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MADRAS

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When fire strikes twice... ...Heritage is the victim

(By A Special Correspondent)

They say lightning never strikes twice. But in our city, fires certainly do. The Government Press, which is housed in the buildings of the erstwhile Mint on the eponymous street, had a fire within six months of two earlier ones. The most recent and most serious blaze of them all destroyed what the first two had not. The buildings had to be demolished. Thanks to poor maintenance, shoddy electrical wiring and an appalling sense of housekeeping, another one of the heritage structures of the city fell victim to what was very much an avoidable tragedy.

But that is not the view of officialdom which moved ahead with unseemly speed to flatten what was left, speed that could have been shown in restoration which, if done, could have obviated the causes for the fire accident. Even now it is reliably understood that the fire is seen as a blessing in disguise, for it has ensured that an inconvenient heritage structure that nobody wanted is out of the way and plans can go ahead for a modern structure.

What is not being looked into is the background to the fire. The earlier incidents, both of which occurred within a week of each other, were caused by electric short circuits. The fire services chief made a statement that the building that was burnt had faulty wiring. The Press staff claimed that the wiring was old because the building was old! Now where does it state that an old building should not upgrade its electrical cabling to prevent short circuits?

This time round, the fire was caused by newly installed electrical equipment, which only goes to show what quality can be expected in our State-run institutions. As luck would have it, the recent fire, unlike the earlier ones, broke out at night and was not detected quickly. By the time the fire services were called, it was too late. With reportedly heavy stock of paper in the premises, the fire spread quickly and burnt the supporting columns, most of them being wooden. With the building listing to one side,

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The Government Press on the site of the old Mint, where one more of the City's heritage buildings came down.

The hawkers may leave, but will our pavements return?

A couple of weeks ago we saw the normally busy and congested Sir Theayagaraya Road in T'Nagar emptying itself. With the expiry of a deadline set by the Courts, the roadside shop owners and hawkers had no choice but to move into a new shopping complex built for them by the Corporation in the vicinity. There has been much euphoria over the uncluttered street and its wide but unkempt footpaths. But the question remains: Will this open space be allowed to remain that way?

Past experience shows that this is highly unlikely. Chennai's so-called pedestrian walkways are meant for everyone else but those on foot. The TANGEDCO (formerly TNEB) finds these a convenient space for erecting transformers and junction boxes. Property owners convert them into vehicle parking lots. Shops extend their showroom space by putting up outdoor displays. And, above all, political parties erect banners, hoardings and cut-outs, blocking access completely. Political will and official discipline are both needed to curb such tendencies.

The solution currently implemented in T'Nagar has, however, shown a greater sensitivity to the requirements of the hawkers. Unlike earlier attempts where eviction and not rehabilitation was the sole aim, leading to the hawkers returning to the same spaces after a brief while, the authorities have recognised that the hawkers are also stakeholders. And as is usual, all this has

licensed hawker retire or pass away. The civic body was then asked to build/identify specific areas to which these hawkers could be moved and from where they could continue plying their trade. To ensure that this was done quickly, a Hawking Committee was ordered to be set up. The scheme was to apply to ten zones identified as having problems of congestion owing to indiscriminate hawking.

observed that none of his observations had been taken seriously by the administrative machinery. That was when the Court set a deadline and everyone had to comply.

Which brings us to the original issue. If hawkers and vested interests could continue merrily despite court orders, what price that the now emptied spaces will not be encroached upon again? Will the Courts need to be approached to ensure that what is rightfully ours remains in our possession? If so, will it mean another prolonged legal battle lasting several years? To what purpose then the law enforcement agencies and a civic body?

The T'Nagar scheme needs to be extended to all locations quickly. A single implementation seven years after the judgement is not a track record to be proud of. In 2006, there were an estimated 35,000 hawkers in the city. Today the number is one lakh. The longer we delay, the greater the problem is going to be. And in all such areas, the space retrieved should not be allowed to encroached again.

• by A Special Correspondent

come to pass thanks to the intervention of the High Court of Madras.

It was in 2006 that Justices A.P. Shah and Prabha Sridevan had, as part of their judgement covering several petitions concerning the hawking problem, formulated a new scheme. This involved the enumeration of hawkers and the issuing of licences to them by the Corporation. These licences were to be renewed each year and could be passed on to those who wished to carry on the business should a

Matters moved slowly thereafter and it was only after a Public Interest Litigation was filed a couple of years ago that the issue was once again brought to the notice of the High Court. The Hawking Committee in its report lamented that the lack of speed in implementation was mainly due to official lethargy and apathy. The report also hinted at official connivance in allowing the hawkers to stay where they were despite alternative accommodation being ready. The Chairman of the Committee

Chess and corporate strategy

At the Sanmar Group's Annual Day held some time ago, Viswanathan Anand, the World Chess champion, spoke with refreshing candour while drawing subtle parallels between his chess career and the challenges of corporate life.

Speaking with wit, he recalled that for a chess player, known for planning many moves ahead on the board, he was left embarrassed on one occasion when he forgot to greet his wife on their wedding anniversary.

He spoke of his passion and enthusiasm for the game from a very young age, his admiration for the late Bobby Fisher (until whom the sport was dominated by the Soviets) and his early inability to become a Grand Master (GM) despite committed participation. He then took time off, set clear goals and completed his Class XII Board exams. Success came to him when he least expected it, true to the dictum "Focus on the process, results will happen".

ing is cast in stone in a changing situation and the penchant for learning takes precedence.

He emphasised the need for emotional connect, the need to believe in yourself, and keep your spirits up in bad times, the need to visualise and reinforce the mind with stories of past victories acting as catalysts to pull yourself together in weaker moments.

Later, he answered queries in an interview:

What lessons for life do you gain from chess and vice versa? Do you see parallels between corporate and chess strategy?

Of course, chess is very much a mirror image of corporate strategy. You are trying to constantly gain the mindspace of your opinion. Each one's profession shapes how he chooses to lead his life. Chess has taught me a lot and given me rich experience.

We know that visualisation plays a major part in sporting success. Can you throw some light on this and other methods of prepara-

The pump that stays put

Will it? Or won't it? That is the question that is uppermost in the minds of those who live in Chennai and need to worry about it. *The Man from Madras Musings* alludes to the rain. And currently, going by the vague pronouncements of the Astrological, sorry, Meteorological Department, it appears to be anybody's guess as to whether it will. To MMM, who being married is naturally inclined to pessimism, it does not look like it will rain. There is a nip in the air, which is usually felt once the monsoons are over. Which means the monsoons are er... over, only we did not notice them come or go.

In which case, where do we go from here? Straight to the loft is MMM's recommendation, in order to extricate those plastic pots in which we stored water in the years of scarcity. In case you don't have them, you need not worry, there is at least one five star hotel in the city, built on the site of an erst-

ship), a quick decision had to be taken. The elders abandoned all orthodoxy and welcomed with open arms the hand pump. Water came to it only once a day and that too for an hour at an ungodly 3.00 a.m. But you should have seen the enthusiasm with which everyone worked the pump. Its well-being and its treatment during times of sickness (which was often) was the topic of discussion at all times. Some family members became experts in detecting the early signals of failure and their expertise was much sought after.

Everyone learnt to live with limited water supply. The bathtubs, without which no bathroom was complete in the old days, were put to new use – as water storage facilities. The MMM family has since then moved on to borewells, deep borewells and deeper borewells. But the hand pump has never been dislodged, remaining as it does as a reminder to the fact that Chennai is a

visions of men going up in the air and causing clouds to form. It was said that they would spray a chemical which would make the clouds come crowding in and pour forth like nobody's business. Nothing of the sort happened. The men came, they went up in the air and then muttered what to MMM appeared rather flimsy excuses – wind speed was either too much or too little and that there was an already existing cloud cover. The fact remained that no water came down, though the men did, and lots of money went up in smoke.

A few years later, when all appeared to be going well, the city witnessed a curious spectacle. And then again, in a country where the Archaeological Survey begins digging for gold based on a godman's dream, perhaps not so curious after all. But spectacle it certainly was for the protagonist involved was a violinist who was certainly a spectacle

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

while film studio, that has enough and more to spare, for it features them as items of décor. But be that as it may, getting the pot is not an issue. As the old adage goes, you may take the pot to the water, but you cannot make it fill (was this something about horses and drinking? But the line was too good to be dropped and so MMM has put it in. Like the moving finger at Nebuchadnezzar's feast, MMM moves on...).

Years ago, when MMM was a Cherubic Child of Chennai, the city had its first experience of a prolonged drought. The MMM household had till then taken its ancestral well for granted. An automatic pump, that would switch on whenever water in the overhead tank ran low, would keep going at all odd hours and ensure that MMM and family spent water like water. But came a day when the pump gave out sounds indicative of great distress and, having laboured on for a few minutes, called it a day. The well, it was found, had run dry and nobody had bothered looking into it.

For reasons of ritual purity, MMM's ancestors had a rather dim view of piped water supply. "You never knew where it had been," was the general opinion. But now with the well churning out mud and also an occasional clay idol or two of the elephant-headed god (dumped there after wor-

water-starved city. In all this excitement, the old automatic pump was forgotten. It never made a comeback even in times of plenty. The considered opinion was that now the family had learnt to live with restricted water supply, such luxuries were unwanted. The well was fitted with a new pump, whose working had to be monitored strictly, failing which it would draw excess water that would deplete the well and also cause the overhead tank to overflow. It was functional, but it did not have the charm of the old one.

The automatic lingered on for years, however, a ghostly relic of a water-rich past until the time came for it to be sold for scrap. But there are days when MMM can even now remember the musical tone of its suddenly coming to life at all odd hours of the day.

The rain dance

Writing in this reminiscent vein, *The Man from Madras Musings* is also reminded of various attempts at bringing rain to the city. The year that saw the hand pump arrive at MMM household was a particularly bad one and it was even rumoured that the city would be evacuated. Then came the announcement that the Russians (or was it the Americans? Not that this made a difference, as we were non-aligned anyway) had been invited to try something called cloud seeding. MMM had

though his music was not spectacular. Listening to him or, more importantly, seeing him perform made you understand the difference between a violinist and non-violent person. But be that as it may, this personality offered to perform a rain song or, to put it correctly, a rain raga. This involved the man standing in a tub of water and playing the fiddle. But no rains came, no matter how inspiring his violin was. You just can't fiddle with nature, is the way MMM looks at it.

Oddly enough, it rained copiously the year the entire city took a pledge to conserve rainwater. And it continued raining each year till the rainwater harvesting schemes began to be given the go-by. Perhaps there is a lesson in this for every one of us.

Tailpiece

The season of Music and Dance is just around the corner. *The Man from Madras Musings* is getting ready to go Sabha-hopping. And as he limbers his sinews to cope with the stress and strain, he cannot help reflecting that to be a good artiste, nimble fingers are all that is required. For it appears to MMM that today's artistes spend more time typing out e-invites and spreading the good word on social media than on some serious practice.

– MMM

● V. Ramnarayan meets Viswanathan Anand

Anand spoke of the usual paradox that bedevils most winners, the relative ease of reaching the top, but the difficulty of staying there. However, his love for the game pushed him to sort out his weaknesses, while his opponents posed severe hurdles, as he grew in stature in the world of championship chess post-2000.

Of the challenges he faced, he spoke of the difference between matches and tournaments. In tournaments, you could pick your opponents, to meet the larger goal of winning the tournament; winning matches was hence tougher. This would be similar to business situations, where you create winning business portfolios or, in a similar context, of "losing the war, winning the battle."

He talked of his experience of building a team with people of different cultures and backgrounds, with whom he could bounce off opinions, strategy, and logic as he prepared for a match. This again is much similar to industrial philosophy where a 'second view' is examined. Chess is similar to business, where the dynamics of the environment change rapidly at times. He also stressed the need to be flexible. As you learn and unlearn, you realise that noth-

tion, and how they may have changed through the decades?

I am what you can call the crossover brigade in chess. We started out with books and board and now we use only computers to work, analyse and research. For chess, memory plays a key role and any added gift is a plus. I am known to be intuitive and have a keen sense of potential danger. Chess is all about catching your opponent in uncharted territory.

As a corollary, chess being such an intense mind game, how do you switch off when you are not playing or want a break from thinking of chess?

I deliberately try to shut my mind from chess when possible. So we take vacations or, now, I tend to spend more time with Akhil. I am also fond of astronomy and mathematics.

What keeps you motivated at this stage of your career? What do you do to stay hungry when you have done it all?

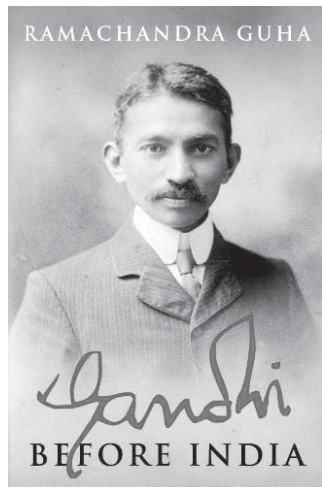
I don't really sit back and think about what has been achieved. I rather like to play from game to game and maximise my result.

Chess by itself is complex and intense, so I try to avoid the additional baggage. But some-

(Continued on page 6)



- *A portrait of Gandhi*
- *Violinist in worship mode*
- *The Chennai Hollywoodian*



Gandhi Before India – Ramachandra Guha (Allen Lane, Rs. 899)

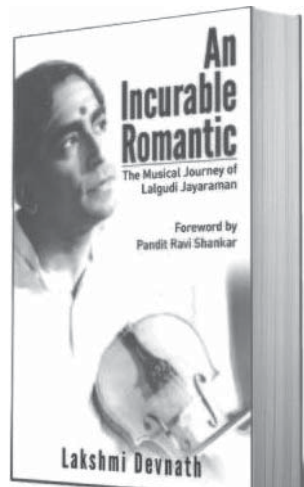
One of the most fascinating books I have read is Ram Guha's tome on a man whom we all know as Mahatma Gandhi. But what was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi like before he became the Mahatma? Was he just another young boy with dreams in his eyes and courage and compassion in his heart? Was he?

This is a journey of a Modh Bania boy who began life as a below-average student in a taluk school in Rajkot, Kathiawar District, Gujarat, but went on to change the destiny of a nation. Along the way, he spent years in London and South Africa, learning legal parlance and fighting for his fellow countrymen.

Gandhi left for London as a 23-year-old to study further and sharpen his thinking skills and intellect. But it was in South Africa that he began to understand and think about various social and political happenings which he was a witness to and soon a victim of.

This book covers the 20 years that Gandhi spent in South Africa, which shaped his world view and moulded his philosophy. It was here that he forged the philosophy and techniques that would undermine and ultimately destroy the British Empire. These two decades were crucial in the making of the Mahatma.

In fact, the idea to use Satyagraha as a tool of opposition germinated during his political battles in South Africa. He brought out a newspaper, *The Indian Opinion*, that voiced his thoughts, which would eventually become a reality when he faced the rigid Boers and tough British. It was during his years in England and South Africa that he came to understand the nature of imperialism



and racism. Incidentally, the people who supported Gandhi the most and sacrificed a lot during his fights in South Africa were Tamils. Yes, they were the most willing to fill jails and give up plenty to stand for Gandhi's cause.

Based on a wealth of new material and research, this book paints a portrait of Gandhi and a little known world he lived in – his experiments with dissident cults, his friendships with Jews, Christians and Muslims, his enmities and rivalries, and his failures as a husband and father.

Dramatic yet moving, this is an inspirational tale of courage, conviction, compassion and, yes, failings of the man who was Mahatma Gandhi.

● by **Savitha Gautam**

An Incurable Romantic – Lakshmi Devnath (Harper Collins, Rs. 599)

One of the most memorable moments in my life was when I got an opportunity to meet violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. Simple and humble, he greeted me with a "Vanakkam" in a soft voice. And I remember thinking, "This is what greatness is all about..."

Lakshmi Devnath's engaging biography captures that humility of the musician with the same intensity and clarity it does his musicianship. Truly, a colossus in the field of Carnatic music, Jayaraman had over the years built a style, the *Lalgudi Bani*, that created a new path for his creative expression as an accompanist, soloist and composer.

Whether it was playing for doyens such as Chembai or M.D. Ramanathan or going solo or jamming with the likes of Yehudi Menuhin, Lalgudi was at ease.



Once he picked up his violin and bow, he was in worship mode. And that was evident in his music, which was at once meditative and mellifluous.

The book has plenty of trivia to weave a narrative that is historical and anecdotal, informative and interesting. Intertwining the threads of his life with the strings of the violin, it is also a study of the violin in the Indian context and Lalgudi's role in getting the instrument its due on the national and international stages.

Advantage Hollywood – Ashok Amritraj (Harper Collins, Rs. 499)

Here's another Chennaiite who has made his mark on the international map.

This is the story of a shy boy from Chennai, better known as the tennis star Vijay Amritraj's brother, who went on to etch a name for himself in the echelons of Hollywood. And how!

Ashok Amritraj. A name that has become synonymous with success and profit in the movie-making business. The last child of Maggie and Robert Amritraj, Ashok began life as a tennis player. But he loved the movies. Playing tennis taught him perseverance and patience. He put these trials to good use and took a bold step to realise his dream. And he did it. Thirty years later, Ashok is one of the most successful producers in Hollywood. He has made over a hundred films with global revenues in excess of \$1 billion.

From Chennai to Wimbledon to Hollywood, this is a gripping tale of grit and determination and overcoming obstacles. And as you turn the pages, you encounter stars of the calibre of Frank Sinatra, Sidney Poitier, Sandra Bullock and Dustin Hoffman, and learn a little more about people such as Sylvester Stallone, Angelina Jolie and Bruce Willis.



Till November 24: *Fractured Realities*, retrospective exhibition (1951-2013) of the work of S. Murugesan who has more than 4 decades of experience in the field of Sculpture, executing it in stone, wood and bronze (at Lalit Kala Akademi).

Till November 24: *The Emerging Frame* is a series of four exhibitions spread over four quarters and aims to commemorate 2013/14 as the 40th year of Indo-Korean relations. This – the second exhibition in the series – showcases the work of four young painters from India and Korea. These artists draw inspiration from nature and from the contemporary world that they live in (at Lalit Kala Akademi).

Till November 30: Photo Exhibition: *Monuments of Madhya Pradesh* by Anil Gaikwad from Bhopal.

In this show most of the photos are from Khajuraho, Sanchi, Bhedaghat, Jabalput and the Bhimbetka caves (at Dakshina Chitra).

December 7: Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B flat major; Carl Nielsen: Symphony No. 5. Entry on invitation only! (at Goethe Institut Art Gallery, 6.30 p.m.)

December 2-6: SoundLab; and **December 7:** Concert. Border Movement is a platform that aims to encourage interaction between the electronic music scenes of South Asia and Ger-



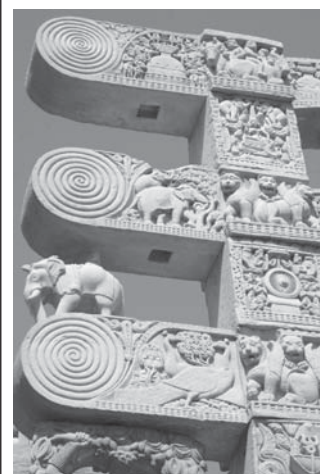
Sculpture by Murugesan

many. The aim is to encourage dialogue between the scenes and to bring South Asian artistes closer to German audiences and vice versa. The four-day workshop "SoundLab" enables artistes from South Asia and Germany to engage and collaborate together in the field of electronic music. Local artistes and experts work together on the issue of electronic music and present the results at a concert at the Indie Earth Xchange Festival (at Goethe Institut Auditorium).

December 12: Jazz concert: Carlos Bica and Azul. A double bass player and composer, Carlos Bica is one of the most innovative sound artistes in Portugal. His debut album *Azul*, together with Frank Mobus (Germany) and Jim Black (USA), was voted 'Best jazz record of the year' in 1996. They will perform together at this concert (at Goethe Institut Auditorium, 7 p.m.)

December 12-13: Workshop by Lena Neudauer in cooperation with the KM Music Conservatory. *Forenoon:* Workshop for composers. *Afternoon:* Concert with Sunshine Orchestras.

Lena Neudauer, violinist, has played with different orchestras and performed at many festivals. In 2010, she was appointed professor for violin at the University of Music in Saarbrücken, becoming one of Germany's youngest university professors. The workshop gives musicians and students the opportunity to share experiences about violin music and compositions (at KM Music Conservatory).



Sanchi

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A record-holder of sorts

— This maverick of TN cricket

A cricketering record-holder of sorts was S.R. Jagannathan who passed away recently. Not only was he a cricketer, captain, founder of a club, a club secretary, a selector, Life Member and member of the TNCA Constitution Committee (twice), member of the Executive Committee, an office-bearer and, of course, a King Maker in the TNCA, but he also attended as many as 87 consecutive general body meetings. Quite a record! No one was more dedicated to Tamil Nadu cricket, or the rule book, than he was.

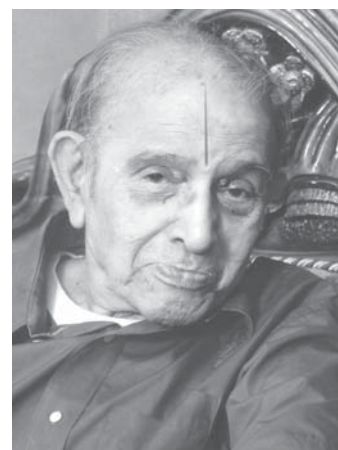
“SRJ” was the grandson of the famed criminal lawyer Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachari and it was perhaps the legal mind he inherited that encouraged him in the litigation he resorted to often, much to the discomfiture of the mighty men he chose to humble. To him goes the credit of Chepauk stadium being named after M.A. Chidambaram, the framing of the Madras Cricket Association's Constitution in 1952 and its revision in 1990, and the naming of the Western Gate at the stadium after the legendary A.G. Ram Singh.

After his schooling at the

MTCM School, he studied at both Pachaiyappa's and Presidency Colleges, majoring in Geology. He played for the State junior teams, in inter-association and City versus Districts matches, and for the Madras University. He was also among the reserves for the State Ranji Trophy team that was then captained by C.P. Johnstone. His frank speaking, he used to relate, may have cost him a permanent places in the team.

SRJ's induction into the game came in the late 1930s and he made a mark while playing for Madras University. He was an opening batsman and a leg-break googly bowler. In 1949, while playing against Hyderabad University, he opened the innings at 10:30 a.m. and remained unbeaten at stumps which were drawn at 5:30 p.m. He was at that time responsible for a record opening wicket partnership of 159, with his own contribution being 49. He often fondly recalled his experiences facing up to the likes of G.S. Ramchand and Subash Gupte of the then Bombay University team.

SRJ's playing days were cut short by a motorcycle accident which severely impaired his



S.R. Jagannathan

movements. He used to joke that the doctor reduced the length of one of his legs.

As early as 1946, SRJ provided places for several district players in Madras teams. For years he supported two clubs in Madras, viz. Egmore Excelsiors and the Eccentrics Cricket Club. S. Vasudevan and R. Madhavan were two of his 'finds'.

To promote cricket in Tamil Nadu, he launched *Straight Bat* in January 1997 as a cricket newsletter that focussed on cricket in the State. What started as a five-page newsletter soon grew into a monthly magazine. R. Ramchandran, Foun-

der-Secretary of Hamsadvani, and R. Sundaravadanan joined the venture which also brought out commemorative souvenirs when international teams played in Madras. He funded these publications from his own savings and the help of a few advertisements. Eminent cricket writers like R. Sriman, K.N. Prabhu, Raju Bharatan, K.R. Wadhwaney, Harish Pandya, Rajan Bala, Partab Ramchand, Suresh Menon, R. Mohan and V. Ramnarayan regularly contributed articles for *Straight Bat*.

SRJ was very generous and would never put a clamp on the number of pages for the monthly and the special souvenirs. Cost never worried him. All that he expected from his contributors was fair writing and meeting deadlines.

“I must confess, without hesitation, that it was SRJ who instructed me to read the TNCA Rules & Regulations and not break any of them during my stint as Hony. Secretary of TNCA,” recalls Prabhakar Rao. He adds, “When the TNCA's Committee decided to update the Rules & Regulations the year I took over as Hony. Secretary of the TNCA, I had to study three earlier printed Constitution books of TNCA to be able to act as convener of the Sub-Committee formed by the Executive Committee. SRJ had then told me not to attend the Sub-Committee meetings unless I

read the Constitution books more than once because there would be questions asked and clarifications sought by the members which I had to be able to clarify.” SRJ was never a person who could be cowed down on issues pertaining to the progress of cricket. The game was very dear to him and he neither wavered from his stance on principles nor compromised his position.

SRJ could make every General Body member lend his ears to his comments, whether seriously stated or jokingly. He would present a number of resolutions for the benefit of TNCA club secretaries and staff. Almost all the privileges at present enjoyed by the club secretaries are a result of resolutions introduced by him and passed by the General Body.

SRJ's memory was never short and he would often regale his visitors with anecdotes about his league playing days during the British Raj and post-Independence days, and his experiences as an administrator and selector. In between he never failed to talk about the nuances of leg-spin bowling and proper batting techniques. He was an institution in Tamil Nadu cricket.

(Compiled by A Staff Reporter from articles by the Editorial Board of *Straight Bat*, U. Prabhakar Rao and Bhaskeran Thomas.)

Remembering two stalwarts

The master builder

● For fifty long years, A. Ramakrishna (AR) was closely involved with the changes in India's construction industry. His tenure with L&T ECC from the time he joined, soon after taking his post-graduate degree in structural engineering from the College of Engineering, Guindy, in the 1960s, to his retirement four decades later, marks a spectacular evolution of the Indian construction sector.



A. Ramakrishna (AR)

The giant corporate L&T achieved a turnover of Rs. 72,724 crore last year. There have been very few large, sophisticated projects, be they related to factories and buildings, harbours and airports, steel plants and other industrial projects, roads and bridges, railways, sports complexes, hotels, multispeciality hospitals, or IT parks – name what you will – with which L&T has not been associated.

A. Ramakrishna (AR), who passed away recently, had been associated with a large number of them. A measure of this is evident from the growth recorded by L&T ECC under his stewardship during 1992-2004; the revenue of ECC grew close to 15 times, from Rs. 440 crore to Rs. 6500 crore, profits from Rs. 18 crore to Rs. 250 crore! This record continues, with the construction business accounting for a major share of L&T's revenues and projects.

I have interacted with AR at the time of commissioning several prestigious projects, like a blast furnace at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. On another occasion, I chanced to travel with him on a flight from Frankfurt to Chennai. That was the time L&T ECC was constructing a stadium for the World Cup cricket match in Barbados, West Indies. AR explained the challenges involved in completing the project to a tight schedule at a place 10,000 miles away! The stadium was got ready in time for the World Cup match.

Such challenges were met in a great measure due to the 18-month specialised training AR underwent in structural design and engineering in the then German Democratic Republic. This enabled AR to gain proficiency

in state-of-the-art German construction techniques. Regular visits to the giant construction fair Bauma and his other frequent trips to Germany enabled him to adopt several of the emerging practices. AR specialised in pre-stressed concrete for composite construction and in introducing alternative designs that saved on original cost estimates. He once referred to the advantages of steam curing of pre-stressed rib slabs, a practice common in Germany.

Recourse to alternative designs opened up the scope for achieving handsome economies. While AR noted the preference for steel structures in Europe and in Japan, thanks to plentiful availability of steel, he felt that concrete structures were more suitable in India, especially in coastal areas and for chemical and fertiliser plants that suffered corrosion. Concrete structures also saved 15-20 per cent on total cost, as steel was expensive. This technique became industry standard and was even adopted by international construction giants like Toyo Engineering.

Skills development and training have been receiving attention at the national level only in recent years. ECC set up a well-equipped centre at Manapakkam for training construction workers in a variety of skills. The centre has comprehensive curriculum and training systems and sophisticated tools and equipment for training artisans in several centres spread across the country. In-house training facilities are



A view of Hi-Tech City, Hyderabad.

provided to diploma-holders and graduate engineers.

AR was closely involved in IIT-M instituting a M.Tech programme on structural engineering. Apart from imparting theory, the programme also provides for training at L&T sites. AR also took care to include financial and personnel management as part of the curriculum, thus equipping graduates to handle managerial functions.

Top industrial houses, like the Tatas and Reliance, entrust all major jobs to L&T ECC as a

time. The present Rs. 15,000 crore Hyderabad metro rail project is being constructed and will be operated by a subsidiary of L&T. All these huge economic activities in Hyderabad can be credited to the initiative of AR.

AR was closely associated with the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. L&T ECC was entrusted with the construction of the Trust's modern hospitals, housing colonies and marriage halls. Sri Sai Baba also had L&T ECC line the Telugu Ganga Canal to help Chennai get drinking water

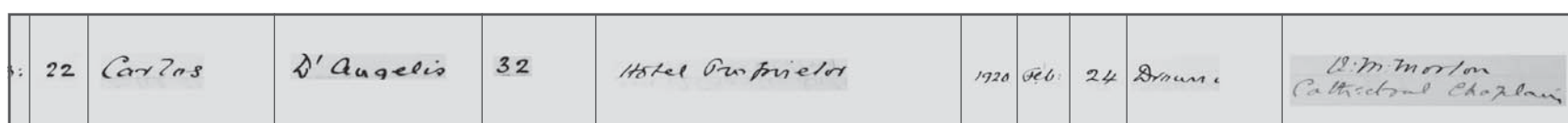
standards in a sector that accounts for 40-50 per cent of the capital expenditure on projects and massive employment of around 50 million!

ECC standardised form works, shuttering, and concreting. AR worked consistently on educating and lobbying for the use of ready mix concrete (RMC) which ensured the right mix and consistent quality. L&T, at that time a large producer of cement, also set up dozens of RMC plants. AR could take credit for the use of RMC gaining wide acceptance in quick time. Familiar with the speed of construction in developed countries, AR once remarked, “Our roads, bridges over level crossings and other projects can be standardised to some four or five basic designs. If this is done, we can complete a bridge over a railway level crossing in six months instead of the more than three years taken now!”

L&T ECC has completed large housing projects in short time. It constructed 10,000 primary school buildings in different locations in Gujarat at an average construction time of just 80 days per school thanks to extensive standardisation.

A matter for disappointment is the lack of recognition on the part of Delhi and the State governments to the multifarious contributions made by AR, many of which were of a pioneering nature. Tamil Nadu leadership has been focussing largely on politics, films and social issues of mass appeal. Sadly, the invaluable contributions made by business leaders, professionals, scientists and academics are not receiving the attention they deserve. Just think of this Mr. Builder not being considered for a Padma award! (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)

● by S. Viswanathan



On the trail of a hotel proprietor who drowned

● Jefferis Donald Evan D'Angelis, grandson of once well-known Madras hotelier, Giacano D'Angelis, lives in Chile and from there has been researching his family history. His latest find is information about the tragic death of his uncle Carlos D'Angelis (also surnamed Wilme). And this he found related, to his surprise, in some detail in the Straits Times, making him wonder why a Straits Settlement newspaper should record this death in some detail unless it was because the Hotel D'Angelis was a well-known hotel in South and Southeast Asia at the time. The report, headlined 'HOTEL PROPRIETOR DROWNED – Peculiar Fatality on a Shooting Trip', stated:

The death has occurred owing to an accident while on shooting of Mr. Carlos D'Angelis of the well known firm of Messrs G. D'Angelis and Son, owners of the Hotel D'Angelis.

Mr. Carlos D'Angelis left the hotel early on February 22nd on a shooting trip with Mr. F. Willow of *The Madras Mail* staff. They started at about 6 a.m. by motor car and drove up to Panapakkam tank in Saidapet Taluq, about 20 miles from Madras. At Panapakkam there is a large tank or jheel where duck, teal and snipe are to be found in the early morning. Mr. D'Angelis seems to have entered the boat, his own, having sighted some duck on the tank, while Mr. Willow followed him along the bund.

Mr. D'Angelis fired two or three shots and then the boat suddenly capsized. Mr. Willow, after doing all he could, went in search of help, which in that desolate place was not available. He sent the car back to Madras in search of help. The driver having reported at D' Angelis Hotel, the manager, accompanied by Inspectors Upshon and Moss and Sub-Inspector Govindarajulu, proceeded to the scene, where they spent a whole day in vain efforts to recover the body.

Subsequently, the body was recovered and at the inquest the evidence of a shikari who had been with the deceased for some years showed that the latter was thrown out of the boat by the premature explosion of his gun, and was probably stunned, which accounts for the fact that he sank almost without a struggle and without shouting for help.

A verdict of accidental drowning was recorded. The remains were interred in St. George's Cathedral Cemetery.

Editor's Note: A search at St. George's Cemetery did not reveal Carlos D'Angelis' last resting place. The tombstone was possibly covered by later burials. But a book kept in the cemetery recording burials in it has his name (see picture).

Another Madras first

– The first entomological paper from India

Tranquebar's missionaries included medical doctors employed by the Royal Danish Lutheran Mission (also known as the Tranquebar Mission, Halle Mission). Samuel Benjamin Cnoll (1705-1767), a surgeon from Halle (Germany), was employed in Tranquebar from 1732 to 1767. When Cnoll died in 1767, Johann Gerhard König (1728-1785), a surgeon trained in botany by Carolus Linnaeus (Uppsala, Sweden), succeeded him in 1768.

König gave up the Tranquebar Mission position to join the Court of the Nawab of Arcot in 1775. During his employment with the Nawab of Arcot, König travelled to the mountains north of Madras and to Ceylon collecting plants. Through the efforts of Joseph Banks, the most influential president of the Royal Society of London, König was offered the job of Naturalist with the English East India Company in 1778, with which he remained until his death in 1785. While travelling to Vizagapatam to meet Claud Russell, the brother of Patrick Russell, König contracted an enteric infection. William Roxburgh, then at Samalkot, treated König, but in vain. He is interred in Jaggandhapuram near Kakinada. König is remembered in India as an avid botanist for his extensive collections and deter-



Cover page of Volume 4 of *Beschäftigungen der Berlinischen Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde*, 1779.

minations of different plants of southern India.

I was amazed to find that König had published a professional paper entitled 'The Natural history of the so-called white ants – the termites' (*Naturgeschichte der sogenannten weissen Ameise*) in the *Beschäftigungen der Berlinischen Gesellschaft naturforschender Freunde* (which can be crudely

translated to read *The Research Activities of the Berlin Society of the Friends of Nature*) in Volume 4, 1779. As customary in the 18th century Germany, König's paper is printed in the difficult to read *Fraktur* typefaces (the calligraphic hand of Latin letters of alphabets) (see images).

Today we know that termites are the master architects of the natural world. When we



Page 1 of D(oc)tor Johann Gerhard König's article, 'Naturgeschichte der sogenannten weissen Ameise'.

compare a termite to the size of an average human, the relative height of one termitarium (termite mound) would be as tall as a 180-storey building in human terms. They build termitaria using the soil mixed with their saliva. A system of channels and ducts circulates air through these mounds, which have porous walls. At the lower core of the termitarium are the living

When fire strikes twice...

(Continued from page 1)

demolition was the only solution.

The Government had announced after the first fires that it was sanctioning the construction of a 4000 sq ft building on the site. With the more recent fire, the planned building can be even bigger. But at what a big loss of heritage! The building

has been in existence since the 18th Century, first as a gunpowder mill and later as a mint where the East India Company struck coins for the Nawabs of Arcot. It was later made over to the Government Press, which has been in operation here for a long period of time. The precinct, for it houses several buildings, has been listed by the

Justice Padmanabhan Committee report on heritage structures and precincts as qualified for Grade I importance.

The Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) of the CMDA has chosen to remain silent on the fire. Shortly after its inception, it had received a proposal for the demolition of the Mint and the construction of modern highrise in its place. The Committee had then refused to sanction the plan. Now the new construction has become a fait accompli.

It would appear that none in

authority is willing to learn from repeated incidents of fires in heritage properties. Chennai's list of victims is long – Spencer's, Moore Market, Gandhi Illam, the GPO, Chepauk Palace and now the Mint – and hardly an edifying record. But yet we find that many old buildings are easy targets for fire accidents – plenty of old timber, faulty electric wiring and loads of flammable rubbish, making for a deadly combination. Such apathy does not bode well for the remaining heritage properties.

OUR ADDRESSES

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– THE EDITOR

Chess & corporate strategy

(Continued from page 2)

times when people put you along with the all-time greats, that's a special feeling. You can't deny it.

You said you admired Bobby Fisher most among chess champions. Can you tell us why?

What he achieved in 1972 was unthinkable in that era. He had a special feeling for chess

and played with a lot of flair and style.

After active chess, what, besides the initiatives in which you are already involved? Will there be a greater involvement in spreading the chess movement in schools? Writing/commentating on chess?

Definitely, but I am not thinking about it. (Courtesy: Asterix, the journal of the Sanmar Group)

• 'Pages from History' by DR. A. RAMAN

Charles Sturt University
Orange, New South Wales
Australia

and working quarters. This area is the coolest and most insulated section of the mound. The royal chamber, which is the largest chamber in the nest, houses the queen and king. Below the royal chamber, the worker termites store food and care for the young termites. In some colonies, the workers tend gardens where fungi grow. The termites grow this fungus inside a comb, which is located in several pockets in the central section of the inner core of the mound.

Termites live on cellulose, the carbohydrate that builds plant material. The tunnels lead outward and branch into a network of passages that open to the outside. The insects make their trips to the outside at night, when it is cooler, and collect twigs, leaves, seeds and other vegetable food. The towers of the termite mounds act as turrets pushing the rising hot air, generated by the breaking down of the fecal comb by the fungus. Amazingly modified structures of the exteriors of termitaria occur throughout the world, adapting to local environmental conditions. Woeful it is that we – humans – look with bias and contempt at these extraordinary natural engineers as pests.

In 'The Natural history of the so-called white ants – the termites', König refers to termites and termitaria he studied at a location east, southeast of Tanjore. He describes vividly the elegant structure of the termitaria and the biological details of these relentless social animals. His inspiration to write this article, he declares at the start of his article, comes from the previous work of Johan Christian Fabricius (1745-1808), a Danish Naturalist, whose writing on castes in European termites was published in Germany.

I was astounded to read many details in König's article published way back in 1779 that elegantly match with our present understanding of the termites and termitaria.

I am nearly cent per cent confident that this article of König is the first formal scientific paper in entomology from India. The next formal entomological paper was by James Kerr, a medical officer in the India Company's Service, who published the paper entitled 'Natural history of the insect which produces the gum lacca'. This was published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* in 1781.

Another feather to Madras's cap – I am, of course, pleased!

(Continued from
last fortnight)

Until the age of 40, Chari's interest in music was restricted to Tamil and Hindi film music. Listening to *Binaca Geet Mala* hosted by the legendary Amin Sayani was a must for him every Wednesday night. In fact, as a youth he would get peeved when he was not allowed to listen to his favourite programme, as his brothers wanted to listen to Carnatic music on the only radio available in the house. This resulted in his developing an aversion towards Carnatic music.

One evening in later years, he was hosting a dinner for some of his family members in the more spacious independent house on TTK Road where his family had moved in. Much to his dislike he found that the entire conversation was about Carnatic music. He felt totally left out. When he protested, his brothers-in-law posed a challenge to him; "They asked me to listen to 500 hours of Carnatic music to realise its magic". Chari accepted the challenge. And his brothers-in-law were proved right. Chari became hooked to Carnatic music in a big way. Soon he became a donor member of Music Academy, attending concerts regularly. Chari realised that Carnatic music was not only giving him great joy but also helping him to become a calmer and a focussed person.

He decided to share the joy of listening to Carnatic music with his close friends and relatives. His first initiative in this direction was to hold Chamber music concerts in his remod-



R.T. Chari.

elled flat in Poes Garden. For 10 years, Chari organised nearly 50 chamber music concerts lasting for about 150 minutes each. Not satisfied with just offering a feast for the ears, Chari ensured that every concert was followed by a sumptuous dinner for all the invitees. When I asked him about that, he said "I learnt that from my mother. Seeing the satisfaction of the guests after a hearty meal gives me immense pleasure."

Not just the meal. Chari also ensured that every guest who attended the concert received a cassette containing 90 minutes of the edited version of the concert.

"Delighting the customers" is a phrase used extensively by marketers in the corporate world. Chari has always believed in delighting his guest audience in more ways than one!

This abiding interest in Carnatic music led Chari to collect more than 6000 hours of music from not only his own archives but also from other collectors. As a person with a vision who always believes in thinking big, Chari realised the need for chronicling and preserving for posterity the treasure trove of music he had collected.

The idea for a Digital Listening Library was born and soon Chari persuaded the Music

Sharing wealth with music

Academy, of which he was already an executive committee member, to provide space for the proposed TAG Music Academy Digital Listening Archives which he agreed to establish and maintain for five years (which he has now extended by another five years). The Digital Archive was launched at the Music Academy on December 13, 2008.

● by R.V. Rajan

Chari says, "The difficult job of converting and indexing was done by my son Prakash and his team. Empowered by a touch screen technology, the user can in ten seconds listen to a song of his choice, categorised under a *raga* or name of the song, singer or composer".

Chari's dedication to the cause of promoting Carnatic music has led him to sponsor similar archives in cities like Bangalore, Mysore, Hyderabad, and Palakkad, apart from the one in Madras University's Music Department. His foray to establish such an archive abroad started with the inauguration of one in Singapore, in association with SIFAS (Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society), and has extended to three places in Sri Lanka.

Not content with promoting only music, Chari who had no

great love for Classical dances earlier, decided to also extend his help in archiving Indian classical dance. The TAG Viewing Gallery was launched recently at the Music Academy, adding one more dimension to the Academy's efforts in promoting classical music and dance. The TAG Music Academy Listening and Viewing Archives has ambitious plans for acquiring 20,000 hours of music and many more hours of dance programmes, in the next five years!

His passion for music and how it should be received by the audience has now extended beyond TAG Centre which he owns. TAG Corporation has already sponsored state-of-the-art auditoriums in eight schools. Chari has also donated a Super Tech 400-seater auditorium to Guindy Engineering College, which he considers as one of his best contributions.

According to Chari, "Gifting is fine, but it is also important to see that it is received and used properly". So Chari continues to monitor the institutions where he has extended his support.

In the last couple of years, Chari has been organising lecture demonstrations to help people appreciate Carnatic music. He also started supporting efforts to create greater awareness about Carnatic music among school students by regu-

larly conducting *raga* identification competitions in selected schools.

In February 2002, Chari launched the TAG South India Heritage Programmes to develop a deep understanding of South India's cultural heritage. Held on the last Sunday of every month, these lectures by eminent speakers focus on specific aspects of South Indian heritage.

The invitee audience, which is served breakfast, consists mostly of senior citizens, all eminent people in their respective vocations. However, Chari's effort to bring in the younger generation into the programme has so far not been very successful. But Chari continues to encourage music talent in the young in several ways.

In the last five years he has been also organising monthly lectures on various topics connected with religion. Chari says, "I have learnt a lot about our heritage and religion from these lectures. I will continue with this effort and hopefully someday I will be able to rope in the younger generation to attend these programmes"

Chari's saga of service to society in the area of health, education, music and heritage and other social causes still continue. His other areas of interest are travelling. "I have so far travelled to 60 countries and collected coins and miniature dolls from other countries. I have so far collected 3000 sets of dolls and 3500 coins. I also have a collection of miniature chess sets," he says proudly.

As for future plans he says, "I want to continue to sponsor auditoriums in schools. I have already identified schools in Cuddalore and Chengalpattu."

Chari is a highly focussed individual. "I don't take on any project which I feel will be a waste of time and effort. When I find something worthwhile, I totally concentrate on that just one thing. I am aware that I have a one-track mind, which is both my strength and weakness." He is also known for insisting that the recipients of his generosity agree to contribute something as their share for the project, before he commits to support it. Anything given free is never appreciated by people, according to Chari, so "I insist on a 'deal' to ensure total commitment from the recipient of my charity, for the maintenance and continuing success of the project I have supported."

If more people start sharing their wealth and passions like the way Chari has been doing for the last 35 years, I am sure this world will be a better place to live in!

Feedback welcome on 9840392082 or

email: rvrajan42@gmail.com
(Concluded)

How good, this Ranji Trophy team of ours?

The Tamil Nadu probables for the 2013-14 Ranji Trophy season appear to have been selected on form. But, it is surprising that young Maruthi Raghav has not been included in the list. He is a batsman who displayed superb form in the league circuit and the Buchi Babu tournament. Raghav certainly deserved a look in.

The choice of young fast bowler Aswin Crist is also surprising as he is untried material. He has turned up for a none-too-strong club in the league circuit. However, his selection has to be supported as he's done pretty well over the years in the league and age-group cricket. The TNCA First Division League has not been producing quality bowlers as it did about a decade ago. I wonder, therefore, why a genuine quick and experienced fast bowler like Chandrasekhar Ganapathy has not been considered.

The re-emergence of M. Mohammed, Sunil Sam and Jagannathan Kaushik augurs well for the season ahead. It was good to see that Sam spent time with the Aussie legend and MRF Pace Foundation guru Glenn McGrath. That Bharath Arun is heading the Tamil Nadu Cricket Academy augurs well for fast bowlers in the State. He is a perfect teacher for young fast bowlers.

The selection of Baba Indrajith along with his twin brother Aparajith is most welcome. These siblings are the best bets for selection to the senior India squad in the none-too-distant future in view of their outstanding and consistent showing since last season. Aparajith did well for the Under-23 side that played in Singapore in the Asian Cricket Council Emerging Players tournament. We've never seen a batsman perform with such a degree of consistency in the recent past.

Older players like Abhinav Mukund and Anirudha Srikanth will have to show better form. The media needlessly undermined the younger Srikanth when he did well year before last, as he was playing under pressure of his illustrious father heading the national selection committee. Also, injuries hampered him last year.

It's also good to see the emergence of Selvam Suresh Kumar through sheer dint of hard work. His excellent showing in the league and Buchi Babu games certainly proved him an all-rounder of merit. He also did well in the Moin ud Dowla Cup tournament.

Off-spinner Malolan Rangarajan was good in the league circuit but was most disappointing in the Buchi Babu final. It was here that he was really tested against a strong outfit from North India. He needs to learn from the experience. Left-arm spinner Aushik Srinivas is a dependable tweaker and should be the lynchpin of the home team attack. Rahil Shah should be a good back-up since he has performed well thus far. Leggie M. Ashwin has shown a lot of improvement this season. It is to be hoped that he overcomes his no-ball problem. A.C. Parthiban may be considered for the limited over tournaments where he'll be quite handy.

Among the wicket-keepers chosen, Aditya Karthik appears to be the best bet when Dinesh is away on national duty. He appears pretty quick in his work.

It's difficult to pinpoint as to who'd be the better captain, Lakshmiopathy Balaji or Subramaniam Badrinath. It appears that the selectors have struck a compromise in naming Balaji to lead the team in the longer version of the game and Badrinath to lead the one-day combination.

THE PROBABLES: S. Badrinath, L. Balaji, R. Ashwin, M. Vijay, A. Mukund, B. Aparajith, B. Indrajith, R. Prasanna, Vijay Shankar, Dinesh Karthik, S. Suresh Kumar, K.B. Arun Karthick, K. Bharat Shankar, S. Anirudha, Kaushik Gandhi, U. Sushil, Karthik Adithya, R. Rohith, R. Aushik Srinivas, Rahil Shah, Vijay Anand, M. Ashwin, Malolan Rangarajan, M. Prabhu, Sunil Sam, J. Kaushik, M. Mohammed, Aswin Crist, V. Yomahesh. - (Courtesy: Straight Bat)

- A Special Correspondent

● **The fifteenth in a series of profiles by V. RAMNARAYAN of cricketers who may have made an all-time Madras* squad.**

Tamil Nadu – the erstwhile Madras included – has boasted of some good wicket-keepers, including quite a few who represented India in official or unofficial Tests. *Madras Musings* Editor S. Muthiah rates H.P. Ward – one of the four musketeers he eulogises in his riveting *Spirit of Chepauk* – as worthy of a place in his all-time State XI. S.V.T. Chari, S. Parthasarathi and M.O. Srinivasan kept wickets for India in unofficial Tests, and D.L. Chakravarthi, P.K. Belliappa, Bharath Reddy, M. Sanjay and Dinesh Karthik have been some of the prominent names among those who did duty for the State behind the stumps through the decades.

With due respect to the Editor's choice as well as the reputations of all the other 'keepers in this list, I zoomed in on the two Tamil Nadu stumpers who have played official Tests. Bharath Reddy was in the 1970s an athletic wicket keeper who occasionally played a useful tailend batsman's role. In the four Tests he played on the 1979 tour of England, he had a highest score of 21 and nine catches and two stumpings. He also played three ODIs.

An energetic cricketer reaching his peak

My choice for the wicket-keeper's slot, however, is Dinesh Karthik, who has 56 victims in Test cricket and 51 in one-day internationals. He has also scored exactly 1000 runs in Test cricket – including a highest of 129 – with an average of nearly 28, and 1263 runs in ODIs. Though he has not quite lived up to his early promise, he has quite a few fighting innings and at least one incredible stumping to his credit at the highest level – during the Nat West Challenge series in 2004 in England.

I first set my eyes on K.K. Dinesh Karthik around the first year of the millennium, when he made two consecutive tall scores at the junior level to attract everyone's attention. I also happened to watch two successive hundreds by him in the Ranji Trophy. Both were daring counterattacks launched by him, with Tamil Nadu in deep trouble. Both were splendid re-



K.K. Dinesh Karthik.

arguard actions. He performed brilliantly in the Under-19 World Cup in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Making his Test debut against Australia on a notorious Wankhede Stadium wicket in Mumbai, Karthik was part of an Indian batting line-up which was bundled out in the second innings by the left-arm spin of Clarke. India, however, won the match by 13 runs. Though Karthik failed with the bat, he did a reasonable job behind the stumps.

In Test cricket, Dinesh Karthik's wicket keeping was fairly decent, though he had a few off days. Scoring only one half century in ten Tests (88 against England), he was forced to make way for Mahendra Singh Dhoni, one of the most exciting prospects for a long time in Indian cricket. Karthik,

however, returned for India's tour of South Africa towards the end of 2006, and consolidated his position in both Tests and ODIs. On the tour of Bangladesh in 2007, he was a specialist Test opener and scored 129, his only test hundred, in the second Test in Dhaka.

There was perhaps not much to choose between Karthik and Dhoni, when the present Indian captain first replaced him in the team, but Dhoni was a brilliant if unorthodox batsman, as we all know, and has improved his keeping by leaps and bounds over the years. Add his superb captaincy skills, and it is a wonder that Dinesh has managed to remain in contention for a place in the India team at all.

Unfortunately, Dinesh failed to capitalise on his chances when Dhoni dropped out of a Sri Lanka tour in 2008, failing both in front of the stumps and behind them.

In domestic cricket, Dinesh has been consistency personified for Tamil Nadu and South Zone, barring one or two relatively unsuccessful seasons. The 2008-09 season was a high point. He scored three centuries in the Ranji Trophy and captained Tamil Nadu through to the semi-finals. He also scored two centuries in the Duleep Trophy, earning a recall to the Indian team, for the tour of New Zealand, being selected in all three forms of the game.

The last season has perhaps been by far the most satisfying for Dinesh. He played a major role in Mumbai's success in the IPL, which earned him a berth in the ODI side for the 2013 Champions Trophy in England. Earlier, he had been Tamil Nadu's most successful batsman of the season.

India's captain Dhoni says of Karthik, "He is someone who can bat really well in the middle order. He is a good runner. He reads the situation pretty well and he is someone who can look to go on and play big innings and that is what is really important in the middle order. He is technically sound and once he gets going he keeps himself busy throughout the innings."

A restless, energetic soul, Dinesh Karthik follows a punishing work schedule. Training with Prasanna Agoram, the South African team's video analyst, and S. Basu, trainer with Royal Challengers Bangalore and a close friend, the 28-year-old sets the bar very high for himself in terms of improving his technique and focus. He is perhaps approaching his peak as a batsman and 'keeper in all three forms of the game, and with the support of the likes of Dhoni and Ponting – his erstwhile Mumbai Indians senior – he is poised for a brand new phase in his cricket career. If he learns to unwind a bit, relax when the chips are down, and wait patiently for better days, he can continue to play a vital role in Tamil Nadu's Ranji Trophy campaign. And he may still figure in the selectors' scheme of things for the 2015 World Cup.

*Madras Province/State/Tamil Nadu.

MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

To reach out to as many readers as possible who share our keen interest in Madras that is Chennai, and in response to requests from many well-wishers – especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late – for an online edition. *Madras Musings* is now on the web at www.madrasmusings.com

THE EDITOR

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