

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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### INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- Cancer care institute
- Air terminal facilities
- Testimonials that speak
- Versatile cricketer

## Yet another Cooum clean-up!

It is just a couple of months since we reported on a detailed exercise that was planned to clean the city's river of sorrow. Even then we had apologised for expressing a sense of déjà vu, and now we are not certain as to what is to be said. But plans are afoot once more, for yet another attempt, this time with Spanish technical help. It makes you wonder as to what happened to the earlier plan and/or whether this new exercise is part of the same scheme.

The new team has done a detailed study and presented its findings at a public discussion organised by the Chennai River Restoration Trust a couple of weeks ago. It ran along the expected lines that anyone

name of resettlement they would be displaced to far away colonies, completely removed from the places where they earn their livelihood. The study is expected to be tabled before the Government in a couple of months after which work is expected to begin.

It cannot be forgotten that no project has thus far succeeded in cleaning the river. The first attempt was in the 1970s, when boating was planned on the Cooum. Some of the piers and jetties built for this can still be seen along the river. This was abandoned when there was a change of government. Since then there have been several programmes and schemes, all of which have come to nought despite crores

of rupees having been spent on so-called improvements which somehow never appeared to have had the desired result. In addition to these schemes, there have been several smaller grants for periodic desilting of the waterways. These have been for shorter stretches and their effect, on completion, has been negligible. Almost Rs. 2 crore is spent each year on these exercises.

Presently, around 30% of the city's raw sewage gets into the Cooum river. Cynics aver that this is the reason for the river having any water at all. But when you consider that around 100 million litres of sewage makes its way into the river in a year, the environmental impact is staggering. Some 340 drains connect

(Continued on page 4)

• by  
The Editor

familiar with the river restoration knows – steps needed to keep water flowing during off-season, prevention of untreated sewage from being let into the river, ensuring solid wastes are not directly disposed off into it, and resettlement of slums that exist along the river.

Those who attended the consultation trashed the study as elitist as it focussed principally on beautification, which included building of cycle tracks and parks, along with upmarket housing on space that is now occupied by shanties. Some were of the view that the study did not take into account the problems of the slum dwellers. It also skirted around the issue of wastes being let into the river by Government agencies. Among those who were present were representatives from the slums who feared that in the

of rupees having been spent on so-called improvements which somehow never appeared to have had the desired result. In addition to these schemes, there have been several smaller grants for periodic desilting of the waterways. These have been for shorter stretches and their effect, on completion, has been negligible. Almost Rs. 2 crore is spent each year on these exercises.

In 2001, a Rs. 1200 crore City River Conservation Project was sanctioned by the Central Government. Rs. 750 crore out of that was spent on building sewage treatment plants for the CMWSSB. At the end of it, raw effluents were found to be still pouring into the river. It was admitted later that the scheme had failed to take into account the needs of city's exploding population. Pre-

## T. Nagar multi-level parking lot revived, again!

The State Government has yet again resurrected the idea of having a multi-level parking lot adjacent to Panagal Park. This is perhaps the fourth or fifth time that this plan is being mooted. Each time it has been hailed as a solution for the congestion that continues to plague the surroundings and each time it has failed on just one count – no contractor has ever bid for the tender each time it has been floated. Will it be any different now?

The Corporation of Chennai has repeatedly toyed with the idea of multi-level parking facilities at several locations in the city – namely Wallace Gardens (Nungambakkam), Broadway, Flower Bazaar and Panagal Park. Of these, barring the first one, none has moved beyond the proposal stage. The sole exception, which is nearing completion, probably owes its success to the persistent push of a nearby private hospital that desperately needs this facility to decongest the surroundings.

The others have had a chequered history even on pa-



per. The Broadway lot, proposed to be constructed at the present bus terminus (which in turn is on the erstwhile Madras United Club ground), was announced four times only to have had no bids for the tender. It has even now not been given up; it has been merely put on hold thanks to the Metrorail project taking over quite a bit of space meant for the facility.

• by A Staff Reporter

The Flower Bazaar parking lot, which was meant for two-wheelers, has also remained on paper for want of takers. Given this background, what is the guarantee of success for the T. Nagar plan?

On paper at least, the idea looks good. The Rs. 25 crore facility will be on Bhashyam Road, adjacent to Panagal Park, on land that is already being used for parking vehicles. It will be on 1600 sq m of land, with space for 500 cars and 900 two-wheelers. The consulting agency had initially suggested

that the entire facility be underground, below Panagal Park, with exits on GN Chetty, Doraiswamy and Venkatanarayana Roads. But the Corporation has shied away from this, citing implementation difficulties. While this may be a tough solution to implement, it probably was the best, for it would have allowed for smooth flow of surface traffic. The idea has already been successfully executed in New Delhi's Palika Bazaar, in the heart of Connaught Circus.

The present modified plan, which calls for an over-the-ground facility, has received the State Government's approval. The Corporation hopes to call for bids and select an approved contractor in six months. The plan will take 18 to 24 months to implement. All this is provided a contractor expresses interest. Reluctance to participate in such bids mainly stems from doubts about commercial viability, possible delays in execution and the likely

(Continued on page 7)

# Path of industrialisation

After a couple of years' stint in teaching, I began my career in journalism in 1962. Through these 50 years, I have witnessed phenomenal changes in the growth of corporate entities. There has been innovative and special support by the governments at the Centre and the State level to promote enterprises and encourage entrepreneurship. Development institutions at the State level, like the Madras Industrial Investment Corporation (today, Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation), and Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI), Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) and the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) at the national level provided liberal term loans and equity support.

Days were also different with political leaders passionate about development and known for their integrity. Leaders like Rajaji, Kamaraj, C. Subramaniam and R. Venkataraman (RV) were imbued with these qualities in a rich measure. RV, who handled important portfolios of industry, labour, power and transport, aided by stalwarts in administration like T.A. Verghese, could create a new generation of entrepreneurs, persuading them to set up industrial units. Initially the focus was on the traditional sectors like textiles, sugar and engineering. Soon, effectively utilising the licensing and permit regime, these sectors expanded to a range of new industries like aluminium, cement, chemicals, fertilisers, papers, viscose yarn, watches and even shipping.

I recall RV persuading M.A. Muthiah Chettiar to set up a cement plant in Karur offering the licence and support from State financial institutions. This was also enormously helped by the Union government, also administered by the Congress. Visionaries like T.T. Krishnamachari and civil servants like S. Ranganathan

**Business notes by  
S. VISWANATHAN**  
Editor, *Industrial Economist*

extended the necessary support and advice. Tamil Nadu was quickly and effectively set on the path of industrialisation.

\* \* \*

The experience of TVS is an interesting case. Prior to 1962, TVS was largely known for its efficient bus service in Madurai and adjoining districts, for its parcel service through Southern Roadways and for retreading and rubber parts through Sundaram Industries, as also for dealerships in vehicles and components, and for insurance and financing of vehicles.

T.S. Srinivasan, the fourth son of founder T.V. Sundaram Iyengar, acquired a large tract of land in Padi in the western part of Madras. From 1962, at quick intervals Wheels India, Sundaram Clayton, Brakes India and Lucas TVS were inaugurated. These were set up in collaboration with renowned British companies.

S.N. Ramasami (SNR), Advertising Manager of the group, was a Gandhian and freedom fighter, and had deep insights into the transport industry. Clad in khadi (a four cubit *dhoti* and *kurta*), SNR provided me with a flood of information and introductions.

I referred to the ease of setting up a company. Total investment involved in setting up Wheels India Ltd., for instance, was around Rs. 2 crore. Of this, Rs. 1.50 crore was accessed from the financial institutions. The promoters – the foreign and Indian counterparts – pitched in around Rs. 25 lakh each. There was no hassle and procedural issues like publicising a prospectus, incurring huge expenditure on promoting it to the public, getting numerous clearances, etc.

A similar process was involved in setting up any unit, be it related to textiles, sugar or other products. In several cases, if the Central FIs' funding was not sufficient, State corporations and banks pitched in.

Of course, those were different times from the present, with limited disclosures and information made available to the public. Most industrial units were closely held by the promoter families. Excepting the inauguration of a plant or such other important landmark event, there was little occasion to access information. Very few companies had public relations officers. Since the size of the media was small, for most press conferences addressed by business leaders, the number of reporters was just a handful.

I cite an instance. Tube Investments of India Ltd. was then active in the production of steel tubes, bicycles, bicycle components and metal sections. The company had appointed Markand Desai, who earlier lived in London, as its PRO. Desai liked to move

(Continued on page 3)

# Exasperation at Egmore

**T**he Man from Madras Musings can hear you all groan "Oh, no, not another Egmore story." But let MMM assure you that once you have read it your knotted and combined locks will part and stand on end like quills on a fretful porpoise, as the Bard said. That by the way is something that will never happen to MMM, for what with working for the Chief on a permanent basis, he (meaning MMM and not the Chief) is challenged in the matter of hair.

But to get back to Egmore. The other day MMM had to go to the station, this time not as a passenger but to meet someone who was arriving. The person to be met needed assistance in walking and that made MMM's alabaster brow furrowed. There are overbridges to negotiate and the platforms

wheelchair would be sent as soon as the previous hirer had returned it. And how long would that take, asked MMM. The voice had no answer. After some hesitation it replied that the entire station had one solitary wheelchair and it was anybody's guess as to when it would be returned to the booking office. There were, added the voice most helpfully, ten trains arriving in that one hour and so the wheelchair was in great demand. It could not have been more sought after had it been a minister's chair.

By that time the platform was pretty much deserted, barring MMM, the elderly passenger and a pile of luggage. The phone rang. It was the voice again. A wave of hope surged in MMM. Could the wheelchair have been returned, after all? But that was

the number of traffic lights that are on the blink. There is one near where MMM lives which for over four months has literally been blinking. The ailment began with the various lights blinking rapidly all the time. Then they began to flicker at the edges. Someone then attended to them after which they ceased blinking together but blinked in proper sequence.

A few days later, it was noticed by those who look at traffic lights at all (and yes, that foolish fraternity, though dwindling, does have some members) that the lights had reduced in diameter though that did not in any way interfere with the blinking. Now, all of the three have become mere dots. You need to have the eyes of an eagle to be able to spot whether the lights have

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

are long, uneven and often dirty.

And so it was a pensive MMM who crossed the stately portals of Egmore station. He did not pause to admire the stained glass (once multi-coloured but now stained a permanent betelnut red) or the corbels or the staircase, all of which, had MMM been differently situated, he would have spent time on. He was, after all, there with a purpose. MMM went straight to the office where, he was told, he needed to book a wheelchair. It was one of those places that could have passed for a morgue, for it appeared at first sight to be filled with winding sheets. The wheelchair booking office, it transpired, also doubled as the laundry collection area. The staff was friendly enough and MMM was assured that all he needed to do was to give a call on the wheelchair-in-charge's cell phone as soon as MMM's friend had alighted from his train. The wheelchair, MMM was given to understand, would be there in a jiffy.

And so off went MMM to the assigned platform. A load had been lifted from his head. He could not help contrasting it with his younger days when elderly relatives had to suffer the indignity of being transported in baggage trolleys, pushed by cursing porters. The train arrived. The person whom MMM had come to meet duly alighted and staggered off to a nearby bench. MMM made his call. The voice at the other end said that the wheelchair would soon be on its way. A stage wait occurred. MMM made a second call. He was informed that the

not the case. The wheelchair would take quite a while, said the Voice of God, but MMM could avail of the next best thing. The voice said that it had organised for a porter to bring a luggage trolley in which the passenger could be moved. It had, said the voice, the added advantage that the bags could also be loaded on to it. And then having added smartly that MMM could settle directly with the porter, the voice went off, no doubt to spend the rest of the day folding bed sheets.

In the distance MMM could see a porter wheeling a baggage trolley. He was weaving his way uncertainly towards MMM having, no doubt, spent a considerable portion of his antepandial earnings on an aperitif or two. His vocabulary was rich judging by the way he addressed a stray dog that happened to cross his path. MMM looked at the elderly relative, who just had a resigned air. There is little further to be said, other than the fact that the journey was by trolley, pushed by a cursing porter.

## Chennai's traffic laws

**W**e Chennaiites are different. The rest of the world may go by the nursery rhyme that went 'Stop says the red light, go says the green. Change says the amber light twinkling in-between'. There is also something else about queens obeying it and all that which *The Man from Madras Musings* has forgotten. Not that any of it is relevant in Chennai where it is 'Run says the red light, go says the green. Keep going says the amber light twinkling in between', and twinkling is just about right given

turned red, amber or green. Not that it matters to those on the road anyway.

Most of these road-hogging monsters, it appears to MMM, are those who think that the horn is the only component in a car that needs to work. And perhaps that is the only one that they know how to operate anyway. They use it to clear their route of other vehicles, pedestrians and stray animals. Above all, they somehow believe that the louder they hoot at a traffic light, the faster it is likely to change from red to green, assuming that these people are the variety that stops at traffic lights.

## Onward, ever onward

**T**here is yet another variety of road-users, as *The Man from Madras Musings* notices, that never really stops its vehicle. They merely slow down and all the while they keep looking for any gaps that they can perceive in the ranks in front of them. Having identified it, they proceed to nose their way there, often using their horns to good effect (that does remind you of what buffaloes and bison do, does it not?). Having reached the front of the waiting vehicles, they begin inching forward, keeping a wary eye for any vehicles coming at right angles, for the signal is green for them. By relentlessly keeping at it, they reach the other side, long before the signal actually turns green. Makes you green with envy especially when you are left waiting.

– MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE



### Unintelligible names

Further to my note (MM, June 16th) on the Duke of Wellington, I wish to commend the excellent sense of intuition of your special correspondent, in the light of some fresh information I have stumbled upon. His intuitive guess that the Duke's Indian military experience might have wrested his Waterloo honours is certainly not mistaken.

According to a modern day historian, John Keay (2000), the Duke always regarded his Maratha encounter a stiffer contest than his victory at Waterloo where he lost 15,000 of his men while the French lost 40,000. The Battle at Assaye (Ahmednagar) which the future Duke fought against the Scindia is said to be the fiercest campaign that Arthur Wellesley, ever waged. Wellesley, commanding his Madras troops

consisting of 5,000 Infantry and 2,000 Cavalry (which included 1,300 Europeans), vanquished the Marathas consisting of 42,000 soldiers at the Battle of Assaye. The insignia of Assaye Elephant that was awarded, later replaced the Royal Crown in the Madras Regimental Crest. After the departure of English troops (garrisoned here since 1853), the Madras Regiment came to be cantoned at Wellington from February 1947.

The proposal to name this Military establishment after the Duke of Wellington (d.1852) was first made by the then Commander-in-Chief, Sir Richard Armstrong. This was because the Duke had always advocated establishing a health resort in these hills for the English battalions in India. But this proposal was vetoed by the then Governor Sir Henry Pottinger who held that "the name would be unintelligible to the natives". A future Governor Sir Charles Trevelyan, however, okayed it in 1860. A bridge connecting the cantonment to Ooty road was originally known as Waterloo Bridge, which subsequently came to be called Black Bridge after iron girders replaced the original wooden construction. Now a broadened bridge has been re-christened as Manekshaw Bridge. These new names had to be provided because the local name for the ford across the watercourse on the road happened to be "unintelligible" to the Europeans and their successors!

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### 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

# Air terminals

Much has been said and written about the new domestic terminal at the airport (unfortunately mostly negative) with the latest to join the chorus being MM (June 16th). Most of the comments pertain to the functioning of the terminal as such – glass panes breaking, poor maintenance, stinking toilets, steep ramp not suitable for baggage, etc.

A key issue that has been overlooked is whether this is how a terminal should be. After spending two thousand crores, one would expect a terminal with all features and facilities that are required for comfortable arrival and departure by air passengers and also the people who come to receive and send them off. Sadly that is not the case.

The concept of an Arrival Hall does not seem to exist in India. Consequently we see people including drivers standing and waiting behind the railing just outside the arrival area to meet incoming passengers. Chairs have not been provided. Consequently some people simply sit on the raised edge that protects the plants. (Bangalore Airport has several steel chairs outside the terminal.) One needs to go no further than Colombo (just an hour's flight away) to get an idea of an Arrival Hall. Colombo Airport has a huge, gargantuan Arrival Hall which is probably 200 feet X 150 feet X 150 feet. Yes, that's right, the height of the hall is the same as the width. There are only a few hundred chairs.

Does the new terminal have a telephone (STD) facility? If yes, it is certainly hidden from view. You will not believe the number of people who require a phone upon arrival (mobile ran out of charge, etc.). Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad have a phone facility. Once, in Delhi there was a queue of ten people waiting in line to use the public phone.

Emergence from the Hyderabad airport and you will be greeted by eateries, shops, etc. Go down one level and you will encounter the ubiquitous McDonald's. Come out of the Madras airport and what greets you? Nothing! Yes, that's right! Nothing other than the drivers holding placards with the name of the passenger. How long do these poor fellows usually have to wait, I wonder. Cannot something be done for them? At least provide a TV fixed high on the wall. There is supposed to be a Snack Bar in the arrival area but I am yet to find it. If it does exist it is hidden from view; the signage is certainly poor. It can be argued that the Hyderabad and Bangalore airports being greenfield constructions, facilities such as restaurants, shops, etc. were included in the design and executed. However, with a little imagination and planning, these much-needed

facilities could have been incorporated into the new terminal, topography notwithstanding. The best joke is that any new facility is described as world-class!

The new terminal does not have art work unlike the new Delhi air terminal. Art in the form of paintings, sculptures, etc. enhances the beauty of the terminal. One gets a feeling that the new terminal is drab, dull and lifeless. It does look modern, though, and also attractive when viewed from a distance.

What can be more quintessential than the traditional South Indian filter coffee? Imagine being greeted by the sound of 'sooda kaapi' upon arrival. Imagine a mobile counter (or fixed, it really does not matter) moving around the four baggage carousels dispensing hot coffee. What a hit it will be! Needless to say the coffee must be of the highest quality. Reputed restaurants such as the one named after the six-headed God (to plagiarize MMM) should be considered. If at all there is a debate on this issue, it will likely be the number of cups that can be sold daily – 500, 1,000, 1,500 and so on. It requires a lot of imagination and out-of-the-box thinking to create something novel, new and innovative which at the same time is beneficial. Traditional governmental thinking will not suffice (which the new terminal is perhaps the result of). (This letter focusses on the arrival portion of the new terminal since I have not yet used the new departure portion.)

No article on airports and airlines (in newspapers) is complete without a quote from the president of the Air Passengers' Association. Interestingly it is the same person who gets quoted again and again making one wonder whether he is the life-time president. What has this association done for air passengers? The answer is perhaps a closely-guarded secret. Does this association participate in meetings concerning air travel? Are the office bearers on the various committees constituted by the government? Does this organisation influence the planning/decision-making process? Did it provide any inputs into the design of the new domestic terminal? Does this association have a website? Sadly one does not get a sense that this association serves the needs or protects the interests of air passengers. When the government allowed airlines to unbundle services thereby enabling them to charge for seats, etc., this association should have been in the forefront to oppose such measures.

B. Gautham

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# PATH OF INDUSTRIALISATION

(Continued from page 2)

around in his three-piece suit, sporting a pipe which he used to light for special effects!

In my publication, *Mobile*, I presented the production figures of TI Cycles and Standard Motor Products of India. Desai called me and asked for the source of my information. I assured him that I did not get the information from the company's top brass, but from a report of the Department of Industry of the State Government. The report furnished the information in a very simple format.

The next year, Desai promptly got in touch with me around June to know the production figures for the previous year! Clearly those were days

not known for disclosures of such information. With limited competition, companies provided minimum information. Of course, for the media these have to be only positive!

\* \* \*

During the Janata Party Government (1977-79), George Fernandes, as Minister of Industry, decreed that the foreign equity holding in companies should be limited to 40 per cent of the total capital. After some initial resistance, foreign companies, with the exception of IBM and Coca Cola, fell in line. V. Krishnamurthy, Industries Secretary, who had headed BHEL earlier, introduced to the public sector the culture of greater information sharing.

Fernandes insisted that large companies mobilising capital should offer a portion to the public. Of course, the size of the offer was small, of just a few lakhs of rupees and could easily have been provided by the promoters.

In the South, Amalgamations Ltd., whose shares are almost fully owned by the promoter family, came out with a public issue for a small portion of equity for Amalgamations Repco Ltd. Of course, it was quickly oversubscribed.

Likewise, when the TVS group promoted Sundaram Abex Ltd. (now Sundaram Brake Linings Ltd), it was for a small issue. Chairman T.S. Srinivasan announced the offer at the Taj Coromandel to a

small group of media persons. I sought information on the new technology that would come from yet another new collaboration (there were already two other large manufacturers of brake linings – Hindustan Ferrodo and Bramec Suri). S. Narayanan, heading Madras Auto Service and a grandson of T.V. Sundaram Iyengar, pulled me back. I heard some murmurs later that that was why they shouldn't go public!

Of course, the capital sought to be raised was too small for the group and could easily have been provided by the promoter companies.

Things changed after 1991 when the economy was liberalised, The protection offered through permits, licences and

quotas was withdrawn. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was set up as the regulator. In quick time, SEBI formulated guidelines for corporate behaviour. Companies were directed to be more transparent and to disclose information over wider arena.

Today, several Indian corporates adopt the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The public is thus provided much vaster range of information than earlier. Surely, it is a Hanuman jump from the time the PRO of a company looked for production figures from a news magazine. – (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)

# Always first with the latest equipment



● 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. This issue features the final part.

The Cancer Institute has been the first to buy the latest equipment related to diagnosis and treatment of cancer because of its ability to take quick decisions and the help from supportive corporate and individual donors who are willing to help, whatever may be the cost. The Institute was the first to introduce the super voltage era in Asia with the installation of the Cobalt Therapy unit in 1956, to instal an indigenously built Caesium Tele Cure Therapy unit in 1962, to have indigenously designed Therapy Simulator in 1968, and also to introduce Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in 1978. At present, it is the only place where the facility is available. In the same year, it also introduced the first blood compound unit, using the blood cell separator in the supportive treatment of high dose chemo-

therapy and Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy. It also installed the first Intra-operative Radio Therapy (IORT) and Brachy Therapy (CITRON) between 1995 and 1998, and the Clinac 2300 (a), the first conformational therapy unit in 1999, and the Rapid Arc Accelerator in 2009. The state-of-the-art Accelerator for Radio Therapy, costing Rs.12 crore – with a grant of Rs.6 crore from Government of India – was also inaugurated by the Chief Minister as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The hospital has also been very fortunate to have Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a top IT company in the country, providing it a state-of-the-art Hospital Management System 'MED Mantra', and maintaining it totally free. Operational since

2010, MED Mantra has helped the Institute automate all administrative, clinical and nursing, patient admission and transfer and all imaging functions. All the information about a patient is securely stored and is accessible to an authorised doctor at the click of a mouse. This information system, unique to the Institute, enhances the quality of care for all patients besides providing easy access to data for research. I had the opportunity to see the system in operation when my wife was admitted for treatment at the Institute. Whether it was the specialist medical oncologist or the duty doctor, he or she got complete details of the diagnosis and progress of the treatment at the click of a button, which ensured that every doctor attending on my wife was fully aware of her case.

Speaking of the philosophy of the hospital, Dr. Shantha said, "The Institute believes in offering the same kind of care to both paying and non-paying patients. Patient care is foremost. Returns

are secondary. If the Institute can save a patient with its expertise, it will do so. It will never turn him back because he cannot afford the treatment. Affordable and equitable treatment for all is the mantra at the Cancer Institute."

When I asked her, "After Dr. Shantha, who?" she smiled and said, "The current Director of the Institute, Dr. T. G. Sagar, who himself has been with the Institute for over 40 years, and his team of dedicated doctors, I am sure, will carry on the vision of the founder in the years to come."

As regards the ability of the Institute to continue to provide free service to the poor people, she was happy to report that apart from major donors from across the world, who continue to help the Institute, in recent times both the State and Central Governments have come forward to provide financial grants to the Institute.

The Institute has also been able to get all the cancer related drugs at very special rates from the manufacturers without taxes and VATs. This helps the Institute to offer drugs free or at highly subsidised rates to patients.

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"The cancer institute will be celebrating its Diamond Jubilee next year (2014). At the same time, I will be also completing my association with the hospital for 60 years," said Dr. Shantha with a sense of pride and fulfilment in her eyes. The year-long celebrations include conducting Medical Education Seminars and Major Medical Meetings throughout Tamil Nadu. I came back from the interview with the confidence that the Institute will continue to make new strides in Cancer care, with the team of dedicated doctors and support staff it rightly and truly boasts of.

(Concluded)

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

## Cooum clean-up!

(Continued from page 1)

from CMWSSB manholes directly into the river.

The Union Government had in 2009 sanctioned Rs. 360 crore for the cleaning-up of Chennai's waterways. This was based on an estimation submitted by the city's Corporation for which funds have been allotted out of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The estimate was based on a study by consultants

who recommended desilting of North Chennai's waterways in particular, constructing micro-and macro-drains, and building concrete walls. The sanction was hailed as a major victory for the State by the powers that be. What of that scheme now and what is its fate?

Leaving that aside, the present scheme, like most of its predecessors, chooses to avoid the question of the slums along the river. What can such a solution that ignores ground realities achieve?

# A gold chain from the Prince of Wales



● This is the final 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 care-

fully 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

MADRAS POLICE,  
13th November 1870.

MY DEAR MR. RAMACHENDRA ROW,

I can't leave Madras without writing to thank you for the cordial aid and assistance you have so willingly given me since I came here as Commissioner. Your enquiries into cases have been conducted in a manner so complete and full as to leave no room for doubt. I trust on my return to the Town, I may find you in equally full vigour.

Your's truly,  
W. S. DREVER.

MY DEAR RAMACHENDRA ROW,

I return that deeply interesting paper with many thanks. The case\* was fully detected ere it passed from your hands.  
\* Great note Forgery case.

4-7-75.

Your's very truly,  
W. ROBINSON.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
MADRAS POLICE, 4th December 1874.

MY DEAR RAMACHENDRA ROW,

I cannot leave the office where I have been acting for the last 3 months without putting in writing how much I am obliged to you for your assistance while I have been here. You have been always most ready to help me in any way I asked you, and with regard to the three particular cases that I gave over to you, I don't know what I should have done without your assistance. The 1st case was the Dindigul Robbery Case where you traced the Rupees 10 (note) to the hands of the Shroff

in the Deputy Collector's Treasury in Madras; of course where we are met as you were there by dishonest Government servants, our hands are sadly tied, but I think you deserve credit for having exposed what is going on in that office. Then came the case of General Pater's kept woman and the missing Bond which you so keenly and ably traced out. I consider that was a most difficult and intricate case and fully tested your ability in that line.

I do not think that there is any one else in Madras, certainly not in the Police who could have exposed the history of that Bond in the way you did. Then came our friend from Acheen; a delicate affair which you managed very well and got an information for me which enabled me to warn the authorities of Malabar of who was coming. In all these cases you did right well, and I have much to thank you for I do not know whether I shall ever return to Madras, but if not, and I want any difficult case traced here, I shall know who to apply to, and I am sure I may depend upon your assistance.

Wishing you well in all ways.

Believe me,  
Your's truly,  
W. O. SWANSTON.

17th January 1875.

DEAR SIR,

I perused the enclosed papers with much interest. The Note No. 4458 for Rupees 2,200 appears to have been entered in the Administrator-General's Office under date 15th August 1850, but there is a similar entry of the same date in the office of the Registrar, High Court, and it was in this latter capacity that Mr. Searle appears to have held the note title deeds in trust; how was this? did Mr. Searle hold both offices? The history of the note has been traced by you with great skill.

Your's truly,  
C. S. HEARN.

MADRAS, 20th January.

DEAR SIR,

I return the enclosed papers with thanks—as for the Bank Note Forgery, it is evident that you hit off the clues in the second part of the case (after the occurrence of Triputty) and that you had already placed it in a forward state of detection when it was handed over to a special officer.

Your's sincerely,  
C. S. HEARN.

Extract of a letter from Major T. E. Tennant, Acting Commissioner of Police, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 21st October 1872, No. 75.

I have the honor to submit the report and accounts of the Triplike Lungarkhana for the official year ending 31st March 1872.

Para. 10. The management of the institution was conducted by Mr. Ramachendra Row, Deputy Commissioner of Police, who has had continuous charge of the Poor house for the last 11 years, and by whose careful administration the funds of the charity have been economized.

No. 81.  
ORDER THEREON, 28th October 1872, No. 1204.

Para. 2. The Commissioner of Police will convey the thanks of Government to Ramachendra Row for his services in the administration of this useful charitable institution.

J. STURROCK,  
Acting Under Secretary to Government.

Extract from Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department, 27th April 1874, No. 189.

Adverting to the monthly saving of Rupees 50 effected by the changes recently ordered in the office of the Commissioner of Police, Madras, the Governor in Council resolves, as soon as those changes are actually carried out, to appropriate the said saving as a personal allowance to T. Ramachendra Rao, Deputy Commissioner, who with a total service under Government of 32 years, has filled his present important post with very great satisfaction to successive Commissioners, since the 20th June 1858.

D. F. GARMICHAEL,  
Acting Chief Secretary.

14th December 1875.

DEAR MR. RAMACHENDRA ROW,

The Duke of Buckingham desires me to say that if you can bring any men who can shew some really good acrobatic feats when you bring the snake charmers. The Prince of Wales would like to see them.

Let me know if you can do so. When are the snake charmers ordered to come.

I remain, your's truly,  
BERTIE HOBART,  
(Military Secretary to the Governor).

14th December 1875.

MR. RAMACHENDRA ROW,

I shall be very much obliged to you if you can make it convenient

to be here at half past 9 o'clock this morning to afford some information to the Duke of Sutherland and Dr. Russell, who belong to the Prince of Wales' party. If you cannot come, please let me know.

I remain, your's faithfully,  
BERTIE HOBART,  
(Military Secretary to the Governor).

14th December 1875.

MR. RAMACHENDRA ROW,

His Royal Highness will see the Jugglers here at Madras at 10 A. M. on Thursday.

G. B. HADAWAY,  
A. D. C. to the Governor.

MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
MADRAS, 6th December 1875.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been unable to reply to your note till now. Your idea of having a rehearsal is very good; as the south platform of the Terminus is now clear, it would be well to have the performance there—your own Sub-Committee had better appoint a master of the ceremonies. I think you ought to perform that most responsible duty. Would you be good enough to arrange for having the people ready on Thursday evening at 6 o'clock?

Your's truly,  
L. R. BURROWS,  
Acting Municipal President.

18th December 1875.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am desired to say that H. R. H. The Prince of Wales wishes to see you at Government House immediately.

Your's faithfully,  
J. MICHAEL.

TO RAMACHENDRA ROW, Esq.

It is on this occasion His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was pleased to present a gold Albert Chain as a Souvenir with his own hand to T. Ramachendra Row in token of H. R. H. regard for services rendered, H. R. H.

H. R. H. THE PRINCE OF WALES' CAMP,  
NEPAUL TERAI, February 20th, 1876.

DEAR SIR,

I am very much obliged to you for your kind attention to my wishes and it will afford me much pleasure if I am able to do anything for you in return. Pray command me. Your letter was a long time in coming to me, and I hope this will not be so tardy in conveying to you my acknowledgments.

I mention the matter you asked me to bring to Lord Carington's notice to His Lordship. He assured me he had only received your letters a few days before, and would at once write to you; no doubt you will have heard from him before this note reaches you.

If no other result follows, and I think there will be many others, some of great importance, the visit of the Prince of Wales will at least cause Indian questions and the interests of the people of India to be considered with greater care and regarded with deeper interest. Pray let me hear from you.

Believe me,  
Your's truly,  
W. H. RUSSELL.

(Concluded)

## OUR ADDRESSES

For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: CHENNAI HERITAGE, 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 14.

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– The Editor

## CHENNAI HERITAGE

No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road,  
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(Current Affairs questions are from the period June 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Which eminent business group launched Indicash, the country's first-ever network of white label ATMs, on June 27th?
2. Who won the man-of-the-match award in the final as well as the Golden Ball in the ICC Champions Trophy won by India?
3. According to a survey conducted by UNCTAD, India was the third most attractive destination for investment in the world. Name the top two.
4. Who has again become Prime Minister of Australia after a gap of three years?
5. Which Indian properties have been added to UNESCO's World Heritage Sites list this year under the Cultural category?
6. What type of creature is 'Ammu', the mascot for the 35th National Games to be held later in the year in Kerala?
7. With an objective to help simplify the web for Indian users, which online giant recently launched a campaign called 'Start Searching India'?
8. Which eminent Indian origin sculptor has been honoured with a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II in her birthday honours list, for services to Visual Arts?
9. The lawmakers of which central American nation have granted rights to an Asian company to build a \$40-billion shipping canal to rival the Panama Canal?
10. What was Operation Rahat that made news recently?
11. Name the Tamilian who has been appointed the next Chief Justice of India.
12. Name the three MPs from the State who were re-elected to the Rajya Sabha recently.
13. Name the trophy given to the second division champion in the TNCA league.
14. Vaduvor K. Duraiswamy Iyengar's work *Bhaskara Vilas Puraanam* was an adaptation of which famous Sherlock Holmes story?
15. Expand the initials in the name of the popular yesteryear actor T.R. Mahalingam.
16. The city's corporation before moving into Ripon Buildings was housed on which street?
17. Which respected medical institution in Chennai gets its name from a Portuguese queen from the 13-14th Centuries?
18. Where in the State is the post-independence avatar of the Army Staff College that was first established in Deolali in 1905?
19. Between which two places was the first railway line in the South laid with the first sod cut in 1853?
20. What now stands where the 'Pleasant', the Rane Group's hotel, once stood?

(Answers on page 8)

# Down memory lane

Sitting with my husband, enjoying coffee and the morning newspaper in the porch of my son and daughter-in-law's home in Adyar, the mornings give us time to go down memory lane. My life and Adyar have seen so many changes and I am proud to say that I was part of them. Changes are inevitable and good in many ways, as we keep up with the fast growing world, but old still continues to be gold. The years have gone by and we continue to live in Adyar, now as a retired, older couple, full of memories, memories and memories.

Living in Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, in the early 1950s was very different. We were one big happy family, where everyone knew everyone else in the colony. It was then that the Gandhi Nagar Club was formed

by a few enthusiasts. The first programme, a Carnatic music concert by the Soolamangalam Sisters, was held in the open air, outside a small shed which was the Club House. This little shed stood in the same place where the majestic Gandhi Nagar Club now stands.

The Gandhi Nagar Ladies' Club was started a little later and my mother, Daisy Boaz, was made the Entertainment Secretary, as she was talented and gifted in presenting simple social plays in Tamil. For Christmas, she put on Nativity plays. A memorable grand finale of one such play was an Angel Dance around the crib and the baby Jesus in it. This role was performed by a small, sweet-looking boy in an Angel's costume.

The boy was P.N. Kumar, grandson of of the famous

Tamil scholar P.N. Appuswamy, who lived on 2nd Main Road, where Grand Sweets now operates. Little Kumar's dance as an angel in white dress and wings was so mesmerising, giving us a heavenly feeling, that it continues to be fresh in my mind even to this day. Kumar was also the one who acted as the young Lord Muruga in Gemini's movie *Avvaiyar*. He is the one who asks K.B. Sundarambal, who acted as Avvaiyar, if she wants "*Sutta palzhama, sudaatha palzhama?*"

The Gandhi Nagar Ladies' Club, in one of its fundraising events, invited actor Chandra Babu to open the sale. Even though he was at the height of his fame then, he gladly agreed and his presence drew a big crowd. I was one of those who actively participated in that event, and it was exciting to see a movie star close and in person.

My father, Dr. G.D. Boaz, was the first correspondent of the Gandhi Nagar School, started by some of the residents of Gandhi Nagar. Interviews for the appointment of a Headmaster for the school took place in our house, and I remember a number of people calling in with

• by  
**Bharati Paul**

big files in their hands. Later, the school was handed over to another management and it became the Raja Muthiah School. More and more people moved to Gandhi Nagar as the houses got completed.

St. Patrick's School, which was already there and run by the Patrician Brothers, started a very small private section with only a few classes inside their campus, called St. Michael's School, with Miss Mitchell as the head. My son who still lives in Adyar was one of the very first students of that small school. It has now expanded into a big building on the other side of their compound and has grown to become St. Michael's Academy.

The very first big bakery to come to Adyar on the main road was McRennett's, later named Adyar Bakery. Most of the residents of Adyar were regulars at this bakery, where would always bump into someone whom we knew. It was such a popular place. The reason behind the friendliness of the bakery was Venu, who was in charge of it. He welcomed everyone with a smiling face and made sure all customers were taken care of in a special way. That was customer service!

One of the most popular items of the bakery was 'Bun Butter Jam'. It was a simple bakery bun, sliced and spread with butter and jam. But it was a delicacy and extremely popular. There was no youngster in Adyar who was not fond of it. With Adyar growing, Venu's son started his own shop in Shastri Nagar and named it Venson after his father. Venson still continues to flourish in Shastri Nagar today.

There is an interesting story behind Hotel Runs, also on the main road. In the same place where it is now, many different shops opened but, for some reason or the other, none of them survived and they all eventually closed down. Finally, an enterprising person decided to open a hotel with a name that made sure it was going to run: Hotel Runs still continues to run!

When my father was getting our house built at No.5, First Crescent Park Road, Gandhi Nagar, facing the Adyar river, the *maistry* who was in charge of overseeing the construction was Ganapathy. I still vividly remember going with Father to see our house coming up and to see Ganapathy. He was a tall man who always wore a white veshti and shirt, and he would patiently listen to Father giving him a million instructions about the construction. Ganapathy was a hard and sincere worker. He later bought a property on Lattice Bridge Road, where he built a theatre named Ganapathy Ram. When the theatre opened, I excitedly took my children to see the place and showed them the achievement and results of a simple, hard working man.

In the early 1960s, C.N. Annadurai and a young Karunanidhi frequently visited actor K.R. Ramaswamy, who was a resident of Gandhi Nagar 4th Main Road. They were good friends and could be seen playing cards. My brother Rasi Boaz, whose friends were Ramaswamy's sons, vividly remembers seeing them when going to play at his friend's house in the evenings.

Movie scenes filmed in Gandhi Nagar always brought excitement to our life, especially down the road we lived in. All of us know that the superstar Rajinikanth's first picture was *Apoorva Ragangal*. His first shot in the film was taken at the last house of 1st Crescent Park Road, Gandhi Nagar, adjacent to St. Patrick's School. The scene in the movie was Rajinikanth standing at the gate of that house, wanting to see his wife Sri Vidhya. Little did we know then that this unknown actor would later become world famous in the cine field.

## The founder of South Madras

In the middle of 1940s, when Rao Bahadur J.C. Ryan was Registrar of Co-operative Societies, South Madras was a God-forsaken village. There were only the *Raj Bhavan* and the College of Engineering surrounded by bullock-cart roads.

On holidays, Ryan and his three sons used to hide behind the trees and bushes on the Adyar river-bed early in the morning to shoot rabbit and other animals that had strayed out of *Raj Bhavan*. It was on one such occasion that it occurred to him that a co-operative housing colony could be built on the vast acreage of neglected land on the riverside. He purchased the land from the Most Rev. Louis Mathias, the then Archbishop of Madras, for Rs.14.5 lakh, and it was there that Gandhi Nagar and Kasthurba Nagar came up.

Four types of houses were built by the co-operative society in Gandhi Nagar and given to its members on a 20-year instalment basis while Kasthurba Nagar was sold as plots with all infrastructure provided as a site and service project.

Out of the 'Common Good Fund' set aside by the Society and money advanced by the State Co-operative Bank, the board of management then purchased about 100 acres on the new East Coast Road near Mahabalipuram and sold them as one or two-ground plots to the public.

Thanks to the foresight of J.C. Ryan, South Madras has been and is spreading and you can say it is the best area in the city.

In April 1947, Ryan had registered the Katpadi Co-operative Township Society Ltd and acquired 411.30 acres and allotted 1240 plots to the public. Katpadi is now a flourishing town.

Thereafter he built houses and also sold 50,000 plots in the then Madras Presidency. Thousands of people live in houses in these plots today. The Vedachella Nagar in Chengalpattu, Crawford Colony and Thillai Nagar in Trichy came up due to his initiative.

He also helped build the Nirmala Co-operative Housing Society (Colony) in Bangalore, the Yemmiganoor Weavers' Co-operative Housing Colony now in Andhra Pradesh and introduced the concept of co-operative housing colonies in many Third World countries where he served as adviser to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

Inspired by the work of J.C. Ryan, his son Felix Ryan promoted a co-operative housing colony for about a hundred families in the Ullagaram Village behind St. Thomas' Mount railway station for use by his staff when he was a Director in the Ministry of Industry, Government of India, stationed at Guindy. The colony, which is called SISI Colony, is now a landmark in South Madras.

— Bernard Ryan

Madras Week, which started off as Madras Day nine years ago to celebrate the founding of the city on August 22, 1639, has become Madras Fortnight, if not Madras Month. For the small band of volunteers who began this concept and now help coordinate the programmes, the response from corporates and public citizens of the city has given enormous satisfaction.

This year, the hotels of the city will, as usual, be enthusiastic participants. Some are venues for talks while others are hosting 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.

The Chennai Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is also planning several competitive programmes for schools, such as quizzes, elocution contests and debates with Madras as the focus. *Mylapore Times* too is organising a wide range of events for Madras Week. These include walks, quiz contests and other programmes. As has been the practice in past years, Chennai Heritage, publishers of *Madras Musings*, will be hosting talks at various locations on subjects related to the city. Plenty of heritage walks are also being organised this year. Rotary Clubs are also having several programmes. Further details will soon be available at the site [www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in)

Participation is purely a voluntary effort by those wanting to organise programmes during the Week. The role of the informal group of co-coordinators is only to encourage such participation, try to organise publicity for the events, offer advice and, where possible, arrange venues. For any assistance or information please contact [editor@madrasmusings.com](mailto:editor@madrasmusings.com).

\* \* \*

# Draw up your plans for Madras Week

Nizhal celebrates Madras Week this August with tree walks in English and Tamil. The walks will last for about an hour. Rediscover the verdant parks and magnificent trees in your neighborhood with friends and family! The Azhinji at Kotturpuram Tree Park, the Thaandri at Semmozhi Poonga, the Putranjiva at Panagal Park and many more such gems!

Date	Venue	Timings/Language
August 16th (Friday)	Kotturpuram Tree Park	5.00 pm (Tamil)
August 17th (Saturday)	Nageswara Rao Park, Luz Church Road	4.30 pm (English)
August 18th (Sunday)	Anna Nagar Tower Park	4.30 pm (English)
August 23rd (Friday)	Panagal Park, T Nagar	5.00 pm (English)
August 24th (Saturday)	Semmozhi Poonga, Cathedral Road	4.30 pm (English)
August 25th (Sunday)	Namangalam Forest Park	8.00 pm (English)
August 25th (Sunday)	Sivan Park, K.K.Nagar	4.30 pm (English)

As a part of Madras Week celebrations, a "Special Musical Tree Walk" will be held in Kalakshetra on Sunday, 18th August, at 8 am. The walk will be led by the Nizhal team (Latha Nathan and Dr. Babu), and Carnatic musician Dr. Sowmya along with her disciples.

Meeting and assembly point will be the Kalakshetra Road entrance to the campus.

Registration for all the Walks

By phone, please call: Usha at 97910 29568 between 10 am and 6 pm. Online through [www.facebook.com/Nizhal.shade](http://www.facebook.com/Nizhal.shade)

\* \* \*

Sunday August 18th, 9.30 a.m.	-	The South India Heritage Programme, Tag Centre, Chennai. Y.G. Mahendran and A.R. Srinivasan will do a dialogue-presentation on Tamil theatre – history and landmarks. (Note: private gathering. Only for members).
Tuesday August 6th	-	Rotary Clubs of Madras South, Madras North, Madras West, Madras East: Ms Nina John on <i>Women of Chennai: Where are they now? Where are they going?</i> 6.30 p.m. Hotel Savera. (Note: only for Rotarians).
Tuesday August 27th	-	Rotary Club of Madras South: K. Hariharan, film-maker and director of the L.V. Prasad Academy on Chennai, Chennaiites and Cinema. 6.30 p.m. Hotel Savera (Note: only for Rotarians).

\* \* \*

As has been the practice for a few years now, as part of the Madras Week celebrations, the Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS) will organise a Nature Walk for the public at Pallikaranai Marsh on Sunday, 25th August. The details are as under:

Group size: 30

Reporting time: 6.15 a.m.

Reporting place: Forest Dept. Office on Velachery-Thoraipakkam Road

(When coming from Velachery, take the service road along the 2nd Flyover on the Velachery-Tambaram Road and turn left at the junction under the Flyover onto the Velachery-Thoraipakkam Road, travel around 300 metres. and take the U-turn after the Toll Plaza sign and the Office is on the left immediately after the turn. When coming from OMR, the Office is 200 metres after the Toll Plaza).

\* \* \*

Sunday, 11th August 7.30-8 a.m. Walk. Waves of conversion! *Tiruvanmiyur in 7-8th Century: A landmark on the Vadagu Peruvazhi* (as the ECR was known in Chola times), Tiruvanmiyur. Marundeeswarar Temple is a great place in Madras to understand the work of the Shaivaite saints in

reconverting Tamilians in the Chola times to Hinduism from Jainism and Buddhism. The 30-minute walk will explore the sadly modernised temple and help understand how religion and politics mingled for mutual benefit in the 6-9th Centuries. Using the hymns on the temple, we will recreate how Tiruvanmiyur looked in those times and how the conversion techniques the saints used can teach the modern management expert a thing or two about achieving lasting changes in institutions.

Date: Sunday, 11th August 7.30-8 a.m. Meeting spot will be announced to those whose registration is accepted.

- The walk is free and will not focus on the religious aspect of the temple – there will be no time in the walk to offer worship, please plan for that separately
- Please dress appropriately for a house of worship. No shorts please!
- Participants above 40 cannot register unless they bring with them a school (class 8 and above) or college student. This is the best way we can get younger folks interested and they will get enough information that will help them in their careers. The student doesn't necessarily have to be someone you even remotely know; so please don't ask for exceptions!
- No more than 30 participants. Registrations to [Pradeepandanusha@gmail.com](mailto:Pradeepandanusha@gmail.com) on or before August 1st, 12 noon.
- No transport/food arrangements for the walk.

## Parking lot revived, again!

(Continued from page 1)

difficulties in dealing with multiple government agencies. And so, we may very well remain at this stage even after a full year, with the number of vehicles on the road likely to have increased substantially by then.

The problem calls for some out of the box thinking. The Corporation, while undoubtedly good in its intention, is coming up with solutions in isolation, none of which will have a significant impact towards decongestion. After all, what difference is a facility for park-

ing 1400 vehicles of different types going to make at T Nagar? What is required is that agencies such as CUMTA (Chennai United Metropolitan Transport Authority), the Metrorail, the MRTS and the Corporation, together with private transport authorities, come up with a unified plan for freeing of our roads. This can mean significant increases in parking fees, decongestion surcharges and other deterrents against using of private transport. This has to be done in tandem with development of multimodal public transport facilities at hotspots such as T Nagar. Only then will we have a long-term sustainable and impactful solution.

### MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

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

THE EDITOR

## Madras Week contacts

For any assistance or information regarding 'Madras Week' programmes please contact:

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[themadrasday@gmail.com](mailto:themadrasday@gmail.com)

PRISM PR, Satyan Bhatt (9840085411).

Website [www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in)

To list your programme on this site, e-mail: [themadrasday@gmail.com](mailto:themadrasday@gmail.com)

\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

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

He must be cricket's most versatile all rounder – within the game – not an all rounder beyond it like C.B Fry, the Rev. David Sheppard or Mike Brearley, cricketers who rose to great positions in other walks of life. For, few players have achieved excellence as Test cricketers as well as international umpires, besides serving the game in administrative and other capacities, as S. Venkataraghavan has done.

Venkataraghavan's credentials as an off-spinner were immaculate. He came into the Indian side when he was a student of the Guindy Engineering College, barely two months short of his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Making his debut at the Corporation Stadium, Madras, in February 1965 against New Zealand, he bowled impressively, finishing with figures of 48-23-90-2, clean bowling Dowling and Sinclair in the process. That he stood out in a spin attack that also included Durrani, Borde, and Nadkarni was testimony to his impact in that drawn game.

Venkat, as most cricketers know him, then bowled in a sharp, fastish style and was almost impossible to score off, as many of us who played against him in local cricket knew. He was a tall, good-looking, slightly built young man, with long, strong fingers that enabled him to give the ball a sharp tweak at terrific pace. He was accuracy personified and bowled a wicked leg cutter that caught batsmen – and often the slip fielders – by surprise. He was superbly fit and quite tireless, which explained his accuracy over long spells. He was a brilliant close-in fielder and a very competent batsman, quite fearless against fast bowling, as he

# The Mr. Versatile of Indian cricket

showed against the express pace of Wes Hall and Charlie Griffith barely a couple of years after his Test debut.

Venkat's most successful Test match came in his very first series, when he played a large role in India's win in the Delhi Test. His 12 wickets in the match – 8 in the first and 4 in the second – cost him merely 152 runs in an astonishing total of 112.3 overs.

In the series against Garry Sobers' West Indies in 1966-67, Venkat bowled well enough to draw high praise from Sobers, and played defiant innings in two rearguard actions in Bombay, but lost his place to Prasanna, making a comeback at Chepauk.

His best performances for India came under Ajit Wadekar's captaincy in 1971, when he played a crucial role in India's twin triumphs in the West Indies and England. He also captained India with skill during the 1975 tour of England, though the disastrous World Cup campaign, for which the captaincy could hardly be blamed, resulted in his exit as captain.

I played with or against (mostly against) Venkat from the time I was about 10 and he 12. We had some enjoyable exchanges, highly competitive and intensely fought, at the college as well as State levels. We both played for the same school, P. S. High School of Mylapore, Madras, but in college cricket, we were regularly



S. Venkataraghavan

pitted against each other. He led the formidable Guindy Engineering College against Presidency, my college, which had a number of talented players. He was already a Test cricketer, and some of the senior batsmen in my side got out to him even before they left the safety of the pavilion, so complete was his psychological domination on them. Our first victory over Engineering was achieved only after Venkat's graduation.

My enduring memory of Venkat is one of seriousness with which he approached net practice, bowling non-stop for three hours every day, following that with an extended session of fielding practice. Taking a hundred slip catches a day was above par for the course for him.

Throughout his career, Venkat never left the ground citing injury. Two occasions stand out in my memory. The first was during a Duleep

Trophy match against Central Zone at Bangalore in 1975. One evening during the match, Venkat met with a minor road accident, falling off a scooter. (Can you imagine a current Test cricketer on two wheels?) On the morrow, he carried on as if nothing had happened, bowling a long, match-winning spell with little or no indication that he was in any discomfort. But back in the pavilion he had great difficulty taking off his trousers to change, because he had been badly bruised from waist to foot on one side.

No tribute to the disciplinarian Venkat can be complete without mention of the terror he struck in the hearts of colleagues and rivals alike. I remember him describing the South Zone fielding in that same Bangalore match as "diabolic" and my wondering how many of my teammates understood the word. And sure enough, I found one of them scurrying off to the KSCA office and asking the clerk there if he could borrow a dictionary.

Another time, playing for Madras Cricket Club in the Chennai league, he was the non-striker, with S. Vasudevan in the midst of a brilliant spell of left-arm spin, claiming six wickets on a placid track. Vasu bowled one ball down the leg side during that spell, possibly the only bad ball he bowled that day, and to his utter shock the non-striker literally barked: "How many times have I told you to bowl the faster one on

the stumps!" Venkat was then the captain of the State team and Vasu was one of his main bowlers.

The years Venkat led Tamil Nadu in the Ranji Trophy were some of the best in its history – merit alone mattered in his scheme of things, and despite his stern exterior, his players knew that he was a fair man who led by example. With V.V. Kumar, he struck a deadly partnership that ran circles around most opposition batsmen. His record against southern greats like Jaisimha, Pataudi, Patel and Vishwanath was outstanding.

After his playing years, Venkat continued to be aggressive and relentlessly focussed on his job as an umpire. He has never sought to win popularity contests and revels in calling a spade a bloody shovel. He is indeed a professional, for whom pride of performance in all he does has been an article of faith.

\* Madras Province/State/Tamil Nadu.

## Answers to Quiz

1. The Tatas; 2. Ravindra Jadeja; 3. China and USA respectively; 4. Kevin Rudd; 5. Six hill forts of Rajasthan; 6. Hornbill; 7. Google; 8. Anish Kapoor; 9. Nicaragua; 10. The IAF's massive operation to rescue stranded pilgrims in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

\* \* \*

11. P. Sathasivam; 12. Kanimozhi (DMK), D. Raja (CPI) and V. Maithreyan (AIADMK); 13. C.P. Johnstone Shield; 14. 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'; 15. Thenkarai Ramakrishna; 16. Errabalu Chetty Street; 17. St. Isabel's Hospital; 18. Wellington. It is now called Defence Services Staff College; 19. Vyasarpadi to Wallajah Road; 20. The Trident.

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