

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

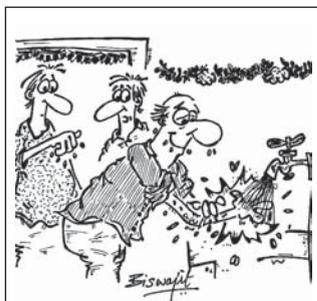
MADRAS MUSINGS

Vol. XXI No. 7

July 16-31, 2011

INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- When a Heritage Act?
- The Congress in Madras
- Chennoise – that's us
- In search of the tribals



You know Kittu Maama! The more and more he washes his hand, the greater he has enjoyed the saappadu!!

That 'Sink'ing feeling

Wedding Yellai Sapaads are great – grand tradition... yummy food...

But –

There's a tricky side.

They tend to get ...er...wet-ish....you know?

Which means that the after-meal dash to the rather strangely named 'wash area' requires strategy and timing, as it involves drippy fingers and possible damage to outfits (both your own and of others).

That's when you realise fellow sink-users come in various forms – and they all cause delays.

The Have-Mirror –Will-Lookers: These tend to gaze earnestly at their own faces; patting their hair, adjusting eye makeup, while the queue behind grows and languishes.

The Argle-Bargle-Garglers: This variety likes to spring clean their mouths, throats.... and judging from the sound – the inside of their toes – in the open. Should you call the cops – or an ambulance?

The OCD Hand Washers: Boy, do they wash, wash, wash, while the queue behind steadily ages.

The Lingerers: They're done – but will chat with co-sinkers, discover long lost friends, call out greetings, oblivious to glares or dark mutterings.

Then, the I-Don't-Care-About-The-Next-User Messers –ghastly.

Maybe we need signs....or Do/Don't pamphlets handed out along with the handfuls of bless-the-couple akshatai.

Seriously – some rules here, guys.

Otherwise, we're sunk...er.... 'sink-sunk'.

Ranjitha Ashok

Delhi & Ahmadabad steal a march

But can we at least get a Heritage Act?

(By A Madras Week Coordinator)

It was announced last week that Delhi will be applying to UNESCO that it be recognised as a Heritage City. The Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has put together a dossier on the subject and has approached the Archaeological Survey of India with a request to make the application to UNESCO. Ahmadabad is already in the race and Delhi hopes that, by virtue of its being the capital city, it will be given priority. Now where does that leave Chennai which is nowhere near even a locally enacted legislation to protect its heritage?

This year, the team that helps catalyse a Madras Week in August hopes to launch a signature campaign to press the Government for the passing of a Heritage Act. With almost all other modes and avenues having been exhausted, this appears to be the only way ahead. Readers of *Madras Musings* need hardly be reminded that the draft of a Heritage Act was completed in 2002 and had it been adopted then, we would not be a city minus buildings such as Gandhi Illam, Capper House, the erstwhile Madras Club building on *Express Estates*, and Government House. And Bharat Insurance Building would not be facing an uncertain future. However, with Queen Mary's College being threatened in 2003, the draft regulations were quietly shelved. Since then there have been attempts at revival in fits and starts, but nothing concrete has emerged.

The High Court then took the initiative and, in response to

(Continued on page 6)

(Also see page 2)



Built for the new Secretariat and Assembly complex.

Whatever the views on this building, to good use it must be put

The State Government has firmly rejected all suggestions that it should continue to operate some of its departments from the recently built Assembly-cum-Secretariat building. It has been decided that Fort St George will be its home and the reasons being given for this are that the new building is yet incomplete and that there is an enquiry pending on alleged irregularities in the construction. If that decision is irrevocable, then the Government also ought to specify as to what its plans are for the building. It does not make sense to have a vast edifice standing empty after a huge amount of money has been spent on its construction.

You just need to walk down Mount Road to notice that the building is already going to seed. The neon signs announcing that it was indeed the State Chief Secretariat and Assembly have been removed. The gardens are devoid of any security and at night the building is completely dark without any light anywhere on the campus. This way the structure will soon

fall prey to vandals. Its vast size also means that it has the potential for unlawful activities and may become the den of anti-socials. The area to the rear is still under development and there is no clear-cut plan on what is to come up there.

What is ironic is that the State Government is eternally in need of space. Several of its departments are functioning from rented premises in various parts of the city. Accepting the

ing to the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Surely this Government-sponsored company can fit all its departments into the new Secretariat, thereby sparing the Nandanam property? At least we will this way have some use for a building that has cost us Rs. 1000 crore and more.

Every property requires maintenance and that will happen in the new Secretariat only if it is occupied. If it is left to the elements, it will soon decay and, as and when the Government decides to move in, a huge amount of expenditure will be incurred in refurbishing the place. That can certainly be avoided if the building is peopled from the start.

The Government may well want to take a leaf from the book of neighbouring Karnataka. When in the 1950s the Vidhan Soudha was being constructed, there were allegations of irregularities against the then Chief Minister Kengal Hanumanthiah. But that did not

(Continued on page 3)

• By The Editor

Government's argument that it is impossible to have departments functioning from two locations (the Fort and the new Assembly) implies that having some of the offices in far-flung locations is equally inconvenient. Surely these can be accommodated in the new Secretariat? We also have Chennai Metro Rail Limited, which has for the purposes of its office taken over a vast and verdant campus in Nandanam belong-

When do we get a Heritage Act?

Heritage generally refers to something we have inherited from our ancestors. It is used to relate to cultural heritage, natural heritage, virtual heritage, heritage canals, heritage routes, etc. Underwater heritage and movable heritage have also been seriously considered in recent years. UNESCO, in its convention held in 1972, noted that cultural and natural heritages are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by decay but also by the changing social and economic conditions, which aggravate the situation. In view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community to participate in the protection of heritage of outstanding value.

UNESCO has defined 'cultural heritage' as

- Monuments, sculpture and paintings, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings, and combinations of features which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

- Groups of buildings, groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; and

- Works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

'Natural heritage' has been defined as

- Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;

- Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas, which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation; and

- Natural sites from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

'Digital heritage', also called 'e-heritage', refers to computer-based materials of enduring value that should be kept for future generations. Understanding that the digital heritage is at risk of being lost and

that its preservation for the benefit of the present and future generations is an urgent issue of worldwide concern, UNESCO proclaimed certain principles and adopted a Charter in 2003. Virtual systems and multimedia pioneered the field of virtual heritage over a decade ago. UNESCO's strategy includes conservation of movable heritage and museums.

'Underwater cultural heritage' encompasses all traces of human existence that lie or were lying under water and had a cultural or historical character. UNESCO elaborated it in its convention held in 2001 on the protection of underwater cultural heritage.

Noting that the 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, UNESCO adopted, on June 24, 2010 directives on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Cultural heritage does not end with monuments and collections of objects but also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

In India

Rapid urbanisation has brought immense pressure on land and resources. These changes have brought about the destruction of many priceless buildings and built environs, and have resulted in the loss of traditional building methods and skills.

The existing infrastructure and supporting legislation are all directed towards new development in both planning and construction. These laws are inadequate in protecting the vast cultural heritage of this country. A new, urgent and alternative approach is required to ensure that what is left of our valuable inheritance is not lost forever. This approach will acknowledge conservation as an integral part of and not contradictory to development.

Recognition of the need to protect and conserve 'heritage' and environs is the aim and thrust of a Heritage Act. Sensing the need for such an Act, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) started a heritage movement and drafted a model Act as early as 1990 and urged State regulations governing

(Continued on page 7)

Hi-decibel weddings

The Man from Madras Musings is still reeling from the impact of the wedding season and those of you who read his columns will have no choice but to hear more on the subject. And hear, as far as MMM is concerned, is the operative word. For, MMM notices that our weddings have become high decibel affairs which need to be seriously monitored for noise pollution and aural damage.

There was a time when weddings in the city were characterised by the *nagaswaram* ensemble, with the only other sounds being those of the conversation, the laughter and the priest steadily intoning the hymns. Then came the reformist weddings where the priest was replaced by a respected elder who gave a speech and then supervised the tying of the knot. But all things have come a full circle and MMM notices that the priest has made a strong comeback and, what's more, having taken a leaf from the book of

unfortunately heard what he said to the caller which was clearly inappropriate and inauspicious to the occasion.

Shortly thereafter, he was back on the air addressing the audience, this time giving a detailed account of what happens at a marriage. The audience was too busy talking to itself to notice, for after all nothing out-of-the-ordinary ever happens in any of these events. Then, after a few desultory chants and a few phone calls ("Yes, you can buy those shares"), he was once again addressing his flock and this time he gained everyone's attention. "We are now tying the knot," he thundered and that made the audience go silent even as the pipers and drummers worked themselves to a musical crescendo.

"And once that is over," he shrieked above the music, "please don't come crowding for shaking hands of the bride and the groom. That is reserved for later. Now they must hold only each other's hands." Nobody bothered with that, for within a few minutes, everyone

a schedule was published and it was announced that the rota system would be followed strictly. But that was observed more in the breach than in practice, and now MMM has made his own private schedule which, simply put, means you can expect a power cut when you least expect it. There are days when power is turned off at the main for a full day, ostensibly under the claim of maintenance. We must surely be the only place in the world where maintenance of an essential utility requires it to be turned off at the main! Or is it that the powers-that-be in the electricity department are working overtime to cover up for lack of maintenance in the past. Certainly, a cursory look at some of the transformers and wires gives MMM that impression. His supply is from a transformer which at the first sight of a cloud in the sky turns into a fire-cracker of sorts. It lets off colourful sparks and when a drop of water falls on it explodes and throws off pieces of rubber.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

reformist wedding, delivers a speech interspersed with hymns. Thereby he demonstrates his superiority and durability no doubt, for the reformer would not be able to chant hymns.

But what everyone conveniently forgets to note is that priests do not need the speaker's mike to hold. But, like seasoned speakers, they do not like to let go of the mike, as MMM has noticed at countless weddings. Last week, MMM was at one such event, where a near apoplectic priest, who had obviously done rather well at meals, was dominating the show.

The bride and bridegroom had hardly sat down when the agent-of-God was off to a start, delivering a speech on the importance of the marriage. He chose to expand on the topic at great length, dwelling in detail on what could possibly go wrong in that blessed state of life. But the way he spoke of the pitfalls made MMM wonder if he was almost hinting to the betrothed couple that this was their last chance to break it all off and walk away into a sunset of freedom.

Then it was back to hymns and chants for a while during which assistant priests did the intoning while the star-of-the-show busied himself with answering calls on his cell phone. He did not let go of the mike even then and those who paid attention could clearly hear what he was talking. And MMM

was busy clambering on to stage to wish the couple. The priest did not appear to mind. He was busy announcing the gifts, the names of those who gave them and if it was in cash the amount also. Some of those who gave cash did not appear overly enthusiastic about their names and the amounts being announced, for obvious reasons. Then, after a brief bout of chants, he was back, this time announcing the various shrines from where blessings had been received. In short, he had the time of his life.

To his bellowings you just had to add the general high-pitched conversation, and with the noise of the traffic outside and the oppressive weather, you knew for sure that the newlyweds had had a wedding they would never forget.

The loss of power

Every day, even if for only an hour, *The Man from Madras Musings* is made aware how painful the loss of power can be. No, he is not spending an hour each day with one of the unsuccessful candidates in the recent elections. He is referring to the power-cut, also known for some reason as load-shedding. In the early days, MMM, having come to know that areas in the mofussil had for long been putting up with this problem, was all for sharing their burden. But now his patience is wearing thin. Let them use lanterns is MMM's secret comment, though he does not utter it in public.

When the idea of a power-cut in Madras was first mooted,

Power cuts usually dull MMM's mind and it is on one such occasion that he came up with this:

Monday's cut is outage in every phase

Tuesday's cut is low voltage in a phase

Wednesday it is under guise of maintenance

Thursday cut means you take it as a penance

Friday's cut is terrible and tiring

Saturday's cut is really enervating.

The cut on the Sabbath day heaps MMM's curse on the TNEB in every way.

Not one of MMM's best but he is not Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Tailpiece

It was once again at a wedding and the event being over, *The Man from Madras Musings* and his good lady were trying to gain the attention of the valet-parking service attendant. This was to no avail as several others were attempting the same. But then along came a stentorian voice that imperiously asked for its vehicle. "It's a Benz," it said in clear tones for the benefit of the rest of the crowd and the attendant, also perhaps implying that being a Benz entitled the vehicle to priority. Now MMM realises why his own humble vehicle is often the last to be fetched by parking lot attendants.

— MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Of kavu and caves

I would like to add to some of Prof. Raman's statements (MM, July 16th). The first built shrine could be a small structure similar to that for Chandikeswarar we find in Siva temples. Later, big structures similar to *Garbagrahams* were built. *Praharas* and *gopurams* were still later additions.

Regarding *kavu* and *kaaba*, *kavu* means a 'shrine' or 'sanctuary'. But this word is not found in that sense in Tamil, Telugu or Kannada, the principal spoken Dravidian languages of the time. So it could be a word which has its roots in some other ancient language.

Similarly, *kaaba* is the name of the holiest shrine of Islam in Mecca. Nobody knows at what point of time it was built. So the name may have been in existence before Arab settlement of the Arabian Peninsula. Was *kaaba* also built within a forest? It is a windowless, single entrance structure, rectangular in plan and with flat roof.

It is stated by Alain Daniélou in his book *L'Histoire de l'Inde* that the Arabian Peninsula was once a fertile land and became a desert at a later date. Was the Arabian Peninsula then occupied by a different race that practised a kind of religion which the Arabs who came later adopted. Perhaps so, when the *kaaba* was built.

Al-Lat, al-'Uzza and Manat, all female deities, in addition to numerous idols, were worshipped by the Arabs of Mecca during pre-Islamic period. The tribe Quraysh comprised the people in charge of the shrine called *kaaba*. The Prophet Mohammed belonged to that tribe.

The root of the French word 'cave' is given as *cava* in Latin according to the French dictionary *Peitt Le Robert*. The 1959 edition of *Chamber's Twentieth*

Century Dictionary also furnishes the derivative of the English word *Cave* as Latin. Are the words *kavu*, *kaaba* and *cava* derivatives of an unknown mother language?

From time immemorial some caves have been used as shrines for one or more deities.

S.N. Mahalingam

64-A, Kalamegam Street Extn.
SBI Colony II Street
Kamarajapuram
Chennai 600 073

Whose responsibility?

While we agree with many of Prabha Sridevan's observations (MM, June 16th), it must be stated that as regards the maintenance of the tenements, all the allottees together should have jointly organised a maintenance crew for upkeep, repairs, replastering, repainting, etc. of the buildings. There is lack of feeling and responsibility of ownership among the occupants which has led to overall deterioration. The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board should have supervised, monitored and controlled things.

K. Soundarraj &
Mrs Adhilakshmi Logamurthy
10/12, 8th Street
Dr. Radhkrishnan Salai
Chennai 600 004

Change it back

I fully endorse the views of reader N.P. Andavan regarding our city's name, i.e. Madras. Changing the name was a hasty decision like changing the Tamil New Year Day from April 14th to January 14th. It is high time the city name is changed back to Madras. Better late than never.

Sundaram

somasundaram@hotmail.com
Chennai 600 017

* * *
About the old debate on
Chennai and Madras

A big 'Thank You' to 26 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.06.11 and 15.07.11, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

— Chennai Heritage

Rs.50: Arul's Coaching Centre

Rs.100: Manuel Aaron; Narayanan, K.S.; Ananthachari, K.; Shanmugakani, K.; Venugopal, R.; Vittal Rao, K.; Umamahesh Krishnan; Shantha Venkataraman; Krishna, S.

Rs.120: Venkataseshan, R.

Rs.200: Ponraj, S.; Chandrasekaran, N.; Muthukumaran, S.; Viswanathan, TS.

Rs.400: George K John; Ahalya Chari; Ravi, K.; Vijayaraghavan, B.; Sridhar, R.

Rs.444: Vipradas, GB.

Rs.900: Shankar, P.; Ramasamy, SA.; Book Marketing Services; Malathi Ramaswamy; Amalgamated Engineers

Integrated Public Transport for Chennai

Recently, there have been many comments in the media on the suitability of Metro rail or Monorail for Chennai. There are also studies being carried out for a BRT system at grade on some corridors in Chennai. Each system has its own merits and demerits and no single mode can be the solution for a city like Chennai, with its mix of only a few wide roads and many narrow but still busy roads.

Metro rail is the most expensive, but at the same time it has the highest capacity and speed potential. World experience is that on corridors with likely traffic density of 30,000 and over PHPDT, Metro rail is necessary. BRT, which is most cost effective, has also reached such capacity in some Latin American cities. Such corridors would have four dedicated bus (BRT) lanes on the median, one pair for the slower buses and the other pair for faster limited stop buses or for overtaking. Metro rail is more expensive, especially if it has to go underground. If it can be elevated, which is possible on roads with ROW of 25m and over, the overall cost will be about 25 per cent higher than Monorail. The Monorail structure being light is less costly, but the monorail vehicle cost will be more than that of a metro coach combination of equivalent capacity. For example, the Monorail under construction in Mumbai is estimated to cost about Rs.130 crore per kilometre.

A study of the cities where Monorail has been used would indicate that they have been used as airport links in major cities and for main corridors in Level II cities, especially in Japan, which have busy corridors. The highest ridership achieved in a direction appears to be 17,000 per hour by Chongziang Monorail in China. The longest line is a 28-km link from airport and to Osaka city carrying about 100,000 passengers a day. One of the earliest and busiest Monorail lines is the 17-km line from Tokyo airport to city and it carries a maximum of 300,000 passengers a day. Singapore has provided short Monorail loops serving their MRT stations in some neighbourhoods. Thus, it is an ideal mode for medium density corridors and dedicated links and as a feeder mode.

Mumbai, the first city in India to implement Monorail, has adopted it for a line from Chembur to Jacob Circle, a length of about 19 km of which, it is learnt, trial runs are on in the first 8.26 km. There is a Master plan for the region, which includes 135 km of Monorail. At the same time, they are fast progressing on an East-West Metro line and have planned taking up a longer North-South line. They are also optimising and adding some parallel lines on the existing suburban lines and are laying exten-

sions of the suburban lines in Navi Mumbai. Thus, they have gone in for a mix of modes to suit traffic density and ROW availability.

When the Monorail proposals were made in 2006 for Chennai, the main objection raised was about adopting it on very dense corridors like Anna Salai and Periyar Salai. Thankfully, now, the Metro rail corridors proposed on these two corridors will stay. While planning further, it is suggested that a specific traffic study is conducted to assess traffic corridor-wise. The denser corridors should be earmarked for future Metro rail links. A typical example is the Foreshore Estate-Porur-Poonamallee corridor via T'Nagar-Vadapalani.

The next level corridors, where Right of Way is adequate, BRT will be more cost effective, e.g. corridors like, Rajiv Gandhi Salai (OMR) and Anna Nagar-Madhavaram via IRR. The corridors with narrow roads and/or winding alignment at this level of traffic requirement will be best for Monorail.

The main advantage of Monorail is that its structure occupies minimum space. It need not necessarily be on the median. The up and down lines can be taken along the kerb on either side of the road and stations provided in between the two lines at intervals. On still narrower roads, a line in one direction can be taken on one road and the return direction line on a parallel road close by. To start with, old tramline corridors, excluding the lengths covered by the Metro rail under construction, will easily qualify for this mode with some modifications e.g. (i) Chennai Beach to Moolakkadai via Mint-Basin Bridge; ii) Purasawalkam-Vepery-Egmore; iii) Egmore-Chintadripet-Wallajah Road-Triplicane High Road-Barber's Bridge; iv) Anna Salai-Royapettah High Road-Luz. Amongst new ones, an orbital line from Light House to Moolakkadai via Gemini, Nungambakkam, Kilpauk, and Perambur can be considered. Further, Monorail can be used as feeder mode in the suburbs and in a circular route in CBD as suggested by some senior experts.

The suggestions given above for different modal corridors are only indicative. In all cases, however, there should be proper intermodal transfer facilities provided wherever different mass transit modes (including MRTS and Suburban Rail) meet or cross each other. In addition feeder bus services will need to be provided at important stations.

Dr. S. Ponnuswamy

Addl. General Manager (Retd), Southern Railway
56, Venkatratnam Nagar
Adyar, Chennai 600 020

(MM, July 1st), one point needs to be made clear. In the Tamil context this city was always known as Chennai.

I studied in a Tamil medium school in a village and our lessons spoke about 'Chennai'. If you see the Tamil magazines and dailies of the 1930s and even earlier, it was always Chennai. Railway timetables in Tamil and radio programmes mentioned Chennai. But there was this other name Madras also in use. So the city carried on with both names, Chennai in Tamil, Madras in English. What the Government of Tamil Nadu did was merely to jettison one name.

S. Theodore Baskaran

Asha Township Phase II
Dodda Gubbi Post
Bangalore 560 077

* * *

I fully endorse the views and expressions of reader Jaidev

in 'Madras again' (MM, July 16th). It is time to reconsider and bring back the name Madras. The name Madras still rings in the ears. We have constant reminders of Madras through Madras High Court, Madras Fertilizers, Madras Uni-

versity, Madras Central railway station, Madras Airport, IIT-Madras, Madras Race Club, Madras Club, Madrasis, *Madras Musings!* to mention a few.

Dr. H.K. Lakshman Rao

33, Krishnapuri, R.A. Puram
Chennai 600 028



Till July 31: Photography Exhibition: *Temples of India* by Photographic Society of Madras (at DakshinaChitra).

Till August 31: *Children's Mela* – Folk performances, puppet shows, storytelling, and other activities for schoolchildren (at DakshinaChitra).

Worshops at DakshinaChitra

Adult workshops;

July 23 & 24: Miniature painting on marble

July 30: Vegetable and fruit carving. For details, contact 27472603, 27472783

WHAT'S ITS FUTURE?

(Continued from page 1)

mean that the building had to be abandoned. It was put to good use and has remained a landmark of Bangalore.

The new Assembly-cum-Secretariat in Chennai too promises to become a landmark, but of a different kind – as a symbol of the partisan politics that our State specialises in.

When the Congress met in Madras

The Indian National Congress was 125 years old on December 28, 2010. This landmark event did not receive much attention, scams and scandals no doubt hogging the lime-light. This article is to mark that milestone, belated though it is.

Madras was where the seeds of the Indian National Congress were sown and, in the years leading up to Independence, the city was to play host to eight sessions of the party. I look at some of these historic venues here.

The idea of an Indian National Congress took shape in late December 1884 when 17 men met at the house of Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao in Mylapore to chart out a plan for the formation of a political National Movement. Most of the 17 men were delegates to the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society that had just concluded at Adyar. Though what exactly was discussed at the meeting is not known, it is generally accepted that this gathering of the 17 men sowed the seeds of the formation of the Congress. The residence where the meeting was held does not exist now, and in its place today stands an apartment complex – Vishwakamal. Residents of the complex remember a plaque commemorating that meeting, but it has long vanished.

After its formation, the first Congress session to be held in Madras was in December 1887. This was the 3rd Congress Session, the first two having been held in Poona and Calcutta respectively. The chairman of the reception committee of the Madras Session was Sir T. Madhava Rao, civil servant, administrator and Dewan of Travancore,

Indore and Baroda at different times. The event was held at Mackay's Gardens. This is an area that exists by the same name even today and lies just off Graeme's Road. 607 delegates attended it, Madras leading the numbers with 362 participants. An interesting trivia, though not verified, is that today's Thousand Lights area takes its name thanks to the Thousand Lights that were lit to commemorate the occasion. It was in this session that Congress got its first Muslim President with the election of Badruddin Tyabji to the post.

Entertainments were hosted by the Governor of Madras, Lord Connemara, Rajah Sir Savalai Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the philanthropist and the then Sheriff of Madras, and Eardley Norton, a leading lawyer.

• by **Karthik A. Bhatt**

The next Congress Session in Madras was in 1894. This was the 10th Session of the party and was held in Hyde Park Gardens on Poonamallee High Road, a place that exists even today as part of the Kilpauk Medical College campus. It was the property of the Rajah of Panagal, Panuganti Ramarayaningar, and it was later made over to the Indian Medical Practitioners' Association for the setting up of a college that would teach Indian systems of medicine. Sir Alfred Webb, an Irishman was elected the Chairman of this Session. Little else is known about this session other than the various resolutions that were passed.

The 1903. The venue this time was Spring Gardens, Teynampet, where a pandal accommodating nearly 6000 persons was put up. Interestingly, Burma was represented for the first time in a Congress session here. Lal Mohan Ghose was elected President of this session. Spring Gardens was a property dating back at least to 1822, then owned by one J. Sherman. It later seems to have changed hands many times, having been mentioned as the residence of the Rajah of Pithapuram, Rajah Ram Venkata Kumara Mahipati, Surya Rao Bahadur Garu, as revealed in a book published in 1915. Sir C. Madhavan Nair, Judge of the

The Congress returned to Madras for its 14th Session, held in December 1898. Ananda Mohan Bose was the Chairman of this session, which was held at Patter's Gardens, Royapettah, the residence of the wealthy Gujarati Lodd family. The scions of this family were known for their philanthropy and support to social causes. Patter's Gardens still survives, though its vast gardens have now been swallowed up by constructions. The headquarters of the Congress Party, Satyamurti Bhawan, stands adjoining the Gardens on land donated by Lodd Govinddoss, the best-known member of the family. His tomb, surrounded by dense shrubbery, still stands on the campus.

Madras played host to the 19th Session of the Congress in

1903. The venue this time was Spring Gardens, Teynampet, where a pandal accommodating nearly 6000 persons was put up. Interestingly, Burma was represented for the first time in a Congress session here. Lal Mohan Ghose was elected President of this session. Spring Gardens was a property dating back at least to 1822, then owned by one J. Sherman. It later seems to have changed hands many times, having been mentioned as the residence of the Rajah of Pithapuram, Rajah Ram Venkata Kumara Mahipati, Surya Rao Bahadur Garu, as revealed in a book published in 1915. Sir C. Madhavan Nair, Judge of the



Doveton House

Madras High Court, also seems to have owned the property at some point of time as mentioned in his short biography of his father-in-law, Sir C. Sankaran Nair. Springs Gardens later became home of the Motion Pictures Combine, promoted by film-maker K. Subrahmanyam, and finally metamorphosed into S.S. Vasani's Gemini Studio. In the heart of this sylvan campus stood a house that was once supposed to have been lived in by Edward, the second Lord Clive. Today all this has been overrun by several highrises and a star hotel that in its own way celebrates Chennai's film heritage – The Park.

Two notable matters discussed in the Spring Gardens session were the Coronation Durbar held in Delhi earlier that year and the Madras Municipal Bill which was to be introduced. On the subject of the Coronation Durbar, the Congress took strong exception to the treatment accorded to the Indian Princes – "subjected to a humiliation they had never known before under the British Government" – and to the Indian visitors, who returned with "bitter memories of the different treatment received by Indians and Europeans." The Madras Mu-

nicipal Bill was called "retrograde and reactionary" by the Session President and a resolution was passed condemning its introduction. The Bill evoked strong criticism as it proposed to reduce the number of popular representatives to 16 (from 24) and proposed 8 to associations wholly or mainly composed of Europeans. Strong exception was also taken to the Bill due to the fact that it was not in consonance with the principles of Local Self Government laid down in the time of Lord Ripon.

The 23rd Session of the Congress was held in Madras in 1908. This session was held in exceptional circumstances, it having been adjourned from Surat where it was originally scheduled in 1907. The move to Madras was caused thanks to the rioting and chaos that took place in Surat due to a split in the Party over the election of the President, thus leading to the adjournment of the Session. Following this, the Convention Committee met at Allahabad in April 1908 where a Constitution was drawn up for the Indian National Congress. Thus, Madras had the distinction of playing host to the first session held in December 1908 under a formal Constitution. The session was held at Elphinstone Grounds, Mount Road, later the home of two theatres of the same name and, of course, the place to which young Madras flocked for its fix of Jaffar's ice cream and, in particular, Peach Melba.

The next Congress Session held in Madras was in 1914. This was held in a pavilion erected in the grounds of Doveton House in Nungambakkam. This is one of Madras's historic buildings thanks to its origins that can be traced to the 1790s, when it was built by a Benjamin Roebuck. The home got its name when it became the residence of a John Doveton, who had purchased it on his becoming a Lieutenant General, from its owner Linghi Chetty in 1837. John Doveton had served as the guardian of Tipu Sultan's two sons who were taken into custody by Lord

Cornwallis. After his time, the property changed hands with the Government acquiring it. It acquired a degree of notoriety when Khande Rao Gaekwad, the usurper of the Baroda throne, was housed in it after he was deposed by the British in 1870. The Women's Christian College moved into this campus in 1916 and Doveton House survives even today.

The 1914 session was well attended with 866 delegates participating. The platform was crowded with several Madras noteworthies when the President-elect Bhupendranath Basu reached the venue in a procession and was escorted to the pavilion door by a guard of Congress volunteers on cycles. The session was a historic one as it was visited by the Governor of Madras, Lord Pentland. It was the first ever visit by a Governor to a Congress session.

The Congress did not return to Madras till 1927, when the 42nd Session was held in the dry bed of the Spur Tank in Chetpet. It was here that for the first time the Congress called for Purna Swaraj, or complete freedom, with Jawaharlal Nehru moving the Independence Resolution. It also paved the way for the formation of the Music Academy, as an offshoot of an All India Music Conference that was held in conjunction with the Congress Session.

The Congress last met in Madras in 1955. The famous Avadi session saw the adoption of a resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru on the 'Socialistic Pattern of Society'. In 1988, a meeting of the All India Congress Committee, presided over by Rajiv Gandhi, was held at Maraimalainagar, following which the area developed rapidly as an industrial estate.

In this historic year, it would be good if the Congress thought of unveiling plaques at the various locations that it met in Madras, as a record for posterity.

Acknowledgements: *How India Wrought for Freedom* – By Annie Besant. The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1915.

The evolution of a coin no more

No longer is it legal tender: The road has finally come to an end for the humble 25 paise coin. The Reserve Bank of India is withdrawing from circulation coins of 25 paise and below from June 30, 2011. Coins of denominations of 25 paise and below will not be accepted for exchange at the bank branches from July 1, 2011 onwards. We trace the history of the 25 paise coin from the British era to contemporary India. (Sent to us by PADMINI NATARAJAN).

1835 The first issues of the quarter rupee coins were released in India during the reign of William IV. The coins were made of silver.



1840 The longest reigning monarch of the United Kingdom, Queen Victoria also held the title of the Empress of India. During her reign a number of quarter rupee coins were issued. Soon after her ascent to the throne, a silver quarter rupee coin was issued in India. The coins featured the bust of a young Queen Victoria. She was made the queen soon after her 18th birthday



1875 The coins issued later in Queen Victoria's reign had a more mature looking bust of the queen. The quarter rupee coins were made of silver.



1890 While Queen Victoria was adding to her years in real life, she also put in a bit of weight on her image on the coins.



1909 The new century also witnessed a change on the British monarchy. Following the death of his mother Queen Victoria, Edward VII was crowned as the King of the United Kingdom and also as the Emperor of India. All new coins issued during the time bore his name and face.



1920 A new design of coins was introduced in 1919 that sought to replace the then existing silver quarter rupee coins. The new equivalent of the quarter rupee coin was the 4 anna coin, that was made from cupro-nickel instead of silver. The rising silver prices following the First World War necessitated this change. These coins had the effigy of King George V.



1925 George V was crowned the King in 1910. He was also the first reigning British monarch to tour India. The 4 anna coins introduced in 1919 didn't gain popularity and soon the quarter rupee coins had to be brought back.



1939 King George VI was the last of the British monarchs to rule over India. His predecessor Edward VIII abdicated the throne in order to marry divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson. There were no coins issued for Edward VIII. While coins of other denominations went for a design change, the quarter rupee coins continued, with only a new monarch replacing the old.



1950 Following the Independence of India the currency system continued with the British series of coins till the establishment of the Indian Republic. The first coins of independent India were introduced on August 15, 1950 and they included the quarter rupee coin made of nickel. The coins had the words 'char anna' embossed in Devnagri script and had the Ashoka emblem on one side.



1959 Another major landmark in the history of the 25 paise coin happened following the introduction of the decimal series in accordance with the Indian Coinage Act that came into force from April 1, 1957. The 19 mm 25 paise coins were called '25 naye paise'. The term 'naye paise' was used for wider public recognition of the new coinage system and was discontinued from June 1, 1964 when the word 'naye' was dropped. The coins weighed 5 grams and were made of nickel.



(Continued on page 8)

CHENNAI HERITAGE

No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014

I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No.....) / I have just seen Madras Musings and would like to receive it hereafter.

• If we enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs. 100 (Rupees One hundred) payable to CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS, as subscription to Madras Musings for the year 2011-12.

• As token of my support for the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that Madras Musings espouses, I send Chennai Heritage an additional Rs..... (Rupees) Please keep / put me on your mailing list.

Name :

Address :

Note: Overseas postage Rs. 550/year extra. Cheques for overseas postage alone payable to M/s. Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd. All other cheques to 'Chennai Heritage'.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

• Since Volume XIV, No.1 (April 16, 2003), Madras Musings has been priced at Rs.5 a copy. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/- Please make out your cheque only to CHENNAI HERITAGE and send it, together with the COUPON, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014 or C/O LOKAVANI SOUTHERN PRINTERS PVT. LTD., 62/63, GREAMES ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs.100 covers only a part of our costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essential for Chennai Heritage and Madras Musings to play a greater role in creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDITION TO your subscriptions.

If in the coming year Chennai Heritage receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep Madras Musings going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to Madras Musings for 2011-12 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

We look forward to all readers of Madras Musings, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions.

– The Editor



(Current Affairs questions are from the period June 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. How did Ayman al-Zawahiri make news on June 16th?
2. Name the Northern Ireland golfer who became the youngest since Bobby Jones in 1923 to win the U.S. Open, one of the four Majors, recently.
3. According to experts, which famous artist's self-portrait, displayed in an eponymous museum in Amsterdam, is actually a depiction of his brother Theo?
4. J.K. Rowling's new project, an interactive website, launched on June 23rd, is called...?
5. Which (now) common online activity did Pope Benedict XVI use to launch a new Vatican website on June 29th?
6. Christine Lagarde is the new head of which global organisation following her predecessor's forced departure over a sexual assault controversy?
7. Name the (now) invite-only social networking service operated by Google Inc., launched on June 28th.
8. Which very senior minister in the Union Cabinet confirmed that he suspected his ministry offices were bugged and had sought a secret inquiry into the alleged incidents?
9. Who is Michael Nobbs in the Indian sports scenario?
10. India's campaign to get which place to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site received a setback, with the UN committee postponing the decision to 2012?
* * *
11. In which year was the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by which Madras was restored to the English, signed?
12. Which institution in Triplicane was founded by Janab Syed Azmathullah Sahib in 1927?
13. What is the contribution of the artist Prof. R. Krishna Rao to Tamil Nadu's identity?
14. Name the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the present Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.
15. Who was described in a citation awarded by UNESCO as 'the prophet of the new age, the Socrates of South East Asia'?
16. Which structure in Tamil Nadu, inaugurated on January 1, 2000, is made up of 3681 stone blocks weighing between 3 and 8 tons each?
17. Where in Madras was *Biden House* used as a harbour-masters' residence?
18. Fill in the blank: French Capuchin priest, Father Ephraim de Nevers, is considered to have started in his own house in White Town, very soon after Madras came into being, the first _____.
19. *Royapettah House* is now better known as...?
20. Which major institution in Madras was inaugurated on September 29, 1688?

(Answers on page 8)

Chennoise – that's who we are

• **Living in Chennai is equivalent to living in a factory – at least in terms of how much noise all the residents are subjected to. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) shows that the noise levels everywhere in Chennai are over 100 dB – more than a typical factory. The average noise level in Chennai is actually higher at more than 129 decibels. It must be noted that pain in the ear begins at 125 decibels. The permissible limit is 85 dB fixed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).**

The above is an extract from a newspaper. Maybe we can call ourselves Chennoise? We shout, we scream, we are loud.

We believe in loudness for all seasons. We have devotion and faith blaring from those cone things in every street and you worry whether closing your ears is a sacrilege. In fact, there have been cases in the Madras High Court where petitioners have complained of this noise assault. But Chennai does not care.

We have huge commercial establishments in residential streets, schools in cul-de-sacs, *kalyana mandapams* in what used to be quiet streets. The offices have noisy generators and neighbours are asked to "adjust" when they complain of the noise. Wedding receptions, of course, must have what is called light music concerts. How is it "light", pray? Weddings are social occasions too, when we meet friends and relatives, renew bonds. It is just not about the 'girl' and the 'boy' coming together. But with these huge speakers drowning out normal sounds, we are zonked into silence. This is about dear ones coming together. The story is the same when dear ones depart. From the womb to the tomb, it is a life of audio attack.

But what do you expect? Schools shout. Children warble

away into microphones in quiet avenues. People use drilling equipment all the 24 hours repairing their flats with no thought for the elders, the sick, the infants in the neighbouring places. Yes, it is your house and you have the right to set it right. But it is their living space too, they have the right to some peace and quiet. Why can't we inform our neighbours that we will drill or hammer from, let's say, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.? We don't care about anyone else when we raise the noise decibel. So, kids learn that it is all right to be loud and insensitive. And as grown-ups they continue to be loud and forget the virtues of silence.

There are silences and silences. To name some, there is the silence of spirituality, the silence of a learner, the silence of loyalty, the silence of ignorance, the silence of weakness, the silence of cowardice, the silence of reverence, the silence of companionship and even the forced silence. Some are positive silences, some are not. For instance, the silence of omerta imposed by the Mafiosi is not silence but muteness born of fear. When Peter denied Christ thrice before the cock crew, that was not the right silence. The elders failed to speak and were silent, when the Pandava queen was disrobed; that was a silence of *adharmā*.

Delhi, Ahmadabad steal the show

(Continued from page 1)

litigation on the demolition of *Gokhale Hall*, ruled that around 400 buildings listed by the Justice Padmanabhan Committee had to be protected. Subsequently, acting on the same ruling, the Government appointed a Heritage Conservation Committee with a mandate to ensure the protection of each of the buildings listed in the High Court's judgement. However, with the Committee being largely populated by bureaucrats and with it choosing to take its own time in getting its act together, several buildings were demolished in the interim. And, later still, the Committee

has remained a passive witness to the depredations of the Metro Rail which, unmindful of any heritage consciousness, has cut a wide swathe of destruction in its wake.

It is in the light of these developments that the demand for a Heritage Act in the city needs to be looked at. And so, during Madras Week, we will be approaching each one of you with a request to sign the petition. We look forward to your cooperation to participate in the continuing effort to ensure that Chennai protects what little there is of its heritage, even if it may not aspire for Heritage City status, which, however, it should.

Being quiet is a kindness to others and to us. It is an act of respect. It is an act of *ahimsa*. Actually it is the incessant noise that translates into violence in our lives. As a city we must stop being noisy. Is Chennai afraid of silence? We fill our space with noise, or at least with texting, shuffling or ipoding, which are all noise too of a different kind.

As I said, our marriages are noisy, our last processions are noisy, our religious celebrations are noisy, we are buffeted by noises and have got so used to it that we have become strangers to that silence which is the stillness of being.

I see walkers wiring their ears with some music. Actually there are birds even now in Chennai. Please listen to those minstrels. That music may soon die into eternity. But no, we

• by
Prabha Sridevan

proudly walk with wired ears not wanting to listen to the 'cheep cheep'. Is it so difficult to be with myself in silence, that even when I walk I need aural company? Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh recommends walking meditation where the very simple act of walking is transcended into a deeply healing tool which tells us how to be in the here and now.

The Dakshinamurthi icon creates for us a teacher and students learning in silence. There is a verse which is a beautiful study in contrast and it is also about silence. It asks us to picture at the base of the *vata* tree the aged disciples and the young teacher! The teacher explains wordlessly and the doubts of the students are shattered. The scene is so tranquil and so peaceful. He is not burdened by the thought of having to teach the hardest lesson, the Lesson of Knowledge. The space under the shade of the tree is one of silent communication and silent communion. Knowledge is transmitted easily and in silence because the students are ready to receive it. Their minds are silent too, not clamouring with conflicting thoughts. The space is free of noise; both noise inside and noise outside.

But what about today's teacher? We will look at the ordinary teacher who is buffeted by myriad problems, who is there only for the paycheck and not for love of teaching or for love of children. There is neither peace nor tranquillity in her mind nor in her life. Her students do not know what si-

lence is, for they come from noisy homes and are sent to noisy schools. She scrawls her name in the staff register, and rushes into the classroom, unprepared for that day's lesson. The first words she says are, "Children! Silence please!" The children may stop shouting, but that is not the learning silence. We must teach children the richness of silence. We must teach them the virtue of being quiet. We must teach them not to be restless in silence.

Every religious tradition has the vow of silence or practice of silence as an integral part of it. The technique of *Vipassana* is about learning to be silent. The Cistercian Order or Trappist Order is very strict about silence. Obviously, then, silence is a *sine qua non* for spiritual evolution. The largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, declares a national holiday each year to mark the Hindu-majority Bali's day of silence, Hari Raya Nyepi Tahun Baru. This profound concept has been absorbed into the beautiful Muslim-Hindu culture of that unique nation. It seems that on that day the streets are empty, no TV, no radio, no entertainment, nothing. It is a day devoted to introspection. Though it is a Hindu festival, everyone, even non-Hindus, willingly adopts silence that day. Imagine the whole of India turning inwards and silent for a day! Do you think we can start with Chennai? Nope. I have as much hope as an icicle has of survival in hell.

There is a book called, *The Sacred Tree*, compiled by The Four World Development Project from contributions by the Native elders, spiritual leaders and professionals of various Native communities in North America. It is a stunning evidence of the wisdom of the original people of North America. How much have we lost by not listening to such people? In this book, we read, "A sign that much work is needed in the area of personal spiritual growth is when a person dislikes being alone, and especially dislikes being alone in silence. Many people use television or recorded music to fill the silence so that they do not have to experience themselves as they really are. To face ourselves in silence, and to love ourselves because the Creator has made us beautiful are things that every developing human being needs to learn." Wow! All of us, not just the Chennoise are stunted in spiritual growth, tested against this standard. Sigh!

Biking in search of the tribals

Edgar Thurston, who wrote *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, is well-remembered in anthropological, ethnographic and sociology circles in India. Unfortunately, forgotten is the Madras-based amateur ethnographer and anthropology-enthusiast Philo Irudayanath. Riding a modified push-bike, Irudayanath travelled over much of the Nilgiris and parts of the Western Ghats, traversing hilly terrains, travelling through thick forests while stopping at tiny hamlets, and 'studying' various tribes and nomadic communities.

Irudayanath's concerted efforts to study the tribes of the Nilgiris spanned nearly 50 years. While serving as a school teacher in Madras, Irudayanath's chance encounter with a woman of the *Kuruvikkārar* tribe and her suggestion to cure a bald patch on his hand proved to be a turning point; this incident triggered his investigation of different tribes, such as the *Kōsava-s*, *Kādar-s*, *Tōda-s*, *Narikurava-s*, and *Kuruvikkārar-s*.

Born to Tamil parents in Mysore in 1916, Irudayanath studied at St. Joseph's Primary School, Pullipakkam, Chingleput, and at San Thomé High School, Madras. He adopted the *Philo* prefix after his family's visit to St. Philomena's Church in Mysore. His mother was a school teacher and his father, F.A. Michael, an army medical officer, who had served as a

Captain in World War I. From childhood, Irudayanath was an avid collector of pictures of people of different tribes which, he said, catalysed his future interest. He completed teacher training, became a teacher, and worked in three different Government primary schools in the Madras Province.

His articles reveal that he planned thoroughly before every tour – getting to know the place of visit, which tribes lived there, locating a suitable human guide, and packing all necessary items for the expedition, which was usually for a week or two.

During his bike rides to the hills and forests, he lived with

tain 'dictatorial' rulers that people were driven from their territories to seek shelter in the hills and forests to secure themselves from the destruction wrought by such rulers. In his essays, he links their customs, language, songs, dances, and various other art forms to that of their ancestors. This he does citing poems from Sangam poetry – *Tolkappiyam*, *Manimekalai*, *Silappadhigaram*, *Ettu Tokai* – the works of Subramania Bharatiyar and also from the Bible.

He has traced links between various Dravidian tribes and the Sumerians, Africans, and Egyptians. In fact, he devoted a full title to this subject:

● M. RAMANATHAN remembers PHILO IRUDAYANATH

the tribal people, eating their food, danced and sang with them, and slept in their huts. From his travels, he brought back an extensive collection of material (bamboo products used by the tribes, their clothing, ornamental wear, and much more), but his real treasure was his vast collection of pictures and negatives, which are either lost or gone into various hands.

On a few occasions, Irudayanath's wife, Philomena, accompanied him.

Irudayanath strongly believed that it was because of cer-

Adivāṣaḷin Maraiṇda Varalaru published by Tamizhselvi Nilayam in 1977 and 1979. In it he records his observations of the identical buffalo sacrifice followed by the Todas and the Gonds of Central India. Referring to the Tamil classical works, *Peruntokai* and *Purana-nuru*, he states that the Enatiars, living near Kurnool, Cudappah, Chittoor, and Nellore, were known as trusted lieutenants of the Cholas.

In *Pazhankudiyinar*, he details the traditional rituals and customs of the Irula community, which is driven by the

number 12, the importance of *muttukottai ennai* used in their births, deaths and other functions, the eight divisions among them, their Panchayat organisation, and the various roles of its members. Detailing another tribe, the Anamalai Pulaiyar, he quotes from the *Tolkappiyam* to trace the origin of the use of *todu (olai curul)* used by the women of this tribe. He infers that the Pulaiyars would have migrated from the hill country of neighbouring Kerala as they celebrate *Onam* and *Vishu*.

He records that, while various government schemes using modern technological tools, could not store seeds and grains safely, techniques employed by adivasis were successful. Mature seeds and grains were stored in large *kalanjiyam-s* (made from a mixture of cow dung, *chunnam*, clay, and a juice extract from the palm tree) that were usually covered with *korai*, all made from locally available materials. He asserts that the tribes use such *kalanjiyam-s* for 5-6 years without having to build another one.

He carried the Bible during all his travels, praying for a peaceful family life, and strongly believed that monetary shortcomings would not stop him from his ambitions.

Irudayanath's early writing is on the small towns and villages that he visited during his travels, recording their historical significance, detailing etymological roots of the place names and other details.

For instance, he infers that Masinagudi is derived from *masina*, the God of the Lambadis and Sukkalis of the Nilgiris and mentions that its earlier name was Devarayapattinam. Similarly, he traces



Philo Irudayanath. (Courtesy: Roja Muthiah Research Library, Taramani)

the etymology of Kovalam and Tarangambadi. He has also written about landmarks in some of these places – one such place is Kumili Kulam in Kumili reachable from Kannivakkam (between Guduvancheri and Nellikuppam); water in this *kulam*, he claims, is known for its medicinal value because the water gets mixed with plants known to possess remedial qualities, as it winds its way through the mountains before reaching the *kulam*. Not stopping with that, he records the presence of *onbathu kalvettu* near the *kulam*.

According to professional sociologists, Irudayanath's articles sensationalised certain facts and incidents to boost readership. His articles were published in *Kalaimagal*, *Manjari*, *Sakti* and other magazines. The Chennai branch of the National Folklore Support Centre Library and Roja Muthiah Research Library [RMRL] in Taramani have in their collection about 25 titles authored by Irudayanath and published by half a dozen publishing houses, such as Vanathi, Kalaimagal, Malligai, Illango, Tamizhselvi and Muthu.

Irudayanath received the Tamil Nadu State award for teachers in 1968 and the President's award in 1978. Although his efforts were not funded by research agencies and although during his time environment was not the buzzword as it is now, he took it upon himself to study in detail and document his findings without formal training in anthropology, and with the least use of modern gadgets and transport modes (often he hitched space on lorries, and bullock carts for himself and his push bike). It is time an effort is made to collate all his writings and his pictures.

When do we get a Heritage Act?

(Continued from page 2)

buildings and environs declared to be architecturally and historically important to the public.

The Heritage Act, as conceived by INTACH, aimed to ensure the following:

For buildings:

Listed buildings cannot be demolished, altered, or left to wanton decay.

Physical intervention to the interior and exterior structures may be permitted but need to be monitored.

For environs:

The declaration of an area as a Heritage Zone alerts town planners to the special needs of those areas. Special development rules would need to be drafted to regulate development and protect the character of the Heritage Zone.

Local delays

Observing the delay in bringing legislation separately for protection and conserva-

tion of heritage buildings and precincts, I had once suggested amendment to the Local Bodies Act to protect and conserve heritage buildings and precincts. No definitive move towards this direction has happened yet. In a seminar on Heritage Buildings/Precincts in the Chennai Metropolitan Area held on October 8, 2010, the then Minister and Chairman of the CMDA announced that a "Heritage Act" was under active consideration of the Government and would be enacted soon. However, the aspiration of the public for a Heritage Act remains unfulfilled.

Notwithstanding plans to enact legislation on heritage, the CMDA, by making use of the Second Master Plan, started adopting a regulatory process for conservation of heritage. A Committee was constituted to go in to the subject of 'Heritage' and, at the first instance, prepare a list of buildings of historical and/or

architectural importance and cultural value. However, this exercise is limited to only the Chennai Metropolitan Area. In the absence of implementation of Master Plans for the State's other cities and no provisions made in the Local Body Act for introducing a regulatory process for protecting and conserving heritage buildings/precincts, it is all the more important to enact legislation on heritage at the earliest, with the scope:

- To list and document heritage for protection, management and conservation;

- To prepare heritage conservation plans and projects with a focus on urban heritage;

- To create and strengthen the institutional set-up and carry out necessary capacity building on heritage conservation;

- To take measures for adaptive re-use of heritage buildings; and

- To use urban heritage to

revitalise cities' economies and urban built environment for a better quality of life.

Under the provisions of this Act, a multi-disciplinary technical committee should be formed to work out rules of heritage conservation and to evaluate and approve potential listed buildings and environs submitted to them.

The conservation regulations should form a part of the Heritage Act.

There should be provision for budgetary support by the State and Local Governments for conservation of heritage subjects as and when listed.

After the Assembly election in April 2011, a new Government has come to power and moved to Fort St. George, a Heritage precinct.

I hope the long-awaited Heritage Act for Tamil Nadu will be enacted by it in 2011/2012. (Courtesy: *Our Building and Construction*)

– K.R. Thooyavan

Madras Week gets underway with design & heritage contests

(By A Staff Reporter)

Madras Day/Week (August 21-28) is already getting underway with two contests and a participatory programme already announced by *Mylapore Times*. One competition is to design a 'T-shirt for Chennai'. The other is a contest for school students which encourages them to explore less known heritage places in the city and present each as a project.

Designers and creative people, besides students of art, design and film, can take part in the T-shirt contest. The prize-winner not only gets a cash prize of Rs.3000 and a certificate, but is also invited to help use or re-design the work to be used on the 'Chennai T-shirt' of 2012 which will be offered to the public at a nominal price. This contest closes on August 5th.

The contest for students invites city schools to create teams of three each which will each choose a heritage spot / trend / milestone and research, record and jot down all that helps to create a great power point production. The teams

will then meet on August 23rd at a hall in Luz for the contest. Last year, 21 schools took part and the top three took home trophies, gifts and certificates. Entry has to be made at the school level. Extensive information on these contests is posted at www.themadrasday.in.

Mylapore Times is also encouraging making documentaries in English/Tamil on Madras that is Chennai. About its people and places, its landmarks and its institutions, its life-trends and its communities. The best of the documentaries will be screened at a festival during the Madras Day/Week celebrations in August.

The project for 2011 is now open to students of VisComm and Media, Film and Botany and History, to young film-makers, artists and writers and journalists, to anyone who loves Chennai and is capable of making small films.

The selection: You must submit any form of creative material that proves your interest in the city / film documentation

/ media. You can send us rough cut film material or just photos or articles. You must also tell us in 100 words the subject on Chennai you would like to document on film. You should submit your application by July 25th.

Those who qualify will then have to submit a film plan and script. The best four selected will be paid Rs. 9,000 each to make the film and Rs. 3,000 each when the film is submitted to *Mylapore Times* by August 25th.

Note: Only one person who plans to produce/direct the documentary should apply. He/she in turn can employ others for shooting/editing/sound design, etc. *Mylapore Times* can help with research material, inputs, sources, etc.

Screening: All films will be screened in late August/mid-September in Chennai at a FESTIVAL.

Contact: 98410 49155. Email: themadrasday@gmail.com

Other early starters are Asan Memorial School, which has

planned a week-long celebration shortly before Madras Week, and the Rotary Club of Madras South, which has a speaker on a Madras-focussed subject at every meeting in August.

Chennai Heritage is planning a talk every day during the Week. Chamiers, Taj Club House, Amethyst, Savera, Park Sheraton and the Gymkhana Club have already agreed to host the talks. Speakers will include Prabha Sridevan, Harry Maclure, Mohan Raman, Geeta Doctor, P. Unnikrishnan and K.R.N. Menon in dialogue.

Chennai Heritage will also lead several walks in little visited areas of Madras. Namma Mylapore has planned guided tours of DakshinaChitra and the Museum's Bronze Gallery led by Chitra Madhavan. And Nizhal is planning two tree walks in parks and a 'Trees of Madras' exhibition for children.

The Madras Naturalists' Society is also planning a couple of excursions to take in the

birds and 'wild life' of the city's suburbs and the *Mylapore Times* has several programmes for the Mylapore area. Namma Arcot Road too is planning a host of events, including a whole-day programme at the Green Park Hotel.

Pradeep Chakravarthy is planning temple walks every week during August, and Revathy and Nandini have several programmes tied up for the Kilpauk-Purasawalkam area. The Roja Muthiah Research Library intends to host several talks in Tamil during the Week together with an exhibition based on its collection. INTACH-Chennai Chapter is putting together several events in which numerous schools are expected to participate. SOS Village, Tambaram, has planned several programmes. So has the Association of British Scholars.

And the Murugappa Group is planning to have a grand inter-schools quiz for 'Madras 372'.

The August 1st issue of *Madras Musings* will have details of all these events and many more. And the August 16th issue will include a comprehensive guide to all the 'Madras Week' events that plan to stretch into a month.

The evolution of a coin no more

(Continued from page 5)

1972 By the late 1960s, Indians had become used to the new coinage system. The text 'rupaiye ka chautha bhag' (one fourth of a rupee) was also replaced by 25 paise. While other coins of lower denominations underwent a major change and moved to aluminium, the 25 paise coin didn't change much.



2002 In 1988 the 25 paise coin went steel and was made of ferritic stainless steel. It was a little heavier than its predecessor at 2.83 grams but was of the same size. The last 25 paise coins seen in popular circulation were minted in the year 2002.



Answers to Quiz

1. He was elected the leader of al-Qaeda, succeeding Osama bin Laden; 2. Rory McLroy; 3. Vincent Van Gogh; 4. Pottermore; 5. Tweeting, the first by a Pope; 6. International Monetary Fund; 7. Google+; 8. Pranab Mukherjee; 9. The new coach of Indian men's hockey team; 10. The Western Ghats.

* * *

11. 1748; 12. The hand-written *The Muslim* newspaper; 13. He designed the State emblem; 14. D. Jayakumar and P. Dhanapal; 15. Periyar; 16. The Thiruvalluvar statue in Kanniyakumari; 17. Royapuram; 18. Western-type school; 19. *Amir Mahal*; 20. The Corporation of Madras.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations

 Amalgamations Group	 ASHOK LEYLAND ENGINEERING YOUR TOMORROWS	 Bata India Limited	 Brakes India Limited	 CavinKare
 Go Placidly	 F.L. Smidth Limited	 GRUNDFOS	 The Hindu Group of Publications	 Konica COLOR LAB AND STUDIO
 LOKAVANI	 murugappa	 BATTERIES TORCHES	 Rane Group	 The future of glass. Since 1665.
 SANMAR	 SUNDARAM FINANCE Enduring values. New age thinking.	 Sundram Fasteners Limited	 TATA TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES	 TVS TVS MOTOR COMPANY
 UCAL UCAL AUTO PRIVATE LIMITED	 YAMAHA MUSIC SQUARE	<p>Since 1856, patently leaders — A WELLWISHER</p>		