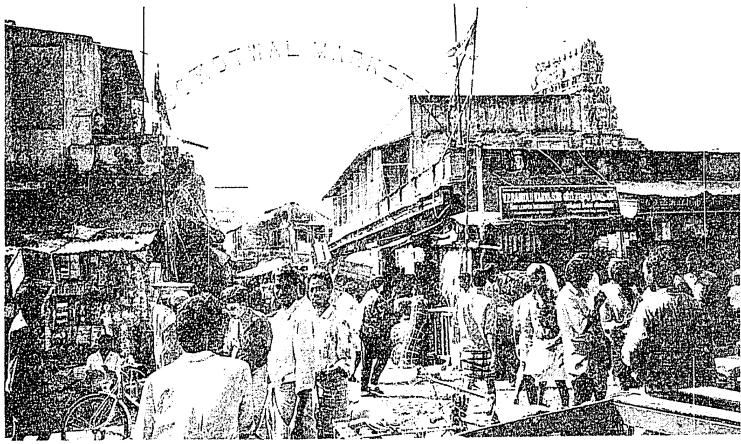
to Chennai for the conference; all the gurus in the invited faculty save Dr. Juan Delcan of Spain turned up. Going through the who's-who list, it was heartwarming to find many Indians — both NRIs and RIs — many of whom were Madrasis. It was an impressive gathering — 850 delegates from all over the Asia-Pacific

The Conference, which was essentially a course designed for upcoming cardiologists, was a success in two dimensions. Firstly, it proved to the learned doctors from abroad that, given the facilities, Indian cardiologists can do any intervention done anywhere else in the world. Indeed, the visiting interventionalists were most impressed with the facilities available in Chennai and the work being done here. The Tai-snake-charmer-beggars image of India conjured up by foreigners, doctors or otherwise, was surely dispelled.

The second win was in successful 'conferencing'. Martin the Apollo Hospital cath-lab. The videos were shot and edited in record time and shown to the delegates at the Taj. The pictures were perfect and everything was done just right. For a maiden attempt at teleconferencing it was a runaway success. For the twenty patients who underwent interventions the Conference provided a bonus, for they got their treatments at highly subsidised rates. To the credit of the interventionalists, 19 out of the twenty procedures were successful; only one case had to be abandoned and the patient now awaits elective surgery.

Well, what news do the heart-specialists have for us? Firstly, that every patient with a coronary block does not have to go under the bypass surgeon's knife; the long arm of the cardiologist, i.e. the catheter with an angioplasty balloon may well be able to do the trick. Secondly, talking of all the ways a block may be got rid of — by blowing it up with a

(Continued on Page 5)



Wholesale Market Complex (KWMC) has opened for business (our NEW) and the nearly 200-year-old Kothawal Chavadi (our OLD) is expected to roll down its shutters and help decongest George Town.

The origin of the KWMC goes back to 1974 when the then DMK Government mooted the idea of developing an alternative market that would cater to the northwest areas of the city. After undergoing changes with successive state governments, the scheme received its final shape in 1982.

The scheme envisaged three categories of shops for the traders: on rental basis, developed plots with other facilities, and full fledged shops. In 1990, the then Governor, P.C. Alexander, laid the foundation stone for the complex, and construction was completed in 1995. The KWMC has 456 flower shops at a cost of Rs.584 lakh, 432 fruit shops at a cost of Rs.753 lakh and 1422 vegetable shops at a cost of Rs.2416 lakh. The overview in one of our NEW shows much of the complex still unoccupied; the other view is of the entrance to the flower market.

Under the new Tamil Nadu Specified Commodities Markets (Regulation and Location) Bill, 1996, the wholesale trade of perishable commodi-THE OLD...

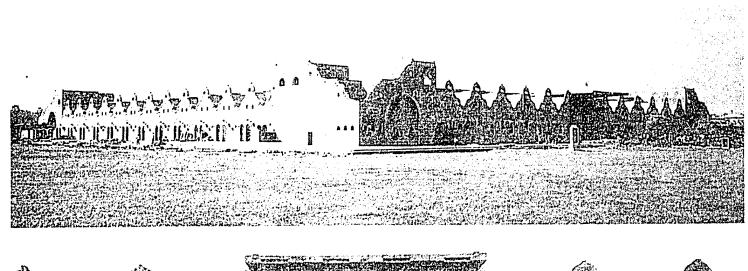
...& THE ties can take place only in specified areas (not in Kothawal Chavadi and NEW its surrounding areas). The first such area is the Koyambedu Complex. The KWMC will be a full-fledged business centre with all facilities,

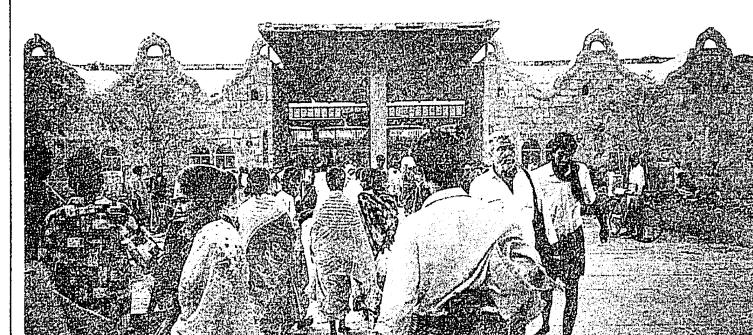
including cold-storage. It will accommodate around 2300 shops in an estimated area of 50 acres, besides banks, post and telegraph offices, dispensaries and a police station.

The Kothawal market till recently offered direct employment to over 15,000 people and indirect employment to as many. Will they move to Koyambedu? The shifting would help only a section of the traders, the Kothawal traders feel. But Government is confident the KWMC will be a success.

And, it hopes, the 12,000 trucks and 15,000 handcarts that serve Kothawal Chavadi every day, from dawn to dusk, will disappear from the area where the market opened its doors in 1803-4 as a part of the Kannikaparameswari Temple Trust. A hundred acres will then be decongested in the heart of the City, it is hoped.

At the time of writing, however, Kothawal Chavadi still seems to be in business after traders there went to court again. And congestion still prevails. What next? (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)





Interventional cardiologists, the heavyweights

What's an interventional cardiologist? Are there non-interventional ones or what? asked a wag. In cardiolingo, medical cardiologists are lambs; flyweights who simply prescribe pills, injections or lifestyle changes. Then there are the invasive-cardiologists; bantamweights who put in pace-makers, do angiograms and so on. Finally, you have the heavyweights; daredevils who stalk the frontiers of Cardiology taking potshots

at blocked coronaries, stenosed heart valves, holes-inthe-heart and so on with an armoury of balloons, drills, ablators, lasers, stents etc. etc. - the 'Interventional Cardiologists'.

The foundation of interventional cardiology lies in the development of high-tech, slender catheters which can be put in through a peripheral blood-vessel and, under X-Ray vision, guided to the scene of battle in a blocked coronary,

stenosed heart-valve, hole-inthe-heart etc. This catheter serves as the long arm of the interventionist and, by railroading necessary instruments on the cathether, s/he can, by remote control, manoeuvre the instrument and, thereby, blow up blocks, open up narrowed valves, close a congential anomaly and so on. However,

though such a wide array of

interventional possibilities ex-

ist, the focus of attention is, at

the moment, on coronary

blocks, for, world-over, the rise in coronary artery disease has been phenomenal in the past two decades. How to unblock a blocked coronary artery without surgery is the million dollar question.

The great plus point about interventional cardiology is that nil or minimal anaesthesia is required; and, of course, there is no cutting open the chest either. So hospital stay, pain and discomfort are much less than that asso-

ciated with bypass surgery, provided the intervention is a success. On the other hand, re-stenosis, or re-blocks, are commoner after interventional procedures than with bypass surgery. These are some of the many points to be considered before deciding between angioplasty and bypass surgery.

H.S.

The fort the Danes built.

A heritage site in waiting

TARANGAMBADI, queen of the Coromandel Coast, in Nagapattinam Quaid-e-Milleth District, was designated a special tourism area over three years ago and Government passed orders for its development. The Danes, to whom it once belonged — they called it TRAN-QUEBAR — promised assistance for the restoration of some of the finest colonial buildings of the 17th Century in India. But little has come of these plans.

Today's article and last fortnight's are published as reminders to all concerned that Tranquebar is worth preserving and developing as a heritage holiday site — which it has been declared. The articles were written over a year ago by a Madrasi who was visiting from Australia. Little has changed since them.

— THE EDITOR

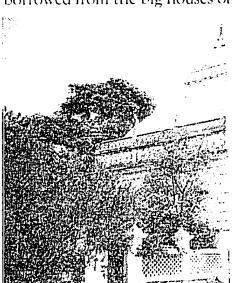
(Continued from last fortnight)

T ust south of the maidan is the J Dansborg, the little fort that Ove Gedde built in the early 17th Century. It is in fairly good shape, except for a small portion of an interior wall, but the main rooms, which are only on the seaward wall, have distressingly modern Government issue windows. The architecture is curious, the walls sprouting conical projections at regular intervals. Two rooms house a museum, and an entrance fee of Re. 1 is charged. Inside all is gloom and despair. Damp vaulted roofs and the lack of proper lighting (none at all when I visited it) give an eerie, discouraging feeling.

Some of the exhibits are most relevant, a significant number quite irrelevant. Of great interest is a printed document giving permission to the Danes to set up "fortresses" to carry on trade with Tanjore. The original gold leaf document granted by Thirumalai Nayak is in the museum at Copenhagen. Significantly, the document specifically mentions that the Navak would allow only the Portuguese and the Danes the right of trade. The Dutch, the French and the English were not to be entertained. Indo-Portuguese trade was well established before any other European nation came to India and the Danes found a thriving Indo-Portuguese community engaged in trade.

A few maps are on display, as also architects' drawings of of them still in use. A map of Tranquebar shows a fortified town with gates and residences, a thriving Tamil town nearby, and a plain lush with paddy fields and thick clumps of trees. Those were the days when Tamils managed with ease THREE crops of rice a year.

The Dansborg affords a commanding view of the sea and the surrounding countryside, but this point is not to be compared with the upstairs verandah of the Governor's mansion. The house itself is built in colonial style, a style borrowed from the big houses of



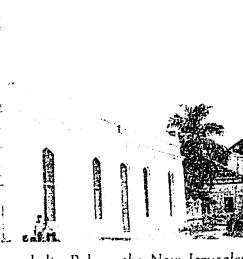
The Zion Church (above), built in 1701 for use by the Danish settlers, was recently renovated with Danish

the South, and then developed further: three large rooms in a row, another three behind this row, and a broad verandah in front and at the back. The upper storey usually has only one set of rooms — the front row — a lower ceiling and a tile roof. A recent cyclone had dislodged many tiles, as it had done to almost every roof in the

The almost endless staircase had lost the bottom stair, and the whole was propped up on bricks. Visitors were not encouraged to go to the upper floor, "it is dangerous". I, being slight of build and very curious, risked it. The house has huge doors but no windows. Eight enormous Ionic columns support the upper verandah. The main room, the drawing room, has a modern brick wall built down it, splitting it. In the smaller part lives the caretaker,

certain important buildings, all

Among the few photographs displayed, is one of a large canopied grave with an unusual emblem. This exhibit is labelled "A Danish grave in Tranquebar". In fact, it is one of the many Dutch graves in the old Dutch cemetery in Nagapartinam, which was a thriving Dutch trading settlement until the Dutch moved on in the 18th Century.



help. Below, the New Jerusalem Church, built by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg for his Tamil parishioners,

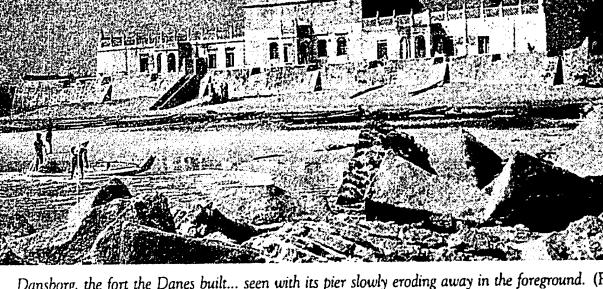
down the walls of the town

straight-away, as they had done

over a century ago at San

Thomé after its capture, to

prevent the French at Pondy



Dansborg, the fort the Danes built... seen with its pier slowly eroding away in the foreground. (Photograph by

Shyam Tekwani.) a pleasant local woman who shows visitors the Visitors' Book, and who cooks on a small wood fire in a corner of Ove Gedde's drawing room.

On a scruffy table lay the Visitors' Book made from cheap yellow paper. The official Government Tourism Official was "not in his seat", so the caretaker invited me to record my name, address and impressions. Most entries were by Danish nationals (ves, they actually do visit India), one of the recent entries was made by a Malaysian, and I must have been the only Indian in months to visit or, at least, record his

In 1858, the Danish Government sold all its holdings and buildings, excluding church and temple property, in Tranquebar to the British for Rs. 121/2 lakh. The British PROBABLY pulled

pattinam because it was so well and Karaikal getting ideas about kept, so peaceful and SPOT - Tranquebar, although by then LESSLY CLEAN. St. Peter's there was no threat to British power in India.

King Street is lined on either side by solid houses, all with pillared verandahs and cool inviting inner courtyards. The style is solidly colonial. incorporating the lofty grace of classical architecture and the heat-beating techniques of India. There is a school run by nuns, a few private homes, all in good condition. One or two of the dozen or so buildings in the street need attention. The Tamil Lutheran Evangelical

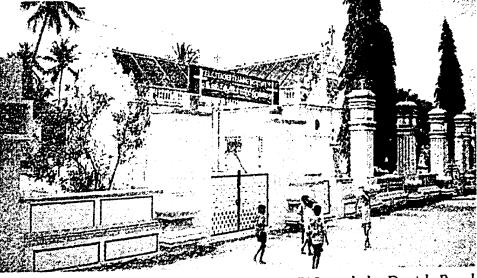
Church in the same town has been restored — and looks exa ctly as it did in 1774 when it was built by the Dutch. What, then, needs to be done in Tranquebar now? Restoration of all buildings to

their original condition must be undertaken immediately. A history of the place must be made available in the form of tourist brochures. Since Tranquebar is not far from Pondy or Karaikal, those two

by Simeon Mascarenhas

Church is very well maintained. In the course of my wanderings. I have observed that it is only in cities, where the 'educated' congregate, that fine buildings,

towns may remain base points, from where regular, convenient, and not-too-expensive transport is made available. Indians should be encouraged to visit



is now tended by the Tranquebar Lutheran Mission which has given it a coat of paint. The date of consecra-

with great charm and immense historical value, have to be 'renovated' — i.e., ruined. I particularly remember a rather large Siva temple in Naga

tion, 1718, and the Danish Royal Crest are seen above the church's entrance. (Photographs by Rajind N

places of historical interest in their own country. This might help in creating an awareness of the priceless heritage that is (Continued on Page 6)

Chennai — at the heart of things

(Continued from Page 4)

balloon, by shearing it with a rotablator or vapourising it with a laser etc. etc. — the winner seems to be the balloon; and stents, i.e. the little steeltubes put into the blood vessels after they have been deblocked, to ensure vessel patency, have come to stay; balloon-angioplasty followed by stenting is the name of the

The coronary balloons are very expensive. A natural question is 'why not reuse them'. In France and certain other European countries they do. Theoretically, a used balloon is not

as good as a new one, but in many countries they are reused. In India, there is no proper policy yet regarding balloon-reuse; the Cardiology Society of India needs to lay down some guidelines regarding this. The APIC meet, being mainly an update course, did not, as expected, touch on the touchy

What about indigenous manufacture of balloons? A country that could develop the INSAT-II should surely be able to do this; and it was heartening to hear somewhere along the grapevine that work on balloons and stents is going on in

some Indian centres. The Chitra Centre at Trivandrum has already made an artificial heart valve. Once indigenously manufactured balloons and stents are available, the cost of angioplasties should come down. Talking of costs now, on strict exchange terms, angioplasties are still cheaper in India than, say, the US. An angioplasty here would cost around Rs.1.5 lakh, while in the US it would cost the equivalent of around Rs.7.5 lakh. Of course, for the average Indian, even the lower Indian rate is no great consolaagency people who had orga-

nised the meet. They were

squirming in their seats when-

ever a reporter asked a ques-

tion. In fact, after the meet,

one executive of the agency

expressed his hurt to a reporter

who had asked the Executive

Chairman whether the Com-

pany would repay its depositors

or file an insolvency petition as

had a couple of other finance

Even after pointing out that

companies in the recent past.

thousands of families had be-

come insolvent and that several

had stopped marriages because

of failing finance companies,

the reporter was not able to as-

suage the hurt feelings of the

PR executives, who seemed de-

termined to prove the adage

"more loyal than the king".

Now that an insolvency case in-

volving this Company is pend-

ing in Court, the reporter won-

ders what this loyal PR man's

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMA-NAN's questions are from the period December 1 to 15. Ouestions 16 to 20 pertain to Madras that is Chennai.)

- 1. What was December 1st observed worldwide as?
- 2. Which Indian became the first Test cricketer to play against all the eight Test-playing countries both at home and
- 3. What did Prime Minister Deva Gowda achieve recently in his leadership of Parliament? 4. What world record did the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra set recently?
- 5. Why has the Telugu film, Annamaya run into contro-
- 6. Who is the Chief Justice-designate of the Supreme Court? 7. Who became the first woman Secretary of State of the United States?
- 8. What is the new theme song of the Indian Army?
- 9. The new Chief Election Commissioner of India is
- 10. Which artiste became the second Indian to receive the famed 'Crystal Award' of the World Economic Forum?
- 11. Who is the new UN Secretary-General?
- 12. After which doven of the Freedom Struggle has the Ahmadabad International Airport been renamed?
- 13. What has Shree Nayar of Columbia University pioneered in the field of photography?
- 14. The new European currency, Euro, was unveiled on December 13th. In order to avoid partiality it does not feature any famous personality. What does it depict?
- 15. Tung Chee-Hwa, a shipping magnate, is to be the first Chief Executive (or Governorin-waiting) of what will soon be an ex-colony. Which?

* * * 16. For which case was former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha arrested?

- 17. The foundation stone for which car project was laid by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister on December 10th?
- 18. Who presided over the 70th Conference of the Music Acad-
- 19. Which hockey team lifted the prestigious Champions' Trophy in Chennai on December 15th?
- 20. Who has been appointed vice-chairman of the Chennai Bench of the Central Administrative Triburial?

(Answers on p.7)

State's thrust — fruit and flower growth

↑ fter declaring the automobile industry as a 'thrust' industry', the State Government is next planning to concentrate on the development of the floriculture and horticulture sectors. The Government is expected to shortly announce its new policy for the growth of these agro-industries.

With the floriculture units in the State establishing their operations — about 14,500 hectare are under flower cultivation — the State intends to develop horticulture in and around Chengalpattu.

Meanwhile, Government has identified about 20 acres at Pallikarnai for the construction of a flower auction centre which will be jointly owned by the Tamil Nadu State Agriculture Marketing Board and the Agricultural Products Export Development Authority. The Rs.20 crore project is to be funded equally by the two agencies. Technical support is to be provided by Schelfthout, Germany. The centre is expected to be operational in a year.

Dumpers by choice

T Tindustan Motors Ltd's T Earthmoving Equipment Division (HMEED), now commanding 40 per cent of the dumper market, hopes to increase its share by offering a unique concept: building 35-40 ton dumpers according to customer specification with a lead time of three months.

Customers will have the option of choosing the kind of brakes, engines, transmission lines and suspensions they want. L & T, for instance, after buying two dumpers, has placed an order for 19 more, asking for oilcooled disc brakes.

HMEED is also investing Rs.15 crore to roll out fuel-effi-

Odepositor had filed a case in the Madras High Court to declare a particular financial house insolvent, the firm's Executive Chairman called a press

second half of the year.

P.R. loyalty

geted over Rs.200 cr for the

Chortly before an aggrieved

Venkatachari Jagannathan looks at THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE

cient hydraulic excavators in 1997-98. The new machine will be manufactured at the Division's existing complex in Tiruvallur, where civil construction for the project has already commenced. This is in line with the Division's plans to enter the small equipment segment hitherto dominated by L&T, Escorts, BEML and Tata's.

Nine months ago, HMEED's backhoe loader plant went on stream at Pondicherry and has been producing six machines a month in collaboration with Fermec, UK (formerly Massey-Fergusson). According to P. Balakrishnan, Executive Vice-President, volumes will be increased once the market for their backhoe loaders pick up.

The Division has, in the first half of the current year, sold 250 machines (produced 300 units) for Rs.135 cr. It has tarconference to assure depositors that their dues would be settled

on the due dates. The beleaguered Executive Chairman responded well to the barrage of questions except for brief moments when he suffered temporary amnesia with regard to the backgrounds, occupations and even the names of his fellow Directors. However, the most embarrassed

Danes Built

reactions are.

(Continued from Page 5) shouted about — and promptly

On the beach stands a large old whitewashed bungalow, somewhat 'renovated'. It has recently been sold to the owners of a holiday resort firm, who plan 'development'. This would COMPLETELY ruin atmosphere of the place, not to mention cutting off the view English) from the same book from the Governor's bungalow. All motorised traffic should be

banned from the town. It takes only about five minutes to walk from the town gate to the sea

In the 'remarks' column of the visitors book I wrote "Restore Tranquebar: PLEASE DO NOT 'develop' it.'' To emphasise this, I can do no better than quote a remark (the only one by a Danish tourist in "It is highest time to do the

ooking with White Sta Usha Bail

HOT MADRAS EGG CURRY (serves 6)

2 tomatoes 1 onion 2 cups grated coconut 3 tbs oil or ghee. tbs coriander leaves 2 tsp coriander powder tsp cumin powder l tsp chilli powder

l tsp ginger-garlic paste 3/4 tsp salt 1/2 tsp pepper powder 1/2 tsp saunf (sombu)

1/2 lime 1/4 tsp turmeric powder

Method

Hard-boil eggs, shell them, cut into halves and keep aside. Chop all vegetables and purée the tomatoes. Add 1¹/, cups of water to the coconut, grind in the mixie for a minute, strain out the coconut milk. Keep aside.

Heat oil or ghee in a pan, add the saunf to the hot oil, and when it splutters add the onion and

ginger-garlic paste. Fry till the raw smell of garlic disappears and the onion is light gold in colour. Add all the powders, reduce flame and fry till lightly roasted. Add tomato purée and fry a bit. Add the coconut milk, salt, and the boiled eggs. Simmer till slightly thick and remove from

Squeeze lime juice and serve hot, garnished with coriander

Can be eaten with rice or rotis. Slit green chillies can be added if more spiciness is required.

NILGIRI KURMAH (serves 6)

1/2 kg mutton 1 cup thick curd green chillies 2 red chillies 2 onions tbs oil

ths grated coconut 2 tbs coriander leaves 1 tbs poppy seeds (kuskus) 1 tbs coriander seeds 1/ tsp salt tsp ginger-garlic paste

1/4 tsp garam masala powder

Method

Cut mutton into mediumsized pieces. Marinate in beaten curd for three hours. Chop all vegetables. Grind one onion, green and red chillies, coriander leaves, ginger-garlic paste, poppy seeds, coconut and coriander seeds into a fine paste.

Heat oil in a pressure cooker, add the remaining chopped onion, fry till light golden in colour. Add the ground masala paste. Fry till the raw smell of garlic disappears. Add mutton pieces and keep on stirring and frying till the mixture becomes dry and oil starts floating on top of the masala. Add salt and 11/4 cups of water and pressure cook for 20 minutes.

Serve hot, garnished with garam masala powder and coriander leaves.

KHEEMA PARATHA (serves 6)

 $1!/_2$ cups maida 1/, cups atta (wholewheat flour) 250 g mutton mince 1/2 cup boiled peas 2 boiled potatoes 2 green chillies lonion 2 tbs melted ghee

2 tbs oil 11/, tsp salt

Method

1 tsp ginger-garlic paste

1 tsp chilli powder l tsp tomato purée 1 tsp cumin seeds 1 tsp coriander leaves

1/4 tsp garam masala powder 1/4 tsp turmeric powder

Mix maida, atta, 1/2 teaspoon salt and ghee with enough cold milk to make a smooth dough. Keep aside. Chop all vegetables. Peel and mash potatoes and coarsely mash the peas.

Heat oil in a pan, add the cumin seeds, and when they splutter, add onion, green chillies and ginger-garlic paste and fry till the raw smell of garlic disappears. Add the cleaned and washed mince and cook covered, on a slow flame, till the mince gets cooked. Mix all the powders, tomato purée, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and the mashed vegetables. Add coriander leaves and mix well. Allow to cool.

Fill small balls of this stuffing into larger balls of dough. Cover well, flatten and roll out into parathas. Shallow fry with ghee till golden brown on both sides. Serve hot.

Dance, dancers and audiences

nary activity was the theme for this year's Natya Kala Conference. The convenor was Chitra Visweswaran, who did a good job. She neither intruded into each speaker's time nor did she project herself much. There was a quiet dignity in her conduct of the Conference. And she herself presented an excellent paper on theatrecraft and dance.

Jan. 1-15, 1997

She had been overworking. it was obvious. With rehearsals of her own shows right after the Conference sessions, with rehearsals at home in the afternoons, and with an obligation to attend dance shows in the evenings, no wonder her voice was hoarse by the end of the Conference!

The Natya Kala Conference had a painter do the decor and a theatre person for the lighting and sound. In that, there was multidisciplinary understand ing, but other decor distracted from the art. The Music Academy had a shocking crimson all over the stage. Though the colour was too reflective and dancers had to carefully choose the costumes they wore, it seemed pleasant enough. Many experiments are going on with lighting and decor. But with too many programmes and no time or inclination to concentrate on special effects, it is very difficult for a good professional dance company to perform during The Season. You either accept the discomfort and feel happy that you have been given a chance to perform during The Season or just give it a miss. There are a thousand others waiting in the queue — even willing to pay to dance!

This year, however, the story has been a little different. Art-

Answers to Quiz 1. World Aids Day; 2. Mohd

Azharuddin; 3. The first Prime Minister to be the Leader of the Rajya Sabha; 4. They performed with the biggest orchestra (2845 children); 5. The film was granted permission to shoot on Tirumala Hills, which critics felt desanctified the shrine; 6. Justice J.S. Verma; 7 Madeline Albright; 8. Kadham Kadham Badaye, the theme song o Netaji's INA; 9. M.S. Gill; 10. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan; 11. Kofi Annan of Ghana; 12. Sardar Vallabhai Patel; 13. The first camera with a 360-degree view; 14. A set of buildings in the varied and famous architectural styles of Europe; * * *

16. The Rs. 8.53 crore TV sets scam: 17. Hyundai; 18. Flautist N Ramani; 19. The Netherlands; 20. Justice K.S. Bhakthavatsalam.

15. Hong Kong.



ists have begun to demand their rights too. Malavika Sarukkai refused to perform at the Krishna Gana Sabha. With Alarmel Valli having contracted jaundice, her performances also had to be cancelled. And dancers asked to replace the top dancers demanded proper fees. It is said that a Bombay-based artist who was asked to perform in the allmale 'Purush' dance festival at the Krishna Gana Sabha asked for the comforts of a good hotel, a car at his disposal and air tickets. Well! The myth that dancers come running to Chennai from all over just to perform during its hallowed Season seems to be getting shattered!

Choreography debate

own with choreogra-Dphy," said choreographer Paul Taylor once. On the eve of the visit of the Paul Taylor company to Chennai (January 20th and 21st), the word 'choreography' appears to be unacceptable in the context

to modern dance. I wonder if there is any transition at all. The three-dimensional depiction, the narrative or delineation, and the abstract have always co-existed in Indian life and religion. A Saraswati can be worshipped as an icon, a picture or as an abstract concept, as in Sri Chakra. There is a Saptamatrika temple devoted to the concept of the seven female deities that has a very modern abstraction as the main deity in the sanctum sanctorum. Abstraction has never been a problem for rura

India. I agree.

Indians. Nowadays, there is too much discussion about what is modern and what is traditional. I feel the debate does not even apply in the Indian context, just as the classical and folk divide itself is an artificial one.

Respect audiences

A dding to his "down with Choreography" statement Paul Taylor had once said, "A dancer is involved in learning to execute a dance movement



'dance composition' would be more appropriate to dance in The other aspect discussed was about the transition from classical, or traditional, dance

on stage and tell the public how somebody or the other had tears in their eyes when they had watched them perform years earlier. I have always chuckled over it. It amuses me and makes me want to stand up and ask was it that good or that bad! But then, dance and music are such subjective arts that Dill Gates, in his fully revised



Dakshinachitra inaugurated

The first phase of Dakshinachitra, a centre for the cultures of South India, at Muttukadu, promoted by The Madras Craft Foundation, was inaugurated on Saturday, December 14. The Centre on the Mamallapuram Road is now open to the public. Our picture shows one of the houses in the Tamil Nadu complex, which is now ready but which is constantly being improved on. Work on the Kerala complex is underway. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

precisely in shape and time. A dancer is occupied with placement, stage spacing, the quality of a leap, the softness of a foot, whether a movement goes out to the audience or spirals inwards upon itself. But what actually is seen is actually more than a foot of a curved back. We see an individual and we see what that individual is. All this exact training and dance stylisation cannot abstract a body into nonentity. A person is going to be revealed. Vanity, generosity, insecurity, warmth are some traits that have a way of coming into view".

So, dancers, please don't tell the audience about past glories and that they are going to see "perhaps the best dance recital of the season". Those in the audiences have minds of their own and form their own opinions. They have to be respected. Even if they do not have the same opinion as the dancer's.

Year after year, artists come

everyone has an opinion — and it may be completely contrary to what someone else is thinking. What is an exalted performance to one is repulsive to another. And both points of view are valid. It is just that artists need the humility to accept the good and the courage to accept the criticism. Too many artists expect "an honest opinion" to be always pleasant.

A Finn in Chennai

The music and dance season is increasingly seeing the presence of NRIs and other music and dance lovers from abroad. In town from November has been Eero Hammeniemi, a Finnish music composer who has been coming to Madras every music season and who is very vocal with his sharp comments; he also writes about the Season. He comes for the season to hone his musical sen-

sibilities with Indian ragas. Four years ago, he was a guest of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in Madras and was shunted by them from venue to venue. He was very new to Madras then and did not know what to do. Today, he can give expert advice on what is where and who is who in the Chennai cultural scene.

V.R. Devika

Bookshelves

£6.99) by Michael Crichton has hit the stands at the right time. The novel takes a look at the crisis-laden commercial aviation industry. Ninetyfour passengers are injured and three dead aboard a TPA 545 flight. The cabin of the aircraft is virtually destroyed. Casey Singleton, vicepresident of Norton Aircraft, probes the mishap and her findings are shocking. Another scientifically-researched and informative bestseller from Crichton.

* * *

the sea. Graham Swift's Last Orders (Picador, £3.99) is a poignant tale about human beings and their perishability. It is a tale of humble souls and the author's deft understanding of the simple and ordinary thoughts that run through their \Lambda ir Frame (Century minds. Last Orders won the 1996 Booker Prize. * * *

Prof. Stephen Hawking's review of the theories of Aristotle, Newton and Einstein in The Cambridge Lectures (Dove Books, \$24.95) delves into the most complex theories of physics. These lectures expose us to the rich history of scientific thought and the complex universe we live in. The title includes one book and four audio tapes of the lectures read by Prof. Hawking himself. * * *

Tack Dodds, a London-based Dand updated version of his butcher dies and four of his bestseller, Road Ahead (Penfriends unite to carry out his last guin, \$12.50), talks in depth wish — to scatter his ashes into about the Internet, which has revolutionised the world of communication. Gates shows how the new tools of the Information Age have transformed our entire attitude to life — the way we buy, sell, work, learn and have fun together. The book also includes a CD-ROM which has an interview with Gates and a complete text with hundreds of multimedia links.

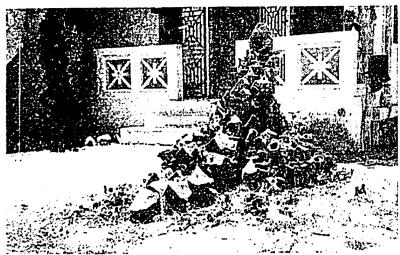
> The 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Wislawa Szymborska for her poetry. A View With a Grain of Sand (Faber and Faber, £5.50) is her first selection in English. These poems deal with the unglamourised actualities of human conditions. * * *

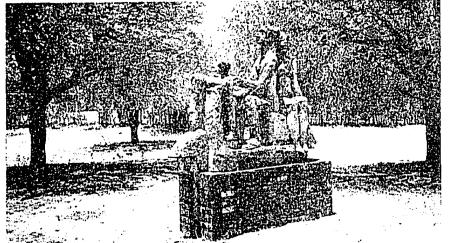
escribed by the Dalai Lama as "one of the great-

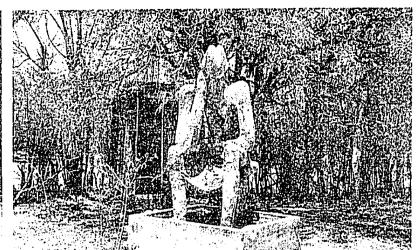
est thinkers of the age", J. Krishnamurthi has influenced millions in the 20th Century. Total Freedom (HarperCollins, £8.80) is an introduction to JK. as he was popularly known. This collection of his talks prods us into recognising that Truth is a pathless land. The talks also inspire us to think critically, liberate ourselves and evolve spiritually. * * *

The epic poems Silappadi-1 karam and Manimekalai (Orient Longman, Rs.575) have withstood the passage of time and are still considered among the greatest classics of Tamil literature. Their stories, retold by Lakshmi Holmstrom, together with illustrations by A V Illango, bring to modern readers the texture of the times, the religious beliefs and practices, and the contrasts in lifestyles.

Savitha Padmanabhan







Sculpture to bid you welcome to a Cholamandal house.... and sculpture to embellish the beautiful natural surroundings in the Cholamandal Artists' Village. (Photographs by Rajind N Christy.)

Changing Cholamandal

(Continued from last fortnight)

Pholamandal started out as a movement with the ideology of allowing an artist to concentrate on his work, cut off from the world. It appears to have gone further and further away from its goal over the years. Indeed, today, this artists' village no longer presents a united front or boasts its own style but is simply a beautiful place for artists to live and work

"Cholamandal is no longer a big family like it used to be," agrees Nandagopal. "When it started, my father was some sort of a guiding figures to the artists. His peers continued in his role after his death, but today most of them are gone too," he says.

"The overarching ideology of the Sixties has disappeared,"

James says, adding that Cholamandal is no longer a movement but just a few brilliant individuals. "In the Sixties and Seventies there was something like the Cholamandal style, which no longer exists. In those days there was this great spirit of adventure and enthusiasm and we were furthering a certain point of view. All that is no longer there." Also, there no longer exists any real interaction between most of its members, though there are smaller groups within the village which interact with each other.

Nandagopal, however, feels that despite these changes the end result is not something his father would have been unhappy with. "One can never have a blueprint on how an experiment of this sort will shape," he says. "The artists who set up Cholamandal did not want an institution; they had no idea how the next generation of artists in Cholamandal would feel and they never tried to perpetuate an ideology. That, I think has helped this place develop in an interesting manner."

by -Vaishali Honawar

In the recent past Cholamandal has opened its doors to several new entrants from all over the country, including Calcutta, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. From time to time artists from abroad come to live in the guesthouse donated by West Germany and work in the two studios financed by the managing director of the Transport

Corporation of India Ltd. Often the village plays host to camps of painters and sculptors and the grounds of Cholamandal are dotted with granite and metal sculptures which have been products of these visits.

In the Sixties and Seventies. workshops on art would be held in Cholamandal, but over the years these too have faded out as "all the artists here are against too much theorising and form discussions. It is just not Cholamandal's style," says James. "What we're looking for is informal interaction, not concept and ideologies."

The artists of Cholamandal often join hand to hold exhibitions in groups of two or three in galleries around the country. As part of Cholamandal's 30th anniversary celebrations, an exhibition of the works of some

of its artists will open at the Jehangir Art Gallery in Bombay on December 6th.

Some time ago, a few Cholamandal sculptors, including Nandagopal, brought out a book on Modern Indian Sculpture in the Madras Metapohor — the first of its kind to record a specific movement in art in the country.

The activities may be fewer and, perhaps, Cholamandal today is not what its founders visualised, but it continues to be a source of inspiration to those who choose to make it their home. James sums it up exactly when he says: "Perhaps the strength of this place is that it leaves you alone. If an artist's personality is strong enough, it simply allows it to emerge." (Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta.)

(Concluded)

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