

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

Vol. XXIII No. 23

March 16-31, 2014

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People's Marina



Must the people lose even a bit of this space that is theirs?

(By The Editor)

It was too good to last. Given the pressure that land faces in a city like ours, it was only a question of time before someone or the other began eyeing the largest open lung of the city – the Marina beach. In what can only be termed as a misguided attempt to provide recreation facilities, the Government aims to take over thirty acres of land on the Marina to create an adventure water sports arena.

The plan, mooted by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC), is now under the consideration of the Public Works Department (PWD). The TTDC, it is learnt, wants to have a place on the beach with facilities such as hot-air balloon rides, scuba diving and water-kite flying. Also on the anvil are berthing facilities

for yachts and small sail boats so that regattas can be held. There is also an idea that boat services can be provided from the Marina to Puducherry and Mamallapuram.

There are several objections to all this, no matter how good they sound on paper. In the first place, we have already sacrificed enough of the Marina for all kinds of construction. Secondly, it was and should remain a place for the common folk of the city to take the air. The ideas that the TTDC has now aired are all elitist and aim to cater to foreign tourists (who are likely to find such facilities no better than from wherever they came). The beach is common property to all Chennai citizens and cannot be controlled by a few.

Thirdly, the TTDC's own record of providing such facilities is rather poor. One was on

– Under threat again

the Island Grounds and offered recreations such as reverse bungee jumping, rock wall climbing, paint ball, dart board, net cricket, grease pole climbing, squad bike and archery. This came a cropper following very poor public patronage. The other scheme was at Mudaliarkuppam near the city where para-sailing and water-skiing were offered at exorbitant rates, ostensibly to lure up-market clientele. This too failed. As of date, both the facilities at Island Grounds and Mudaliarkuppam stand withdrawn. What is the guarantee that the proposed Marina scheme for the will fare any better?

Lastly, it appears that those who came up with this idea

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Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



• Serendipitously there arrived on my desk recently a Madras guide book of the 1950s, with a heap of pictures of the landmarks of that era. Some of them survive as they were, others survive in a re-constructed form, and many have vanished. From this issue onwards, we will publish a picture of one of them every fortnight, as they were 50 years ago and more ago. We start with Dasaprakash Hotel, an Udipi icon of that era, on Poonamallee High Road. A wonderful art deco building, it was part of a chain built up by Kuttethoor Seetharama Rao who gave up a lowly Government job in 1921 to join his brothers in running a restaurant in Mysore. It later established others in Madras and Ootacamund, then in the 1970s, moved to North India and, thereafter, to the USA.

The Poonamallee High Road flagship hotel was inaugurated in 1954, as was its twin kalyana mandapam, Dharmaprakash. The hotel was known for its good Udipi fare, ice creams and comfortable rooms. In its time, its restaurants had seen visitors ranging from Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to J.K. Galbraith.

Differences in the family and the five-star culture saw the closure of Dasaprakash in the 1990s. The building was demolished in 2010 to make way for highrise after the property changed hands.

Work on elevated expressway again – but hopefully not at Cooum's expense

Work is expected soon to resume on the elevated expressway connecting the Port to Maduravoyal. This is following the High Court of Madras setting aside the 2012 order of the Public Works Department to stop all work on the project. While there is no denying that the elevated road was a necessity for the free movement of cargo to and from the port, it is unclear as to what will be the fate of the Cooum River in whose dry bed several pillars for the elevated road have been erected.

Envisaged as a 19-km elevated corridor, the project was mooted by the Chennai Port Trust. Clearance was given by the State Government in consultation with the Ministry of Shipping, Government of India,

and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The project, initially estimated to cost Rs.1500 crore, had its foundation stone laid by the Prime Minister in 2007. Work then began on the road and progressed rapidly in the next few years.

● by A Special Correspondent

Originally planned as a corridor running over Poonamallee High Road, its alignment underwent a couple of changes since. Those in charge had voiced the view that land acquisition in Poonamallee High Road would be an issue and the expressway was then planned to run along the Cooum. This was resisted by the Tamil Nadu

State Coastal Management Zone Authority (TNSCZMA), which claimed that the proposal to build the road along the Cooum violated Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance.

Surprisingly, the TNSCZMA later reversed its stance and said that the proposed road would not affect the free flow of water in the riverbed. This despite the fact that around 34.58 hectare of the road fell within the CRZ and, more importantly, 35 foundation pits were to be in the riverbed. To all intents and purposes this meant that the road would effectively be built on the riverbed, leading to obstruction of water flow.

In 2011, with the change in regime in the State, the elevated road was among the first

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Madras Eye

"I'm going to vote for the party that that will push up India's GDP, bring down the rate of inflation, manage the macro-economic performance, increase exports, and, most importantly, promises to build a new platform for you and me to live comfortably!"



The Prison Bazaar in Puzhal – and the 'Freedom' vermicompost it sells (inset).

Now, shop at Prison Bazaar

Normally, only anxious family members and friends frequent the outside of the grim Puzhal prison complex in the suburbs of Chennai, as they wait to meet their loved ones. Of late, there has been a new flurry of activity, more smiles and light exchanges. And the recently opened Prisons Bazaar of the Prisons Department of Tamil Nadu Police is the reason!

The 600 sq ft outlet on the periphery of the Puzhal prison campus, on the Grand North Trunk Road, has no hoardings to attract people and looks like a typical government-run super-market. "However, once you step in, you can get anything you want, from sweet Mysore Paks to delicious vegetable fried rice, vermicompost for your garden or even organic keerai for the kitchen!" says an official. The 'prison bazaar' at the Central Prison was launched by Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa, through video conferencing, on December 9, 2013.

Mooted sometime in May 2013, the idea was to set up separate bazaars for products from the nine central prisons in the State – in Chennai, Salem, Tiruchi, Cuddalore, Madurai, Vellore, Palayamkottai and Coimbatore. Chennai has three campuses – Puzhal Central Prison No.1 and No. 2, and the Women's Prison.

Earlier, inmates of these prisons had been involved in making a variety of products, that were used so far only by government departments and not sold to the public. Now products such as readymade garments, confectionery items, footwear, detergent soap/powder, candles, mosquito nets, raincoats, masala powder, vermicompost packets and vegetables are available to the public too at nominal rates. A bakery unit at Puzhal Central Prison-I was recently opened. And as prisoners bustle around making delicious smelling breads and cakes, there is not even a minute to spare, with products being lapped up as fast as they are made!. "People are now flocking to the store to buy goods because they are impressed with the quality of the products displayed," an official says.

Meanwhile, as part of the Green Prisons Programme facilitated by Nizhal (a Trust involved in sensitive greening) across all the central prison campuses, organic vegetable patches are being tended, nurtured and harvested enthusiastically under the guidance of organic farming experts. Also, plastic litter is consciously reduced and leaf and kitchen waste converted into beneficial, healing compost! All these are now being sold in the prison bazaar.

The Puzhal outlet was initiated with a State Government grant of Rs.10 lakh. "Now that it is doing well, we have instructed Superintendents of the prisons in Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Cuddalore, Salem, Vellore and Palayamkottai to start similar outlets," a senior official confirms. The bazaars on the prison campuses have entrances opening out on to the road for easier access. "The exclusive products manufactured in each prison will be sent to outlets in other prisons, too. The bazaars will work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day," a prison official says.

Following the launch of the first outlet and gratified by its popularity, another counter was opened outside the prison headquarters in the CMDA building in January. All items sold – leather goods, bakery items, readymade clothes, mats, footwear, handicrafts and paintings by prisoners – come under the brand name 'Freedom', and are displayed for sale on the ground floor of the prison headquarters.

Senior officials say that they are also looking for options beyond prison complexes and prison offices to sell these products using efficient marketing strategies and best commercial practices to ensure that pricing is on a par with other retail outlets. The system is aimed at creating skilled manpower in the prisons that will enable prisoners to lead a life of dignity after their release, but also assures them of an income from the sale of products while serving their sentences.

(Continued on page 3)

The evolution of wedding gifts

The Man from Madras Musings is breathing easy, now that the wedding season is over. His good lady, also known as She Who Must Be Obeyed, has now gone on to other things to expend her surplus energy leaving MMM alone and free from the care of attending weddings. But the spate of marriages had MMM musing on the way wedding gifts have changed over the years.

MMM is aware of a dim past when diamond necklaces, silverware and other such gifts were de rigueur but he was born in a more prosaic age. Among MMM's earliest memories is of a doctor aunt getting married. A patient of hers gifted her with a ghastly steel cup (or was it a set MMM forgets). The aunt having put it away, rather absentmindedly gifted it back to the same pa-

throughout the year.

Far worse than the milk cookers were the glowing lamps. MMM is fairly certain that the younger generation among his faithful readers will not know about these. They were hideous, comprising two metal florets, which held a coloured, transparent plastic cylinder between them. This cylinder contained water within. All simple and innocent you may imagine. The lamp was however a nasty bag of tricks that revealed itself only when connected to electric power. The water inside began to glow and, what was worse, revealed several tape-worm-like floaters that shone and darted about hither and thither. This was bad enough but some others had music in them as well. The only good thing was that the whole ensemble lasted a week or ten

invite came from the other side. Some families had long memories and the same amounts used to be given, chiefly in retaliation, generation after generation, with not a care about inflation. MMM has known of guests who gave crossed cheques for rupees fifteen! By the time it travelled between bank accounts, it would have cost everyone involved a pretty penny, barring the giver.

The notebook was usually entrusted to a sharp-eyed cousin who was also good at mathematics. As MMM failed on both accounts, he was never ordered to report for duty. At one wedding none of the sharp-eyed cousins was available and having lightly passed MMM over, the family zeroed in on a newly married American aunt. It was the considered view of some of the

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

tient when the patient got married. A couple of years later, the cup (or was it a set) came right back, when a second aunt got married. That aunt migrated to another city where no doubt the cup (or the set) was launched once again onto the gift circuit where it probably still orbits.

Mind you, a steel cup (or set), though hideous, was still better than the plastic ones that began doing the rounds a decade later. The era of the plastics was generally the worst for gifts and has mercifully got over. There are days when the mood is despondent and MMM can recall those cream coloured melamine cups with printed floral designs that were the most favoured gifts, at least from the giver's point of view. If you got plenty of those, there were other excrescences as well. Who could forget the milk cookers – those aluminium creations in which water circulated and boiled in a chamber that surrounded the one in which the milk was poured. The water boiled first and the cooker whistled to warn you that the milk was next in line. It all worked well for the first month or so after which the whistle got choked with whatever whistles get choked with. The consequence was that the milk boiled over, the water having evaporated by then. But you did not have to worry, for you had at least half-a-dozen milk cookers on standby – all from your wedding – if you had not gifted them to others by then that is. If you were married in the 1970s or 1980s, milk cookers were the standard gifts, closely followed by electric irons. A close third was the ice bucket, perhaps because our city's hot weather

days at most at the end of which the water drained out. A rather cynical uncle told MMM that the lamp was popular as a wedding gift as it symbolised marital bliss and only lasted that long. But that, as MMM hastens to add, was his, the uncle's, view and not MMM's.

One excrescence that is still going strong is the statuette of white metal. Nothing can be uglier than this, no matter what shape it takes – a Venus, the elephant-headed God or a horse. There were some thrifty souls who got away with the simple expedient of sending a greetings telegram. These used to be ceremoniously read out as well.

In cash we trust

Continuing in the same vein, The Man from Madras Musings remembers cash gifts – most of them of a value that probably just about covered the cost of meals for two. That mention of cash gifts reminds The Man from Madras Musings of, no, not politics, but of the practice of a notebook being opened at each wedding for meticulously listing what each person gave by way of cash. This would in some communities be read out to the general public over a broadcasting system. Those who gave niggardly amounts would writhe in agony, as the value of their cash gift was made known to all. MMM in all his innocence assumed that the notebook was maintained to tally receipts. But that it had a second and more sinister purpose was revealed much later to him. It served as an aide memoire for the bride and groom's families as to who gave what. That in turn helped in deciding what amounts needed to be given in reciprocation as and when an

senior ladies that it would give HER something to do and help HER understand our customs. The aunt took the notebook with enthusiasm, mounted the stage and seated herself behind the newly weds. She collected the cash but noting down our many syllabled, tongue-twisting names was an impossible task. By the time she had noted one name several others had gone by. So practical American that she was, she kept collecting the cash and skipping the names.

After the flood had abated to an extent, she set about tallying each guest with the cash they had given. This was done by going around the crowd, seeking out familiar faces and then having fixed them with a steady smile, asking them in a stentorian voice as to how much they had given. Several guests who had given nothing began to beat a hasty retreat at the approach of the aunt. It was a laugh riot for the younger and irreverent ones such as MMM but the senior members of the family were not amused. The notebook was quickly taken away from the aunt and handed over to a sharp-eyed cousin who tallied books of accounts for a living.

Tailpiece

Today most of all this is gone. Wedding gifts are usually flowers, and here too there are some ugly bouquets. Many invites sternly forbid gifts. But when The Man from Madras Musings received one that said Mr & Mrs XYZ request your presents on the occasion of the marriage of ... etc, it made him wonder if it was a typographical error or a Freudian slip.

– MMM

OUR
READERS
WRITE



Gender confused

In T.K. Srinivasa Chari's write-up about Nirmala Lakshman's book *Degree Coffee* (MM, February 16th), after the first mention of her as Nirmala Lakshman, the authoress is subsequently referred to as 'Lakshman'. Surely it is Nirmala's father's name or husband's name. Referring to her again and again as 'Lakshman' is irritating. Let the surnames be there for the rest of the world. In Chennai, let us refer to the person by his or her own name because that is how it should be. If the author of *Degree Coffee* is addressed with a man's name, it particularly irritates an old Madras hand like me because it confuses the gender.

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Curative culture

Regarding the article 'Beyond Botany to Medicare' (MM, March 1st), which stated that smoking 'stramonium' cured asthma, I was reminded that decades ago an MBBS medical practitioner cured asthma with an injection of one-day culture of the patient's blood and urine. The procedure cured me of my chronic allergic rhinitis.

S.N. Mahalingam

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A Chitale theatre

My father P.C.Subba Raju built a cinema theatre in Tenkasi. The architect was none other than L.M.Chitale (MM, March 1st). The project was started in 1947 and completed in 1952. Following discussions, two black granite pillars were added to support the balcony which gave an imposing look to the theatre. The theatre was named Bharathan Talkies by none other than Rajaji and Kalki. It was opened in 1952 by K.V.L.RM. Ramanathan Chettiar with a musical concert by the great M.S.

Dr. P. S. Venkateswaran
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Prison Bazaar

(Continued from page 2)

As I noticed the neat packets of Freedom vermicompost available in the prison bazaar outlets, at Rs.10 per kilo, and the organic *keerai*, *thakkali* and *vazhakkai* stacked neatly on counters, I wondered, "Will the prisons across Tamil Nadu be soon initiating trends for the nation toward greener, more organic lifestyles?" A distinct possibility – and the time is just right!

– Shobha Menon



A spectacular view of the Pamban Bridge reader Sudha Umashankar spotted on the Internet.

The India-Sri Lanka Bridge – a new initiative needed

On June 30th/July 1st, the visual and print media announced the inauguration of the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (BWSL) in Mumbai as the first bridge built in India across the sea. Almost exactly a century earlier, to be more specific in 1914, the Pamban viaduct, the first bridge in the open sea, connecting Rameswaram Island with the mainland, was commissioned by the South Indian Railway. Though the 2-km (6776 feet) length project now appears to be a pilot project or a toy bridge, it was an engineering marvel at that time. Much later, in 1988, a road bridge was built parallel to it in the open sea.

On October 2, 1988, the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, dedicated to the nation the Pamban road bridge named after his mother, Indira Gandhi, as Annai Indira Gandhi Palam (AIGP). The event took place in the remote village of Mantapam from where the bridge starts to reach Pamban village on Rameswaram Island. Media announced the event as "Poet Bharati's dream come true" little realising what the poet had dreamt. His vision was the mammoth bridge to Singala Thivu (Sri Lanka), something akin to mythological Rama Sethu. Pamban Bridge was only a first step in the long hop, step and jump. At a special media meet it was explained that, compared to what the poet dreamed, the present achievement was just like a prologue to a great epic. At best we could say the completion of the Pamban Bridge brought the poet's dream into the realm of the possible.

Since then I have been crusading the cause of a causeway or bridge between India and Sri Lanka. In the conference on 'Our World in Concrete Structures' held in Singapore in 1995 a paper on the need for this bridge was presented. Then in the booklet *Bridge Building – A Way of Life – The Story of Pamban Bridge*, brought out by the Indian Concrete Institute in 1996, there was an epilogue which outlined the feasibility of this bridge. Thereafter in many international fora the importance of this structure was brought out. But the cry fell on ears deafened by the roar of guns in the island nation.

Then, at the beginning of this century, a ray of hope was seen. There was a peace accord in Sri Lanka and the guns went silent. The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, which is older than the Institution of Engineers, India, joined hands with Tamil Nadu centre of the IEI and organised an event on India-Sri Lanka Cooperation in Technologies for Development held in Chennai in 2001. At that meet I explained how a bridge between India and Sri Lanka would facilitate economic development much faster.

A year later, in 2002, IESL invited the Tamil Nadu centre of IEI to organise a joint seminar on an India-Sri Lanka Land Bridge. The event was held on August 31, 2002 in Colombo. The event

itself was a sequel to the interest evinced and the initiative taken by the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe, in a land bridge. He visited India 2-3 times and persuaded his Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee to agree to carry out a joint feasibility study on such a bridge. In fact, the Sri Lankan Board of Investments had already carried out a preliminary pre-feasibility conceptual study.

On August 23, 2003, while delivering the millennium lecture for The Hindu Media Research Centre for Sustainable Development and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Ranil Wickremesinghe stated: "A land bridge between Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu and Talaimanar in Sri Lanka would be a major step towards sub-regional economic integration and would offer both sides of the Palk Strait huge economic benefits."

But soon political shadows and renewed armed conflict loomed over the atmosphere. But when the guns became silent the present Sri Lankan Government and President Mahinda Rajapakse committed themselves to reconciliation and development in the North. As such it is time to revisit the bridge project. Geographers call the stretch of land/sea between Pamban Island in India and Mannar Island in Sri Lanka as Adam's Bridge. It is a narrow ridge of sand and rock, mostly dry, which connects Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar. It is about 30 km running east of southeast from Dhanushkodi. It is mostly composed of shifting sandbanks with intricate channels in between, in which the depth of water varies from .6 m to 20 m. Waves cover nearly 20 km of the 30 km during monsoon periods and about 17 km during non-monsoon periods, the rest of the distance being sandy islands.

This topography attracted many people much before poet Bharati dreamt of a bridge to Singala Thivu (Sri Lanka). In the late 19th Century, Edward J. Young studied the possibility of establishing a rail link between the Madras Presidency and Ceylon. Of course his objective was to make the journey for labour to and fro as easy, cheap and attractive as possible. After interacting with various officials in Madras Presidency and South Indian Railway he was able to get a commitment from William S. Betts, Managing Agent, South Indian Railway, at Trichnopolopoly on March 4, 1892 as under:

"I believe there would be no difficulty in raising the capital required for the construction of the railway upon the united guarantee of the governments of Ceylon and Madras to pay four per cent interest thereon and South Indian Railway would be willing to undertake the work."

(Continued on page 7)

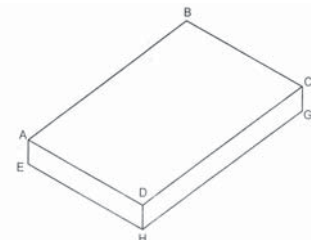
Drawing with Mano – I

Learning from trains

Perspective in art is something I began unravelling well before I even knew the word 'perspective'.

I have drawn pictures ever since I can remember. Even in those days, my parents – who were artistic-minded themselves – recognised that the quality of my drawings was better than those of other children of my age known to us. The school teachers too saw that I had artistic potential.

During my boyhood (1940s), drawing classes were compulsory in schools up to the secondary level. When I was in the Fifth Standard, we were taught how to draw a rectangular slab. Here, lines AB, DC and HG are equal in length and parallel to one another. So is the case with lines AD, EH and BC. However, the electric commuter trains of Madras taught me that – unlike in the drawing – parallel lines in a real object seen at an angle will not appear parallel in a drawing and their lengths would seldom



be equal in the drawing, even if they were so in the real object. How did I learn this from electric trains?

When I was in secondary school, in the mid-1940s, I became totally immersed in drawing steam road-rollers, fire engines, those gawky World War II planes and, above all, steam-engine trains. Many boys of my age group at that time too were interested in them. But the difference was that I could draw – somewhat clumsily, but, of course, far better than my classmates.

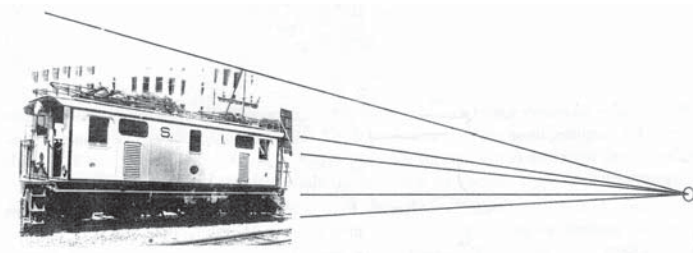
I grew up in Madurai. My paternal grandparents lived in Madras. I spent many summer and Christmas vacations with them. From their house in Thirumalai Pillai Road, T' Nagar, we travelled to the heart of the city using the commuter electric trains. I loved these trains, not so much from an artistic point of view but rather as something representing power, speed and action. I immensely enjoyed hearing the saxophone roar of their traction motors, as the trains accelerated, and the bugle calls of their pow-

erful horns. All these fascinated me.

Our family always went from Madurai to Madras by steam-engine train, which would invariably reach Tambaram early in the morning. This is where the electric commuter trains started their day. Our steam-engine train would leave Tambaram only to stop at the terminus, Egmore. The electric trains, of course, stopped at each and every station in between. The electric train would start from one of these stations, and with high acceleration would soon catch up with our speeding, smoke-belching express train and begin to overtake it, only to decelerate suddenly as it approached the next commuter station, while our express train pressed on. The electric train going in the opposite direction would appear and disappear like a flash. A unit of the electric train had only three carriages, the traction motor being located in the centre of the middle carriage. During peak hours, they coupled two units together.

Back in Madurai, I learnt that none of my classmates had ever been to Madras – they simply called it *pattanam* (the city) in those days. They had not heard of electric trains. I shared my knowledge about the electric train with them, talking about its power, the sound it made, speed, horn and all these through the current it drew from a wire suspended above. I tried to draw a picture of an electric train – the drawing did not show what I wanted to convey.

During my next summer vacation, I saw with my uncle, Babu, a photograph of a single electric traction engine designed to pull a large number of goods wagons. While in Madras, I studied this photograph. I stuck it gently on a foolscap sheet and extrapolated the traction line, the top and the bottom lines of the engine, and the line of the rail. To my utter astonishment all these lines merged into a single point. I had only completed my Sixth Standard (1st Form) and I had unwittingly,



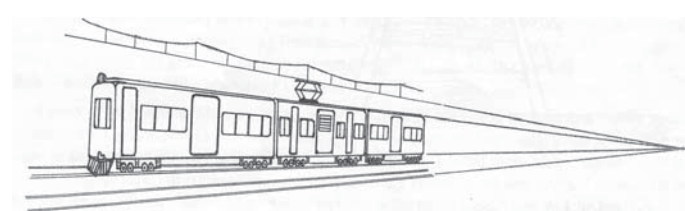
and partly out of curiosity, opened – not Pandora's box – but the magic box of perspective.

From this humble discovery, I figured out that what applies to a severely simple object like a commuter train would apply equally well for complex buildings. I pulled out photographs of buildings and lightly stuck them on to foolscap sheets and extrapolated converging lines that were not parallel in the photographs but which were parallel



in the actual buildings. It was sheer delight for me to find two vanishing points – one each for two sets of lines that were perpendicular to each other in the 'real building'. This exercise also reaffirmed in my mind that an object in a perspective drawing usually has two or more vanishing points.

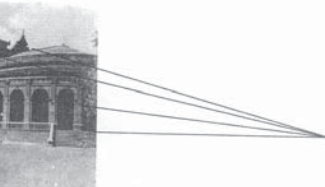
A couple of years later, when we were again in Madras, I saw a new photograph of an electric train taken at an angle. I extrapolated the power line, the top



line, the window lines and the bottom line to the vanishing point. The gap between the end of the last carriage and the vanishing point was not at all that much. A rudimentary ink drawing of a unit of an electric train that I did years later shows this aspect.

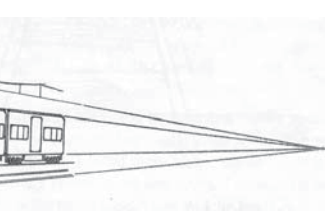
If the train had another unit of three carriages, that too would fit in without crossing the vanishing point, would it not? What about 100 units next to one another? How about 1000 units? It seemed irrational to expect

MANOHAR DEVADOSS, that brilliant near-blind artist who produces meticulous drawings of people and places, tells you in this series how he began drawing and continued to do so even as his sight deteriorated. These excerpts are from his recently released book, *From an Artist's Perspective*, which tells a human story as well as offers advice to all who draw.



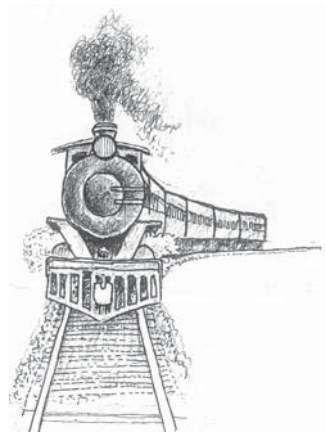
1000 units to fit in. It really bothered me. I had no answer.

One day, when I was in Seventh Standard, our family went by car on a highway. The railway level-crossing gate was closed and a steam-engine train stood still nearby. I got out of the car, climbed over the gate and stood in the middle of the rails and looked at the steam-engine. It was a forbidding sight. At the same time, for a little boy it was also a new vision. I had never seen a railway engine's face un-



til then. By this time, I knew that the tracks would 'appear' to broaden towards me. The carriages stood on a curved track. I was able to see some of the rectangular (lengthwise) rear carriages, which did not quite appear rectangular.

(To be continued)



Anglo-Indians bond in Southern India

Fearing a revolt by Indians in the 18th Century, led by British-trained East Indians (as Anglo-Indians were then called), inspired by mulattos-led revolts in Haiti and San Domingo, the English East India Company passed several restrictive orders.

The first, in 1786, was that the wards of the Upper Orphanage

• by Geoffrey K. Francis

Schools in Calcutta were in future to be prohibited from proceeding to England to complete their education and thus qualify for the Covenanted Services. The second, in 1791, stated that the sons born of Britishers were prohibited from being employed in the Civil, Military and Marine Services of the Company. And the third, in 1795, prevented the employment in the Army, except as musicians, of all persons not descending from European parents on both sides.

The object of these standing orders was to reduce East Indians to a condition of social degradation and political impotency. For nearly half a century, Eurasians were ineligible to serve on juries and, as if this disability were not enough, they were actually debarred from specific appointments open to the natives of the country. They were unable to take part in the administration of the country, the services were closed to them, and they were excluded from admission to colleges in which Indians had free access.

In about 1825, there began a movement in Calcutta organi-

sed by the community itself to obtain relief from these disabilities.

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the Anglo-Indian poet (1809-1831) with a deep passion for India and a patriotic zeal, was equally passionate in uplifting his community. His house in Calcutta became the rendezvous for members of the community, like John William Ricketts, who wanted to discuss the political, social and economic difficulties of the East Indians. In November 1825, they resolved to present a petition to the House of Commons. By March 1829, the petition was placed in the Town Hall for signature and was published in all the leading newspapers.

Meanwhile, in Madras, the *Government Gazette* of October 8, 1829 had the following report:

"Madras is soon to have an East Indian Association. Arrangements are being made to establish one and a Committee has been appointed to frame rules for its institution. At a General Meeting of Eurasians, it was resolved:

1. That a Petition to Parliament be prepared as soon as practicable to be presented in conjunction with and for the support of the specific object of the Calcutta East Indian Petition.
2. That the Petition be forwarded to the East Indian Committee at Calcutta with a solicitation that it may accompany theirs and be put into the hands of some agent employed by them.
3. That a public subscription be solicited in this Presidency in support of our undertaking.

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munity went up by leaps and bounds.

Meanwhile, another meeting to induce the Eurasians in Madras to form themselves into an Association was held at the New Town Prayer Hall on June 5, 1879. New Town was wisely chosen by D.E.S. White, the organiser, as the venue, the area being a stronghold of the Eurasian community in those days. The now defunct Madras Gun Carriage factory was in existence then on Naval Hospital Road (the site now occupied by the Government Medical Stores) manned by skilled Eurasian artisan soldiers known as the Carnatic Ordinance Artificer Corps, most of whose members with their families resided in the vicinity.

John Ricketts took the Petition from Calcutta, arrived in London in 1829, and sought

The plaque in New Town

The site now occupied by the Government Medical Store was originally a Naval Hospital before it was taken over by the Gun Carriage Factory. A stone tablet still in it bears the following inscription:

"This Hospital was erected during the command of His Excellency Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Pellow-Bar – Commander-in-Chief – in the year 1808, by Lieutenant Thomas Fraser, Superintending Engineer, Fort St. George."

A second meeting was convened at Victoria Memorial Hall under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Sir Charles Turner, Chief Justice of Madras, on October 7, 1879 at which the Association was formed, having as its object the promotion of the social, moral and intellectual advancement of the European and Eurasians permanently settled in India. White was elected the Founder-President. A newspaper named the *European Anglo-Indian Advocate* was started, the title of which was a short time afterwards changed to *Eastern Guardian*. Over a thousand members were enrolled in due course and 16 branches were formed in the districts.

David Emmanuel Starkenburg White, measured by any yardstick, was a multidimensional visionary who combined vision with dedicated hard work. He was born in 1832, the son of an Apothecary of the Madras Medical Department, and was educated at St. Andrew's Parochial School. He started his career as a clerk in the Education Department of the Government of Madras and rose to the position of Personal Assistant to the Director of Public Instruction. Before his retirement in 1888, he was appointed the Registrar of Assurance.

Apart from his professional life, he will go down in history as the person who urged the then Eurasians of Madras to constitute an Association.

The Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India was incorporated under the Indian Companies Act VI of 1882 on March 30, 1882. Its name was subsequently changed to The Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India on January 17, 1908. It was further changed to the Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India on August 27, 1994, the name by which it still goes.

Apart from constituting and being the first President of the Eurasians and Anglo-Indian As-



From John Ricketts to David White.



sociation of Southern India, White obtained the consent of 400 members of the Eurasian community and submitted their names to the authorities to constitute the First Volunteer Corps in India that is still known as the Madras Guards. He was also actively involved in raising funds for the construction of the Victoria Public Hall in Madras.

One of White's achievements was his recommendation to organise an annual conference of all East Indian Associations in India to discuss policies to be pursued by the community on important matters affecting the interests of Domiciled Anglo-Indians and Eurasians scattered all over the country. As a result of this, the first annual conference was held in Jabalpur on September 26 and 27, 1885. White was asked to take the Chair.

White was also a great environmentalist and induced members of the community to acquire *Roof Trees*, to which they could turn their thoughts and their steps after wandering. He set an example by securing the lease of a plot of land at Puttundur, adjoining Whitefield near Bangalore, where he built a lovely country house and brought in many Eurasians to settle in the area.

In 1888, White was given the unique honour of presiding over a meeting of the Madras Congress Committee at Pachaiyappa's Hall to accord a rousing welcome to Eardbey Norton, an outstanding Barrister-at-Law and Life Member of the Associa-

tion, on his return from England where he had acquainted the English public of India's wants and aspirations. The Association office and a small industrial school were then established by White at No.1 Mint Street. On February 1, 1889, White breathed his last at his residence at Moore's Garden, Nungambakkam, and was buried at St. Andrew's Church Cemetery in Madras.

Since his death, the Anglo-Indian Association has made tremendous progress under the leadership of great Anglo-Indian stalwarts, including W.S. Gantz, Bar-at-Law, who was an active member of the Indian National Congress, and T. Richmond, an outstanding Anglo-Indian leader and Barrister in Bangalore (he was President of the Association for 12 years). Gantz, in 1890, was nominated for the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. B. Lavery, another East Indian stalwart in Madras, was the Headmaster of Pachaiyappa's School from 1877, was a Municipal Commissioner from 1867, and was twice appointed Sheriff of Madras.

The Association has established a Computer Centre, a Nursery School, and a Special Training Centre for graduate courses and there are plans and proposals to set up an Industrial Training Institute and to provide more modern facilities for Anglo-Indian youth. (Excerpted from *Contemporary Facets of the Anglo-Indian Community* by Dr. Geoffrey K. Francis.)

People's Marina

(Continued from page 1)

have forgotten that the sea here has had a history of tragedies ranging from drowning incidents to the massive tsunami that hit the coast ten years ago. Professional swimmers and divers speak of a deadly current that runs all along the shore. How safe will it be to have water-sporting facilities here?

While details of the scheme are still awaited, it is clear that this is yet another instance of wanting to take over the Marina. This is not the first time and it certainly will not be the last. The earliest instance was 110 years ago when a railway line was planned across the sea front, connecting George Town with Mylapore. That was abandoned following public protest. The Mass Rapid Transport System

wanted to revive the idea in the 1980s until better counsel prevailed though the Buckingham Canal ultimately had to fall victim to that piece of development. Then came the scheme of the 1990s when it was envisaged that a series of high-rise constructions would come up a la Shanghai, catering to a well-heeled expatriate clientele. That idea was dropped once the tsunami hit the coast. We wonder what will save the Marina this time. Public outcry is the only hope, if we are to save this common recreational facility from encroachment in the name of development. The citizens of Bangalore have shown that they were capable of this when Cubbon Park was similarly threatened. Can Chennaites prove that they are of the same mettle?

Quizzin'
with
Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period February 16th to 28th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. What is so special about zircon crystal found in sandstone in the Jack Hills region of Western Australia recently?
2. On February 19th, Brian Acton and Jan Koum made global headlines thanks to Facebook. Explain.
3. In which State capital was the country's longest free Wi-Fi zone, stretching nearly 20 km, unveiled recently?
4. On February 20th, which language attained the sixth "classical language" status in the country?
5. Name the Government of India's recently launched new online information guide for social sectors and software tools to develop Internet-based content in local languages.
6. On February 26th, who became the first chief of a defence force to resign in independent India?
7. The oldest parliamentarian of India, aged 94, announced on February 21st his decision to call it a day. He joined politics and became a member of the first Lok Sabha in 1952. Name this Manipuri.
8. In the world of medicine, what is the newly discovered 'Dua's Layer' named after its discoverer, Professor Harminder Singh Dua?
9. Which Union Minister has written the lyrics for the music album *Raunaq* that has music by A.R. Rahman and singers like Lata Mangeshkar and Shreya Ghosal?
10. Name the space telescope that has just discovered 715 planets beyond our solar system.

* * *

11. In 1668, who was the first to be designated Governor of Madras?
12. What grand edifice on the Marina was built in the gardens of Chepauk Palace, occupying what had been the Nawab's Artillery?
13. Alphabetically arranged (in English), which constituencies would be the first and the last of the present 39 Lok Sabha constituencies in Tamil Nadu?
14. Where in Chennai can you find the original registers detailing the marriage of Robert Clive and Elihu Yale and the baptism of the children of the founder of modern Calcutta, Job Charnock?
15. Where did the Corporation of Madras meet before it moved to Ripon Building in 1913?
16. In which city temple would you see the unique 'Aadhi Amdh-prabhu' idol? Also name the two deities that make up the idol.
17. In which educational institution in Madras can you see a statue of Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort on a pedestal?
18. Which institution, synonymous with Chennai and popularly known by a four-lettered abbreviation, was founded by V.R. Singaravelar and Ambat Sivarama Menon with V.S. Srinivasa Sastri becoming its first president?
19. What is the signature drink for which people flock to the Kalathy Store in Mylapore?
20. Fill in the blank in this statement made by Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff about one of his own initiatives: "From old Sicilian recollections I gave in 1884 to our new creation the name of _____".?

(Answers on page 8)

Our own MIT Rajam's dream

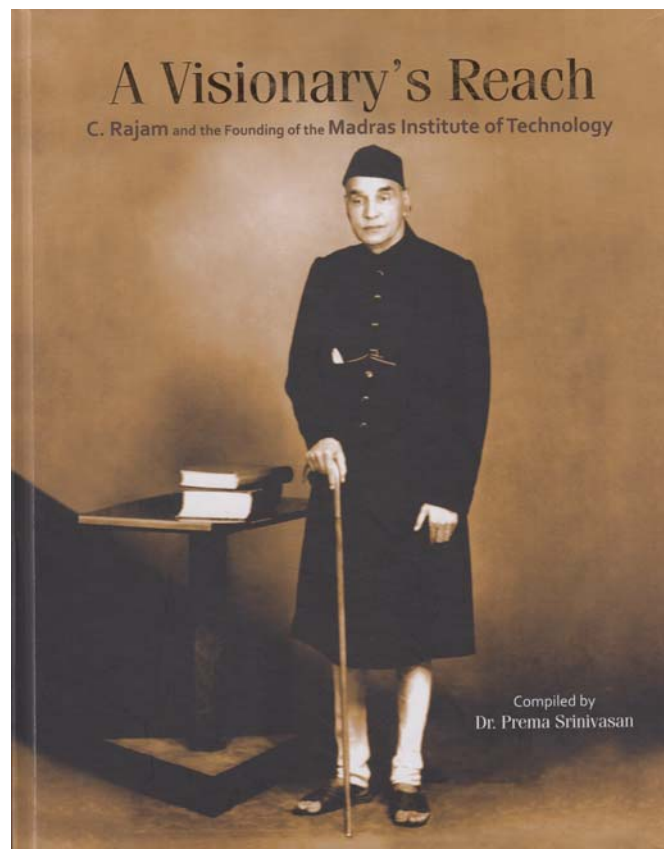
Chennai should feel a sense of pride that the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) was established in 1949, a little earlier than the first IIT set up in West Bengal's Kharagpur in May 1950, and a decade before IIT Madras in 1959. MIT, established by an industrialist, Chinnaswamy Rajam, opened in July 1949 with 96 students from "Kashmir to Kanyakumari" who would specialise in automobile engineering, aeronautical engineering, electronics engineering and instrumentation technology.

The campus had readymade hangars, as the 27 acres of land in Chromepet on which MIT was set up, had been used as an airfield during World War II. The hangars became workshops for the students. The seed capital for buying the land on which MIT now functions was Rs. 5 lakh that Rajam mobilised by selling *India House*, his handsome bungalow across the road from the Music Academy.

The story of the founder and founding of the institution's growth are only too briefly told in a small coffee table-type book, *A Visionary's Reach*, which was released at a recent function.

To help him set up the College, Rajam formed a core committee which comprised lawyer and philanthropist M. Subbaraya Iyer, who was also instrumental in founding Vivekananda College and Vidya Mandir; M.K. Ranganathan, the first Director of MIT (1949-54); K. Srinivasan, Editor, *The Hindu*; C.R. Srinivasan, Editor, *Swadesamitran*; philosopher and statesman S. Radhakrishnan; and retired PWD engineer L. Venkatakrishna Iyer.

Demonstrating that the institute enjoyed plenty of goodwill, students of the first batch, on the last day of the first term exam, went to Coimbatore to train in the G.D. Naidu Industrial Training



Centre. G.D. Naidu also donated the college its first clock tower. When the first year classes in Applied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry began, till MIT's laboratories were adequately equipped, Physics and Chemistry practicals were conducted in the Madras Christian College campus in Tambaram between 6 and 9 a.m. according to the schedule.

Dr. Prema Srinivasan, who put together the book, is a granddaughter of C. Rajam. She writes that the idea of writing a biography came when MIT students and professors were searching for photographs of Rajam and details of his activities from his collection for the MIT Museum which was inaugurated in 2011. Four alumni of MIT, Vijayalakshmi, Karthika Kumarasamy, Sameer Nizamuddin and Balamurugan Ponnusamy, helped compile the book.

Among the many pictures in the book is one of the sixth batch of Aeronautics students (1954-57) with former President of India,



From India House to hangars.



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam sitting with his classmates and Professors Repen- thin, Sponder and Pandalai.

Dr. Kalam, recalling the life of Rajam, writes: "He (Rajam) sold his bungalow... What for? Shri Rajam found when he was starting an industry, he had to install a lot of equipment. After installation, some had to be repaired. Every time Shri Rajam found he had to invite foreign technologists and technicians for setting right the equipment either in steel rolling mills, power stations or electrical mill companies. Rajam felt that Indian engineers could design and build equipment and plants and also maintain them. He visualised that the design, development, maintenance and operation of engineering systems should be integrated in the technological field. That is how he worked towards founding MIT. This process has become an integrated part of education at MIT. In addition, the visionary Rajam also foresaw the requirements of the Indian Defence Services. He wanted to see the Defence Services employ engineers and scientists. This integrated vision gave birth to the MIT we see today."

Nehru's words in his address at the first Convocation (October 9, 1952) drew attention to the initiatives taken by the founder and his associates: "Anyhow, the most impressive fact of this young and growing institute is that you, having started from small beginnings, are making good progress more with your own efforts, than what you could have if you had an easier time, having all things put before you." Part of the progress was the number of expatriate academics Rajam recruited for MIT.

Well after its silver jubilee celebrations in 1975, MIT and three sister colleges, the College of Engineering, Alagappa College of Technology and the School of Architecture and Planning, all in Guindy, merged to form the Perarignar Anna University of Technology, now the unitary Anna University. MIT has its own website (<http://www.mitindia.edu/>) with its original insignia 'In the service of India' emblazoned alongside Anna University's.

Apart from his industrial and educational interests, Rajam was a music aficionado. It was he who introduced the legendary singer M.S. Subbulakshmi to Madras by sponsoring a lecture and vocal-veena-violin concert on December 28, 1933. MS was accompanied by her mother Shanmuga Vadivoo on the veena.

Of Rajam's six children, three sons and three daughters, C.R. Ramaswamy gave up a career in the Indian Army to help his father in the family business when his elder brother C.R. Vishwanthan passed away suddenly. It was Ramaswamy who took on Rajam's mantle after his death in July 1955.

One of the alumni, Dr K. B. Chandrasekhar, who passed his DMIT (Electronics) in 1983, helped to set up the AU-KBC research centre in his alma mater in 1999 with generous funding and mentoring support. Other notable alumni are Prof. K.V. Narayanan, who went on to work at MIT for 37 years, and T.A.S. Balagopal, formerly Director (Exports), Tata Motors, and Chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council. Maya and Lakshmi Menon (1964) were the first women graduates of the Institute.

— T. K. Srinivasa Chari



The Tarangampadi gold foil

History written in gold

At the recent Prof. Ananthakrishnan Endowment Lecture at the Roja Muthiah Research Library, Prof. P.S. Ramanujam, a professor in optics at the Technical University of Denmark, spoke on his passion, the history of Tarangampadi (Tranquebar) during Danish rule. He particularly focussed on the Gold Leaf Agreement between the Danes and the ruling Nayak, dated 1620.

While researching into archival material regarding the Danish East Indian colonies of Tranquebar and Serampore, and palm leaf collections in Denmark, he found this April 1620 letter written on a gold foil, 40 cm long and 25 mm wide, which invited the Danes to trade from there. The foil was signed by Raghunatha Nayak in Telugu, though the text itself was in Tamil. The text was later translated into Danish and German by C. T. Walther in 1741.

Ramanujam read out the text in the gold leaf which is a prized possession of the National Archives in Copenhagen. It stated,

"We, the Royal Highness Srimad Raghunatha Nayak: send this message to the ambassador of the King of Denmark, on the 22nd day of Chitrai in the year Raudri. We are prospering here. Kindly despatch the news about Your Highness' prosperity. We are pleased to learn the news of that place brought to us by Captain Roeland Crape and the Holland General. Since we have agreed that we should not draw a distinction between Your Highness and ours and have agreed to live as one, we have honoured the Holland General and Captain Roeland Crape with palanquins and permitted the subjects of that country to come and settle here. We order the creation of a port

named Tarangampadi here and allow the export of pepper to that country as it is not available there. We have given appropriate warning to the Portuguese against the trouble they caused to Roeland Crape, fined them 12,000 pon and have issued orders to them not to interfere with your ships. We have sent back the general. Since we have ordered that this place should be made suitable for the residence of Captain Roeland Crape, he is now residing there.

"As it has been resolved that we should not entertain distinction between our country and yours, we order that the people from our country could come and settle in this place. Please arrange frequently to send us rare objects from that country. We are sending with this garments two big pitambarams (silk garments), a hanging carpet, two upper garments, four painted carpets, two jamutad swords, a dagger with lion-handle, another dagger and four Singaram bows."

The signature of the Nayak is on the lower right hand side of the foil and sprawls across several text lines which surround it. This seems to indicate that Raghunatha Nayak had signed first, and the text was filled up later. The text of the foil starts with "Raudra year, Chittirai month, 20th"; this will correspond to the current Gregorian date of April 16, 1620 (*Indian Chronology*, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai).

The second line of the text starts with "ulandeesu chenne-

ralum, Rulangkalappai karpitharum.."; Rulangkalappai refers to Roeland Crappé and karpithar is Captain. Ulandeesu Chennaral refers to a General from Holland. Who this General was, we do not know. Walther translated the date as "Raudra 2nd April". Later citations claim this date to be "2nd April 1621". These dates, according to Ramanujam, could not be correct. It is obvious from the text that Tranquebar was given to the Danes, but through Roeland Crappé. The text states that a port called Tharangampadi has been established with a view to the Danes setting up a trade centre there.

• by
K.R.A. Narasiah

According to history, Tarangampadi is a port town established by Kulasekhara Pandian in the 14th Century on the Coromandel coast. After agreement between Raghunatha Nayak and the Danish king, Christian IV, the town became a trading post of the Danes and remained in their hands until 1845, when it was sold to the English.

When Kulasekhara Pandian established the port town in the 14th Century, it was called Shadanganpadi. Ramanujam says that this can be seen from an inscription in the Masilamanai Temple there.

Ramanujam explains the way the Danes entered the area. In December 1619, Roeland Crappé of Denmark captured a few small Portuguese vessels carrying arecanuts and rice in the seas north of Sri Lanka. The Portuguese, however, lay in wait, and wrecked his ship. Crappé, along with 12 others, managed to swim ashore and were given asylum by Raghunatha Nayak in April 1620. Ove Gedde, who was commanding a Danish fleet, contacted Roeland Crappé, who invited him to visit the Nayak at Tanjore. This resulted in a treaty between Raghunatha Nayak and Christian IV. Gedde left Tranquebar on February 13, 1621 and reached Copenhagen on March 4, 1622. Roeland Crappé became the first 'Governor' of Tranquebar.

Ramanujam explains that historians of a later period have misinterpreted the contents of the golden foil as THE treaty written in Tamil. It is not – it is a letter of friendship written by the Nayak. In the Danish National Archives, there is another translation of the gold foil dating to 1791, which has been overlooked by all historians. This translation corresponds to Ramanujam's with the exception of the year which is mentioned as Nala. Nala corresponds to 1616!

Ramanujam concludes that the main treaty between Raghunatha Nayak and Ove Gedde was signed on November

19, 1620. One copy of the treaty written on parchment in Portuguese, which was then the main language for trade, is in the National Archives in Copenhagen. This treaty bears the original signature of Raghunatha (which can be compared with the gold foil). After Ove Gedde came home, the treaty was ratified by Christian IV; however, the ratification was never sent back to Tanjore. It is also believed that there was a treaty in "Mallabarisk" (Tamil) too. Ramanujam does not believe this to be true; he thinks that this is a misunderstanding caused by those who mistook the letter on the gold foil to be a treaty.

Ramanujam says that there are two more letters on gold foil, but these were written much later, between 1620 and 1636.

According to Ramanujam, approximately 60 documents in Modi (Marathi) script are there in the Danish National Archives. These are documents written by the Maratha rulers at Tanjore to the Government in Tranquebar. All these documents have been translated.

A dubash who was prominent at one time, Daniel Pullei (Pillai), wrote more than a hundred letters in Tamil addressed to one Piragasam Pullei. These are in the Copenhagen Archives as are letters from one Viraraghava Ayyangar and a Gulam Muhammad, who served as intermediaries between the Raja of Tanjore and the Danish Government and also as assessors at the Black Court. Their letters document local history, such as the invasion by Tipu Sultan.

(More details about the documents at the National Archives can be seen on www.tharangampadi.dk)

Work on elevated expressway

(Continued from page 1)

projects to be stalled. The Chief Engineer of the PWD issued notice to stop work on the ground that the road was being constructed directly over the river and had therefore deviated from its original alignment. The Port Trust challenged this order in Court. With the NHAI also filing a writ requesting orders to resume work, the Court has permitted this, with the proviso that the PWD must be taken into confidence and care must be taken that there is no obstruction to the Cooum. It is to be hoped that this will be adhered to.

It must be pointed out, however, that the NHAI has not yet given any commitment to remove the pillars in the river or to change the alignment again to prevent any construction on

the riverbed. If it continues to build the corridor with the river as its base, we are in for trouble.

To those who have seen what happened to the Buckingham Canal, all this is not new. The MRTS was built on the canal bed and this permanently destroyed that water body, at least within the city. Since then, all announcements to the effect that the canal would be revived as a navigable waterway have remained hollow promises. The sinking of pillars into the canal has only ensured that the waterway is no longer an effective stormwater drain system and also causing flooding in neighbouring areas. The same method, if adopted with the Cooum, can spell a bigger disaster as the river flows through several crowded localities within the city.

INDIA-SRI LANKA BRIDGE

(Continued from page 3)

Edward J. Young, however, could not succeed in getting clearance for this project as Sir A.E. Havelock, the then Governor of Ceylon, was personally averse to the scheme and considered that its completion might lead to the annexation of Ceylon to India.

In spite of this setback South Indian Railway continued its efforts to make Ceylon as easily reachable as possible. And it did so with the Pamban Bridge. Now it is time to take Bharati's dream further.

The civil war in Sri Lanka that lasted a generation has now come to an end. There is no hurdle to pursuing the project. Public opinion has to be mobilised in favour of this

bridge in both the countries. Media has a large role to play in this direction. The completion of BWSL provides proof to our technical competence and capability. While the sea link in Mumbai eases the traffic congestion on a specific route in that city, this bridge will facilitate two nations becoming more prosperous.

President Mahinda Rajapakse of Sri Lanka has repeatedly reiterated his personal commitment to project of reconciliation and development. This bridge should form part of the development project.

"Let's build a common future, from our common past. All it requires is imagination, leadership and the commitment to break off the shackles of the past.... To make our people

rich". Let us build this friendship bridge at this opportune moment.

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– THE EDITOR

The Chitales of Chennai – Part II

No Chitale stamp – Each different

(Continued from last fortnight)

Unlike his father, the leg-endarly L.M. Chitale, who was born in a family of limited means, Krish Chitale was born to parents who had prospered and had an easier life. But he lost his mother when he was only 8 years old and had a difficult childhood thereafter, as he was brought up by friends and relatives since his father was away most of the time. When his father passed away in 1960, Krish Chitale had to step into the larger-than-life shoes of his father. He was only 28 years old at the time.

Born in Tarapore, Maharashtra, in 1932 Krish Chitale had his schooling in Madras at P S Senior Secondary School and Madras Christian College School. He got his degree in architecture from Sir JJ School of Architecture, Bombay, where he met his future wife Sushila, a Gujarati girl from Bombay.

Immediately after passing out of the JJ School he joined his father's firm in Madras. It was not long before he married Sushila, a qualified architect herself, who also joined the firm and was with it till the arrival of their son in 1960.

Between 1952 and 2003, the year Krish Chitale handed over the mantle to his son Kapil Chitale, he was actively involved in designing landmark buildings in South India. When I asked him about the difference between the style of designing buildings during his and his father's time, he said, "In my

father's time the emphasis was on symmetry and grandeur. But the buildings that I have designed are all different because I believe good design implies change. You cannot see a Chitale stamp in my buildings. Each one will be different. Be-

• by R.V. Rajan

sides, I pay a lot of attention to wind direction and how to make the best use of natural light."

According to him, the Kothari Building on Nungambakkam High Road is one of the first buildings in Madras to use sun control louvres. In Tarapore Tower, another landmark building on Anna Salai that Chitale designed, he used solid fire-proof walls between the individual shops, so that in case of a fire in one shop it will be contained in that area. "I believe that every building should have its own identity created by a simple and expressive architecture corresponding



The Kothari Building by Krish Chitale.

to its specific functions and location," says Krish Chitale.

Since Krish Chitale took over the mantle, Chitale & Son has been involved in designing and building scores of buildings. The list of clients of Chitale & Son reads like a "who's who" of the country.

Krish Chitale is also known for his interest in preserving heritage in the city. "I am a die-hard believer in conserving heritage buildings. I have made sure that whenever we renovate such buildings, we respect them for what they are because they are our history." He recalls his efforts in renovating the Library and District Boardroom of the Free Masons Grand Lodge of Madras District, located in the campus of the Free Masons Hall, off Ethiraj Salai, Chennai. A small building but an eye-catching one after restoration.

While he and his son have kept the flag of Chitale & Son flying high as a leading architect firm in South India, it is Krish Chitale's total involvement in several voluntary organisations that have helped him get a

reputation as a social activist with a difference. Working with Round Table and Rotary, he contributed significantly to Family Planning programme of the Corporation of Madras, the establishment of Child Trust's Hospital in Nungambakkam, the successful implementation of the Red Measles immunisation programme, and the massive polio eradication programme which was later adopted by Rotary International. "Doing social service is my hobby," he says.

As for the legacy he will be leaving behind, he quips, "Well, I have managed to keep the name of 'Chitale & Son' going for 81 years. I hope Kapil, who is already heading the business, will take it forward, with its reputation intact, to reach the milestone of 100 years!"

(Concluded)

(Feedback welcome on rvrajan42@gmail.com)

Answers to Quiz

1. The 4.4-billion-year-old crystal has been confirmed as the oldest fragment of Earth's crust; 2. Their popular creation WhatsApp was bought by the online giant for a staggering \$19 billion; 3. Patna; 4. Odia; 5. Vikaspedia; 6. Indian Navy chief Admiral Devendra Kumar Joshi; 7. Manipur's Rishang Keishing; 8. At 15 microns thick, it is a new layer in the eye located at the back of the cornea between the corneal stroma and Descemet's membrane; 9. Kapil Sibal; 10. Kepler.

11. George Foxcroft; 12. Senate House; 13. Arakkonam and Virudhunagar; 14. St. Mary's Church in the Fort and the Fort Museum; 15. Errabalu Chetty Street; 16. Madhya Kailash. The idol is an amalgam of Anjaneya and Lord Ganesha; 17. Santhome Higher Secondary School; 18. TUCS; 19. Rose milk; 20. Marina.

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