

# Andhra assn's silver jubilee

By R. Venu

Twentyfive years old and still going strong. This is the message that the Andhra Cultural Association beamed out to the residents of Cochin city as the Andhra community celebrates the silver jubilee of its organised efforts at cultural promotion along with the arrival of the New Year "Ugadi" on Monday.

Walking through the exhibition "Gifts of Andhra" that had an illustrated takeoff on Sunday morning at the Sankara Theosophical Society premises, a flood of relief and joy is the first emotion that floods in. This is due to the fact that for a change it is not a government-propelled self eulogy but a sincere effort of a small group to utilise its humble resources in the best possible manner to bring out the various facets of Andhra's culture and economy.

Traversing through the various charts, drawings, and models describing the mineral resources, forest wealth, cultural background, customs and traditions, two major elements in the lifestyle of the Telugus jut out — their obvious religiosity and the richness of their heritage. And as if to assert the first point the organisers have displayed the comments of the Father of the Nation: "Andhras are like the open sea. I like Andhra because the people there are religious and hard working." The exhibition elaborately lists the various festivals of Andhra and the mythology surrounding them as well as the main instruments of personal and domestic pooja, that even today dominates the life of Hindus, be they settled in Andhra or Kerala.

The photograph shows Varalakshmi created out of coconut placed on top of a huge "kalasam" and adorned with garments, which is the major part of varalakshmi vratham, an auspicious observance for married women.

If that was religion even the food habits of the people have not been forgotten and a plan-tain leaf laid out with exotic veni-satable and rice preparations leave onlookers smacking their lips and almost wishing there was a feast along with their celebrations.

The charming guide almost

went into raptures over "ugadi pachadi" and pointing out the different varieties of pickles and chutneys. "If Keerala's forte is payasam there is no doubt to beat Andhra in pickles", asserted "Ugadi pachadi made out of neem flowers, jaggery, tamarind, salt and mango, the very special item of Andhra New Year, transcends the joys of the palate and enters the realms of philosophy when it is seen as a representation of life in its entirety, a mixture of good and bad, sweet and bitter."

As the background music changes from "Veda parayanam" to "Annamachari" kritis one reaches the section on culture and fine arts, a wide-ranging collection of Telugu classics and modern-day magazines flanked by a portrait of Saint Thyagaraja along with charts describing the origin and evolution of the Telugu script, literature and its various dance forms. A well-made replica of the "kuchipudi" village highlights the rustic origins of Andhra's well-known dance form and muggu drawings on the floor point out the rice flour artist that almost every Andhra woman is.

Talking to the various members of the Andhra Cultural Association, in an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality, it becomes evident that the spirit of cultural individuality that the Association seeks to promote compliments the social and cultural melting pot that cosmopolitan Cochin is fast turning into. Mrs. Geetha Lakshman who came to Cochin after her marriage in 1979 and now runs an institute for kuchipudi dance pointed out that almost every activity of the Association ought to bring about a fusion of Kerala and Andhra traditions.

She said that inauguration of the exhibition performed by Mrs. Ratnakala S. Menon, combined the Andhra practice of breaking a coconut along with the Kerala custom of lighting a lamp.

She went on to add that the Association participated in all the social festivals and functions organised in Cochin and that celebration of Onam and Vishu had become a family affair.

Mr. Vishnu Bhatia, a scientist at the Naval Base, pointed out that the community consisting of

around 300 families comprised a Neeraja Rao and Mrs. Kausalya Rajaram, were being felicitated at the public function on Monday for the services they have rendered in promoting Andhra culture and art.

Coming to children and education, the Andhras came out with their problems and worries. There was no way that their children could learn Telugu systematically in schools at present. Since most of them were Central Government employees, with the Damocles sword of transfer hanging over their heads at all times, they preferred to put their children in central schools, where there was only Hindi and English. Most of the other children went to private English medium schools and learned Malayalam as a language and the only way to teach them Telugu was for parents themselves to take up the responsibility at home.

Association president Sreenivas said that one of the objectives of the Association all along had been to serve as a focal institution for the teaching of Telugu language and the various music and dance forms. A plan had been chalked out for the creation of a full-fledged Telugu library and a Telugu medium school and a development fund had been started for the purpose.

The Andhra Government had come forward to give grants through the International Telugu Institute for the purchase of books and musical instruments, and had promised money for the construction of a building if the association could get a suitable plot of land. "Space is the problem", he said and it is for that "we are now looking towards the Kerala Government, the Cochin Corporation and the GCDA."

But to this idea, Mr. Venkataraman added a different perspective when he pointed out the transition that was overcoming the migrant community in terms of fusion and integration with the Kerala society.

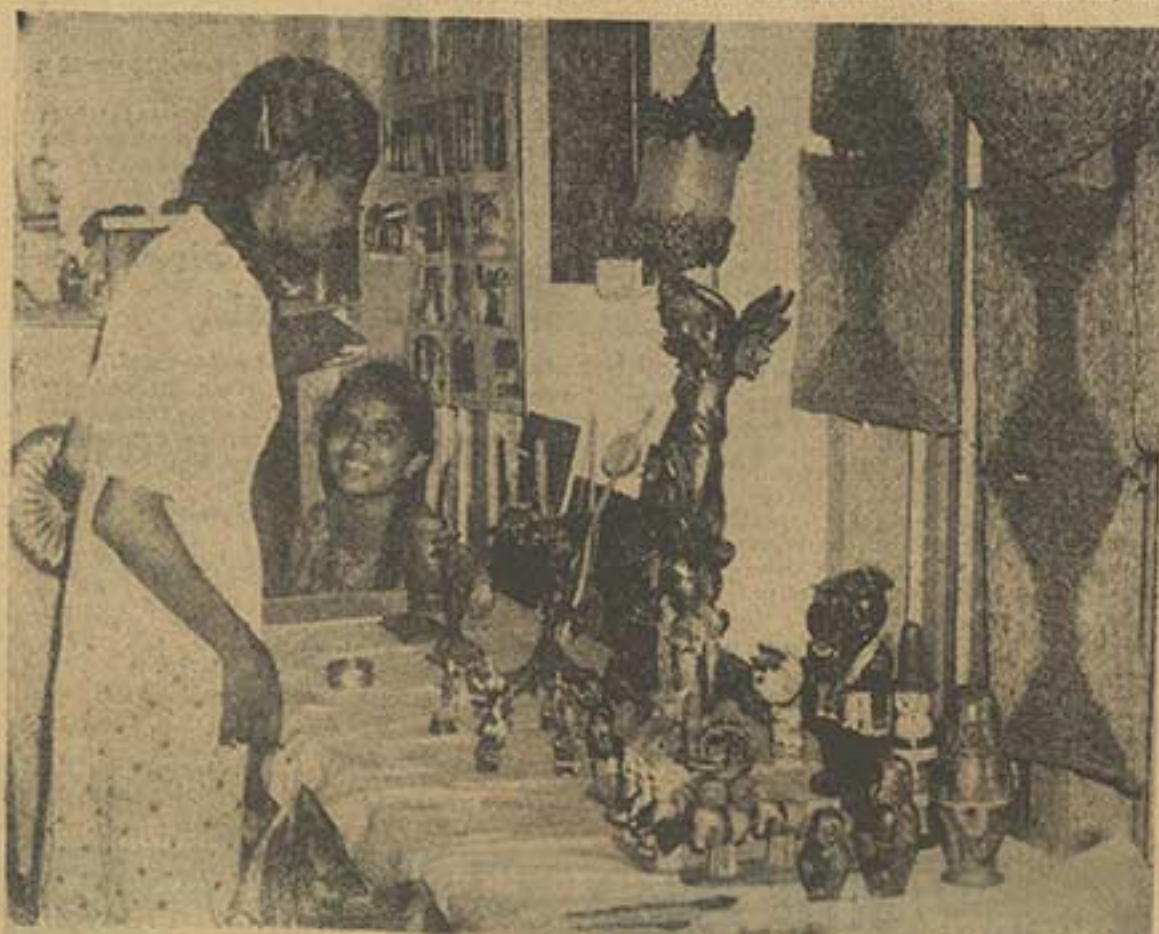
Insisting that the people of Cochin should not see the Telugu culture as a foreign one, he said that most of them had fully well become naturalised Malayalis. They did maintain links with their native villages in Andhra and went there quite often, but one trend that was increasingly discernible among the youngsters was that Cochin was their home and Andhra a foreign land.

They disliked the heat and dust of Andhra and preferred the rain and greenery of Kerala. And almost all of them spoke Malayalam as good as Telugu. Quite a few of the Telugu community had already built houses and decided to settle down here permanently. Because of these reasons, he felt that the authorities should show the same concern they had for the development of Kerala's culture and art forms.

Another interesting feature that came out of the discussion was the feelings of affinity these migrants had vis-a-vis other migrants.

Mr. P. Shivkumar, a banker, pointed out that probably integration had not reached the level of marriages outside the community as most of the elders had to go back to Andhra or other metropolitan cities hunting for brides and bridegrooms. But still there was a obvious preference for Andhra people settled outside the State. This was because the process of migration, resettling, adjustment and integration into a new social and culture necessarily brought about a broadening of horizons and spirit of tolerance that people within the State who had seen other society but their own, could not have. Orthodoxy and conservatism were considerably less among the Andhras in Cochin compared to the people in the home State. Social evils like dowry had a negligible influence, Mr. Shivkumar added.

In the efforts of this community which is only seeking assimilation Cochin city can probably find test-case to bring about an effluence of various strands of culture that together can form ideally excellent synthesis.



Glimpses of Andhra

2-1-87



June 28-1984  
 Byline no. 7 Inside page

# Case against nuclear reactor

By R. VENU  
 Express News Service

"Saving society from the consequences of Government decisions made in the shadow of environmental ignorance". This seemed to be the underlying theme and task of a one-day seminar on the "Advisability of a nuclear reactor in Kerala" held in Cochin a few days ago under the auspices of half a dozen environmental and socio-political organisations.

The seminar itself was actually based on the format of a monumental report in two volumes compiled by a team of scholars led by Prof M. P. Varghese based on a news report in March 1982 regarding a proposal to establish a nuclear plant near Bhoothathankettu barage in the Periyar with a view to produce 2000 MW of electricity at cost of Rs 2500 crores.

The seminar, which brought together some of the leading scientists of the State, was primarily intended to set the final seal of scientific opinion on a technical report compiled from a social scientist's angle.

The feature of both the report and efforts for the seminar that deserves special mention is the fact that it represents the informed opinion of the people living in the site proposed for the reactor, as collected and synthesised by a group of intellectuals, also of that area, on their behalf.

As Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer who inaugurated the seminar and Prof M. P. Manmadhan who delivered the valedictory address put it, "This kind of effort which marks a spirit of grass-roots activism is what is desperately needed to rejuvenate our somnolent democracy in which it is unfortunately the commonman who is the most oblivious of the issues that concern and affect him".

Following in the tradition of the "save Silent Valley" campaign, this movement to highlight the issue of atomic reactors also reflects the sentiment that war cannot be left to Generals alone and seeks to build up a formidable combination of scientific opinion and public consciousness to check the monolith that is Government from getting away with planting a monster that spreads silent death in the midst of an unsuspecting public.

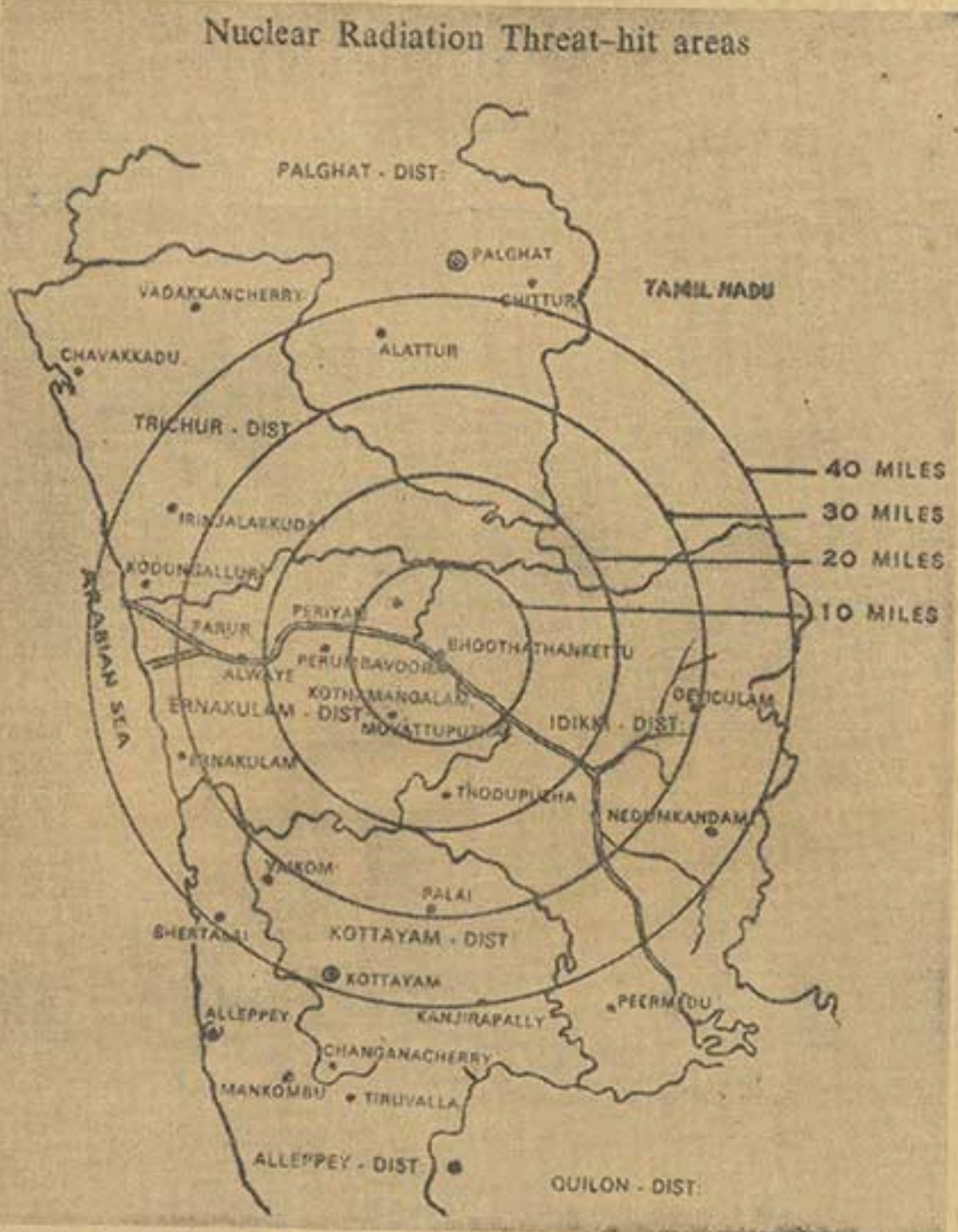
The arguments presented by the assembled scientists to the audience were diverse, well-documented and logical.

Every man throughout the world is being constantly subjected to natural and man-made radiation from cosmic rays, radioactive minerals in the soil, water and food as well as from X-rays, radium dial wrist-watches and television sets.

While the radiation dose from these itself comes quite near the tolerance end, if the people reside close to a nuclear reactor then direct radiation from the reactor, which in itself is minimal, can combine with natural radiation causing great hazards to health.

Besides there is continuous seepage of small quantities of radiation into the atmosphere and the soil that could gradually build up over the years affecting man through air, water and food.

A fool-proof reactor with totally safe defence mechanisms has come to be accepted as a myth everywhere. Accidents are always a live probability and there is no way the community around a nuclear reactor can be immunised against the spillovers of accident. Though technically no one has died till now due to nuclear accident, there is no country where there has not out utility but discharging radiation accidents, including the nation for a very long time.



tions with the most advanced technology. As far as India is concerned, there is enough documentary evidence to prove that nuclear programme can hardly be called a success story and quite a number of reports have come out in the Press about the very high levels of radiation the workers as well as residents of the area are being subject to.

The question of waste disposal is the most feared and unsolved problem of nuclear programmes even in the highly developed countries. A rough estimate foresees the accumulation of 60,000 cubic metres in the United Kingdom and 10,000 tonnes in the United States of intermediate level wastes.

As a Nobel laureate in physics, Prof Hans Alfren, puts it "Till date there is no realistic project on how to deposit radioactive waste, only optimistic speculation." The radioactivity of wastes lasts for thousands of years and even capacity. Almost all countries in the West have become aware of the non viability of the nuclear programme and are turning their attention to alternative sources of energy like solar, geothermal, tidal,

Experiments in the US to bury wastes in canisters and dump them in the sea have ended as disastrous failures with canisters leaking and radioactivity seeping into the oceans and its marine life.

Effects of atomic radiation need no extra emphasis. It destroys cells of the body, causes cancer, damages the blood-producing spleens and narrows and destroys the infection resistance mechanism. It also has genetic effects causing mutations and abnormal births which could be propagated from generation to generation.

Nuclear energy is the costliest of all forms of energy and the progress of the programme in the country so far does not justify further investment in it at all. After 30 years of the nuclear programme, only the total electricity generated through reactors comes to only around 160 MW or less than one per cent of India's generation capacity. Almost all countries in the West have become aware of the non viability of the nuclear programme and are turning their attention to alternative sources of energy like solar, geothermal, tidal,

hydro-power and thermal. India's coal resources alone would satisfy her energy requirements for the next 150 years. If the amount of money being invested in the atomic programme was diverted to research in the alternative sources, we could probably emerge in the forefront of energy-producing nations by the turn of the century. The nuclear programme has established a band of dependency with foreign nations that affects our overall attempts for self-reliance. Nuclear plants have very little employment potential compared to hydel and thermal plants.

As far as siting of the plant is concerned, a worse place than Kerala, whose density of population (654 per sq km) exceeds even the most dense of nations Japan (389 per sq km) could not be found. The present site of Bhoothathankettu would have within its radius of 10 km a population of 2.6 lakhs, within 20 km a population of 11 lakhs, within 30 km 43 lakhs of people and within 40 km 70 lakhs of people. The site of Bhoothathankettu decided for the nuclear reactor would not conform to the guidelines laid

down by IAEA, US agencies or Indian Government itself for deciding the location of an atomic reactor.

The maximum density fixed by the IAEA for the area surrounding a nuclear plant is 150 while Kerala's average density is 654. The proximity of a city like Cochin with a population of five lakhs would also not fit into IAEA guidelines. The limits on allowed population, set by a US task force on siting of nuclear plants, in 0.5-mile radius zone is 100 while in Bhoothathankettu the actual population is 1815, for 5-10 mile zone the limit is 150 while the actual population in 1766 and for the 10-20 mile radius zone the limit is 400 while the actual population is 1737.

Even in India the practice so far has been that there should be no population centre greater than 10,000 within 16 km in the main wind direction. The existence of two major municipal towns, Kothamangalam (8 km) and Muvattupuzha (13 km) with a population of 33,111 and 25,310 respectively, clearly go against the set guideline.

Besides, legally it can be argued that people of the area have a voice in whether a nuclear plant should be established there or not. In the US, two States, California and Maine have prohibited any further nuclear plants and eight other States have banned nuclear waste repositories within their border.

As far as the case of Bhoothathankettu is concerned, the people of the locality or the State have not even been informed properly of the decision, let alone be consulted on the question of the advisability of a reactor.

The various papers at the seminar were presented by Dr P. K. Joy of Travancore Titanium Products, Dr C. P. Menon, Cochin University, Dr T. K. Avirah, UC College, Alwaye, Prof V. M. Varghese, MA College, Kothamangalam, Mr U. K. Gopalan, Institute of Oceanography, Dr Joseph Kurien, Lisle Hospital, Prof T. K. Varghese, MA College of Engineering, Dr S. Mohan CSIR, Advocate Dr Vincent Panikulangara of Public Interests Law Society, Prof B. V. G. Menon, Trivandrum Engineering College and Prof M. P. Mathal of St Peter's College, Kolencherry.

It was, however, left to Prof M. K. Prasad of Maharaja's College, one of the leading figures of the Shastra Sahitya Parishad, to sum up the deliberations as he was the moderator of the seminar.

Relating incidents from his experience during the Silent Valley campaign, Prof Prasad said that the real battle over the atomic reactor was only to begin and warned the enthusiasts of the anti-reactor movement to be watchful of the strong politician-bureaucratic-scientist nexus that dominated the administration in Kerala.

Asking the participants to be prepared for criticism of being unpatriotic, anti-development and retrograde in thought, Prof Prasad called for the development of an inter-disciplinary task force comprising scientists, economists, lawyers and social activists that could take up vital concerns of the State's ecology and the future of the coming generations.

Adding that it was not enough for grey-heads and bald-pates to keep on discussing genetic mutations and tolerance levels of radiation, he called for efforts to bring young blood as well as the lay people into such movements so that they would be infused with the energy and spirit that could change an intellectual movement into a popular agitation.





March 30,  
1985

Rylin  
20

Waiting for the taps to open up

30/3/85

# Cochin turning drought city

By R. Venu

Express News Service

Water drips from taps, overhead tanks remain empty and areas that are normally short of water have turned bone dry. This is the situation in the Cochin region today with nearly a month and half of summer yet to be overcome.

This might be scary but even more foreboding is the assertion of water supply officials that the system in the area is functioning at peak capacity and no further augmentation is possible with the existing infrastructure.

What makes this year so different that water shortage has become more acute than ever? The reply of officials is that wasteful consumption plus the fact that new connections keep increasing, adding pressure to an already overloaded system.

In summer, people use the municipal supply to water their plants and trees as well as to soak the bricks used for construction activities. If this could be checked to some extent, officials say, there would be more water available for domestic use.

The corporation, it is understood, has issued an order prohibiting all temporary connections for construction activities till the lean season is over, and so have water supply officials for the rural areas, but this seems to have hardly improved the situation.

Another official version is that there is no water shortage as such, only a lack of pressure in the supply. It is contended that almost every part of the city gets water continuously at the ground level and a furor is being created only because water is not going into the overhead tanks.

Since water is being drawn at various points on its route from Alwaye, by the time it reaches Ernakulam the pressure becomes very low, some officials say and point out that the worst sufferers are those at the end of the line living in areas like Eda Cochin, Vypeen, Kannamali etc who get their water only after Ernakulam's needs are met.

Water supply officials say that they are involved in a very delicate act of balancing out supply from one region to another, cut-

ting from one place for some hours to meet the needs of another in a few hours and then coming back to the old position.

The complaint of some of the women in the farflung areas is that they are unable to sleep because water comes only at midnight. An official said measures were being taken to give them at least two hours of water during the day.

All discussions with the officials veer round to the question of infrastructure for the supply and they unanimously conclude the problems of the Cochin belt cannot be solved unless the existing facilities are enhanced considerably.

The water treatment plant at Alwaye has not been able to increase its capacity to meet the rise in population of the areas it feeds and consequently demand has outstripped supply many times over in the last few years.

The capacity of the plant, even after the installation of high-power pumps, comes to only 20 lakh gallons of water a day. From this, around 20 lakh gallon goes to Parur and adjoining panchayats and to the Vypeen and Njarakkal areas by a single line.

Two lines, one a 42-inch pipe and the other a 36-inch one, bring the remaining water south towards Ernakulam. These pipelines which have water flowing through them for 24 hours, feed first the Alwaye municipality and adjoining panchayats before coming down to the Ernakulam side. Around 10 gallons of water from a small plant at Chovara also joins this supply and it comes up to Palarivattom after feeding Kalamassery, Eloor and Thrikkakara areas.

At Kalamassery there is a pumping station which pumps water to the Thrikkakara area as well as towards Pachalam, where there is another pumping station. From here, water is sent to areas like Cheranallor, Kadamakudi, Muluvakadu, Panambulladu and Vypeen by an underground line.

The 42-inch line merges with the 36-inch line at Palarivattom, and the joint line proceeds to Perumanoor, where water is supplied to the Cochin Refineries, the shipyard,

the Navy, Port Trust, Willingdon Island etc while Ernakulam draws its water from the main lines itself. A separate line from Perumanoor goes to Karuvellipady, from where water is pumped to Fort Cochin, Eda Cochin, Chellanam and Kannamali areas.

To better the supply, the Kerala Water and Waste Water Authority has taken up a few projects of which the most important is the proposal for an additional treatment plant with separate wells at Alwaye, next door to the existing treatment plant. This scheme is expected to provide another 250 lakh gallons of water every day which would virtually double the capacity for water treatment. The only progress so far has been the acquisition of six acres of land and commencement of work on one intake well. The project is expected to take off only if World Bank agrees to fund it and as far as the World Bank is concerned the scheme has just been brought to its notice.

Another scheme on the Anvil is construction of a reservoir at Thammannam so that the 42-inch pipeline can be extended from Palarivattom to it and water stored there. From there the plan is to pump water to the city via Katori kadavu. However, since the quantity of water coming from Alwaye is not going to change the difference will only be that water flow to the city will have a higher pressure.

As far as the Alwaye side is concerned, there is another proposal to collect water in an underground tank at Parur and pump it to the Vypeen islands, using ten pumps and four overhead tanks at Eloor, kunnappuzha, Njarakkal, Moothakunnam and Nayarambalam. This programme which comes under the minimum needs programme of the State Government has been allocated only Rs. 30 lakhs till now, which will just about suffice for the underground tank. The programme of adequate water supply from Periyar will still remain.

It is clear, therefore, that unless this new water treatment plant comes up at Alwaye, there is going to be no long-term solution for the Cochin Refineries, the shipyard,

Willingdon Island etc while Ernakulam draws its water from the main lines itself. A separate line from Perumanoor goes to Karuvellipady, from where water is pumped to Fort Cochin, Eda Cochin, Chellanam and Kannamali areas.

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30/3/85





Examination in open air at the collectorate is on.

*Byline 33,  
30-7-85*

## Electronic goods exposed to sun and rain

By R. VENU

Express News Service

Lakhs of rupees worth of highly sophisticated electronic goods and household equipment are lying exposed to sun and rain in the courtyard of the Customs House of Cochin, even as the skeleton of a multi-storeyed warehouse sleeps nearby.

At present, there is only a small room and a temporary asbestos roofed shed to shelter the large amount of air cargo and unaccompanied baggage that comes to Cochin from different parts of the world. Baggage pieces can be seen lying all over the courtyard and the corridors of the Customs House, and are

generally examined by Customs officials in the open.

According to sources, it was in May 1981 that the Finance Ministry sanctioned Rs 12.5 lakh for the warehouse which was meant to serve as a godown-cum-examination yard. At that time, the cost of the structure alone was estimated to come to Rs 5.5 lakh but it took two years to award the contract and by then, the estimates for the structure had escalated to Rs 10 lakh.

The work was allotted to a contractor in February 1983 by the Central Public Works Department and it is understood that as per the terms of the contract, the entire work was to be completed within 11 months. But

today, nearly 31 months since the contractor took it up, not even the frame of the first floor has been completed and according to sources, only about Rs 2 lakh has been spent on it.

Informed sources reveal that according to the terms of the contract and statutory rules, the contractor is entitled to claim only 90 per cent of the cost of the materials, and the charges incurred by him at every stage of the claim. Reports however say the contractor has already received over Rs 6 lakh.

The whereabouts of the contractor is at present not known and it is quite some time since work on the building came to a total halt.



# Phone talk: Weekly taken for a ride?

By R. Venu

Express News Service

Investigation into the mystery 'telephone documents' seems to indicate that the Bombay weekly had been taken for a ride by an insider of the Telephone Department.

In a nutshell, the insider got the fault docket printed outside, took out the subscriber fault card from the department and made false entries upon it, before palming them off on an unsuspecting journalist of the Weekly. Whether there was any consideration behind it is anybody's guess.

But what is more intriguing is the role of a former Minister who is understood to have financed the insider ostensibly for footing the latter's travel expenses. And equally intriguing is the fact that it was some Congress (I) men who tipped off the Weekly reporter about a phone call from the Chief Minister to the judge. The owner of a private

press in Ernakulam told this reporter that the "insider" approached him nearly a month back with a sample of the fault docket of the Telephones Department and requested him to print around 20 copies of the same with certain serial numbers. Smelling a rat, the press owner refused to oblige him and it is understood that consequently, he approached another press and got the same printed there.

So far as the subscriber fault card is concerned, the operator was able to remove the original from the records of the department and get the vital entries of "Xavier" and "Gopalakrishnan" made thereon.

It may be remembered that the General Manager, Telephones, had admitted that the fault card was found missing.

According to informed sources, initially only the entry under "Xavier" was forged onto the subscriber

fault card and it was only later that the last entry under the name "Gopalakrishnan" was added on. After having a confidant forge the entry of "Xavier" on to the card, this racketeer himself is understood to have telephoned in a complaint from a local telephone, and in the normal course of things, a docket was prepared, and the facts entered into the tally sheet and tell-tale sheet of that particular day. After checking up the details on these records, the racketeer is believed to have got another person to record the last entry of "Gopalakrishnan" onto the fault card. The motive behind this ingenious operation was to lend credibility to the entire document and most of all to the crucial entry of "Xavier".

There is also believed to be one other person, a senior official of the department, who is in the full know of things and had an active role in the entire affair.



Feb 22, 1985. Byline 18.

# Preserve wildlife the nature's way

By R. Venu

Express News Service

The salient aspect of all wildlife conservation efforts lies in the preservation and protection of the natural habitats that nurture wild animals, and for this purpose what is needed most is scientific management of all areas of wilderness and semi-wilderness that survive in our country.

This was the consensus that emerged from a three-day international conference on wildlife management organised by the Kerala Forest Department at Thekkady from February 12 to 14, in connection with the golden jubilee celebrations of the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

Besieged by politicians more interested in the green gold that are trees and organised gangs of poachers, the forester in the country in general and the Kerala Forest Department in particular has had his own problems in cultivating a scientific approach and expertise that would enable him to perform his tasks better.

But as though to make a radical diversion from the practices of the past coinciding with the 'new action plan for wildlife' that has been launched by the Union Government and the reorganisation of the department into separate wings of specialisation in forest and wildlife which is on the anvil, this seminar definitely marked the beginning of a new phase of activities in which scientific opinion would play a very major role.

For a first-ever effort of the department, the response was very encouraging and the participation included leading wildlife biologists from US, West Germany and Sri Lanka, representatives of the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, senior officials of the Central Government, including the Joint Secretary in the Department of Environment holding the charge of wildlife, Mr H. S. Panwar, Director, Project Tiger, senior forest officials from States like Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, MP, UP, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, scientists from various colleges, universities and institutions, the Kerala Forest Research Institute, the Bombay Natural History Society, well known naturalists who included lawyers, engineers and photographers by profession, and members environmental bodies like the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad and the Madras Range Rovers.

The seminar opened with an inaugural address by Dr Salim Ali in which he expressed his deep anguish at the way in which the

natural wealth of Kerala was being squandered by the hacking down of pristine habitats for cultivation and other human purposes.

He called for an urgent check to the desolation that was taking place and made a fervent plea for the establishment of research cells at all major sanctuaries and national parks for the continuous monitoring of existing conditions and collection of dependable data for corrective measures.

The Agricultural Production Commissioner who is the custodian of all the forests in the State, on behalf of the State Government pointed out that Kerala was one of the few States where clear felling has been stopped completely and announced the launching of a special ecological restoration project in Idukki district and the taking over of around 225 sq. km. cardamom estates selected within the Periyar sanctuary.

The session on assessment of carrying capacity of the optimum population for a particular area of sanctuaries concluded more or less affirming the principle of least interference being best management and scientists pointing out the urgent need for revising and refining to Indian conditions, techniques and census methods used in the country for assessing populations of various animals, especially tiger and elephant.

The very limited knowledge of animal behaviour and the total fatality of using assessment methods, perfected by other countries and continents, were stressed during the deliberations, which threw up quite a few suggestions and new census techniques.

The second session on habitat management was presided over by Mr Samar Singh, Joint Secretary (Wildlife), who described the remarkable growth of protected habitats in the country from 24,000 sq. km (five national parks and 126 sanctuaries) in 1975 to over 100,000 sq. km (53 national parks and 247 sanctuaries) in 1985.

During the deliberations, the main causes of the decline in the population of wildlife were identified as habitat destruction owing to increasing demographic pressures and uncontrolled trade and commerce in wildlife articles that was leading to wanton destruction for monetary gain.

The discussions highlighted the urgency of the situation in which threats to forests and wildlife were increasing day by day and stressed the need for adopting an integrated approach to the problem of conservation, in which it was the entire ecosystem that was sought to be preserved and not a particular species or animal.

The need for educating people on the relation between wildlife and forests and in turn forests and man, along with the message that conservation of wildlife and forests in the long run meant conservation of mankind itself was brought out by some speakers.

A note of caution was struck by some that it would not be wise to interfere too much and retard the process of evolution. They asserted the need for an in-depth research and data collection for arriving at some understanding of biological processes before manipulation and management practices were undertaken.

Another major point that came up during the discussions was the question of social acceptability for conservation efforts and the interaction between the people in and around the sanctuary and the conservationists as well as the Government.

It was suggested that the setting up of a sanctuary should be an integrated part of socio-economic development plan for the community in the area. It was recommended that the shifting of tribal populations from the core reserves should be done only after providing ample facilities at the translocated places and opportunities for alternative employment.

The importance of voluntary groups involving the public especially the youth in all conservation activities and the harnessing of the media and educational institutions for the dissemination of nature education at the widest level was another point that emerged from the sessions.

The final session on nationalisation of trade in wildlife articles which was moderated by Mr. Justice K. Sukumaran of the Kerala High Court evoked the most heated and contentious deliberations with differing views for and against nationalisation as well as opposing and supporting total prohibition on trade and use of these articles were expressed.

A call was issued by participants for an urgent review of the deficiencies and lacunae in existing

wildlife laws and for discouraging use of wildlife articles.

Proponents of the nationalisation theory stressed the fact that it was not seen as a substitute for the non-implementation of enforcement provisions while opponents expressed the fear that nationalisation would lead to yet another leviathan inefficient organisation.

Fears that prohibition of trade in wildlife articles would deprive traditional handicrafts artisans of their livelihood, were expressed by some while others wondered whether the same would not be the result of over-exploitation of wildlife.

Grave concern was expressed about the large amounts of poached ivory coming into the hands of traders under the guise of imported ivory from Africa and the importance of developing handicrafts out of substitutes like animal horn and synthetic ivory was highlighted by the speakers.

The seminar concluded with recommendations that included a request for increased allocation of plan funds for wildlife activities, strengthening of existing programmes for conservation, developing research and education in wildlife, declaring immediate surroundings of sanctuaries as special areas for economic development and the encouragement of regulatory State trading that would reinforce the enforcement mechanism.

As far as Kerala was concerned the seminar recommended the redemarcation of national parks and sanctuaries in the State, organising committees of friends of wildlife parks, abandoning afforestation of grasslands, restriction of tapioca cultivation to hill areas, preservation of mangrove areas like Kumarakom and encouraging water birds at the Periyar Sanctuary.

The participants specially appreciated the excellent arrangements made for the seminar by forest department officials under the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) G. Mukundan, Field Director, Project Tiger, T. M. Manoharan and DFO Lakhwinder Singh.

INDIAN EXPRESS Monday January 7 1985

## Happy denouement to many a turbulent life



# Hashish kingpin obtains bail

By R. Venu

Express News Service

The alleged leader of the gang responsible for the smuggling of 500 kg of hashish seized by the Cochin customs has taken anticipatory bail from a Bombay court and thus come out into the open.

This was a sequel to about six days of intensive interrogation of the leader by revenue intelligence authorities in Bombay on the basis of documents seized from Nigil Exports — the exporter of the hashish from Cochin.

The leader has several aliases. He is popularly known as Sathva Behl in the Bombay underworld and is believed to be one of the biggest drug smugglers in the country today. Having been detained under COFEPOSA once for having smuggled gold and other contraband, Behl is believed to have turned to drugs only about a year ago and all his major operations have been from Cochin.

Sufficient evidence is said to have been collected by the various investigating agencies that point to this gang being the party behind the heroin shipment in cans of crab meat from Cochin and seized in Manchester in May



Antony John

1983, a shipment of catfish sent to New York by Antony of Nigil Exports last November, which is suspected to have carried around 500 kg of narcotics, and the April shipment of Antony, from which the 500 kg of hashish was seized. The possibility of this gang also being behind the 414-kg of low quality hashish seized from a peeling shed at Kannamali near Cochin a week ago also cannot be ruled out.

A new person who has emerged from investigation of the above mentioned drug smuggling cases is one "Kumar", an admitted associate of Behl. He is believed to be one of his main henchmen, who is said to have been present at the time of the packing of the hashish (seized by Cochin customs) by Antony, his son and some others at his freezing plant at Kannamali. It is learnt that this Kumar arrived in Cochin along with the hashish packed in tea chests, travelling in an inter-State lorry of a Calcutta-based company on a night in the third week of March.

The lorry was received by Antony in front of the Nigil Exports office opposite the Shipyard. The tea chests, which were hidden between cartons of paint tins, were unloaded on to a tempo van and then taken to



Elsy Antony

the freezing plant at Kannamali. Kumar pretended to be one of the lorry workers. He went with Antony in his car, which followed the tempo van to Kannamali. He stayed with Antony for three days and then disappeared from the scene. The tempo van used for transporting the hashish was seized by customs officials a few days ago and its owner-driver Joseph has admitted to all that happened. He has identified Kumar also.

Kumar is believed to have been present in Cochin during the heroin shipment of May 1983 also when he escaped leaving behind some incriminating documents. However, action could not be taken against him at that time for lack of direct evidence.

The story of the heroin seized in Manchester is as interesting as the present one. Officials believe that Daniel, now in jail for that case under COFEPOSA, Mankatturam Anand, another leading figure of the Behl gang, and Behl himself entered into a conspiracy at an ITDC hotel of Delhi to begin drug smuggling on a large scale and use Cochin as the conduit point. Behl till then was allegedly engaged in smugg-

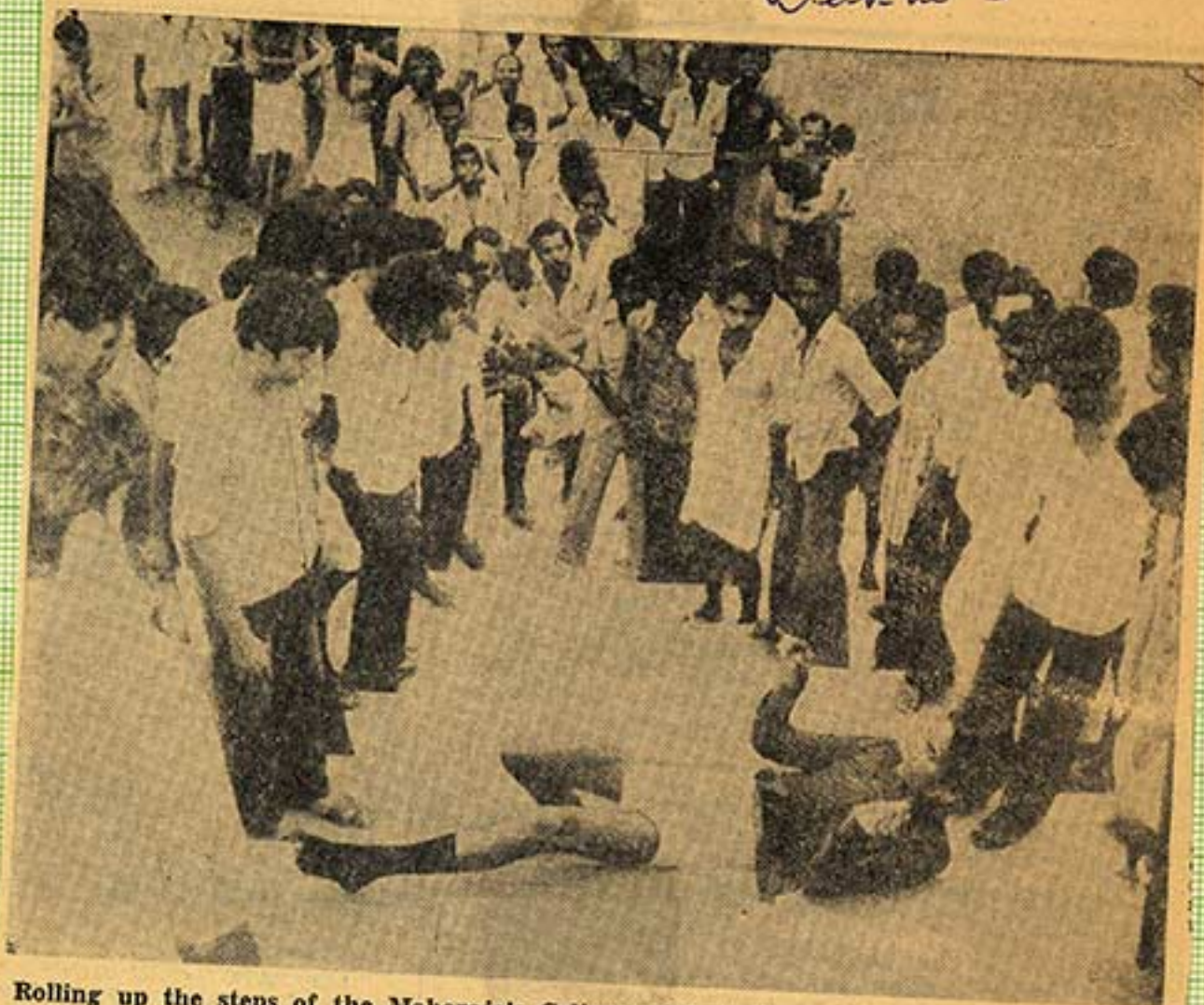
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Week no 3



Rolling up the steps of the Maharaja's College mini-stadium at Ernakulam on Tuesday is N. Parthasarathy of Coimbatore.

# Dare-devil stunts

By R. VENU

Express News Service

It was ten minutes of lingering tension while the scorpion tried to force open his left eyelid. The sigh of relief heaved by the 200-strong audience when the five-inch monster finally gave up, was much more striking than all the applause Parthasarathy received for the stunt he performed.

N. Parthasarathy of Coimbatore was in action in Cochin on Tuesday at the mini-stadium in the Maharaja's College grounds. Twenty-nine-year-old Parthasarathy who arrived in Cochin a few days ago has been touring the length and breadth of the country indulging in such dare-devil stunts for the past ten years.

Though the major act of the day was rolling up and down the 46 concrete steps of the stadium pavilion three times over, once with three scorpions scrambling over his body, what really gripped the people was the struggle he had with the scorpion, trying to dislodge it from his eye without provoking too severe a reaction.

Talking to this reporter after the show, Parthasarathy said he had received a minor sting but now he was so used to such things that he treated it as if it was a mosquito bite. Brushing aside suggestions of doctors and medicine, he said very assuredly that all he needed was six balls of black pepper.

Playing with scorpions and rolling down steps are very minor stunts compared to what he has been doing so far, says Parthasarathy thrusting a four-page print out that is titled "Partha-

sarthy's endurance feats booklet" inflicting extreme cruelty upon the into the listener's hands, Parthasarathy proudly proclaimed, "you name it and I'll do it. There is nothing that I run away from."

The booklet that calls him "king of snakes, king of walking, harmonist, story-writer, psychologist and palmist," lists in all 46 different feats comprising walking, standing, crawling, staring, running, eating, smoking and staying in cages with snakes, scorpions and centipedes.

Later, Parthasarathy said the only purpose of these feats was fame and money. Though he considered himself more than famous already, he would feel that he has really arrived only when he makes it as a top grade Hollywood villain or stunt man.

All these acts are only stepping stones to this not so long-term goal (1995, he says) and he claims that call from the Hindi film world is due any day. Parthasarathy said he hardly missed any English film and pulled out a paper cutting on "Octopussy" from his bag as if to prove his point. However he did not think much of the Guinness Book of Records "if they want, let them contact me," he said.

The only people he looked upon as gurus are Muhammed Ghazni and Robert Clive, he said, adding that though he had studied only up to his SSLC he was an excellent student of history. While what he had learnt from the former was the philosophy of never-say-die, the latter gave him belief in rags-to-riches stories. Asked if he thought that he was

inflicting extreme cruelty upon the reptiles he used in his feats, he said stoically "I am a brahmin I believe that it is by God's will that they have fallen into my hands" and then added with a cheeky smile, "It's by the same God's will that I have fallen into their hands too."

About the loneliness of his existence, he said that since he left his home, he has been a loner but he does have plans to settle down, marry and have children. Asked if all these acts won't put off women from him, he gave a "what do you know" look filled with disdain, and said "my experience has been very much to the contrary."

"Girls are terribly attracted by my dare-devil acts especially in north India where they are not as inhibited as here. He warned this reporter that its better not to go too deep into his private life because he was not such a good man really. However, in the same breath he added that he was a vegetarian teetotaler with 'chay' as the only vice.

Parthasarathy concluded the discussion saying that his main agenda for Cochin was a scorpion-yagna or a continuous singing session. He said he was on the look out for some one to organise the show and that only snakes came under the purview of the wildlife Act not scorpions. He however added that if he failed to manage an organiser in the next few days, he plans to go to Kozhikode where he would probably get better help in his plans to go abroad.



*Credit line*  
*Byline 2*  
*Week 5*

## CINEMA

# Rishi: Art film guys are hypocrites

THE immediate reaction was, watch it, he's bound to be a snob. The legends that surround the Kapoor clan hardly helped lose this feeling. And to add to my fast sinking enthusiasm came the dire warnings of the hotel staff that Mr Kapoor is a very tough customer. To top it all, came the very curt voice over the telephone "contact me after 6.30 p.m."

But then it is truly said that little hopes lead to great happiness and it was much more than a pleasant surprise to see the star waiting at his door with a cheerful smile and outstretched hand.

Dressed in a crimson silk kurta and a dark grey lungi Rishi seemed one of the most informal people one could run into. His bed lay crumpled with an open book on it and the reading lamp was on. There was a dressing table principally adorned with a mobile puja room of all the things, "Krishna, Christ and the Kaaba", he proudly says, displaying close identity with India's official version of secularism.

The picturesque view of the backwaters with its little boats and huge ships through the glass window was more than answer to the first question that was in the mind, what brings Rishi and the unit of 'Duniya' to Cochin.

He has 10 to 12 films on hand. Rishi said they were all good films but there was nothing about any one that he would particularly like to mention.

This statement naturally led to the commercial cinema vs art cinema debate.

Talking very forcefully, he said that he could never understand what this "art film" stood for. Did they mean to say that there was no art in any film that sells? Of what point was a movie that would spend its life in cans without seeing the light



Not merely a star son... Rishi Kapoor

of the day, however 'arty' it was? He pointed out that the biggest patrons of the film movement were the masses and they should be given what they wanted. Poverty and reality are subjects which are very dry and boring and if the people who live in it come to movie halls to escape it, then cinema should help them indulge in their flights of fancy.

Seeing the amount of energy that he was throwing into his argument, I decided to needle him a bit and ask him.

What he thought of Shashi Kapoor donning the mantle of art film patron.

That really hit him and he burst out, "I think all these people including my uncle are hypocrites. They indulge in all this talk because they cannot make good films that will sell. If they want to make drawing room films for an exclusive intelligensia then they should make it on TV or video and screen it only for themselves."

It was not that he was against movies with a social message. The hero cults had a lot more

bad effects than good effects upon youngsters but then the way to set this right was not to declare an apartheid on commercial cinema. Thespians like Ashok Kumar and Dilip Kumar had given their whole lives to entertaining people Rishi pointed out. Are they to be condemned just because they chose to act in commercial films rather than art films?

Rishi concluded the exposition of his theory, saying that he did not intend to remain a passive partner in the process of making films but he intended to venture into that field himself.

He added in a number vein that notwithstanding his acting commitments, he didn't have the patience at present to direct a film and probably a few more years would bring him that attribute.

Asked to comment on the show business, Rishi came up with

the quip "there's no business like show business". It might be filled with petty bickerings, jealousies, feuds, deceptions and dishonesty but then there was nothing else like it and however frustrated he became at times he would never like to leave that wonderful world.

Though the quick flow of statements on how happy he was to be here and how wonderful the place was and friendly the people were made one wonder if the guy had just been putting on an exclusive performance, one cannot but admit that he is a very articulate young man with clear ideas as to what he is doing and why.

He is not just another aspect of the 'son' or 'grandson' phenomenon that permeates Indian society but a conscious individual out to make a mark for himself in life.

— R. VENU