

Whose voice is it anyway?

AVENTRILOQUIST has been defined by the Chambers dictionary as one who can speak without showing that he is doing it, his voice seems to come from some other person or place. The art combines the warmth and magnetism of puppets, the mystery and wonder of magic and the fun and excitement of show business.

Evidence of ventriloquism is available in Hebrew and Egyptian archaeology. Eurycles of Athens was the most celebrated Greek ven-

triloquist. Priests of ancient times were masters of this art and miracles such as the speaking statues of Egypt and the Greek oracles could be ascribed to them. Some aborigine races including the Zulus and Maoris are adept in ventriloquism. China and India are its traditional centres.

Ventriloquism is gaining popularity particularly as an audio-visual-aid in educational projects. It has been observed that listeners pay much more attention to a doll, as they do not wish to miss even a single word. Experimental studies conducted on U.S. school children proved that the per cent of dialogue retained by young viewers is very high, compared to the impact of a speech or classroom lesson, unaided by a doll or other visual

shift of dialogue to live characters could reduce the burden on the dolls and make such plays more entertaining.

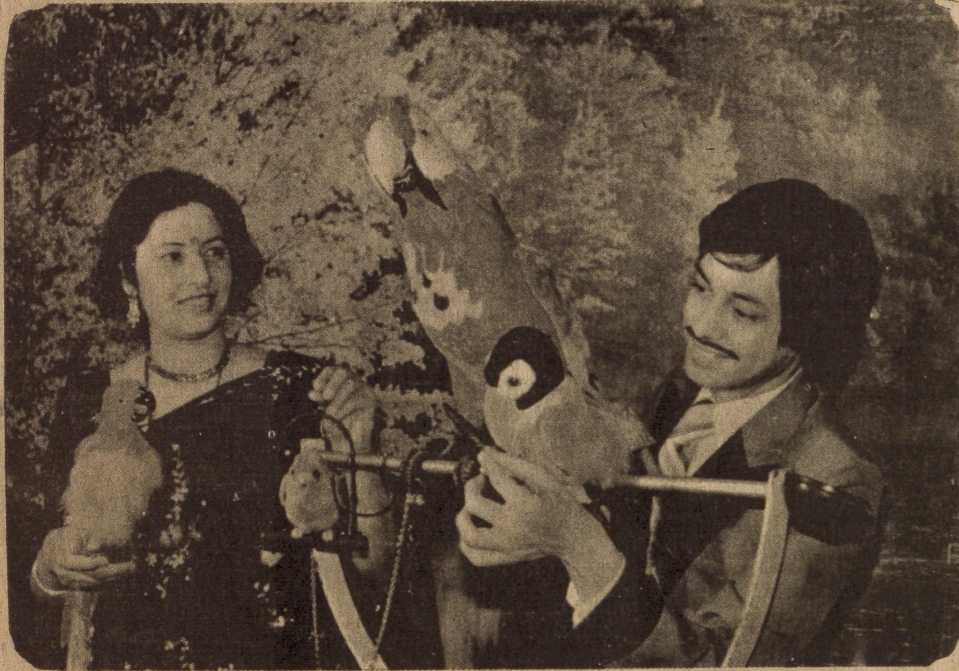
As an artist Ramdas Padhye has a wide range of talent. He has already appeared on American, Canadian, Bangkok and Hong Kong television and has visited East Asian countries for public performances. He presented popular television serials and has been a frequent performer in entertainment programmes.

Ventriloquism is an inheritance for Ramdas, as his father

created some lively characters like Adhawat Rao, Avada Bai and Gadbad Singh also, some animals and a parrot. They hold their own when cast with actors and actresses on the stage or screen.

A powerful and tightly-knit script is the foremost requirement of any good play, particularly when the cast includes inanimate dolls severely handicapped in dialogue delivery and portrayal of action and emotion.

A ventriloquist cannot open his mouth fully while speaking for the dolls. This muffles the sound and can be exasperating to the audience. A sound system with very sensitive and carefully placed microphones is required to make ventriloquism a success. Probably, musical support and a



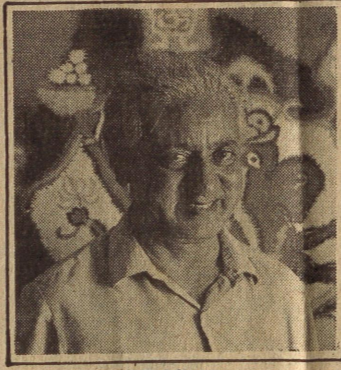
Ramdas Padhye with his puppet

Prof. Y.K. Padhye was a pioneer in the field. Ramdas is constantly researching and experimenting. He feels ventriloquism is a powerful visual aid and is breaking new ground in Indian cinema and stage.

Ramdas has an enviable rapport with his audience. Perhaps more shows, specially for young audiences, could make him a unique and popular educational entertainer. Ventriloquism can be tailored to promote civic sense, awareness of socio-economic problems, and national integration. However research and experimentation as in other folk art forms, is woefully limited. It would be worthwhile for the State and Central departments of education and culture to look into this neglected art form and evolve schemes for its revival in a big way.

MADHU UPADHYAY

A brush with folk art



C.D. Mistry

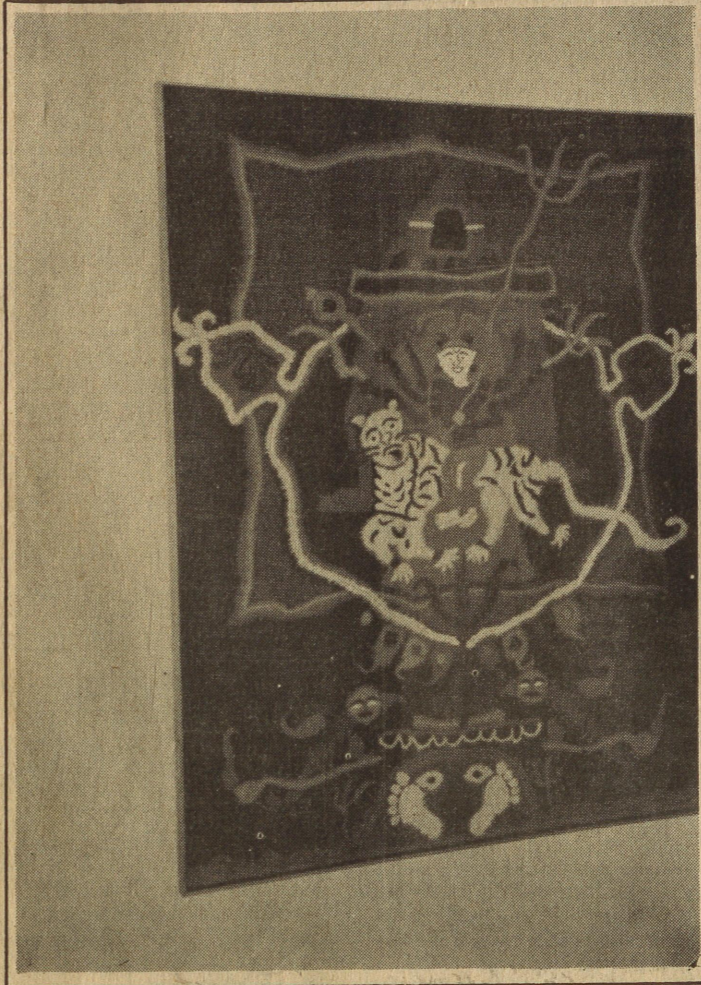
C.D. MISTRY is not influenced by any school of art. He follows any school of art. Based on mythological themes the forms in Mistry's paintings have a primitive quality about them. At first sight they might seem to have been done by some untutored villagers. Mistry admits that he had been trying to rejuvenate primitive folk art on the canvas for the benefit of modern art lovers.

"Every day we come across such primitive, folk art forms on walls, woods, stones, clothes and utensils. But unless they are preserved for posterity they are bound to die a natural death. My main concern is to see that the folk art form is available for the benefit of the modern artists," says Mistry.

C.D. Mistry, a lecturer in Sheth C.N. College of Fine Arts, Ahmedabad, was born in Chikhali, of Bulsar district in Gujarat in 1933. Through the years he has been the recipient of many a prestigious award which include a gold medal and cash award by the Hyderabad Art Society in 1972.

"Though the years, Indian art has inherited various styles, trends, approaches, and techniques. Folk artists have expressed their ideas and sentiments in their decorations and paintings in vital, simplified, primitive forms," says Mistry.

Face to face



Mahashakti from Devipurana

He had been inspired by folk and tribal art and also by child art.

Every artist uses his own techniques while mixing colours. But Mistry believes in using the natural

colours without any mixing. He deals with primitive subjects. He uses the dry brush which produces the effect of velvet or carpet.

"Natural colours do not



Sita Swayamvar

become dull with time. These are easily available. The common villager does not know the proportion in which they have to be mixed to get the desired colour combinations. They used only pure dark colours which are in their own way quite impressive," says Mistry.

Mistry tries to commune with all types of viewers. He has tried to maintain the textural quality of embroidery and furs. He has created velvety effect by using the dry brush process.

Mistry has not adopted any modern technique of painting. His usage of colours is without shades. His paintings are not sophisticated but they still stand out. His paintings are characterised by vitality, simplicity, spontaneity and primitiveness.

"I used to go from village to village, slums to slums to study the motifs. I have studied the folk as well as the tribal art. Tribals usually decorate their

walls with tapestry or paintings during religious ceremonies," he says.

Mistry was inspired by these traditional forms. He says that as the tribals never believed in commercialising the art form it never got enough publicity. It is only a recent outcome. Apart from studying the art forms Mistry used to visit huts to study their life, note down the form of art that they depict on their utensils or ornaments. He even studied the life of Kumaoni women who spend long, imaginative hours painting the walls of their homes with the legends of Krishna and other folk stories. The dyes they use are indigenous, gleaned from vegetables. The yellow they use is a type of dal ground to paste and gur is used as binder.

A very soft spoken man, Mistry does not want to get involved in any controversies. But it is his paintings that speak for him about folk art forms.

Vivek Rao Moodbidri

A diet that cures

AFTER the Varsha Ritu comes the sharad. This is the second one of the Visarga kaala meaning the period (the half of the year) in which we get more physical strength. Moreover, being the middle Ritu of this Visarga Kaala our strength (bala) during this Ritu is medium just as in Vasanta which is the second and middle Ritu of Aadanakaala.

The sky now has become either totally free of the clouds or with a few white ones. The dark rainy clouds disappear. There is little mud on the earth. The sun becomes brighter and hot. The lakes and ponds become clean and are full of

a variety of lotus. The birds (particularly Krauncha) fly freely and happily in the sky and the aquatic birds too are full of life.

During the Varsha Ritu pitalal gets accumulated (Sanohaya) due to the Amla-Vipak (turning sour after digestion) of water and grains etc. But the Pitta cannot get excited (Prakaps) because the climate then is cold and the pitta in mainly Ushna (roughly, hot). Now in sharad the weather is also hot which causes the pitta-prakopa. To meet it, our diet, practices and medicines should be such as are capable to soothe the pitta. The diet should be light Laghu easily digestible, sweet and

bitter in taste. Usually sweet, bitter, astringent (Madhura, tikta and kashaya) food is pitta soothing. Wheat, barely and specific rice (Shali) are prescribed in this season. For non-vegetarians, hare, deer and sparrow (kapinjala) are advised. A ghee medicated with certain bitter herbs known as Tikta-Gririta should be taken to soothe the Pitta. Virechana

should be taken little less than the hunger. Sleep during day is harmful. Early parts of nights should be spent on the terraces under the rays of the Moon. Swimming is pleasant. Dress should be light and clean. Cold pastes (of Chandan, Khni, etc) should be applied on the body. With wheat and barley, moong dal and vegetables like Patol (Parawal),

Ayurveda

(purgatives) also help in soothing Pitta. In severe cases of Pitta-prakopa, a specific device is prescribed of letting out the venous blood, known as Rakta-mokshana.

Sun and dew both should be avoided. Oils and fats the meat of aquatic animals, curds and acidic substances, pickles, strong drinks and eastern winds should be avoided. Food

Turiya and Karels and good for this season. Draksha (grapes), Amala, Dadim, Misri (Khadi Sakhar) and honey are also good.

During this season the water in lakes, wells and ponds is purified by the rays of the sun during the days and of the moon during the nights continuously. After the rise of the star Agastya it becomes still more harmless. This type

of water in this season is called Hansodaka and is good not only for drinking but also for swimming and bathing.

The common diseases during this season are Paitika Jwara, paitika Prashyaya, Amlapitta (hyper-acidity), general burning and certain skin diseases. The common treatment of all these is the pitta soothing treatment which includes Suvarna-Soota-Shekhar-Rasa, Chandrakala Rasa, Leela-Visalasa-Rasa, Chandramrita-Rasa, Mukta Pishiti, Pravala Pishiti, Praval, Panchamitra, Godanti-bhasma, Shankha-bhasma, Jaharnocharapishiti, Avipattikara Choorana, Drakshadi Choorana, Dadimashtaka Choorana, Shataparyadi Choorana, Sarvadi-Hima and Ushheersava, Chandanasawa and Sarivadyarishta.

Vaidya Vasudeva V. Vyas

Banking on Gandhiji

MAHATMA Gandhi was convalescing at Mrs Sumati Morarji's home after one of his numerous historical fasts. One day the lady of the house asked Gandhiji, "Bapuji, may I have your autograph?" "Surely," said the irrepressible Mahatma, "but at a price." "How much will it cost?" enquired the curious lady. "Rs. 5 per signature" was the reply. "Done," said the lady with alacrity, and Gandhiji signed. Not once or twice, but 11 languages, making a cool Rs. 55!

Gandhiji knew the value of money. He knew very little about the banking business, but that did not come in the way of his performing the opening ceremony of the new premises of the Union Bank of India Ltd. on Apollo Street, Fort, Bombay, on July 21, 1921. He was accompanied on the occasion by Sarojini Naidu.

Those were the days when the nation was riding the crest of the Swadeshi movement. In keeping with the spirit of the times, the Marwari community decided to have a bank of its own. Their compulsion was understandable since in those days the banking business remained a monopoly of industrial houses.

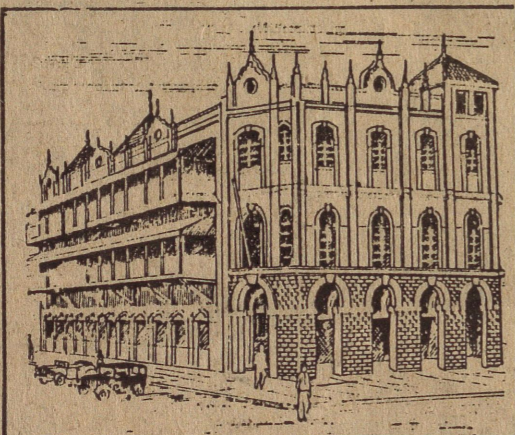
It was in the summer of 1919 that the seed of a swadeshi bank was sown in the minds of some prominent Marwaris. Soon, around six firms interested in the proposal met at the Hanging Gardens. The deliberations lasted a week, but by the end of it the Big Six had pooled in about Rs. 30 lakhs. Public subscriptions sought through newspapers brought in another Rs. 30 lakhs, and the Union Bank was born. Gandhiji's involvement

in the bank was radically different from the opening, inaugurating and foundation-stone-laying indulged in by today's politicians. At the opening ceremony, he clarified: "I am induced to come here by friends and I am attracted here by their love. I sometimes come here to beg for money for the sake of our Motherland. I have also to approach you for persuading you to abandon foreign cloth and to encourage Swadeshi, in which lies the key to Swaraj."

His commonsensical

means of doing immense good to the suffering humanity." And he blessed the Union Bank with the fond hope that it will carry on business on high moral principles.

The bank's growth was no smooth-sailing. Its very first manager, a European, stood on white-skinned dignity and refused to work with a native secretary. But some plain speaking brought him round and within two years he was shown the door. The Swadeshi spirit had really caught on by



The Apollo Street office of the Union Bank of India Ltd. inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi (right) in 1921.

approach to banking was: "We should have the ability to carry on a big bank to manage efficiently crores of rupees in the course of our national activities. Though we have not many banks amongst us, it does not follow that we are not capable of efficiently managing crores and tens of crores of rupees."

Gandhiji recalled on that occasion the observation that most of the recent wars were due to economic causes, and noted: "At the same time, it can be said that the rich people are the

then. Later in 1949, Union Bank fought off a crisis when it was sought to be merged with the Hind Bank Ltd. Much before that, even way back in 1921, it had ventured into the field of foreign exchange which was then monopolised by British banks.

Union Bank of India Ltd. still nicknamed 'Gandhiji's bank' among old-timers, completes 70 eventful years today.

DEEPAK RAO MOODBIDRI

White horses take centre stage

YOU have to see it to believe it. Pure white stallions in glittering tack wheeling and turning to music like perfectly synchronised ballet dancers.

There is only one place in the world where horses are trained to perform the awesome and graceful movements of the classical school. The Spanish Riding School of Vienna does not often leave Austria for performances abroad, but this year 24 of the best stallions and their riders will be visiting Britain.

The Lipizzaner horses used exclusively by the school are the oldest purebred strain in Europe. They have descended from a breed of Berber horse brought to Spain in 800 AD, and named after the village of Lipica near Trieste, where the first stud was founded in 1580. The school itself was founded by Emperor Charles VI in 1735 to retain and encourage the art of haut ecole, which had flourished in Vienna since 1572.

It is based in a part of the former Imperial Palace of the Hapsburgs, and performances take place in a baroque ballroom for horses, which is long and narrow with chandeliers and tiers of galleries whose seats are invariably packed.

The horses are actually

bred several hundred miles away at the government-funded stud at Piber, in the alpine foothills near the Hungarian border.

It is a wonderfully picturesque setting - the main buildings were once used as a Benedictine monastery, and there is still a church beside the stable blocks. Around eight stallions, at least one from each of the six historic bloodlines, and 80 brood mares are kept.

At about three and a half years old, the very best of the young stallions are selected for training in Vienna, and the best mares are chosen for the stud. Unwanted Lipizzaners are quickly snapped up by amateur riders.

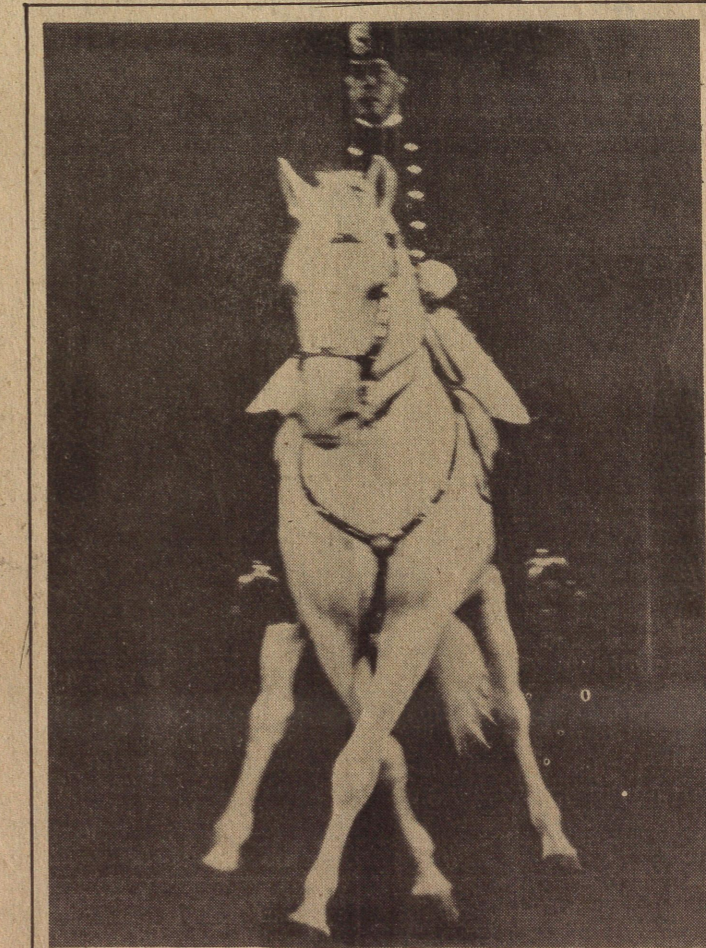
Stallions past their prime are never sold. They are retired to a farm near Vienna, which is also used every summer by the school for the performing stallions' holiday break.

Dr Jaromir Oulehla, 45, is director of both the stud and the Spanish Riding School. A Czechoslovakian-born veterinary surgeon, he is the first man ever to hold both posts.

periods to vary the gene pool.

The traditions of the school date back 400 years, and it is the only riding

academy in the world still practising classical horsemanship. This originated in the need to train young nobles to use weapons on



Classical horsemanship

horseback, and to control a horse in battle.

Vocal commands are not allowed - instead the riders use seat, hands and legs to guide the horses through three basic types of riding.

The most spectacular parts of the stallions' repertoire include the Piaffe, a trot on the spot, and the Priouette, a canter circling the inner hind leg.

Pesade and Levade are balances at varying angles on the hindlegs. Courbette is a series of hops forward performed in this position, and in the Capriole the horse leaps in the air, kicking out its hind legs.

All this, and 'dances' in which up to eight horses perform identical movements, takes place to the music of some of Vienna's greatest composers.

The horses have characters of their own, and are treated like stars. On occasions like the trip to Britain, for example, they travel in luxurious accommodation complete with air conditioning, automatic water dispensers and closed circuit television.

Every equine whim is catered for. The first time they were in London, the stallions refused to settle down in their specially built stables, drumming on the wooden partitions with their hooves. The problem was that they couldn't see each other, and a carpenter had to be found in the middle of the night to cut holes in the walls.

Julie Cockcroft

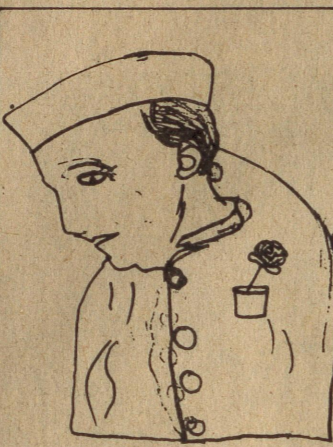
BY THE YOUNG



Prasad R Chandragi (12) St. Theresa's High School Bombay



Jitha P. Kurup (12) Atomic Energy Central School Bombay



Yashavi Pancholi (8) Our Lady of Remedy Bombay

Attention girls!

I HAVE seen that boys always enjoy a special status compared to girls. Most parents demand and get extra work done by their daughters. I was wild when my mother scolded me for not cleaning the house, in spite of knowing that I was studying for my exams. Though my brother (who is a year older) was relaxing, he was not taken to task for ignoring the household jobs.

Subsequently I realised that I am living in a male-dominated world. Parents consider sons to be breadwinners in old age and entrust them with the responsibility of maintaining the family prestige and glory. I overheard my grandfather's remarks about my brother "After all he is the one who will be performing my last rites".

Why can't a girl perform the last rites? Which religious scripture undermines the status of women? I do not know much about these things. But a universal truth I have understood is that women in society are not given equal rights and status. Even languages are often unjust to females. Words like statesman, sportsman, manhours, manpower are not usually used in their feminine gender.

Girls of today are going



to be the women of tomorrow. We can achieve anything and equal the might of man in any field. Indira Gandhi ruled the largest democracy in the world for two decades. Even a conservative Muslim country like Pakistan is ruled by a woman. Valentina Tereshkova, Bachendri Pal, P.T. Usha, Kiran Bedi are examples of those who have shown their supremacy. Then why this disparity? Girls - we have to take a decision before it is too late. Let us revolt against this injustice by working hard and studying with ambition, will power and confidence.

dence. Let us revolt to improve the social status of women and bring prosperity and progress to our country.

Geesha Nair (13) Kendriya Vidyalaya Pune

The flight

SHE was standing alone when a man whistled. She started running away and the man followed her. She looked back and saw the man was accompanied by another. She began running faster and tried to get out of their reach. But they did not give up the chase.

They were all amazed to see that she was unwilling. Turning round the corner she saw me and since she had a good opinion of me, she tried to come my way but seeing another man, she started off in the opposite direction.

Once she got the chance she dodged this way and that and soon there was no one between us. I opened my arms to welcome her and... she lay in my arms. Readers, do not get anxious because she was a football and I the goalkeeper.

Devinder Singh Kandhari (17) A.V. College Sangamner

Questions

Is life an aimless one? Why do we search for a purpose? Myself confused, yourself perplexed, They say lead a meaningful life, But what is it? The question remains an unanswered one. Baffled by the questions, No hope in the heart But why does pride lie In the hopeless one? Forced to stop Unable to walk Depressed, groping I stand as a novice, An apprentice to life Blind to the fake world Thinking of greatness Rising to heights I remain entangled In my own little circle Confused, nervous My mind is one.

Sandeep Karu (16) St. Josephs Convent Jalandhar

Not my day

When you're feeling rather down Don't let your mouth turn upside down Nor your face turn into a great sulky frown Just turn the frown down-side up and say, "I shan't give up, today's just not my day." Maybe tomorrow Miss Luck will come my way. I must not loose heart or be a drip And groan and grumble so If I do I jolly well know Miss Luck will not come my way tomorrow.

Charmaine de Souza (14) Goa.

FOR THE YOUNG

Playing with SSSSnakes

IF I told you about a boy who has snakes as his only 'pet' hobby-not the rainbow-hued lazybones who lie, sleepy-eyed, on your Snakes & Ladders board; nor the plump, oily kind, with a foul case of bad breath who appear, miraculously from black tablets on Diwali-but real, slithering, slippery, slimy snakes who say "Hisssss" instead of a polite hello-what would you call him? Well, his family and friends (including the crawling ones) call him Mahesh Sathe, a 20-year-old Commerce student of Ruparel College, Bombay.

When I was told about him and his reptilian friends by an acquaintance, police officer Avinash Mokashi, I told him I didn't believe his Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not kind of tale. After much persuasion, I agreed to see Mahesh but not at his home, at any cost! I wasn't too keen on trampling on a crawling thing or too, nor to have a rattling coffee-cup in my hands while something long &

cold slid over my feet! But I was literally kidnapped, nearly at gun-point by Avinash on his police mobike. But thankfully Mahesh and more thankfully his 'friends', were not at home. Phew!

Mahesh's father Bhalchandra Sathe, a marketing executive with Hindustan Petroleum, told us "Mahesh always had this penchant for reptiles and insects. As a kid, he used to catch live cockroaches and lizards and dangle menacing, deadly-looking crabs in front of his mother and sisters to shock them. Though frightened initially at his fearlessness we used to indulge him as he was our youngest child". There is a distinct note of fatherly pride in his voice. Mahesh's mother joined in "We just asked him to be cautious and not to take any foolhardy risks. We only prayed that he wouldn't get hurt".

The next day, I met Mahesh for his side of this fable-like tale of tails, at a restaurant. (When he sug-

gested that his place would be better, I hissed a firm "No!".)

I got interested in snakes when I was around 12 or 13-years-old. I happened to visit the shrine of Battees Shirala near Karad in Sangli district. An annual fair is held there on Naagpanchami day-I was mesmerised by all the tantriks, mantriks, snake-charmers and especially the snakes-performing their various, at that time seemingly dangerous rituals and tricks. I was hypnotized to watch the competition of giant, black king cobras standing erect on their tails, with their majestic hoods forming the top of this eerie, gymnastic display. The person whose snake stood the tallest was awarded prizes as fabulous as Rs.5000. Similarly, I was attracted to the hazardously tricky fine art of snake-capturing. Having a scientific bent of mind, I watched the snake catchers keenly to learn the secrets of this exercise-it basically needs a sharp, alert mind, a fearless heart and swift, dexterous hands. To capture a snake, you have to approach it stealthily from behind and before it gets time to react or escape, pin its head down with an improvised, Y-headed stick, at the same time stepping on its tail. Then, with firm hands, you have to hold its head at the right place and if it is of a poisonous variety, make it spill out its venom in a small glass cup. Once its venom pouches are empty, it is practically harmless-its hiss being more deadly than its bite".

He described all this as if teaching a kid to catch butterflies! His long, sssssary discourse had left me perspiring and panting in an



Mahesh Sathe with his 'pet'

air-conditioned restaurant. Weakly, I asked the waiter for some more chilled water. But without waiting for me to catch my breath, Mahesh continued with staccato, wild bursts of energy.

"Initially, my friends and family were alarmed to learn of my new-found hob-

by. But gradually, my friends' awe and fear gave way to respect and pride. They began to accompany me on hiking trips to Borivali National Park, and to forests in places like Neral & Matheran, to get snakes-but always maintaining a safe distance. I used to bring these snakes home

and hide them in the house!"

But these uninvited guests got restless very soon and started embarrassing Mahesh by appearing in the most unimaginable places at the most unpredictable times. His mother recoiled in horror as a huge, black coil, uncoiled to reveal its true identity as she opened her kitchen cupboard. One night when his father drew back the bed-covers, something shiny and long rapidly slithered away to the floor. Both, to say the least, were not the least bit amused! But unable to persuade Mahesh to get rid of the snakes, his parents managed to make him keep the snakes in a closed cage.

Assuming a grave, grandfatherly manner, Mahesh suddenly seemed to moul out of his boyish, chirpy self. "I read a lot about snakes consulted experts. Out of some 375 species of snakes found in India, only three or four like the cobras, the vipers, the kraits are fatally poisonous to human-beings. It is just the primitive, subconscious fear of this reptile that kills most people and makes them kill this beautiful, harmless form of life. There are a lot of misconceptions and superstitions concerning snakes in India, especially in rural areas, which are exploited by the so-called mantriks.

So, if you are interested in snakes, or in keeping them as pets, Mahesh Sathe is always at your service, with his friendly advice at: 2, Parijat, Makrand Society, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar (West), Bombay-400 028. Telephone number:437 5447.

Deepak Shrivastav

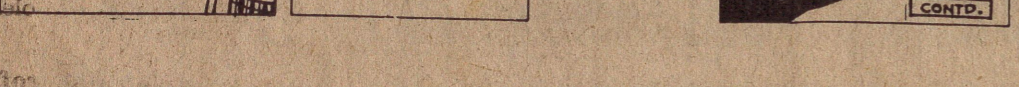
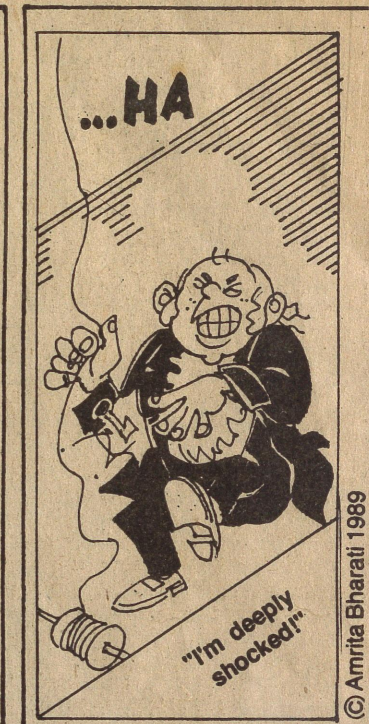
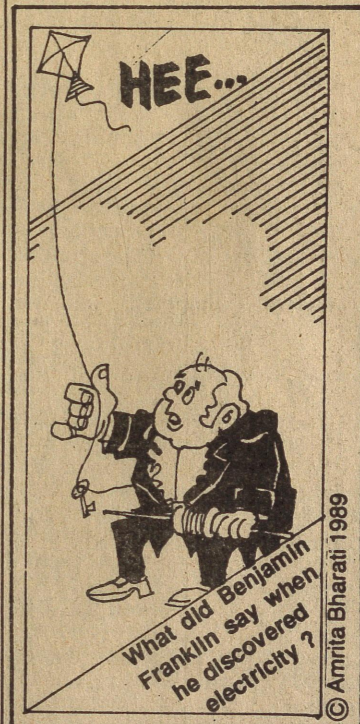
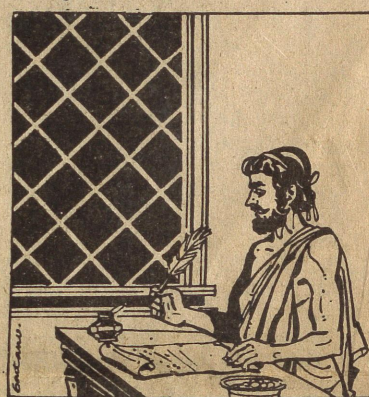
Origin

CANCEL

In the olden days European scholars wrote on parchment (writing material made of animal skin). If they wrote a word wrongly they could not erase it so they would draw two oblique lines X across the word and carry on.

As these criss-cross lines looked like the lattices of their windows the scholars began to call them by the Latin name for lattices, cancelli.

'Cancelli' has given us the English word 'cancel'.



Amrita Bharati 1989



The Scholar's Questions

One day a scholar came to the court of Emperor Akbar and challenged Birbal to answer his questions and thus prove that he was as clever as people said he was. He asked Birbal: "Would you prefer to answer a hundred easy questions or just a single difficult one?"

Both the emperor and Birbal had had a difficult day and were impatient to leave.

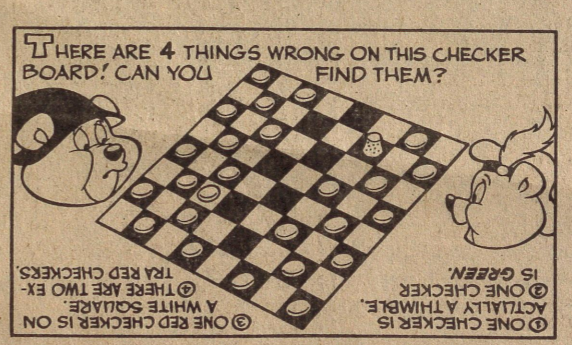
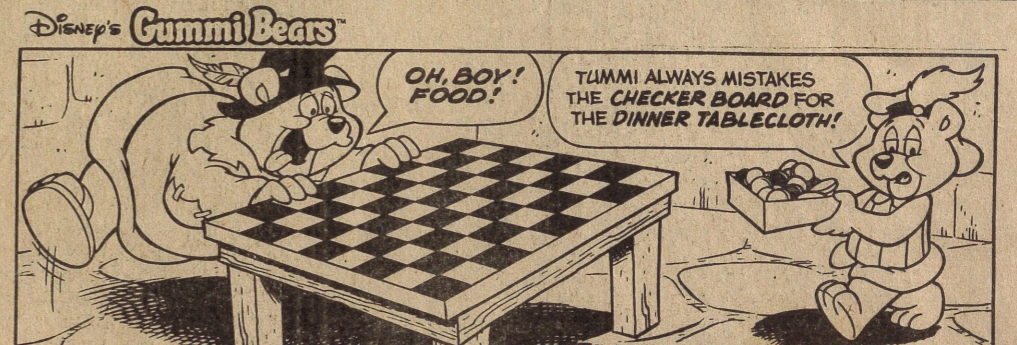
"Ask me one difficult question," said Birbal.

"Well, then, tell me," said the man, "which came first into the world, the hen or the egg?"

"The hen," replied Birbal.

"How do you know?" asked the scholar, a note of triumph in his voice.

"We had agreed you would ask only one question and you have already asked it" said Birbal and he and the emperor walked away leaving the scholar gaping.



Scholarship

The Principal Scientific Officer, Ministry of Science & Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Block-2, 7th floor, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110 003. Biotechnology Overseas Association Scheme. The applicants should possess a Ph.D./M.D. degree or their equivalent in areas related to biotechnology, with outstanding contribution in areas of their spe-

cialisation. The candidates should hold regular position in research institutions and should be actively engaged in biotechnology R & D work. The long-term association is awarded initially for a period of one year which may be extended by another year. A monthly associateship US \$ 1,200 or equivalent in the country of study, personal equipment grant of Rs. 4,000

(lumpsum), and cost of air passage in economic class by Air-India for joining overseas laboratory and back are given. The short-term associateship is awarded for three months only and is not extendable. A monthly associateship US \$ 1,600 or equivalent in the country of study, and cost of air passage for joining overseas lab and back are given.