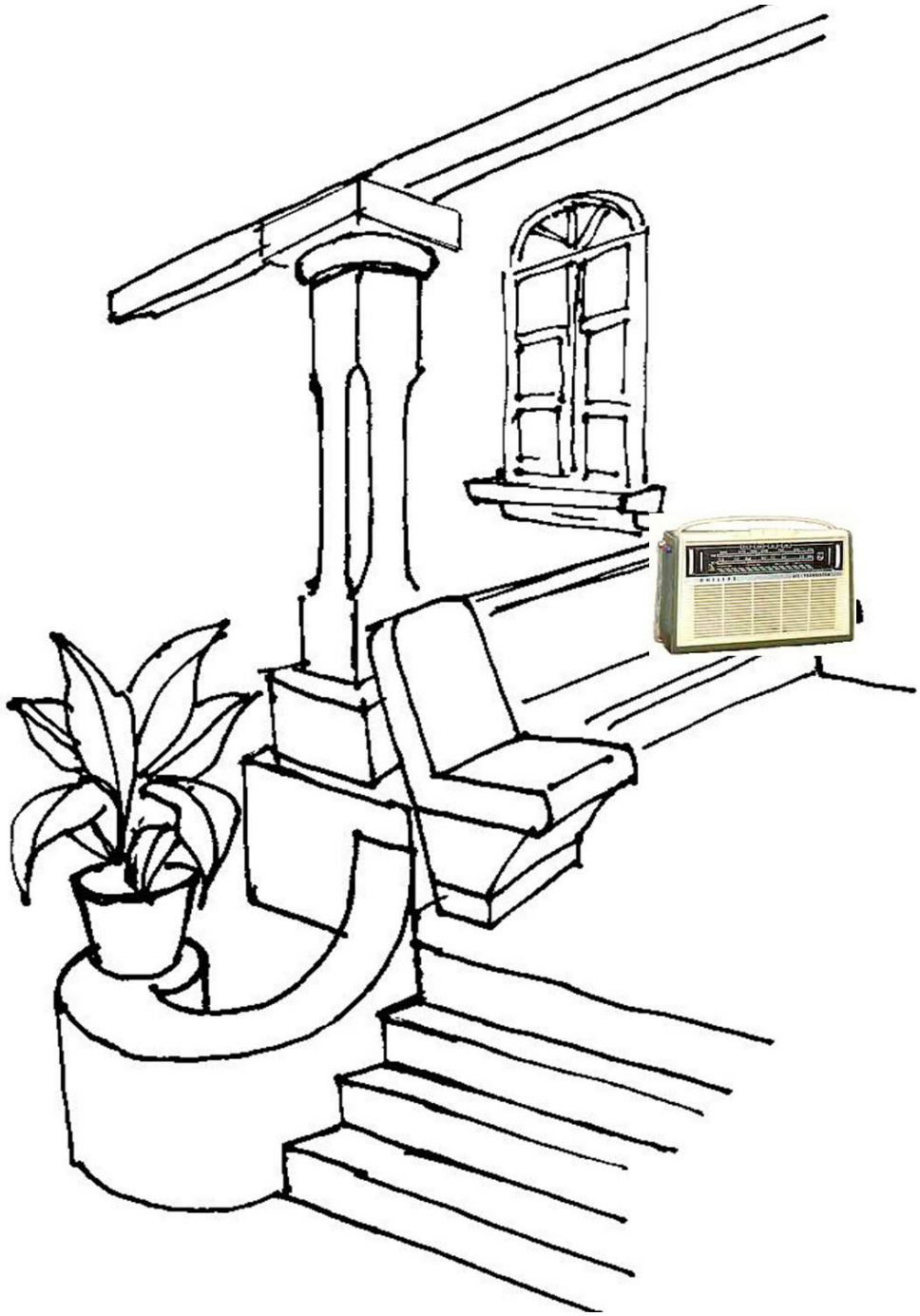

Part I'This is the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon' came the announcement over the radio as Felicio sat in the front balcao (balcony) of his house early in the morning. It was the usual routine – rising early to study. Then after a cup of tea, Felicio would pick up the Philips portable transistor radio from the showcase, carry it outside, and place it on the 'sopo' (a mud-cement combination of blocks of seats on either side of main door of houses in Goa).The radio was quite new to Felicio's house then. Only two other families had a radio in the entire village. Felicio's mother had stitched and fitted a custom-made cloth cover for it to keep the dust away. It had a flap that exposed only the dial. Flip the cloth cover over the handle of the radio, pull up and adjust its aerial, and it would then be time to tune to his favourite station "Radio Ceylon", as it was known then. Searching for the station on the dial was quite easy once one got the hang of it. Switching to Short Wave, turning the knob and aligning the needle

precisely to its position on the 31 Meter Band, and with a little bit of fine tuning it came on loud and clear - the magic of Radio Ceylon. At times certain orientation would be required for a better reception. Through the clutter of other stations in that particular region of the radio dial, it was immediately recognizable by its crispiness and clarity. As Felicio shuffled and zipped through the static and clatter, various other broadcasts like Voice of America, Vividh Bharati and Radio Moscow popped out clear and sharp too. As the atmospheric conditions were more favourable for an optimum reception of these broadcasts in early mornings and late evenings, the popular programs could be received and heard crystal-clear during these times.
The instrumentals played from 7 am to 7.30 am were a real treat. From The Jumping Jewels with ‘Zambezi' and The Shadows with ‘The Foot Tapper’ were raging hits. Radio Ceylon also relayed BBC News from London at 7.30 am Indian Standard Time everyday. The news began at the end of the familiar six distinct 'pips' of Greenwich Time Signal. This was also the time when family members automatically turned towards their clocks and check watches to check their accuracy. It would have been precisely 1300 hrs GMT, in London. ‘BBC World Service’ came the announcement preceding the news. It was good news and bad news from the Western world that was often heard relayed through the years. Included in the news were reports about Soviet Union's Yuri Gagarin orbiting earth, the assassination of President Kennedy, and the death of Marilyn Monroe, the Air India crash on Mont Blanc, the tragedy of the Vietnam War and the deaths of 3 astronauts in the launch pad fire at the start of the first manned Apollo mission. As Felicio and his brother walked to school they would pass on the news they heard on the radio to other boys that they met along the way. But what this station of Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation in Colombo, Ceylon, (now Sri Lanka) was probably most renowned for was its 'Binaca Hit Parade' on Sundays, playing the latest English vocal top tunes that played a part in greatly influencing that generation by western English music. Another popular broadcast was 'Binaca Geetmala' hosted by golden voiced celebrity Ameen Sayani. In the evenings its daily 2-hour long listeners' choice program was exciting to look forward to. The suave voices of disc jockeys Vijaya Correa and Eric Fernando reverberated through the air when the world's most popular hits ruled the waves - from Elvis Presley to the Beatles. 'Happy Birthday to Me' by Hank Locklin, 'May the Good Lord bless and keep you' by Connie Francis were frequently heard, but the solemn narration of the 'The Deck of Cards' by T. Texas Tyler as the sun went down sent a chilling tingle down Felicio’s spine. Sometimes as he walked home from a football match, or as he bicycled after having a bag of wheat ground into flour at the flour-mill in the neighbouring village, just a little after sundown, it was not unusual to hear these songs from the Radio Ceylon's listeners' choice program coming out from road-side houses. Hank Locklin’s ‘Send me the pillow that you dream on’ and Paul Anka’s ‘Diana’ were popular and often-requested songs. Songs by Ricky Nelson, Nat King Cole, Peter & Gordon, Everly Brothers, Doris Day, Bobby Darin, Brian Hyland, and Bobby Vinton would definitely be remembered by kids of those days till the present day. Pat Boone's 'Speedy Gonsales' was quite a hit then with ‘the plaintive cry of the young Mexican girl’ piercing through the stillness of the evening air. Felicio always wondered if he had missed out on any of his favourite songs when the radio was temporarily switched off just before the recitation of the ‘Angelus’. Tracks by Dutch Swing College Band and Acker Bilk were often aired on special Jazz and Swing quarter-hour programs. By 9 a.m. a lot of chirp, clatter and other radio disturbances were audible as the signal got weak.

[redacted]Original Article and others can be read here[redacted]