

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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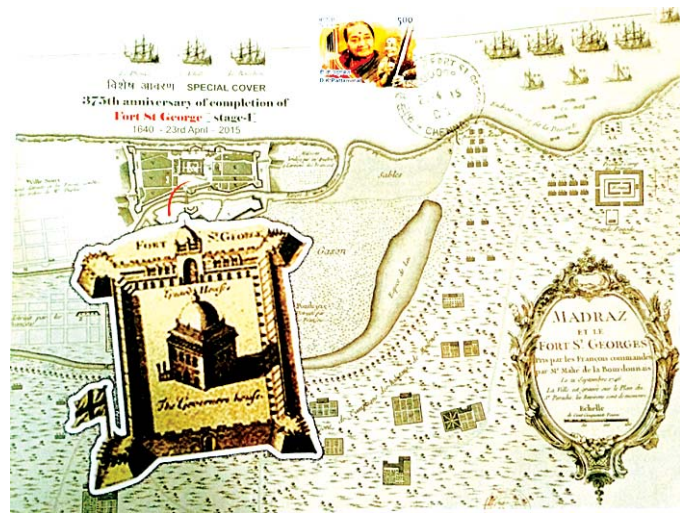
May 1-15, 2015

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## A muted Fort celebration

(By A Special Correspondent)

As was to be expected, the landmark date of April 23, 2015 came and went with hardly a sound. The 375<sup>th</sup> birthday of Fort St George was a muted affair, with the principal occupants of the Fort – the Government, the Legislature, the Army and the Navy – treating it as a regular working day with not a sign of any celebration. The one bright spot was the event organised by the Archaeological Survey of India. The prime movers behind this too were private enthusiasts and had it not been for them, our Fort would not have had even this low-key commemoration. It shows the kind of importance that is assigned to history and heritage in our State.



D.H. Rao's celebratory cover.

The highlight

That said, it must be placed on record that the event put together by individual enthusiasts and the ASI was a colourful and well planned one. It was held, most appropriately, in the Fort Museum and, most importantly, was brief and began and ended on time. The highlight

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## Killing heritage for beautification

How would you classify the beach road aka Kamaraj Salai? Well kept is what we would consider it. A broad walkway on one side that affords a wonderful view of the sea and, beyond it, the harbour, and, on the other, a slightly narrower footpath, walking on which you get a close look at some of the best heritage buildings in the city. Yet, our Government, no matter who is in power, considers this not enough and wastes enormous sums in unnecessary additions to the beach, none of which would strictly qualify as beautification. This is nothing but a waste of public money that could be spent elsewhere.

In the past, we have railed (mostly fruitlessly, we must admit) about the rockery, the artificial fountain and the gazebo. Now we see yet another useless activity in progress – demolition of the compound wall of all the

• by The Editor

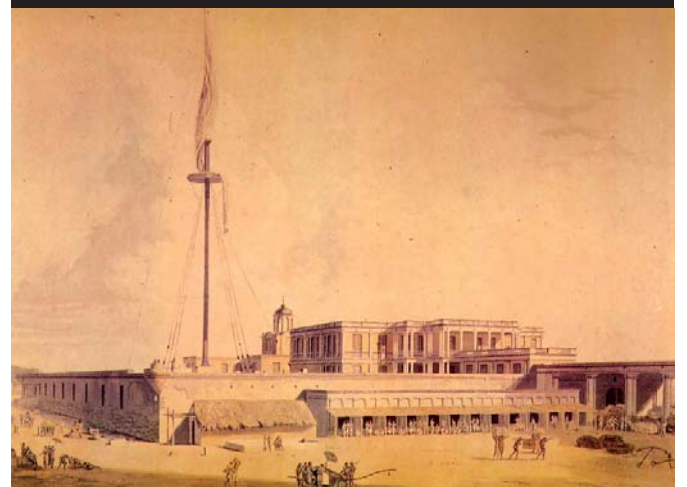
buildings on the western side, to be replaced by identical replicas. Now this would have been a commendable plan had the original wall been weak or was maintained poorly. But such was not the case. The common compound wall featuring squat pillars at intervals, each bearing a bronze rosette, had been laid

at the beginning of the last century and had survived more or less intact. It is true that in some places the pillars had sunk below road level but all that had to be done was to extract them and put them up on new foundations. This could have been achieved at a fraction of the current planned expense of Rs. 33 crore.

But that was not acceptable to our city's civic fathers. New granite pillars had to replace the old ones and all of them had to be redone. What is forgotten in all this is that heritage conservation is not just replacing old designs with replicas; we need

(Continued on page 7)

## Know your Fort better



The Fort by William Daniells showing c.1833 flagstaff (Courtesy: Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry collection).

One of the distinctive features of Fort St. George is its flagstaff, its immense height of 148 feet towering over the rest of the mostly low topography. In fact, it is one of the tallest flagstaffs in the whole country.

The original teak mast stood erect from 1688 till 1994 when it made way for a steel replica. The origins of the monumental teak beam are rather hazy. The story agreed upon is that it was the mast of a ship that sank off Madras in the 1680s. The beam was stored in Fort St. George and came in handy in 1687 when Elihu Yale took over as Governor. Permission was received from King James II of England for Fort St George “to wear his colours”, which meant that the King’s flag could be flown from the ramparts. The Fort’s Diary and Consultation Book for 1688 has it that “the Garrison and Train’D Bands are therefore order’d to be in Arms and the Chief Inhabitants of all Nations invited to the solemnity.”

The event took place on June 12, 1688 when, it is recorded, the Governor made a “handsome collation upon the Fort House Tarrass”. The garrison and trained bands comprising 100 English men marched around the Fort while the Governor and Council, the free merchants, the important natives of Madras and representatives of other nationalities gathered at what was known as the English bastion of the Fort. This no longer exists, but it formed the southeastern corner of the old Fort which, as we saw in the last instalment, was then nothing more than the Fort House and a little more.

The teak beam was erected to form the flagstaff and Yale hoisted the Union Jack on it. He then “opened a glass of Toby” and asked everyone to drink to “our Gracious King’s health & Royall families & his happy long reign”. The soldiers, who were “as merry as Punch could make them” shouted their hurrahs and the guns boomed 31 salutes for the king, 21 for the East India Company and 19 for Sir Josiah Child, the domineering Governor of the East India Company who sat in distant England but kept a sharp eye on what was happening in Madras. The ships in the roadstead answered the salute and it must have been a noisy evening.

(Continued on page 4)

# Offering much for a meet that's in waiting

The Tamil Nadu Global Investors' Meet (GIM) has been once again postponed. But the campaign goes on so as to get an overwhelming response when it finally takes place. So the road shows go on, focussing on the following:

Tamil Nadu has registered striking progress in regard to attracting foreign direct investments. Large scale investments have flown into the automobile industry at Sriperumbudur, Maraimalainagar and Oragadam. Global giants, including Ford, Hyundai, Renault Nissan and Daimler, have made large investments for the production of automobiles. These have been massively supported by a large number of component manufacturers and suppliers of essential parts like safety glasses and tyres. These together have helped Tamil Nadu emerge as a strong centre for automobiles in Asia. The State has also evolved as a large exporter of fully built cars, commercial vehicles, two-wheelers and a vast range of forgings, castings and auto components.

The State also has its strengths in the IT sector. The special efforts made over the last decade had also attracted investments in a wide range of electronic goods.

Tamil Nadu has certain unique advantages not offered by most other states:

- Strong infrastructure in terms of well laid roads and bridges
- A long coastline that has three major ports, Tuticorin, Ennore and Chennai, and a large private sector port – L&T at Kattupalli. The last named has also ship building, sophisticated fabrication and repair facilities.
- A strong network of institutions that offer higher education in science, arts, engineering. There are over 610 engineering colleges in the State that turn out a couple of lakhs of engineering graduates and postgraduates every year.
- Tamil Nadu is called the healthcare capital of the country, with a large number of super-speciality and speciality hospitals.
- Maharashtra and West Bengal have a longer history of industrial development; but industrial development is confined to a few pockets/districts of these States. Tamil Nadu has its development well spread over the entire State, from Chennai to Salem, Coimbatore to Tiruchi, Madurai, Tuticorin, etc. These towns are well-connected by road and rail.
- There are also a number of airports; four of them are international.
- Unlike in several other states, public sector units in the State, like BHEL, Neyveli Lignite Corporation, ICF and Chennai Petroleum, have been registering profitable growth and providing jobs for thousands.
- Stable administration known for its efficiency and other special features of the state.
- The financial infrastructure is also strong. With a strong spread of banking and non-banking finance companies, the State is the home for the largest NBFC, Shriram Capital Ltd., and the oldest, Sundaram Finance Ltd., that have rendered great service to lakhs of small businesses, especially truck operators. (Courtesy: Industrial Economist).

– S. Viswanathan

## OUR ADDRESSES

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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 ésnail mail! approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

ñ THE EDITOR

# The Madras Ark

“The Lord said to Noah there's going to be a floody floody” thus began a song that *The Man from Madras Musings* learnt when he was a young cherub. He remembers singing it along with several other tiny tots even as a school marm played the piano. And the song came rather spontaneously to MMM's mind the other day when it rained.

In the case of Noah, as MMM is sure most of his readers remember, the rain lasted forty days (fo-orty daisy daisy, as the song went for some reason) and everything became so muddy muddy (refrain – Children of the Lord). In Chennai, the rainwater, as you know, stagnates mainly in the plain. Not that there is much plain, what with the high plinths of multi-storey buildings, the deep excavations of the Metro rail, and the perennial road cuts done by the Electricity Department which in this regard is perpetually in a battle of one-upmanship with the Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Add to this the sand mounds created by construction activity and you have what geographers refer to as a land of high relief. No wonder the water charts its own course until evaporation removes it. And, so, at the end of the brief shower, everything was as muddy as in Noah's time.

To get back to the rains – the animals in Noah's time, if you recall another song, went in orderly rows of two by two, led by the elephant and the kangaroo. But the bipeds of Chennai chart their own rules. Never the most law-abiding when on the roads, they become firm adherents of laissez faire once it rains. To each one's own, they declare, and rush in all directions. Suddenly lanes where everyone was going in three by three like the wasp, the ant and the bumblebee, becomes four by four resulting in a great hippopotamus getting stuck at the door, by which MMM alludes to those massive private vehicles referred to as SUVs which get by only on the power of their horn. Traffic snarls and accidents are the general result and it often makes MMM wonder as to why and how Chennai's accident roster is not longer than what it is.

Father Noah, from what MMM remembers of yet another song from his (by which MMM alludes to his own and not Noah's) childhood, settled down beneath the rainbow's end. Later, MMM came to know that this meant Mount Ararat. The day it rained this was also perhaps what a mini-bus driver had on his mind. Having decided that he had to get to rainbow's end as soon as possible, he raced over a fly-over, shot over the boundary

wall and landed his vehicle on the Metro rail construction below, from where it dangled for quite some time before a crane arrived to remove it. This caused another traffic build up chiefly because this became one of the sights of the city, with every man and woman wanting to take a look. It was a wonder that the Corporation did not sell tickets for viewing the suspended vehicle from which all passengers luckily escaped unscathed.

A lady whom MMM knows was catching an international flight the day it rained. Having reached the airport she was informed that departure was delayed by at least five hours. She decided to summon her vehicle back so that she could go home and return at the appropriate time. But what with all the chaos caused by the bus and its shenanigans the vehicle took two hours to reach home. And once there, it was time to leave for the airport again! Such things happen only in Chennai. When the animals began going eight by eight, Noah, if MMM remembers correctly, worried that the weight was too great. The same

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

situation prevails here – our city, like Noah's ark, is bursting at it seams and only God can give us a way out of the present mess.

## Water & sewage

*The Man from Madras Musings* often chuckles at the thought that water supply and sewage are combined in most Indian cities. Chennai is no exception and these onerous twin responsibilities are handled by the organisation that rejoices in the name of CMWSSB – Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Every once in a while, this organisation reminds us humble denizens that it takes care of both these liquid forms by mixing them up. And so it came about that early one morning MMM had just stepped into his bath along with his pet duck and other important accessories when he realised that all was not well with the bathwater. In simple words, it stank to the high heavens.

MMM and family then made enquiries among the neighbours, many of whom replied rather unconcernedly that they too had smelt the odour but what could be done? These were difficult times, said

a couple of them, and we need to accept it. Not so, felt members of MMM's household, and off went a couple of the more energetic ones to lodge a complaint. The concerned official, or, since we are referring to the Government here, shall we say appropriate authority (AA), was not in his seat and so the registering process took quite a while. But when it happened, the AA was not in the least perturbed. Such occurrences, the AA implied by his demeanour, were commonplace and scarcely merited a notice. If he had been Marcus Aurelius he may have added that the befalling of such an aught was a good thing and was meant to make us more spiritual. But to do him credit, he did not temporise but promised action. He also informed the complainant that the mixing of the water and the sewage had happened three days earlier and had since been detected and stopped.

Back home all this led to much emptying of water tank and sump and then the cleaning of both before (presumably) fresh and (supposedly) clean water was let in. A couple of relatives from abroad who call daily thanks to the proliferation of free channels of communication wanted to know if MMM could sue. The least that the AA could have done, they opined, was to inform all the residents of the locality as soon as the contamination occurred so that they could have taken suitable precautions. A good lawyer, they felt, could bring in a claim for substantial amounts on the grounds that MMM and neighbourhood had been exposed to the risk of cholera, typhoid and jaundice, not to mention glandular botts and a whole host of other illnesses.

MMM was tempted for a moment. Then he reflected on the number of years it may take for a judgement to be given and decided to abandon the idea.

## Tailpiece

And so summer is here. *The Man from Madras Musings* notices that the city is divided into three camps. The first says it is the heat that it minds, and the second feels that the chief culprit is the humidity. But both agree that summer in Chennai is rarely otherwise. The third is a group that appears to have been taken by surprise by the advent of summer. It has cited the heat as the reason for calling off an event. Did they expect this year to be any different to the previous 375 years, MMM wonders.

– MMM

**OUR  
READERS  
WRITE**



**Water crisis**

I am a former Chief Engineer (Groundwater), TNPWD, and conducted a number of village level awareness programmes on Rainwater Harvesting and Groundwater during 2000-2002 while in government service.

The projections/extrapolations of data on the shortage of water in general and drinking water in particular by the World Bank-supported organisations are not real and further they had a hidden agenda to force the Governments to declare water as a commercial commodity for the sole benefit of multinational companies.

The Indian Government, State Governments and local bodies have a bounden duty to supply protected drinking water to their citizens instead of helping make water a business commodity.

Chennai City's water supply reservoirs – Poondi, Puzhal and Chembarambakkam – should be desilted and deepened to 1m depth to achieve additional 3 feet TMC water storage. This will cost about Rs. 660 crore, which burden can be shared by the brick kiln owners, road contractors and builders of large buildings, to a considerable extent.

Government data shows that Tamil Nadu has about 39202 minor irrigation tanks with a storage capacity of 390 TMC feet water (out of which 18789 under the control of TNPWD, another 20413 under panchayat unions, with a silting up of more than 25%). These should be desilted and deepened by at least 0.50 metre to create additional storage of 60 TMC feet water during heavy rains (if they occur) to tide over any water crisis. Tamil Nadu has adequate average rainfall of 925 mm (more than Andhra (908 mm) and Karnataka (732 mm)). Chennai City has 982 mm annual average rainfall but poor water management lets out a huge quantity, 259.76 TMC

feet, to the sea as flood waters once in four years.

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**Citizens too**

I refer to S.P. Ambrose's article (MM, April 1st) on water problem.

Water, perhaps the most important of all natural resources, is being affected by uncontrolled economic growth. We find that the available sources of fresh water are getting depleted and degraded by exploitation. There are 34 river basins in Tamil Nadu. The Institute of Water Studies (IWS) in Taramani has prepared an environmental status report on all of them. The study has revealed that the groundwater in Palar river basin with a total area of 1847 million hectares (mha) is polluted. A major portion of the basin contains saline water caused by the discharge of untreated effluents from tanneries and from rubber and plastic industries.

In the case of the Chennai Basin, there are four sub-basins as reported in the study, Araniar, Kusasthalaiyar, Cooum and Adyar. It was revealed that there was over-exploitation of groundwater for drinking purposes, discharge of untreated domestic sewage into the Cooum and Adyar, and pollution by industrial effluents, particularly from more than one hundred tanneries.

The study has further reported that the Cauvery river basin from Bhavani to Tiruchirapalli is polluted by industries manufacturing chemicals, sugar, paper and several tanneries and dyeing units, situated along the Cauvery and its tributaries heavily polluting the surface and groundwater.

In the case of the Bhavani and Noyyal sub-basin the study had pointed out that stretches are being heavily polluted by industries involving in dyeing,

manufacturing paper, viscose and sugar.

Groundwater reserves are depleting at rates faster than they can be replenished. The recent research reports reveal that the demand for water by the industrial sector has increased enormously and domestic water requirements, with the increased urbanisation, cannot be met with the balance of the available resources.

The Supreme Court Bench comprising three judges stated that the "Traditional concept that development and ecology are opposed to each other, is no longer acceptable." The apex court quoted Brundland Report defining 'Sustainable Development' stating, "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs."

It is the paramount duty of citizens also to take part in the implementation of water conservation projects. This is in line with Article 51-A of the Constitution of India on Fundamental Duties of Citizens, especially clause (g) which states, "It shall be the duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

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**Ranking corruption**

I fully agree with reader Sridhar Chandrasekar's views (MM, April 16th), especially the bit about corruption. It is time that this (not the "scams" that appear endlessly on television channels, but day-to-day harassment and extortion at the grassroots level) is discussed openly in public fora and people made aware how it adversely affects the quality of life and safety of the citizens of this country.

However vehemently our Prime Minister may declare that India is 'now' free of graft, there is little he can do with governance at the State level. The States may sit up and take notice if the Centre is prepared to rank them according to prevailing levels of corruption, honesty among police, ease of doing business, etc., not in its usual partisan manner, but in an objective and transparent fashion, and publish it in the print media.

However, I feel that Tamil Nadu is not going to fall off the development map. It will, like J.R.D. Tata once said about India, do well not because of the government, but in spite of it.

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# Searching for answers to slums

The U.N. Habitat's goal is to raise awareness of living conditions in some areas of the planet which are crowded, with inadequate housing, poor or no water and sanitation facilities, and no security of tenure. There is rarely any public space in these areas and no allocation for streets, meaning no public transport and no access for emergency services.

As part of the Millennium Development Goals, the world pledged to improve the lives of 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020. It is stated by U.N. that by 2010 the achievement has been more than expected. However, with growing urbanisation, the number of people being born in or moving into these areas is also increasing and the overall number of people living in slums continues to rise. Estimates claim that there are already one billion people living in slums.

People in slums are also disproportionately affected by climate change, with houses often built precariously on slopes or unsuitable building space and with inadequate materials, making them vulnerable to landslides, floods, fire, earthquake, tsunami and cyclones.

Great efforts are being made to improve many slums around the world and better the lives of those who live there. But slums are a manifestation of rapid unchecked urbanisation – a result of allowing our cities to expand without design or regulation and with disregard to their citizens. While continuing to upgrade the slums, we urgently need to focus our efforts on robust urban planning and the provision of safe, affordable housing that is appropriate and adequate and for our citizens' growing needs.

Through real stories from many cities it has been heard that slum upgrading programmes are yielding better life conditions for slum-dwellers, and greater economic and social impacts, of course with certain shortcomings. Crime is often endemic, with women and girls particularly at risk. Unemployment, underemployment and the cost of transport to distant places of work add to further hardship.

Dharavi slum-dwellers in Mumbai are not willing to move out from there to a new environment both hygienic and self-sufficient even though they are offered a better place but with 350 sq.ft. only. They consider the highrise building is going to be a vertical slum. Even though there may be personal toilets in the highrise building, they are prepared to live where they are, managing with the available public toilets, particularly because a dwelling unit of 450 sq ft is partly rented out for a shop or residence which earns an additional income. The upgraded slums provide facilities like water supply, electricity and educational facilities. But for any change there must be 80 per cent positive votes from the residents.

Many building designers are obsessed with highrises. But highrises are inappropriate for the urban poor. They shrink the community space and are expensive and difficult to maintain.

House owners in informal settlements often rent out the extra space they create. This is a source of income for them, while for the poor and migrant labourers, it provides an opportunity to live in areas close to work places at affordable rents. Experts feel that appropriate policies for rental spaces can go a long way in solving the housing problems for the urban poor.

The objective of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board is very clear. It aims to clear all slums in Chennai and provide self-contained hygienic tenements. That apart, it seeks to prevent the growth of slums and encroachments, TNSCB has so far completed 1.32 lakh tenements and 1.35 lakh plotted development in the allotted Rs. 3000 crore. By 2022, 13.53 lakh urban population is targeted at a huge cost of Rs. 1,13,286.53 crore.

In Nochikuppam in Phase-1 (2011-12), out of 628 dwellings constructed 60 per cent were allotted for defaulters and the balance for encroachers. One BHK with built area of about 400 sq.ft. costs around Rs. 9 lakh to be repaid within 25 years.

Voices are raised that 400 sq.ft. is not adequate and the design type has to be modified. The present improved tenement is alleged to be highly dense and the remaining open space is not maintained by the public. Further, illegal transaction of flats has not stopped.

The suggestion from the slum dwellers is to use the stilt floor either as open space for community or for vendors and small traders.

The voices from the migrant labourers who are under transit in so-called transit slums at construction sites are seldom heard by politicians and policy makers. Migrant labourers are left to live without basic infrastructure; not only that, but amidst immoral activities, rape and crime. Their voices should be heard too. – (Courtesy: *Our Building & Construction*)

– Dr. K.R. Thooyavan

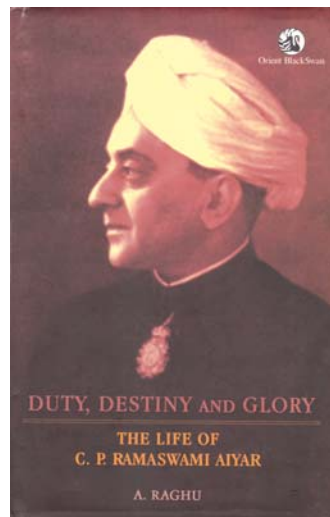
## MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

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

**THE EDITOR**

# A life full of controversy

\* *Duty, Destiny and Glory – The life of C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar* by A. Raghu (Orient Black Swan).



A concise biography\* of a controversial person, the legendary C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, by A. Raghu, an Associate Professor in a college in Kollam, Kerala, this is a book that is sure to generate more controversy.

CP was a Tamil Brahmin who was highly Anglicised. He was a lawyer who had drunk the waters of the Cauvery but was also a person who did not mind drinking the water of the Thames if the situation warranted it, writes Raghu.

CP's rise in the legal profession was through the unexpected inheritance of the cases of his brother-in-law and also because three other leading lawyers of the original side had either withdrawn from the profession or passed away. In less than a decade, he became the undisputed leader of the original side of the Madras High Court.

Narianiah vs. Besant, a landmark case in CP's life, brought him close to Annie Besant and paved the way for his joining Congress in 1904. CP became Besant's chief political lieutenant.

"CP's close friendship with Besant was to become the first of a series of intense personal relationships with powerful women that were to serve as the building blocks of his career. The second was Lady Willingdon and the third was Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi, mother of the boy-king Sree Chitra Tirunal of Travancore," records Raghu.

When Besant, President of the Indian National Congress and who had focussed on Home Rule, was defeated by the Gandhians for the next presidency, CP resigned from the Congress.

After he won a seat in the Madras Legislative Council in 1919, CP sailed for England to give evidence regarding the reform bill before the Joint Parlia-

mentary Committee (JPC). "What he did in England became the subject of feverish gossip back home in Madras. It was during this time that the collecting virus entered his system, marking the beginning of CP's career as an enthusiastic assembler of an immense variety of beautiful things. He would buy whatever caught his fancy, regardless of its price," relates Raghu.

Lord Willingdon arrived in Madras in 1919 as Governor. CP

tional Liberals – a semi-independent splinter group of the Congress. CP wanted all Indians to join hands to persuade the British Government to give India dominion status which was opposed by the conservatives in Britain.

To break the impasse, three Round Table Conferences were held in London. CP took an active part in the first conference in 1930-1931 in London and even persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to participate in the second.



Sir CP (extreme left) with the Willingdons.

became a close friend of the Willingdons and his relationship with Lady Willingdon became the subject of much scurrilous drawing room gossip.

Willingdon made CP the Advocate General; at 41, he was the youngest AG in Madras judicial history. During the brief period he was AG, he tendered advice to the Madras Government on more than 650 cases.

In the Madras Executive Council to which he was appointed by Lord Willingdon, CP was made member in charge of law, police, public works (irrigation), ports and electricity. His first great achievement was piloting the irrigation bill. Several massive irrigation and hydro-electric schemes were introduced. CP also helped in streamlining the judiciary and police establishment.

From his days in the Executive Council, he walked straight into the headquarters of the Na-

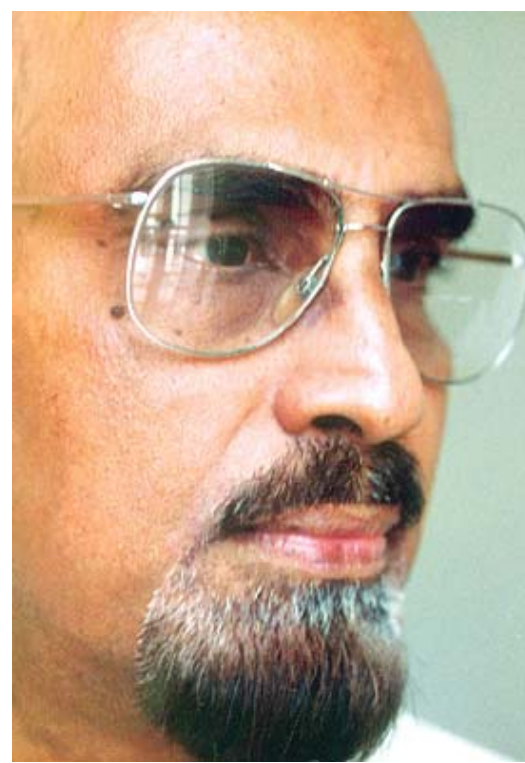
But, while CP lived laborious days, he did not scorn delights, writes Raghu. "He was a party animal. The dazzling tea parties and dinner parties at *The Grove*, an immense mansion in Alwarpet, where CP lived, were major events for the elite of Madras which established CP as one of the towering figures in the socio-cultural world of Madras."

Because of his opulent lifestyle, he found himself in dire financial straits and had to resume practice and started appearing for several wealthy clients, including many Maharajas.

A significant source of support came from the junior Maharani of Travancore, who was trying feverishly to place her son on the throne of Travancore. Thus began CP's tryst with Travancore, leading to an eventful but controversial chapter in his life.

CP and Setu Parvati Bayi met for the first time in Ootacamund in 1924 shortly after the proclamation of the regency. She wanted to wrest control of the Government of Travancore from the hands of the regent. While the immediate termination of the regency was not possible, for the Maharaja was still a minor, she managed, with help from CP,

(Continued on page 6)



Abraham Eraly – a much loved Editor and a greatly respected writer of the historical.

In the week following the announcement of Abraham Eraly's death, the most heartfelt expressions of condolence were posted on the web and came from writers and journalists whom he had nurtured as Editor of *Aside*, the erstwhile city magazine that was Madras's unique voice.

There was reason for this. Every one of those who fondly remembered Eraly did so because he or she felt each of them owed a debt of gratitude (big or small) to him for his undeniable part in letting every one of them discover their strengths and weaknesses as writers. I use the word 'writers' intentionally; the biggest strength of *Aside*, even when it was reporting news, was the fine quality of its writing.

A lot of people know of Eraly as a historian, a man who had both taught history and written on it (nine delightfully written books on Indian history that sadly received more appreciation abroad than in India). But he was also many other things, an artist – *Aside* probably carried the only serious writing among Madras journals of the time, on contemporary art and artists; a collector of art – there was an enviable amount of art on our office walls; a man with a great sense of design and aesthetics in printing; a good photographer; and a stickler for detail.

## • The Eraly legacy

# Original thinking and great writing

During his editorship (and this was when the magazine was at its best), *Aside* explored Madras the way no other publication had ever done before. Its writers examined its spaces (the inner and outer), its people (however staid or outlandish), its language (does anyone remember R.Parthasarathy's enchanting piece, 'Summa I came'), and its spirit, in a tone that was astute, often irreverent, sometimes critical, and always soft, just a little above a whisper. Hence the magazine's name. As *Asides* enhance or dispute the statements they are attached to, the magazine's writing qualified the character and voice of Madras.

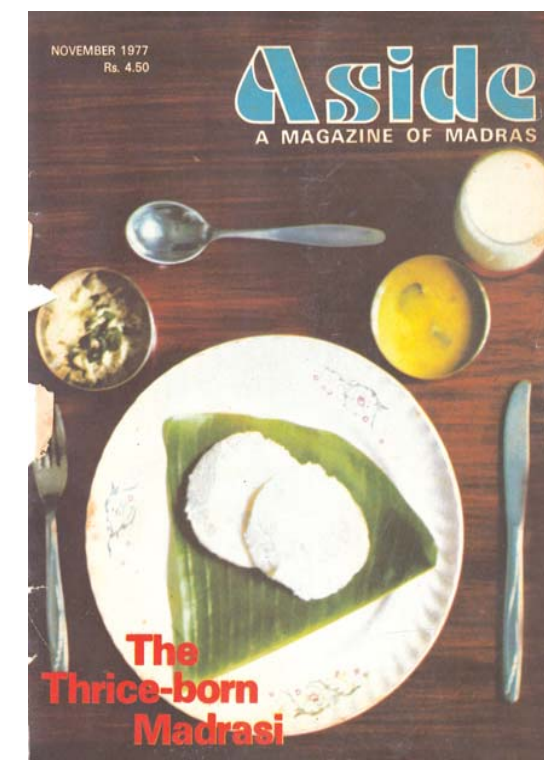
I have an image of our working environment that is sort of frozen in time, around mid-morning. Eraly stands, arm draped over the top of a cubicle partition, saying, "It definitely needs rewriting, rethinking even." He is referring to a manuscript that is liberally overwritten with the editor's red ink. The writer in question responds by throwing a minor fit – "That is probably some of the best writings I have ever done!" "You can do much better!" replies Eraly before turning to greet a visitor. This could be anyone – S. Muthiah, having come to offer an article or some advice, or Rom Whitaker, suggesting the government should start a corporation for selling rat meat ("It's good protein, available in plenty, and we will be saving the crops" was his argument), or a white skinned *sadhu* named Ishwar Saran throwing a tantrum because we had changed a comma in his copy. Photographer S. Anwar, holding up a black and white stunner of a picture of a Bharata Natyam dancer or K.V. Anand extolling the virtues of the fish-eye lens that he had recently procured and that he had absolutely decided to use it for our next cover photo. Kavitha Shetty, drinking tea and observing, "I think T. Rajender is cute! Can anyone else rhyme so ridiculously? Besides, I love his beard and moustache." Sridevi Rao fluttering her beautiful fingers as she says, "There is life after death, I am sure of it."

Ira Bhasker or LR. Jagadeesan was informing us that all Tamil politicians and almost all Tamil film stars hated us because we poked fun at them. In other words, it was a picture of an office hard at work.

At *Aside*, there was no real hierarchy in the office set-up. It was not just because it was too small for any real pecking order, it was also because Eraly firmly believed that people working together performed better than people working for someone. He created an office environment that encouraged creativity and discouraged mundaneness. Staffers from that time recall with relish how, for Eraly, form was as important as content in writing. The elegant turn of phrase was as precious as honest reporting. And when appreciation for your writing came from him, it was always special, not because it was from the boss but because it was from someone who wrote so well himself.

As a writer, Eraly was entirely self-driven. He was a curious man, in the best sense of the term. He inquired into facts and issues with a clear and logical vision and was willing to consider the most seemingly outrageous presumptions until they crumbled under his scrutiny. A known atheist ("I have been unsure of many things in my life," he liked to say, "but there is one thing that I am absolutely sure of – that there is no God."), he was still willing to explore, in print, every spiritual possibility, from transcendental meditation, life-after-death, the most extreme forms of astrology and the wackiest of Godmen.

Although he liked to say that he gave up teaching history because his job had begun to resemble 'premature retirement', the historian in him never really vanished. "To understand what we are, we have to go back and understand what we were," he reasoned. Most major *Aside* articles were therefore divided in three parts, one of which invariably studied the history of the issue or the person in question. No prizes for guessing which one the editor wrote. Incidentally, there was always some curiosity about the aliases Eraly



The cover of the first issue of *Aside*, November 1977.

used for writing in the magazine. Abraham Eraly wrote editorials and conducted major interviews; Ashok Dorairaj wrote on ticklish issues and took photographs; Pratibha Iyer penned those biting and, often, hilarious reviews.

It was Eraly's personality that attracted to *Aside* (especially in the early issues) some remarkable talent. The contributors included Harry Miller, S. Muthiah, R. Parthasarathy, Sadanand Menon, Rathindranath Roy, Mithran Devanesan, S.G. Vasudev, Ajit Ninan – the names often read like a list of Madras' who's who. Every issue was a joy to create and design and the result was an unusual treat for the Madras reader hitherto fed on a diet of plain reporting and conservative writing.

It was only when, because of commercial constraints, *Aside* turned into a 'news fortnightly' that the magazine lost its unique charm and with it, perhaps, the interest of its editor. Still, by that time, *Aside* had already achieved what Eraly had intended it to – help to understand the city a bit better by exploring its past and present in depth. The legacy Abraham Eraly has left behind is that of original thinking and great writing. Of how many can that be said?

– Janaki Venkataraman

# KNOW YOUR FORT BETTER

(Continued from page 1)

H.D. Love in *Vestiges of Old Madras* thinks that the clerk who documented the evening may have erroneously written 'toddy' as 'toby'. But what is interesting is that Yale University has a tradition of 'Elihu Yale Toby mugs', which are all made in the profile of the former Governor of Madras. First modelled in 1933 by Prof Robert G. Eberhard of the Sculpture Department of the University, these have since been in production. Mugs from the original batch, brought out by Josiah Wedgwood, are now collectors' items!

But to get back to the flagstaff, it has never been properly established as to when it made the shift from the English bastion to the centre of the eastern face of the Fort. In 1697 it was where Yale had installed it. "On the south east point is the standard" wrote Dr. John Fryer that year in his account of the Fort. Sometime later, it shifted to the Parade or Fort Square. By the 1780s, it appears to have made it to the eastern face of the Fort. Even then, it appears to have moved a couple of times. A painting by F.S. Ward (*Fort St. George, looking from the North West Curtain towards the St. Thomas Gate*) done in 1785 shows it pretty much where it is now, but another painting by William Daniell in 1793 shows it at the southeast corner of the fully constructed Fort, above the St. Thomas bastion. But by the early 1800s, it had definitely made it back to the 'Great Bulwark' above the Sea Gate where it remains.

For three years, 1746 to 1749, when the French occupied Madras, their flag flew from this post. According to Mrs Frank Penny in her *Fort St. George, Story of Our First Possession in India*, when Madras was returned to the English in November 1749, their first act was to lower the French flag and raise the Union Jack on the flagstaff. By 1801, it was such a symbol of Madras that when the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor General of India, commissioned a portrait of himself to commemorate the British victory over Tipu Sultan, he was depicted seated in a pillared verandah with the Fort St. George flagstaff in the background.

What is a wonder is that the flagstaff endured for so long and survived bombardment by the French from the sea in 1746 and 1758. The second attack was the more vicious, when not a single building in the Fort was spared. The flagstaff having then been within Fort Square must have afforded it some protection. Perhaps its sheer staying power created a legend that was most popular in the early 20th Century, according to Lt. Col. D.M. Reid. He notes in his *Story of Fort St. George* that the troops believed that "a ship was blown up the beach in a great storm, and had one mast remaining upright. The mast was used temporarily for signals and was so useful that it was left there and was built over, and today, under the masonry, the old ship sleeps in her solid foundation." But as to whether it survived in one

piece is not certain. Records of a cyclone on May 8, 1820 have it that the upper part of the flagstaff was carried away along with the signalling crew. That regular repairs were carried out is evident from House of Commons papers from the 19th Century. "Tarring the rigging" of the flagstaff was a routine expenditure.

The morning of January 26, 1932 saw considerable commotion around the tarred rigging. Arya Bhashyam, a freedom fighter, had shinned up the ropes, climbed the 148 feet, torn down the Union Jack and hoisted the Indian tricolour. He was arrested when he descended and on refusing to express regret for what he had done was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Bhashyam would, after Independence, refuse the pension awarded to him as a freedom fighter and eke out his life doing portraits of Subramania Bharati and sculpting statues and busts of Mahatma Gandhi. The official portrait of Bharati with the handlebar moustache is his and some of his works adorn the Tamil Nadu legislature.

On August 15, 1947, the Indian national flag was hoisted on the flagstaff at 5.30 am. The flag unfurled that day is now a treasured possession of the Fort Museum, displayed in the third floor. It is the only surviving flag among the countless ones hoisted across the entire country that day. But what had survived wind, weather and war, could not escape the clumsy removal in 1994 to make way for the steel replica. The wooden mast had to be cut to pieces and is now confined to some unknown yard in the Fort. It would perhaps have been more appropriate if the old teak beam had been preserved in entirety and erected elsewhere in the Fort with protection from the elements. What a sight it would have been!



The modern flagstaff of the past (on left), and the steel flagstaff of 1994 (on right).

Quizzin'  
with  
Ram'nan

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

- Who on April 15th became the third Indian, after Kapil Dev and Rahul Dravid, to be inducted into the Laureus World Sports Academy?
- Nokia recently announced the acquisition of which telecom network firm that would make it the world's largest supplier of telecom equipment?
- Name the German Nobel Laureate, who once served in Adolf Hitler's forces and who passed away recently.
- Which Indian won the bronze medal in the World women's chess championships recently?
- On April 9th, whom did President Pranab Mukherjee appoint as the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)?
- Minor planet 4538, located somewhere between Mars and Jupiter, is named after which person honoured with a Padma Vibhushan?
- The new capital city of Andhra Pradesh coming up in the Vijayawada-Guntur region will be called...?
- Which ambitious scientific apparatus has been restarted after two years following an upgrade that could see it making scientific history for a second time?
- What was 'Operation Raahat', which was conducted on a large scale between April 1st and 11th?
- Which Maharashtra city was named as the National Earth Hour Capital 2015 on April 9th?

\* \* \*

- What happened in Madras 200 years ago on April 28th consequent to the volcanic eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia?
- Name the water body that features at the beginning pages of Kalki's *Ponniyin Selvan*?
- What twin, aesthetic structures in Chennai, standing 57 feet tall each, were built to celebrate the 75th birth anniversary of C.N. Annadurai?
- Which place of worship was built by the Roman Catholic fishermen, belonging to the Gurukula Vamsa Varunakula Mudaliar community, in 1829?
- What commodity came to India from abroad for the first time when the clipper *Tuscany* docked in 1833?
- Which public playing facility, now in disuse, owes its existence to J.P.L. Shenoy, ICS, who was Commissioner of Madras Corporation in the 1940s?
- Which famous products of Nachiarcoil and Pattamadai have GI tags?
- Chennai's Ilavazhagi and A. Maria Irudayam have long been world champions in which game/sport?
- Which famous couple have been long-time residents of 12 North Mada Street, Mylapore?
- Which is the oldest existing building in Fort St. George?

(Answers on page 8)



Rural visitors in the hundreds. Commemara Library in the background.



Walking through the Archaeological Gallery.

## A Museum visit 50 years ago

Madras Museum in Egmore was a "must visit" site in the 1960s for visitors from all parts of India, particularly from the neighbouring States of Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala. Busloads of visitors would come to visit the Museum (popularly called 'the place of dead things') and the Zoological Gardens ('the place of living things').

The Museum had plenty of parking space, and the visitors would amble through the galleries, looking at the displays in awe. Very few would have paused and read the labels, as would have been expected. But they were mostly rural folk and a visit to Madras was a landmark event in their



Home food never tasted better!



A snack or two is a "must".

lives, not the text in the Museum. They all entered the galleries and came out the same way, to amble into the front park adjacent to the auditorium, then to the Bronze Gallery and the New Art Gallery, to see the famous Nataraja from Tiruvelangadu and the paintings. A highlight of the visit was having a snack or two.

Then, a while later, was 'lunch break', to share what was in the 'tiffin carriers' they had brought along.

Home food was something to relish under the shadow of the many cannons on display around the Auditorium Building.

Soon it was 3 p.m. and time for the buses to depart to the

next place on the itinerary.

These photographs taken in 1962 show how simple folk enjoyed a city visit in those days.

Simple they may have been, but seldom was there a report of any displays being damaged.

— Dr. Akkaraju Sarma  
Akkaraju1@gmail.com

# A life full of controversy

(Continued from page 4)

to become a part of the Regency Council. When Lord Willingdon became Viceroy of India in 1931, CP was successful in having the regency terminated and full reigning powers handed to the young Maharaja, who promptly declared the appointment of CP as the legal and constitutional adviser to the Maharaja, making CP the most powerful man in Travancore.

Travancore under CP pioneered many social measures: untouchability was done away with through direct governmental action, capital punishment was abolished, a free mid-day meal scheme for schoolchildren was introduced, and agricultural income tax levied. Countering opposition to the idea, the University of Travancore was inaugurated in 1937.

Free and compulsory primary education was introduced throughout the State, with handicrafts, music and physical training included in the curriculum. The industrialisation of Travancore also proceeded apace.

But some of the educational policies initiated by CP sowed the seeds of bitter conflict between the Christian Church and State. Writes Raghu, "CP was seen as the leader of the much hated Tamil Brahmin clique that was ruling and ruining Travancore in the name of the impotent Maharaja. CP was frequently compelled to take unpopular steps because the Maharani wanted him to. Thus the image of CP as Travancore's Rasputin was generated."

The crash of the Christian-led Travancore National and Quilon Bank (TNQB) in 1938 followed the conflict between Church and State.

The officers of the Bank openly participated in anti-government politics – funds of the Bank were used to finance agitation against the Government, particularly the Dewan. When the Government used its muscle, TNQB went into liquidation and criminal proceedings were launched against the directors. This aroused widespread anti-government feelings in the Syrian Christian community, particularly against CP.

He weathered the storm but remained a love-hate figure.

\* \* \*

More controversy was to follow. Before India became free, the Maharaja announced that the State would become an independent nation on August 15, 1947. There was bitter opposition to the move. An attempt was made on CP's life. CP, it is said, opposed the stand taken by the Maharaja, but as a loyal employee of the State he was compelled to project the Maharaja's view.

Widespread agitation followed. Fortunately for all, after discussions between CP and Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, CP committed himself, subject to ratification by the Maharaja and Maharani, to the merger of Travancore with the Indian Union. On August 19, 1947 CP relinquished office as Dewan.

CP spent the next two decades in Ootacamund. He went on extensive tours. He took up prestigious teaching assignments. He was a Vice Chan-

cellar three times. He served on national commissions. He read and he wrote.

On one of his overseas visits, he passed away in the National Liberal Club, London, on September 26, 1966, shortly before his 87th birthday. Philippa Burrell, a journalist and his last mistress, was by his side when he died. He had gone to London to gather material for his autobiography and to lecture at the Universities of London and Oxford. His body was flown in an Air Force plane to Madras. Huge crowds gathered at the airport to receive the body.

According to Raghu, "What is surprising is that despite his aristocratic birth, despite his imperial tastes, despite the splendour of his lifestyle, despite his racy private life, despite all the controversies in which he willy-nilly enmeshed himself, ordinary people, especially the ordinary people of his beloved home town Madras, deeply mourned his passing."

— by R.V. Rajan  
rvrajan42@gmail.com

● **PRESIDENCY AT 175**

# The presidential years

I came to Madras in 1959 to join Presidency College. When I entered the campus I was astonished by the atmosphere and the neatly, well-dressed students. Women students were all in sarees. When I entered the College building, I saw a staircase fit for a Maharaja's palace. Waiting in the corridor itself was an awesome experience. The students were so quiet while going to classes.

A man in a full suit saw me and asked what I wanted. I promptly replied that I sought admission. He asked me to come to his room. He was Principal Dr. T.R. Govindachari. He told me that all the admissions were over but there was one B.A. English seat available. He went through my records and said, "You have secured good marks in English. I will admit you in B.A. English." I had my own reservations about choosing B.A. English. So I requested him to give me any other course. After looking at me silently, he said that he would give me a seat in Economics, as a student who had been given admission had not joined. I accepted the offer gladly.

The head of the Economics Department was Prof. Dr. C. Velayutham, a renowned scholar in Tamil. When I met him he started talking in Tamil. I felt great pleasure in speaking to him in Tamil. He advised me that as I had come from a re-



'President' Roosevelt addresses a Students' Union meeting.

mote village near Pattukkottai, Thanjavur, I needed to understand the decorum practised in the college. He told me that admission to the college was a great honour. Admission would normally be given only to children of leading families of Madras. So I would have to cope with the environment and my fellow students. His advice stood me in good stead.

I was given a double sharing room at the Victoria Hostel attached to the College. The room was good and my roommate very cooperative and helpful. More than anything, the hostel food was excellent.

\* \* \*

I contested for the post of Secretary of Presidency College Tamizh Mandram. My opponent was Arivudai Nambi, the son of the Speaker of the State Assembly, Pulavar Govindan. I won the election.

During my tenure, I invited Tamil scholar "Kiva" Jagannathan, poet Soundaram Kailasam and S.A.P. Annamalai, then editor of *Kumudam*, to speak at the association's functions. Annamalai announced eight pages in the ensuing issue of *Kumudam* to bring out the writing talent of Presidency College students.

I wanted to bring out a souvenir in the name of Tamizh Cholai. The Head of the Department, Dr. K. Meenakshisundaram, agreed on condition that I did not ask for any funds from the College. We raised the funds and brought out *Tamizh Cholai*.

Dr. Meenakshisundaram asked Assistant Professor K. Thirunavukkarasu to edit *Tamizh Cholai*. We then released the souvenir at a grand function.

\* \* \*

When I joined M.A. Economics, V. Gopalasamy (Vaiko) used to sit beside me and we became good friends. I was attracted by his eloquent and passionate speeches.

When the College announced the Students' Union President's election, I decided to contest. My life's ambition was to add President before my name, as my father, P.K. Meiyappan, had named me after the American President



'President' Roosevelt (right) with Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar (left).

F.D. Roosevelt. V. Gopalasamy, who had done his B.A. in Palayamkottai and had been the President of the College Union there, also wanted to contest. Our common friends discussed the matter with him and he agreed to support me.

● by  
**M. Roosevelt**

AVM Caesar, who was doing M.A. in Politics and was a well-to-do day scholar, was my opponent. With Gopalasamy's support I won comfortably.

I took charge as Union President. I was extremely happy that I had achieved my life's ambition to be called President Roosevelt. During my presidency we invited Dr. Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar to inaugurate the College Union. He was an old student. After the inaugural function, Dr. Raja Sir invited me to his birthday dinner at Chettinad Palace. He sent a car to pick me up from Victoria Hostel. I was thrilled to attend that big function in which all the city's VIPs, including the Chief Minister, were present. Raja Sir introduced me to all the dignitaries.

\* \* \*

During my time, we nominated N. Ram, later Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu*, and P. Chidambaram, later a Union Minister, as our English oratorical team members and V. Gopalasamy and Raja Mohammed (later a Tamil Nadu Minister) as the Tamil oratorical team members. They used to participate in all inter-collegiate debates and won many trophies for the College.

Gopalasamy suggested we participate in the anti-Hindi agitation. We joined together and launched a campaign. The College was closed and we were asked to vacate the hostel. The CID police used to follow us around to ascertain what action we planned. Several students were arrested.

We collected a lot of funds in the Triplicane area to buy food items for the students in Central Jail. After a month, the College reopened and all the students were released from jail. We again started concentrating on the students' union activities. We brought out a monthly magazine, *The Presidential Trend*, with articles from students and professors. It was welcomed by all. Then it was time to say goodbye to College with a grand party. (Courtesy: TCC Digest).

## KILLING HERITAGE

(Continued from page 1)

to reuse the older material as well. That has been completely overlooked in the present case.

What is worse is that the replacement has been embarked upon without the consent of the stakeholders – namely the twelve Government institutions along that stretch of the road. This became evident when letters were delivered to all of them intimating them about the proposed work. The University of Madras has rejected the idea claiming that its compound wall forms a part of its heritage and so cannot be tampered with by any other agency. Given that this institution has a middling record at best when it

comes to preserving its heritage, this comes as a bit of a pleasant surprise. Sources aver that the University was keen on protecting the sesquicentennial commemorative arch (another unnecessary addition and not in keeping with the prevalent architecture in the area) unveiled in 2013 and came up with this imaginative reply.

In the event, it would appear that the University is the odd man out. Even its former constituent, Presidency College, has consented to the change as have all the other institutions on the road. But given that the University is probably the biggest landowner along this stretch, it makes you wonder as to what price the Corporation's plan for a uniform compound

wall if the university doesn't agree.

As of now, the Corporation has begun demolition of the compound walls of the rest of the buildings. It has announced that it will be completing the new compound wall by June this year.

Also on the anvil is the paving of the footpath along the wall with granite, so that it matches the walkway on the eastern side. Considering that this stretch is the favourite for all those wanting to erect banners, flex boards and hoardings to impress VIPs who pass by, it is anybody's guess as to how long the granite paving will last. But by then it will be time for another beautification anyway.



**Till May 31:** Art exhibition by Thyagarajan (at Dakshina-Chitra)

**Till May 31:** Art exhibition by K K Segar (at DakshinaChitra)

**Till May 30:** *Waiting for Eternity*, an exhibition of paintings by Sanjeeva Rao and Sundararaju (at Sandy's (Cenotaph Road) and Sandy's (Nungambakkam)).

**Till June 30:** *Baramasa*, an exhibition of contemporary artists exploring the moods inspired by different seasons (at Apparao Galleries, Nungambakkam and The Leela Palace).

**Till June 30:** *The Art of Chess*, an exhibition of chess sets created by contemporary artists (at Apparao Galleries).

**June 30:** Painting by Raja (at DakshinaChitra).

**June 5-29:** Art exhibition by N S Manohar, Kumbakonam (at DakshinaChitra)

**May-June:** Photography/art exhibition by Gita (at Dakshina-Chitra).

**DakshinaChitra workshops**

*For Adults:*

**May 9-10:** Kantha embroidery

**May 13-17:** Basics of Embroidery (10 Styles)

**May 30-31:** Chikankari Embroidery

**June 6-7:** Kasuti Embroidery

*For Children:*

**May 9:** Pyrography (wood painting) (8-14 yrs)

**May 16-17:** Residential Theatre Art (8-14 yrs)

**May 20-23:** 4-day Studio Pottery (8-14 yrs)

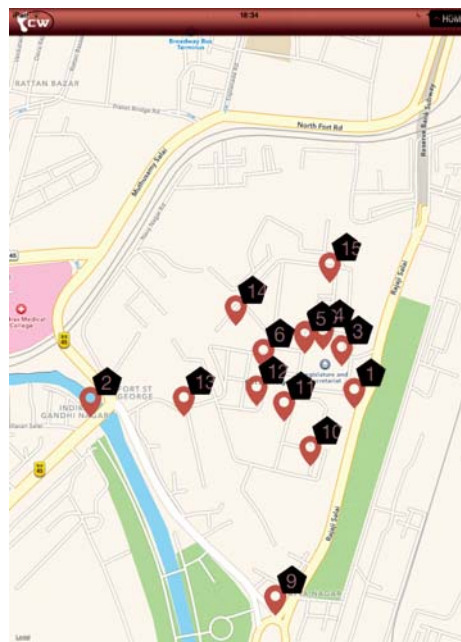
**June 13:** Stencil-making and T-Shirt Printing (8-14 yrs)

# The Fort gets an App

On the occasion of Fort St George turning 375, it received a gift from Sriram V., Associate Editor, *Madras Musings*, by way of a mobile application that will help tourists navigate the Fort. Available on Google Play Stores and ios App Stores, it can be located by searching for Chennai Walkabout. The development has been done by Broadgate Technical Services (India) Pvt Limited.

The story of the Fort is scattered across various books and the app makes it possible for people to know in brief all these same details. The app uses Google maps to point out the various locations in the Fort. The tour, as created in the app, covers 17 different spots in the Fort over a perimeter of 3 km. The user needs to simply follow the map provided and, at a normal walking pace, can cover the place in a couple of hours. The monuments can all be identified by means of the photographs provided on the app. The history behind each place is explained in text and also audio.

There are plans to add more locations to the tour to give users a complete experience of the Fort's historicity.



# A muted Fort celebration

(Continued from page 1)

was the release of a special day cover brought out by the Madras Heritage Lovers' Forum led by D.H. Rao, who is also fighting to bring focus on the much neglected Buckingham Canal.

The cover, featured on front page, depicts an early map of the city with a superimposed picture of the first building in the Fort – the domed structure that was once Governor's House and much else. This was later pulled down and a second Governor's House built which absorbed forever within the confines of the Assembly building and Secretariat. The cover released by Dr. S. Suresh, Convenor, INTACH Tamil Nadu chapter. Dr. K. Lourdasamy, Superintending Archaeologist, Chennai Circle, and K. Moortheeswari, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Museum Branch, Southern Region, ASI, received it. The event had Vincent D'Souza of *Mylapore Times* as compere.

In his speech, Dr. Suresh spoke of how the history of Chennai/Madras stretches far beyond the founding of Fort St George. Terming Chennai as a classic site for prehistoric settlements, he traced some of the locations – Pallavaram, Kilpauk and Egmore – where excavations in the past have revealed Palaeolithic vestiges. He added to the city's long list of firsts – apparently the first Palaeolithic evidence in the whole of Asia was found in Madras in the 1860s.

It was in the speeches of Dr. Lourdasamy and K. Moorthees-

wari that some of the highlights of the Fort Museum came to the fore. Did you know, for instance, that the only surviving flag among the thousands unfurled all over the country on August 15, 1947 is now preserved in the Museum? This was discovered in a fairly tattered state but wise heads decided to treasure it. The Museum has also taken efforts to become interactive with a special focus on children. A children's corner has interactive audiovisual facilities for them. A bigger attraction is the ability to swivel a cannon on its pivot. Still more popular is the talking cannon, which tells them in simple words the way these tools of war were operated.

The Museum has also done some commendable work using augmented reality techniques. Thus, by holding a small palm device in front of a screen, visitors can see close-ups of coins and stamps that are in the collection. The details that are visible would otherwise put a great strain on the eye. To commemorate the Fort's 375<sup>th</sup> birthday, the ASI also released a digitised version of all the aquatints of William and Thomas Daniells that are in its possession.

If all this was possible by just one agency, imagine what could have been done if all the other occupants of the Fort had joined in? Hopefully, better sense will prevail by the 400<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For those who are interested – the Special Day Covers can be purchased from D.H. Rao at Rs. 50 each. Contact 9840870172

## CHENNAI HERITAGE

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## Answers to Quiz

1. Sachin Tendulkar; 2. Alcatel-Lucent; 3. Günter Grass; 4. D. Harika; 5. Dr. Nasim Zaidi; 6. Chess wizard V. Anand; 7. Amaravati; 8. The Large Hadron Collider; 9. Evacuation of Indian citizens from Yemen; 10. Thane.

\* \* \*

11. The city froze, with temperatures dipping to minus 3 degrees Celsius; 12. The present-day Veeranam Lake; 13. Anna Nagar arches; 14. St. Peter's Church in Royapuram; 15. Ice; 16. Egmore tennis stadium; 17. Kuthuvilakku (lamp stand) and Paai (mats); 18. Carrom; 19. Lord Kapaleeswarar and Karpagambal; 20. St. Mary's Church.

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