

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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The Fort at 375 deserves better

To The Chief Secretary Government of Tamil Nadu Fort St George Chennai 600 009

Dear Sir, Re: Fort St George at 375

This is to greet you on the occasion of our beloved Fort turning 375 years which landmark date will be on April 23rd of this year. We are sure that several celebrations and commemorative events are being planned by the Government to mark this historic milestone. It is heartening that at the time this anniversary has come

about, the seat of government is once again where it ought to be, namely within the Fort, which is where much of what we call modern India had its origins.

The following facts may not be new to you but we are once again bringing them to your kind attention as they are worth recalling and establish the greatness of our Fort – this was where the Indian army was born, this was where modern India's first bank (the Madras Bank) was set up, this was the birthplace of one of the oldest civic bodies of the world, the Corporation of Madras, now

Chennai. It was also where the health facility that we recognise as the General Hospital was set up in 1644, leading to our city today being an acknowledged capital of medical tourism. Of course, it goes without saying that modern governance as we know of it, and of which you and the Government are in charge, took shape here as did the oldest archive in the world for Governmental records, today the Tamil Nadu Archives. The list of the Fort's claims to greatness is practically inexhaustible. It is a record that behoves the Government to work at getting the Fort recognised as an UNESCO-listed World Heritage Precinct. A welcome attempt to achieve this was led by the Government a couple of years ago, and though that failed there is no reason why it should not be campaigned for with even greater vigour now.

Given this context, we also feel it is our bounden duty to bring to your notice that there are several aspects of the Fort's present condition that call for immediate action. The general level of upkeep has fallen over the years, especially in parts that are directly under the Government's purview. The car parking facilities within the Fort are completely haphazard and there are very few clearly marked pedestrian areas. With a huge parking lot in front of the Fort itself, and which lies unused for most of the year, it is indeed a pity that so many vehicles need to come into the Fort itself. It is time Government vehicles too used that lot, and made the Fort only a drop or pick-up area.

Secondly, the number of posters and hoardings that have come up within this heritage

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Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



One of the best known landmarks of North Chennai, this building is synonymous with the promotion of Tamil as a musical language. Strange though it may seem, that was not the view of the scholars and practitioners of Carnatic music till the 1930s. That was largely a circumstance of history, for much of Madras Presidency had, after the Cholas, been ruled by Telugu-speaking Vijayanagar rulers and Nayaks and, after them, the musical heartland of Tanjore came under the control of the Marathas.

When a group of thinkers, writers and musicians tried to set this imbalance right in the 1930s, they met with stiff opposition, especially from the Music Academy and the Indian Fine Arts Society (IFAS), the two established sabhas. However, the Tamil lobby had the support of stalwarts such as T.K. Chidambaramudaliar, Kalki R. Krishnamurthy and the singer M.S. Subbulakshmi. Most importantly, the movement was bankrolled by Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettyar.

The Tamil Isai Sangam came into existence in 1943 as the vehicle for this cause, the name being given by Rajaji. From its first year, it began hosting a concert season in December, challenging the monopoly of the Academy and the IFAS. The songs performed had to be only in Tamil. A suitable venue proved to be a problem and, for the first few years, it held its programmes in the Parish Hall of St Mary's Cathedral on Armenian Street. It later conducted programmes at the Museum Theatre.

In 1948, 23 grounds of land at the eastern end of the Esplanade were taken on lease for fifty years from the Corporation of Madras. Work began in 1949, by which time the Rajah had died. The design was by L.M. Chitale and the auditorium was the first of its kind in the city. Closely supervised by the Rajah's sons, Rajah Sir M.A. Muthiah Chettiar and M.A. Chidambaram, whose offices were located next door to the site, the auditorium rose quickly. The architect in an article also gave much credit for several elements in the design to Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, the first Finance Minister of independent India, who had become President of the Tamil Isai Sangam after the Rajah's passing.

The Raja Annamalai Mandram, a two storeyed building with constructed space of 20,000 square feet on the ground floor was ready in time for the music season of 1952. It was declared open by Rajaji on October 31st that year. It is a lavishly constructed structure with generous use of fine timber and perhaps one of the first buildings in the city to use mosaic instead of the more traditional granite. It is noteworthy for its combination of art deco with the traditional Chettinad style of architecture, the latter predominating in the woodwork in particular.

The auditorium was designed keeping acoustics in mind and soon became a favourite of performing artistes. The first floor hosts the Sangam's music college and also a gallery of instruments. The entrance has a statue of the founder unveiled in 1964 by Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, the Maharajah of Mysore, who was the next year to become the Governor of Madras.

Some major modifications were undertaken in 1968, to coincide with the silver jubilee of the Sangam. These were undertaken by S.L. Chitale, son of the man who had designed the original edifice. These changes, largely in the interior, were done to keep out the ambient noise, which had increased sharply in a decade. The seats, 866 in number, were padded and arranged in a circular fashion with

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Lessons for & from Pondy Festival

(By A Special Correspondent)

Last month saw the launch of what promises to be an annual fixture – a celebration of Pondicherry's heritage. Directly inspired by the Madras Week celebrations, it was spurred on by the recent collapse of the historic Mairie building in that city. The festival was very successful as far as a beginning went, with excellent participation by residents, conservationists and, above all, elected representatives. While this calls for deserved congratulations all around, it is also time for some reflection on how the event can be improved and taken forward in the future.

Unlike Chennai, where the battle for heritage conservation is more often than not a lost cause and the occasional victory is of the pyrrhic variety, Pondicherry has much going for it. For one, heritage enthusiasts and conservationists are not forever set on a collision course with the Government. That was reflected in the presence of the elected representatives at the festival. And, what's more, the Government has promised all possible help for the conduct of future festivals of this kind. That is not something that has happened in Chennai, despite Madras Week having seen eight editions thus far.

Secondly, owing to its never having expanded into a full metro, Pondicherry has retained a lot of its heritage. Most of the old buildings are still standing, especially in the White Town. There is also a strong realisation that tourism is a source of income for the city and this is being encouraged. While this may have resulted in an

The Fort at 375 deserves better

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precinct in recent years is truly alarming. These have been indiscriminately put up on all available surfaces and greatly detract from what is a unique historic enclave. We are sure you agree with us that the Fort's dignity as a seat of governance is much impaired by these.

We are also deeply concerned with the proliferation of snack bars and kiosks vending tea and coffee. You will agree with us that the presence of a live kitchen with minimum fire safety measures poses a threat not only to the built heritage but also to the people milling around it. In addition, such eateries are not maintained well and are surrounded by garbage. We also bring to your attention that a full-fledged vegetable and flower bazaar springs up each evening near the North Gate of the Fort. This may be a convenience for the employees of the Government, but it could also be a security hazard. It would be far better if a fair price shop is opened somewhere within the premises.

The *Namakkal Kavignar Maligai* has recently been refurbished and inaugurated. What

distresses us is that construction debris has still not been cleared from its rear. We felt strongly about the presence of a highrise inside a heritage precinct, but now that it is there, can we at least hope that debris from it will be cleared forthwith?

While we are highlighting these issues with the parts that fall under the Government's direct scrutiny, we are by no means stating that the parts under the control of the Army or the Archaeological Survey of India do not have issues of their own. We will be highlighting these problems to them separately.

We are addressing these thoughts of ours to you not with any intention to criticise but with the hope that the Fort, which is dear to all of us, can be restored to its full glory and celebrated this year. We trust this communication will be received in the right spirit and lead to a cleaning up and conservation exercise as well as a celebration.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

For Chennai Heritage

S. Muthiah

Editor, *Madras Musings*

Pondy Festival

(Continued from page 1)

overdose of showcasing – too many coffee shops, restaurants, bistros and bed-and-breakfast places, it is a refreshing change to see at least one Indian city that looks at development differently, as something that can be done even while retaining and putting the past to creative re-use.

That said, the festival needs to broadbase itself if it is to survive in the long run. It is currently restricted entirely to the old White Town. The other half – Black Town – was conspicuous by its absence. The only exception from the latter was Ananda Ranga Pillai's house, which was highlighted but there again it was only his connection with the French that was presented. This will not do. One of the reasons why Madras Week has sustained thus far is that efforts have been on to take it to all parts of the city. Even the reluctant northern wards have been roped in, albeit with marginal response, thanks to the repeated conduct of heritage talks and walks, besides events in schools. These have gone a long way in promoting awareness.

Another observation is that the local participation in the event's organisation in Pondicherry was at best muted. The catalysts are mainly people from North India or abroad who have made Pondicherry their base. This does run the risk of getting the festival depicted as an isolated celebration by a group that has no local roots. Getting people whose families have lived in Pondicherry for generations to become involved can change this. The festival can also make an effort to get the temples of Pondicherry highlighted – some such as the Manakkula Vinayakar shrine need no publicity, but others, such as the temple for Sengazhuneer Amman, which too is old, could do with some attention. The participation of schools in greater number would also bring in the parents, thereby making it a people's event.

In sum, we would give the Pondicherry heritage festival the thumbs up sign while, at the same time, patting the organisers of Madras Week on the back. The surest sign of success is when others begin to emulate an example.

Much ado over nothing

The telephone rang and *The Man from Madras Musings* answered it. A most diffident voice piped up, wanting to know if it was Sar speaking at the other end. MMM was not so sure as to which Sar was wanted. In these days of H1N1, the last thing anyone wants is an outbreak of SARS. But the voice at the other end then asked if it had the pleasure of speaking to MMM Sar. To this MMM agreed, whereupon the conversation proceeded rather on the lines of a Minister speaking to Queen Victoria – entirely in the third person. A sample is given below:

Voice (V): Good morning Sar. Will Sar be in his office this morning Sar?

lieve that. He wanted to know who else was on the committee and what ideas MMM would bring to the table. To all of this MMM replied, when he got a word in edgeways, that it was early days yet and there was no official communication of any kind. The reporter rang off, deeply incensed that MMM had not offered a bite of any sort.

The next day, the voice was back, with double the dose of diffidence. It begged Sar's pardon but what could it do Sar when its Sar had assigned it a different task the previous day. MMM wondered as to what prevented the voice from making a call to that effect, but that clearly was not in the rule book, written no doubt in

give it a nice contrast. The compound wall, however, remained a prominent eyesore. It always had posters on it and some were of such a lascivious nature that many a motorist would pause to gaze rapturously at them, only to be collided with at the rear by someone who did not pause to stand and stare.

Such accidents were more or less commonplace here and the locals had perfected a routine. The police would continue resting near a tree unless it was a particularly disruptive incident. In all other cases, those from nearby shops would direct traffic, the soda-vendor would give the injured a cooling drink and, after the usual colourful exchange of

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

MMM (M): Yes, but can I know why you are asking this?

V: Our Sar wants to invite Sar to be a part of a committee Sar. When can I call on Sar, Sar?

It transpired that a Sar in Government circles had read something that MMM wrote about and, rather than take offence, had decided to draft MMM into a committee that could hopefully set some wrongs right. MMM was flattered and immediately accepted. But that was not all. The voice at the other end had been instructed by the Sar to meet MMM in person and hand over an invitation and it would not rest until it had fulfilled its mission. It was in vain that MMM tried to explain that in this time and age a personal invitation was most unnecessary and an email ought to do the needful. The voice was shocked. It clearly belonged to an era when messages from panjandrams were brought in ornate scrolls on elephant back, accompanied by the tom-toming of drums and a retinue of dancing girls. A personal visit it had to be, said the voice and, so, MMM finally gave in. It was agreed that the voice, together with the body that embodied it, would visit MMM the next day and hand over the invitation in person. MMM half-wondered if he ought to put together a reception committee.

The next day, however, produced nobody. The voice was conspicuous by its absence. A day later, just as MMM was beginning to forget about it, there was a call from a newspaper reporter, who sounded all excited. Was it true, he asked, that MMM had been nominated to a committee? To this MMM replied that he was not so sure but the reporter was not willing to be-

1875. The voice then wanted to know if Sar was in Sar's office for the voice was a short distance away and could it therefore drop off the invitation. To this MMM agreed and after a considerable lapse of time, the voice and its owner appeared in person. The missive was handed over to MMM with much bowing and scraping. It requested MMM, along with a couple of others, to come to a Government office for a meeting on a certain date.

The appointed date duly arrived only to have the voice calling once again. The meeting, it said, was off, because the top Sar, whose idea the whole thing was, had been called away for some greater good. The new date, it said, would soon be informed to Sar and so could Sar keep himself free. In other words, MMM was in suspended animation or adjourned *sine die*. Such are the ways of Government.

Colours of Royapettah

Have you been to the Royapettah hospital of late? Before you take offence, let *The Man from Madras Musings* assure all of you that he does not wish you ill. All he means is that he wonders if you have recently passed by that historic edifice. In case you have, you may know what MMM is writing about.

Till a couple of years ago, this noble pile, by which MMM means the old building, was painted a sickly pink. It was then painted yellow for a while and then one day reverted to the old pink. Then there came a day last year when it became red, more or less the same shade as Central Station. And mind you, it did not look bad at all, particularly after the borders and the ornamental brick arches were painted white to

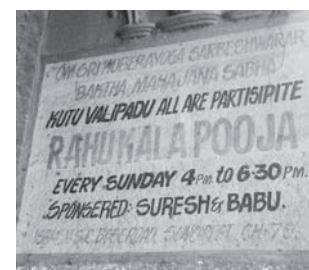
words of endearment between the collider and the collided, everyone would go his respective way.

For years the hospital and the local councillor put up appeals on the wall requesting that it be spared of posters. They grew plants below it to prevent easy access but that only added to the problem for the bushes provided a convenient place for committing nuisance, this despite a pay and use toilet being a stone's throw away. And then someone in the hospital decided to take matters in hand. The wall was scraped and given a rough finish to prevent posters being pasted. The bushes were removed and the wall was painted white. It looked lovely till the hospital no doubt discovered that it had a stock of green paint. For some reason they decided that the compound wall was the best place for it. And so bilious green clashes with the red and white. MMM shuts his eyes each time he drives by. Hopefully he will not be collided with.

Tailpiece

Walking into a temple recently, *The Man from Madras Musings* saw the notice seen in the picture below. Surely a place of worship ought not to have spite of any kind was MMM's first thought. But we are like that only.

– MMM



OUR
READERS
WRITE



Cooum 'Nature Trail' a cruel joke

Saree – sorry!

I agree that the colour picture that you published on the back page of MM, March 1st, was appealing.

I don't know if you have simply taken the second sentence of the caption from some catalogue, or if you have appended it. (Editor: It was the title of the exhibition.)

In any case, I found it rather amusing. The caption writer perhaps had the phrase "the whole nine yards" in his or her mind as can be gauged from the voluminous folds of the garment. That I appreciate very much.

What the caption is silent about is the style in which the saree is worn by the woman. I believe some holding back on the part of the caption writer is there. This for a heritage-conscious journal nostalgic for anything ancient is strange. (Editor: We saw it only as a picture, not as a bit of heritage or of the old being comfortable with the new. Perhaps we should have thought of the latter.)

C.G. Rishikesh
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Chennai 600 086

First appearance

K.S.S. Seshan, the author of the article *National Anthem & the Cousins* (MM, March 1st) writes that the article was originally published in *The Hindu* on March 15, 2009.

– The Editor

It is with mixed emotions, of anguish and amusement, I read the news that the Corporation of Chennai is seriously planning to develop a 'nature trail' along the Cooum at an estimated cost of Rs. 8 crore, no meagre sum.

Anguish at the fact that, instead of tackling the fundamental issue of restoring the Cooum to good health and making the water flow, the authorities are engaged in wasteful peripheral and non-essential activities like creating 'nature trails'. Amusement arises at the total ignorance and limited understanding of the authorities of the concept of a 'nature trail'.

I wonder what the teams comprising officials and non-officials learnt on their junkets not too far back, at public expense, to San Antonio and Singapore. Did they see 'nature trails' along banks of rivers and water bodies filled with untreated sewage, filth, garbage and stinking? Mention must be made here of the 'ostrich'-like behaviour of the authorities in raising the side walls of bridges across the Cooum, obviously to prevent us from seeing the ugly sights of the river. What about the stench and stink?

A play-back of the efforts to restore the Cooum is necessary to understand how the present situation has come to pass. The Cooum has been a victim of neglect and political foot-balling. Around the 1970s the then Government planned to make the Cooum navigable, and even today unused structures for boat landing and pick-up sites can be seen. With the change of government, this laudable project became 'untouchable' for close to two decades. You can imagine the disastrous consequences of such neglect.

In the mid-1980s, the Government of the UK, through its aid wing, provided a grant to the Government of Tamil Nadu, through which a team of consultants from the UK, experienced in managing water bodies, analysing water quality and recommending mitigation strategies, was deployed. A counterpart multidisciplinary team of officials was identified to work alongside the UK consultants. The Indian team was also given training in UK in various aspects of managing water bodies. (It should be remembered that the river Thames, which was once the most polluted river in Europe, has been restored, and today you can see salmon flourishing in its waters, which are also put to a variety of uses, including floating restaurants, enriching the London experience.) By the 1990s, the UK consultants completed their work and submitted a practical, time-based strategy for restoring the Cooum. Till today, no meaningful follow-up action has been taken on most of the recommendations in the report.

A revealing sidelight which needs mention is the fact that attempts were being made to sell these reports as wastepaper! The author had the unenviable task of mentioning this at a public function in the presence of an Honourable Minister, in the hope that the sale would be stopped.

Another thoughtless project that, fortunately, has been stalled by the present State Government for the time being is to provide connectivity from Chennai Port for container movement. This was to be done using a road elevated on huge solid

pillars erected in the bed of the Cooum, on which the containers would trundle through the heart of the city. The clearance of this multi-crore project does not appear to have been subject to public hearing. In addition to restricting flow of water in the Cooum, the only carrier of storm and flood waters, the associated impacts on security, noise, air quality, and the huge inconvenience in case any of these monster containers falls, do not appear to have been studied adequately and presented to communities living alongside the Cooum. With the large outlay provided for this project, it would have been possible to identify an alternative solution, if necessary, by providing larger outlays. The present proposal that compromises quality of life in the city for all time to come is very short-sighted. The project deserves to be shelved permanently.

Spending on peripheral issues only wastes scarce public money and will not solve the basic issue of cleaning and restoring the Cooum. The 'nature trail' is one such. The money identified for this purpose can be better spent on providing well-managed toilets for the public, improving the roads, and stormwater drains.

The issues involved in cleaning the Cooum do not require rocket science. The following only need to be done:

1. Plug all outfalls of untreated sewage. Many government and public bodies along the banks are also guilty.
2. Relocate all encroachers and unauthorised settlers along the banks. This will be the biggest challenge. But, with calibrated handling and assistance from credible NGOs, this will not be insurmountable. A proposal to construct a 23 km wall after removing the encroachments is a good idea.
3. Dredge the river to remove the deposits/sludge of decades. The selective testing of the inherent quality of the deposits is necessary to determine their toxicity and selection of suitable dumpyards. Disposal into the sea is not an acceptable option.
4. The possibility of using seawater to flush the river and return it, as is done in Dubai and some Gulf States, is worthy of consideration.
5. The above actions require large financial outlays. With India's present financial credibility, thrust towards national cleanliness, and concept of smart cities, institutions like the World Bank or Asian Development Bank should have no hesitation in coming forward to support this initiative. India is no stranger to these institutions.

Finally, without strong commitment, sustained unbiased political will, and a designated multidisciplinary team of officials, not susceptible to transfers, supported by reputable NGOs, nothing will change and the Cooum in its present state will continue to remain a blight on Chennai's face, as it seeks to project itself as an inviting and favourable destination for global investors.

A 'nature trail' along Cooum will not add value to the city.

P.M. Belliappa, IAS (RETD.)
Former Chairman, Tamil Nadu
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Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago

(Continued from page 1)

enough space between the aisles for the patrons to file in and out. The seats were also fixed on a gradient, thereby enabling those at the rear to get an unimpeded view of the stage. More importantly, the hall was enclosed with sound absorbing material that was aesthetically hidden behind teak panelling. The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, provided advice on acoustics and this ensured that the hall still is a delight to attend music programmes in.

The whole building is maintained very well, though it must be said that the seats in the auditorium are now ageing rapidly. The Mandram today serves as a popular venue for events in North Madras. But it is at its best in December when it hosts its annual festival and confers the title of Isai Perarignar on a senior musician/scholar.

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

THE EDITOR

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

ñ THE EDITOR

The best of Indian architecture

(Century) was described in 1522 by the Portuguese traveller Paes as the "best provided city in the world." An area of 60 square miles was covered by "innumerable lakes, waterways and gardens as large as Rome and very beautiful to sight."

Mandu in Madhya Pradesh, dating back to the 15th Century is now a ghost town and "its romance lives in the ballads of the tragic love of Muslim ruler Baz Bahadur and the Hindu beauty Rupmati."

The fort of Mandavagarh



Sanchi Stupa



Arjuna's Penance



Mandavagarh Fort



Humayun Tomb



Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus



Bahai Temple

towers majestically over a part of the Vindhya, isolated by a deep ravine. The Muslim invaders after defeating the Hindu ruler in 1304 built palaces, mosques, and tombs here in a wondrous architectural style.

Closer home at Mamallapuram is the 'Descent of the Ganges' or 'Arjuna's Penance', a grand sculpted frieze adorning a gigantic rockface measuring 30 metres in length and 15 metres in height.

Fatehpur-Sikri represents its most "sumptuous form" amalgamating Indian and Persian traditions.

The Great Stupa at Sanchi is supplemented with several stupas, each a hemispherical structure with a central chamber enshrining relics of a holy personage.

New Delhi, a creation of the British, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker and inaugurated in 1931, largely reflects the European Palladian style, but incorporates elements of Mughal, Buddhist, and Hindu architecture.

The next set of panels featuring cave temples and monas-

teries, largely a Buddhist tradition where a gracefully sculpted Buddha is the highlight. The Phase I of this architectural endeavour started in the 2nd Century and Phase II was completed in the 7th Century, only to be forgotten and abandoned, till the British, in their hunting expeditions, discovered them in the 19th Century. You travel from the 6th Century Mahesh Murti at Elephanta, a cave temple atop a hill, to the rock-cut Kailasha Natha temple at Ellora of the 8th Century,

Then it's on to the Golden Temple at Amristar (re)built in 1764, after the earlier Hari Mandir Sahib of 1589 had been destroyed by Afghan invaders.

The Convent of St. Francis of Assisi in Goa is representative of the Portuguese creations in the 16th to 17th Century period. Then you visit the Jantar Mantar of 1728 CE in Jaipur, built by Sawai Jai Singh II as a cluster of five observatories and used even today for weather forecasting.

You then, as you move on to the more familiar Chatrapati

interspersed with Luna Vasahi at Mt. Abu and the Kandanya Mahadev temple at Khajuraho, which is well known for its sculptural friezes representing erotic postures – all of these combining devotion with breathtaking works of art in mountainous settings.

Rani ki Vav in Gujarat (1068 CE), Tikse Monastery in Ladakh, and the Man Mandir Palace showcase Hindu creations predating the Mughal Qutb Minar and the Jami Masjid in Champaner, Gujarat. Humayun's Tomb, the finest Muslim mausoleum which, should serve as a model for others, features a *charbagh* (an enclosed garden divided into four quarters by water channels representing the rivers of paradise) with the tomb at the centre. Akbar's Tomb and the Taj Mahal follow Humayun's tomb in layout and style. Gol Gumbaz (1659) is the tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah and symbolises Indian architectural ingenuity and sophistication. Its dome 37.9 metres high is the largest in India. The Great Imambara in Lucknow is a grandiose complex built by Asf-ud-Dauli as flood relief work in 1784.

From here, the architectural variety moves faster with minimalism predominating, starting with art deco re-lived in the

Liberty Cinema in Mumbai. Chandigarh was designed by the French architect Le Corbusier, appointed by Jawaharlal Nehru, who was criticised for imposing Western values on Indian ethos. But the erstwhile province of Punjab needed a new capital after its western half went to Pakistan along with its capital Lahore and Nehru, looking to the future, wanted something modern. The Akshardam Temple is a modern re-creation of temple architecture. The Baha'i temple in Delhi, designed by the Iranian designer Fariburz Sabha, represents a lotus opening its petals at dawn. The 5600-metre-long Rajiv Gandhi Sea Link connecting north Mumbai with south Mumbai is an aesthetically designed engineering marvel built across the sea along the

The men who built Mylapore's temple

The annual festival at the Mylapore Kapaleeswarar Temple will start a week from now. The deities will be brought out on various processional mounts twice a day for ten days. Some events are, of course, more important than others – these being the Adhikara Nandi sevai (Day Three), the Vrshabha Vahanam (Day Five), the car festival (Day Seven), the Arupathumovar (Day Eight) and the Kalyanam (Day Ten). The devout will throng the four mada streets on all days; their numbers rising to unmanageable levels on the eighth day in particular.

Even as Kapali goes around the four mada streets accompanied by the other deities, those that watch the procession are probably doing what has been a practice for several centuries. There is no denying that the Kapali temple is an ancient one, having featured in the works of the Nayanmars of the 7th Century and after them in other literary creations. Sambandar, in his *Poompavai Pathikam*, lists a festival for each month of the year and most of these are observed even now. And yet, there are unsolved mysteries about the shrine. Did it really stand on the seashore at one time? Why are there no inscriptions from the times of the Cholas in the present temple?

Did the Portuguese destroy the temple or was it because of war or did the sea rise up and swallow it? There are no certain answers, but almost everyone is agreed on the fact that the temple was relocated to where it stands now and was rebuilt there 'around three hundred years ago'. As to who built the shrine has also been a matter of debate.

A couple of publications by current day scholars throw some additional light on the present temple and its sub-shrines. The first of these is *The Diaspora of the Gods, Modern Hindu Temples in an Urban-Middle Class World* by Joanne Punzo Waghorne (OUP 2004). The second is *The View from Below, Indigenous Society, Temples and the Early Colonial State in Tamil Nadu, 1700-1835*, by Kanakalatha Mukund (Orient Longman 2005). A study of these helps to locate the period of reconstruction of the Kapali temple with greater precision. More importantly, it identifies the men who were responsible for the work. Read in conjunction with the playwright Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar's autobiography, *Yen Suyacharitai* (1963) we get a more or less complete

– K. Venkatesh

picture. This article is based on what is written in these accounts.

Waghorne in her book dwells at length on the details of the temple as given in Colin Mackenzie's manuscripts. He had arrived in Madras in 1783 and after 13 years' military service, began devoting his time to Indology, balancing the demands of his hobby with those of his professional career which culminated in his becoming the first Surveyor General of India. By the time of his death in 1821, he had collected a huge number of manuscripts, besides maps and books. Among these is an account of the Kapali temple with a sketch of the shrine, with the various parts marked and ascribed to the men who built each of them. Waghorne surmises that this particular manuscript may have been done between 1796 and 1800.

by Sriram V.

The sketch gives credit for much of the temple to Mootoopam Mood, who from Mukund's work can be identified as Nattu Muthiappa Mudali, a prominent member of the Tuluva Vellalar community. Mukund, who bases her writing on extensive research at the Tamil Nadu Archives, has Muthiappa Mudali as the 'original dharmakarta of the temple' in the early 18th Century. This tallies with Waghorne's information from the Mackenzie manuscript, which recognises that Muthiappa Mudali renovated the shrine to the Goddess, which was 'an old church' (presumably used here as a synonym for a temple). He constructed shrines for Jagadiswarar (which still exists on the eastern front of the temple) and Sundareswarar shrine. He also built the small *gopuram* that is on the western wall of the temple. Waghorne states that the present contours of the temple owe their construction to Muthiappa Mudali, but points out that two sub shrines built by him – one to the Sun God on the eastern side and another to Bhadrakali on the western side facing the present day Singaravelar shrine have since vanished. She also has it that the multi-tiered eastern *gopuram* was built by him but, when read in conjunction with Sambanda Mudaliar's account, that is debatable.

It is Mukund who describes in

detail as to the exact contributions of later *dharmakartas*. She writes that the descendants of Muthiappa Mudali handed over the management of the temple to Ponnambala Vadyar and Kanakasabai Pandaram. Considering that a street that is just next to the temple commemorates the former, we can surmise that the temple had acquired its present boundaries within a generation after Muthiappa Mudali. The next major change happens in 1749 when, with the restitution of Madras to the British, San Thomé-Mylapore also becomes part of East India Company territory. Whereupon the head *conicopoly* of the Export Warehouse and later *dubash* of Governor Saunders, Kumarappa Mudali, became the *dharmakarta*.

The temple was by then in a 'ruinous condition'. Kumarappa, who has a street named after him in Mylapore and another in the Seven Wells area of George Town, found the temple lands encroached upon by people of 'foreign religions'. The four Mada streets had become mere lanes. The temple was barely functioning, with daily worship being suspended owing to want of funds. Using his high office to good effect, Kumarappa bought off the encroachers and reclaimed the lands. He rebuilt the temple walls and tank, had the four main streets broadened and planted coconut trees on their periphery. He had the processional icons made, fashioned carriages and mounts, commissioned temple jewellery and recruited temple servants and dancing girls, for whom he had houses built.

After Kumarappa, his brother Nattu Subbaraya, who also has a street named after him in Mylapore, took over as trustee and he, in turn, was succeeded by Kasi Mudali. During the latter's tenure, there was evidently an extensive reconstruction of the temple, for Waghorne, quoting from Mackenzie, states that the 'Cabalasewara pagoda' was built by 'Bagavintorayer, Causy Mood and Coomy Valappa Mood'. The Causy Mood was evidently Kasi Mudali. By 1800, Kasi Mudali's son Masilamani Mudali had succeeded to the trusteeship. But the Tuluva Vellalars were not happy with his management and petitioned the Board of Revenue (BOR) for his removal. A Native Committee appointed by the BOR went into great detail in its investigation and discovered that Kasi Mudali had nominated



The great festival in Mylapore – (Courtesy: Vintage Vignettes.)

five people to succeed him.

Three were considered to be suitable by the Committee and these three were Pammal Subbaraya Mudali, Kovur Vaidyanatha Mudali, merchant of the East India Company, and Coonra Vellaiyappa Mudali (this being Mackenzie's Coomy Valappa Mood). Vaidyanatha Mudali was also trustee of the Chintadripet Adipuriswara temple and has a street named after him in that area.

It would appear that Coonra Vellaiyappa Mudali's line became extinct after him, for the Kovur and Pammal families handled temple affairs for a time. Pammal Subbaraya Mudali is recorded to have conducted the temple festivals splendidly for over ten years, spending about 20 or 30,000 pagodas in constructing the temple chariot and gifting gold and silver vessels. In 1810, his passing created a vacancy. The Tuluva Vellalars petitioned the Collector of Madras, F.W. Ellis (he of *Tirukkural* fame) to entrust the post of *dharmakarta* to Ayya Mudali, commemorated in a street in Chintadripet. Within five years, however, the community deemed Ayya Mudali to be old and infirm and requested that Kovur Sundara Mudali, the last Chief Merchant of the East India Company, be given the responsibility instead. The Company refused and Ayya Mudali remained in charge despite his 'old age and infirmities', whatever they were. This was despite Sundara Mudali having sponsored the annual festival in 1821 at a cost of 200 pagodas and constructed 'useful buildings' within the temple. Kovur Sundara Mudali, incidentally, is remembered chiefly for bringing the composer Tyagaraja to Madras in 1837. His palatial

house on Bunder Street still survives in a decrepit state. A long street in Mylapore commemorates him and it has, over time morphed into Sundareswarar Swamy Street!

The non-controversial Pammal line appears to have served the longest, lasting well over a century. Pammal Vijayaranga Mudaliar, who was in the Education Department of the Government, served as trustee till his passing in 1895 after which his elder son, Pammal Ayyasamy Mudaliar, held the post till 1905 when he resigned on his being appointed a District Munsiff.

The trusteeship passed to Vijayaranga Mudaliar's younger son Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, the playwright. He remained trustee till his appointment as a judge of the Small Causes Court in 1924. According to him, it was during his time that the eastern *gopuram* was built, thanks to a businessman of Triplicane whose name was subsequently forgotten and whom Sambanda Mudaliar refers to only as Gopuram Chettiar! It was also Sambanda Mudaliar who got the tank steps laid out. The seed money of Rs. 5000 came from the bequest of a *sanyasi* who had collected money for this purpose. But the total estimate came to Rs 1 lakh. When local residents balked at the expense, Sambanda Mudaliar hit upon the idea of inscribing donors' names on the steps. This caught public fancy and money came in. The names of the donors can still be faintly made out.

The temple management was taken over by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board following its creation in the 1920s and the concept of hereditary trusteeship ceased thereafter.

● Is this the answer to

Making T'Nagar world class?

(Continued from last fortnight)

Here are some suggestions to decongest the Theagaroya Nagar area. Many of these can be implemented without too much difficulty and within a short time frame.

Pedestrianisation: It should be the aim to achieve pedestrianisation of the retail core area around Panagal Park, part of Theagaroya Road, G N Chetty Road, North Usman Road and South Usman Road.

South Usman Road could be used as a 'pedestrian only' zone and no vehicles permitted in the designated area with bollards managed by Police. The eastern side of South Usman Road is connected with a series of side roads. Hence, as part of the streetscape, partial vehicle access to South Usman Road using connecting streets (Sarojini Ramasamy Street, etc.) could be achieved. This will allow the entire eastern side of South Usman Road to be a 'pedestrian only' area with limited access to traffic. At night, loading/unloading vehicles can access the shops effectively managing/using the bollards. By pedestrianisation and stimulating the retail development along other streets in the area and subsequently creating alternative pedestrian circulation patterns, some of the pressure will be taken off Ranganathan Street and Usman Road.

Pondy Bazaar is one of the oldest shopping areas of T'Nagar and could be transformed into a much more pleasurable shopping experience by introducing pedestrianisation and traffic calming measures in the public realm. The final stretch of Theagaroya Road (from Sivagnanam Street/Srinivasa Road upto Panagal Park) should be fully pedestrianised which will allow pedestrians to walk from Pondy Bazaar to the bus station at South Usman through one extended car-free zone. The next stretch of Theagaroya Road (between Sivagnanam Street/Srinivasa Road and Sivaprakasam Street/Muthukrishnan Street) could be redesigned as a Traffic Calm Area. While all through-traffic would be diverted, visitors to Pondy Bazaar can park their cars in nearby Multilevel Car Parks (MLCP) accessible from G N Chetty Road and Venkatanarayana Road. This will ensure that the traffic load on Theagaroya Road is reduced significantly.

One carriageway left on both sides of the street will leave space for short parking and a substantial pedestrian space in the middle of the road. The low traffic load and slow speed of cars will make crossing the street for pedestrians easy.

Along this whole stretch of Pondy Bazaar the existing street vendors along the pavement can be moved to stalls in the central axis of the street. These permanent stalls will have no

● by A. Shankar
Head – Strategic
Consulting, JLL, India

'backside', as they will be designed to house four vendors facing all sides. In this way ample space will be created for as much as a large footfall between the shops on both sides of the road and the street vendors' stalls in the middle of it. In the fully pedestrianised stretch, enough space will become available to add amenities and street furniture.

Sky walks: Approximately 40 per cent of the pedestrian

traffic during weekdays is transit users, who switch their mode of commute from rail to bus or vice versa. Hence, it is evident that there is a requirement for a skywalk that interlinks Mambalam Railway Station and T'Nagar Bus Terminus. This skywalk will reduce travel time for transit users. It will also reduce the pedestrian count to mainly shoppers, thereby reducing pedestrian conflict along Ranganathan Street and Usman Road.

Multilevel car parking: Pedestrianisation of streets in the central area of T'Nagar with multilevel car park buildings (MLCPs) at the edges of the pedestrian area will make users of the retail area in T'Nagar park and then walk to their final destinations. Viable locations for surface car and two-wheeler parking would be possible at Theagaroya Road. MLCPs could be at Anandhan Street, Theagaroya Nagar bus terminus, Prakasam Road and Dr Nair Road junction.

Dedicated hawker zones: The fundamental right of a citizen of India to do business as a hawker is recognised nationally.



The Ranganathan Street crowd.

Three types of hawker activity is found in T'Nagar: (i) areas with a concentration of newly-built permanent street vendor stalls, (ii) street vendor zones, allowing all kinds of stationary, peripatetic and mobile street vending, and (iii) zones where no street vending is allowed (besides the newly built permanent street vendor stalls).

Much of the street vendors' merchandise falls into the category 'impulse buys'. Street vendors are an important part of the attraction of T'Nagar for visitors and form an integral part of the lively street atmosphere of T'Nagar. Relocating (or 'hiding') street vendors into multi-storey buildings is therefore not the solution.

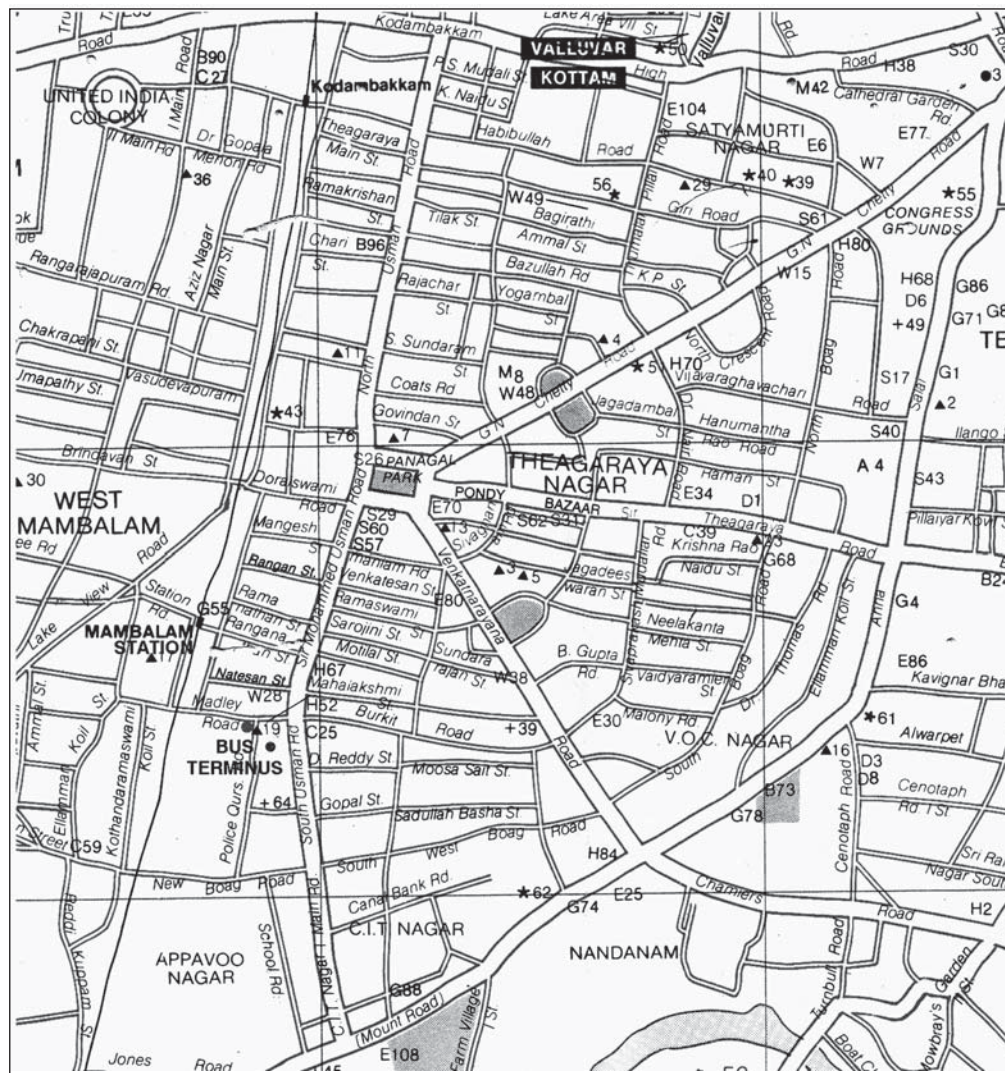
Considering their location along the streets with the highest footfall, the particular location and orientation along the streets and the amount of space allocated for the new street vendor stalls should be carefully chosen and strictly monitored to ensure they do not restrict the flow of pedestrians. The space in the newly built street vendor stalls should be allo-

cated according to the type of merchandise, in order to create/keep a concentration of certain shopping categories that work well, together with other retail category in the area. This will help to create a market niche for each concentration of street vendors and attract more visitors.

Implement feeder system: In order to provide connectivity for the commuters using bus transportation, a mini-bus feeder system should be operated along defined routes within T'Nagar. The feeder bus nodes should be located near/at major collection points and should integrate multiple transport options, including bus, rail and multilevel parking. In the long-term, additional feeder loops can be created to integrate the Metro stations along Anna Salai with the feeder system and transit hubs within T'Nagar. The feeder system can be a fleet of mini buses/mini vans which have easy manoeuvrability. These vehicles can be battery-operated/CNG eco-friendly vehicles. With more feeder stops, this could act as a neighbourhood-friendly transport system. The Mini Bus Feeder System can connect all T'Nagar and all transit nodes in a loop without any major investment on infrastructure. By implementing it effectively, it will promote public transportation and increase patronage to major public transport modes.

Improve three-wheelers' (autos) circulation pattern: There are currently more than 40 unauthorised auto stands and only very few authorised ones in the T'Nagar area. The current locations are demand driven and do not follow any standard protocol. It is proposed that each auto stand is limited to 8 autos in the commercial area and 5 in residential areas. The nodes would be integrated with the roadway design of arterials and sub-arterial roads. The auto stands should not be located within 50m of major intersections or within 20m of minor intersections.

Effective traffic circulation and planning: Traffic and transportation planning is an integral process in the overall planning for redevelopment of an area. The major challenges in T'Nagar are elimination of conflict between transit traffic



(Continued on page 7)



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

1. Which film won the Best Picture Oscar this year?
2. The actor who achieved cult status for playing Mr. Spock in *Star Trek* passed away recently. Name him.
3. On which date this February was 'Science for Nation Building' the theme?
4. The Union Budget, in an effort to improve quality of life of common man, has proposed the launch of the JAM trinity. What is JAM?
5. Who smashed the fastest 150 in ODIs, off just 64 balls, recently?
6. According to a recent World Bank report, environmental damage to which World Heritage Site is costing India Rs. 1,290 crore each year?
7. Name the fourth Indian cricketer who was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame on February 19th?
8. The Chinese New Year that started on February 19th is the Year of the...?
9. Name the Dadasaheb Phalke and Padma Bhushan awardee, who held the Guinness World record for producing the highest

number of films (over 150), who passed away recently.

10. India and the US on February 19th held their first-ever dialogue on what institution and other multilateral issues in Washington?

* * *

11. Name the celebrated cinematographer and director, credited with introducing the zoom shot in Indian cinema in *Uthama Puthiran*, who passed away recently.

12. What distinct edifice, identified with Chennai on the silver screen, occupies most of what was once called Nari Medu or Hog's Hill?

13. Which Saivite saint was once the Jain monk Marulnikkiyar?

14. Which was the first art deco building in Chennai to be designed by an Indian?

15. What iconic institution began circa 1840 as a shop selling the publications of the Wesleyan Missionaries?

16. What is there now on Radhakrishnan Salai where the erstwhile shed for the trams stood?

17. If one is thumbing through an *Original Vel* publication, what is the person following?

18. Which school in Chennai houses the Sivakami Pethachi Auditorium?

19. What was the former name of Raja Muthiah Road in Chennai?

20. Name the Chennai-based businesswoman named in Forbes' 'Asia's 50 Power Businesswomen 2015' list.

(Answers on page 8)

The Auroville dream

This is what the modern youth came to do

On the 28th February 1968 the youth of the world came to lay the foundation stone of Auroville, the town dedicated to the youth of the world.

*A boy and a girl
from many countries
came to Auroville
bringing with them a handful of earth
from their country.*

*The earth of all lands was put
into the foundation-stone structure
as a symbol
of their determination
to realise a true universal harmony*

• **Where is Auroville situated**

Auroville is mainly in the state of Tamil Nadu but also covers some area in Pondichery. It is planned to cover an area of about 15 sq. miles.

• **Auroville – A glimpse**

A modern and beautiful township with provision for about 50,000 residents in the main town, 20,000 in the model villages in its green belt, and 30,000 in its subsidiary projects, Auroville will combine the modern amenities of living, with artistic beauty. The town is being developed on a circular plan of urbanisation, giving equal place to the four fundamental aspects of man's activity:

- Dwelling – Residential Zone
- Work – Industrial Zone
- Culture – Cultural Zone
- Social Relations – International Zone

At the centre of the town, a Park of Unity will be formed by a crown of gardens overhanging a lake which will surround the Sanctuary of



The Matrimandir.

Truth with the Matrimandir. The Sanctuary of Truth, by its form and position, will be the heart of the town, the dominating point of Auroville opening to the Light.

Each Zone will occupy its position and importance in relation to the spiritual centre of the town, which will dominate the architecture ensemble and will be a constant reminder of the "raison d'être" of Auroville.

The Matrimandir, at the centre of Auroville, has a shape symbolising the fundamental unity of creation. Its golden sphere emerges out of the earth crater. In its centre, there is a luminous crystal which reflects the rays of the sun, thereby lighting the four petal-shaped mediation areas around the crystal.

The names given by the Mother for the twelve gardens surrounding the Matrimandir are: Existence; Consciousness; Bliss; Light; Life; Power; Wealth; Utility; Progress; Youth; Harmony; and Perfection

At some distance stands a lotus-shaped urn in white marble which contains handfuls of soil from many nations that were blended on February 28, 1968 to symbolise the coming together of nations.

(Extracted from *Sri Aurobindo's Action*, October 1971. Courtesy: *Sri Aurobindo's Action*)

Making T'Nagar world class?

(Continued from page 6)

and retail (shopping) traffic and restricting conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Coordination of signal systems at all conflict nodes along with regulation of parking will improve free flow of traffic without any congestion.

The existing circulation of buses around T'Nagar bus terminus causes congestion at the intersections/bus terminus entry and exit. A new circulation route for the buses exiting from the terminus could be developed through Muthurangan Road. The traffic circulation to Aranganathan subway through New Boag Road and North Road in West CIT Nagar can be integrated in this circulation to minimise conflicts and facilitate traffic circulation.

By extending the South Usman flyover across the intersection of South Usman Road and Madley Road the impact of the North-South through traffic can be reduced locally. At the same time the measure should allow for increase in traffic capacity of Madley Road in the East-West direction, which will help divert some of the traffic from around Panagal Park-South Usman and Duraisamy Roads.

Existing infrastructure augmentation: Existing infrastructure should be augmented to accomplish traffic and transportation-related objectives. These include extension of South Usman Road flyover and Mahalingapuram flyover, ROB along Venkatnarayana Road, ROB along South Boag Road, etc. Extension of these ROB shall provide long-term free movement of transit traffic along the arterial roads such as Usman Road, Burkit Road, Venkatnarayana Road, Thanikachalam Road, South Boag Road etc. thereby passing the core shopping area without mixing into the shoppers' trip and destination.

The existing bus terminus has a major impact on the traffic circulation in South Usman Road, C I T Nagar First Main Road, and Madley Road. In order to minimise conflicts, the bus terminus has to be relocated. The existing T'Nagar Bus Terminus could retain the number/frequency of origin and destination buses, but the augmentation of buses can be split to two alternative locations. The increment of buses to accommodate the future demand/part of festive demand may be distributed first near

Valluvar Kottam (Thirumalai Pillai Road/Arcot Road Junction) followed by Saidapet (after the completion of metro station). This will eliminate future increase in bus traffic (originating at existing terminus) currently accessing T'Nagar from the major roads. Revised bus route circulation needs to be prepared which will ease the traffic congestion in South Usman Road and C I T Nagar First Main Road.

Effective use of open spaces: Pedestrianisation and traffic calming of the streets around Panagal Park offers the single greatest opportunity to create a world class urban space as the heart beat of T'Nagar. A large, hard, landscaped square can be created that will blend perfectly with the soft green landscaping of the adjacent Panagal Park. In the middle of the square a dramatical sculptural building can be added. The building will sit right at the end of the long vista of Theagaroya Road and form the perfect landmark for T'Nagar. The building could be used (as the backdrop) for cultural events, performances, exhibitions and double as the entrance/exit for pedestrians to/from the MLCP.

Existing underused market

building along the western side of Panagal Park forms a barrier between Usman Road and the Park. It should be replaced with an attractive user-friendly building that houses a range of food and beverage outlets. The F & B outlets will offer an al-fresco eating/drinking experience overlooking the peaceful greenery of Panagal Park. Different forms of passive recreation should be introduced into the Park to make it more lively and attractive to visitors with, for example, a small amphitheatre, a wet area with a pond and jet fountain for children to enjoy. On the northern and southern side of Panagal Park a row of permanent street vendor stalls can be introduced. To add to the cultural flavour of the area around Panagal Park, the street vendors here should sell not ordinary goods but preferably arts and crafts and souvenirs for visitors and tourists.

Ranganathan Street and the western side of South Usman Road have been one of the most commercially thriving and, consequently, most congested areas in T'Nagar. With the right incentives Rameswaram Street could develop into a really attractive shopping street that

will invite people to take from Mambalam Station this alternative route towards South Usman and Nageswaran Roads, avoiding the main crowds.

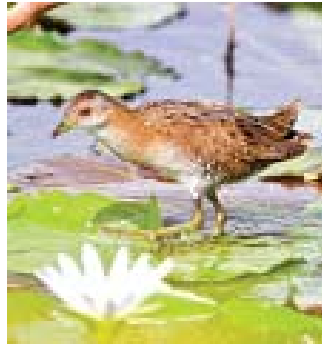
For T'Nagar to retain its position as a Shopping Destination it needs to focus on not only retail but also a range of entertainment, leisure, food and beverage outlets. The demand for all of these is growing strongly. Addressing the quality of the public realm in T'Nagar will be a first step in creating the right environment for new up-marking initiatives in retail, leisure and recreational developments. Government can do its part in promoting these developments by setting the right example with initiatives in the equally important, not-for-profit cultural sector.

Government should create a special unit with 'Cluster Managers'. These persons will work closely together with all relevant shop-owners, business-owners and residents in the different areas on how to achieve the goal of a more vibrant, high end and distinctive character for the different clusters that will benefit all parties involved. (Courtesy: *Our Building & Construction*)

(Concluded)



Amur Falcon (Pix: Dr. Muthu Narayanan)



Baillon's Crake (Pix: Dr. Muthu Narayanan)



Blue-throated flycatcher (Pix: Dr. R. Bhanumathi)



Orange-breasted Pigeon (Pix: Umesh Mani)



Chestnut-winged Cuckoo (Pix: Umesh Mani)

Birds in our backyards

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a global event that happens during February 13-16 every year. This year, the sub-event in India was the Campus Bird Count. The Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS) co-ordinated the count in Tamil Nadu, with Subramanian Sankar anchoring the event.

List of participating schools and colleges:

The School-KFI, University of Madras, Stella Maris College, Vivekananda College, Sishya School, Dharmambal Polytechnic, Chettinad Vidyashram, Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering, Marudam Farm School (Tiruvannamalai), Ol-

cott Memorial School, IIT – Madras, Kalakshetra, Anna University, Women's Christian College, Madras Christian College.

Tamil Nadu – 323 species recorded, 739 check lists

Coimbatore – 221 species
Tirunelveli – 182 species
Chennai – 133 species

Top 5 Hot Spots in Tamil Nadu (Most species recorded)

Mittanamalli Wetlands, Thiruvallur
Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai
Kannankurichi Lake, Salem
National Institute of Technology, Trichy
Koonthakulam Bird Sanctuary, Tirunelveli

Top 5 Hot Spots in Chennai (Most species recorded)

IIT – Madras
Theosophical Society, Chennai
Olcott Memorial School, Chennai
Guindy National Park, Chennai
The School-KFI, Chennai

Rare sightings

Booted Warbler, Virudunagar – Sharan Venkatesh
Ruddy Breasted Crake,

Mittanamalli Wetland, Thiruvallur – Pronoy Baidya
Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, IIT Madras – Susy Varughese
Citrine Wagtail, IIT Madras – Anshuman Sarkar
Egyptian Vulture, Tuticorin – Dr. Muthu Narayanan
Orange-breasted Pigeon, IIT Madras – Umesh Mani
Yellow-throated Bulbul, Vellore - Hari Hariharan
Blue-winged Leafbird, Vellore – Hari hariharan
Sri Lanka Green-Pigeon, Coimbatore – The Nature Trust
Amur Falcon, Tuticorin – Dr. Muthu Narayanan
Sykes Warbler, Trichy – Arun Jeeva.
(Courtesy: MNS Bulletin)

Sighting Raptors

Of the 69 Raptor species in India, 35 of them are known to be seen in Chennai and its environs. In fact, Gnanaskandan K. has recorded sighting 20 of them in and around Chennai.

The presence of a Raptor in an area indicates a very healthy status for that ecosystem.

MNS intends to start a Field Project in March 2015, to run through February 2016, to scout for the remaining 15 species as well as ensuring the conservation of the areas where the 20 species have been seen.



Till May 23: *Modernist Paradigms, Nativist Leanings*, an exhibition of paintings by M. Senathipathi, one of the founder members of the Cholamandal Artists' Village, and a veteran whose art practice spans more than 5 decades. His works have the quality of timelessness with the artist having passed into history as one of pioneers that configured the Madras art movement (at Forum Art Gallery).

Till March 23: *Unbound, Line That Traverses Elements*, an exhibition of drawings of the script in a representational form by Chantal Jumel (at the Apparao Infinity).

Till March 26: *Four Expressions*

From Auroville, a group show of mixed media works including ceramics, metal, wood and canvas showcasing diverse sculptural works of four Auroville artists, Adil Writer, Anamika, Henk Van Putten and Priya Sundaravalli. (at Apparao Galleries).

Till March 30: *Unfurling the Visual*, an exhibition of paintings by Neeta Gajam & Rajesh Patil (at Apparao Galleries @ Sandy's (Cenotaph Road) and @ Sandy's (Nungambakkam).

Till March 31: *Impersonations Impersonating enacting icons, Gandhi/MGR*, an exhibition of photos by Cop Shiva (at The Leela Galleria, Apparao Galleries @ The Leela Palace).

Answers to Quiz

1. *Birdman*; 2. Leonard Nimoy; 3. February 28th (National Science Day); 4. Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar and Mobile; 5. A.B. De Villiers against West Indies; 6. Sunderbans; 7. Anil Kumble; 8. Goat/sheep; 9. D. Rama Naidu; 10. United Nations.

* * *

11. Aloysius Vincent; 12. The Central Station; 13. Apparao or Tirunavukkarasar; 14. National Insurance Building on NSC Bose Road; 15. Higginbotham's; 16. TANGEDCO's facilities near the junction of Radhakrishnan Salai and Royapettah High Road; 17. Horse racing; 18. M.C.T.M. Chidambaram Chettyar Matriculation School; 19. Sydenham's Road; 20. Akhila Srinivasan, the MD of Shriram Investments Limited.

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