

**WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI**

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

Vol. XXIII No. 5

June 16-30, 2013

### INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- The Namakkal schools
- Cancer Institute experience
- Interpreter to detective
- 'The Triplicane Express'

## Heritage buildings turn to ashes

— *Mint fire  
shows lessons  
from the past  
are not  
being learnt*

Around 4000 sq ft of built area was gutted by a fire at the historic Government Press on Mint Street. The damage could have been much worse had it not been for the serendipitous fact that the fire broke out during working hours and so was detected and put out quickly. What is most distressing is that those involved in the entire fire-fighting operation and the press releases that followed accused the heritage building of being the villain of the piece, making it out to be the cause of the fire!

The building has been in existence since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, first as a power 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 as being of Grade 1 importance by the Justice Padmanabhan Committee report on heritage structures and precincts.

The fire, it has been said, was due to an electric short circuit. The fire services chief has made a statement that the building that was burnt had faulty wiring. The Press staff claim that the wiring is old because the building is old! Now where does it state that an old building should not upgrade its electrical cabling to prevent short circuits? Considering that Chennai has so far seen five

heritage buildings either partially or fully gutted (Moore Market, Spencers, Gandhi Illam, GPO and Chepauk Palace), all of them due to electric short circuits, surely we ought to have learnt our lesson by now.

But that is not the case, as was evident in the present instance. The godown that caught fire was stacked with unwanted paper and scrap which, combined with faulty wiring, made for a tinderbox that was in search of a lighted match. An argument against this can be that a press will naturally have waste paper. But then should not such a facility also naturally take suitable precautions to prevent fires? Apparently not, for within days of the above-mentioned fire, a smaller one broke out at the same location.

The statement by the Government that a new building to replace the old facility of 4000 sq ft would be constructed has been greatly welcomed. The old structure caved in during the fire-fighting operations. Those in charge of the Press say that most of the structures in the premises are old and so this kind of an accident is bound to happen. Unfortunately that is not a tenable statement, as there are several heritage buildings the world over which are being put to good use and survive, thanks to good maintenance and protection.

This awareness is sadly lacking in our city where officialdom sometimes appears most happy when there are fires of this kind as it gives them an opportunity to do away with the old and replace it with an incongruous new. We have in the past reported on how the Government was toying with the idea of demolishing the Press and replacing it with modern highrise. It is only the Justice Padmanabhan

Committee listing that has prevented this. But when disasters such as fire strike, they become a heaven-sent opportunity to sweep away old structures. Thankfully, the fire was restricted to one building in the Press. But there is no doubt that its replacement will be a PWD creation, completely out of place with what is surrounding it, thereby irretrievably damaging the fabric of the heritage precinct.



The Government Press, Mint.

## How world-class is our airport?

And so, we finally have a new terminal at our airport. It took its time in coming up and, even when ready, had to wait for a long time to be inaugurated. But those who were expecting world-class facilities were in for a big disappointment. Outwardly all glass and international, it is internally beset with several problems, all indicative of faulty planning and worse execution. While this may be endemic to the whole country, how long are we to put up with such shoddiness?

It all began with the layout of the terminal, which passengers declared was not user-friendly. The exit did not link to public transport facilities at all and passengers needed to trudge long distances before accessing them. Next came the discovery that there was a solitary ramp for handling baggage, both incoming and outgoing. That only slowed down the handling of luggage. And there was no exhaust facility to let out gases accumulating from baggage trucks in this underground ramp. This was let out near where the passengers stood to

collect whatever they had checked in! On receiving complaints about this, it is learnt that the authorities instructed airline operators to run battery-operated trucks in future. The airlines, already struggling under losses, are complaining about the additional costs.

Glass panels have repeatedly cracked at various locations. But that is nothing compared to

taken forever in getting ready still have to be full of incomplete work necessitating an army of workmen continuously on the premises with their tools clattering every nook and cranny? Matters are going to be complicated further when the international terminal is inaugurated in the next few days.

The Chennai terminal has been built by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) sans any outside consultant or partner. It would perhaps have been better if external help had been sought, given the current fiasco. But surely an Indian agency which possesses several decades' experience in running airports ought to be an expert on such matters by now. Clearly more attention has been paid to red tape and adhering to Government standards than more practical matters.

It now appears that the only way out is to bring in some expert management in the running of the terminal. This may be a blessing in disguise, as it could pave the way for privatising the running of the

• by A Special  
Correspondent

the falling down of false ceiling panels. This has happened twice. We have also had a fire to deal with. The latest is that the passengers are complaining about pigeon droppings and a massive beehive that is building inside the terminal. The last two are, of course, the least of the troubles; in any case, the authorities ought to have looked into how their building could integrate with nature, an excellent example of which is the Bangalore airport. And finally, does a terminal that has

(Continued on page 3)



# The broiler schools of Namakkal

Recent trend in Board examinations in Tamil Nadu has been better performances by schools from the southern districts. Students of Chennai, it had been long felt, were the creamy layer having as they did greater access to better coaching, something their counterparts in rural towns lacked. But surprisingly a new trend has evolved in the southern districts. In particular it is so in Namakkal, where students are put under rigorous training for two years.

It was after Mala scoring 90 per cent in Class X that her parents dreamt of her getting a medical college seat or an engineering seat in a top government college. Mala was enrolled in one of the most sought-after schools in the Namakkal District. Famous for broiler chickens, Namakkal District has today carved itself an identity as a producer of a fine breed of students. These schools assure State rank for children, if not admission in medical or engineering colleges.

All these schools have been established by retired school teachers. They charge about Rs. 1 lakh compared to the government-stipulated fee of Rs. 10,000 a year and parents are ready to set apart the sum to reap future benefits.

After studying in a tension-free, serene atmosphere in Chennai, Mala found it difficult to adapt to the rigours of Namakkal. All students in a school, even if residents of the town, have to stay in its hostel. Even the teachers are provided accommodation within the campus for uninterrupted coaching. With restrained access to family and the outside world, every student is closely monitored for his or her performance.

● by Dr. V. Gopalakrishnan

The coaching for 12<sup>th</sup> grade starts from the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (October). By then, all 11<sup>th</sup> grade portions have ended or are abandoned half way. So, one and a half years before the common 12<sup>th</sup> grade exam, the coaching begins in these schools and goes on uninterrupted without holidays.

The school employs three categories of teachers. Subject paper teachers are paid Rs. 20,000 per month. Test paper correction teachers are paid Rs.8000 per month. They don't handle classes but only correct the students' answer sheets and comment on their performance line by line. Hostel study supervision teachers are paid Rs.6000 per month and they monitor the students throughout their stay in hostel.

Through these two years, the students are cut off from access to the outside world. Many do fairly well in exams and enter some prestigious institutions, but half of them leave half way, unable to cope with the shock of low marks in examinations. A few even end their lives, unable to withstand the shock of poor marks in examinations. A disturbing trend is the spread of a similar culture in colleges. These institutions have succumbed to parental and societal pressures and have made students rather similar to the broiler chicken of the area.

Defenders of the system point to the end justifying the means. They cite the success of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar in winning large shares of seats in the IIT-JEE and civil services examinations. Chandrababu Naidu as Chief Minister encouraged such coaching. It is common to find long stretches in Hyderabad with numerous coaching institutions. In quick time, these became famous for the success rate of their students in the entrance examination of IIT. At IIT-M, the *lingua franca* has changed to Telugu. Likewise, Patna has witnessed such coaching centres that prepare students for the civil service exam. They succeeded in taking Bihar to the top in exams, even as the State during the tenure of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi performed poorly in development. The pass-outs from these institutions work in Delhi and other States as administrators.

As Jerome K. Jerome put it: The methods may be crude, but they are effective. – (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*.)

# Agony in Anna Nagar

The Man from Madras Musings was strongly reminded of Hansel and Gretel. Those two intelligent children, if you recollect, had marked their route into the forest with pebbles and had thereby managed to return safely much to the delight of their father but to the distress of their step-mother. Standing at a cross-roads at Anna Nagar, MMM was of the view that he too ought to have done the same. But hang on, MMM can see that you, dear reader (to borrow from *Jane Eyre*), are confused. What is MMM coming to these days, you wonder, and rightfully so. After all, these are not the Meanderings of a Misguided Man.

To put everything into perspective, let MMM begin from the beginning which, as the song had it, is a very good place to start. MMM had to be at Anna Nagar and, so, off he went. He dodged a few trenches, all courtesy Metrorail, drove under the 'heritage' Anna Arches, which are still standing thanks to historically aware people and, presto, there he was, in Anna Nagar. This is not really a locality that MMM visits all that often, but his impression of the place was always one of broad roads and tree-lined avenues. Not any longer, MMM sadly noted. The broad roads are now much narrower, thanks to massive construction activity of the Metro or Monorail or a flyover or some other public transport facility which is going to make our city truly Chennapure. As for the tree-lined avenues, they are all debris-lined, as every second house is in the process of metamorphosing into a multi-storeyed complex, complete with a certain number of b,h & ks and also swimming pool, gym and clubhouse. Enough to make the place Madrattan.

But MMM digresses, always a known weakness of his. The crux of his story is the return journey. His errand completed, MMM prepared to make his way back. It was then that he thought of the siblings Hansel and Gretel and realised a moment later that even they would have been flummoxed, for Anna Nagar now operates through a series of complicated one-ways, where the way up is not the way down and never do the twain meet. MMM felt more like Abhimanyu, the Mahabharata hero who knew how to enter a certain enemy formation but not how to exit from it. The civic body that claims to run our city (or are the Police responsible for the signboards?) had thoughtfully placed several signboards at various places to guide those driving around Anna Nagar. 'Keep Left' said one, another admonished MMM and others of his ilk not to mix drinking and driving. A third informed MMM that speed thrilled, but killed. But as to how to leave Anna Nagar there was not a

single sign or it missed MMM's eye. He was later pointed to a couple of signs that gave directions, but these were so small that it was impossible to make out what they were stating, especially while driving.

MMM had to resort to stopping at every junction and ask for directions. This was much to the irritation of those in vehicles behind who, it appeared, were in a tearing hurry. Amidst the honking MMM could barely make out what passers-by were telling him, but he understood enough to drive on. MMM crossed several of Anna Nagar's famed residential blocks and as he was passing Block X it dawned on him that Z should surely be the last block and after that he should be out of the maze. But he did not know that Anna Nagar was the grid, which was the inspiration for Microsoft's Excel.

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

After Z there began AA, AB and so on endlessly. A wrong turn near AA (or was it AB?) brought MMM back to where he had started. He had to stop for directions once more. Finally, after several lefts and rights and ups and downs, he could see the twin arches in the distance. A wave of fondness for the two heritage structures poured over MMM. He wishes them well and hopes that they will stay on forever, to guide those lost in Anna Nagar.

## Egmore eccentricities

Those of you who follow these ramblings of *The Man from Madras Musings* would know that MMM is quite fond of Egmore Station, though he would be the first to admit that it is not what it was. The other day MMM was happy to note that the railway authorities were equally glad to see MMM for, when he entered the station, he saw this electronic signboard. You get the message too, don't you? The Indian Railways, it said, welcomed MMM. And in case MMM did not get it the first time, it welcomed him again. And for good measure, again, and again and again. And then once more, if MMM is not mistaken.

The effusive welcome notwithstanding, MMM was keen to know the platform from which his train was to depart. What with contending with a political meeting on the way, MMM was rather short on time. And to compound it, he was travelling with his good lady who believes in arriving at a railway station when the intended train is just about leaving it. But of train arrivals and departures there was not a scrap of information. The electronic display board had been put to good use welcoming



passengers, but as to more important information that it needed to offer there was none. The only option was to listen to the public address system, which probably had been installed when the station was inaugurated. "Bark bowow," it went. And then "Bark bark bowow, bark bowow, bark bark." There were lots more of it, but MMM will spare you the details leaving you with the gist. You had to sharpen your ears to the utmost to make out what was being said. Eventually, after repeatedly listening to it, this almost uniformly canine language revealed some syllables that could be comprehended. Based on this, MMM made his way to his platform, his good lady boldly leading the way.

The path was not smooth and even the good lady, who is not to be easily daunted, was somewhat shaken. The station provides, as you know, escalators for going up but not for coming down and, so, while progress is fast in one direction, it slows down considerably in the other. The stairways, though wide, are bottle-necks. These tend to become more bottlenecked when someone decides to regurgitate (to put it mildly) all along the steps. Of cleaning staff there was no sign and so the recycled matter remained where it was, with passengers and porters negotiating it with care, hands and kerchiefs pressed to the nostrils and eyes trying not to look.

MMM and his good lady made it, or just about.

## Sines of the tymes

*The Man from Madras Musings* notices these signs have been put up all over the city. The first he can forgive as a typographical error, but the second can only be a Freudian slip. There is a third that says "Pedestrain" crossing, but it escaped MMM's camera. Perhaps it referred to the strain of walking where no walkway existed.

– MMM





## OUR READERS WRITE



### A Nilgiris view

The three-part presentation on British interaction with the Nilgiris (MM, May-June, 2013) offers an interesting perspective. It is debatable how the English impact is still highlighted as the only worthy historical intervention in the livelihoods of the natives of the district. However, my intention here is not to pursue the matter, but only to offer some additional insight.

1. Leaving aside, the “scant results” of Christian evangelism, the figure 4,000 mentioned for Christians in the Nilgiris must be attributed only to the Christian Badagas. I have, in one of my contributions to the encyclopedia, estimated, on available evidence, the total number of Christians in Nilgiris to be about 15 per cent of the population.

2. The London Missionary Society, as a denominational entity, never had any work in the Nilgiris. Their ecclesiastical structure was different from that of the Basal German Mission, Anglicans, Methodists and Catholics who were working during the British times. A full-fledged entry devoted to the history of Christianity in the Nilgiris is found in the encyclopedia.

3. There are surely more than 192 places that were given English names. Tamil names that have been foisted in present times are a legion more. The most unwarranted one is Udhagamandalam.

4. The alleged “intimate tie” of Col. Wellesley (later, Duke of Wellington) with the Nilgiris cannot be substantiated. He happened to be only one of the co-signatories of the Treaty that annexed the Nilgiris to the Madras domain of the East India Company in 1799.

He certainly did not fight for as long as several months in Nilgiri Wynaad nor was he the first of the British to have visited the hills, as stated in the write-up. The earliest English visitor to the hills (much before Sullivan) was Dr. Lacy Ford, an assistant surgeon of the Madras Medical Service in 1809, followed by Capt. Henry Bevan and William Morrison in 1812.

5. Col. Sartorius, Col. Stevenson and Col. Boles were the British officers who actually led the military expeditions against Pazhasi Raja (Pychei Rebel) in the Wynaad, portions of which were added to the Nilgiris only as late as in 1877. Col. Wellesley only headed the overall military operations from Srirangapatna in which capacity he happened to be the co-signatory of the Treaty, already mentioned. The experiences he derived mainly came from the strategies he directly employed against the Marathas and the Nizam on earlier occasions. To stretch them to Waterloo can only be a guess at its best.

6. Last but not the least, among so many others the following persons can also be accorded some place in the roll of honour. Dr. G.U. Pope (an award has since been instituted in his name by the Tamil Nadu Government) lived in Ooty between 1858 and 1871. He had his own fascinating ways in which he tried to make an impact. Incidentally, it was he who gave the name ‘Snowdon’ to a sacred Toda peak (ignoring its original name).

Then there was Margaret Cockburn of Kotagiri (1829-1928), a freelance ornithologist whose splendid collection of illustrations was published by the Natural History Museum of London in as recently as 2002. And who would like to forget Josiah Goodwin (d.1898), stenographer to Swami Vivekananda, resting in peace in the St. Thomas’ churchyard in Ooty.

Rev. Philip K. Mulley  
Anaihatti Road  
Kotagiri 643 217  
The Nilgiris



Maybe, the offices at the station.



Train station?

# Danushkodi memories

● An article I recently read (below) reminded me of a trip we did in 2012 to the tip of Danushkodi – written by Walter Scott, no less! These are some pictures we took of that washed out old train station and other bits of destruction that still remain.

I have fond memories of the train stations of South India where I spent a lot of time. The Station Masters always fascinated me.

The language is so Indian. I especially liked the part where it says he “attained the age of superannuation” in 1991. I’m getting to that point myself.

It says he died of old age – nicely put. May we all go that way.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The letter is from Dr. Ramu Sundaram who lives in the U.S. The article he refers to was a news item in The Hindu (probably only in the Madurai edition) by a reporter named D.J. Walter Scott. It was datelined Ramanathapuram, May 24, 2013 and was headlined: Last station master of Danushkodi passes away – Railway has lost one of its last living links to the 1964 tragedy.

\* \* \*

‘R. Sunderaraj, a railway officer who, unfazed, stood sentinel as Station Master in the Danushkodi Railway Station hours before the devastating cyclonic storm that destroyed the town on the night of December 22, 1964, passed away at the age of 80 in his home in K.K. Nagar, Madurai. With his death the Southern Railway has lost one of its last living links to the horrific trag-



What remains of the church after the cyclone. (All pictures by Dr. Ramu Sundaram.)

edy that destroyed the railway station and washed away the incoming Train No.653, Pamban-Dhanushkodi Passenger, killing all 115 on board. Mr Sunderaraj was among the few on the island who survived the natural calamity and, as it turned out, was the last Station Master of Danushkodi Railway Station. After serving the day shift on December 22, 1964, he had returned home in the evening, little realising that it would be his last day at the station.

Recalling the nightmare and the most unforgettable moment of their lives, Mrs Gladys Sunderaraj said they were living in a house close to the shore, near a Church, when the cyclonic storm crashed into the tiny town.

As they sat for dinner around 9 p.m., their five-year-old elder son looked terrified and refused to have dinner. He went to bed without eating, only to wake the family at half past midnight.

He looked terrified. There

were gusty winds and her husband noticed water seeping into the house through the main door. He tried in vain to stop it by placing a gunny bag.

When he opened the door, water gushed into the house and soon things started floating. ‘We left all our things and started walking towards the railway station, carrying our three children – a five-year-old son, a three-year-old daughter and a three-month-old daughter,’ Mrs Sunderaraj recalled.

She said they walked for hours in neck-deep water, carrying their children on their shoulders and reached the railway station around 4.30 a.m. Only later, her husband came to know that train from Pamban was washed away on being hit by a huge tidal wave.

(The tragedy came to light only after 48 hours when the railway headquarters issued a bulletin based on the information given by the Marine Superintendent, Mandapam.)

They stayed in the station for a week before they were shifted to Mandapam in a ship, she said. Their three-year-old daughter Shanthi, who fell sick during the tragedy, died after they moved to Tuticorin, she added.

Mr Sunderaraj was posted as Station Master in Danushkodi in November 1964 and had hardly served a month. He retired as the Senior Goods Supervisor in Tuticorin Railway Station when he attained the age of superannuation on May 31, 1991.

## World-class airport?

(Continued from page 1)

airport. Meanwhile, it is reliably learnt that there is pressure on the Centre to build a new international airport for Chennai somewhere in the vicinity of Sriperumbudur.

If that is to be any different from the current apology that passes off as one, it will be absolutely necessary that international class consultants are roped in to advise on it so that it becomes a world-class facility from inception.

Projects such as these do not happen every day and, once built, it is difficult to correct infrastructural errors. Hopefully, saner counsels will prevail when it comes to a new facility.

## READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the ‘i-s’ and crossing the ‘t-s’.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible. Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

– THE EDITOR

## CHENNAI HERITAGE

No. 5, Bhattach Tower, 30, Westcott Road,  
Royapettah, Chennai 600 014

I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No.....) / I have just seen *Madras Musings* and would like to receive it hereafter.

● I/we enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs. 100 (Rupees One hundred) payable to **CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS**, as **subscription to Madras Musings** for the year 2013-14.

● As token of my support for the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that *Madras Musings* espouses, I send Chennai Heritage an additional Rs..... (Rupees .....). Please keep / put me on your mailing list.

Name : .....

Address: .....

**Note:** Overseas postage Rs. 550/year extra. Cheques for overseas postage alone payable to M/s. Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd. All other cheques to ‘Chennai Heritage’. DD/Cheque should be sent by Speed Post only.



# Experiencing the Cancer Institute, Adyar

● On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Cancer Institute, Adyar, R.V. RAJAN, narrates in a two-part feature his personal experience with the hospital and the story of the hospital itself.

It was on June 4, 2012 that I got the shocking news; my wife was suffering from cancer and it was an inoperable case. Unfortunately we discovered the disease late. All the doctors who saw the test reports agreed that cure was not possible. But still, we felt we had to give her some treatment to see if we could contain the disease so that she could live longer than what was predicted.

The venue for treatment was a choice between a top five-star specialty hospital and the Cancer Institute. We were in a dilemma. My family had already had a bad experience with a starhospital for a simple tonsillitis procedure required for my granddaughter. Such hospitals boast of

tive of whether the patient is poor or rich. Our experience with the Institute laid to rest all our early apprehensions.

The hospital has two wings. The main building is where thousands of poor patients are provided free consultation and treatment by a panel of highly qualified oncologists. There is another wing called the Maduram Narayanan (M&N) Block where patients paying for the services are given appointments to meet the consultant doctors. This wing has an airconditioned reception area where patients wait patiently for their appointments with the doctors. The same building also houses well-appointed and well-maintained non-AC and AC rooms for patients who come for treatment, be it for investigations, chemotherapy or for post-operative care. Rooms are reasonably priced, unlike the rates of rooms in five-star hospitals which are higher than even the

● by R.V. Rajan

some of the finest doctors but because they are corporate institutions with high investment in the latest equipment, they have to ensure maximum utilisation of the equipment to achieve a profit for the hospital.

On the other hand, the Cancer Institute, Adyar, a centre of excellence in cancer treatment, is run by Women's India Association (WIA), and is a not-for-profit NGO with the image of a typical government hospital. It caters largely to poor patients from across the country, who are given the expensive treatment totally free of cost! So there was some hesitation on our part to go to the Cancer Institute.

A senior doctor from a five-star hospital whom we consulted informally helped us make up our mind. He said, "If you are prejudiced against the five-star hospital because of your bad experience, I would recommend you go to the Cancer Institute, Adyar, as they are one of the best in the country".

So the decision was made. My wife would be taken to the Cancer Institute for treatment not because it was less expensive but because we were assured that the hospital is totally dedicated to providing top rate diagnostic facilities and focussed treatment for all types of cancer, irrespec-

rates in some of the five-star hotels today.

A team of top oncologists provides consultation to all the paying patients. If you are particular about meeting the same doctor for reassurance, you can do so by scheduling an appointment on the specific day of the week when that particular doctor is available. All the doctors are down-to-earth, practical and friendly. No patient or attendant is allowed to throw his weight around, using his/her position or power. At no stage do you get the feeling that you are being exploited. Besides that, as it is a specialty hospital totally devoted to cancer, only relevant tests are conducted. Thorough investigation is done to locate the root of the cancer before the doctors commence treatment. There is no question of your being admitted to the hospital for observation and having every single specialist in the hospital check you, recommending unnecessary tests, the costs of which get added to your bill.

The Cancer Institute has the best of diagnostic testing facilities in the country which are available for both paying and non-paying patients. Testing facilities are common for both.

(Continued on page 6)



## From interpreter to 'acute detective'

● This is a three-part story of T. Rama Chendra Row, the first Indian to be appointed Assistant Commissioner of Police, Madras City, the highest post achieved by an Indian till that time. It is narrated rather differently – through testimonials and letters he received and which his family have carefully retained – to provide a flavour of the times and show something of the interaction between the British and the Indians. These extracts have been copied from a printed compilation the family had done.

### TESTIMONIALS.

Ramah Chendrah Row, the bearer of this, was placed under my charge by Major Crisp, Honorable Company's Acting Astronomer, to be employed during his absence from Madras. He did duty for a period of nearly 6 months at the Magnetic Observatory, during which time, I always found him attentive to his duties, intelligent and anxious to improve.

S. O. E. LUDLOW,  
Supt., Magnetic Observatory.

MADRAS, }  
3rd May 1842. }

### CERTIFICATE.

I hereby certify that Ram Chendra Row was attached to the Honorable Company's Observatory from the month of June 1840 to December 1843, during which time his conduct and attention to his duties were such as to give me entire satisfaction, he has left me at his own request in order to obtain a more lucrative situation than I had in my power to bestow.

T. G. TAYLOR,  
Hon'ble Compy's Astronomer

MADRAS OBSERVATORY, }  
14th February 1844. }

### CERTIFICATE.

Rama Chendra Row, was employed in the Military Fund Office, from January 1844 till October 1847, where as an Accountant and Writer, he gave every satisfaction. He leaves this Office for a Government situation with the eventual prospect of a better provision and reward for his talents than it is within the means of this office, to bestow on him.

W. SHELLEY, CAPTAIN,  
Secretary, Military Fund.

FORT ST. GEORGE, }  
4th October 1847. }

### LETTER

Extract from a letter from E. F. Elliot, Esq., Chief Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, to J. F. Thomas, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated 27th October 1848.

Para. 4. And it is proposed to appoint Ram Chendra Row as the Assistant Interpreter, in succession to Mahomed Esuff. He is an able scholar in Tamil, Telugoo, Hindoostanee, Canarese and Mahratta, in all of which languages he can interpret fluently.

(A True Extract.)

J. C. BOULDERSON,  
Commissioner of Police.

Ramachendrah Row, the Assistant Interpreter at the General Police Office, informs me he is desirous of becoming a Candidate for the office of Canarese Interpreter to the Supreme Court, likely to become vacant by the resignation of Mr. Morris, and has asked me for a Certificate of his qualification. During the last 5 years, I have had frequent opportunities of seeing him and judging of his capabilities as an Interpreter in the cases pending before the Chief Magistrate in which I had to conduct the prosecution in my official capacity; in all these, I have found him very obliging and willing, and extremely intelligent, giving his interpretations in very good English, and speaking with great facility, and as far as I could judge (not myself knowing any Native languages) very correctly. In the case of *The Queen vers. Daubeny*,

the Examinations were long and difficult, and many of the witnesses were Burghers brought from the Nilgherry Hills. As far as I can now remember they gave their testimony in Canarese and Ramachendra Row informs me he acted as Interpreter in their examination before the Magistrate; I cannot remember that fact at this distance of time, but Mr. Elliot will doubtless recollect the circumstance. I can however most conscientiously certify that in every case in which Ramachendra Row has acted as Interpreter, in which I have been engaged, he has performed the duties most efficiently.

CLEMENT DALE,  
Hon'ble Compy's Solicitor.

SUPREME COURT HOUSE, }  
MADRAS, }  
1st September 1852. }

Ramachendra Row has been employed in the Police Office for 5 years, four of which as Assistant Interpreter. He is a good English Scholar, and well versed, in Hindoostanee, Telugu, Tamil, Mahratta, Canarese and Sanscrit, of which Canarese is his own language. He is a good Interpreter, and an excellent Translator. I may add that Ramachendra Row has given every satisfaction in his conduct whilst employed at this office. He has interpreted in the Canarese language on all occasions, when there was any business with parties from the opposite coast, and I found him fluent, and well acquainted with the different idioms of the various classes, which appear at times at this office.

E. F. ELLIOT,  
Chief Magistrate and Supt. of Police.

GENERAL POLICE OFFICE, }  
2nd September 1852. }

### CERTIFICATE

T. Ramachendra Row, has been examined by me in the Canarese language, and I am of opinion that he is fully qualified to perform the duties of Interpreter in this language. The language being that used by those of his class, he has great facility in speaking it.

J. L. LUSHINGTON,  
Canarese Translator to Government.

MADRAS, }  
September 27, 1852. }

### TESTIMONIAL-CERTIFICATE

MADRAS, 1st October, 1852.

I do hereby certify that I have known the bearer Ramachendra Row for upwards of twelve years. I took him in hand quite a lad, in the year 1840 to instruct and train to calculations and composition, for I found him to be a youth of excellent parts and disposition. I employed him at first as my private Writer from August 1840 to March 1841.

When I was appointed Acting Astronomer in April 1841, I put my Elève Ram Chender into the office and found him exceedingly useful as a Calculator and Observer. He remained in the Astronomer's Department until December 1843 and during this period I likewise placed him under Lieutenant Ludlow of the Engineers, to be taught and trained to Magnetic observations in his Observatory at the College.

In January 1844, I was appointed Secretary and Actuary to the Military Fund and took him with me into that office; his services were invaluable to me in a laborious examination and revision of the account; he being from his quickness and intelligence my chief and most dependable aid in the arrangement and preparation of details; to which duty I had thoroughly drilled him. He remained in the Fund Office, until September 1847 doing the duty of Accountant and Ledger-keeper.

The situation of Writer in my own Office of Mahratta Translator to Government having fallen vacant in April 1847, I placed him in the Department, and he has served in it ever since as Writer and Assistant Moonshiee with credit to himself and to my entire satisfaction. He has a thorough knowledge of Mahratta and Canarese and a very competent acquaintance with English, interpreting and translating readily and converting one into the other into good idiomatic language.

His general bearing and behaviour throughout his career have been most exemplary.

JOHN CRISP,  
Mahratta Translator to Government.

### LETTER

SUPREME COURT, MADRAS,

Registrar's Office, 26th November 1852.

Sir,—I am directed by the Hon'ble the Judges to inform you that your application for the appointment of Canarese Interpreter of the Supreme Court is accepted, on the express condition however that you do not permit any other duties to interfere with those belonging to you as such Interpreter, you will therefore be so good as to present yourself to the Sitting Judge on Friday next the 30th Instant, to be sworn, and enter on your duties on the 1st December next.

### TESTIMONIAL

Ramachendra Row has for several years been employed in the office of the Mahratta Translator to Government, and has performed his duties very efficiently, though at the same time filling situations of much greater importance in other Departments.

I consider him an exceedingly intelligent person, and a good practical linguist, his acquaintance with the English language being rather unusually extensive.

J. J. LOSH,  
Mahratta Translator to Government.

FORT ST. GEORGE, }  
3rd January 1856. }

### TESTIMONIAL

GENERAL POLICE OFFICE,  
MADRAS, 28th April 1856.

T. Ramachendra Row entered the Police Establishment in October 1847 as a Minute Writer. In October 1848 he obtained the situation of Assistant Interpreter; in March 1853 he was made Deputy Interpreter, and on the 1st December 1854 he was appointed Interpreter to the Chief Magistrate on a salary of Rupees 150: Ramachendra Row is Master of Tamil, Telugu, Hindustanee, Canarese, Mahratta, and Sanscrit. He speaks and writes English perfectly: he is an excellent Accountant and altogether a thorough man of business. By his assiduity he soon learnt all the forms of Proceedings in Magisterial cases, and in the numerous and variety of important cases committed by me from the years 1848 to the present time, Ramachendra Row acted not only as Interpreter but as Clerk to take down the evidence which he performed in a masterly manner. In justice to a most useful talented and zealous public servant, I record my obligation to him, and state my opinion that he is worthy of confidence, at all events I may add that to my knowledge he has never acted except as an honorable man, and I consider him equal to higher employment and worthy of consideration.

E. F. ELLIOT,  
Chief Magistrate and Superintendent of Police.

### TESTIMONIAL

MADRAS, 8th May 1856.

I have known Ramachendra Row for nearly ten years and his intelligence, his unusual knowledge of English, and his acquaintance with several Native languages, were so clearly evinced during my enquiries into a case wherein I was professionally consulted that I mentioned them to Mr. Elliot, the Chief Magistrate. He soon afterwards took an opportunity of judging for himself, and the result was that he gave Ramachendra Row employment at the Head Police Office, and his opinion of the abilities and integrity evinced by Ramachendra Row is best shown by his having promoted him, step by step, within nine years from Minute Writer, at Rs. 21 a month to Head Interpreter to the Chief Magistrate, at Rs. 150; and by the written Testimonial he has given on his departure to Ramachendra Row. Ramachendra Row has on several occasions officiated as Interpreter at the Supreme Court, and been examined as a witness with reference to what passed at the Police Office in various Criminal Cases, and in every instance has acquitted himself most satisfactorily.

I know of no Native possessed of superior, and very few indeed of equal intelligence, ability, and knowledge of the English and native languages; his business-like habits, and facility of mastering official details are best shown by Mr. Elliot's testimonial, and I have a very high opinion of his integrity. I think he only wants opportunity to show himself a very valuable public servant in a higher sphere than he has yet been tried in.

THOMAS SYDNEY SMYTH,  
Advocate-General.

### TESTIMONIAL

My duties as Clerk of the Crown have for many years past brought me in contact with Ramachendra Row; and I have on all occasions found him intelligent, active and efficient in the performance of his official duties. For some time he acted as Canarese Interpreter of the Supreme Court, and though he had not much opportunity of displaying his abilities, he interpreted in one important case with much ability. I consider him an efficient public servant, well worthy of promotion and employment in a higher range of service.

JOHN BRUCE NORTON.

MADRAS, }  
June 22nd, 1856. }

### LETTER

Extract from a letter, dated 10th December 1857 at Paris from E. F. Elliot, Esq., late Chief Magistrate and Superintendent of Madras Police.

DEAR RAMACHENDRA ROW.

I cannot permit another Mail to leave without acknowledging your last kind letter of the 14th October. I am so incorrigible as a Correspondent that I will not attempt to excuse remissness on my part in having failed to thank you for several most interesting letters but will only say that I have been equally culpable to many other kind friends who have occasionally favored me with their remembrance and I beg you to pardon my shortcomings in the way of writing for I may truly assert that they arise from an unhappy weakness, more than from any want of sincere regard for my friends in India. And I believe I may safely add that I am moved to break through the spell in the present instance from my desire to convey to you my hearty congratulations on your promotion to an office which your services merited and for which you are so well qualified by unusual attainments.

One of our hard days in the Police Office when we had a stiff case in hand would occupy 4 or 5 days in Europe.

Mrs. Elliot and my children join in kind remembrance and wishes for your happiness. Your letters are always read aloud and create much interest. Your Photograph is always on the mantle piece in the waiting Room and never fail to attract the notice of all visitors.

Believe me in all truth,

Very sincerely yours,  
E. F. ELLIOT.

24th December 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for your kindness in helping me with the translation of the Mahratta Account of Banjares and I cannot lose this opportunity to pass without stating to you my satisfaction the manner in which you have fulfilled the expectations, I was led to form of your zeal and ability from the terms in which Mr. E. F. ELLIOT, commended you to my notice.

I trust that you may still attain to a higher degree of promotion as a field for the employment of your country men is enlarged and at you will continue to display the same zeal, acuteness, and assiduity which have manifested hitherto in your present office.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's very truly,  
WALTER ELLIOT.

T. RAMACHENDRA ROW, Esq.

Extract from a letter from Colonel J. C. Boulderson, Commissioner of Police, to T. Pycroft, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated 30th April 1860.

Para. 18. My Native Deputy T. Ramachendra Row, has also displayed superior zeal and ability in several difficult cases, and is altogether a most experienced able, and acute detective official. He has indeed a thorough knowledge of his profession in every branch.

(A true extract.)

J. C. BOULDERSON,  
Commissioner of Police.  
(To be continued)





(Current Affairs questions are from the period May 16th to 31st. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu).

1. Who recently became the world's richest person for the first time since 2007 with a fortune of approximately \$72.7 billion?
2. At 2.6 billion years old, what was it that was discovered deep inside a mine near the city of Timmins in Ontario to make it the oldest of its kind, even older than multi-cellular life?
3. Which popular former England football captain has retired after winning the Ligue 1 title with his last club, Paris Saint-Germain?
4. Name Microsoft's latest and eighth generation gaming console announced recently.
5. At which prestigious festival did French film *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* win the highest award, the Palme d'Or?
6. At 349 x 227 metres, about three times the size of a football field, which European country's national flag recently became the largest flag ever made?
7. Name the talented young filmmaker from Bengal, who won 12 National awards and who passed away on May 30th.
8. Which IT giant recently got a six-year contract from the Department of Posts, worth over Rs. 1100 crore, for a project called 'India Post 2012'?
9. Name the players who won the Orange and Purple Cap respectively in the most recent IPL.
10. In which State did an audacious attack by Maoists kill 24 people including some prominent Congress leaders?
11. Where in the State was the first fighter plane base of the IAF in the southern peninsula dedicated to the nation on May 27th by the Defence Minister?
12. What technical first did *Annai Bhoomi*, made in 1985, achieve?
13. With whom do you associate *Indu Nesan*, which was known for its scandalous stories?
14. What was the peerage title of George Frederick Samuel Robinson, now the name of an important edifice in Chennai?
15. What had its genesis in the house of Shanmugam Pillai, at 7 Coral Merchant Street, George Town, in September 1949?
16. Moses de Castro, who left Madras in 1786, is considered the last merchant from which community that once did a thriving trade in the city?
17. In the language of John Company, if Persewacca was Pursawakam and Yegmore was Egmore, then what was Lungambacca?
18. Which building came up in 1680 thanks to the circulation of a voluntary subscription paper by Streynsham Master, the then Governor of Madras?
19. Which village was the first addition to it, some twenty years after the acquisition of Madras by the Company?
20. Name the legendary playback singer, who had sung for all popular matinee idols over four decades, and who passed away recently.

(Answers on page 8)

# The 'environmental volunteer'

(By T.K. Srinivasa Chari)

Meet Arun Krishnamurthy, winner of the 2012 Rolex Award for Enterprise for his work on restoring the Kilkattalai Lake.

Growing up in suburban Mudichur, 6 km from Tambaram and near the Mudichur Lake, taking in the sight of birds like cormorants, egrets and herons, and even animals like wild dogs, almost every year during 1993-2007, Arun Krishnamurthy was inspired by Nature. When he was 13, he became a volunteer

at the Vandalur Zoo, educating people on how to/not to interact with the captive animals. A self-motivated 'environment volunteer' as he likes to call himself, he has always taken up tasks without waiting for others to take them up.

His education at Madras Christian College strengthened his resolve to work for the cause of environment. As a member of the campus' Scrub Society, he was able to indulge in his favourite interests. He gradu-

ated in Microbiology and completed a postgraduate diploma at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in Delhi. After his studies, he joined the Media Marketing and Sales Acquisition team of Google. In 2008, he went to Florida in the US for the Global Youth Summit where he met the world famous expert on chimpanzees, Jane Goodall. She wrote in his diary that he should continue working on environment and stay focussed.

When the urge to go full throttle ahead for the sake of the environment became too much, he quit his job and founded the Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) in 2011. Even while working at Google in Hyderabad, Arun did his bit for the environment by cleaning up a local lake, the Gurnadham Cheruvu, with help of young volunteers and a Corporation lorry to clear the garbage. Today, three lakes, Alwal, Kapra and Gurnadham, are poised for full-fledged restoration, the garbage removed and the lakes desilted,



Arun Krishnamurthy.

native trees planted on the banks and each lake fenced. Once restored, EFI will maintain these lakes. "The lakes that we cleaned are comparatively cleaner but need more people participation to keep them trash-free," says Arun.

In Chennai, the virtual swallowing up of the Mudichur lake by the Highways Department before his eyes for the construction of the New Outer Ring Road (Vandalur-Minjur) was an act of environmental degradation he found impossible to digest. The local body was not consulted and this only reflected the short-sightedness of the planners.

Arun closely follows Indian and international politics. "If we are able to build a strong team that believes in contesting elections we will do so; else, believ-

(Continued on page 7)



Cleaning the surroundings of the restored Kilkattalai Lake

## A Cancer Institute experience

(Continued from page 4)

This is the only place where paying patients have to rub shoulders with non-paying patients and where I saw some discrimination – paying patients getting a priority over non-paying patients, if there is a long queue for a particular test.

All the doctors at the testing centres are kind, sympathetic and try to make the patients feel comfortable though the patient is undergoing a painful procedure. The nurses and nursing aides are equally friendly and kind.

Two other areas where I found the hospital distinctly different from the exploitative five-star hospitals are in their methods of treatment and financial dealings. All the tests we had conducted conclusively proved that her disease was not curable. It was only a question of time. Three of the consultant doctors told us that though special and highly-priced injections were now available they would not recommend them because the effort would be futile. At best, her life span could be extended by a couple of months but would be accompanied by all the pain and misery related to the disease. So they decided to give her only palliative treat-

ment which would keep her comfortable with much less side-effects than what there was likely to be with aggressive treatment.

In a similar situation involving a relative, the doctors at a five-star hospital started on the expensive injection from the word 'go'. The patient did not live long and the last few days of his life were spent in the ICU of the hospital, resulting in the family having to pay a huge bill before the body could be removed from the facility.

As for the payment system – this is where the five-star hospitals make you feel miserable. Not only do you have to pay a sizeable advance to such hospitals before any kind of tests are conducted, but you have to keep topping up the balance constantly to ensure that the tests and treatment are conducted without interruption. On the other hand, at the Cancer Institute, apart from paying the consultant's fee on the first occasion, there is no further consultant fees. If the patient has to be admitted to the hospital either for tests or for treatment, you get an order from the consulting doctor that you produce at the Cash Centre and pay the necessary fees in ad-

vance and in cash. If the amount is more than Rs.5000, you have to pay the amount at the Andhra Bank counter located within the campus and obtain a receipt. Credit cards or cheques are not accepted but there is an ATM machine in the premises for emergency cash withdrawals. If it is a continuous process running for a couple of days, then the Cash Department makes a note of the doctor's diagnostic prescriptions in your account and provides you a final bill at the time of discharge. There is no question of treatment and tests being stopped for want of a balance in your account.

Considering the large number of patients handled by the hospital and the apparent pressures on the administrative staff, I found that the established systems and procedures worked very well and every single patient was attended to every day. There was method in the madness. There was hope and a positive attitude among the hundreds of patients and their attendants waiting in the reception area.

In spite of the huge turn-out of poorer patients visiting the facilities, I found the hospital being maintained well. The en-

tire sprawling campus was clean and even the Wards for free patients were neat and tidy. The typical overpowering disinfectant smell you get in any hospital was, surprisingly, missing.

My wife had to be admitted to the hospital seven times during the six-month period she was undergoing chemotherapy. Except for the first time, when there was a feeling of nervousness and trepidation, on every subsequent occasion it was like a picnic for two or three days. The atmosphere was so informal and nice that, in spite of the pain and suffering, her stay in the hospital was comfortable.

Though my wife passed away during the seventh month from the date of being diagnosed with terminal cancer, never, at any point during the course of her treatment, did we regret the decision to go with the Cancer Institute instead of a five-star hospital. Their care and commitment were exemplary. Despite all their efforts, the miracle that we were hoping for did not happen and my wife left this world, surrounded by her family. Her time had come.

(To be concluded)

Feedback welcome on rvrajan42@gmail.com



## On the Bookshelves

# The man of the hour...

He is the man of the hour. People either praise him or hate him. But they are unable to ignore him. His rise to political fame is a fascinating story which needs to be told. And that's what two recently published books by well-known journalists have tried to do... paint a somewhat complete portrait of Narendra Damodardas Modi, the charismatic Chief Minister of Gujarat whose sights seem to be set on the New Delhi 'throne.'

The books are:

**The Namo Story: A Political Life** by Kingshuk Nag (Roli Books, Rs. 295), and

**Narendra Modi: The Man, the Times** by Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay (Tranquebar, Rs. 495).

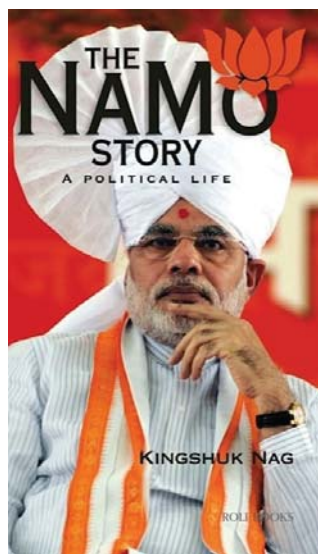
Both bios talk of Modi's humble roots and the rise to political stardom via the RSS and BJP route. One of the truly enigmatic personalities in the contemporary Indian political arena, Modi has become a force to reckon with. From the moment Modi became Chief Minister in 2001, he has been a man on a mission – to make Gujarat a model State, both economically and socially. So far, he has succeeded, and what's impressive is that he is at it, in his fourth tenure as Chief Minister.

Modi's mantra for change and development is gradually

finding many takers. Yes, there is Godhra and its aftermath, and he does evoke vastly different reactions from people, but what is absolutely clear is that he is racing towards the Centre, making the 2014 General Elections likely to look more like a Presidential system of election, where you either vote for him or against him. And that, as they say, is the Modi effect.

Despite polarising Gujarat and India in more ways than one, if there's one thing that Modi does effortlessly, that is win elections, time and again. But will he make it to the top? Many believe he will. Only time will tell.

In his book, Kingshuk Nag, who's with *The Times of India*,



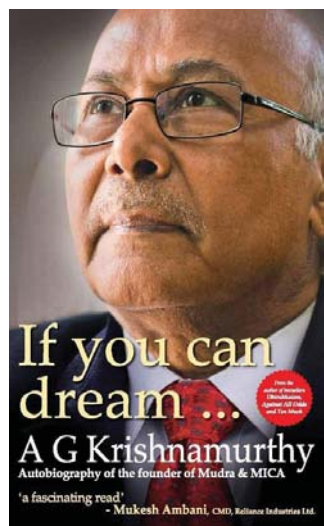
paints a vivid picture of an amazing politician.

Mukhopadhyay's book is the result of extensive interviews, plenty of in-depth research and travels through Gujarat. His book too reveals many hitherto unknown aspects of Modi's psyche: a six-year-old selling tea to help his father and distribut-



ing badges and raising slogans at the behest of a local political leader; abandoning his family and travelling to the Himalayas in search of truth, and his initiation into the RSS, which was the beginning of a challenging and determined political journey.

## ... & a key player in the ad world



**If You Can Dream: Autobiography of the Founder of Mudra and MICA** – A.G. Krishnamurthy (Tata McGraw-Hill Education, Rs. 325).

One of the key players in the 1990s advertising world, Mudra was a name that was synonymous with several successful brand campaigns, such as Rasna, Godrej, McDonald's and Big Bazaar. The man behind Mudra is veteran ad man A.G. Krishnamurthy. In fellow adman Alyque Padamsee's words, "AGK is a man who knows advertising inside out." This book recounts his life story in his own words. And, yes, it does read like a fairy tale!

Colourfully detailed and peppered with surprising twists and turns, the narrative sweeps across three wide canvases. On the surface, this can be just another story of an ordinary small town boy who made it big despite the odds. It is the author's gentle humour and the almost self-deprecating story-telling

style that together make all the difference.

The book reveals fascinating tidbits about AGK, whose journey from Hyderabad to every nook and cranny of the country and abroad is the stuff of dreams. And the creator of two of the country's most respected advertising institutions, Mudra and the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmadabad (MICA), argues that dreams can be realised.

Truly inspirational, AGK's life story is a great example of how to dream big and, more important, how hard work and determination can turn a person's life into the stuff bestsellers are made of! As fellow adman Balki puts it, this is "a simple man's quest for success through simplicity."

– Savitha Gautam

# Plans to beautify Chennai roads

The road beautification project, a Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI), in association with Corporation of Chennai (COC), was launched recently by Mayor Saidai Duraisamy in the presence of Vikram Kapur, IAS, Principal Secretary & Commissioner, COC, at EVK Sampath Salai, near Vepery High Road.

With the desire to bring about a sustained and marked difference in the conservancy of city roads, CREDAI – Chennai has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with COC.

At the inaugural function, Mayor Saidai Duraisamy said, "Initially twelve roads have been assigned to CREDAI Chennai to make them look neat and tidy. The assigned roads are: EVK Sampath Salai, Jothi Venkatachalam Salai, Vepery High Road, Raja Muthiah Road, Gangadheeswarar Koil Street, Gandhi Irwin Road, Purasawalkam High Road, Raja Annamalai Road, Narayana Guru Salai, Police Commissioner's Road, Pantheon Road, and Whannel's Road".

Sandeep Mehta, President, CREDAI, said, "This is our CSR initiative and we want to make a marked difference in the conservancy operations. We will engage outside agencies for maintenance and cleaning, and dedicated conservancy workers will be put to work on a four-hour shift basis twice daily to ensure litter-free roads. The medians and traffic islands on the assigned roads will also be maintained. The team will report damages in civic infrastructure to the Chennai Corporation. Watering of plants on medians, aesthetics of traffic islands, removal of unauthorised banners and wall posters, pruning of trees along the roads and facilitating adequate illumination at night will also be undertaken by CREDAI."

He further added, "We will implement an effective monitoring system to ensure regular coordination between COC and CREDAI Chennai. Continuous improvement will be the hallmark of this CSR initiative to make the assigned roads look cleaner and greener." – (Courtesy: *Our Building and Construction*)

# THE 'ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEER'

(Continued from page 6)

ing as we do in democracy, we will actively participate," he says.

In October 2012, he took up conservation work on the Kilkattalai Lake, a lake which feeds the Pallikaralai marshland, home to many species of birds and the pond turtle. "Lakes are responsible for groundwater stabilisation, temperature regulation and maintaining biodiversity. Thus, it becomes important to protect them," says Arun whose work on this project won him the Rolex Award with its prize money of 100,000 Swiss Francs. EFI's core team comprises 47

members who manage and run the organisation across nine cities. In Chennai, the Madambakkam, Arasankhazani and Mudichur Lakes are being restored. Depending on the size of the lake and the amount of garbage that it has accumulated, it takes between two to eight months to work on restoring a lake. Arun feels that while Government is keen on restoring water bodies, people need to cooperate and participate in this nation-building effort. Otherwise, all Government's efforts will go in vain.

The EFI seeks only voluntary participation from people to make a collective difference.

Their recent 12-hour overnight-clean-up of the Madras beaches – from Ashtalakshmi Temple Beach, Besant Nagar, to Tiruvanmiyur New Beach (6-10 pm), Tiruvanmiyur New Beach to Palavakkam (10 pm to 2 am) and Palavakkam Beach to Neelangerai (2 am to 6 am) – with the help of volunteers and with participation from the public and approved by the Corporation was a noteworthy initiative on their part. On an average, around 70 volunteers turn up for a clean-up campaign. Only people's mindset and their discouraging attitude towards the environment and natural resources are the biggest

opposition to his work. Otherwise, his routine day is filled with joy, work and responsibilities.

Arun's vision for EFI is to establish and grow it into a result-delivering conservation group. EFI intends to restore 45 lakes in the next ten years, have four animal homes, and cater to all life forms possible. EFI also plans to establish its educational services to build a socially sensitive society.

Arun also runs Krish Info Media, advising companies on how to achieve their Corporate Social Responsibilities.

EFI's website is [www.indiaenvironment.org](http://www.indiaenvironment.org).



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

C.R. Rangachari's exploits for Madras were good enough for him to lay claim to being the best fast bowler his home state has produced.

With M.J. Gopalan, he formed a deadly pair of opening bowlers, Gopalan growing with the years into a seam and swing specialist and Rangachari himself remaining wedded to sheer pace for most of his career.

Born on April 14, 1916, Rangachari learnt his cricket on the streets and bylanes of Triplicane, very much as his senior, M.J. Gopalan, had. Strongly built, Rangachari wanted to be a genuine fast bowler from the time he was a child and succeeded in generating considerable pace throughout his career. He was also a willing bowler of long spells.

As a bowler with the Pachaiyappa's College team, the young Ranga was quite erratic, but improved his accuracy under the watchful eye of his college captain Mohan Rangiah. When the Madras league began in 1932, the fast bowler played for a team called Chepauk Club, but switched to the Triplicane National Recreation Club in the second division. When he finally shifted to Triplicane Cricket Club, he struck a fearful combination with M.J. Gopalan. It was in the Buchi Babu Trophy, initially a tournament for clubs, that he first turned out for TCC. Under the captaincy of B. Ramanujam, TCC won the trophy that year.

Rangachari first caught the selectors' attention with a fine 9 for 45 against Mysore in the inter-association junior match of 1938. He made his Ranji Trophy debut the same year and performed reasonably well, taking 3 for 26 and 2 for 43 against

## 'The Triplicane Express', the 'go-to' bowler

Hyderabad and contributing his mite to his team's score in a last wicket stand with W.V.H. Robins that gave Madras the first innings lead.

In the very next season, Rangachari took 4 for 38 and helped bundle Mysore out for 108 at Chepauk. In his third season, he had figures of 3 for 37 against Mysore, and one for 20 and 2 for 41 against Hyderabad, followed by some splendid bowling against United Provinces. Madras won by 25 runs and Rangachari played a prominent role in that win, capturing 5 for 75 and 3 for 31.

In the very next round, Rangachari, left arm spinner A.G. Ram Singh and leg spinner N.J. Venkatesan had formidable Maharashtra reeling at 56 for 5, before Vijay Hazare (137) and C.T. Sarwate (33) took the score to 284, gaining a match winning lead in the process. Ranga's 4 for 71 included the scalps of both the openers Bhalekar and Sohoni, as well as the redoubtable Prof. D.B. Deodhar.

In the second innings, he had the prolific Babu Nimbalkar caught behind by J.A.G.C. Law, but Maharashtra won by six wickets. That season, Ranga also distinguished himself in the Presidency match, in which he took 4 for 41 and 4 for 30, helping the Indians win by 97 runs.

Rangachari joined the Police, and his cricket career developed nicely. Being naturally fit and healthy, he found in his



C.R. Rangachari.

official training new ways of keeping extra fit. He soon gained a reputation of being a tireless fast medium bowler and brilliant close-in fielder. He took several smart catches off the bowling of Ram Singh, fielding at silly mid-off. He also battled stubbornly towards the end of an innings.

Rangachari was selected as a member of the Indian team that toured Australia under the captaincy of Lala Amarnath in 1947-48. He forced his way into the Test side following some good performances in the first class matches, including a hat trick against Tasmania. In his first Test at Adelaide, he bowled well without luck, beating Don Bradman a few times, and winning the appreciation of the great Australian. He dismissed Keith Miller, Neil Harvey, Ray Lindwall and Ian Johnson to emerge as the most successful Indian bowler with four for 141 off 41 eight ball overs.

The Triplicane Express's best Test performance was his 5 for 107 against the West Indies in the New Delhi Test of the 1948-49 series. He claimed the wickets of Allan Rae, Jeff Stollmeyer and George Headley in a fiery opening spell and the West Indies were reduced to 27 for 3. He also played in unofficial 'Tests' against the Australian Services team in 1945 and the first Commonwealth team in 1949-50.

In the Ranji Trophy, Rangachari led the Madras attack for many years and his 104 wickets cost him only 20.79 apiece. In a first class career that stretched from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s, Rangachari took 200 wickets at an average of 25.98.

As a selector, coach and manager after his retirement as a player, Rangachari was known to be a good sport who spent considerable time mentoring his young wards, and lightening the mood in the dressing room with entertaining, if apocryphal, stories from his own youth. As manager of the South Zone team in the late 1970s, he created some interesting situations when he discussed the merits and demerits of some of the players with a rare measure of candour, but not always with the player concerned. The result could be explosive, as when he told one player that Roger Binny was a poor new ball bowler and another that Binny was an ordinary opening batsman. After the team decided to

pull the manager's leg, Binny pretended to be greatly hurt by the manager's insults, and knocked for hours together on his door calling out his name in his loudest voice.

During the same match, a young cricketer asked him if he was quicker than Kapil Dev. "Have you seen Wes Hall? Same speed!" was Rangachari's instant response. Only it sounded like *shame speed*, thanks to the tobacco he was chewing. The resultant giggles and tittering were understandable, as the young listeners had never seen him in action or even read about his sterling deeds in first class cricket.

Those who actually did, remembered him as a very sharp speed merchant, tireless and persistent, even on dead wickets. In today's language, he was his captain C.P. Johnstone's go-to bowler in all manner of situations. He was a brave soldier of Madras cricket.

\* Madras Province/State/Tamil Nadu.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Bill Gates; 2. Pocket of water; 3. David Beckham; 4. Xbox One; 5. Cannes Film Festival; 6. Romania; 7. Rituparno Ghosh; 8. TCS; 9. Mike Hussey and Dwayne Bravo; 10. Chhattisgarh.

\* \* \*

11. Thanjavur; 12. First Tamil film in 3D; 13. C.N. Lakshmi-kanthan; 14. Lord Ripon; 15. The DMK; 16. Jewish community; 17. Nungambakkam; 18. St. Mary's Church in the fort; 19. Triplicane; 20. TMS.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations



Amalgamations Group



ASHOK LEYLAND  
ENGINEERING YOUR TOMORROWS

**Bata**

Bata India Limited



Brakes India Limited



Go Placidly



F.L. Smidth Limited

THE HINDU

The Hindu  
Group of Publications



LARSEN & TOUBRO

It's all about Imagineering



Spirit of Visioneering



murugappa



BATTERIES TORCHES



Rane Group



The future of glass. Since 1665.



Enduring values. New age thinking.



Sundram Fasteners  
Limited



Hotels Resorts  
and Palaces



TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES TVS MOTOR COMPANY



UCAL AUTO  
PRIVATE LIMITED



MUSIC SQUARE

Since 1856,  
patently leaders  
— A WELLWISHER