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From the President's Desk . . .

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Dear (s) We are fresh from the happy conduct of Child Fest which was a grandiose event. The weather cooperated and children in large numbers conglomerated. There was active participation from all the sides which ensured the success of the competition.

There was happy news on the cricketing front also. After the resounding victory in the One day series, the cricket fans could rejoice again. Last time when we played Pakis at Kotla, Laxman snapped up Akram to complete Kumble's 10 wicket haul. Now the same man led from the front to set up another famous victory. Though the fourth innings victory target of 203 looked gettable, a terrific Akhtar had India in trouble at 93-3. Happily the senior pros Ganguly-Tendulkar stand stamped out all hopes of a Pakistani revival.

But the happenings at Nandigram are melancholic. Nandigram is no longer just an area in East Midnapore district of West Bengal. It is neither any concern about industrialization, nor another name for a struggle against the acquisition of land to create an SEZ, which has the potential to trigger off similar protests around the country. Unfortunately, Nandigram has become synonymous with the blatant support of the State apparatus for a repressionist policy. In the place which was once peaceful, goons aided by political cadres went on rampage to recapture villages, kill innocent people, burn their houses and denied the media any opportunity to speak to the victims. The role in such violence, of the State claiming to identify with the concerns of the poor and the deprived, cannot be countenanced in a democracy. All the dust would settle down as soon as another crisis erupts diverting the attention of the media.

Elsewhere at Jharkhand which is part of naxal affected corridor, the killings are becoming frequent. Recently, 18 people were killed – the dead included the son of former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi. This unfortunate event happened in the presence of nearly 8,000 people at a cultural function, which was attended by the Naxals, who saw the dance and drama programme, and struck at will at a chosen moment. The smaller states do not garner the attention they deserve and Jharkhand's travails are no secret.

-T.J.Ramani

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சைமாவின் குழந்தைகள் விழா - 2007

The first week of November (3rd and 4th to be precise) saw children attend in large numbers. Yes the festivity was Child Fest of SYMA. This annual fete is immensely popular amongst school and school children of the City. This year around 4500 students from around 100 schools participated.

As all are well aware, we have been in the field of Social service for more than 3 decades, striving for betterment of society. Our aim has been to inculcate good qualities to children thereby making them become responsible citizens. Child Fest is one such attempt aimed at imbibing in them the skill sets, confidence and more importantly competitiveness.

We provide a competitive platform for the young citizens to showcase their talents in various fields. There are competitions in the disciplines of Singing, Dancing, Fancy Dress and knowledge. This year we after rounds of deliberations decided to exclude dance competition for the school children of higher classes as the cultural values were seemingly eroding in such a show.

On Saturday, the programme got off to an auspicious start with Mr. R. Seshadri, Regional Manager, G.M. Pens, inaugurating the function by lighting the kuthu vilakku. Singing competitions followed at the main Sudarshan hall. Then we had the drawing competition for the higher classes of 6th to 12th standard. Students of 8th & 9th drew on the caption Uses of Forests, while it was Vision of Nehru for the students of 11th & 12th.

At 11.30 it was written preliminary for the two groups of Quiz. There was good participation from schools vying to claim the honours in the knowledge show. Each school was represented by a team consisting of two and four schools reached the finals which was a grand show in the main hall. There were quite a few enthralled audience for the Quiz this time which gave us some sense of satisfaction. The Quiz was conducted by the team of Mr Sridhar Joshi, Sundar & Rajaraman. The concluding question was of great relevance and significance to our organization. It was the picture of a bird asked to be identified. Any wild guesses ?

Well the name of the bird was Syma. It is a genus of a bird in the Alcedinidae family containing the species of Mountain kingfisher and yellowbilled kingfisher.

Then followed the competition for which children in large numbers turned up in a motley of colours and variety of attires representing Gods, freedom fighters and

more. It was truly a pleasing sight to see so many children in different costumes.

In a surprise deviation from the customary, the prize distribution for some of the events was organized in the first day itself. Cine actress Ms Rohini & Dr. Mrs. Anuradha Ramanan were the Chief Guest who gave away the prizes to the winning children.

Sunday saw presence of a very high turn out, despite inclement weather and some heavy showers. The participation for drawing is increasing every year and we strain our every sinew to cope up with increasing volumes. We then had the Singing competition finals and the Dancing competition for students of LKG to 5th standard.

The prize distribution function started off at 5.30pm. The Prize Distribution function on the second day was embellished by the suave Ms Supriya Sahu, IAS, Ms Mahathi, famous singer and the affable entertainer Bosski. For Statistical delight –

Singing : Carnatic 37 ; Film 36.

Quiz – 31 teams; (2 Groups)

Drawing : LKG & UKG 128;

1 & 2 236; 3-5 636;

6 - 8 779; 9&10 297;

11&12 46;

Fancy Dress :

Lkg-1st : 210; 2-5 : 116.

Group dance : 72.

The greatness of any organization does not depend on its antiquity but more on its continuity. We owe our continued organizing Child Fest for almost 20 years now to many Organisations and individuals who have been supporting us in our various ventures. This is not a mere formal thanks giving and hence we always make it a point to put before the audience, those without whose efforts and assistance this grand show would have been possible. Come November there are heavy rains and the efforts of our volunteers are indeed laudable – specific mention to R Kannan, TAS, Raghu, SRP, Veeraraghavan and many others who have been the backbone and have rendered services in great measure without putting them in the forefront. It is the selfless attitude and efforts of many like them, which makes SYMA unique and enables smooth conduct of events of such large magnitude.

We are thankful to Soundarya Rathnamala and Mrs Prema Krishnamohan for the great assistance in control and coordination. Old order changeth, yielding place to new. Presently a bunch of youngsters are helping us in our activities which also means that the average age of the SYMA is getting younger. Many thanks to the young volunteers of Kellet and NKT National Boys High Schools. We place on record our appreciation and thanks to Mrs Vasudha Bakthisaran for attending to tele enquiries. Our thanks are due to Capt. Zahed Hussain and other cadets of 1 TN Infantry Battalion of NCC.

We are thankful to the distinguished guests –Mr. R. Seshadri of G.M. Pens for inaugurating the function. Cine actress Ms Rohini & Dr. Anuradha Ramanan for gracing the occasion and giving away the prizes on the 1st day.

Whilst Bosski engrossed the audience with a witty deliverance, Ms Mahathi rendered some mellifluous songs. The Chief Guest Ms Supriya Sahu made an emphatic speech, telling a children a thought provoking story of a bird in the hand of a youngster.

We place on record our gratitude to our sponsors – Shri Murali of Sree Krishna Sweets; Shri Bala of Mangal Tirth Estates, ITC – Greeting Cards and Stationery division, Reynolds and Arun Ice cream.

We have to thank the Principal, Headmistress, Management and especially the Staff of NKT National Girls High School for providing us the place and helping us in so many ways. Though there was depression in the bay and it rained heavily, the arena was kept useable thanks to the Sanitary staff.

We thank the Schools and parents of all students who enthusiastically participated in the Child Fest upholding the principles of competitive participation. Thanks are due to Mr Kumaresan for the brochures, CR Sridhar of Media Associates and Swaraj Graphics Mani. We thank Mr Saranyan for the catering and serving of food at the venue; Mr Ramesh for the stage, Mr M Cheran, MC for the barricades and electrician, Mr Varadhan. Our thanks are also to Mr Sridhar Joshi & Sundar for conducting the Quiz and to all the distinguished Judges who selected the best of the entries that were on show. We thank photographer Mr Selvakumar, the Newspaper & Press (especially The Hindu) and D 3 Police Station for ensuring proper conduct of the show.

பறக்கும் ரயில் சில விவரங்கள்

Much to the delight of the commuters of Chennai, the much awaited elevated train services between Velachery and Thirumayilai under the 'Mass Rapid Transit System' (MRTS), was inaugurated by the Chief Minister recently (19th Nov 2007). Chennai, has a well-established Suburban Railway Network, which dates back to 1931, when services began on the metre-gauge line from Beach to Tambaram.

The Govt began planning for a new railway line inside the city in 1985 and construction was started in 1991. The first phase was delayed and finally opened in 1997. The section of the line encompassing the first three Stations- Beach, Fort and Park Town, is at grade; after Park Town it begins climbing. All the Stations after Park Town — Chintadripet, Chepauk, Tiruvallikeni, Lighthouse and Thirumayilai are elevated. The Line from Park Town to Thirumayilai follows the course of the Buckingham Canal, which runs parallel to the Coromandel Coast.

The current length of the MRTS is 16 Km or 10 Miles, from Beach to Thiruvanmiyur. The trains run on the MRTS are 'normal' EMUs, and do not have automatic doors like a Metro Train. With the present inauguration, the commuters, would have train services up to Velachery from Chennai Beach station. This extension would considerably ease the traffic congestion in the sector. There are eight stations — Mandaveli, Greenways Road, Kotturpuram, Kasturba Nagar, Indira Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Taramani and Perungudi in the new section. With the completion of this phase, it is hoped that the circuit would be completed by future extensions from Velachery to St. Thomas Mount; Mount to Villivakkam and Villivakkam to Ennore.

The journey from Beach to Velachery would take only 40 minutes. The first train in the morning leaves Beach at 6.05 and would reach Velachery by 6.50. The first train leaves Velachery by 6.45 am Presently, there would be no train from Beach beyond 8.30 p.m. and from Velachery beyond 9.15 p.m. as these are the last trains out of the termini.

There are many things that are far from perfect mainly the access about this train service. For truly benefitting the common man, the stations will have to be modernised and lot needs to be done to ward off the desolate appearance, poor maintenance and forbidding dark recesses of the stations which tend to strike fear among the commuting public. We hope that sooner all these would be solved and the train travel would in the near future become the primary mode of transit of the chennaites.

Ques: There's no argument about how much we love money and how we feel contented when we see it grow safely. And those who do not want to risk their investments certainly love to buy gold. Reliance unveiled low-end variants of gold coins weighing as low as half a gram. Infact a Diwali Offer "buy a Gold coin, get a silver coin" was launched to accelerate the sales. Gold is no longer a costly metal with limited usage. Do you know what the largest coin available for purchase is?

Ans:in Pg 4

தேசியம் அறிவோம் - செக்கிமுத்த செம்மல்

Close on the heels of our Q on Veerapandia Kattabomman in our last issue, the younger generation needs to know lot about a great freedom fighter whose extraordinary zeal will always remain a source of inspirations for the generations. Apart from his sacrifices, he will eternally be remembered for the great enterprise and wisdom – running a shipping company. Nationalism ought to be not merely a political creed but a religious aspiration and a moral attitude.

V.O.Chidambarampillai (VOC) was born on 5 September 1872 in Ottapidaram, Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, the same District which a hundred years earlier had given birth to Veerapandiya Kattabomman. He supported Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the militant wing of the Indian National Congress. He participated in the 1907 Surat Congress together with Subramania Bharatiar

Commerce between Tuticorin and Colombo was the monopoly of the British India Steam Navigation Company (BISN) and its Tuticorin agents, A. & F. Harvey. Inspired by the Swadeshi movement, V.O.C. mobilised the support of local merchants, and launched the first indigenous Indian shipping enterprise, the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, thus earning for himself the name - "Kappalottiya Tamilan ". The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was registered on the 12th of November 1906. He purchased two steamships, S.S. Gallia and S.S. Lawoe for the company and commenced regular services between Tuticorin and Colombo against the opposition of the British traders and the Imperial Government. His efforts to widen the base of the Swadeshi movement, by mobilising the workers of the Coral Mills (also managed by A. & F. Harvey) brought him into increasing conflict with the British Raj. Fearing that this would break the British monopoly over shipping trade and transport in the subcontinent the British even carried passengers between Tuticorin and Colombo free and offering an umbrella free besides. This caused V.O.C.'s ships to go empty.

On 12 March 1908, he was arrested on charges of sedition and for two days, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin witnessed unprecedented violence, quelled only by the stationing of a punitive police force. V.O.C. was confined in the Central Prison, Coimabtoore from 9 July 1908 to 1 December 1910. The Court imposed a sentence of two life imprisonments (in effect 40 years). Chidambarampillai was not treated as a 'political prisoner'. The sentence that was imposed on him was not 'simple imprisonment'. He was treated as a convict sentenced to life imprisonment and required to do hard labour. He was "yoked to the oil press like an animal and made to work it in the cruel hot sun.

He was finally released on December 12, 1912. To his dismay, the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was forced to wind up as it could not withstand the onslaught of the British pressure. He fell ill and passed away on November 18, 1936.

The extraordinary zeal of the patriot will always remain a source of inspiration for generations to come

Answer to Q. Pg.3 : In India the ones offered by Reliance weighing half a gram would cost around Rs. 500 per unit and 1 gram Rs. 1,000/- The largest of the coins however is not available in India but in Canada. The Gold Maple Leaf coin, minted by the Royal Canadian Mint & put up for online auction by Teletrade is made of 99.999% pure gold, weighs 100 kg and has a face value of CA\$1 million. The 100 kg coin is approximately 50 cm in diameter and about 3 cm thick. At 99.999% purity, the gold coins are amongst the purest in the bullion market.

At current prices, the coin's 3,215 troy ounces of gold are worth well over C\$2 million. The exchange rate to C\$ to Indian Rupees is approx 40.30. The sale is stated to be of a very limited one. So far, the mint reportedly has confirmed orders for five coins.

வாழ்த்துகிறோம்

Our members - D Krishnan, N Ganapathy, D Sudarshan & R Vijayaraghavan, S. Mani, have been elected as Committee Members of the prestigious Sri Parthasarathi Swami Sabha in their AGM conducted recently. BLISS wishes them.

To

உறுப்பினர்களிடமிருந்து செய்திகள், துணுக்குகள்
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அணுக வேண்டிய முகவரி : **சைமா BLISS**

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