

**WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI**

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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## Railways attempt to discard their heritage

The Indian Railways has been the one bright spot in an administration that pays lip service or, worse, just does not care for its heritage – built or natural. Scores of heritage railway stations have been preserved as they ought to be and at least two railway possessions – the Nilgiri Mountain Railway and the Chatrapati Shivaji (Victoria) Terminus – have world heritage status. Closer home, the new wing of the Central Station has been built as a replica of the older one. It is in the light of this that the decision to demolish historic Royapuram Station is a distressing one.

Last week, representatives of the Southern Railway approp-

riated the station today in the entire subcontinent – Pakistan and Bangladesh included. The station at Bori Bunder near Mumbai which was a year older has long gone. It was from Royapuram that South India's first train service, to Arcot, was flagged off on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1856. The Madras Railway Company (MRC), which in 1907 merged with the Southern Mahratta Railway to form the M&SM, became a part of the Southern Railway in 1950. The construction of Central Station in 1873 reduced the importance of Royapuram which over the years slowly became nothing more than a wayside station catering to a very few passenger services.

harbour, was laid perpendicular to it. The northern side developed as an industrial belt and the railway workshop which came up at Perambur played a

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• by  
**The Editor**

ched the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority seeking the removal of the Royapuram Station from the list of protected buildings and to allow for its demolition. The space occupied by it, they claim, will be needed for the building of a third terminus for Chennai (after Central and Egmore) and which will help in the decongestion of the city. The HCC it is learnt, is meeting on it on the 26<sup>th</sup>. There are indications that permission may be withheld. But current legislation can do nothing if the railways chose to neglect the building and allow it to collapse by itself.

Royapuram Station, whose foundation was laid in 1854, can claim to be the oldest

The station is a fine example of the early colonial classical style with Corinthian columns, tall archways and a huge portico that welcomed important guests. Till 1873, it was customary for newly appointed Governors of Madras to arrive here by train after reaching the west coast by ship. Royapuram has hosted viceroys and, in 1875, royalty too – the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII – being feted here.

The presence of the terminus here was to play a definitive role in the development of the contours of North Madras. The prime business district of First Line Beach led off to the south from the station. The first breakwater of Madras, the predecessor of the present

Come one, come all to celebrate Madras Day-2013 that's become Madras Week-2013 and promises to become Madras Month-2013. And the more the merrier. That was the message of the Coordinators of Madras Week when they recently announced that Madras Week this year would be celebrated from August 18<sup>th</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>, bracketing Madras Day, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. And they said they were happy to add that the celebrations were likely to start, judging from the programmes they had heard about, from early in August and run into the first week of September.

First off the mark has been INTACH's Chennai chapter, the Rotary Club of Madras South and the British Council. INTACH is focussing on schools with three competitions featuring short plays, AV presentations and essays. It is also organising an open photographic contest. And it has a DVD presentation on the history of Madras and a look at its heritage which it hopes to show



## Call to participate in Madras Week-2013

*INTACH-C, Rotary-S & British Council first up*

in schools, colleges and other institutions like corporates and clubs who would like to see it. This presentation will be only a phone call away: contact INTACH's organisers and they'll arrive at your premises to screen the programme if you provide screening facilities, says INTACH's Co-Convener, Sujatha Shankar.

• by **A Staff Reporter**

Rotary Club, Madras South, is planning programmes right through August and Programme Organiser S.R. Madhu will be glad to help any other Rotary Club or any other organisation looking for speakers on Madras. And the British Council is organising a whole-day seminar on the Nawab Wallajah-Governor George Pigot-Rajah of Tanjore connection besides other programmes. Chennai Heritage is planning eight talks on different aspects of Madras. Mylapore Times has several competitions and quizzes planned, as has Namma Arcot Road. All three and Nizhal and

others have walks planned – and walks in different parts of the city throughout the week will be a particular feature of this year's celebrations. If you would like to organise a heritage walk in your area, contact us for advice, say the Coordinators.

Programmes like these and any others which innovative planners can think up to celebrate Madras are what the Coordinators of the celebrations hope will happen between August 18<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup> – and they'd be glad if they happen well into September as well.

Participation is purely a voluntary effort by those wanting to organise programmes during the Week. The role of the informal group of Coordinators is only to encourage such participation, try to organise publicity for the events, offer advice and, where possible, arrange venues. Their press conference was a first call for individuals/groups/institutions, who wish voluntarily to celebrate the founding of this city, to join in.

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# Stormwater drains...mixed responses



The Rs. 815 crore stormwater drains (SWDs) project under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), approved in April 2009, aims at constructing about 535 km of SWDs in about 1200 stretches in Chennai. As of March 31, 2012, work at 250 sites had been completed and was in progress at about 225 sites. With 'no work' at 725 sites, the deadline has been extended to June 2013. However, this is one 'development project' that seems to keep extending timelessly while generating only much chaos, besides failing to prevent water-logging on the streets in many supposedly 'completed' areas, according to residents in these streets..

Technically, 35 per cent of the project share is to come from the Centre, 15 per cent from the State Government, and the remaining 50 per cent from the City Corporation. But, according to the records, the civic body has provided only about Rs.14 crore as against its mandatory share of around Rs. 290 crore for the work till March 31, 2012. According to a recent Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report, the slow progress is attributed to

• by Shobha Menon

"only 5 per cent of the mandated budget for the SWD project being allocated by the Chennai Corporation for SWD work." The report pointed out that the civic body had failed to coordinate with other departments to ensure hindrance-free work, and this has resulted in inundation during the monsoon and cost overruns.

There are differing views on the role of SWDs. Are they meant for recharging groundwater levels or only to mitigate flooding and drain off into the sea? Do all areas across the city need them? Do citizens realise it is important for them to make informed choices on what strategies/plans they need in their own neighbourhoods?

SWDs in a city that receives the bulk of its rains in a one-month period should ideally remain dry for the rest of the year. But the truth is that almost the entire length of the 800-km-plus drain network and the 14 waterways in the city have sewage flowing through them throughout the year! In some instances, even Metrowater contributes to the sewage flow. And it is not only lower income groups who illegally connect their sewage lines to waterways. Says an official, "Every SWD has to be connected to one of the city's 16 canals. Water from the canals then flows into the Adyar and Cooum Rivers or Buckingham Canal en route to the sea." But, sewage overflow into the SWDs and the siting of utility cables alongside them create the problems.

Consider a couple of examples. Besant Nagar I Avenue is completely sandy at all levels and does not need SWDs. Some water in front of the local MLA's house on that street was, however, cited as a possible reason for SWD construction. Though experts pointed out that the solution was to leave open space between road and pavement, this was not done and when they completed the work, the water stagnated even after the rains! On request from residents, percolation wells for the remaining stretches were put in.

Say residents of Shastri Nagar, "Clay soil beneath our road gets sandy after 6 to 7 ft. With SWDs positioned almost in the middle

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# Trouble in Paradise

The Man from Madras Musings learns that those who built huge high-rises all along the sea coast, starting from San Thome and ending practically at the shore temple, are now a worried lot. Those who built on parallel stretches some distance inland are also sick as mud. Apparently most of the flats are empty causing these real estate punters who constructed them to suffer sleepless nights.

Opinion is divided as to why this should be so. After all, these places were promoted as Valhallas, Meccas, Edens and heavens on earth. So why is the public not flocking to the booking offices with open cheque books and pens on the ready? MMM is told that this is because of the economic recession which is causing the flat-buying populace to

and more was promised in the brochure and looked real enough while visiting the site before the buildings were put up. But the builders, like Noah, decided that two of every kind of flat and building was better than one and so put up twice the number of structures on the promised land. The result? Rolling parklands have been taken over by robust concrete. Open skies can be seen only using a periscope and wind is available only when the neighbour opens a window or two.

And then there is the aspect of maintenance. Nobody took these into calculation while signing but these do add up to quite a bit. How else to keep swimming pools, club houses and gymnasiums in the state to which they are accustomed. But several of those residents

these is advertised with the tumbler and its counterpart. But what MMM is not sure of is the quality of the coffee offered at many of these places. After all, what is a degree from a particular town for coffee? Does that town have any monopoly over mocha? Not so, MMM would imagine. And at least the coffee that he stopped to have at a couple of these outlets left him with a feeling that its quality can only be described as third degree. The milk was watery, the decoction weak and probably left in the rain. He reflected that the degree claimed was perhaps quite in keeping with that town's reputation in the days of the Raj.

Not that old-timers from that temple town would agree. Their town was ill-used by the erstwhile masters, they allege,

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

stick to its money like glue. Blame it on the Government, said a real estate baron to MMM.

There are, however, other stories doing the rounds. Those who have already unscrewed their pens and handed over their cheques feel that they did not get what they paid for. The Bs, Hs and Ks are there and so are the committed square feet of areas. But what of the other things that are needed to make these places close to heaven even though they may be high enough to be there already? Take for instance electricity. These structures being mostly in the mofussil, where power cuts are usually for most of the day, elevators don't work and the residents are left feeling like the Grand Old Duke of York's men who, if you recollect, marched up the hill and down again. And then there is water. Or the lack of it. The much needed liquid, which is now sold in sachets, bottles and barrels (and no, MMM is not writing of what you think it to be), is sadly not available on tap. The promoters had promised grade A water supply but there are days when even grade D is not available. Deep borewells have been dug, some at such depth that even lava from the earth's core may come up but sadly no water. Enough to make the residents feel used.

That is not all, say these sick-as-mud and waterless pitiable specimens. In order to experience heaven, there have to be wide open spaces with rolling parklands, open skies and free flowing wind. All this

who don't use these facilities (perhaps not being able to come down from their heavenly abodes due to lack of elevators or perhaps considering the hauling up of water as enough exercise) are asking as to why they need to pay up. The ground floor resident most often refuses to pay the elevator maintenance. The top floor owner thinks the terrace is his as a free add-on. Chennai has never been known for community spirit, or has it?

As in most things in our city, MMM came to the conclusion that there were clearly faults on both sides. But all this has made these promised heavens more hells on earth. It is no wonder that those who are canny are choosing to stay away from these blighted, sorry, these gated communities.

### A question of degree

The gate communities may not be flourishing on the road by the coast and its illustrious parallel thoroughfare further inland but The Man from Madras Musings can tell you what appear to be flourishing – coffee shops. All along the two roads (Exasperatingly Congested and Only Motorcars Roads) several of these establishments have come up. And all of them promise a variety of coffee that claims to have a certification from a once-educational town down south, better known during British times for mendacity.

When MMM says several he is perhaps understating the numbers quite a bit. There is on an average one coffee shop for every car that drives down these highways. Everyone of

and assure us that they are made of the same degree of grey as people anywhere in the State. While tending to agree with them, MMM has to say that the degree coffee will perhaps only go to reinforce that old opinion. If MMM were from the town, he would have long ago issued a statement of denial and wrongful usage of name.

MMM, however, may be in a minority. All along his drive south he saw car after car drawing up at several of these outlets to part with cash for the weak brown liquid. And most appeared to go away satisfied. Perhaps the awareness of what makes good coffee is long gone. Coffee, as we knew it is dead, long live the Degree Coffee.

### Tailpiece

The Man from Madras Musings remembers the hype that was given to the two roads – Exasperatingly Curved and Obnoxiously Maintained Roads – when they were first modernised. We were told that these would be a developed country experience in an otherwise third world country and that on driving here, we would think Chennai was Singai (in local political speak, Chengalpattu is Chengai, Saidapet is Saidai etc). But both roads are now completely tropicalised. For one, they are lined with digital banners and cutouts of our political worthies. Secondly, they have pot-holes. Thirdly, several structures encroach on them. Fourthly, vehicles and pedestrians follow their own rules. All this makes us feel at home.

– MMM



## OUR READERS WRITE



### Vanishing heritage

I suggest we gift the bureaucrats sledge hammers and bulldozers. They can begin by demolishing all the heritage buildings in Tamil Nadu. Why stop with the Royapuram Station and Teachers' College? After they are done, the Government can honour them with "Distinguished Service Awards" for having contributed to the preservation of our culture.

Their thoughts of destroying such lovely buildings are shameful. I wonder if they have any conscience.

Ananth

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the Health Secretary and those in the medical profession.

He has rightly said that five star hospitals only make you important because you pay what they ask without question. If these Government-owned institutions can be promoted, they will prosper, people will be happy; there may even be a race amongst Government hospitals and other institutions to become better, so that they will be recognised, accepted and serve the people in the true sense of the word.

A great deal of snobbishness by the Government's own doctors and other officials will slowly disappear.

R. Desikan

raghavachari.desikan@gmail.com

### The people's voice

You have been writing very passionately about conservation of our heritage buildings, etc. Today, I read with some shock and immense sadness that the Royapuram railway station will be demolished for developmental work.

Is there no way in which citizens can stand up to this barbaric treatment of our heritage and history?

I am sure that if enough of a noise is made, the Southern Railway can be made to rethink on its stand. But the noise has to be made, as in the case of the *Bharat Insurance Building*.

The mulish attitude of the powers that be will continue, but at least we as a people would have made the effort not to let this happen without a fight.

C. K. Jaidev

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### Improving medicare

R.V. Rajan's article on his cancer hospital experience should be read by all, including

the shadow of the station. It was a favourite space for C.N. Annadurai, whose ideologies all Dravidian parties claim to follow.

The Royapuram Station, which is symbolic of all this and much more, has historic value, heritage value, art and architectural value, commemorative value and age value. Fulfilling these criteria is what makes a structure of heritage value as per international standards. If so, why demolish it? The railway reasoning that it needs the space does not hold water,

sues due to the isolated location. But nothing is insurmountable as long as there is a will.

Some 'development plans' which may be the reason for asking for the demolition are:

1. Top of the list is making Royapuram another passenger terminus, as demanded by some political groups. But Royapuram station is not easily approachable even from areas of North Chennai. With the Washermenpet Metro station coming up, people can easily reach Central or Egmore using the Metro in another three years. If the extension to Wimco Nagar comes through all north Chennaites can easily access Central and Egmore via the Metro. (The Chief Minister should get this extension sanctioned by the Centre without further waste of time.) There is absolutely no need for a Royapuram terminus. Rather, the ongoing plans for Tambaram should be speeded up.

because the Royapuram precinct consists of 72 acres in area of which only a small portion is occupied by the Station. And, moreover, the railways themselves spent a sizeable amount of money restoring the station only recently, albeit after a fashion. The station is in no way a hindrance for modernisation and development of the space as a major terminus. It will only serve to enhance its value. Can we, therefore, hope that the railways will wake up to its treasure and preserve it?

## The new airport terminal – money down the drain

I read with interest the article on the new domestic air terminal (MM, June 16th).

I live in Tambaram and commute to the city every day and, hence, I have been watching the new terminal being built right from the Bhoomi Puja (if ever it was held).

I saw a construction coming up which seemed a cross between a posh, modern cowshed and an airport service hangar.

At night it looks like a posh cowshed, cross-ed with a shopping mall lit up.

As for the interior, rather like the Rameswaram temple with a 1000 pillar *Mantapam*, this terminal seems to have supporting steel pillars and truss rods here, there and everywhere, so that you have to dodge round them to get about.

From Kanniyakumari to the Himalaya, from the far East of India to the West, there are so many styles of magnificent architecture – the Cholas, Pandyas and the Pallavas, the Moghuls, the Indo Sarcenic, the Hoysalas, the British colonial and so many more beautiful styles.

Our civil engineers and architects are second

to none in the world – could their expertise not be used?

With a vast, unlimited spending budget, could the authorities concerned have taken the trouble to fix on an architectural style that would ensure that the finished terminal would be a symbol of everything South Indian?

What is inspiring and beautiful about a glass wall surmounted by steel sheet (or whatever material) roofing?

A glass wall which cracks, to boot.

In its present condition, it could be equally said that the terminal is half finished or that it is half constructed and abandoned.

Your article has dealt sufficiently with the interior woes.

Ultimately, the terminal is a disgrace to aesthetics and, what is worse, seemingly not capable of performing to the extent required of it.

Unfortunately, a huge amount of money has gone down the drain.

S. Rajaram

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East Tambaram, Chennai 600 059

## Station demolition is not really necessary

I have been really boiling inside since reading about the threat to the Royapuram railway station. I am glad some efforts are on to stop the foolish move to demolish this heritage structure.

Having been an insider, I know the demolition is really not required for any kind of railway development at Royapuram where the heritage structure stands. An enlightened previous regime had done an excellent renovation of the structure only eight years ago. In fact, in January 2008, the Republic Day was celebrated by running a special train from Royapuram to Tambaram via Beach, hauled by an old refurbished heritage steam engine. I was privileged to be on the loco for some distance. I suppose the present lot of civil engineers in charge consider it a nuisance and headache to maintain the Royapuram heritage station. There may be some security is-

2. The Electric Loco shed at Royapuram was thrust on the operating department who never wanted it in Royapuram. Operationally it was not making sense to move locos from Royapuram to Central back and forth without first removing the bottleneck at Basin Bridge. Anyway the Stage 1 of the Loco shed is nearing completion without affecting the heritage structure. No plans of expansion should be allowed for the shed.

3. Railways have a huge area in Royapuram which perhaps they want to commercially exploit. Fine, but it should not be at the cost of the heritage structure. I have found particularly in the Southern Railway that there is no regard for anything called heritage. Because of a few

individuals, the facade of Central was maintained when Central was expanded sideways to handle increasing volumes. The old SIR records and implements have been preserved to some extent at Trichy due to the efforts of an enlightened DRM. There is no concerted effort for preservation of heritage. The Railway never wants to participate in or join hands with the Madras Week celebrations!

4. The only real need for land around the area is for laying a quadruple line from Madras Beach Station towards Ennore for the north-east line. But there must be many options to get this done without demolishing the heritage structure.

An ex-railwayman

Chennai

## Discarding their heritage

(Continued from page 1)

vital role in Indian labour history – the Madras Labour Union set up in 1921 being India's first trade union.

The large railway workforce in and around Royapuram made it a fertile space for nationalist and, later, political sentiments. Everyone from Mahatma Gandhi has addressed audiences here. The Dravidian movement owes a great debt to the railway workforce and for long was headquartered in Royapuram in

### CHENNAI HERITAGE

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# A Centre for Excellence in Cancer care

No story about the Cancer Institute, Adyar, located in a sprawling 9-acre campus next to IIT, Madras, can be complete without a meeting with the living legend who heads the Institute, Dr. V. Shantha, the Mag-saysay and Padma Bhushan awardee.

I met her at her small office in the old campus of the Institute in Gandhi Nagar. An 85-year-old diminutive woman looking a little frail, she continues to display a rare enthusiasm and energy that she is famous for when she talks about her favourite 'temple'. She says that she does not believe in going to temples, as she considers the Cancer Institute, where she has served for 60 years, as her temple. When I told her that for lakhs of cancer patients who come with hopes in their hearts to the hospital, she and her team of dedicated doctors are like Gods and their saviours, she smiled.

The hospital, which in the

12 beds in a small hut. It was run right from its inception by Dr. S. Krishnamoorthy (son of Dr. Muthulakshmi) who passed away in 2010, and Dr. V. Shantha (both of them were earlier at Government General Hospital), doubling themselves as doctors and assistants in the initial years.

After the death of Dr. Reddy in July 1968, both fought all odds to keep the facility going. According to Dr. Shantha, right from the beginning it has been a running battle between supportive and non-supportive governments. Since the hospital was totally dependent on donations, getting the money to run the Institute in the early years was itself a stupendous task. But thanks to the generosity of both corporate and individual donors and the dedicated team, the hospital made tremendous strides over the years and is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee this year.

The hospital, which in the

● On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Cancer Institute, Adyar, R.V. RAJAN narrates in a three-part feature his personal experience with the hospital and the story of the hospital itself. The second part is featured in this issue.

Cancer Institute (WIA) was founded in 1952 as a charitable institute by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first woman in South India to graduate in medicine. She was also the first woman to become a member and, subsequently, the Vice-President (Deputy Speaker) of the Madras Legislative Assembly. The loss of her younger sister to cancer affected her deeply and propelled her to institute a Cancer Relief Fund in 1949.

It was several years before she could translate her dream of establishing a speciality hospital for treatment of cancer to serve the growing number of those afflicted, particularly poor patients. Despite several obstacles in her way that the bureaucratic system placed, she was determined and started searching for land for the Institute she planned. Eventually she got a narrow stretch of 2-acre land abutting the Buckingham Canal in Gandhi Nagar, Adyar. With the support of the Women's India Association (WIA) of which she was President for 30 years, Muthulakshmi Reddy started on this site the first cancer hospital in South India. The foundation stone for the hospital building was laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952 and the hospital was inaugurated on June 18, 1954 by the then Union Finance Minister, C.D. Deshmukh. The facility that was raised had just

first year opened a small single building space, with minimal diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, is today a Comprehensive Care Centre for cancer with 450 beds and a very active research laboratory apart from the Dr. Muthulakshmi College of Oncologic Sciences and a separate Division of Preventive Oncology.

The patients, mostly from poor sections of community across the country, come with fear in their minds but hope in their hearts. Every day, the Institute registers over 400 cases of which nearly 80 per cent are poor. The poor are given totally free or highly subsidised treatment.

The hospital treated over 1,40,000 patients in 2012, a jump of over 60 per cent from the figure of 85,000 patients it treated in 2000.

The Research Centre is recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. It has Molecular Oncology, Electron Microscopy and Immuno Hematology facilities and a tumour bank. Research is going on in the Institute to find a vaccine for the prevention of cancer. Another area of research is 'gene profiling' of the disease, literally creating a horoscope of the disease for each patient.

Dispelling the concept of miracles in cancer cure, Dr.



● This is the second part of a three-part story on T. Ramachendra 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.

(Continued from last fortnight)

## LETTER

Extract from a letter from Sir Charles Trevelyan, late Governor of Madras, to Colonel J. O. Boulderson, Commissioner of Police, dated 18th June 1860.

"There is no Public Officer from whom I have received more willing and efficient support than from yourself. Your management of your own Department, with the able assistance of your Deputies Mr. Campbell and Ramachendra Row, has been all that could be desired. There has not been the slightest disturbance of the peace of Madras since I have been here; and I have never seen a large population which went about their daily business with such order, and quietness and confidence of protection as that of Madras. Your active co-operation with me in the reduction of Military Guards by the substitution of Police was of much public importance; and to crimes committed beyond the limits of your jurisdiction the robbery of the Railway balance at Vellore and the murder of Captain Leicester at Vizagapatam, in the exposure and punishment of which the well being of Society was deeply concerned, were effectually dealt with by your help. In the Vizagapatam case you were yourself deputed to the spot and remained there until the murderer had been convicted."

## JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

### PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from Colonel J. O. Boulderson, Commissioner of Police, to T. Pycroft, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 27th July 1860, No. 81.

1. On the 4th May last, I had the honor to report for the information of the Honorable the Governor in Council that several daring robberies had taken place in Madras, and that property of considerable value had recently been stolen from a house situated at the Adyar, occupied by Captain Randall, and from another situated on the Mount Road, occupied by Captain Johnstone. For reasons given in my letter

Shantha says that all improvements in this area are a result of modern science, which today can provide 'targeted treatment' for different types of cancers, resulting in a much higher success rate. Today, the disease can be diagnosed even at the molecular stage (without any sort of growth/tumour or physical appearance). If diagnosed early, 65 per cent cancer cases can be treated and the patients can lead normal lives. It is no more a killer disease as it was thought to be in the past, because of the tremendous strides made in research in the field of Oncology.

The Institute introduced the concept of Oncology as a super-speciality as early as 1982 and started the first super speciality college in Oncology – the Dr. Muthulakshmi College of Oncologic Sciences – in 1984. The Institute, affiliated to Dr. MGR Medical University and Madras University, offers courses in Surgical Oncology, Medical Oncology and Radiation Oncology. Every year, eight students who study three specialised fields pass out of the College. The College also offers para-professional

training, covering a wide variety of support services.

"Thanks to the efforts of the Institute in the area of education and professional training in cancer care, cancer hospitals across the country today have trained doctors and support staff," says Dr. Shantha. She refers to a Dr. Ravi Kumar, who moved from the Institute to start a new cancer speciality hospital in Silchar, Assam, to provide free or subsidised cancer care to poor patients there with support and guidance from the Cancer Institute, Adyar.

A visit to the Paediatric Oncology unit, located in the old premises on the canal bank, will move anybody. This is the place where thousands of poor children from the villages of South India come for treatment of cancer – mostly lymphoblastic leukemia. From a dismal 20 per cent, the cure rate today at the state-of-the-art Mahesh Memorial Paediatric Ward is as high as 60 per cent. According to Dr. Shantha, this can be further

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# Regret over leaving him in a subordinate post

Under notice, the Government was pleased to authorize the offer of a reward of 500 Rupees for the apprehension of the party or parties implicated.

2. I have now the satisfaction to annex an extract from the Calendar, the third Sessions of our Supreme Court for this year, by which you will perceive that several of the parties who had committed Burglaries during the preceding few months, have not only been arrested, but also convicted, and by reference to cases Nos. 25 and 26 you will find that the Burglar, who entered the house of Captain Randall has been sentenced to transportation for 7 years.

3. I beg you therefore to favour me by soliciting the Honorable the Governor in Council, to authorize the payment to me of Rupees 300 out of the 500 sanctioned, for distribution among those persons who were induced to give the information which procured the arrest of the several parties committed for trial, leaving the balance of Rupees 200 to be paid when the thief and receiver, in the case of robbery in the house of Captain Johnstone are arrested, tried, and convicted.

4. I deem it my duty to bring to the notice of Government the names of those officers of the force, by whose strenuous efforts both within Madras and in adjoining districts, since July last year, I have been enabled to procure the conviction of so many experienced thieves and through whose devoted and praiseworthy exertions, the panic how

their successful depredations gave rise to, has been allayed and public confidence completely restored, and I trust His Excellency the Governor in Council will not consider that I step beyond the bounds of my duty, when I earnestly solicit for each of them a bonus of one month's pay as an acknowledgment of the good service rendered by them, and as an encouragement to the members of the force generally to exert themselves to the utmost on future occasions.

5. The names of the Officers whom I consider deserving the special notice of Government, are:

	Pay
	Per mensem.
Deputy Commissioner Ramachendra Row ...	500 0 0
Mr. Inspector Alli Dhost ...	100 0 0
Daroga Chinnaasawmy ...	30 0 0
Ditto Peddo Naik ...	30 0 0
Talliar Naiga Moottoosawmy ...	12 0 0
Ditto Chinnasawmy ...	12 0 0
Talliar Tooloocanum ...	9 0 0
Total Rupees...	693 0 0

ORDER THEREON, 6th August 1860, No. 981.

Paragraph 3 of the foregoing letter will be communicated to the Civil Auditor in reference to the Order of the 4th May last, No. 561. Payment of Rupees 300 may be made now, and that of the remaining 200 on the contingency indicated by the Commissioner of Police, occurring.

2. His Honor in Council is unable to sanction a bonus of a month's pay to the Deputy Commissioner Ramachendra Row and the other Police Officers, named by the Commissioner.

3. The testimony borne by Colonel Boulderson to their exertions is highly creditable to them, but the Government do not feel at liberty to award them special remuneration for performing services within the strict line of their duty, and not attended with personal exposure or danger.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,  
Chief Secretary.

EXTRACT FROM THE "ATHENÆUM,"

Dated Tuesday the 13th November 1860.

## LOCAL.

We understand that our Reporter in his brief notice of the serious fire which occurred at Washermenpettah on the 9th Instant, published by us last Saturday, fell into the error of awarding to one Police authority the praise that was justly due to another who had borne literally the burthen and heat of the day before his Colleague arrived at the scene of the action. The Native Deputy Commissioner of Police T. Ramachendra Row

was the party to whose exertions in providing and applying the means of quenching the flame it is chiefly owing that the conflagration was not more extensive and disastrous than it improved. He and the officers under his orders, had done all that the exigency of the case required, before Colonel Boulderson and Mr. Campbell could reach the spot.

We make this slight correction of the report alluded to because it is only fair that every man should have his due, and the Native Deputy Commissioner is certainly entitled to high commendation.

EXTRACT FROM POLICE ORDERS, BY COL. J. C. BOULDERSON,

Dated 2nd January 1861.

Previous to resigning the command of the Madras Police Force, and bidding all Ranks European and Native farewell, Col. Boulderson desires publicly to express the satisfaction which his connexion with the Force has at all times afforded him.

He begs his Deputies Messrs. R. P. Campbell and T. Ramachendra Row will accept his sincere thanks for the zeal, ability and carefulness with which they have at all times performed the onerous duties which have devolved upon them, and he now tenders to them, his acknowledgment for the uniform support which they have always afforded him in the maintenance of order and discipline in the Force and the prevention of crime, whereby the peace and quiet of this large city have been for so many years happily maintained.

MADRAS, 3rd January 1861,

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Before I embark for London, I must fulfil a duty which I owe to you and a pleasure which I owe to myself, for it is but right and just and proper that I should by writing as well as by mouth convey to you my best thanks and warm acknowledgment of the good able and devoted service which you have ever rendered to me since the day Mr. Elliot introduced you to me as the Chief of the Police of this Town. You have been my most able Deputy in every sense of the word, it is impossible for me to suppose that I could have been better served by another Native Gentleman.

It is with regret that I leave you in a subordinate post, but I feel assured that the zeal which you have always displayed as an officer of the Government with your eminent legal ability, and long experience in all judicial affairs, will in due course secure your elevation to the Bench either as a Magistrate or Judge of a Court of Small Causes, and that such may soon fall to your lot I do most earnestly pray and hope.

Believe me with my kindest and best wishes and sincere thanks.

Your ever kind Friend,  
J. C. BOULDERSON,  
Commissioner of Police.

Extracts from the Proceedings of Government upon the Inaugural Khana Report submitted by the Commissioner of Police, Colonel W. J. Wilson, under date 17th September 1861. No. 107.

Para. 17. After suspending the Superintendent, I deputed Mr. Ramachendra Row, the Deputy Commissioner to examine the affairs of the poor house, the result of which has been to show that the quantity of food daily used and charged against the Institution alone was sufficient

to feed not only all of the Paupers but also the Inmates of the House of Industry in addition and there is therefore every reason to conclude that the greater part if not the whole of the sums received monthly from the Commissariat as stated above, was embezzled by the Superintendent.

Para. 21. Within the last few months, the whole of the Paupers have been inspected personally by Mr. Ramachendra Row with the exception of a few Gosha females who have been examined by persons sent for that purpose. The Descriptive Rolls have also been revised and compared. Eight individuals have been removed from the List. Of these, five were found to be in possession of Tickets to which they had no right and the remaining three failed to appear either while the enquiry was going on or since it has been concluded. Their places have been supplied by an equal number selected from the most indigent of the applicants for relief, of whom there are a considerable number.

Para. 22. I am much indebted to Mr. Ramachendra Row for the time and labor he has bestowed on the investigation in addition to his own immediate duties which are of themselves sufficiently onerous.

Order thereon, 8th October 1861, No. 1389.

Para. 8. The result of the examination subsequently made by the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Ramachendra Row into the affairs of the Institution, has shewn that the Funds that had passed through the hands of the late Superintendent for the purpose of the charity were far more than was necessary for its actual requirements thus leaving to the obvious inference that the greater portion of the money had been embezzled by him.

(True extract.)

W. J. WILSON,  
Commissioner of Police.

Extract of letter from Major C. S. Hearn, Commissioner of Police, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 10th September 1866, No. 90.

At noon on Thursday, it was reported to me that an enormous mob was collected in Triplicane. Being laid up myself with a broken leg, I despatched Mr. Deputy Commissioner Ramachendra Row at once to the spot, with reinforcements Mounted and Foot Police. The judgment and energy, displayed by the Deputy Commissioner, aided by the exertions of the Police Force at his disposal, availed to prevent the mob from breaking out into riot, although many thousands of persons were collected, probably the largest mass that assembled in any one place during the disturbances. Some small retail Bazaars of grain, ghee and oil, on outskirts of Triplicane were however plundered of their contents. Elsewhere in this quarter sales partially recommenced, and in the evening the mob dispersed; but a very large number of persons had been unable to buy their daily meal.

Extract from G. O., dated 21st September 1886, No. 1467, J. D., passed thereon.

The Town however, remained undisturbed until noon of the 6th, when a very large crowd assembled in Triplicane, which by the exertions of the Police and "the judgment and energy displayed by the Deputy Commissioner" Ramachendra Row was prevented from breaking out into riot.

(True Extract.)

C. S. HEARN,  
Commissioner of Police.

To

T. RAMACHENDRA ROW, ESQUIRE, J. P.,  
Deputy Commissioner of Police, Madras.

Extract from the Administration Report of the Madras Town Police to Government, by Major C. S. Hearn, Commissioner of Police for 1866, Para. 23. Officers of the Force in the margin.

The Deputy Commissioners of Police, Messrs. Ansell and Ramachendra Row, have worked zealously and efficiently throughout the year. Owing to the confinement of the Commissioner to his own room, the task of preparing the numerous grain riot cases for trial before the Magistrates and High Court fell exclusively on these 2 Officers. The care and ability with which this duty was performed, are proved by the fact that out of 359 persons sent for trial, 312 or 87 per cent. were convicted.

(True Extract.)

W. S. DREVER,  
Acting Police Commissioner.

MADRAS, 13th April 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,

Although the honorable position to which you have raised yourself by your talents and efficiency as a Public Servant makes you independent of any testimonial from me, yet as you desire that I should express my opinion of your services in writing, I have much pleasure in so doing.

During the course of our long official connection which commenced on my appointment to the Magisterial Bench in 1851 and terminated in 1866, I had constant opportunities of observing your unemitting attention to business, as well as the experience and ability evinced in the performance of your duties more especially those of your present office, and I have on more than one occasion publicly acknowledged the value of the assistance you afforded me when I held the office of Commissioner of Police.

Yours sincerely,

W. J. WILSON, LIEUT.-COLONEL,  
Inspector-General of Jails.

(To be concluded)





(Current Affairs questions are from the period June 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. According to a new research, which allotrope of carbon has been labelled the strongest material in the world, even when patched together?
2. According to the latest Forbes List of 'world's highest paid athletes', which Indian cricketer is ranked at No. 16 with a total pay of \$31.5 million?
3. Name the 25-year-old actress, a performer in *Ghajini* (with Aamir Khan) and *Nishabd* (opposite Amitabh Bachchan), whose suicide created a sensation recently.
4. After which cult rocker, who dubbed himself 'The Lizard King', has a newly discovered prehistoric lizard been named?
5. Who won the 'Coupe des Mousquetaires' and 'Coupe Suzanne-Lenglen' recently?
6. On June 4th, a service was held at Westminster Abbey to mark 60 years of which historic royal event?
7. Name the world's largest online retailer that began operations in India on June 4th.
8. According to the Global Destination Cities Index, published by Master Card, which Asian Capital city is the most visited city with 15.98 million international visitors spending at least one night last year?
9. Which place in India, home to 1,800 animal species and some most endangered tribes, has been designated as a world biosphere reserve by UNESCO?
10. For which global 'Day' this year was adopted the theme "Think. Eat. Save - Reduce Your Foodprint"?

\* \* \*

11. Which WHS monument in the State has the Government permitted ONGC to adopt as part of the Ministry of Tourism's 'Campaign Clean India'?
12. June 15th marked the 225th birth anniversary of the discoverer of Ooty. Name him.
13. How endearingly are the jawans of the Madras Sappers called?
14. Pre-independence, who was Chief Minister twice?
15. In which educational institution's campus is the MRF Pace Foundation located?
16. Which respected Chennai institution's emblem has the motto 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth' running around it?
17. How did Chepauk enter the cricketering record books on November 4, 1934?
18. What edifice in Chennai was built by Friar Pedro de Atongia in 1516?
19. Why does the Rajaji Memorial on Sardar Patel Road have a 32-feet gopuram?
20. A brainchild of the future President R. Venkatraman, what came up near Guindy in 1958 and was named after a labour leader?

(Answers on page 8)

# Buddhist shrine in Adyar

On the verdant campus of the Theosophical Society, close to the Adyar River, is a temple for Gautama Buddha – a haven of peace and tranquility. Although the seeds for the construction of this shrine were sown in 1883, it was completed only in time to be consecrated during the Golden Jubilee convention of the Theosophical Society in December 1925.

The design of this shrine was, in the words of C. Jinajadasa, the fourth President of the Theosophical Society, "a combination of two styles, both contemporaneous, though one is at Buddha Gaya and the other in Nepal. The base of the

• by  
**Chithra Madhavan**

shrine, with its rounded arches and pillars, is taken from Buddha Gaya, while the cornices and the dome are from a Buddhist temple in Nepal." A souvenir to commemorate the centenary of the Buddhist shrine was published in February 1983.

The shrine is a small but elegant structure, white in colour, with beautiful wooden doors carved with motifs like the lotus and swastika and seven stone steps with elephant-head balustrades leading to the sanctum. The exquisite grey stone image of the Buddha from the eastern parts of India enshrined here was a gift of Dr. Annie Besant, the second President of the Theosophical Society. The Buddha is seen here as the Teacher of Dharma, with his palms in the Dharmachakra Mudra, turning the wheel of Dharma. Above his head is an inscription in Tibetan characters: "He taught the cause of all things as also the means of cessation."



Bodhi tree, Buddhist Shrine Theosophical Society.

Opposite the temple is a lotus pond, on the banks of which is a magnificent peepal (Bodhi) tree planted by President Jinajadasa on the 75th anniversary of the Theosophical Society. It is a scion of the original Bodhi tree under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment. A small marble plaque states that this sapling from the tree at Bodhi Gaya was planted on December 24, 1950.

Near the Bodhi tree is a small structure which housed an ancient Buddhist gong that used to be struck at 6 in the morning and 6 in the evening, recalling the six remembrances of the Buddha which are etched nearby on a black stone slab:

*To the parents as the East, where rises the light,*

*To teachers as the South, whence rich gifts come,*

*To wife and children as the West, where gleam colours of love and calm,*

*To friends and kinsmen and all men as the North, where stars are firm-fixed,*

*To servants and dependents as the earth beneath which humbly nourishes all,*

*To Devas and holy ones above, around which all moves.*

A Zen Memorial Stone, donated by the Institute of South Indian Buddhist Studies and Jogetsu of Japan, was unveiled on October 5, 2009. On it is an image of Bodhidharma, the great Buddhist monk of the 6th century C.E. and the first patri-



Plaque near Bodhi tree, Buddhist Shrine, Theosophical Society.



Buddhist Shrine, Theosophical Society.

arch of Zen. The plaque states that, according to Chinese Buddhist tradition, Bodhidharma was born the third prince of the Pallava dynasty at Kanchipuram.

Sitting near the lotus pond, by the side of the Bodhi tree in front of the Buddha shrine, enveloped by silence, is an experience to be cherished.

## Madras Week-2013

(Continued from page 1)

This year, the hotels of the city will, once again, be enthusiastic participants. Some will be venues for talks while others will host art and photographic exhibitions besides organising food festivals with Madras cuisine as their theme. Art galleries have also taken to this event in a big way in the past.

The Murugappa Group's Madras Quiz for schools in Greater Madras is now an annual event and will be the highlight of a Madras quizzing season that's a feature of the Week.

Perhaps indicative of the success of Madras Week as a means of creating awareness about the City and its heritage is the number of institutions that have come forward each year to celebrate the city. Several IT companies organised programmes last year and are planning to do more this year. So have several Clubs. The celebrations have also spread to the suburbs such as Tiruvanniyur, Nanganallur and Tambaram. Private apartment blocks and various societies are planning their own events. The Coordinators look forward to more participants this year, particularly from North and West Madras, besides the growing

number from South and Central Madras.

For the small band of volunteers who catalysed this celebration and now help coordinate the programmes, the response from corporates, educational institutions and citizens of the city has given enormous satisfaction by the way it has grown over the last ten years.

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# The cerebral Army Chief

July 1, 2013 is an important date in the calendar of the Indian Army. It is the birth centenary of General P.P. Kumaramangalam, one of the best Chiefs of the Indian Army. Though he is not much spoken about, the shape he gave the Army during his tenure from June 1966 to June 1969 still forms the basis of our organisational structure, national war strategy and division level tactics. It is said that the remodeling of the Army that was done by him and the new thinking that was imbued under him formed the groundwork for the resounding success that was achieved by the Armed Forces during the 1971 war against Pakistan.

Kumaramangalam, who belonged to a well-to-do family of zamindars who went into politics, was born in his family estate at Kumaramangalam, near Thiruchengode, in Salem District. His illustrious father P. Subbarayan was a freedom fighter, diplomat, Chief Minister of the Madras Presidency, a Minister in Nehru's Cabinet and Governor of Maharashtra.

After early education at home, he was sent at the age of 11 to a prep school in the UK from where he went to Eton College for his secondary school education. He was a graduate of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He was commissioned in 1933 and was the second Indian officer to be commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery. When he retired in 1969, he was the last of the line of King's Commissioned Indian Officers.

In September 1940, during the World War II, the Italians attacked Egypt which was then a British protectorate. They were beaten back and Tobruk in Libya was captured and held

by Indian troops. In early 1942, Kumaramangalam was posted to the Artillery unit in Tobruk. In June 1942, Tobruk fell to the German Afrika Corps under Rommel. Kumaramangalam was taken as a prisoner-of-war to Italy. He escaped, but was captured again and sent to a high security prison in Germany called Stalag Luft III from where he was released in 1945 at the end of the War. During the War he won two important decorations – DSO and MBE.

In 1948, he became a Brigadier in the Indian Army. In 1963, he was a Lieutenant General, and that followed the assignment of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command. In the years, he was successively made the Deputy Chief and Vice Chief and finally on June 8, 1966 the seventh Chief of Staff of the Indian Army, the first Artillery officer to rise to that position.

It was as Chief that he was to exhibit his brilliance. He realised that India would have to be prepared to face war on two fronts – against Pakistan and against China. Whereas the terrain in the Pakistan front

is plains, we faced the Chinese across the Himalaya with its torturing mountain peaks, ravines and high altitudes. The ability to use vehicles in such an area is limited due to lack of roads. Heavy vehicles and equipment cannot be used and men have to mostly move on man-pack basis. For logistics you have to rely on mules.

At the time when Kumaramangalam took over as Chief, the Government was considering creating two different armies, one for the mountains and one for the plains. Kumaramangalam did not agree with this because such an organisation would not only be expensive but also unwieldy. Further, formations from one area could not be employed in another area.

So, he hit upon the idea of having the infantry division as the normal fighting formation. The one organised to fight on the plains would be the Standard Infantry Division. The one designed to fight on the mountains would be designated as Modification 'M'. A Mod 'M' infantry division would have the same basic structure as the

Standard Division except that heavy guns and equipment not portable and usable in mountain terrain would be removed and those usable in the mountain terrain, including extreme cold clothing and equipment, would be issued. Thus, within a matter of days a Standard Division could be converted into a Mod 'M' Division and vice versa and forces could effortlessly be shifted across theatres, depending upon the needs of war.

He was aware of the problems faced by the Indian Army in the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the Pakistan war of 1965. He decided to rearm and reequip the Army. For example, in the Pakistan war, the standard weapon of an infantry soldier was the .303 bolt action rifle. This weapon was heavy and had a very low rate of fire. He had it replaced with the 7.62mm Self Loading Rifle. He took up the case for importing sturdier Australian mules so that they could carry more load in the mountains.

He then caused all the military education books and manuals, called GS Pamphlets,

to be revised so that new ideas could be taught to the men of the Army.

Kumaramangalam's genius lay in the fact that he prepared the Indian Army for the next war, a task not easily undertaken and accomplished by normal run-of-the mill Generals. India was lucky in that at the right juncture, when a man of outstanding ability was required to lift an Army that had not crowned itself with glory during two decades of independent India, we were blessed with a warrior son who understood the need and found scholarly solutions to meet our ends. In June 1969 he handed over the baton to another great soldier, Field Marshal S.H.F.J. Manekshaw who wielded this new Army to gain a resounding victory over Pakistan in 1971.

Even before the sword he had forged was tested in the fire of war in 1971, so sure was the nation of his achievements that he was awarded of Padma Vibhushan in 1970.

This soldier and intellectual passed away on March 13, 2000 at the age of 87.

– Lt. Col. C.R. Sundar

## CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

(Continued from page 4)

increased if only patients come at an early stage of the disease.

The hospital was the first to establish a Paediatric Oncology unit in India, as early as 1960. In 2009, a Comprehensive Paediatric Oncology Centre, including a long-term survivor clinic, was established in the premises of the Mahesh Memorial Paediatric Ward, thanks to a generous donation from friends of Mahesh who himself was a patient at the Institute and survived for over 12 years

after intensive care at the Institute.

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At every forum and at every meeting she addresses, Dr. Shantha is never tired of emphasising the importance of prevention of cancer through education. According to her, "Lung cancer is the top killer among men, mainly due to tobacco-related habits, whereas among women breast and cervix cancer are most common. These cancers can be detected early through simple check-ups.

Apart from regular mammograms, it is a good idea for women to physically check for any lumps in their breasts regularly and also consult gynaecologists if they find any unusual discharge between two periods."

The Department of Preventive Oncology is a mission that reaches out to every nook and cranny of the State through seminars, lectures and screening camps conducted by specially trained Village Health Nurses (VHN) and multipur-

pose workers to help detect early cancer of the cervix, oral cavity and female breast.

The Tobacco Cell at the Institute is aggressively involved in anti-tobacco programmes.

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When I asked Dr. Shantha why patients are asked very detailed questions regarding not only symptoms but also a lot of personal and family details before they are registered, she said, "It is to help compile the Demographic Registry of the disease maintained by the hospital."

The Madras Metropolitan Town Registry is one of the oldest demographic registries in the country. It was established in 1984 and provides data on cancer incidence, mortality and long-term survival in all treated cases. The Institute is the only centre that provides lifetime follow-up of patients.

In 2012, the Institute launched a joint effort with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, to start the largest population-based Cancer Registry in the world, covering the 72 million people of Tamil Nadu. The information collected through such efforts is of immense help for researchers doing research on the subject. The initiative was inaugurated at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

Feedback welcome on [rvrajan42@gmail.com](mailto:rvrajan42@gmail.com)

## Mixed responses for stormwater drains

(Continued from page 2)

of the road to skirt a temple on the side, huge trees were removed and the road made unmotorable. After the next rains, when houses adjacent were inundated, the authorities said, 'We will continue as planned till the middle of the road stretch and then only stop!'. So we now have SWDs that cannot drain into anywhere!"

Existing drains are not being desilted nor are they being made desilting-friendly. They either need to be broken open at the top or have premoulded roofs that might require a crane to lift them! Will desilting happen at all? Many contractors have built new drains, covering the existing ones with-

out removing the debris and obstructions. "One contractor just applied a coat of plaster to the old drain instead of building a new one," says a resident of Secretariat Colony. While contractors say they are struggling to complete the works in the face of insufficient funds and consequent delay leading to escalating construction costs, pedestrians and motorists complain that SWDs are responsible for injuries causing accidents due to poor visibility.

Dr. Sekar Raghavan, Director, Rain Centre, who has been in the forefront of many campaigns to harvest urban run-off for recharging precious groundwater levels, says, "Currently we are just moving from one problem to another through construction of SWDs. Flooding in

Chennai has increased over the last three decades primarily because old bungalows have been converted into flat complexes, whose surroundings are wholly paved and slope onto the road. Corporation paving in the name of beautification does not allow an inch of soil for water to percolate. Where no SWD has been built, citizens can insist on ways to harvest the run-off, such as building percolation wells with perforated lids so water will drain into them. Where already built, they should find ways to intercept run-off through drains into recharge wells inside private compounds close by. Of course, the recharge wells constructed for harvesting the urban run-off will have to be desilted at least three times a year – before the

onset of the Southwest and Northeast monsoons and once during summer."

Ironically, the JNNURM's objectives include "paying special attention to infrastructural services; ensure that urbanisation is effective in a discrete manner through the process of planned development; and ensure reduction of congestion". After the Mission period (seven years from 2005), it is envisaged that 'all urban residents will be able to obtain access to a basic level of urban services and local services and governance conducted in a manner that is transparent and accountable to citizens.' In the case of SWDs for 'urban renewal', the seven years have passed and citizens are still waiting for simpler and more effective solutions.



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

When Sir Garfield Sobers came to Chennai more than a decade ago to assist former India leg spinner Vaman Kumar at the MAC Spin Academy, he was obviously impressed by the energy and dedication of the veteran already well into his sixties. During an informal dinner that some of us were privileged to attend at the Madras Cricket Club at the end of the camp, Sobers was not, therefore, very surprised when we named V. V. Kumar the best orthodox wrist spinner in India after Subhash Gupte in reply to his query if Subhash's younger brother Baloo would have fitted that description.

Like many cricketers of my generation from the South, I have been a life-long admirer of V. V. Kumar, the leg spinner as well as a fan of his sense of humour and eccentric, unpredictable ways on and off the cricket field.

Long before I saw him in flesh and blood, Kumar had excited my imagination with his heroic deeds in Pakistan as a member of the Indian Starlets team that toured that country circa 1960 under the captaincy of Lala Amarnath, by then retired from Test cricket. It was a great opportunity for young Test hopefuls on both sides of the border to impress the national selectors. On the Indian side, Kumar and fellow Madras cricketer A. G. Milkha Singh were the undoubted successes of the tour. At my grandfather's Trivandrum residence, I excitedly awaited the arrival of *The Hindu* around 4 pm every day from Madras, bearing all the cricket news of the day. V.V. and Milkha rarely belied my expectations that summer.

I first saw V.V. in action when he made his Test debut not long afterwards at Delhi's

## The master leg spinner

Feroze Shah Kotla and my father, then working in New Delhi, took me and my brothers to the match. I was barely 14 then and my memory of the action is clouded by the passage of time, but I can never forget the thrill I experienced when V.V. snared his first victim – Imtiaz Ahmed, the Pakistani wicket keeper. Kumar went on to take five in the innings and seven in all in the match.

Unfortunately, Kumar's dreams of prolonged success as a Test bowler were crushed after his second appearance for India. By a strange coincidence, I happened to be one of the spectators at the Brabourne Stadium, Bombay, the next season, as my father had by then joined Bank of India there. It was a miserable match for Kumar, as he finished with none for 70 in the first innings, did not bowl in the second and did not distinguish himself in the field. There were murmurs about a hidden finger injury leading to this debacle, and even though only one of the four Indian spinners, Chandu Borde, was among the wickets, V.V.'s failure was highlighted by his critics. One of the other Madras players in the Indian team, left-hand batsman A. G. Milkha Singh – who had a decent outing at the Kotla versus Pakistan – failed too and was booed by an unsporting crowd, while his elder brother Kripal Singh scored 38 and 13, both not out. Neither V.V. nor Milkha played for India again despite sterling performances in the Ranji Trophy for several seasons, and Kripal came back into the side under Tiger Pataudi's captaincy. It was all so



V.V. Kumar

depressing for the young fan from Madras.

Returning to Madras in 1962, I had several opportunities to watch Kumar bowl in the local league and the *Sport & Pastime* (later *The Hindu*) trophy matches and eventually play with and against him – with him in the BS Nets organised by the cricket association, and against him in league games. He was a master bowler, constantly improving, adding new weapons to his armoury while perfecting those he already possessed. He did not believe in exaggerated flight, but tossed it up in a tantalising arc, varied his pace, bowled two different types of googlies and an effective flipper. He was accuracy personified, as was his younger spin partner in the State team, S. Venkataraghavan. Both were workhorses, wheeling away in the nets for three hours every evening. I once made the foolish mistake of charging V.V. in the nets with some success, and he made my life miserable forever afterwards by switching over to my net from wherever he was bowling in the practice complex of

half a dozen wickets. He did this day after day for a whole season, even though I was a miserable tailender, not a frontline batsman. He was really intent on testing himself against someone who seemed to master him during a solitary session of practice. It is this competitive streak that made him such a successful bowler against all the top batsmen in the country.

I witnessed another side of the V.V. Kumar persona in a practice game I played under him. When stand-in umpire C.S. Dayakar (our own teammate) negated an lbw appeal, V.V. reprimanded him sharply, and then carried on as if nothing had happened. He'd actually snapped "Idiot" at Dayakar who, made of sterner stuff, was unmoved. It was one occasion when Kumar's gamesmanship had no effect on the umpire, unlike the time he barked at a Test umpire in a local match. He caught the umpire nodding away at the crease and waking up startled by his appeal for leg before. "Told you not to stuff yourself with curd rice at lunch," V.V. admonished. "Come on V.V., mind your tongue," the umpire retorted. A couple of balls later, V.V. rapped the batsman on the pads again, but though the ball was clearly missing the leg stump, he nonchalantly turned to the umpire and asked: "How about this one, I say?" This time, up went the umpire's finger.

No batsman in domestic cricket mastered Kumar, with the solitary exception of V. Subramanyam of Karnataka who, in the course of a double century in 1967, punished VV's bowling severely. In the South

Zone, the leading lights of Hyderabad and Karnataka, like Pataudi, Jaisimha, and Vishwanath always found him a handful. He had more than 400 Ranji Trophy wickets and 599 first class scalps in all in his long career. He took part in two hard-fought Ranji Trophy finals against Bombay in 1967-68 and 1972-73, both of which Madras lost despite Kumar's splendid bowling. Despite his consistent successes, his return to Test cricket was blocked by the emergence of the unorthodox but match-winning leg spinner B.S. Chandrasekhar.

In his seventies now, Kumar is fitter than men half his age. He still enjoys bowling in the nets. For the benefit of today's cricket followers brought up on a Qadir-Warne-Kumble legacy, it is important to acknowledge VV's greatness as one of the finest exponents of the art of leg spin bowling in the history of the game.

\* Madras Province/State/Tamil Nadu.

### Answers to Quiz

1. Graphene; 2. M.S. Dhoni; 3. Jiah Khan; 4. Jim Morrison (the lizard is called Barbaturrex morrisoni); 5. Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams; 6. Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; 7. Amazon.com; 8. Bangkok; 9. Nicobar Island; 10. World Environment Day.

\* \* \*

11. Mahabalipuram; 12. John Sullivan; 13. 'Thambi'; 14. Ramakrishna Ranga Rao, Raja of Bobbili; 15. MCC School in Chetpet; 16. The Theosophical Society; 17. The first-ever Ranji Trophy match was played on that day between Madras and Mysore; 18. The Luz Church; 19. To evoke memories of Lord Ram, whom Rajaji immortalised in his English version of the *Ramayana*; 20. Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate.

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