

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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For a better Chennai...

Poverty must be tackled

(By a Special Correspondent)

What is happening to the Sustainable Madras Project? A debate on the reports of the several consultancy groups is still to take place.

Meanwhile, Government officials seem to see the recommendations of the consultancy groups in terms of only a few physical improvements, such as cleaning of waterways, reducing traffic congestion and low-cost sanitation. These are necessary, but it is open to question as to

how these measures alone will lead to a sustainable improvement in living conditions in the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA).

The group which discussed 'Economy and Urban Poverty', for instance, felt that POVERTY is the major contributor to pollution and environmental degradation. Alleviation, or at least reduction of levels of poverty, would greatly help the environmental sustainability of the CMA. The basic issue, therefore it felt, was to tackle poverty in the CMA.

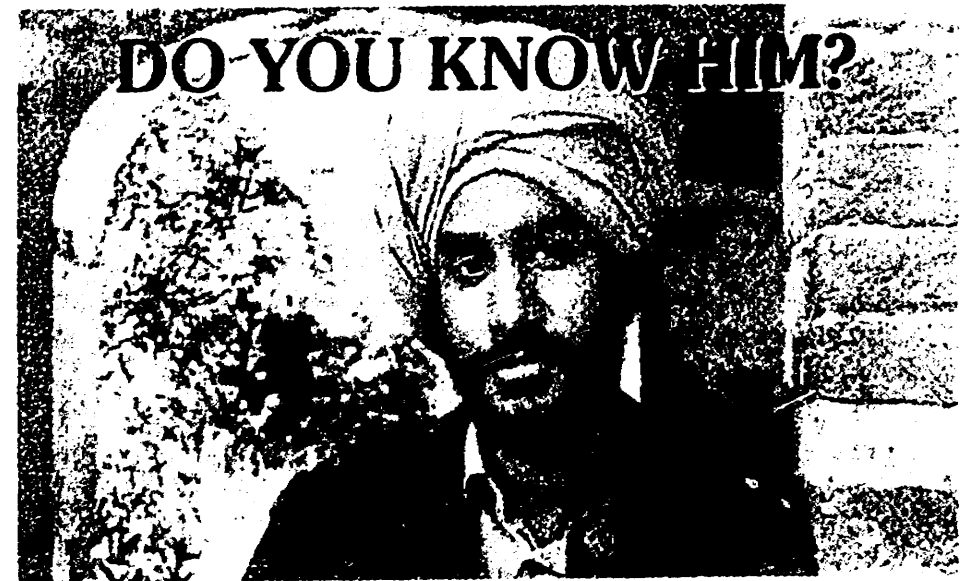
Slums are the open manifestation of urban poverty, the report adds. With about one-third of the CMA population living in slums under appalling conditions of poverty and squalor, the main thrust of poverty alleviation should concentrate on the slums.

The report feels that augmenting the employment, productivity and income levels of the City's population, along with stabilising its growth by dispersal, would be the best ways to ensure CMA's environmentally sustainable development, instead of just tinkering with a few physical facilities. Accordingly, the report has recommended two activities to be accorded top priority in the SMP:

- a) Upgradation and modernisation of the CMA labour market.
- b) Economic and infrastructure initiatives to stabilise the CMA in physical and demographic terms by discouraging inward migration and encouraging reverse migration.

The recommendations suggest

- a comprehensive review of the education and skill levels of labour,
- creation of a Workers' Collective Investment Fund to enable the urban poor to access credit,
- setting up of a high-level government-industry-community task force to undertake a thorough review of slums,
- initiation of a series of economic and infrastructure development activities,
- a study of the functioning of the departments, institutions and agencies providing civic services, and
- an expeditious review of all acts, rules, controls and pro-



DO-YOU KNOW HIM?

His name is Kip. He is a Sikh lieutenant at the time of this story. And he has a short-lived affair with a nurse in Italy during World War II. In Sri Lankan-born Michael Ondaatje's Booker Prize-winner, *The English Patient*, he had a central role in the story. In the film of the same name, which has just won NINE Oscars, his part in the story was made less important, according to many who have seen the film, and they believe that that was the reason he who played Kip wasn't in the running for an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor. Hard lines... but Naveen Andrews' time will come, write these enthusiasts.

Madras Musings features this 'still' from the film showing Andrews for quite another reason. It is reported that the actor's parents were from Madras, though Naveen was born and brought up in London. Do any of our readers know them? If they do, perhaps they can shed a little more light on Naveen Andrews, his family and where the acting talent came from.

cedures to make land readily available for housing.

Modernisation of labour, the report feels, would not only generate employment opportunities and augment household income levels but also raise productivity and remove the mismatch between demand and supply. By upgrading labour skill levels, more job opportunities and increased productivity would be created.

With Chennai almost bursting at the seams, reverse migration is a matter that merits a very serious look, the report feels. If Mumbai can have a New Mumbai, why not new Chennai townships? To make this possible, the Consultancy Group has suggested a series of structural changes — permitting the setting up of new medium and large industries outside the CMA only, linking the new towns of Chennai through a transport corridor, and the formation of a Green Economic Zone around Chennai by linking the lakes and water bodies that surround the CMA.

But issues cannot be tackled in isolation. A pragmatic policy to substantially improve the quality of life of slum-dwellers and squatters cannot ignore factors like low-income housing, supply of land, education, employment, health, hygiene, sanitation and the specific needs of women and children — the

most vulnerable among the poor.

Indeed, these are issues as pressing for the urban middle-class as they are for the urban poor. Housing, for instance, is under severe strain due to the population explosion on the one hand and the acute shortage of urban land on the other. Optimum utilisation of land under the CMA, belonging to the Central and State governments, would give a boost to the economy by creating employment opportunities and raising income levels, says the report.

The report also talks about the need for adequate funds to make the Sustainable Madras Project viable. An innovating funding package for agencies like the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Chennai Corporation, Metro Water, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and the various transport corporations is essential to help them upgrade and modernise their services.

The consultancy group has also suggested the setting up of a Greater Chennai Development Council comprising of the Chief Minister, senior Government functionaries, businessmen, professionals and community leaders to bring about a government-community coalition to address the major issues of the CMA on a continuous basis.

How gullible can you get?

Truly, there's no end to the gullibility of Man! The more we see of it, the more we are amazed. And often promptly fall into the same trap ourselves. But imagine it happening to hard-boiled newsmen! And that too within days of each other!

S Krishnan's comment in his popular *Between You and Me* column on Harry Miller's delightful story in last fortnight's *Madras Musings* on his being chosen 'Man of the Year' has brought on this little piece.

Wrote Krishnan so about this award, from what claimed to be an American institution, and its recipient: Harry Miller "had to send them rather a lot of dollars for the document (naming him 'Man of the Year' for 1997)..." Miller's "ultimate disillusionment", added Krishnan, "came when he discovered that the packet had been mailed from NEW DELHI." (*Emphasis ours.*)

Goes on Krishnan, "I have had similar experiences myself, though not offering such a lofty title, but promising to include me in who's who of well-known journalists, critics etc. for a small fee... What I am leading up to is that we have some ingenious groups ourselves which offer a variety of worldly goods,

always with a delicate demand for money."

Imagine a newspaper falling for this hoary money-making ploy! But that's exactly what the *Indian Express* did, featuring in a news item ANOTHER 'Man of the Year' in Chennai, chosen by the same institution. And to compound its gullibility, the paper put the man's photograph in as well, to embellish the story!

As Miller had predicted, there are indeed likely to be many more 'Men of the Year' like him around, even in Chennai. But to want to boast about it! That's Chennai's own way! But do newspapers have to abet such glorification? Particularly without checking out the facts!

Obviously the *Indian Express* hadn't learnt that once bitten, you should be twice shy. Remember, this was just a few days after the publication in its columns of that infamous photo-blow-up of Jayalalitha, her aides and some Vellore lawyers, two of whom the caption mistakenly claimed were Sivarasan and Dhanu, the subsequent assassins of Rajiv Gandhi. Two 'plants' in just a few days, successfully got away with, believe it or not!

The Editor

Out, damned Shakespeare, out!

Some time last year, *The Man From Madras Musings* saw a speaker at the British Council rock everyone back on their heels when he suggested, "Down with Shakespeare, out with the Bard from our syllabuses" if better communication is what we wish to teach in our English classes in schools and colleges. MMM was reminded of this recently, watching the Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Comedy of Errors*, courtesy the British Council, and thereafter listening to the debates that raged around it.

Some saw existentialism interpreted in it, others saw the zest and razzle-dazzle of its action as bordering on the manic, and still others saw *therukoothu* and its fall-out, the Hindi and Tamil film worlds, in it. As far as MMM was concerned, if this meant that a person could do what he wished with his life, if this implied that manic action could pass for entertainment, and if a longer *therukoothu* history than a Shakespearean one might give us the right one day to claim a 'Shokku Periyar' of our own as playwright of distinction, it might be a good time to endorse those 'Out with Shakespeare' thoughts again, for obviously something went amiss in the communication the RSC attempted in Chennai.

Certainly, following what was being said on the stage was the most difficult part of the evening. The uneven accents, ranging from Emilia's crystal clear one to the street twangs of the Dromios, were difficult enough. But with the keep-it-soft sound amplification (whose? the troupe's or the Music Academy's) and the worsening acoustics for theatre at the Music Academy, difficulty became an ordeal. Especially for the many who at the best of times do not find Shakespeare an able communicator, given the way they've been taught his work and the way they've 'by-heartened' it for exams and then forgotten it all.

In this context, it is no surprise that existentialism and a manic performance become virtues, and that *therukoothu*, the Hindi and Tamil film, and *The Comedy* are spoken of in the same breath. For, after all, it's the mad whirl of free mime and unfettered burlesque that is remembered, not the little understood, less heard words of the Prince of Playwrights.

American view

Curiously, just at the time the RSC was touring India with this erroneous choice of comedy, Shakespeare was making waves in the US too, where the debate on to be or not to be on the English syllabi has been heating up. *The Man From Madras Musings*, who has been reading some of these reports, finds that "two-thirds of the

US's top 70 universities no longer insist that English majors take a Shakespeare course".

What are taking Shakespeare's place in these universities don't particularly thrill MMM. They include such courses as Advertising Imagery, Madonna Lyrics, Internet 'zines and Queer Fiction! No wonder the president of a conservative Washington educational think-tank complained, "This country cannot expect a generation raised on gangster films and sex studies to maintain its leadership in the world. Or even its unity as a nation."

On the other hand, MMM finds more meaningful what prestigious Georgetown University in Washington plans for 1999. This university scrapped its traditional stand that English majors MUST study at least TWO from Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare and will ask students to choose one of three sub-specialties: literature and literary history; culture and performance; and, writing. With no course dedicated to The Bard

are cold and reserved? *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted recently to find a judge of the Madras High Court, Justice Shivraj Patil, not only articulate and down-to-earth in communicating his thoughts on the people and democracy in India to a group of public relations practitioners, but also willing to chattily discuss his views with several in the audience who kept coming up to him during a long drawn-out tea that followed. Here was a VIP in no rush, as well as a knowledgeable person keen to pass on that knowledge to ANYONE who cared to benefit from it.

Pointing out that there are two kinds of democracy, direct democracy and representational democracy, Justice Patil said India cannot afford the regular referendums of the former, in the way the Swiss can, so we have to manage with representational democracy. Sadly, the people's power lasts only for that brief period while a person collects his ballot paper, marks it and drops it into the box. After that he has

Musings was glad that he did refer to it even briefly. Landmark judgments on human rights and unsavoury political issues have been there in the past, he pointed out. It is only because those against whom the courts are now moving are people with high profiles that the judiciary's actions are capturing the headlines. That is what has made judicial activism appear to be greater than in the past, felt Justice Patil.

Referring to the question of when the judiciary needs must act, Justice Patil rhetorically asked, if the legislature is not performing its duties to the people, if the executive is not discharging its functions satisfactorily or is exceeding its limits, should the judiciary keep silent? To act in such circumstances, the judiciary needs to determine whether it is acting in the interests of the country, whether anything it did is against the rule of law, and whether it is consistent with the Constitution.

To questions from the floor,

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

compulsory, the University has been faced with such critical headlines as "The unkindest cut of all" and "Et tu, Georgetown?"

This change in outlook on what English majors should compulsorily study began in the early 70s and has grown apace. But what has remained the same throughout this period is that the numerous elective courses on Shakespeare continue "to thrive... (and are) bulging at the seams". That may enthuse Shakespeare-wallahs everywhere, but what should be remembered is that this is in respect of English majors and those studying Western civilisation alone — and in college. Elsewhere in the American college and high school curriculums, Shakespeare is not the big deal we make of it in India. And it's in this context that MMM endorses the thoughts of that speaker at the British Council last year, even more so after the recent punny burlesque, and hopes that there'll be more of 'communication in English' in our schools and colleges, once the faithful can be persuaded to join the heretics in settling the "to be or not to be" argument by crying, "Out, Shakespeare, out!" Though this may be considered madness, there be method in it, MMM is convinced.

The people can also contribute to the nation's progress in other ways. Progress is not the responsibility of the political system alone. It depends on the people too. And the contribution the people have to make is commitment to honesty, to hard work and to concern and compassion for their fellows. It is the media's duty to foster this among the people of a country afflicted with the criminalisation of politics, corruption and casteism.

Judicial activism

Judicial activism is not something Justice Patil was planning to talk about on the occasion. But *The Man From Madras*

the Justice answered that the judiciary could not do more, for they are not the law-makers; the judiciary can only interpret the laws made by the legislature and act according to them. This was why, he pointed out, there were often occasions when there were conflicts between the needs of the many and the rights of one person that were protected by these laws.

With thinkers on subjects beyond the laws of the land, like Justice Patil, serving the judiciary, all is still well with the third arm of governance in India, it struck MMM. It is to be hoped that the trend will continue in choosing such persons to the highest levels of the judiciary.

In brief

★ Talking to public relations practitioners recently, Justice Shivraj Patil of the Madras High Court related the story of a woman who had been deserted losing the right she had for admission to a professional college seat because she had obtained a divorce subsequently. *The Man From Madras Musings* — and the whole audience — was glad to hear that though the law was clear in differentiating between a deserted woman and a divorced woman, there were judges like Justice Patil who also took a humane view while interpreting the law.

★ Listening to a senior advertising man speaking to a group of

advertising persons on what 1996 had been like for the industry, *The Man From Madras Musings* learnt that the extent of free publicity Bill Gates received in India was estimated worth at least US \$1.5 million (over Rs.5 crore!). Whatever the whizkid from Microsoft plans for India, will any advertising agency in this country — or the newspapers — ever earn as much from his operations, *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders.

★ That P Chidambaram does not quite see eye to eye with his partners in power in Delhi, who call themselves the United Front despite disunity, is well-known. But that he doesn't see quite eye to eye with even his ministerial colleagues from the Tamil Nadu partnership is less well-known. Taking advantage of this is the REAL Congress, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears. They've apparently, the word from Delhi has it, been making overtures to Chidambaram, promising a longer, happier tenureship as Finance Minister if the Thamilz Maanila Congress follows the Tiwari Congress lead. But then what happens to Manmohan Singh? Prime Minister, perhaps, by June?! But will that help the Indian Bank scandal vanish? That's a scandal a lot of people are asking awkward questions of Chidambaram, some of them based on the fact that his kin helped to found the Bank. Now that should not be held against him, even if his kin still retain traditional links with the institution. At the same time, why does he want to disown that kinship? "I don't claim kinship with anyone," he is quoted as saying. That's being rather unrealistic, MMM would think, considering all the attendance he marks at functions involving (disowned?) kin.

Business briefs

★ Another old property that has recently changed hands in Chennai, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns, is Firhaven Estate (wasn't it once the Burmah Shell residential complex?), next to the Adyar Palace. It was owned by ESSAR Shipping. It is slated for "development", MMM hears; he only wishes it is for restoration and refurbishment as one of the grand old garden complexes it was.

★ Renault of France's plans to set up a truck assembly or manufacturing facility in the Chennai area in a tripartite partnership with TIDCO and SPIC have faded with the slowing down of the automobile sector in India. Only the State Government seems to be pushing Renault to continue as planned, even if SPIC is showing no interest, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears.

MMM

From Royal Yacht to a 'fall-out'

I was among those invited to visit the Royal Yacht *Britannia* on her first and last visit to Madras, during the course of her last voyage. When I arrived, she was 'dressed overall', which is sailors' language for having flags flying from stem to stern, mast to mast, in addition to her own 'colours', in this case the White Ensign of the Royal Navy and, of course, the Courtesy Flag, the flag of the Indian Republic. It is a pleasant and strictly observed maritime custom that a ship entering the harbour of a foreign country flies the national flag of that country at its masthead as a matter of courtesy, while the national flag of its home country is flown from a flagstaff over the stern.

In the case of *Britannia* there were scores of other flags flying from the bows up to the foremast and from there to the next two masts and down to the stern, which is the meaning of 'being dressed overall', a ceremonial practice I have not seen for many years. I was surprised, too, by the size of the ship, which displaces five thousand tons — the weight of water she supplants — and everyone aboard must have shared my feeling of sadness that such a beautiful vessel had come to the end of her life. She is now

over forty years old. Before the end of the year, she will be broken up.

The reception on board was pleasant, though I did not stay for what I heard was a magnificent display on the quayside later in the morning by the band of the Royal Marines. It was many years since I had been inside our harbour and so, mischievously, I 'lost my way' in order to look around. What I saw did not please me.

Among other things, I found a large cargo vessel discharging

**One Man's
Madras —
HARRY
MILLER'S**

raw sulphur. That's nasty stuff at the best of times, but surely the harbour authorities could find a better way of unloading the bright yellow powder than by a single crane lowering a large bucket into the hold, grabbing the sulphur in one great gulp, raising it up to be swung over the quay and dumped into a waiting lorry? Each time the bucket came up and its great steel teeth opened like the jaws of *Tyrannosaurus rex*, half the sulphur went into the back of

the lorry, its intended destination, but half went either onto the roof of the lorry's cabin or alongside it onto the quay itself, which was feet thick in the stuff. Presumably what fell on the quayside would later be removed by hand.

It seemed to me that if the vessel, which I would guess was around ten thousand tons deadweight — the weight of the ship plus that of its cargo — was to be unloaded by a single bucket into one lorry at a time, and if its cargo consisted of powdered sulphur and nothing else, it would take weeks to unload her — hardly the height of efficiency. And with all the loose sulphur powder floating about, the next time we have a good monsoon, the rain will be more like sulphuric acid than just plain water, with catastrophic effects on our buildings and lungs.

Only a few days earlier I had received a letter from a good friend who is at present in command of one of a fleet of ships owned by an Indian company. He wrote from Vancouver, which, he says in his letter, is an extremely beautiful place, where you look up from sea-level to mountain peaks that are as high as the Alps and, like them, high enough to be perpetually snow-covered.

The critics' role

In *Critics' Role* (MM, March 16th) V.R.Devika wrote that in the seminar on music and the workshop for critics organised by Natyarangam, the consensus was that "critics have no role in the raising of the standards of music". This was not so. I wish to set the record straight.

I am a part of the Natyarangam organising team whose two-day seminar and workshop was for "Bharatanatyam Critics" (not music!) Only dance criticism was dealt with, not music except as a support system for dance.

Thirteen resource persons (editors, organisers, dancers, critics and connoisseurs) expressed their views on dance critics and criticism. Devika was one of them and attended the seminar on the first day. Some resource persons did say that dancers should not give too much importance to critics' reviews, while one or two said that there should be no reviews for some time! But there certainly was no consensus that critics have no role in raising standards of dance (not music).

An attempt was made to develop certain norms for review writing to help improve their quality. Some of the points in a nutshell:

A. Why do you review?
To help the ordinary viewer discriminate between good and bad/mediocre art; To help the layperson develop into a *rastika* (connoisseur). Help the dancer to improve. En-

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**

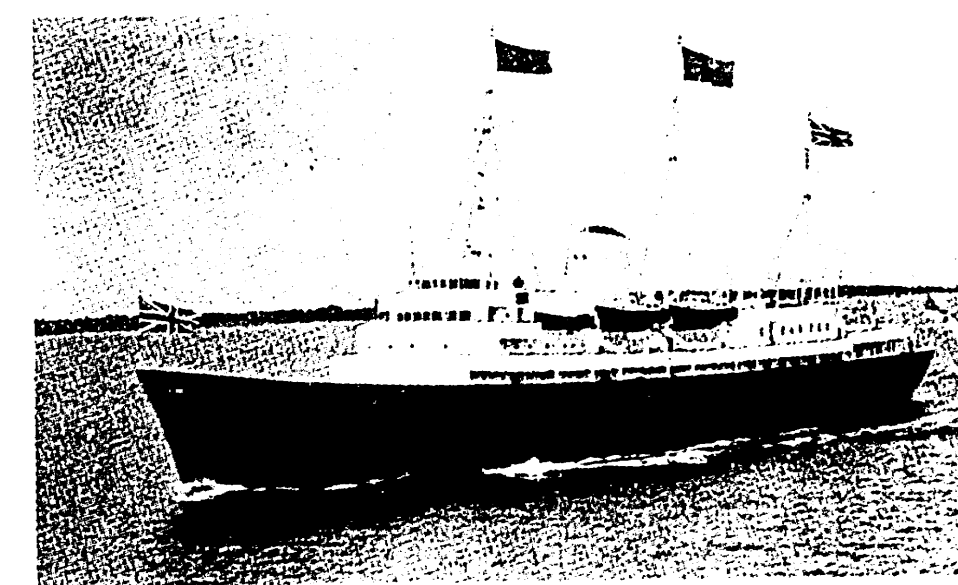
courage young talent. Show a mirror to senior dancers so that they do not become complacent.

B. How do you review? (The critics' approach)
Should communicate with skill; with integrity; with humility; with knowledge of the art; with balance; without fear or favour; with a certain flourish; with empathy; with sensitivity.

C. What do you write about?
Totality of the programme; about the dance items; costumes; ambience; stage decor; sound and lighting; technical aspects of dance.

D. Who should write?
The critic should have considerable knowledge of dance. The critic could be a dancer who does not perform any more, but should not be a frustrated dancer. He/she must educate himself/herself about the dance. Should have an open mind — no prejudice. Should be able to make a critical appraisal. Should have the strength of mind and will to uphold ethics.

The seminar convenor, V. Ramamurthy, I.A.S. (Retd.) spelt out two recommendations at the conclusion of the seminar:
— A critics' association should be



The Royal Yacht Britannia

In his letter, he spoke of how times had changed and explained how port authorities in Vancouver are keenly aware of pollution. In my day, the ship's sewage simply went overboard into the water through a hole in the ship's side. This was a bit awkward when in a harbour, since passersby on the quayside would receive its contents every time a latrine was flushed, unless something was done to prevent it. That something was called, if the Editor will permit such a coarse expression, a 'shit-chute' and consisted of a wooden framework lowered on a rope from the deck to cover the sewage hole in the ship's side, thus deflecting its contents into the harbour water instead of on to dry land.

In Vancouver, even that is no longer allowed. My Captain friend writes: "The anchorage was in a beautiful setting of pine-scented islands, with a distant backdrop of snow-clad mountains. But today, the prettier scenery the tougher the environmental laws. All on-board valves were sealed. Toilet

sive forces, though they are in a very small minority but with lots of funds, fire-power and other means, are unfortunately working to the contrary. However, it is very clear that 'Dharmashakti' and 'Janashakti' directed towards 'Gramswaraj' becomes stronger and there may be a chance for peace.

Since receiving the Gandhi Peace Prize and having met more than 150,000 people in 40 locations during the last 40 days, I am very optimistic that peace will come to Sri Lanka.

A.T. Ariyaratne
President
Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya
Shramadana Sangamaya
98 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa,
Sri Lanka.
Dated : 18.3.97

Can't afford it

I wish to differ with the views expressed by Mr. K.P. Mahalingam (MM, March 16th). There is no basis or justification to compare American bookshops with those of Chennai. According to my information, Americans are able to spend about 20-30% of their incomes on books. In India, the middle class cannot afford such luxury. The escalating costs of books have kept many readers away from bookshops.

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Hopes for peace
I refer to MMM's piece on "A Man of peace in a land at war" (MM, February 16th). Interestingly, I received this copy immediately after returning from the conflict-stricken Eastern Province where I met more than 10,000 Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese with whom I shared ideas.

While we take all the risks and try to bring peace in our land, divi-

water had to be treated and pumped out. We had to burn all our galley (kitchen) rubbish in drums. You can't just throw rubbish overboard like in the old days. Today, they treat ship's garbage as though it is nuclear waste. So many checklists, so many inspectors. It's not an easy life." All valves normally used to discharge waste materials, cleaning fluids, oils of various kinds, whether part of the cargo or for the use in the ship's machines and engines, had to be sealed, and grim officials came aboard every day to ensure the seals had not been tampered with.

This went on for a month, the Captain told me, while the ship lay idle at anchor outside the harbour. This could not have been good news for the owners, for, every day a ship lies idle, a great deal of money is lost, perhaps as much as \$5,000 a day in the case of vessels of that kind. The trouble was, surprisingly, not with the ship nor with the harbour authorities, but with snow inland. The ship was waiting for grain from the great wheat-growing plains to the east of the Rockies, but the snow this year has been so heavy that the trains intended to bring the wheat to Vancouver could not get through. The cargo was intended for Mexico, by the way, not for India. If that seems a strange task for an Indian vessel, it must be remembered that merchant vessels of this kind, commonly called tramps, will pick up cargoes in one place and transport them to another, anywhere in the world that the owners find profitable.

I tell this story in some detail since I could not but compare the negligence while unloading the sulphur in Madras harbour with the Captain's brief but vivid descriptions of the severe restrictions placed on his vessel by Canadian authorities anxious to prevent the slightest pollution of their beautiful environment.

In mythology, the smell of sulphur has always been associated with Hell and the Devil. Quite rightly so, too, considering the damage the stuff can do if it is grossly mishandled. How far this adds to the severe pollution of the city we all love I leave to the reader's imagination.

Trading words over States' fiscal freedom

Montek Singh Ahluwalia of the Finance Ministry versus N Ram of *Frontline* and S. Gurumurthi of the *Swadeshi Jagran Manch* might not have been a bad billing for the panel discussion that was scheduled to be the liveliest part of the recent *Industrial Economist Business Excellence Award 1997* function. The Union Finance Secretary, having the last word, not only came out unscathed, but actually scored a pyrrhic victory of sorts when all expected him to succumb to the fireworks that marked the debate on 'Fiscal Autonomy for the States'.

Sharing the podium with critics the likes of the passionately eloquent Ram and the trenchantly witty Gurumurthi,

sources to States from 24% to 29%.

Gurumurthi was sarcasm personified. He reeled off statistics and figures with the practised ease of the professional giantkiller — who does his homework — that he has grown into over the years. The current situation with the Centre's huge fiscal deficit is hardly conducive to any talk of fiscal autonomy. When the Central government is bankrupt, how can it delegate fiscal powers to the States, he asked. Moreover, the States do not deserve it, anyway, because their governments are often in the hands of undesirable elements. He described the Indian Constitution as "a federal slogan in a unitary container".

• by V. Ramnarayan

Ahluwalia gave glimpses of his clarity of thought and word-perfect articulation that have brought him high visibility and popular acclaim unusual among bureaucrats. In Ahluwalia's view, the States would be much better off if they exercised the fiscal powers already vested in them — through better collections of electricity dues from the SEBs, for instance, an area often afflicted by political compulsions. Improvements in property tax collections would also help considerably. The valuation of urban property was another area that merited a closer look, he asserted.

If Ahluwalia was shaken by the rhetoric and vitriol of the critics of his Government, he did not show it. It would be impractical and unprecedented to make customs and excise duties and income tax State subjects, he replied. Excise collections were, at any rate, shared with the States. As for sales tax, the States were generally very successful in collecting it. The bureaucrat saw hardly any scope for increasing the fiscal powers of the States. He advocated the evolution of a modern, indirect tax system on the lines of MODVAT.

While agreeing that Article 356 should not be used except in a real emergency, Ahluwalia pointed out that fiscal autonomy had nothing to do with the constitutional improprieties involved in the dismissal of several State governments in the past. "I can't recall any State government being dismissed on grounds of fiscal mismanagement," he pointed out.

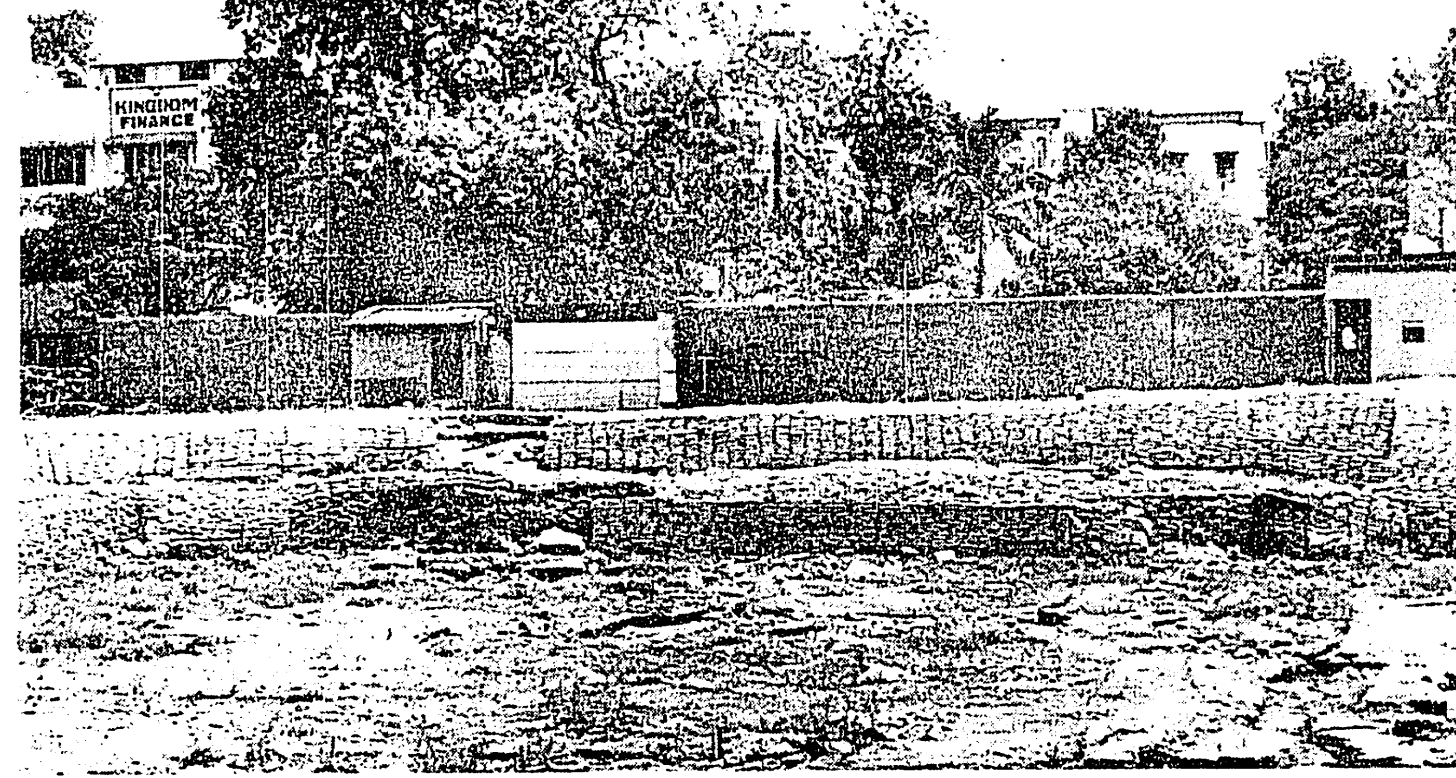
The Finance Secretary expressed the hope that the ongoing reform would pave the way for the economic independence of the States, as, freed from the shackles of licences and permits, they could now create the right environment for increased investment to flow into them, by improving the infrastructure and extending other incentives to investors.



Our OLD and NEW this fortnight are from HARRY MILLER, who writes, "On my way to the Indian Express every morning for many years I used to turn off Mount Road at its junction with White's Road and enter Express Estates through the rear White's Road entrance. Halfway down White's Road on the right as I drove down was the very curious old house seen in my 1989 picture. Goodness knows who built or owned it. Was it Mr. White?"

One day, knowing the house would soon be pulled down, I stopped outside and entered the very large forecourt, which was empty, but a screeching watchman ran up brandishing a stick and shouting that no photographs were allowed. I chatted amiably to him for a minute or two, keeping him occupied, while my driver/photographer walked down the opposite side of the compound taking the picture needed.

Recently I asked him to go and see what had become of the building and the site. Mrs. Goenka closed the White's Road entrance years ago so I never go down there now, and I expected to find that a block of flats, shops or offices had been built there. Instead, as the picture shows, though the house has been pulled down, there is nothing in its place except those piles of roofing tiles (?) seen in the background. What next?!"



Grant 57 (Rs 395), the magazine of new writing, has dedicated its latest issue to the 50th anniversary of Indian Independence. This special edition has extracts from forthcoming novels by R K Narayan and Arundati Roy and articles by Mark Tully, Nirad Chaudhuri and Anita Desai, among others. It also features poems by Vikram Seth and Michael Ondaatje plus an excerpt from V S Naipaul's diary.

Gita Mehta's *Snakes and Ladders* (Minerva — £2.75) is another book which commemorates the golden jubilee of our Independence. It is a tribute to India — the diverse and culturally-rich nation that is the world's largest democracy. This book traces the story of the struggle for Independence and goes on to paint a picture of contemporary India — a land full of contradictions.

Bombay seems to fascinate more and more people. Vikram Chandra's *Love and Longing in Bombay* (Viking —

On the Bookshelves

Rs 300) is a collection of short stories linked together by a common narrator. These stories reflect the mysterious yet passionate aspect of India's economic capital. Chandra won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for his first novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*.

The World Bank was set up in 1945 with the sole aim of helping the underprivileged Third World nations. However, the Bank has not been able to fulfil its goals. Catherine Caufield in *Master of Illusions* (Macmillan — £10.00) takes a closer look at this vast lending arm of the world economy to find out why the Bank has failed in its mission.

For fiction, we have yet another spine-chiller from Robin Cook. Aliens invade the

earth and an unknown virus attacks the living beings causing them to behave in a bizarre fashion. Cook's *Invasion* (Pan — £5.99) is about this virus and man's counter-attack on it. This novel is written in the tradition of the Hollywood blockbuster *Independence Day*.

Silva is presumed dead in a car crash. Just six weeks after his death, \$ 90 million disappears from his law firm. It is then that his partners realise he is not dead. A man-hunt is launched. Another gripping legal thriller from John Grisham. *The Partner* (Century — £8.00) reconfirms Grisham as a master story-teller.

And finally, Kiran Nagarkar's *Cuckold* (HarperCollins — Rs 250). This is an epic novel set in 16th Century Mewar. Written in contemporary style, the novel revolves around the Maharajkumar of Mewar — his trials and tribulations, both on the personal and political front.

Savitha Padmanabhan

The visitors' Chennai

A city that ticks

Thursday morning

How do I feel being a visitor in Chennai with time on my hands for four days? Something rare in my life, accustomed to a routine of driving to the American University of Asia in Colombo, teaching subjects like English speech and writing by the hour, with a touch of management and economics to relieve the monotony. Talking to young people, children of the so-called rich who can afford to pay for an English medium education, an oasis in the desert of knowledge-starved, Sinhala and Tamil medium free education. The availability of paying schools is nothing strange in India which has options about medium, about private fee-levying and private, assisted and completely free schools and universities, and options about studying in English, Hindi, or the regional medium.

I was worried about leaving that routine of teaching tasks when I landed in Chennai airport with a bump and a thud, but pleasant surprises began soon afterwards. You could walk right into the airport from the plane through the tube, unlike in the Colombo airport, where you have to board a bus. The arrivals lounge is air-conditioned, spacious, well-ordered and busy. When we stepped out, there was this concourse of people, a sign of normalcy, and plenty of taxis and 'autos'.

My friend Cubby got in after the two ladies, into the corner of the high back seat of the white Ambassador at the taxi stand. I got in front and we chugged along on Mount Road, and it seemed a real highway leading to a metropolis. On either side it is lined with buildings and billboards, all in English, advertising the goods and services that the open economy has created in Chennai. The village has been transformed in its interior being, in its self-image, into a city. These were the advertisements for self. I was glad to see the transformation that had taken place in a people with whom we are brothers. One should be happy at the prosperity of a brother or a sister.

Friday afternoon

Last evening was a time to remember. I understood why

my cousin, our neighbour, rushes to Madras every six months and returns with sarees and happiness. She is a lady teacher and she goes with other such for a few days, all by themselves.

Cubby and I sit in a hotel bar. We have just returned after a four-hour escapade at Pondy Bazaar where we have had a surfeit of sarees, suits, kurtas, jackets and more sarees.

"You are from Colombo?" asked the young waiter as he served us.

"Yes," I said. I had no doubt he was from Jaffna. Like the young man who had served us

(Contd. on page 6)

A hotel with a difference

I am still the beneficiary of *Madras Musings*, thanks to the Editor's munificence, for an inconsequential note which I had contributed to the paper. In it, I recently found a very interesting article on the hotel industry in Chennai and it set me thinking about a recent visit there.

Chennai was particularly hospitable to us during the first week of March. The weather was cool and breezy, particularly at the IIT campus, where we stayed. One evening, our hosts suggested that we go out for dinner; she wanted to try a place she had heard a lot about.

The 'hotel' was a total surprise to all of us. As we entered, a young woman, in Kanchipuram saree, welcomed us. A man in plain kurta and trousers took us to the mezzanine floor where there was a table for five, and gave each of us a menu card. It was not the usual type of card, giving a list of foods and their prices. This menu card was artistically designed and gave us some history of the foods and the good and the bad of each. There was even a special thali

for people who were health-conscious!

We were allowed to browse for some time and then the 'waiter' came to take our order. He was not in any uniform; a casual evening dress, kurta and pajama, was the order of the day. We did not want to order the usual thali (about Rs. 150 for a South Indian thali), but tried our luck with a few North Indian vegetarian curries, a few phulkas and bhaturas. To top it all, we had lassi and coffee. A sumptuous meal, and the preparations were very good.

But it is not the food that attracted us. We had been to a similar hotel near Orchard Street in Singapore. There too, we had met the same typical South Indian hospitality, young women in Kanchipuram sarees, dinner plates and cutlery all in silver, and a very home-like atmosphere. We had been too engrossed in admiring the shops and their wares in Orchard Street to be impressed by the hotel decor. We were just happy that we had discovered a clean, decent 'hotel', where we could get the food we liked during the few days we planned to be

there!! But here in Chennai it was a total surprise.

We fell to talking with the 'waiters' and found that the man who was serving us so solicitously was the MD of a computer firm and the man serving the next table was the MD of an engineering firm!! We were told that all the 'waiters' were in business, but took turns and time to serve in the 'hotel' and look after its management. We were told that a Swami was the driving force and it was service to the Swami they contributed in this way. We were told that a part of the earnings go to charities, but then, the 'servers' were too busy — we had come in when all the tables were taken — to explain more about the motive force which prompted them to, every evening, carry and remove dinner plates and attend to the multifarious chores connected with the running of a clean and healthy kitchen.

ANNALAKSHMI stole our hearts, while she gave us a very pleasant evening.

M.R.Chandrasekhara
of Bangalore

WHAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN!

Bloated rats burrow
Into putrid garbage,
Blissful, malignant,
Gutters spew their guts
Into sluggish rivulets
Of stinking muck.

Children, half-naked, rickety,
Scramble in the filth, at
One with the filth while
Their begetters eke out
A bare sustenance
By the uncertain grace
Of a grudging God.

Sombre buildings
Of bygone splendour
Brood.
High-domed ceilings,
Nobly-proportioned rooms
Cannot
Cover the shame
Of paint, flaking, peeling;
Wooden banisters crumbling;
The old guard lowering.

Every wall a collage
Of drying spit-marks
Pock-marking a once-glorious
Facade.
Dingy corners reek
Of human waste.
Cobwebs creep downwards
Towards dust carpeting
Uncleaned floors.
What it could have been!
And what it is!!

If you think what is depicted above paints too grim, too stark a picture of almost all of our major cities, DON'T think again! Try accepting the reality, instead. The reality to which we have been turning a blind eye for far too long! The reality that is relentlessly creeping up on several cities all over India. Sores in her womb! How much longer before the inevitable haemorrhage?

The salvation of our cities lies not so much in the improvement of basic infrastructure as in the refinement of the basic instincts of its inhabitants. Were there a collective, instinctive revulsion to the mounds of rotting garbage, to the ubiquitous spit-marks and the disgusting habit of spitting from buses, cars, etc., to the relieving of bowels in public places, to the general filth and squalor perme-

A PLEA FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

ating throughout, our cities would not be in the state in which they are. Can't we all learn from once plague-struck Surat?

Our major problem is that we have become inured to the problems we see as mere irritants. We put up with an appalling state of affairs stoically, rather than push to improve the situation. A well-known architect recently lamented that in India we live in conditions which elsewhere would have sparked a revolution! We are far too tolerant!

It is high time this misplaced tolerance was seen for what it actually is — lethargy and complacency. The ability to put up with a lot of rubbish, literally, because we are too lazy or too busy or too resigned to do anything about it. We seem to have no difficulty in continuing to cling to this ostrich-like belief that if we but continue to look away from the problems that are menacing the very existence of our cities they will, perhaps,

hopefully, disappear. Or that somebody ELSE will do something about them.

The irony is that solutions are so simple, so glaringly obvious, that we keep missing them all the while! We keep indulging in endless confabulations, hunting for solutions, when the most commonsense ones are crying out to be implemented! It is the classic syndrome of the slut slapping on make-up and

But merely because simple solutions may not resolve ALL our problems is no reason why we should not give them a try in a bid to make our cities more liveable.

Can we not start in various small ways? Can we not see to the repairs and upkeep and cleanliness of the buildings we live in? Can we not refrain from throwing garbage out of windows? And protest when we see others doing so? Can we not ensure clean, rodent-free surroundings, at least in our immediate environs? Can we not ensure something is done about open drains and broken sewage pipes just across the streets we live in? Can we not try to educate people not to spit/litter etc. when we see them doing so in front of our very eyes — and, of course, refrain from doing so, ourselves? Can we not get out of this habit of eating the *bhel* and throwing the paper where we stand, instead of walking towards the dustbin or the basket normally kept by the *bhelwallah* for the purpose? And if he has not kept one, can't we suggest he does so? Can't we all educate at least our children in basic civic values?

Let us start by putting in order our own houses, offices, buildings, lanes, streets, roads. The ultimate responsibility rests with each one of us. The buck has to stop somewhere. Let us all make that start. Somewhere.

The results have no option but to ensue.

Armin Wandrewala
of Mumbai

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S question are from the period March 16 to 31. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

- Who on March 17th became the first-ever Cabinet Minister to be convicted in Independent India?
 - A 25-year-old pioneering spacecraft, mankind's most distant interplanetary explorer, transmitted its last data on March 31st. Name the craft.
 - Name the AIADMK MLA suspended by the Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Assembly for levelling unsubstantiated charges.
 - Name the third part of Arthur C. Clarke's *Odyssey* series launched recently.
 - Name the most successful Indian jockey who called it a day recently, after a record 114 Classic winners.
 - Who recently became the world's youngest chess Grandmaster at the age of 14 years and 2 months?
 - Why was the Japanese train, *Streamland Model 500*, in the news recently?
 - Which Indian has been chosen to head the International Cricket Conference, the game's global governing body?
 - Name the cult whose 39 members committed mass suicide in California recently, to keep a rendezvous with comet Hale-Bopp.
 - Name the 'Czarina' of Indian culture who passed away recently.
 - Why were Hosur-based lawyers Nanje Gowda and Dakshayini the centre of media attention in Tamil Nadu recently?
 - Which film swept the Oscars show with nine awards, including Best Picture and Best Director honours?
 - Where is the first Hindu temple in an Islamic country to come up?
 - Who recently equalled Brijesh Patil's record of 26 centuries in Ranji Trophy competition?
 - The 'Pickle King', who hauled Narasimha Rao to the courts on charges of cheating, died on March 31st. Name him.
- * * *
- What new enclosure is to come up at Vandalur zoo at a cost of Rs.1 lakh?
 - Name the British Royal yacht which came acalling in Chennai recently.
 - Who has been recently appointed Chief Justice of the Chennai High Court?
 - The Chennai Corporation has budgeted four pedestrian subways in the coming year. Where?
 - Where in Chennai did the Chief Minister launch the Swift Action Force that has been constituted to tackle communal violence?

(Answers on p.8)

A 'cuckold' by any name

It was by all accounts a classic. Kiran Nagarkar, acclaimed Marathi writer, dramatist, and author of a now-being-made-into-a-film book, *Ravan and Eddie*, was on a three-day blitz of Chennai to promote his latest novel *Cuckold*.

"Cuckold?" someone asked from the audience of Chennai's elite literary brigade that had been invited under the auspices of the Madras Book Club to sip a cup of Nilgiris tea (or instant coffee) at the Connemara Hotel and listen to a reading of the book by Nagarkar and friends, "Is it relevant to make use of a word that was not current in 16th Century India?" Despite being the intellectual hub of the country, there is a rogue element in the Chennai literary set that routinely asks the one question that the author does not expect.

Nagarkar was nonplussed, or, at least, did not rise to the bait. Maria Couto, without whose charming presence no book launch could consider itself actually launched, rushed into the breach with a soothing

disclaimer. 'Cuckold' is a Middle English word that has been around for some time. Contrary to some interpretations, it has nothing to do with the clucking of a hen, though a cuckolded husband could be described as being 'hen-pecked'. And there is the example by as-

ing, particularly as Bhagyam Narayanan, who read the part, came through with a booming voice that was at odds with the image of the gentle, playful image of the Princess of Mewar.

Nagarkar has not used 'cuckold' just in this domestic sense, but in the wider context of his

consulted a particular source and when Nagarkar replied in the negative, he subsided, feeling piqued. "A priest in his pulpit," he murmured. Chennai's reputation as an intellectual reservoir was in the balance. Again, Maria Couto rose to the occasion and applied the soothing balm of the experienced winder-up of literary events.

She confessed that she had not read the book, thereby taking the audience off its intellectual hook, but talked of its author, recounting the different occasions when Nagarkar had landed up on her doorstep in London, through wind, rain, and storm, and partaken of her hospitality with irresistible charm and wit. Nagarkar glowed once more in the light of such accolades. The pearls and chiffon brigade, who had come to watch their hero, sighed with relief. Fans lined up to have their books autographed.

For one hot, moist Tamil night, Nagarkar had made it fashionable to 'cuckold' in public.

By A Special Correspondent

sociation of a cuckolded husband wearing 'horns', just like a cock that had been castrated and deprived of its spurs, being decorated with the spurs that were said to grow back on its head like horns.

Nagarkar's use of the word is specific. His narrator hero is a Rana of Mewar, whose wife is a legendary figure who was so enchanted with the image of her ideal lover that she could be described as being an unfaithful wife. Dear reader, can you guess who she is? It's part of the teaser trailer running through the book, which just did not become apparent during the read-

ing, particularly as Bhagyam Narayanan, who read the part, came through with a booming voice that was at odds with the image of the gentle, playful image of the Princess of Mewar.

At question time the enchantment was near total. Not many people in the audience felt bold enough to ask questions. One erudite gentleman asked Nagarkar whether he had

A CITY THAT TICKS

(Continued from Page 5)

breakfast at the Holiday Inn in Toronto. These were the youth who had escaped the pitiless war but were sad in exile, their lives unfulfilled as mere hirelings in a foreign land.

"That Kumaran shop is a gambling den for the ladies. It is a fatal attraction which takes a woman out of this world into the dreamlands of the highest feminine fantasy." I feel my eloquence is not out of place even though there are no women here and the men seem to be very quiet for a bar.

Kumaran's is approached by a ride in an auto. You walk through a heap of shops, crowded with wares, bangles, radios, watches, *salwar-kameez*, sarees, apples, hair dryers, grapes, beggars, dirt, vehicles, children and you enter a narrow shop front and climb the stairs to the first floor and there before you stretches the El Dorado of the saree-hungry imagination. The shop is enormous, like Selfridge's in Oxford Street, and there is so much space in the middle for children to tumble and urinate, husbands to moan and groan and cashiers to work their cash registers, while all around, climbing high up on the side walls are stacks and stacks of sarees in glass almirahs, waiting to be pulled down. The salesmen pull them out and throw them on the shop tables in ritual gestures, like the ever-rolling waves of the sea. The

women grab them with their fingers, touching the light chiffon or the silk or the georgette with the pleasure of their being concentrated at their fingertips and eyes. Their attitudes are ones of ecstasy as they are portrayed in the *bas reliefs* of a hundred Indian depictions of love.

The biggest thrill is to take that single saree home and claim that she made a bargain to buy it at three thousand when the Colombo price is ten thousand. "The Kanchipurams and the Manipuris are worn by brides and their mothers-in-law, and the Morisses and the Austins, who are the professional bride-dressers insist on the shade which matches the bride's complexion before make-up. The effect is ghastly," laments Cubby. "I was in a way glad that my daughter eloped because I didn't have to pay for those sharks."

The conversation from the group next to us contained words like "electric cable" and "rural project". "These guys are discussing business," I say.

"What business can we talk? There was a man in the plane who was coming to Madras to discuss garment sales with three European buyers who were scared to come to Colombo." I thought how safe it felt here, how easily even ordinary folk moved into fashionable Kumaran's from the street because the

shop sold sarees from fifty rupees to ten thousand. A ten thousand-rupee saree was displayed by a bald-headed middle-aged, shopping assistant on the open floor. He had draped it around his shoulder and let the richness of the design and the colour overflow on the cement.

"They have stunning models to show off their sarees," I remembered Cubby say.

Monday morning

The conversation at dinner last night took a rather strident tone when I broached the thought that Madras was much improved. "No!" said my audience of friends, "we see no improvement at all. It is dirty, slummy, crummy. It is a society divided by hierarchy. Can't you see the untouchable condemned to beggary or to sweep the streets? Consider the English-speaking graduate in khaki who drove the auto in which four of us arrived here at dead of night with you sharing the driver's front seat with him. What improvement for him?"

The young woman on the street who wore a faded green saree with a mango motif would have been a beauty if she was washed and polished. But her job was to carry her two-year-old-child in a sling made of her saree *pota* and release the child whenever he had to beg for her. Or she would herself approach and, raising her fingers to her

mouth, would repeat, "*Chapatu, aiya, chapatu, sir!*"

Then there was the auto driver who had laughed at my comment on the improvements in Madras. "Tamil Nadu Minister improves fifty crore in five minutes!" he said, as he drove the auto like a fierce chariot through the dense throng.

The divisions between the rich and the poor and all the other human divisions are there, very visibly. But also equally visibly alive is the viability of this society, its divisions functioning like parts of a well-integrated organism, a human body like a dancer's where every section of society seems to work, even though the work is demeaning. But the ameliorative forces of democracy and economic expansion are available to cushion the blows that may fall on the highly charged auto, the modern vehicle of the gods, the *vaganam* to which Madras may be compared. The three-wheeler is the symbol of the Indian society which is going places.

But Madrasis don't think so. When I put the question to MMM of this paper, "What makes Madras tick?", he laughed, "The question is does it tick at all?" But he was not thinking of the three-wheeler.

(Saturday and Sunday next fortnight)

Wilfrid Jayasuriya of Colombo

That one talent...

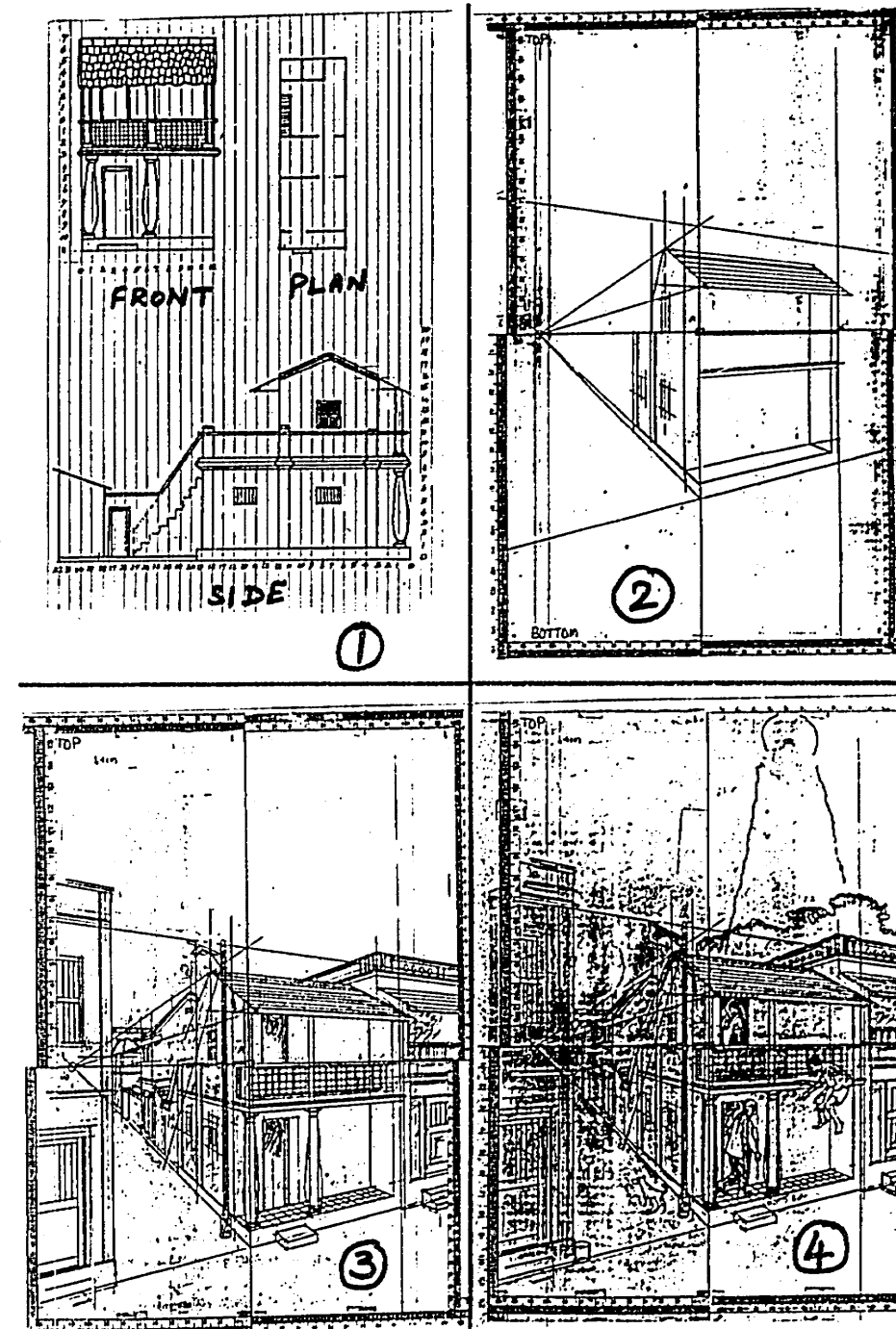
Doth god exact day labour,
light denied, I fondly ask...

JOHN MILTON

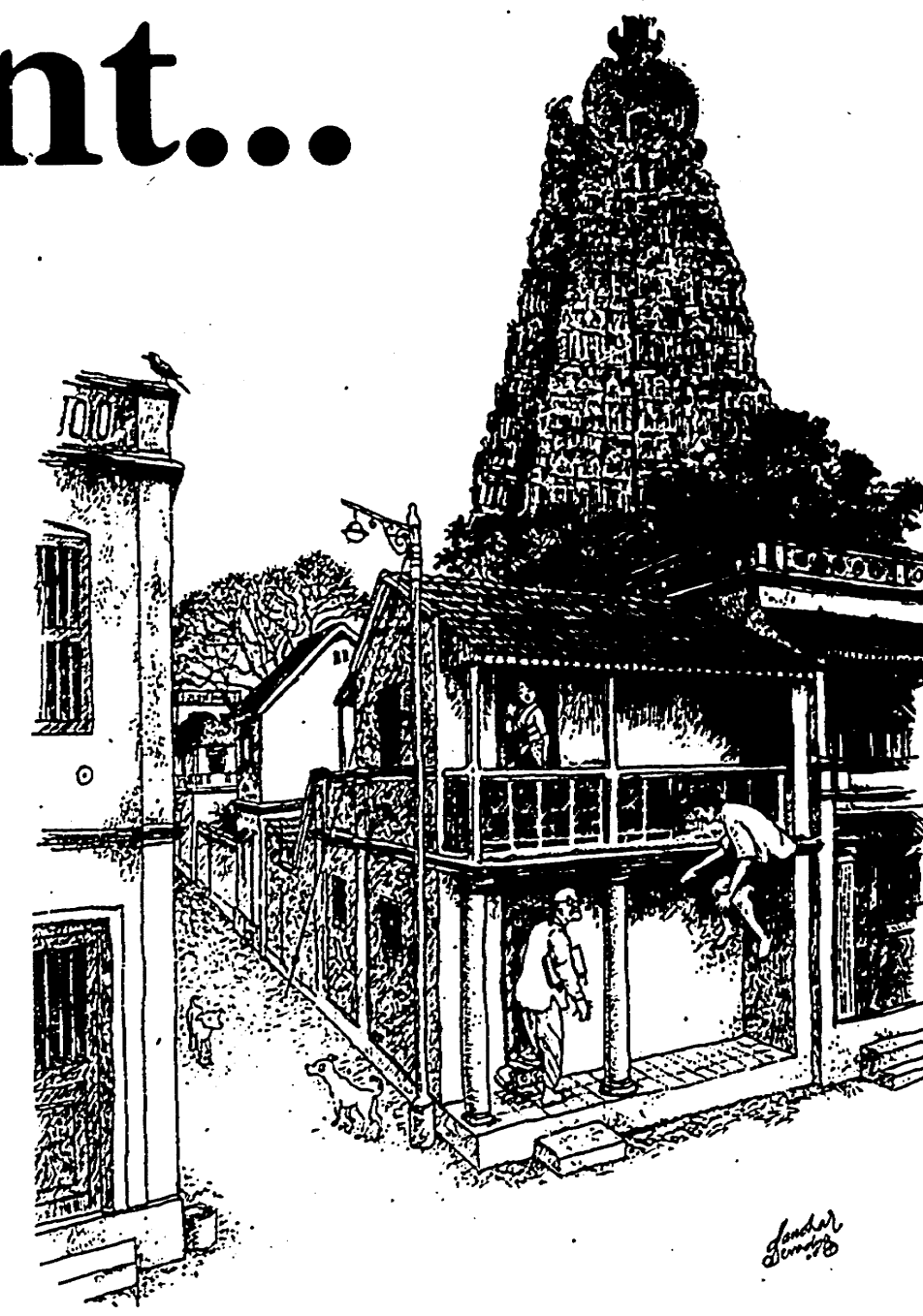
The poignancy of Milton's *On His Blindness* — and Manohar Devadoss' answer to the question — springs foremost to the mind when you see the artist's range of paintings and sketches: A visual feast of palm-fringed landscapes, lyrical trees with lacy branches, soaring church spires and temple *gopurams* sketched with an exquisite 'eye' for detail, faces and forms, puckishly human situations and lovely old buildings which whisper tales of long ago. But not for Manohar Devadoss (to quote Milton again) "that one talent which is death to hide, lodged with me useless".

Despite being stricken by *retinus pigmentosa* 25 years ago, leaving minimal vision in only one eye, this soft-spoken, US-trained chemical engineer celebrates life in all its manifestations of physical and natural beauty with his easel, brush, pen and ink. And now, his prolific output of paintings and much-admired pen-and-ink sketches, shown at exhibitions in the city over the years, finds yet another

unique expression in an illustrated book on his boyhood years in Madurai. So evocative are the exquisitely rendered



This is how Manohar brings to life the Old Madurai seen above, right.



Life in Old Madurai, as remembered by Manohar Devadoss

and grow. He shows me a gem of a pen-and-ink drawing of a jeweller's shop in Madurai. "I first drew the topmost portion of the building and Xeroxed it, then the portion below and Xeroxed it too, and continued section by section till I had

hum. For his much sought-after sketches of old houses, he does exact mathematical calculations before doing angular views and the final skeletal drawing. Once the final skeletal sketch is done, Manohar takes a Xerox, sticks it on scholar paper, illuminates it from below, and then does the final drawing...

While Mahema is his greatest inspiration, helper and harshest critic, and childhood friend Jairaj gives invaluable suggestions, Manohar Devadoss, first and foremost, draws upon his immense talent and spiritual strength to create images of delicate detail. Already more drawing projects are on the anvil for the artist, and promises to keep, mostly to himself, in a life which he cannot imagine without drawing and sketching.

by Pushpa Chari

sketched only one half of the building totally. Thereafter I took the mirror image of the 'half painting', Xeroxed it and stuck the two images together", and, lo and behold, in front of my bemused gaze there was a whole building, just needing a few human figures to make it

doss do it? How does a man who can barely see through +18 glasses turn out such wondrously detailed sketches? "I lenses I need, as though I am a surgeon performing an operation! The more intricate the sketch, the higher the power of the specs. I have favourite names for them too, like *muttai kannadi*, or 'egg specs', for the thick, rounded lenses." You can see where the humorous details in the paintings come from!

Manohar Devadoss started doing his famous pen-and-ink sketches only after his vision began to fail, because "it was easier to do pen-and-ink sketches with a bad vision. I can distinguish between black and white and can see zebra stripes quite clearly." Drawing being a particularly time-consuming business for him, wife Mahema, herself a traumatic quadriplegic confined totally to her wheelchair or bed, reads copiously to him while he sketches. To this day, Manohar associates certain books or passages with certain paintings — *Remains of the Day* is interwoven into his two High Court domes etc.

Manohar uses his rapier sharp memory, his feel for nature, his special lenses, his wit and photographs for his drawings and pen-and-ink sketches. "My sketches," he says, "are like assembly line exercises". His landscapes and trees, which figure quite prominently in his sketches with an unforgettable luminosity and delicacy, Devadoss draws from memory and "quite freely". But what is absolutely fascinating is to see how his sketches of monuments, buildings and houses develop



And this was what 'suburban' Madurai looked like in those days, remembers Manohar

pen-and-ink sketches with their wealth of detail of intense, almost Dickensian, intimacy that each sketch in the book tells its own unique story — with Mano's inimitable touch...

How does Manohar Deva-

have +18, +20, +23, and +25 lenses to do my sketching," says Manohar as he shows me a boxful of lenses with a gleam in his eye (Yes, the gleam is firmly in place!). "As I sketch, my helpers keep handing me the

COOKING with Chandra

SPICY GREEN PEAS

2 cups shelled peas
1 tsp sugar
3/4 tsp chilli powder
2 tbs oil
1 medium-sized onion, grated
1" piece ginger, peeled and grated
Salt to taste

Method

Heat oil, add sugar. When it turns reddish, add grated onion and ginger. Sauté for a minute or two. Add the chilli powder, green peas, salt and 1/2 cup of water. Simmer on low heat till done. Serve immediately.

CARROT PORIYAL

1/2 kg carrot, peeled and chopped to bite size,
2 green chillies, halved
1/2 cup grated coconut
Salt to taste

For tempering

2 tsp oil
1/2 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp blackgram dhal
1 red chilli, halved
1/2 tsp asafoetida powder
A few curry leaves

Method

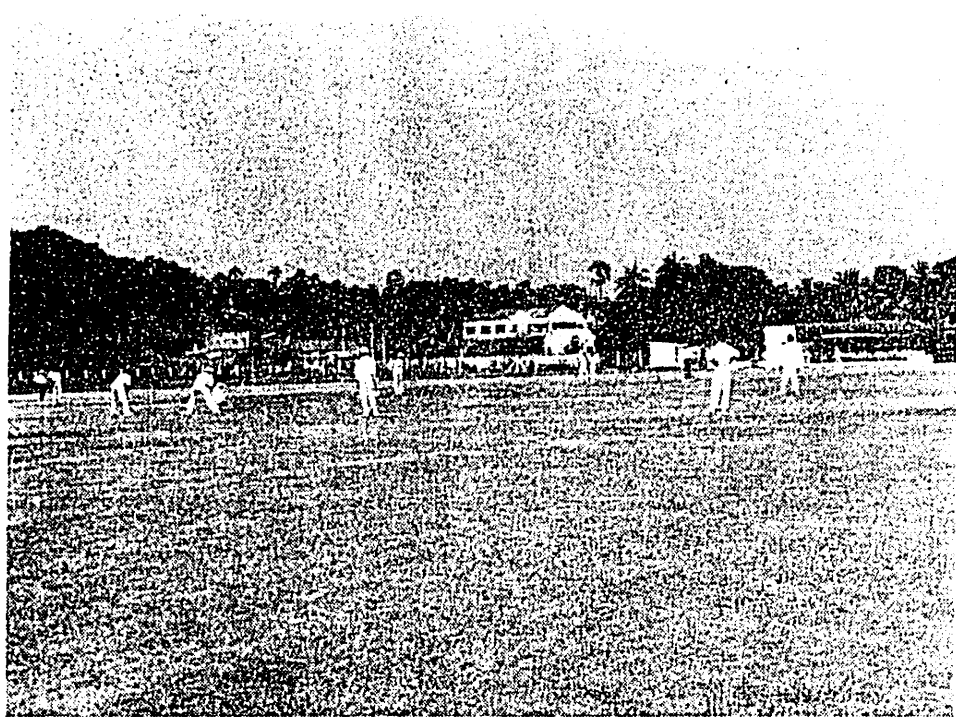
Heat oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When mustard seeds splutter, add the green chillies, chopped carrot, salt to taste and 1/2 cup water. Close with a lid and simmer on a low heat till the carrots are tender. Add the grated coconut. Mix well and serve immediately.

SUFFICIENT GROUNDS
TO BELIEVE...

T.N. cricketers never had it better!

Not very long ago, Madras, with its predominance of matting wickets, provided few opportunities for cricketers to play on turf pitches. Tamil Nadu's batsmen were easily exposed at first-class level because of the bad batting habits they had acquired over the years, groomed as they had been on coir matting. The State's bowlers too suffered from the artificial turn and bounce such surfaces offered, suddenly drying up when they had to bowl on turf.

The reason for the paucity of turf pitches in the city was largely financial. In addition to the initial investments in digging and laying the pitch, consider-



The CPT sports complex in Taramani, which India Pistons has developed as yet another first class cricket ground in the city. With more grounds like this being developed and maintained by sports-loving business houses, do we have grounds to believe that Tamil Nadu's cricketers will reciprocate the gesture with better performances in national competition?

By V. Ramnarayan

able sums of money have to be spent on maintaining it. Water has to be made available in plenty and the playing area has to be constantly protected from trespassers and vandals.

In recent years, a happy feature has been the number of corporate bodies in the city who

have come forward to adopt school and college grounds, transforming sometimes ill-maintained playing fields into top-class sporting facilities. The India Cements-Guru Nanak College collaboration, which began some years ago, has been one initiative which has set world-class standards for others to follow. This college cricket ground at Velacheri now provides as near an English village-green ambience as can be hoped for in tropical Chennai. The Madras Christian College School ground, which houses the MRF Pace Foundation, also has world-class facilities for its fast bowling wards.

Others have followed suit. The latest additions to the City's cricket infrastructure are at IIT Madras and Central Polytechnic (CPT), Taramani, and both promise to grow into outstanding playing fields in the foreseeable future. The IIT-Chemplast ground, set deep inside the campus, presents a beautiful sight with its superb outfield. The India Pistons-sponsored ground at CPT is

equally impressive. Both these are the handiwork of former cricketers — P Mukand and P R Vishwanathan, respectively. Like the SPIC-Anna University Sports Complex, India Pistons' commitment to CPT also goes beyond the cricket ground to cover other sport — football, hockey, basketball and tennis. The proposed tennis courts, however, are to be used primarily by the sponsors.

The SPIC group pioneered the concept of industry-institution cooperation in the promotion of sport, cricket in particular, when it adopted the YMCA grounds at Nandanam nearly a decade ago. (The Sanmar group went through a couple of abortive attempts at the University Union at Egmore and Vivekananda College at Mylapore before finally finding a stable ally in IIT Madras.) The SPIC ground was quite a showpiece in the initial years, but its upkeep declined somewhat in recent times. Recent efforts to improve its condition seem to be working and we may soon see it restored to its former state of excellence. The SPIC-Anna University complex is still in its infancy. The AC College of Technology ground in the complex is home to the MAC Foundation's Spin Academy.

The India Cements-Guru Nanak College and SPIC-YMCA grounds have full-fledged pavilions and dressing rooms. Guru Nanak has one of the best covering systems in these parts. The new grounds — IIT-Chemplast and CPT-India Pistons — are expected to have all these facilities in the near future.

Waking up to it

Last week, *The Corner Flag* commented on the total lack of coverage in that leading sports weekly, *Sportstar*, of the country's first professional football league. *The Corner Flag*'s remarks appeared simultaneously with the April issue of *Sportstar*, which carried a seven-page review of the tournament and acknowledged that it was the finest

by
The Corner Flag

thing that had happened to Indian football. Better late than never, even if the report was tucked away somewhere near the end, long after the pages and pages of cricket of all classes.

The Corner Flag hopes that with this beginning, the pro league will be carried weekly in *Sportstar* this year and that the in-depth coverage that the competition warrants will result in regular cover stories too. With such encouragement, perhaps Indian football will get somewhere, at least even in Asia.

A word to our sponsors

As we begin a new year of publication, *Madras Musings* must thank its sponsors for agreeing to our acknowledging only their names on this page, instead of publishing the small advertising displays of theirs we carried last year. This will enable us to provide more space for Chennai sport, which readers had long been asking us to do, and it will enable us to do this even if the list of sponsors increases, line by line, as we hope it will this year.

— The Editor

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Kalpana Rai; 2. Pioneer 10; 3. R. Tamaraiyani; 4. 3001 — *The Final Odyssey*; 5. Vasant Shinde; 6. Etienne Barcot of France; 7. It's the world's fastest train, capable of a speed of 300km per hour; 8. Jagmohan Dalmiya; 9. Heaven's Gate; 10. Pupul Jayakar; 11. They were erroneously portrayed as Dhanu and Sivarasan, the assassins of Rajiv Gandhi, in a photograph with

Jayalalitha that was published in several newspapers; 12. *The English Patient*; 13. Oman; 14. Ajay Sharma of Delhi; 15. Lakhubhai Pathak.

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16. A butterfly enclosure; 17. *Britannia*; 18. Justice K.A. Thani-kachalam; 19. Mint junction, Ezhilagam, Mylapore-Luz junction, and Perambur. 20. Avadi.

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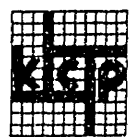
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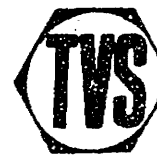
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