

**AIR-INDIA**

# Magic Carpet



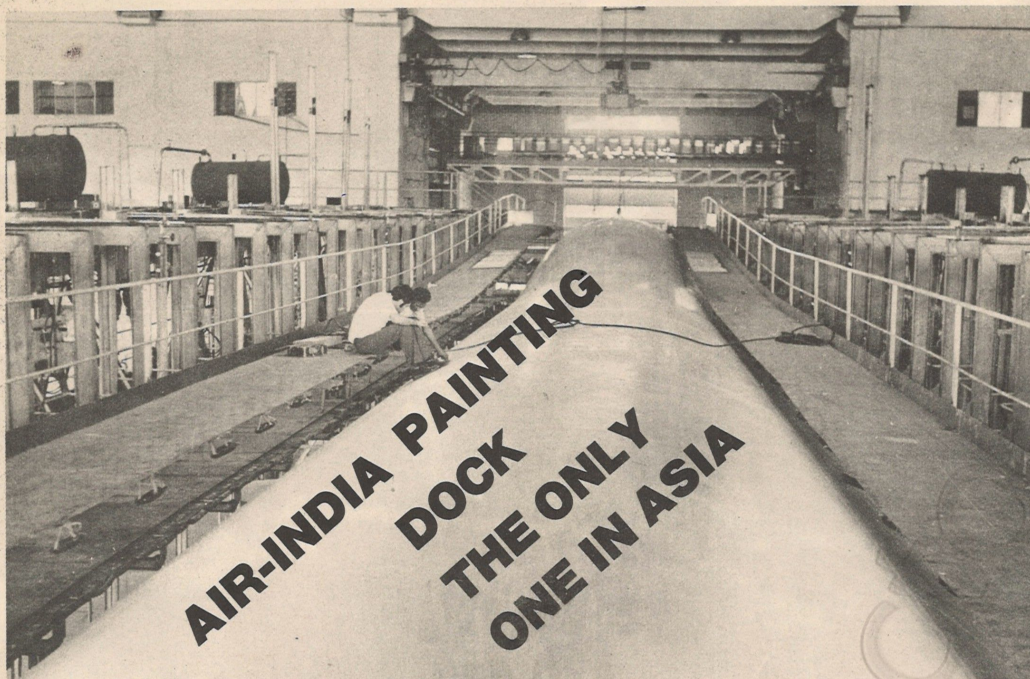
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Air-India's 747 poster designed by the Air-India Art Studio last year was awarded the first prize for design under the Poster Category at the 21st National Awards for Excellence in Printing & Designing function held in New Delhi recently (details on page 3).





**T**HE first of Air-India's ten 747 aircraft arrived in early 1971. These aircraft required painting towards the end of the seventies, and a facility to paint our own aircraft therefore became essential. Painting a 747 abroad would cost as much as Rs. 12 lakhs per aircraft in foreign exchange, not to mention the cost of ferrying the plane, less of revenue and so on. Doing it inhouse would be much cheaper while other maintenance work on the aircraft could simultaneously be carried out.

Designing the facility on the lines of foreign airline hangars was not really feasible for many reasons: (a) Most foreign airlines use "tail-in" parking, whereas ours is designed for "nose-in" parking (b) Hangars are generally constructed with painting facilities preplanned (c) Many foreign airlines have hangars exclusively for painting purposes (d) Foreign airlines rely on greater mechanisation and sophistication and less on labour; our emphasis is different.

The Air-India paint dock is indigenously designed and fabricated by the Engineering Department under the baton of Mr M.P. Kharkar, Director of Engineering. It cost Rs 39 lakhs to construct. It is the only paint dock in Asia (except for Japan Air Lines) and the only one of its kind in the continent since the 747 hangar in the Engineering Base at Santa Cruz is now both a maintenance hangar and a paint dock. The massive steel

structure with moveable work platforms is a model of ingenuity since it now provides access to all parts of the plane, including the top of the fuselage which could not be reached before.

As a first step, two committees were formed — a Paint Committee to define the requirements of the job, and a Projects Committee to look after the actual design and construction. Letters were sent out to leading Indian contractors, and a presentation made to the ten who showed interest in the project. Associated Manufacturers and Engineers were finally selected as contractors for the project and Dubon Project Engineering retained as Consultants.

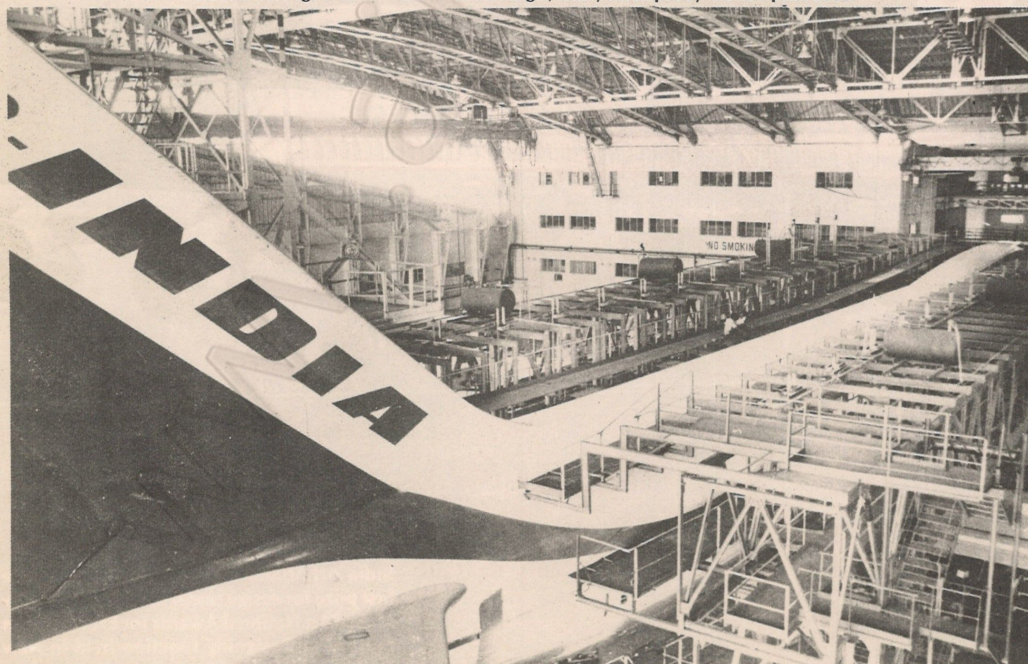
Before the design was finalised, a scale model of the dock was made to iron out any snags in the design. The preliminary work of excavating the 21-inch-thick concrete floor to embed the rails, on which the whole structure moves, began in February last year. At the

same time, the giant steel structure was put together on the apron outside and the entire job of installation was completed in December last year.

The design had to incorporate certain unusual requirements such as the structure had to envelop the entire upper half of the aircraft which is 232 feet long and, at its tallest point in the tail area, 70 feet or six-storeys high; again, working platforms had to be provided at different levels, the structure had to be moveable right out of the way, it could not take any support from the aircraft or the hangar roof.

Although the primary function of the new dock is to enable painting work to be done, it will also facilitate maintenance work. For instance, the dock provides ready and easy access to the aircraft lounge where the work of installing 32-economy class seats is now being done.

The main fuselage of an Air-India 747 in the hangar, totally enveloped by the new paint dock.



## UNDERSTANDING BAR-INDIA

by N.L. Mital, Regional Director — India

**T**oday tourism and travel is an economic activity that very likely will become one of leading industries in the world by the turn of the century. As all of us are aware there has been a growth in world wide travel in the last decade and we may therefore give credence to this optimism.

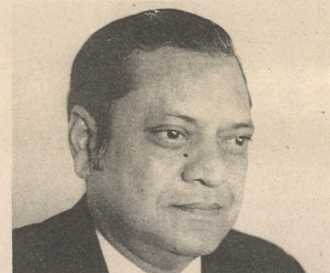
The Board of Air Line Representatives in India (Bar-I) constitutes an Apex Body of the No 1 Representatives of all Airlines in this country. There are 38 members in a unified body who handle matters with Government, semi-Government and other Agencies concerning problems and activities of such organisations that would affect the interest of the airlines and the travel industry in India. Bar (I) provides a forum for close and continuous dialogue between agents and airlines in India in both passenger and cargo fields.

The General Body of BAR has charged the running of the day-to-day activities to the Council of BAR, which comprises of 13 members. This Council has in turn formed sub-committees to deal with various matters. There are currently five such sub-committees under BAR (India):

i) **FAL SUB-COMMITTEE:** Facilitation and charges committee which deals with the achievement of facilitation procedures in India and seeks to achieve standards comparable to those set by IATA and ICAO Annexure 9.

ii) **FIT SUB-COMMITTEE:** The Foreign Travel Tax Sub-Committee essentially deals with problems concerning this tax. The major achievement of this body under the aegis of the BAR and in conjunction with the efforts of TAAI and Air-India, was abolition of the levy of FTT. This will be replaced by a Departure Tax of Rs. 100 per International passenger and Rs 50 per passenger visiting neighbouring countries.

iii) **RBI AND INCOME TAX SUB-COMMITTEE:** This sub-committee deals with matters like 'P' form, FTS and the application of such government requirements. Through the concerted efforts of this Sub-committee, procedures for travel from India have been immensely simplified.



N.L. Mital

iv) **CARGO ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE:** This sub-committee deals with the problems connected with the export and import of cargo, procedures and the rationalisation of freight rates from India.

v) **THE YIELD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE:** As the name implies, this committee was formed with a view to improve the yields of airlines operating to and through India. This Sub-committee has been actively involved in the clean-up of unethical practices in the travel market. Whilst all the 38 airlines are committed to YIP, 18 major carriers, who jointly provide nearly 80% of the total capacity into and out of India are very firmly committed to this programme.

The increasing costs on all sides, like staff expenses, fuel, navigation, landing charges, rents, etc, is going to require the ingenuity of all of us to sustain the growth rate that we have had in the past and can hope for in the future. All the airlines operating from India have products which are good and tailored to meet certain needs, the needs of the travelling public. These products should be sold to the passengers at the tariff quoted. This in itself, will go a long way in assisting the agents, also the airlines in India, in improving their justifiable revenues. For some time BAR (I) has been experiencing the problem of passengers obtaining their tickets from abroad. Thereby circumventing the FTT and taking advantage of the discounts available abroad. Air-India has taken this up on its own with our Government. The Japanese Government has recently made import of tickets into Japan for travel originating in that country an offence.

Last year BAR organised a Seminar on the "Growth and Professionalism in Air Freight." This Seminar opened our eyes to the tremendous potential of cargo in India and the need for achieving a very high degree of professionalism and dedication in realising this potential both for the national benefit as well as that of the travel agents and the airlines in India.

These, in a nutshell, are some of the important activities of BAR (India) in the short span of time it has been in existence. □



# A YEAR OF AWARDS

A. Air-India's Commercial Manager-Publicity, Mr S.S. Dabholkar receiving two awards from the President of India, Mr Sanjiva Reddy, at the 21st National Awards for Excellence in Printing & Designing held in New Delhi recently.



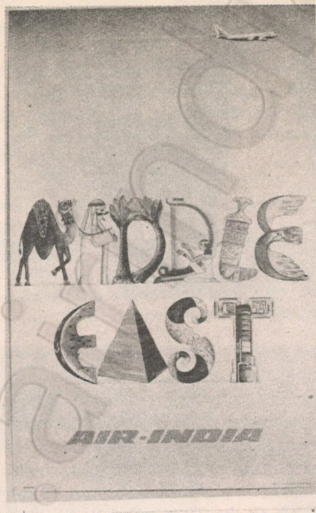
B. Air-India's 1980 Calendar also won the first prize under the Calendars category.



B



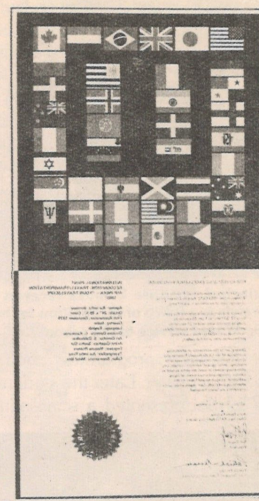
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D



E



F

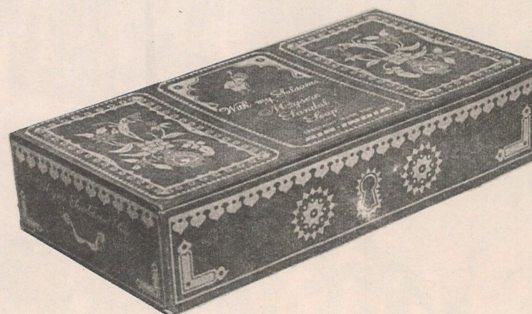
C. Air-India's Tiger poster was reproduced last year in the prestigious Modern Publicity Annual.

D. Air-India's Middle East Poster too was prominently featured in the same Annual last year.

E. "Your Travelscope 1980", Air-India's poster calendar featuring illustrations by cartoonist Sudhir Dar was awarded a finalist certificate at the 1980 International Clio Awards.

F. One of the two certificates awarded to Air-India at the 1980 International Clio Awards.

G. Air-India's presentation pack of three sandalwood soaps was awarded a finalist certificate under the category Packaging & Designing in the 1980 International Clio Awards.



G



# CHILDREN CELEBRATE

## AIR-INDIA MODERN SCHOOL 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL



Students of the Modern School perform a Gujarati dance on stage. Of the dances performed, the Bhangra was much acclaimed.

**T**HE 17th Annual Prize Distribution Day of the Air-India Modern School was celebrated in Bombay recently.

Mr Raghu Raj was the chief guest and Mr S.K. Nanda presided over the function.

programme of dances, drama and skits which were well received by an appreciative audience.

The highlight of the day's programme was the Bhangra dance, which had bagged the first prize in the Inter-School dance competition held in Bombay early this year.

about the continued co-operation extended by the Management without which the school would have not achieved the present status and dimension. She also made a special mention about the high percentage of successful candidates in the S.S.C. Examination



The Principal Ms Rose D'Souza receives a wrist watch as a token of recognition for her dedicated service to the school.

The colourful programme commenced with a prayer. Later the students of the school presented a scintillating



Ms Raghu Raj distributes prizes to the children.

The Principal, Miss Rose D'Souza in her report reviewed the steady progress made by the school since its inception in 1962. She made a special mention

consistently maintained all these years. She drew attention to the outstanding performance of ex-students who have emerged as professionals viz architects, doctors, engineers, journalists while some of them are pursuing their higher studies abroad.

Mr Raghu Raj acclaimed the high standard being maintained by the school in the academic and extra-curricular activities. He was impressed with the various items on the cultural programme presented by the students of different age groups. As a gesture from the Management, he announced a donation of Rs 2500 for furnishing the library with books. He advised the students not only to concentrate on their studies by scoring high marks but also to take part in extra-curricular activities for the development of their mental and physical faculties.

He also instituted the Chairman's Trophy to be awarded to a student who scored the highest number of marks in the S.S.C. Examination.

He further announced a sanction for installation of two water coolers in the school.

Mr S.K. Nanda in his presidential address paid tributes to the Principal and the staff of the school for maintaining a high standard of education and discipline. He appreciated the efforts of the Air-India Staff Colony Association in catering to the educational needs of the children of the staff. He assured all co-operation on behalf of the Management.

Ms Raghu Raj gave away prizes to students for scholarship and general proficiency and special prizes were distributed on behalf of the Air-India Staff Welfare Section.

Ms Raghu Raj also presented H.M.T. wrist watches to five staff members who completed 15 years of service as a token of recognition of their dedicated service to the school. The Principal Miss D'Souza was one of the recipients.

The function concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr R.Y. Pradhan, General Secretary of the Association.

## AI's former MD Passes away



We at Air-India grieve the death of Mr K.K. Unni who passed away at Houston, U.S.A. recently.

Mr Unni joined Air-India in 1960 from the Ministry of Transport & Communications. Earlier in 1952 he was deputed by the Government of India to the U.S.A. for training in Administration in the United States Postal Service.

In Air-India Mr Unni rose to become the Managing Director. He retired from the services of the Corporation in 1977. During his tenure he was a member of the Executive Committee of the International Air Transport Association. He also served as Chairman of the Hotel Corporation of India Ltd, as Director of Indian Airlines and Air-India Charters Ltd and as member on the boards of International Airports Authority of India and the National Tourism Board.

Mr. Unni, who died at the age of sixty-one after a bright and successful career, will always be remembered by Air-Indians with fondness.



Mr S.K. Nanda welcomes Mr and Ms Raghu Raj.





## LINK BETWEEN TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT

### Experts Speak Out

**NAUGURATING** a Seminar on Tourism and Environment at the Air-India Auditorium in Bombay recently, Mr A.P. Sharma, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, said that India has planned a target of 3.5 million foreign tourists by 1990, an increase of about 300%. He said an appropriate environment is a pre-requisite for the development and growth of tourism, and this growth should be planned and controlled in such a manner that the natural environment around tourist centres is well preserved.

Mr Sharma said that the preservation of monuments and socio-cultural traditions was possible today due to an increase in tourism. Hence the objective before us should be that whatever development takes place because of its socio-economic benefits, should be undertaken keeping in view the effect it would have on the environment.

Mr Harish Dass, the Secretary General who welcomed the invitees, said that the National Forum on Tourism and Environment, will work towards a proper balance between tourism and environment. He said that tourism should not be allowed to develop at the cost of environment, and that a line should be drawn at that point where values begin to get eroded.

The Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Mr Shyam Lal Yadhav, said that

the establishment of the Department of Environment will be a source of inspiration to preserve our natural endowments and keep them in a fit state of presentation to the tourists.

Mr Yadhav added that India should pull all her available energy to develop tourism at a steady pace. He said, "We need an enthusiastic climate both for tourism and environment and various sections of our society are to be awakened to this new industrial revolution by

widespread education and dissemination of knowledge."

Mr Raghu Raj, Chairman and Managing Director of Air-India, in a vote of thanks narrated problems tourists faced even before they could enjoy the comforts of India. He spoke of delayed flights, of custom officials, of taxi drivers and beggars. "All this does not give a tourist any feelings of excitement or pleasure. India has excellent 5-star hotels but the prices are just exorbitant."

Mr Raghu Raj said that we in India are aware of these problems and we must put our minds to them. He said that Air-India had always played a pioneering role in the promotion of tourism, and the future of Air-India and tourism are closely linked, but he emphasised, that it was voluntary non-profit organisations like the National Forum on Tourism and Environment that could make a greater impact and help India occupy a prestigious place in the world of tourism.

In the afternoon Mr C.L. Sharma, Air-India's Dy Managing Director presided over the business session.

Dr Ian Greenwood, an expert on wild life spoke on 'Tourism and the National Park'. He spoke of the need to preserve and look after game sanctuaries, zoos and animal parks. "The needs of animals and care of their ecological conditions is of vital importance", he emphasised.

Mr A.H. Mehta, Chairman of Indian Airlines, said that although India had a large air network to most parts of the country, hazards like delayed flights and unconfirmed tickets due to mismanagement by small, disreputable travel agencies caused the tourist a lot of discomfort. "This has to be rectified" he said.

Mr S. Ramanathan, Chairman of the International Airports Authority of India spoke of inadequate conditions at Indian airports. He decried the dirty beggars who pester tourists, the taxi drivers who cheat them, and the amount of time the tourists wasted going through Customs and airport regulations.

In a forthright speech Dr B. Venkatraman, Secretary to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, spoke of targets set before the country and plans to better accommodation for tourists, set up more hotels and build an infrastructure in order to improve facilities at international airports. He added that it was imperative to programme travel circuits to make it easier for tourists to plan out their tours.

Most experts concluded on an optimistic note and felt the seminar had helped "clear the cobwebs", albeit in a small way.



Mr J.R.D. Tata in discussion with Mr A.P. Sharma and Mr Raghu Raj.



Mr Sharma lights the traditional lamp to inaugurate the seminar.



**AIR-INDIA'S computerised reservations system based on the Sperry Univac 1100/22 computer system was set into operation on March 16, 1981, when the system was cleared for 'cut over' from manual to computerised reservations.**

## COMPUTERISED RESERVATIONS SYSTEM LAUNCHED



A presentation was made by Mr C.L. Sharma, Air-India's Deputy Managing Director to the first two passengers, Ms Padmaja

Deshpande and Mr Tedd Lowdlen, whose reservations were processed on the new system.

Throughout February this year

the system was tested out thoroughly and progressively loaded with data of all the Air-India flights operating from Bombay to ensure its accuracy. The system was put under continuous operation to check out its various functions such as creation, storage and retrieval of passenger name records, production of lists of passengers booked and meal lists on a particular flight.

The next station to be switched on to computerised reservations will be Delhi, to be followed by Calcutta and Madras. Later on, this facility will be available on Air-India's Far Eastern route network. Air-India's western routes are already computerised with a link-up with the British Airways computerised reservations system.

The points on the western routes will ultimately be taken over by Air-India's own computer in Bombay.



Mr C.L.Sharma watches the computer at work. Looking on are Mr P. Jayant, Mr C.D. Dubey and Mr Gavankar.



Mr. P. Jayant cuts a cake to celebrate the occasion as Ms Deshpande and Mr Lowdlen await their share.

## INITIATIVE PAYS

From time to time we have been commending the initiative taken by Engineering staff in putting up suggestions for streamlining engineering activities. In recent months Mr M.P. Kharkar, Director of Engineering commended Mr Ghose Roy for a suggestion to modify obsolete 747 seats to be used as crew rest seats in the 707 airplanes. Mr A Menezes suggested an addition of 36 bolts to prevent flange cracking of the crank case main section, while Senior Aircraft Technician, Mr S. Kuppaswamy suggested fabrication of the flaring tool. While Mr Menezes received a letter of appreciation from Mr Kharkar, Mr Kuppaswamy was presented with a sum

of Rs 150 in National Savings Certificate.

Mr K.D. Pitale too was given an award of Rs 100 for suggesting a method for pressure filling of hydraulic fluid during assembly of 747 chairs. Trainee Technician Mr V. Sambaiah too received Management's appreciation and an award of Rs 150 for devising a tool for installation of tight screws on access panels, while Mr Manohar Singh received an award of Rs 100 for suggesting an ignitor plug cleaning device. Mr Kharkar individually congratulated all the awardees for their initiative and keenness in submitting suggestions.



**"Investment" :** Mr J. R. Jagtap, Assistant Secretary-HQ performed the Muhurt Ceremony of the Air-India Maharashtra Mandal's presentation of the play "Investment", at the Air-India Auditorium, Bombay recently. The play was written by Vasant Sabnis and directed by Chandu Beloskar of Ground Services. The artists who performed in the play were Sham Saigaonkar, Anjali Padhye, Vijay Deshpande, Varsha Chitale, Anita Raut, Virangan Patil, Bal Potdar, P.D. Kulkarni, Harish Deolekar, Vasant Bhide and Rajendra Lokhande.

## TRANSITION

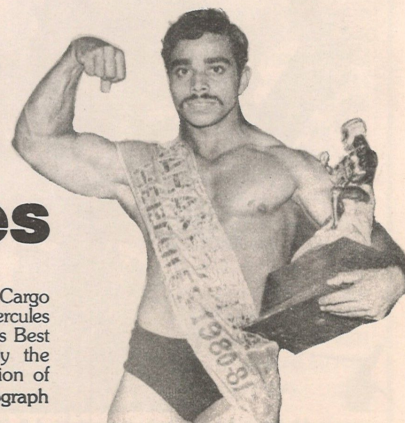
**Air-India condoles the death of the following staff:**

Mr Matrualal Indraj, Sweeper in the Catering/Cabin Services at Santa Cruz (21 years service); Mr P.G. Lad, Security Officer at Santa Cruz (12 years service); Mr Krishan Dutt, Sr Driver in the Transport Division at Bombay (20 years service); Mr Om Prakash, Loader at New Delhi (2 years service); Mr V.P. Kulkarni at Lagos (23 years service); Mr S.G. Jadhav, Sr Loader at Bombay Airport (19 years service); Mr N.F. Aklaria, Head Vendor, Personnel Department

at Bombay (17 years service); Mr N.S. Rahim, Cleaner in the Stores Department at Bombay (25 years service); Mr Krishan Sachdev, Sales Department Superintendent in London (9 years service); Mr Gery Horsley, Asst Passenger Service Manager at London Airport (23 years service); Mr V.B. Bhide, Asst Security Officer at Bombay (13 years service); Mr S.K. Jamnadas, Head Vendor, Personnel Department at Bombay (20 years service); Mr S.K. Wagh, Inflight Supervisor, Inflight Service Department at Bombay (23 years service).

## Padte named Hercules

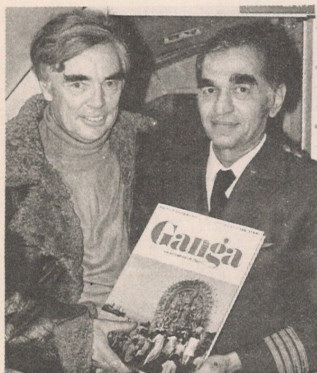
Mr Vishwanath Padte from our Cargo Complex won the Maharashtra Hercules 1980-81 title at the VII Hercules Best Physique contest organised by the Amateur Bodybuilders Association of Maharashtra at Parbhani. Photograph shows Padte flexing his biceps.





# TALES FROM ABROAD

## AN OLD FRIEND



**B**ill Fox is known to many members of the Air-India Traffic staff in the West and indeed to our flying crew and cabin staff. Recently he completed his 200th return flight across the Atlantic with us and to honour the event a presentation was made to him before take-off by our Operations Manager (Western Division) Captain Sam Pedder. When we informed Mr Bill Fox who is Managing Director of Atkins Laboratories Ltd, an Engineering Company, that we would be sending a copy of this photograph to the *Magic Carpet*, he asked for permission to send a message to our readers, which reads:

"It is rarely that a passenger is granted the privilege of 'appearing' in your own *MAGIC CARPET*. I was therefore very grateful to be given the opportunity - shortly after completing my 200th return flight to New York with AIR-INDIA.

"I would like to sincerely thank all the friends I have made whilst flying Air-India over the past years. My affection for India and its people commenced during wartime flying service from your country and continued when working as an engineer on the construction of the Durgapur Steel Works, after the war. Since then, I can truly say that many of my most pleasurable hours have been spent in your country.

"Again, my thanks and warm regards to you all".

**R**ed measles may well be a disease of the past in South India if Rotary International has its way.

Half a million doses of vaccine, weighing more than 5,000 pounds, the first of five such shipments, were shipped through New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport recently on Air-India's freighter service to Madras.

Three and a half million children are to be inoculated against red measles thanks to the work of thousands of Rotarians in Canada, members of Rotary International which celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. The Canadian

Rotarians, to mark this anniversary, undertook this measles vaccine project.

The vaccine is being delivered to the South India Rotary Clubs and will be used for the poor children of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The campaign to raise funds for this project was conducted by Rotary International of Canada in conjunction with the Canadian International Development Agency. Merck Sharp & Dohme International of Rahway, New Jersey, supplied the vaccine for this humanitarian undertaking. The Government of India, through its flag carrier, Air-India, agreed to transport this vital refrigerated cargo on a costfree basis.

## AIR-INDIA PLAYS GOOD SAMARITAN

(Ralph R. Gardner reports)



The first shipment of half a million doses at the Air-India terminal in New York. (Left to right): Frank Sclafani, Area Sales Manager-Cargo, Paul McKelvey of Rotary International-Canada; Robert J. Marson, Vaccine Coordinator, Merck Sharp & Dohme International; and Edward G. O'Hara, Director, Trade Relations, Merck Sharp & Dohme International.

## MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



**T**he Detroit Airlines Sales Managers Association honoured one of their own at their annual dinner meeting recently, when the "Man of the Year" Award was presented to Mr Joseph M Moore, Air-India's District Manager in Detroit.

The "Man of the Year" Award is presented each year to a person, non necessarily a member of the organization nor a male, who has been instrumental in the development of the travel industry, setting an example of leadership in the field of a vocation, and who has given of his time, energy, and abilities in order to enhance the objectives of the association and related travel industry organisations. This is the first year it has been awarded to a member of the association.

Mr Moore has been Air-India's Manager in Detroit for eleven years, having been transferred here from the carrier's Philadelphia office where he had served as a sales representative since 1967. He is presently responsible for both passenger and cargo sales in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.


Mr Moore is a past president of the Detroit Airlines Sales Managers Association. He has also served as president of the Detroit Chapter of SKAL and the Detroit Passenger Traffic Club, and Director of PATA.



## Cook and Tell

**T**he Civil Service Catering Organisation in Cardiff recently held an Indian Food Week and Dick Lewis, our District Sales Manager in Cardiff supported this event with some Air-India publicity material. From all reports it was a great success and it coincided with the publication of a book on Indian recipes written by a member of the Cardiff organisation. It will be observed that the organisers wore saris to enhance the Indian atmosphere. During the week of the promotion, the trade in the centre was up by 25%. Photograph shows members of the Civil Service Catering Organisation who organised this event.

## DATELINE CHICAGO

 **ur Chicago office has become the recipient of some rather interesting mail from school children from Andheri, Bombay. At last count they had received eight letters. Interestingly these children are asking the Chicago office to send them photographs of AI aircraft and, according to Bill Roese, our ASM, all of the letters have gotten through without the benefit of any postal stamps!**



# CHAIRBORNE

**With**  
**Naosherwan Nalavala**

# SHAMITA SHINES

Fifteen-year-old Shamita Sharma, daughter of Mr C.L.Sharma, Dy Managing Director, recently won the rolling trophy for the most outstanding leader of the school last year. Shamita is the first recipient of this trophy instituted by the Petit School, Bombay. Photograph shows Shamita with the rolling trophy as well as a replica of the original presented to her for keepsake. At the awards function she was also presented with the complete works of H.G. Wells.



# USHA IN KARACHI

Traffic Assistant, Usha Krishnamurthy from our Delhi Office was recently invited to Karachi to give a Bharata Natyam recital to the elite of the metropolis. The function was presided over by the Consul General Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar. Usha gave a two-hour recital and explained the various nuances of the dance. She was accompanied by her Guru, Dakshinamurthy, vocalist Nirmala Narasimhan, mridangam-player Subramaniam and the flutist Venugopal. The entire programme was organised by the Indian Airlines commercial Manager, Mr U.K. Mehta and local IAM Manager for Karachi, Mr Subramaniam.



# SHARPSHOOTER

Capt Pradeep Raj Suri of Operations has brought in a handful of medals in the National Shooting Championship Competition held in Kolhapur early this year. Capt Suri participated in the 22 Standard Pistol Novices Match and won the Silver medal. In the 32 Non-Prohibited Pistol Novices Match he set a new record and won a Gold medal.

while in the Air Pistol Silhouette Championship he snatched the Bronze medal. Over 300 shooters participated with representatives from the Army, Navy, BSF, CRP, Railway, Home Guards, Border Security Force and various rifle clubs and associations throughout the country.



# GREENFINGER GRACE

Once again this year Air-India swept five prizes at the Annual Flower Show held by the Agn-Horticultural Society in New Delhi recently. Air-India flew in flowers from Amsterdam, London and Bangkok and greenfingers Grace Coutinho from Bombay Headquarters was flown in to New Delhi to deftly make the floral arrangements. It was

her efforts in juxtaposing tulips, daffodils, roses, orchids and anthuriums with Japanese ferns that ultimately won Air-India multiple prizes. Photograph shows Grace Coutinho (extreme right) with Ms S. Seth Bhat and Mr K. Shankaran of our Delhi Office who co-ordinated with stations abroad to bring in flowers.

# WORKSHOP IN BERN

Air-India - Zurich and the India Tourist Office-Geneva participated in an Airtour Suisse Workshop held in Bern recently. The Indian stand was prominently located in the Workshop, and it attracted about 5000 visitors in four days. It was acknowledged as one of the best decorated stands from the 100 that were put up. The visitors were greeted with hot Indian tea by a charming Indian assistant of the Tea Board and a traditional Indian atmosphere was created with the burning of incense. The Indian stand was so popular that it hit the headlines in the local press and was singled out for publication in a leading newspaper of Bern.

# IN-SERVICE HINDI

Mr Ragnu Raj was the Chief guest at a function held in Bombay recently to present cash incentives and certificates to those staff who have successfully completed the in-service training in Hindi under the Hindi Teaching Scheme. Prizes were also given to winners of the story writing competition organised in memory of the Hindi Writer Premchand. The high light of the function was a three-act Hindi play 'Aath Ghante' staged by a group of non-Hindi speaking artists from Air-India. The play was directed by Mr Kumar Shahu of the Hotel Corporation of India and written by Mr Rajesh Majumdar of Reservations. A large number of staff and their families were present at the function.



# SASHI'S FIRSTS

Air-India's Sashi Menon, who for the first time became the National Lawn Tennis Champion this year, was recently in China to attend the Canton Grand Prix. In an interview with *Magic Carpet* Sashi said, "I was very happy to play in the first professional sports event ever to be held in Communist China, and, in fact, I am the first Indian to win a match in China when I beat Australia's Roos Casc 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, and as luck would have it, two weeks later, I beat him again in Taiwan, and with that win I was able to reach the quarter finals. My trip to Canton was very interesting. From Hong Kong I took a boat to the Portuguese Colony of Macau which is on the mainland. I spent my morning in Macau and tried to get a visa. After my travel arrangements were made I made a four-hour ride in a bus on the bumpiest road I have ever been on and had to get out of the bus four times to cross the Pearl River by Ferry, and, would you believe it I reached Canton in the evening and went straight on to the tennis court to play a match. Although I was very tired, I was able to win in three sets. My first impressions of China? People and cycles everywhere and very few cars. The buses are very crowded and everybody seems to be going around somewhere on their bicycles. I stayed at the White Cloud Hotel which is the best in Canton and I had quite a trying time communicating with the Chinese desk clerks in the hotel lobby since none of them spoke English. The hotel had 1,000 rooms and only one lift. We had to queue to get into the lift. It took 10 to 15 minutes to reach our rooms. One aspect of Chinese life I found fascinating was their honesty. We never locked our hotel rooms, and in fact, we were not even given a key. Another fascinating aspect of the Chinese is that they are a very hardworking people. During my travels I never saw a single person sitting idly doing nothing. The highlight of my stay was a 15-course banquet given by the Chinese Minister for Sport. I started my dinner with some very good chicken soup and then the Chinese gentleman sitting next to me whispered that I had just eaten snake (I became a vegetarian for the rest of my stay)!"