The new spiritual triumvirate

AS expected, the visit of spiritual master Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, who along with Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and Baba Ramdev forms the Holy Trinity of the present times, attracted the country’s movers and shakers (in the past it had been Osho, Swami Chandashekhara and Dhirendra Bhamacharya) to sit at his feet and hear his discourses at NSCI Dome, which has fast become one of the premier venues for the city’s many events — be it saris, exhibitions, weddings, trance concerts or religious gatherings.

Spotted on the occasion were Rhea Pillai, AD and Sabena Singh, Lara Dutta and businessman Suketu Shah, all card-holding members of the city’s beautiful brigade. “It was a very eclectic crowd cutting across age and economic demographics. They hung onto guruji’s every word and gesture. He focused on meditative techniques and answered people’s questions with wit and authority,” says a disciple, who was present. However, the giggly sage’s presence had left a few in the audience underwhelmed.

“The choice of the venue shows the enormous contradictions of the system,” commented a Left-leaning member of the media, who was curious about the guru and had bought a ticket to see what the fuss was about. “Hardly a few seemed to be aware what a huge land grab the NSCI Dome represents,” he said. “Here (had been) a public, municipal sports stadium freely available to the common people. And now, it had been taken over by the rich through an agreement with the civic body and had become a playground for the fun of this class,” he added. Citing the sage’s insistence on ‘going with the flow’, as one more instance of a conspiracy to create a system, where people did not ask inconvenient questions or think critically.

“Breeding conformism is the essence. And that is what men like Sri Sri are good at,” was his verdict. However, the most damning indictment he had was this, “He seems no better than Baba Ramdev. Same promotion of commercial interests. Same salesmanship of a range of products. These were on display yesterday.”