

Oct 12, 1994

# Ravi Kiran sets up fund for musicians

From R Bhagwan Singh

**M**adras: Cricketers have inspired the internationally famous Carnatic musician Ravi Kiran to launch the Musicians Welfare and Relief Fund (MWRF) to help out indigent classical musicians in the country — much on the same lines as the purses raised through benefit cricket matches to help ex-players.

Recognised in the classical music field as a child prodigy with chitra veena, also known as the gottu vadyam, Ravi Kiran, now in his late 20s, has long been in the forefront of welfare projects to benefit the budding and retired musicians. The International Foundation for Carnatic Music (IFCM) founded by him three years ago has been successful in meeting its goals which include promoting the Carnatic system in India and abroad.

The IFCM's publication more about Carnatic music, brought out in the US in October last

year, was sold out in no time and had been well received even by the younger generation there, Ravi Kiran told a press conference here.

He said the IFCM was now readying an audio cassette *Appreciating Carnatic Music* and also a book on music appreciation for release shortly. These two would introduce Carnatic music appreciation even to lay public.

The welfare fund being launched would have a corpus of Rs 1 crore but to begin with, the donation of Rs 1 lakh from Indian Bank Chairman M Gopalakrishnan — who is also MWRF chairman — facilitated the inaugural of the Madras Music Academy, where the aged vocal vidwan Calcutta Krishnamurthy would be presented with Rs 25,000 and Allam Koteeswara Rao and Kalpagam Swaminathan given gold medals.

The inaugural on October 16 will also feature a day-night musical megavaganza with concerts by wellknown young artistes — Priya Sisters, Sanjay Subramani-

am, S Sowmya and P Unnikrishnan.

N Ram, Editor, *Frontline*, and member of the MRWF, was also present at the press conference. He sought to highlight the difficulties faced by indigent musicians and said the need of the hour was to get the governments, corporate houses and the public involved to a greater extent in all the aspects

of protecting and consolidating the rich cultural heritage of the country, which in the field of music is represented by the Carnatic and Hindustani systems.

According to Ram and Ravi Kiran, film star Kamal Hasan readily agreed to be on the MWRF committee and has promised wholesome participation in the organisation's projects.