



TYO (UK) hold 'Ilanthir 2005'

THE Tamil Youth Organisation (TYO) held their first ever event on 28 March, 2005, staging 'Ilanthir 2005', a cultural event at the Walthamstow Assembly in London, UK. This also served as an opportunity to introduce the Tamil Diaspora in Europe to the TYO. Between 750 and 900 people attended the event, at which Jaffna Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarian

Mr. S. Gajendran was the chief guest.

The event began with a moment of silence as a mark of respect, followed by the lighting of the lamp. The first event was a dance to a song titled 'Vanakkam, Vanakkam' (Welcome, Welcome). This was followed by a karate exhibition, which proved to be illuminating and an unusual spectacle. The youth as performed

another dance, which demonstrated their capabilities to an appreciative audience.

Other events included a villupattu (a traditional Tamil combination of song and story telling), debate, Veena performance, dramas and dances to songs about the homeland. In particular, the performance of the song 'Panaimaramae' (Palmyra tree) gained plenty of

applause from the audience, some of whom were heard to comment that they felt they had been transported back to the homelands by the dance.

The chief guest, Mr. Gajendran, also addressed the audience, encouraging them to further support all activities of the youth. The event ended at around 10pm, with a satisfied audience leaving after an enjoyable night out.



TYO (Aus.) hold 'Share tsunami 24'

THE Tamil Youth Organisation (TYO) in Australia held a 'Share tsunami 24' event in Burwood Park, Sydney, Australia over the weekend of 2-3 April 2005. Beginning from 4pm on April 2, over 70 participants spent 24 hours attempting to experience what the tsunami victims would have experienced in the first 24 hours after the tsunami, raising funds to assist those victims while they were at it.

Along the lines of the 40-

hour famine charity fundraiser, where participants go without food for 40 hours to raise funds for charity, the Share tsunami 24 event involved participants experiencing simulated post-tsunami conditions for 24 hours. The participants spent the time without any of the conveniences of modern life - no phones, no electricity, no proper shelter or accommodation and no food.

Instead the participants played games (killi thattu,

naayum irachchiyum, carom, etc), learnt to make and fly kites the traditional Tamil way, make garlands, drape sarees and vertis, weave fishing nets and fences out of Palmyra leaves, listened to stories and held discussions on Tamil heritage and history. For those seeking a more authentic experience, 'patpodi' and 'vepamkuchchi' were available, so those game enough were able to experience brushing teeth the old-fashioned way.

Many local parliamentarians turned out to support the event, including Ms Virginia Judge, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mr Scott Farlow, The Director of Refugee Council of Australia and Ms Julie Owens, Mayor of Strathfield, and representative of Mr John Murphy.

Over 200 Tamils living in Sydney also turned up at Burwood Park at some point during the 24 hours to show their support and participate in the event.

Cine Scope

Missing magic

With Ajit making a fairly decent success of 'Attagasam', one hoped his lean phase had ended and that his career was on the move after the series of flops. But 'Ji' has turned out to be a disappointment for Ajit-fans, and it's back to square one. Also, the handsome actor does look a bit bulky in the film, as he did in his recent releases. But Ajit has an explanation for that. It's all those pills he's been taking after his bone fracture, says he, adding that he's doing something about losing his weight too. His next project with K S Ravikumar seems an exciting one, and may well give his career a boost.



Getting busy

She is in class-10 but looks like Sandhya will have to take a break from her studies. The new teen sensation has been flooded with offers since her 'Kadhal' debut. If the film got rave reviews and zoomed up to be a surprise at the box office, Sandhya too got her fair share of appreciations with offers pouring in from Tamil film-makers. The actress has since signed a film in Telugu and Malayalam too.



Dancers rule



Dancer-choreographer-turned heroes Prabhu Deva and Lawrence may now be going through a lean patch where Tamil films are concerned. But the Telugu audiences have taken the duo to their hearts. And it was for the work they did behind the screen. As directors. Both of them have directed a film each in Telugu, and both their films are big hits in Andhra Pradesh. Not surprising that Tamil film-makers are now vying for the remake rights of the films. The duo are now sure to be wooed by Tamil film-makers too!

Pro-Tamil



While almost the entire industry is one on the issue of titles for films, there's one who begs to differ. Devayani, in reply to a question from journalists about the title issue, and about the pro-Tamil group's persistent threat that they wouldn't allow Tamil films with English titles to run in theatres, replied, "It's appropriate that Tamil films carry Tamil titles." Well, to each his own!

Return to direction

Prakashraj, after his 'Daya' and 'Azhagiya Theeye', is on to his third production venture in Tamil. And he has roped in Priya, who apprenticed under Maniratnam, to direct the film. There's yet another film on the anvil, and one hears that this time it's going to be directed by K Balachander. Balachander returns to the big screen after a long gap to wield the megaphone. He's been busy producing films and making serials. Incidentally, it's Balachander who'd introduced Prakashraj to Tamil films through 'Duet' (that's what Prakashraj has named his banner too, 'Duet Films'), and the actor has never looked back since.



Anyone wonders were sex-bomb Shakila has disappeared to after those itchy-bits comedy roles in Tamil, Telugu films? Well, one hears that the buxom, light-eyed screen siren has returned to Malayalam films. But this time in a role totally in contrast to the ones she'd done earlier. It seems Shakila is playing a nun in a new film. Unbelievable, isn't it? How the Malayalam film folks will react to her return and how the audiences will accept her in this new role is yet to be seen.



Cameraman speaks



Bouncing back to centre stage after a five-year sabbatical is Balu Mahendra. But controversies had never left him even while he was away. The cinematographer-director is shooting for his new film, the Dhanush-Priyamani-starrer. It's 35 years since he entered the industry, reminds Mahendra. He added that he'd been naive all these years where financial matters were concerned. "Many producers have exploited me to their advantage, and I realise how naive I was," says Mahendra with his usual candour. Better late than never.

What's in a name?



It's yet another case of name-change. Remember Sherin? In 'Thulluvatho Ilaami' the Bangalore lass had sizzled the screen with her sensuousness and pouting lips. Not surprising that it was she who was more talked about than Dhanush who'd been totally sidelined. The tables have turned since then, and while Dhanush has made it big, Sherin today has just one film in her kitty. Now one hears that the actress has gone in for a change of name: It's to be Shara Ali. Sounds exotic, but will it work for her career?

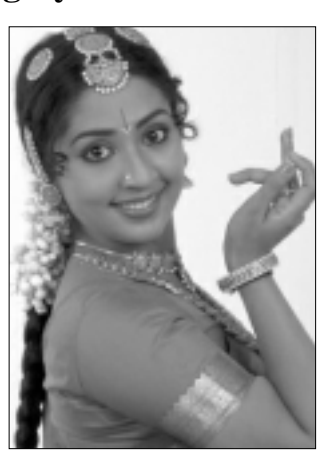
Captain leads

He's been re-elected president of the South Indian Film Artistes Association, and that is proof enough of the clout he wields among his colleagues. And now Vijaykanth's first step is to hold talks with film producers and come to a mutual understanding on the issue of salary for actors. The next would be to conduct cultural programmes to collect funds for constructing a new building for the association. To arrange a pension scheme for the financially weak actors is another matter on the agenda. Meanwhile, Sarat Kumar (who's been re-elected the general secretary of the association) seems to have reconciled his differences with the 'Captain', Sarat even declaring that it was Vijaykanth who was responsible for clearing the debts of the association.



Surgery

Navya Nair recently made a trip to the hospital. Steadily gaining a foothold in Tamil films, and one of the busiest actresses of Malayalam films, Navya had met with an accident while shooting for a Malayalam film in Kerala. A few stitches took care of the matter. But while shooting for a Tamil film in Chennai, the actress experienced acute pain. The stitches had given way, and Navya had to be taken to a hospital to undergo surgery. Incidentally, one hears that the surgeon who operated upon her is the same one who'd done the nose job for Sridevi, and the lip job for Rajinikanth.



Meena in Malayalam

Meena may be sidelined by Tamil film-makers. But she's in demand with other language film-makers, like Kannada and Malayalam. She has quite a few films lined up in Malayalam and her recent releases with Mohanlal have all turned out to be hits like 'Naaturajavu' and her last release 'Udayanunu Thaarum', where she plays the role of a top heroine who falls in love with a struggling director, played by Mohanlal. Meena cuts a pretty picture in the film, and her mature performance is being appreciated by all those who've watched it. The film is a big hit in Kerala, and Meena too can stake her claim to be a major contributor to its success.

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