

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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The sad state of our roads

It has happened once again. A few days of continuous rain and consequently our roads have given up. Wide craters, deep ruts, cracks and potholes have resurfaced, putting paid to the Corporation's claim that it had relaid 10,000 roads at a cost of Rs 400 crore. To what purpose this expenditure if the surfaces cannot withstand a few days of rain?

It was early in February this year that the Corporation formed a quality control wing comprising 21 employees. They were sent around in vans to collect samples from roads being laid. It was discovered that around 85 per cent of the thoroughfares failed the quality test. The parameters tested included temperature of the bitumen and aggregate mix when poured, the quality of the bitumen used, the level of penetration, and the road

thickness. The Corporation then declared that it would ask the contractors to relay the roads or withhold their payments.

● by A Special Correspondent

What happened after that is not known but it is a well-understood reality that contractors operate in cartels when it comes to dealing with the Corporation. They claim that they need this protection as they have to deal with corruption and also political interference. What they earn at the end of the day is always less than what was promised on paper, they claim. It is their view that if they were to be asked to adhere to all quality norms, they would go bankrupt! One way to

break the cartels is to go for global tenders. But then no international bidder will want to deal with the tortuous ways of our bureaucracy. These companies are also invariably interested only in large projects. The Corporation has for years broken up its roads into small stretches and allotted them to various contractors. This will never do if global tenders are to be invited. The civic body is clearly caught in a bind of its own making.

That the much-touted panacea of concrete roads has also failed was more than evident. This was despite the Corporation claiming that the number of areas that experienced flooding had come down by half thanks to the use of concrete. The lack of quality in the way the concrete was laid has led to the creation of permanent bumps and potholes that nothing can now remove them. Added to this was the problem of junctions where tar roads met their concrete counterparts. Huge craters had opened up at these places, causing accidents as well.

The quality of road laying apart, the very methodology that is followed appears flawed. For years, we have seen that fresh layers of tar are poured on to earlier road surfaces, thereby increasing road levels arbitrarily at various places. Ours being a flat city, even small alterations in gradient can cause flooding. This has been completely overlooked, resulting in side roads becoming higher than main roads if covered in concrete. The water then pours out and floods the arterial roads. The rising road levels have also resulted in buildings being constructed on high plinths. With most modern constructions having largely concrete covered

Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



● How many people remember the old air terminal, which is now part of the cargo complex of the Chennai airport? It was a thrilling experience to go there to receive and see off guests. To be able to climb the stairs and watch the flights arrival and take-off was the experience of a lifetime. And if your guest waved at you as he/she got off/walked towards the flight, your cup of joy ran over. A modernist structure very much in the Le Corbusier tradition, it was sufficient for the air traffic of those times.

Flying in Madras began with hotelier D'Angelis who piloted a Madras made aircraft using the Island Grounds as his airstrip. The aeroplane was manufactured by either Simpson or Addison. That was a one off. Some more exhibition flights did take place, including one by J W Madeley, the waterworks engineer. The next attempt was immediately after World War I when the Madras Chamber of Commerce was approached by aircraft manufacturer Sopwith to explore if there was a market in the Presidency. The Chamber was not responsive; such a service ought to run by the Government, it felt. In 1915, the house of Tatas began the Karachi-Madras airmail service, putting the city on the aviation map.

Rather ironically, several members of the Chamber were to be pioneering aviators thereafter. In 1930, the Madras Flying Club (MFC) was founded with William Maurice Browning of Burmah Shell as its first President. He was ably assisted by (Sir) Gerald Hodgson of Parry. Soon the sahibs of other British-owned companies, especially those that had far-flung industrial establishments, such as Beardsell and Binny, joined in. It is significant to note, however, that there were at least 14 Indians as Club members even at its inception; the Chettiar community in particular having a strength of three in the list.

The MFC's stars were pilot G Vlasto, flight instructor Flt. Lt. H.N. Hawker, Chief Flying Instructor Tynedale Biscoe, and Chief Pilot Instructor Mohammed Ismail Khan. In 1936, Capt. V Sundaram became the first Indian to get a commercial pilot's licence from Madras, and he flew a De Havilland Dove from Karachi to our city. Four years prior to this, J.R.D Tata's solo flight in a De Havilland Puss Moth from Karachi to Bombay further continued to Madras via Bellary by Neville Vincent.

World War II saw the Royal Air Force moving in, commandeering much of the MFC's resources, and making full use of its facility of which there was nothing more than an airstrip near St Thoma's Mount. By 1939, the top brass of the Government and several Indian leaders were flying into Madras.

In 1948, Madras became the first city in the country to get an airport. That it was headquarters to K V Al Rm Alagappa Chettiar's Jupiter Airways, which operated a Madras-Delhi service even then, may have had much to do with this. The airstrip expanded to become the Meenambakkam aerodrome, named after the village near it. For years, a hamlet continued to remain in occupation in the triangle formed by the runways and it was only after considerable effort that those in residence were convinced to move. With aircraft being few and far between, the runway was also used for the races conducted by the Madras Motor Sports Club before it shifted to Sholavaram in 1955. The terminal building in the photograph above was completed in 1954.

Welcome sensitising of temple restorers

(By The Editor)

Close on the heels of the Corporation conducting a training programme on heritage conservation for its engineers, the State Government has decided to conduct a six-week training programme on conservation and restoration of monuments and temples. This is mainly for the engineers of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Board which controls all the State-run temples, but it is open to other Government engineers wishing to attend. This is a most welcome move, but it is to be hoped that the training is put to good use in practice.

It cannot be denied that in the past few years, the Governments, both at the Centre and the State, have been allocating handsome budgets for temple restoration. The 13th Finance Commission had allocated Rs. 90 crore for the renovation of over 200 temples in the State with the rider that the restoration could not tamper with the heritage value of the shrines. Thus far the State has utilised Rs. 67.5 crore of this for work on 183 temples. The balance will be spent this year on 46 temples.

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(Continued on page 2)

Welcome sensitising of temple restorers

(Continued from page 1)

While the Government spending on temple restoration is heartening, for these are most often the only surviving symbols of our rich heritage, what is not so laudatory is the manner in which it is done. We keep reading news reports of age-old murals being white-washed, ancient edicts and inscriptions being sandblasted and, worse, being covered with vitrified tiles. Stones bearing valuable historic records are thrown away and the craze for building *gopurams* at times ensures that ancient pavilions are destroyed with no hesitation. The necessity to provide air circulation in sanctum sanctorums has seen ugly metal ducts making their appearance, often by gouging stonework. Tube lights, ugly wall paintings, and plenty of protective grillework complete the picture. All this often causes irreversible damage which could be avoided if those in charge are sensitised. And this is what is hoped this workshop will achieve.

Said to be the first of its kind in the country, the programme is to be conducted by the State Archaeology Department with the course curriculum having been drawn up in consultation with IIT Madras, the Archaeological Survey of India, the Museums Department and the Madras University. A notable absentee is the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) which should have ideally been roped in given its track record. In recent years, INTACH has been responsible for some brilliant restoration work across the country. In the city, we have the *Senate House* completed in 2007 and, as for the rest of the State, the restoration of the Muchukunda murals in the Tiruvarur temple in 2011 is another splendid example. Why then this hesitation in consulting INTACH? It is time that the Government wakes up and realises that some private participation in its laudable exercises will do no harm.

Apart from getting INTACH involved, we feel that attendance at the training programmes should have also been made compulsory for the Public Works Department (PWD) too, given that it is the department that is going to be working on the restoration of two important city landmarks – the Chepauk Palace and the National Art Gallery (formerly the Victoria Memorial Hall). The funds for these projects are to come from Finance Commission grants and so the same rider of “restoration without tampering with heritage value” will hold good. The current methods adopted by the PWD are in no way sympathetic to heritage restoration and need to be overhauled completely. For this to be done, its engineers need to be sensitised to heritage restoration the same way as those of the Corporation and the HR&CE. Will that miracle happen soon?

Madras Landmarks

(Continued from page 1)

Air facilities to Madras owed much to K Kamaraj who kept fighting for them during the 1950s and 1960s. By 1959, with domestic air services being operated by Indian Airlines, Viscounts were flying from Madras to Hyderabad, Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, with the Bombay-Colombo flight touching Madras en route. Dakotas operated between the city and Bangalore, Coimbatore, Cochin, Trivandrum, Madurai and Trichy. There was in addition a night airmail service operating from Madras to Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi via Nagpur. Besides these, the taking off and landing of The Hindu's aircraft with newspapers on board was a familiar sight.

Air India operated the international routes with Madras being connected by Constellations and Super Constellations to Egypt, Greece, Italy, France, England, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong and Japan. The only overseas operator that also functioned from Madras in the 1950s was Air Ceylon that ran a service from here to Colombo. Other airline carriers, such as BOAC (now BA), the defunct TWA and Swiss Air, had offices here but their flights had to be boarded from Bombay. By the 1970s, however, more foreign airlines began touching down at Madras.

In the relaxed atmosphere that then prevailed, cinema shooting at the airport was a common affair. It was also common practice for the busy studios of Madras to hold up flights so that stars from Bombay could finish shooting and then rush to the airport (Gemini Studios to Meenambakkam in fifteen minutes flat) in full make-up to board the aircraft.

With the new passenger terminal coming up in the 1980s near Trisulam, the old Meenambakkam terminal was dedicated to cargo, a function that it still fulfils.

Much ado over a rainy day

Years ago, when *The Man from Madras Musings* was a Cherubic Child of Calcutta, his father had done the rounds seeking admission for him (by which MMM means MMM and not his father) at various schools in the latter city. A missionary institution with a vast campus, named after the Apostle of Madras, was willing to give him a seat. But what made MMM's pater pull his son out at the last minute was a signboard in the campus. Addressed to parents, it advised them to take a certain pathway “for the safety of their child.” This some wag had turned to face in the direction of a deep and reed-infested pond. MMM's father, no doubt knowing his Hamlet and of what happened to Ophelia therein, withdrew his ward at once, who then went on to be

stretched for aid. The reversing through water was an adventure by itself but MMM will not bore you with the details. Many prayers and much effort later, MMM and car reached dry land. MMM made it to the event late what with all these water sports en route. In contrast to MMM's rather be-draggled appearance, everyone else there was shipshape.

It was then that MMM discovered that everyone else had happily driven through the road on the left, disregarding the No Entry sign. Like Robert Frost, they had taken the road less travelled and been successful, while MMM, conformist that he is, had nearly come to a watery end. In Chennai, or for that matter anywhere in India, it pays to overlook road signs and traffic signals.

now got out, their gumboots making for an impressive display as they waded about. MMM felt proud to see them. Chennai was becoming like Singapore, he thought, with its drain workers being so well dressed. But it went steadily downhill from there onwards.

Locating the blocked man-hole proved a challenge and involved asking an evidently lower level worker (less fully clad) to grope for it. When discovered, it was opened with much effort. A tree trunk was shoved in as a marker and then a hose was reeled out from the tanker to pump out the water. Either the pressure was too high or the hose was of a sound vintage, for it immediately broke into three (or possibly four) pieces. The groping routine was repeated to locate the pieces, which then had to be tied together with rags. In

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

the leading curse of another school but in a smaller and more concrete-covered campus.

This incident came back rather vividly to MMM's mind recently when it poured cats and dogs in our usually rain-short city. Undaunted by the rain, MMM decided to honour his commitment to attend an event that was being held at a college deep in the southern fringes of the metro that we know so well. Arriving by noon at the place, MMM was asked by the security to drive on. MMM obeyed and drove on until he came to a fork. A signboard bearing the legend “No Entry” very clearly declared the road on the left to be out of bounds and, so, deducing from this that the road on the right was the only way, MMM went ahead.

Sailed may have been the *mot juste*, for what lay on the right was a vast sheet of water. But you know how it is, what with working for the Chief and walking hand-in-hand in life with the One who is also known as She Who Must Be Obeyed, MMM never questions instructions. In that he is more or less like any member of the Light Brigade. And so he went ahead. It was only after driving on for some time that MMM realised that the waters were rising and the wheels of his car were making squelching noises, thereby indicating that they were negotiating what may well have been a tank bed.

Lord Ullin's Daughter was the poem that came to MMM's mind (The waters wild went over his child etc) and he decided to reverse, not wanting to be discovered the next day like the Scottish peer's daughter with one hand

On rains & drains

The Rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain is a well-known song. In Chennai, rains are somewhat of a rarity but when they do come, they stay on the plain too, rarely making it to the drain. To the mind of *The Man from Madras Musings*, there are some areas in the city where gondolas need to be pressed into service as soon as it rains.

One such is this thoroughfare in Royapettah that connects to a rather important office. This road gets locked, sorry, blocked on most days for reasons of security and, so, drainage work is next to impossible. As a consequence, it is always ill-prepared for the rains and floods that almost immediately follow. This time it was no different.

The day after the rains, MMM happened to be driving by when traffic came to a halt. MMM's car remained stationary for over fifteen minutes at the entrance to this road and he got a ringside view of how the Chennai Water Supply and Sewerage Board (or is it the Corporation) handles such situations. The police obliged by putting up the usual metal barricades of which they appear to have plentiful supply. A huge tanker lorry then pushed its way through the traffic, liberally spraying everyone around with the stagnant water. A short while later, the vehicle was brought to position after much shouting, yelling, cursing and swearing, of which we are as amply blessed as we are with metal barricades.

Four raincoated men

the meanwhile, the water pressure was so high that it spouted up in a powerful jet, drenching everyone, that is those who had been spared by the tanker when it made its entry.

Fixing the hose after it was reassembled was a difficult task, as the water would keep pushing it away. And even when it was put into position, it kept breaking up. By then the traffic had begun to move. Last seen, MMM noticed one of the men sitting on the hose to contain the pressure while others were trying to fit the other pieces to it.

As is always the case, there were plenty of passers-by who did their bit, namely shouting advice, giving a running commentary of sorts, and generally passing the time of the day. What MMM was not prepared for was a foreigner taking pictures on his iPad. MMM looks forward to the day when he will be able to see how the story ended, probably in a video on Youtube.

Tailpiece

Now, who could be living here (below), *The Man from Madras Musings* wonders.

– MMM



**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



Similar situations

I do not hold any brief for the Government or defend the Government servants (MM, October 16th). But the position in the private sector is no better. At least in the Government, the residence telephone numbers are listed in the directory and you can catch someone in the house or barge into his or her room because the person is a 'public servant'. But you cannot even enter a private company office without swiping a card. I have written and talked several times that the Chairman, MD or CEO of a private company – you are sure – exists but you do not know his whereabouts and there is no way you can contact him. In a private company, the secretary (PA or PC in Government) never allows you to cross her and if you persist as I do, she notes down all your details and the chairman or CEO will call you back if he feels that you are sufficiently important.

More or less a similar situation prevails in the fourth estate. For instance, there are three mistakes in your Quiz column: 1) It was not in *Vana Ratham* in 1956 that Lata Mangeshkar sang for a Tamil movie first. Her debut was in 1952 in the dubbed version of

Aan with Dilip Kumar and Nimmi – the music director was Naushad who used the same tune and Lata sang in Tamil. The same mistake was committed first in an article in *The Hindu* recently. I tried to contact the writer a few times, but no way. I did not want to send an e-mail because they say that they get hundreds of e-mails and so do not read most of them! 2) There was no Governor Sri Prakasam. He was Sri Prakasa. 3) *Emden* shelled Madras during World War I (not WW II). Quiz Master: Correct thyself!

Coming from the Gujarat IAS cadre, I appreciate the humour in your lead article: "It is amazing how that city is considered the font of all wisdom these days."

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Editor's Note: (a) We fail to see the connection between the public sector behaviour and errors pointed out in our Quiz, unless it was Dr. Sundaram's inability to contact a writer in *The Hindu*. b) Regarding errors 2 and 3, most readers would realise that the printer's devil was at work and that a veteran

For Swachh to work

Can Swachh work in Chennai (MM, October 16), I wonder. Ever since the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules 2000 came into existence, we speak more about scientific management of MSW, segregation, composting, recycling, incineration, producing electricity, etc. but have not followed up words with deeds, except for spending huge amounts on purchasing three-wheelers, machineries and constructing infrastructure.

Garbage is the major eyesore. If we manage it properly, India will be clean. For Swachh Bharath scheme to work, Government should act on following lines:

Step 1: Ban the manufacture of plastic carry bags less than 20 microns, which forms more than 20 per cent of municipal waste, and plastic cups, trays, etc. Suggest to the manufacturers alternative plastic products, providing technical and financial assistance. This will reduce the total garbage.

Step 2: People should segregate garbage at source, i.e. in the kitchen. Collect wet waste such as vegetable waste, food waste etc. in a separate basket. Wet waste can be put in a compostable bin that may be provided in the backyard, or in two or three flower pots, if you don't have a backyard. Municipality can arrange community composting yards wherever necessary, to be managed by local NGOs

All papers, plastic, milk cover, grocery cover, other packing materials, glass, electrical/electronic items, napkins etc. – all dry waste – can be put in a separate basket. From this dry waste, you can separate papers, plastic covers, milk covers, grocery covers, packing materials etc. which can be sold to waste paper dealer. Municipality should collect other items door to door.

This will minimise the total garbage. Municipality can give some incentives in terms of reduced property tax.

Step 3: Municipality can collect segregated garbage from commercial establishments, hotels, maals, marriage halls, etc. using separate vehicles. Electrical waste, chemical waste, hospital waste etc. can be collected by Municipality who can levy garbage clearance charges from them, depending on the quantum. Municipality should also arrange to collect vegetable waste from vegetable markets, flower markets, temples, etc. and arrange for composting of all this commercial bio waste, while dispose of all other non-biodegradable waste properly.

Step 4: Municipality should arrange for collection of building debris. This can be profitably segregated and reused by, for instance, grinding concrete waste in a coarse/fine aggregate bricks into brick jelly, etc. It is big business if done properly.

By reducing the garbage, Municipality can not only save huge transportation and labour expenses, but also precious land fill area. Trash can become Municipality's cash.

For people to do their parts, you don't need any awareness programmes. You need only incentives and punishments. Municipalities should remain committed to clean cities. The Press and other media should also play a regular role in getting citizens their part in keeping their city clean.

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quizmaster would not make such obvious mistakes.

Enforce GO

Further to the Editor speaking of "Hope for the Canal" (MM, September 16th), I refer you to Madras GO No. 213 dated 30-3-1989 which states that "No industry causing serious water pollution should be permitted within one kilometre from the embankments of rivers, streams, dams etc., and that the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board should furnish a list of such industries to all local bodies." By a subsequent amendment in 1997, the distance was increased to five kilometres. The GO makes mention of two Annexures, Annexure I, the listing of highly polluting industries, and Annexure II, naming the rivers, streams, reservoirs and canals in Tamil Nadu. Ten rivers, ten tanks and reservoirs, and three canals are mentioned in Chennai and Chengalpattu Districts. The Adyar, Cooum and Palar are detailed in the Annexure as rivers in Chennai District. But among the canals, the Buckingham Canal is not mentioned.

The GO clearly states, "The Government impose a total ban on the setting up of the highly polluting industries mentioned in Annexure I" within the limits stated. The Supreme Court,

in the case of Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum Vs Union of India and others, referred to this GO and the Full Bench observed: "We have our doubts whether above quoted government order is being enforced by the Tamil Nadu Government. The order has been issued to control pollution and protect environment. We are of the view that the order should be strictly enforced and no industry listed in Annexure I to the order should be permitted to be set up in the prohibited area." That this direction of the Supreme Court is honoured more in the breach is seen from the present state of the Palar, Adyar and Cooum rivers, apart from the canals, in which the Buckingham Canal must be included.

Among fifteen polluting industries listed and detailed in Annexure I are tanneries, textiles, sago and electroplating. In a study conducted by the Centre for Water Resources, Anna University and the AMM Murugappa Chettiar Research Foundation, Taramani, as part of a UNICEF-commissioned project for evolution of a national water quality management policy, the condition of the quality of water in some of the rivers in Chennai was found to be as follows: "An anomalous chromium concentration oc-

curs along the Adyar river and coastline. A large quantity of effluents is discharged by nearly 90 tanneries in places such as Pallavaram, Chromepet and Pammal, increasing the chromium content in the groundwater. Researchers point out that chromium is highly toxic in nature and the intrusion should be stopped at the earliest. If the groundwater sources are stressed further, the quality of water resources will deteriorate rapidly."

It is the duty of the Chennai Corporation and, more so, of the Tamil Nadu Government to enforce the Madras GO No. 213 dated March 30, 1989 as per the direction of the Supreme Court.

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Correcting ourselves

The headline of the lead story in the last fortnight (October 16th) issue of *Madras Musings* suffered at the hands of the printer's devil. Instead of "Same rule" he had it as "Some rule", obviously not realising the importance of the word **same** in the context of the story.

– The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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The early days of the I.A.S.

During World War II the British Government suspended from 1941 to 1944 the holding of the examination in London for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.). The exam was held in Delhi and a few officers were recruited. The Government of India also announced that further recruitment to the ICS would be kept in abeyance and that:

I. All vacancies would be filled after the war ended by recruiting officers from the Indian Defence Services who had the requisite educational and medical qualifications prescribed for recruitment to the ICS;

II. Every day of service in Defence would be to the credit of the officer recruited; and

III. Seniority would be determined based on the date when the officer joined the Defence Service.

Consequent to this, GOI in 1946 announced the programme to recruit Defence officers to the ICS. Defence officers, who had the qualifications prescribed and who had luckily survived the war, applied and went through a process of examination and selection which took several months. Groups of about 50 each were called and put through a 3-day examination – medical, psychological, intelligence tests, etc. Around 400 or so were selected and they were asked to appear before a committee of the Federal Public Service Commission (now called the UPSC) chaired by the Chairman. I was asked to appear before the Committee at the FPSC's office in the Kennedy House annexe in Simla in June 1946. No D.A. was allowed and a candidate could leave by 4.30 p.m. on the day of the interview. Ultimately, towards the end of 1946, the GOI announced the names of about 130 officers who had been selected.

The Interim Government of India was formed in mid-1946 headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister and Sardar Patel as Home Minister. Sardar Patel said the ICS was neither Indian, nor Civil nor service oriented! So he named the service as the All India Administrative Service. He also said the country could not afford the high pay scales of the ICS.



The author P. Sabanayagam and those with him in the first Madras batch

N. Bhagwandas
M.G. Rajaram
K.P.K. Menon
E.P. Royappa
A. Krishnaswami
S. Viswanathan
C.S. Krishnamurthy
N. Janardhan Kamath
K.C. Madappa
G.H. Jansen
A. Chandrasekar
T.N. Lakshminarayanan
K.S. Sivasubrahmanyam

and that the scale would be Rs. 300-500 (cost of living allowance as applicable, annual increments of Rs. 50) for the first five years and that the pay scales for the subsequent years would be announced later. He further said that the date of entry into the Administrative Service would not be the date of entry into the Defence Service as announced by the British earlier, but the 24th birth date. Subsequently, the Home Department of GOI issued two orders in April 1947 regarding officers appointed to the AIAS on seniority, pay scale and allotment of selected officers to various States. The seniority of war service candidates was antedated by one year by the Ministry of Home Affairs in January 1949.

These changes in the 'ICS declaration' that the British had earlier made came as a shock to those selected. Most of the Defence Service officers selected would lose 50 per cent or more of the salary they were drawing. I was getting Rs 750 p.m. as a Captain but would in the AIAS get only Rs 350! As a result, a large number of the selected Defence

Officers declined the offer of appointment. Only 54 Defence Officers joined! I had also been selected for a permanent commission in the Army (I had been a Captain in the 10th Field Regiment, Royal Indian Artillery) and, therefore, was inclined to refuse the AIAS offer, but was compelled by my father to accept it, which I did. As years passed, I realised Father was right.

The officers who had accepted the offer were asked in March 1947 to report to the IAS School in Metcalfe House in the old GOI Secretariat, Old Delhi. Some Defence Officers, about ten of them, were also selected for the Foreign Service. They too joined the School. The GOI revised the name of the Service from AIAS to IAS. M.J. Desai ICS was the Principal, and J.S. Lal ICS Vice-Principal of the School. We also had a judge as Law Professor and also an Economics Professor. We had accommodation in the Staff Quarters close by. Classes were to go on for about nine months. The Home Department also decided to send the officers under training on a short vacation programme to the States in June 1947 to get acquainted with the functioning of the civil services in the States.

Following the turmoil of Partition, the GOI decided to close the IAS School temporarily and depute the trainees to several places to work with ICS officers.

There was a camp in the campus of Humayun Tomb, New Delhi, where a few thousand Muslim refugees would stay on their way to Pakistan by rail from Nizamuddin Station. A few colleagues and I were posted there to look after their temporary shelter, food, water, etc. We were backed by Army and Police help. The news about the harassment of Hindu refugees roused the feelings of the Indians, and the Police were no exception. Hence there were instances of the Indian Army/Police personnel snatching things carried by the Muslim refugees as they walked to the Station.

One of my colleagues, Misra, seeing such crimes being committed by Indian Police/Army men objected; hot words and a scuffle followed and one of the

The Probationers' examinations

The Curriculum of the Indian Administrative Service Probationers' Training School was:

1. Detailed study of (a) The Indian Penal Code, (b) The Criminal Procedure Code, (c) The Indian Evidence Act
2. A general knowledge of the principles of Civil Law, particularly Hindu and Mohammedan Laws, certain Sections of the Civil Procedure Code (and other Acts and legal principles).
3. Language options.
4. Indian History mainly in its cultural, political, administrative and constitutional aspects... (and trends of the principal periods on the mind, character and the conditions of the people).
5. General principles of Economics with special stress on current economic developments in India particularly in the sphere of State Planning, controlled production and distribution.
6. Public Administration: a comparative view of Civil Services in various democratic countries, and the ideals to be placed before the new Civil Service for India.
7. Riding: a course in motor mechanics and map reading.

* * *

The Probationers, at the end of the period of probation, had to pass an examination conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission. The subjects were as follows:—

1. Indian Law
2. Indian History
3. Economics, with particular reference to Indian economic problems
4. Public Administration
5. Riding; provided that the final examination in Riding may be held at such time during the probationary period as the Federal Public Service Commission may appoint.
6. Hindustani
7. One of such languages specified (for) the Province to which the probationer is assigned with which, in the opinion of the Principal of the Training Centre, the probationer is not sufficiently familiar; or

If the probationer is, in the opinion of the Principal, already sufficiently familiar with all such languages, such other subject as the Principal may prescribe, as being a useful subject of study for the probationer.

Police/Army men shot him dead! When Misra did not return to the camp, we searched and found his body. Some days earlier, Dogra, another colleague, who was returning to the IAS School in Old Delhi in a car after duty in New Delhi, was shot at, but he survived.

These extra curricular activities came to an end after a few months and in November 1947 we were posted to our respective States. I received orders to go to Coimbatore District.

Since only about 50 per cent of those selected opted for the IAS, the GOI could not post a sufficient number of officers to the States. There were, accordingly, an IAS Association letter issued in August 1948, 120 vacancies. Therefore, based on the Gorawala Committee recommendation, special recruitment was made and Emergency Officers selected, one of them being Dr. P.C. Alexander. Provincial Service Officers also were promoted and appointed as IAS officers. The first regular IAS examination and selection by the UPSC took place in 1949 and these continued ever since.

Trying to save Jerdon's Courser

● Following up on her 'A bird that changed a canal's course' (MM, September 1st), Vijaysree Venkatraman writes:

One afternoon in 2008, as the curator of a natural history museum in Scotland was browsing through an uncatalogued set of birds' eggs in the storeroom, he chanced upon an oval-shaped specimen labelled 'Jerdon's Courser'. Confirming its identity through DNA analysis was easy, because a specimen of the whole bird was available. But no ornithologist had seen its egg before, which made this a great find.

Science recorded the existence of Jerdon's Courser (*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*) in 1848, but we know precious little about it. Scottish surgeon-naturalist Thomas Jerdon found this elusive resident of the Eastern Ghats, and reported that "it has a plaintive cry and spends the day sleeping in the sparse shade of scrub jungles." By the end of

Madras beginnings of Hindi Prachar

(By B. Swaminathan)

The 'Hindi Prachar' movement was started south of the Vindhyas long before Indian Independence. The nationalist Tamil poet, Subramania Bharati, wrote in early 1905 in his Tamil daily, *India*, about the importance of learning Hindi. Bharati even attempted to start Hindi classes in 1908.

Mahatma Gandhi, at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916 and the Calcutta session in 1917, drew attention to 'Hindi Prachar' in the South. Gandhiji believed that unless and until the Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam speaking people attained a working knowledge of Hindi, national integration and cultural unity could not be achieved. Keeping this in mind, Gandhiji directed the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan to chart out programmes and collect funds to implement 'Hindi Prachar' in the South.

In 1918, Gandhiji sent his younger son Devdas Gandhi to Madras as the first Hindi Pracharak. He sowed the seeds for the Hindi Prachar movement in Madras with the help of leaders like

Dr. Annie Besant, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer and Srinivasa Sastri. Swami Sathyadev Parivrajak was next sent by Gandhiji to assist Devdas who in turn sent Pandit Harihara Sarma, K.M.

In the first week of May 1918, the first Hindi class was started by Devdas Gandhi in Gokale Hall in George Town, under the presidentship of Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. Dr. Annie

● The Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha sent Madras Musings this article stating that it had begun preparations to celebrate its Centenary in 2018.

Sivarama Sarma, Malladi Venkatesetharamanjeyulu and others to the North to learn to teach Hindi. They returned in 1919 as Pracharaks. K. Bhashyam Iyengar, T.R. Venkatarama Sastry, Sundaram Iyer, S. Ambujammal and other leaders in Madras were students of these Pracharaks. To help Pandit Harihara Sarma and Devdas Gandhi, Prathap Narayan Vajpayee, K. Kshemannand Rahat and Hrishikesh Sharma came from the North in 1919 to serve as Pracharaks. These pioneering Pracharaks paved the way for the establishment of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras.

Besant inaugurated the class. Between 1918 and 1927, Hindi Prachar was carried on under the banner of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at its branch office. In 1927, the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha emerged as an independent organisation and Mahatma Gandhi was its President till he breathed his last.

Till 1920, the Sabha had its office in George Town. After some years it shifted to Mylapore and from there to Triplicane where it functioned till 1936. During those years, the Sabha published Hindi readers, self-instruction materials, Hindi grammars, etc. for Hindi learners.

the 19th Century, the bird was declared extinct.

When the bird was sighted again in 1986, there was much jubilation. It was featured on a postage stamp. A sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh was its home then and it enjoyed protected status. The Telugu-Ganga Project, which could've carried water from that area to ever-parched Madras, was being planned then and, as the canal would have cut through the sanctuary, the engineers drew up another route.

The celebrity and the goodwill notwithstanding, the Courser maintained its low profile. Now a determined international team is on its track. The more they learn about the elusive bird, the greater the chances of saving it from extinction. P. Jeganathan of the Natural Conservation Foundation began studying the bird in 2000 for his PhD thesis. The first order of business of his team was to find

the range of the bird.

Though not heavy or flightless, the Courser tends to get around by walking. So, the researchers laid swathes of fine sand to capture its distinct claw-print. Along the sandy paths, he also set up infrared camera 'traps' to capture images of the ghostly bird whenever it appeared, night or day. After identifying its favoured haunts, satellite images were used to find similar pockets of shrub growth in the jungle. This was to pick an ideal spot for the team's next survey.

Meanwhile, researchers analysed the birds' poop and found it was a termite eater. They also managed to capture its call, the "plaintive cry" as Jerdon had described long ago. They put the recording in a simple playback device – the plastic square of a kid's stuffed toys – and handed it to visitors along with the bird's picture. More people became involved in

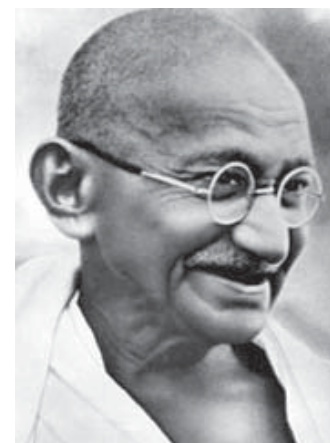
finding its whereabouts.

When a threat loomed over the bird's habitat in the form of illegal construction near the canal project in 2006, researchers had enough data to show that the bird's range, narrow as it was, extended well beyond the sanctuary. The Supreme Court ordered a stop to the construction and even granted extra land to the bird.

Despite that success, the bird continues to be held on the critically endangered list. The sanctuary is protected, not closed off. Locals graze livestock in these scrub forests and cut firewood. In moderation, neither activity can drive the bird to extinction. Quarrying for Cudappah stone and clearing the forest for farming are bigger threats.

Jeganathan is often asked: Why bother to save the bird at all? Like the Taj Mahal or the Big

(Continued on page 6)



Gandhiji, who insisted that Hindi Prachar should be started in the South, sent his son Devdas to Madras as the first Hindi Pracharak.

Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam versions were also brought out simultaneously. To produce these books, it was felt necessary to have a printing press of its own and one was established in rented premises in Triplicane in 1922.

In course of time, when 'Hindi Prachar' picked up momentum, there was a demand for Pracharaks. A Hindi Pracharak Vidyalaya was started in Erode in 1922 by the Sabha and Avadandanjanji and Devadootji were the first instructors. The Erode Vidyalaya was declared open by Pandit Motilal Nehru and it started functioning from the house of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar), who later became a bitter opponent of Hindi.

Provincial branches were established in 1936. The same year, the Sabha moved into the then new premises set in five acres in Theagaraya Nagar. The foundation for the building was laid by Janab Abdul Hameed Khan and the building was declared open on October 7, 1936 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was then the President of the Indian National Congress.

Preliminary examinations were held regularly from 1922. The first degree level examination, 'Rashtrabhasha Visharad', was conducted and the convocation was held in 1931. 'Praveshika' was introduced in 1948. Vidyalayas gave special training to those who had passed 'Rashtrabhasha' and awarded the Hindi Pracharak Sanad to those who qualified.

To exchange views and ideas among the Pracharaks, a Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sammelan was held for the first time in 1923 in *Soundarya Mahal*. Devdas Gandhi presided over the third Sammelan, held in December 1932. Since then, Sammelans have been held every year, featuring Hindi dramas, exhibitions, book exhibitions and *kavi sammelans*.

When the Congress formed its first ministry in the then Madras Presidency in 1937, C.

Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), as the Prime Minister of Madras, introduced the teaching of Hindi in all the schools in the Presidency. The Sabha, of which he was the Vice President, was directed to publish Hindi books for use in the schools.

The Sabha celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1946 after World War II ended and Gandhiji presided over the celebrations. Nearly 10,000 Hindi Pracharaks and Hindi lovers from all over the South took part in the function held in 'Hindustani Nagar' in the sprawling campus of the Sabha. Gandhiji organised conferences on women development, particularly for authors in Southern languages, artists and Harijans and also held seminars on subjects like *charka*. Sir Pethwick Lawrence, who was leading a Parliamentary delegation from Britain, met Gandhiji in the Sabha premises to discuss India's imminent independence. After the celebrations, Gandhiji made a whirlwind tour of the South in a special train taking the message of Hindi to the people. Wherever he went he spoke in Hindi and it was translated into the local language.

To commemorate his presence during the Silver Jubilee celebrations in the Sabha, it was decided to build a *Gandhi Mantap* where he spoke. The *Mantap* was inaugurated on June 9, 1963 by Morarji Desai.

In appreciation of the Sabha's activities, the Government of India accorded it the status of National Importance in June 1964 under an Act of Parliament.

Recent landmarks include a National Hindi Research Library and a *Mahatma Gandhi Convocation Hall (Mahatma Gandhi Padavidhan Mantap)* exclusively for conducting the annual convocations of the Sabha. To commemorate the Nehru Centenary celebrations, the Sabha raised the *Nehru Centenary Memorial Hall*.



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

1. The Golden Jubilee of two trains, one in South India and the other in Japan, was celebrated on October 1st. Name the two well-known trains.

2. Which prestigious literary prize did Australian author Richard Flanagan win on October 14th?

3. What is the Arabic name for the hoopoe bird that made front page news on October 12th for the wrong reasons.

4. Name the organisation founded by India's latest Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi.

5. Who is the latest Indian film personality to be appointed Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF in South Asia?

6. India won gold medals in both the men's and women's section in which sport at the Incheon Asian Games?

7. The ambitious campaign launched by the Prime Minister recently aimed at cleaning India by October 2, 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, is called..?

8. In startling news, NASA's Earth Observatory claimed that the world's fourth largest lake of its time has dried and is on the verge of vanishing. Name the water-body.

9. Who were declared the Man of the Match in the final and the Player of the Series in the Champions League T20 won by the Chennai Super Kings?

10. Of which country was John Key recently elected Prime Minister for a third straight term? (Hint: A cricket-playing nation.)

11. Which 19th Century school was started as a parish school in the Lutheran Church's compound on Tana Street?

12. Tamil Nadu has not one but two National Fossil Wood Parks. Where?

13. Who gifted the AIADMK headquarters building on Lloyd's Road to the Party?

14. What daily activity at a Chennai location has been timed to last for 0.57 second? The timing between each such activity is either 1.93 or 6.93 seconds.

15. Which music genius lives in Vishwa Keerthi on San Thome High Road?

16. Where in Chennai would you find a temple to Vasupujya Swami, the twelfth Jain Tirthankara?

17. Which popular hotel chain was started by A.R. Velupillai as a small 'mess' in the early 1950s?

18. In which district is the Mukurthi National Park?

19. What post does Pollachi V. Jayaraman hold in the legislative administration of the State?

20. What specifically connects the Lok Sabha constituencies of Kancheepuram (SC), Tenkasi (SC), Tiruppur and Tiruvannamalai?

(Answers on page 7)

Advertising goes outdoors

(Continued from last fortnight)

Outdoor

Madras was well known for its huge, larger-than-life hoardings on Mount Road, promoting new and old feature films. The idea was first conceived by the legendary film director S.S. Vasan for the blockbuster movie *Chandralekha* in the early 1950s. The idea caught on and, over the years, not only films but also products and services of all types started featuring their messages on hoardings occupying every vantage point on the roads of Madras, leading to mindless growth of the medium. Many accidents later, the State Government passed a law in 2008 barring hoardings in public places.

For over four decades, thousands of talented artists made a living out of manually painting the big hoardings, using miniature drawings as reference. The advent of the easy-to-assemble flexi sheets, printed with the hoarding messages, threw these talented people out of job. The banning of the medium completely in Chennai left many people dependent on this medium literally on the streets.

Technology has opened up new avenues for outdoor displays of advertising. The ubiquitous giant-size hoardings have been replaced by a slew of other outdoor media, now popular as OOH (Out-Of Home) advertising. These include posters, banners, kiosks, bus shelters, wall sites, hoardings, mobile vans, all vehicles that move, and dynamic display units in and outside the mega malls.

Rural marketing

Rural marketing, a buzz word for several decades, has now become a necessity for many brands of FMCG and consumer durable products. It has seen some pioneering initiatives from Madras. Though promoting products in villages through road shows using vans was in vogue right from the 1940s by companies like TTK group, it was Thomas Maliakkal, a Madras-based adman, who started ORA (Outdoor Rural Advertising) to offer a well-planned audio-visual van operation to reach the villagers of Tamil Nadu. The idea of featuring

• by R.V. Rajan

(Feedback welcome on rvrajan42@gmail.com)

multiple brands in every operation, so that the cost of such an effort is shared by advertisers, was a pioneering effort at the time. After him, R. Parthasarathy of Kripa Outdoor has been an important player in this field for the last 30 years.

Grant Advertising and, then, Anugrah Marketing headed by R.V. Rajan pioneered several rural communication programmes for their agri-input clients and, later, for all types of products leading to more and more clients understanding the importance of rural marketing. Starting of the Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI) in 2005 was an initiative of Anugrah Madison. RMAI continues to be actively involved in disseminating new knowledge on rural marketing to the industry.

Saving Jerdon's Courser

(Continued from page 5)

Temple, our natural history too deserves to be saved, says the Thanjavur native. Genetically, this is an interesting species for biologists because the semi-nocturnal Courser's closest kin is in Africa, not India. We can't say what impact the Courser's disappearance will have because its role in its habitat is not understood yet. Of course, in a populous country with many pressures on land, that entire ecosystem can vanish

before scientists learn anything more.

But the egg, another piece of the puzzle that is the Jerdon's Courser, holds out new hope. "If we find a nest or eggs in the future, we can compare those eggs with the present discovery to confirm it," says Jeganathan. The curator, who confirmed the egg's identity, also established its provenance and published the details of his investigations earlier this year. The egg was procured in 1917 (after the bird was declared extinct) in Kolar,



When hoardings dominated the roadscape.

Social media

Though corporates in Chennai have begun to use social media, it is yet to get the attention it deserves. There are a few social media specialists like Unmetric and a few individuals who are advising clients on social media. The best known name is Kirubha Shanker, who is based in Chennai.

Current scene

The last decade has seen a steady decline of traditional advertising spend in Chennai by FMCG companies (like Cavin-kare) and consumer durable companies (like Hyundai and Ford), many of whom have moved their marketing departments to Mumbai or Delhi, leading to a major setback for the Chennai branches of the established multinational agencies.

Though there has been a tremendous growth in the advertising business from the retail, realty and educational sectors, it has not helped professional agencies because many of the new generation advertisers representing these groups are not professional in their approach and go for media agencies who are able to offer them lowest rates. Many of them even negotiate directly with the media for rates based on bulk booking, affecting the survival of many traditional agencies depending solely on commission income. Besides, technology has made it so easy for small de-

sign outfits to offer creative services to clients at low costs that the big agencies find themselves in a bind, unable to compete with such outfits.

Many of the multinational agencies have either closed shop in Chennai or have drastically cut down their operations. However, for an adman who is willing to adapt to the changing scene in Chennai, the profession still provides enough opportunities, as evident from the success of many local agencies.

Once considered an overgrown village that went to sleep by 9.00 p.m., Chennai during the past decade has acquired a 24x7 reputation. The city has drawn people from all parts of India. Result: The metropolis can offer anything that anyone wants! Be it the choice of food, product, service or even entertainment!

Old, tradition-rich conservative Madras is today a vibrant cosmopolitan Chennai. The young are willing to try out anything new! What better challenge than that for the advertising professional? I am sure that the Chennai advertising world will soon bounce back to its glorious past!

(Concluded)

OUR ADDRESSES

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— THE EDITOR

Answering the need of the hour?

A comprehensive, affordable, sustainable and hygienic solution aimed at catering to the basic and diverse sanitation needs of the common man is the need of the hour in India, which lacks public sanitation facilities everywhere. Difficulty in maintenance, periodic breakdowns, and maintaining a good standard of hygiene in conventional sanitation facilities have remained a challenge in India.

In this context, Eram Scientific Solutions (ESS), a home-grown social enterprise based in Kerala, has introduced toilets which effectively address the challenges faced in the sanitation front by integrating new technologies and better materials at affordable cost.

Its eToilets comprise stainless steel (SS) enclosures and have electronic systems to en-

hance user experience and tracking the health status of these toilets. eToilets have automated access control systems, sensor enabled water minimisation, self-washing and floor wash mechanisms. The stainless steel enclosures are extremely durable and corrosion-resistant.

The SS closet is provided with a P-trap facility to ensure better hygiene and cleanliness in the squatting pan. The P-trap also helps to prevent foul smell inside the toilets and thus ensures cleanliness round the clock. Unlike the ceramic or plastic closets, the SS closet structure is strong enough to withstand heavy weight and major damages. One eToilet SS model weighs approximately 310 kg.

The eToilet has a facility of pre-flushing before entering,

automatic flushing once used, in-built water tanks, sensors for water and electricity conservation, automatic platform, cleaning and power back-up with coin operated entry. Keeping in mind individual needs these toilets are programmed to flush 1.5 litres of water after three minutes of usage or 4.5 litres if usage is longer. The performance status of the units can also be monitored via web using GPRS connectivity of the units. This innovation involves unmanned operations and thus ensures easy and continual operation of the toilets while minimising unnecessary maintenance costs.

These eToilets come in variants such as General Public Model, Civic/School Model, and She Toilet. (Courtesy: *Stainless India*)



Is there any comparison between the street toilets (above) and ours (below)?! Also note the state we are keeping our latest facilities. What price Swachh?!

– The Editor



• Nostalgia

● Madras Medical College, 73 years ago – as recalled by Dr. S. Ramaswamy – a 1941 batch student of MMC – Professor of Anatomy (Retd).

Studying during those ‘Quit India’ days

(Continued from last fortnight)

The examinations arrived in Physiology practical. I had the fortune of having to face Dr. B.T. Krishnan and Dr. Neogy and in the viva voce Dr. Bashir and Dr. Tilang. Dr. BTK, examined me in Biochemistry and Dr. Neogy in experimental physiology which was a demonstration of muscle contraction (a muscle nerve experiment). Dr. Neogy was more a Biochemistry-oriented examiner and similarly BTK was a more Physiology-oriented examiner. So it was an easy passage through the practicals.

Dr. Bashir had a reputation of being a very tough examiner. He used to ask what the steps were involved in coagulation of blood. If, for instance, there were ten steps and the candidate answered only nine, he would say, “Tell me the tenth so that I can give you a pass.” He asked me about the digestion of milk. I came to ‘Ornithine’. He asked me, “What is Ornithine, Mister?” I blurted out “enzymes.” He did not dismiss me straightaway and waited without comment for me to continue. I said “Citrulline”. He

smiled and asked, “Is Citrulline also an enzyme, Mister?” I quickly corrected my previous answer. And he passed me.

For the Anatomy practical, the dissection question was digastric triangle. I completed the dissection in 45 minutes. The examiners, Dr. U.V. Naik (our professor and Head of the Anatomy Department) and Dr. Y. Appaji, a very tough examiner from Mysore, came up to me and observed that I was idling. Dr. Naik asked me “Have you finished?”. Hesitatingly I answered, “Not yet”. He said, “You seem to have finished” and asked me to identify the structures and questioned me on them. Since they had plenty of time at their disposal, his examination was exhaustive, covering a wide range of structures related to the dissection. After he finished, Dr. Appaji asked me, “Do you know of any other gland in the body which is divided into two parts by a muscle (as the submandibular salivary gland in the present dissection)?” “He would have gone on and on, but Dr. Naik interrupted and said, “I have questioned him enough, let him go.”

Though I did not get any significant rank, I passed and that itself was an achievement, taking into account the filtering that used to take place at each stage which required clearing all the subjects before passing on to the next stage. Pre-registration subjects had to be cleared before commencing I MB class, and Organic Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology had to be passed to go to II MB, and Pharmacology, Hygiene, Ophthalmology and Pathology (in which Bacteriology was included) had to be passed before entering the final MB.

The thrill of walking around the hospital wards and corridors with a dangling stethoscope just cannot be described. The feeling was one of being a ‘doctor’ already, but it soon faded a bit with the rigours of courses.

The first three months were thoroughly enjoyable, a very care-free period with no immediate examination in the offing after the preclinical hurdle.

My first posting was in the surgical wards under Dr. Visvanatha Menon, a brilliant surgeon. It was a pleasure watching him operate. Dr.

(Continued on page 8)

SAD STATE OF OUR ROADS

(Continued from page 1)

surfaces, there is no water absorption capacity and the surface run-off has no option but to flood neighbouring areas.

It has also been noticed that, for several years now, road digging for underground activity such as drain-clearing or laying, ducting and cabling gathers momentum just when the monsoon is around the corner. This year has been no different. The Corporation claims that it has very little to do with

road-cuts. Its web site blames TANGEDCO, the CMWSSB and the PWD for these things. But surely it has the influence to ensure that these bodies complete their activities well before the monsoon?

With such a mixture of malpractice, poor quality, dysfunctional departments and administrative sloth, it is no wonder our roads are in such a mess. With one more month of the monsoon left, our problems can only worsen.

Answers to Quiz

1. Brindavan Express (between Chennai and Bangalore) and the Shinkasen or Bullet Train; 2. The 2014 Man Booker Prize for fiction; 3. Hudhud, the name of the cyclone that devastated parts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha; 4. Bachpan Bachao Andolan; 5. Aamir Khan; 6. Kabaddi; 7. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan; 8. Aral Sea; 9. The CSK's Pawn Negi and Suresh Raina; 10. New Zealand.

* * *

11. ELM Fabricius School; 12. Tiruvakkara (Villupuram District) and Sattanur (Perambalur District); 13. Janaki Ramachandran; 14. The flash in the lighthouse on the Marina; 15. M.S. Viswanathan; 16. Kutchery Road; 17. Ponnuswamy Hotel; 18. Nilgiris; 19. Deputy Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly; 20. They have women MPs in the 16th Lok Sabha.

In those 'Quit India' days

(Continued from page 7)

Sakuntala Karamchand, Dr. Rangachari, Dr. Srinivasachari and Dr. Suneetha were his assistants. Each final year student was assigned a third year student (I clinical year) to guide and help him/her. It was a common whispering campaign, justified and unjustified, that alleged that the clinics by the Chief would be at a peak when all the women students were present.

Meanwhile, I was continuing my efforts to get a place in the college cricket team. I do not remember the name of the captain – perhaps it was Gnanaolivu. During the pre-registration course I had attracted attention by taking 7 wickets as a fast bowler for the Sri Venkata Vilas Cricket Club against the RBCC School. The club was in Gream's Road, Nungambakkam. I did not progress much farther except for being 12th man for a match which was held in the YMCA grounds in Saidapet. During preclinical years I had to be content playing for the 'B' team. Bryan Shortt was the College captain then. He was known for his sixes and as a brilliant hockey player. He was a classmate of mine by 'overlap', seniors belonging to the April batch attending some classes with the December batch. My 'pestering' him (during the Bacteriology and Pathology classes) was of no avail!

In 1944, Kasturba Gandhi, who was also in prison with Mahatma Gandhi after his 'Quit India' call, was ill and penicillin which had just made

its appearance in England was flown to India for her treatment. But she succumbed to her illness. The agitation all over India continued and the hostels being closed, students had to find residence elsewhere. There was famine in Bengal with thousands dying. In Madras, the Madras Student Organisation, a Communist-oriented one, organised a delegation of medical students of III year to Final year, i.e. II MB and final MB students, to go to Bengal for medical relief work among the villagers.

Leading the team were Dr. S.A. Kabir, a very prominent participant at the time in the 'Quit India' demonstrations in the College, and Dr. E. Bala-krishnan, a 'hard core' Communist and a member of the Communist Party. We travelled to Calcutta where we were allotted to various relief 'camps'. A final year student, Kaliappan, and I went to Mithapukur village in 24 Parganas District, a couple of miles from Budge Budge station, which had to be reached on foot. The relief camp was a small school building. A Sikh doctor was in charge.

Calls of nature had to be answered in an open field adjoining the site and a tank nearby was where we had to bathe, wash clothes, and take water for drinking (after boiling it). A young man, Sunil Mukherji, was assigned as translator. He was a very pleasant person from whom I learnt two Bengali songs, popular at the time. It took a few days to get acclimatised to the rural life. But Kaliappan could not handle the

inconvenience and left in a very short time.

There was suddenly a demand for urgent medical relief in a neighbouring village, about five miles away, and we were asked to go there. Sunil and I trekked to that place every day, leaving early in the morning and returning in the evening passing through forest-like terrain – returning before dark to avoid large black scorpions. The Sardarji, in charge of the centre, was very happy with the work I did and gave me a testimonial which I still cherish. This additional work was done for ten days at the end of the six weeks that I had been assigned for relief work.

Back in Madras, the third year course continued from July 1944 and I stayed in the IOA as before. The clinical postings in the wards went on as usual and I had the unique opportunity of being posted in Col. McRoberts' (Superintendent of G.H.) unit to which Dr. S.K. Sundaram, a physician of high repute and a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi, was attached. Dr. Sundaram wore only khadi. This was the time of the 'Quit India' movement, but Col. McRoberts and Dr. SKS had great respect towards each other, though one was an Englishman and the other khadi wearer.

A much looked forward to annual function was scheduled during this period and much effort was put into organising the entertainment. When the function started precisely on time, the hall was full. As soon as Dr. Govinda Reddy came on the stage, the whole hall started re-

verberating with 'Down-Down...' and there was no chance for the entertainment to commence. Dr. Reddy called off the programme and the function came to an abrupt close to the disappointment of all those not involved in the shouting and yelling. The country was still in the grip of the 'Quit India' mood. Peace prevailed thereafter and there were no untoward incidents during the rest of the year.

When the academic course commenced, there was no pressure of examinations as the University examination in December 1944 was to be only on one subject, Pharmacology. Lectures on Medicine were taken by Dr. Thambiah, father of the renowned dermatologist, Dr. Arthur Thambiah, my classmate, Dr. Subramania Iyer on Hygiene, Dr. D. Govinda Reddy on Pathology (he was also Warden of the Madras Medical College hostel then located at Kelly's but which had been vacated by the students in protest against the Government order prohibiting hoisting the Tricolour in the hostel campus), Dr. Narayana Rao on Bacteriology (now called Microbiology) and Dr. Bala Sundaravadanam on Surgery. Dr. B.T. Krishnan, Professor of Physiology, had taken over the Principalship from Dr. A.L. Mudaliar. But in the context of the political situation at the time and the compulsion to adhere to the then Government rules, both Dr T. Krishnan and Dr. Govinda Reddy were not popular with the students.

(To be continued)

Dates for Your Diary

Till November 25: *Resurgence*, an exhibition of paintings, sculptures and installations by various artists (at Apparao Galleries @ The Leela Palace).

Pop People Forest Fantasy, an exhibition of paintings by P.G. Dinesh and Pravin Sawarkar (at Apparao Galleries @ Sandy's Cenotaph Road) and @ Sandy's Nungambakkam.

November 7: Concert: classical and contemporary music with Siegfried Mauser (piano) and Gottfried Schneider (violin) (at Goethe-Institut, 7.30 p.m.).

November 18: *Identity and Conflict: Expressions through Cinema* – a programme of short films presented by the curators, Anomaa Rajakaruna (in person), and Susanne Sachsse, Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, and Marc Sieggel (via skype video introduction). The main themes will be pursued further in six programmes in March/April 2015.

The films to be screened are: Helke Sander's film *Subjektitude* (1966, 4 min), a brief look at a woman's negotiations with gender relations while waiting at a bus stop.

Egyptian short film, *On a Monday* by Tamer El Said (2005, 10 min) suggests how a married couple can rediscover their love for one another through a slight change in their daily routine.

Karpo Godina's *Healthy People for Fun* (Yugoslavia 1971, 14 min) is a tribute to the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Vojvodina province in Serbia.

Subasri Krishnan's *This or That Particular Person* (India 2012, 26 min) reflects on issues of personhood and citizenship in the context of the Indian Unique Identification number project 2009.

18th of May by Supun Vishva-buddhi (Sri Lanka 2012, 12 min) refers to the day before the Sri Lankan armed forces claimed victory over the Tamil rebels.

Blames and Flames by Mohammadreza Farza (Iran 2012, 28 min) focusses on the targeted destruction of cinemas during the Iranian revolution of 1978/79

(At Goethe-Institut, 6.30 p.m.)

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