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ALL ABOUT
SUCCESS

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HOW THE ART OF
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SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE

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CROWNING
GLORY

GEORGE CHERIAN, THE
MANE MASTER, TALKS
ABOUT HIS BUSINESS
OF COLLECTING HUMAN
HAIR



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PLATTER
PLEASURE

THIS SUMMER,
TASTE THE EXOTIC
FLAVOURS OF THE
CARRIBEANS AT THE
SPRING HOTEL

MUST SEE | MUST DO

FOOD FESTIVAL»

Enjoy Caribbean food at The Movies (Global Cuisine Restaurant) at The Spring, Nungambakkam. The fest is on till May 16



FOOD:

Ek Shaam Awadh Ke Naam, Lucknowi food festival at Green Park. On till May 23

ART:

Don't miss the exhibition of paintings by Avinash Thaker at Artworld. On till May 20

EXHIBITION:

Vinnyasa presents an "Annual Affordable Art Show" at Vinnyasa Art Gallery, Mylapore

ART»

Glimpse of France — Photo exhibition by Vinoh Vijayaragavan at Alliance Francaise Gallery, till May 30



FILM»

Watch the cow-boy film *Jumbha Kotai Murattu Singam*, directed by Chimu Deven at Sathyan Cinemas



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METAMORPHOSIS

She was labeled the new hot property in Tamil cinema after her steamy role in *Rajadhi Raja*, but in a chat with Uma Kannan Meenakshi reveals that she will be re inventing herself with *Mandhira Punnagai*

MARVELLOUS

Meenakshi

 SHE made her debut in *Karuppusamy Kuththagaithaarar* and received rave reviews for it. But after her debut film, three of her films — *TN 07 AL 4777*, *Perumal* and *Rajadhi Raja* didn't fare well at the box office. Now, actress Meenakshi is hoping for the best in her two forthcoming releases — *Agam Puram* and *Mandira Punnagai*. Asked whether there was any truth to the rumours that her clothes were too revealing in *Agam Puram*, she says, "Not at all. My role is a modern girl in the



She disagrees with the rumours about her clothes in *Agam Puram* being too revealing

film and I wear jeans, t-shirts and skirts. These are normal clothes. I don't do skin shows. I've designed my own costumes in the film. I've used special costumes from Mumbai. I was particular that the clothes are comfortable and not vulgar," says the actress, who did modelling before stepping into the film industry.

"My character in *Karuppusamy Kuththagaithaarar* was very homely. Even today, I am known by the film and not by my other releases. When people watched *Rajadhi Raja*, they said I was too glamorous in the film but I didn't find anything glamorous," laughs the actress. So how is she in real life? "I'm neither homely nor ultra modern. I'm somewhere in between. I don't like wearing short skirts. I'm comfortable in pants and shirts," adds the actress.

Talking about her upcoming flick, the actress says, "*Mandhira Punnagai* will be the best film in my career. My character is performance-oriented. I felt very comfortable working with the director-actor Karu Pazhaniappan. He's a very sensible director. And, I felt the same comfort level while working with Shaam. I developed a good rapport with the entire *Agam Puram* team."

Talking about her big break, she says, "I came for the *Karuppusamy Kuththagaithaarar* audition and I was selected. At that time, I didn't have any Tamilian friends and I felt like I was in an alien land as I couldn't understand the language," says Meenakshi, who was also a theatre artiste. Born in Kolkata, Meenakshi wants to do better movies in the future. "I'm longing to work with Kamal Sir and Rajini Sir," says the actress.



Favorite heroine:

Jyothika

Longing to do:

A dual role. One being an extrovert and the other an introvert

Acting:

I did a Malayalam movie. I want to explore all the South Indian languages

MAKERS OF MELODY

For the last 38 years, the Shah brothers have been making excellent custom-made guitars for a wide clientele including Mandolin Srinivas, Keith Peters and Benny Prasad. Saranya Chakrapani spends a day at their workshop



watch him work. He was purely a self-taught instrumentalist and a genius at that. We at least have the internet to rely on these days."

The brothers are now on a landmark mission to manufacture a violin with frets. "Violin as an instrument is hard to learn. Adding frets would make it so much easier for beginners to learn," says Venkoba. All the raw materials to manufacture the instruments are sourced from India. Maple wood, rosewood and mahogany are extensively used to make the instruments, which are sold under the brand name Tuls. Servicing of guitars is also done here.


"Guitar making is such an art," says

Krishna. "There are subtle aspects we must take care of," he adds. Venkoba however feels that people fail to understand this. "It is sad that custom-made instruments are not given the worth and importance they deserve in India. Abroad, a custom-made guitar costs nothing less than \$ 6000. Here we charge a modest Rs 5,000 and people think twice to pay that much. And this for a custom-made, personalised instrument, which is so much better."

"We don't know about our children, but as long as we live, this is what we're coming back to," smiles the eldest brother, Nagu Shah.

Madras Musical Craft is located at No. 12, Arunachala Naicken Street, Chintadripet. Phone: 91 9840052565

The wizards of strings

 FOR anyone with such abundant knowledge on musical instruments, a flourishing career in the world of music would have to be on the cards. But the brothers, Nagu Shah, Venkoba Shah and Krishna Shah chose to be less predictable and decided that their father's dream was far more fulfilling than all the perks that the cut-throat music and entertainment industry had to offer.

Madras Musical Craft, perhaps one of the oldest and most popular destinations for music lovers and instrumentalists, has been providing custom-made string instruments for over 35 years now. The begrimed

little shop on the busy Chintadripet Market Road remains exactly the way it was 38 years ago — dingy, cluttered and extremely hot. Numerous plastic toffee boxes filled with tools of all shapes and sizes line the worn out shelves. Incomplete guitars, paint cans, slabs of wood, pieces of paper and old photographs are seen everywhere. A small clearance on the floor is all there is for the brothers to sit and work.

But this modest ambience has certainly not been a hindrance to the excellent quality of instruments manufactured here as it proved by the loyal list of customers including some famed names like Benny Prasad,

Mandolin Srinivas, Keith Peters, UP Raju, harp player Vedanth and VS Nasrasimhan to name a few. "Our clan is originally that of textile merchants. We are from Kancheepuram. It was my father who first deviated from this vocation and decided to follow his passion for musical instruments," says Venkoba. His brother Krishna recalls, "As kids we would come back from school and



The brothers are now on a landmark mission to manufacture a violin with frets

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Pic: AS Ganesh

BATH TIME: This little boy has found an innovative way to beat the heat

BUNDCHEN IS
WORLD'S HIGHEST
PAID MODEL

Gisele Bundchen has been named world's highest paid model for the second consecutive year by Forbes magazine. The 29-year-old Brazilian supermodel beats the likes of Heidi Klum and Kate Moss, with the total earning of \$25 million last year. Klum, 36 and mother of four and host of the television show *Project Runway*, came in second with \$16 million in earnings, followed by style icon Moss, who made \$9 million, through her modelling campaigns, clothing range for *Topshop*, and perfume.

Steve Bertoni of Forbes said that the dominance of Bundchen, Klum and Moss is largely due to a risk-averse fashion industry that was not looking for new faces in the unstable economic climate.

"These contracts were written during the doldrums of the recession," said Bertoni. "So when companies decided on the faces of their campaigns, they wanted to play it safe," he added.



Pix: A Raja Chidambaram