

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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## Another plea to save Adyar Creek

Chennai Online, a lively website which describes itself as being "all about Chennai", has been urging the young to launch a 'Save Adyar Creek' campaign. 'It's action now or lose the Creek forever' the site states, echoing what Madras Musings has been long stating. We are glad to have another voice, possibly even a louder one, supporting ours.

The Editor

Reporting on the 'Save Adyar Creek' campaign, Chennai Online states that the Adyar Creek is important because:

1. The creek has good biodiversity with more than 70 species of flora, support-

ing a host of insects and birds, crabs and fish. Once, 200 species of migratory birds vested the Creek and quite a number of them still come.

2. The Estuary is a nutrient-rich spawning ground for

aquatic life and about 500 families of fishermen from Srinivasapuram depend on it for their livelihood.

3. An Orissa-like situation is avoided here because of the creek-estuary playing a role in controlling floods in the area.

4. The wetlands that form part of the creek help greatly to recharge the groundwater.

5. Mangrove that grow along the coasts and in estuaries function as natural barrier against cyclones and storms and help increase fish life. Their prop roots reduce tidal currents.

6. The natural estuarine vegetation plays a major role in cleaning the polluted waters of the Adyar River.

The original Creek area consisted of about 100 acres. Of this, roughly about half still exists as a creek, where the tidal effect is felt twice a day. The other half has been encroached on or 'reclaimed' for development.

Much of the Creek area has been filled up in the name of development, and concrete, construction debris and garbage have replaced the mangroves and other natural vegetation. The most recent aggravation has been the attempt to lay a road along the bank of the Creek, disastrous for the ecosystem. This will cut off the wetland from high tide, cut off the finger of the Creek extending into the land (this finger went right upto to R.K. Mutt Road in the past) and also disrupt the natural and planted areas.

editor@chennaionline.com welcomes support for its campaign.



The proposed Railway highrise at Central

### • A Railway highrise

## Not as described, but still a heritage threat

(By The Editor)

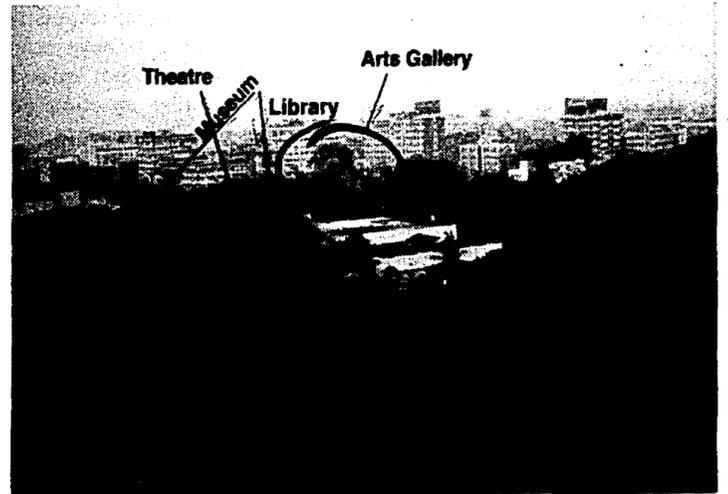
It was as startling a sentence as we have read anywhere in recent times! It was the opening words of the tender notice issued by IRCON International Limited, the construction wing of the Indian Railways, and it stated that the Railways was "proposing to lease developmental rights of the airspace of about 16000 sq.m. over the existing Ground Floor at Chennai Central Railway Station Building" (emphasis ours). It also stated that adequate foundations for a 10 storied building had already been constructed.

That what we have emphasised above could only provide a shock to anyone concerned

with heritage cannot be gainsaid. For what it seemed to state was that it was proposed to build ten storeys above either the old Central Station building or above the sympathetic addition to it created in the last couple of years. Either plan reeked of criminal vandalism; imagine 'rebuilding' the old George Hardinge-designed, Chisholm-improved main block, a heritage building if ever there is one, or despoiling the symmetry that had been achieved in adding the new block!

Fortunately, the idea expressed in the notice is not what

(Continued on page 6)



Our OLD shows the kind of greenery (above) that exists in the Pantheon Complex, shading several of the heritage buildings there. Our NEW shows the devastation that has been wrought by bringing down similar trees in the name of clearing space for a building for various departments of the State Ministry of Culture. What price culture at this rate! (Also see page 3).



## A battle to save Pantheon complex

● SAMUEL J PRABHAKAR of 11, Manohar Avenue, Off Casa Major Road, Chennai 600 008, who has sought for a stay on the ill-conceived activity in the Museum complex writes:

'Initially, I am informed that 1 + 2 floors will be put up in what they think is a 10-month period. Subsequently FOUR more floors will be added. God knows when and at what further inconvenience. Just imagine putting up four floors in a functioning building consisting of three floors below!

Enlightened architects and civil engineers would appreciate my fears regarding driving piles using the drop hammer procedure instead of raft type foundations or pre-bored cast-

in-situ piles. Equipment for such a procedure would be available with leading contractors.'

Editor's Note: We publish below some excerpts from letters of Prabhakar and the Manohar Avenue Owners and Residents Association to the authorities from June 1, 2000.

1.6.2000

The Commissioner National Arts Gallery Museum

I am very concerned to note action by some people apparently deputed by you to cut down or deface the huge and magnificent shirish (rain tree) which is most certainly more than 150 years of age and gives

(Continued on page 6)

# A tower block out of nowhere!

The Man From Madras Musings was intrigued to learn that when the new building being raised in one of the City's premier heritage campuses, the Museum complex on Pantheon Road, was brought up for discussion at the CMDA's Heritage Advisory Committee's monthly meeting when concern about the proposal was expressed, NO ONE from the Governmental majority present seemed to have any idea as to how this building was coming up. Or so MMM learns the minority felt, judging from the embarrassed hemming and hawing that went on. Indeed, this seemed to be a tower block arising out of nowhere!

On whose behalf was the building being raised? Apparently some of those present thought it had something to do with the Ministry of Culture to house several of its departments! Had they got the necessary CMDA approval for the building? MMM understands that they THOUGHT it had been obtained. Had the CMDA given the necessary approval? MMM learns that the CMDA was not very forthcoming on this, in fact it was not very sure what had happened.

The only thing there appeared to be any certainty about was that, MMM is told, the Dravidian style of architecture was to be used. When MMM was told about this response, he couldn't help but wonder whether a temple architectural style would be followed or, if not, which existing ancient Dravidian public building would serve as architectural inspiration!

But whatever the style, if a seven-storey building is to be raised just behind the heritage buildings of the Pantheon complex, it will not only aesthetically harm a site already aesthetically threatened with new blocks and models, but it could well structurally affect the old buildings if pile-driving techniques, as planned, were used. The destruction of several old trees and the congestion, pollution and road-traffic misuse on Halls Road that will follow the raising of such a building to house several hundred persons are all environmental issues that apparently have not been taken into consideration when planning this building. It would seem that whoever is getting the building built has not even thought it fit to consult the Pollution Control Board!

## Estate despoil

Similar flouting of all rules and aesthetic norms has taken place in Government Estate too, where with a great deal of fanfare tower block accommodation was declared open for MLAs and Civilians. Once, this was Chepauk Park, some of it exclusive to Government House where the Governor lived, but much of it a lung for the city. With all the construction within it now, the Metro just one more part of this desecration, *The Man From Madras Musings* has sadly watched

one of the prettiest, greenest parts of the City vanish and a congestion of buildings and the pollution that goes with their occupancy by VIPs take its place. This is not only destruction in the first degree of heritage but also despoilation of the environment. And no one is able to do anything about it, because Government is the destroyer.

The tragedy of the situation in Tamil Nadu, it strikes MMM, is that Government, when it gets around to it, enacts some of the finest laws anywhere or puts on the books some of the most meaningful regulations, but when it comes to implementation not only does the Government singularly fail but, often, as in these cases, it is the institution that pays least heed to the law or the regulations. And unless that changes, we'll continue to find more and more laws broken in this State or just plain ignored.

Whether it is traffic indiscipline, encroachers returning to sites they've been ousted from or building and environmental regulations ignored, you'll find Government giving a lead that others soon follow. When, MMM wonders, is this sad situation going to change? Could it be with a CHANGE OF MIND on the cultural headquarters' planned ignoring every cultural norm?

## Image cleanser

With Bangalore, the 'Silicon Valley of the East', on the slide and Hyderabad making giant strides to overtake it, *The Man From Madras Musings* finds Chief Minister S.M. Krishna hastening to take preventive as well as regenerative action to make Bangalore tick again. What he has done is appoint a task force, the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, to make Bangalore the finest/best city in India by 2004. And to do this, he has given the lead roles to the Corporate sector and teamed it with Government agencies and community groups. Could MMM expect the Tamil Nadu Government to take a leaf out of this book and invite the Corporate sector to play the lead role in such a Government-Corporate-Community partnership in Chennai that will focus on the following:-

Upgrading information systems; improving infrastructure; enhancing income generation in public utilities; monitoring public projects; and expanding the civic resource base.

At the first summit of the BATF, in which the political, local government and corporate leadership participated together with the heads of public utilities and infrastructure bodies as well as eminent citizens, it was agreed that the following short-term measures would be completed this year:

Development of 300 km of good road surface; completion of 100 roads under the municipal bonds scheme; developing civic assets; simplifying property tax

collection procedures; introduction of house level garbage clearance in at least 25 percent of city area; night clearance in commercial areas; plugging of major sewerage leaks; providing telephone on demand in 12 more exchanges and facilitating Internet services; refurbishing existing power distribution lines; introduction of police patrols and reorganisation of the beat system; completion of a new bus depot and replacement of old buses.

The long-term plans expected to be completed by 2004 are:

Planning and implementation of infrastructure improvements with flyovers, public market complexes and multistoried parking lots; systems for slum development and waste management; quality education in municipal schools; daily water supply in most BCC areas; expansion of sewage treatment plants; development of ring roads; introduction of digital network to subscribers' premises; provision of zero-defect power system by strengthening transmission and distribution network; improved safety and security using international standard equipment for prevention and detection of crime; and traffic decongestion with better staffing and traffic signals.

These targets were based on people's priorities according to the results of a survey commissioned by BATF. Priorities as listed by respondents were better roads, good garbage removal system, pollution control, public toilets, proper sewage lines, power transmission management and ban on alcohol outlets in residential areas in that order.

Corporates, industrialists, developers and private sector companies, like Volvo Consortium, Exodus Communications, Infosys, BPL, ABB, Prestige, Brigade group of developers, Coca Cola, Aditi Technologies and Biocon, agreed to make substantial contributions to meet the diverse needs of the city.

Bangalore feels that with this cooperative effort it has never had it so good. MMM wonders whether both Tamil Nadu and Chennai authorities will convene a similar summit and hand over a degree of power to the corporate sector in order to get a better, more efficient Chennai. The existing system has done little for the City. Why not face reality with a broader-based system? (Also see page 5)

development of 300 km of good road surface; completion of 100 roads under the municipal bonds scheme; developing civic assets; simplifying property tax

## Must politics reign?

The discussion was titled 'Sri Lanka; What lies ahead?' and the speakers listed were a couple of academicians, an acknowledged authority on the Island, a journalist-activist, and CPM, CPI and TMC leaders. Waiting for the speakers, proceedings started 45 minutes late, then one speaker did not turn up and the politicians strolled in with their supporters as and when they pleased, upto over 90 minutes after the scheduled start. The organisers, the Indian School of Social Sciences, now in the process of reviving its activities, probably thought it was par for the course, for none of its membership — mainly retired persons — seemed particularly perturbed by the leisureliness of the evening.

*The Man From Madras Musings* had decided to attend the meeting because he hoped that there'd be some fortune reading done if not predictions made about what was likely to happen in Sri Lanka in the days ahead. MMM had hoped that there'd be some insights into what the country's two leading political parties had decided to offer the minorities, particularly the Tamils, and that there might be some discussion on how the Tamils would react and how the gap could be possibly bridged. What a disappointment MMM was in for.

The political representatives spent their time eloquently decrying what other politicians were screaming for and kept the level of debate strictly to the political: the others don't know what they're talking about! This was political diatribe at its worst, the sole issue being the views of Tamil Nadu's political parties not represented on the stage, and with little concern for any meaningful solution to the crisis in the Island.

What proved a greater disappointment was that the academicians did little better. In fact, MMM was quite startled by Prof Suryanarayanan's impassioned survey of events that rather marginalised the LTTE. MMM wonders how the impasse in the Island can be solved without bringing them to the negotiating table and getting them to agree to some kind of compromise, no matter what anyone might feel about their past behaviour. If the professor had an answer, MMM didn't hear it loud and clear on an evening when he sounded more a prophet of doom than hope. Perhaps the next time MMM listens to him, he'll be MMM's favourite Sri Lanka expert again.

One ethnicity

The one point that *The Man From Madras Musings* appreciated at the discussion on Sri Lanka was made by anthropologist Sudarshan of the University of Madras. He pointed out that to call this an ethnic conflict was

wrong; the Sinhalese and Tamils, both Indian and Sri Lankan, and many of the Muslims were of the same ethnic stock. They might be divided by religion and language, but certainly not by ethnic origin in anthropological terms. They were of the same stock as most Indians.

In fact, not only does ethnicity NOT divide the Sinhalese and the Tamils, but MMM has often felt that even the cultural divide between the two is far less than between Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils. Attitudes to food, clothing and shelter, the approach to education and literacy, hygiene and a healthy environment, to rest and recreation, even to certain religious rituals and caste are much more similar between the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils than between the Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils. In this context, as Prof. Sudarshan pointed out, greater thought needs to be put into a solution by any mediator, for not even are religion and language major issues.

This is a point of view few in India — and certainly not in Tamil Nadu — express and it is a pity that Sudarshan's perceptive observation was not paid greater attention to at the meeting or outside.

## In brief

★ Onyx is the new buzzword that *The Man From Madras Musings* hears in the City. The Singapore-French company is expected with a Hey, Presto! to clean up large areas in the City. But what MMM has been finding is that while Onyx's moveable iron bins are emptied every day, they seem to change their positions quite often for one thing and, for another, are too small in many places, resulting in garbage being strewn around the bin. While the 'bin-men' efficiently dispose of the garbage with mechanical help from the garbage lorry, they refuse to touch the strewn garbage. Presumably 'second class' garbage-cleaners are expected to do that, but MMM has never sighted any of them. As for the lorries, when they ply on narrow roads, the stop-gather bin-tilt bin-put back bin operation tends to hold up traffic on the road for quite a while. MMM was stuck on one such stretch in Alwarpet recently for 20 minutes solely on account of an Onyx lorry being most efficient.

★ A recent trip on the East Coast Road proved a disappointment to *The Man From Madras Musings*. The signposting for the road in Pondicherry was almost non-existent, particularly if you are coming from the south. From Cuddalore to Pondicherry the road was not as good as the excellent stretch from Pondy to Mamallapuram, but nowhere did it seem an environmental threat. From Mamallapuram to the City, little appears to have been done and the old road is worse than ever, really an eyesore as it passes through 'main street' after 'main street', each more mud-edged, each littered with garbage and filth, and each so encroached on you have to slow down considerably. To call this a part of what was to be the great East Coast Highway is a joke. MMM

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## OUR READERS WRITE



### Save that campus

*Madras Musings* must be congratulated for drawing the attention of the public to the irremediable damage that would be done to the Madras Museum campus by the construction of a multistoried complex in its not very vast space. The Museum campus is still one of the few untouched green spots in the City, and there are several rare plants and trees in it.

Just a decade ago, a Part II Scheme — as called in Government parlance — was sanctioned for the planting and rearing of more botanical specimens. The construction of a huge complex in this space would mean that all this environmental freshness and riches would be done away with and, in the wake of the complex, a whole bazaar would spring up, breaking the calm of the place.

The Madras Museum campus is a precious heritage site and should be kept undisturbed for its historical and architectural value. Even now, it is not too late to relocate the complex elsewhere and save the Museum campus from irredeemable damage.

SADDENED  
Big Street, Triplicane  
Chennai 600 005.

### Ill-kept precincts

It is a sad commentary that the precincts of the Sri Ramakrishna International Temple leave much to be desired. The temple has been constructed at a colossal cost, thanks to the munificence of philanthropists from different walks of life. Hence, in the fitness of things, upkeep should be a paramount factor as otherwise the sanctity will be a casualty. Math authorities should do something in concert with the civic authorities.

R.K. Sridharan  
2, East Circular Road  
San Thomé, Chennai 600 028.

### Extraordinary service

Komal Sriram, a young ex-IT graduate who returned from the U.S., set up an e-mail service some years ago which does not call for any visits outside the house. Outgoing messages are to be typed or handwritten and these are collected from the house of the sender and e-mailed to recipients in India

### 'Mission Incomplete'

Chennai Corporation is on a mission of removing encroachments, following a High Court ruling.

Mere removal of encroachments is not enough. The Corporation should not only remove all encroachments but should also ensure that no further encroachments come up at such places. While the Corporation will succeed in removing the encroachments, if its past record is any guide, it will hardly achieve the latter. When it is unable to prevent encroachments from

or anywhere abroad, every afternoon. Replies or messages from the other end in English are delivered every morning. In fact, because of the time difference, replies from the U.S. could even get back in 24 hours. Almost too good to be true!

The fee is a mere \$5 or equivalent per month, in any foreign exchange, from each addressee abroad, payable to an U.S. address. Two such addressees (i.e. \$10 per month) permit messages between home and anywhere in the world for no extra charge! To further clarify, the sender based in Chennai does not incur any expense at all, neither in Indian money nor in foreign exchange.

For the ageing lonely parent, the whole operation could not be more painless. Even the sight of the uniformed 'messenger' on blue scooter, perky cap on head, lifts the spirit. A true service.

(Office at 2, Justice Jambulingam Road, Chennai 600 004.  
Tel: 497 1946. E-mail: <nriserv@md2.vsnl.net.in>)

Anna Abraham  
Ganapathy Colony,  
Chennai 600 017.

### One left out

In the article (MM, June 16th), on eminent Carnatic musicians — Century Makers, you have left out Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar (1877-1945).

Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar was one of the great Carnatic music composers of our time. He gave up his study of the Vedas to pursue the study of music under Sambasiva Ayyar. He became an accomplished *vidwan* but chose to pursue a career in *harikatha* since in those days musical discourses received more encouragement than music concerts.

He researched and evolved the raga *Hamsanandi* which literally took the South by storm. To him goes the credit for bringing to light and sometimes creating rare and haunting ragas like *Niroshita* and *Kamranjani*.

As an *Asthana Vidwan* in the court of Mysore his religious devotion took deep expression in the *Ashtothara Satha Kiritanas* in praise of Chamundeswari that he set to music.

Muthaiah Bhagavathar presided over the annual conference of the

Meena Venkateswaran  
14, Chinnaya Road  
T. Nagar  
Chennai 600 017.

### Hazard management

To dilute and disperse any leaking toxic chemical, flushing it into the nearest waterway is possible (MM, June 1st), but another part of such an emergency step is to announce to the vulnerable public to avoid such waters which might possibly be contaminated and also to avoid eating fish or prawn from such waters for a certain period of time.

V.S. Jayaraman  
31 Motilal Street  
Chennai 600 017.

# Woes of the Beach

Four years ago, (1966), in the June 16th and July 1st issues of *Madras Musings*, I sang my elegy to a beach, 'Litter... Litter... Litter'. Much sand has blown over the beach since then. The sea has receded nearly 10 metres meanwhile. I am not sure if the Chennai Corporation and the coastal authorities are aware of it. But that is beside the point.

Since I wrote the elegy, some frequent visitors to the beach formed 'Friends of the Beach' and collected money from individuals and corporate houses to employ 'Beach Beautifiers' to sweep the pavements and collect the litter on the sand. They celebrated anniversaries, presented gifts to the workers, organised *koothu-pattarai* programmes to educate the public on a litter-free beach. But what is the status now? Things have gone from bad to worse. The Friends of the Beach have again approached the Corporation and a Mr. Chandramohan, Dy. Commissioner (Health), Corporation of Chennai, after visiting Elliotts Beach, promised to install Onyx mobile garbage bins at several places at the Beach and introduce night conservancy operations.

But will these solve the problem? Onyx, the international cleaners, are on several streets of

Chennai. They have placed a lot of dustbins all over. They clear the bins regularly. But they do not touch what is on the street. A separate team looks after them. But the team is so small and the area to be covered is so vast that I am afraid they will not be able to make their appearance even once a fortnight. While such is the situation, what is it that they can do for the beach?

The problem lies in tackling the root cause. People must be educated and compelled to put the waste in the bin. Affluent, educated people come in the latest cars, drink/eat Coca-Cola, Pepsi and popcorn and throw the cups and cones on the pavement on the street just by the side of the waste bins. When I suggested to an elderly man seated in a car who had just thrown his cup on the street that he should have put it in the nearby bin, he was kind enough to say sorry, but not kind enough to take it and put it in the bin.

In another incident, a young motor cyclist whose lapse I pointed out thundered "Who are you" and virtually threatened me. He was a boy slightly older than my grandson.

Elliott's Beach has been virtually taken over by the well-to-do and well-educated section of the society in the last decade. Since

then, things have been going from bad to worse. Society has been constantly changing, but the age-old belief of Hindu Society that there are outcasts to do menial jobs still remains. The affluent consider it below their dignity to carry their litter and put it in its place. They just throw it away where they are, seated in a car, sitting on the end wall, or walking along the pavement, sand stretch, shoreline — the net result is utter chaos on this once serene and beautiful beach.

No amount of work by the beach beautifiers or the beach cleaners will change this unless the problem is tackled at the root. The mobile police patrol and the Health Inspector along with Friends of the Beach and Exnora members must appeal through speakers for two or three weeks to visitors to the beach to put their waste in the bins provided. Thereafter it should be announced that an on-the-spot fine would be imposed on the defiers from a specified date when the entire beach and adjoining roads would be declared a litter-free zone. Change that will save the beach.

D. Srinivasan  
'Alai Isai Illam'  
9 (TB/1) 6th Avenue  
Besant Nagar  
Chennai 600 090.

### No anthem, no pride!

Time was when the National Flag used to be screened at the end of a movie to the accompaniment of the National Anthem. The National Anthem was also played at the conclusion of dramas and the day's radio broadcast. The idea was to popularise the National Anthem in the years following Independence. This was an excellent idea since people from all walks of life see movies, listen to the radio etc.

It is many years since this practice was discontinued. It was the government that made the decision, feeling that the necessary awareness had been created. Looking back, it would appear that those were perhaps the only opportunities most people got to listen to the National Anthem.

These days, you hardly get an opportunity to listen to the National Anthem. Hence, theatre owners and drama troupes may consider reviving this practice, voluntarily. The government can also introduce legislation for this purpose.

Looking back at the events over the past two decades — the separatist movements in the Punjab, Kashmir and the Northeast — a hypothetical question may be raised. Was it the discontinuance of the playing of the National Anthem that led to or played a role in a decrease in patriotism that in turn led to these movements?

Hopefully the playing of the National Anthem again will inculcate a sense of patriotism and pride in the citizenry.

P.J. Sanjeeva Raj  
Plot No. 1724, 21st Main Road  
Anna Nagar West  
Chennai 600 040.

### Never say die

Undue brouhaha and pessimism was generated in and over the letter sent by Mr. Jagadisan (June 1st). Things are no doubt bad, but they could be a lot worse. It is for citizens who are in positions of affluence and power to bound themselves into civic-minded bodies and work for improving the quality of life in our city, especially in providing inexpensive healthcare. A newspaper like *Madras Musings* ought to show the way by recapturing MM's headpiece as "We care for Chennai that was Madras", instead of the present one to inject optimism into the reader.

C.G. Prasad  
9, C.S. Mudali Street  
Konditoppe, Chennai 600 079.  
(Also see page 5)

B. Gautham  
122 Wallajah Road  
Chennai 600 002.

# It's time to woo the corporates

Regretting the "stand-alooofishness" of political leaders, the bureaucracy and business leaders in Tamil Nadu, S. Viswanathan, the Editor of *Industrial Economist*, recently wrote:

"Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs and other advisers to Tamil Nadu can sing paeans to the very many attractions and advantages of Tamil Nadu. But an alert leadership must grab opportunities that present themselves time and again. Senior politicians do not often give a sense of comfort and ease (they don't seem to feel at ease, either!) to visiting dignitaries. Chief Minister should groom younger elements in his party and direct senior bureaucrats to undertake continuous public relations exercises with such visitors. He can study the involvement of bureaucracy in Hyderabad and Bangalore in such exercises. The Fort St. George breed has developed a certain disdain and stand-alooofishness not attuned to such exercises.

The leadership can effectively use industry associations like CII for maintaining regular contacts with business leaders and visiting delegations. Just look at the close rapport established by the CII secretariat with Chandrababu Naidu and S.M. Krishna, the number of programmes in which they participate and contrast this with CII-Tamil Nadu being content with organising seminars on technical subjects.

Apart from the stand-alooofishness of bureaucrats, the business leaders of the city also have a similar attitude. Look at the contrast provided by the captains of industry in Bangalore. A few weeks ago, BPL, Infosys and Wipro were reported to have

committed Rs. 40 crore to improve the civic infrastructure of Bangalore. The garden city evokes a certain sense of belonging in its citizens. You could get a feel of this on the part of the citizens of Calcutta also. Even the Marwari business leaders, who have migrated from far off Rajasthan, have developed a certain sense of attachment, characteristic of the *asli* Bengali, to Calcutta.

Delhi and Chennai provide the contrast. Perhaps the reasons are similar. Delhi doesn't boast of a native citizenry. It is a city of migrants, refugees from Pakistan and those who flock to it from

● *Closer ties between corporates & government essential to stop Chennai's march towards decay*

the Punjab, Haryana, UP, the South, the West and the East.

Chennai also seems to suffer from such a historical factor of immigration. Industrialisation being largely a post-independence phenomenon, most scions of industry can trace their forefathers migrating into the city just in the last few decades. Anantharamakrishnan and the Murugappas in the Thirties, the TVS family in the Forties.

I believe this factor may explain the lukewarm attitude of captains of industry to involve themselves in the city's affairs. When the city celebrated 350 years of its founding, nearly a decade ago, few took notice of

it, including the political leadership.

Unlike the *nouveau* rich and what Infosys Narayanamurthy fondly calls 'upstart' business leaders of IT, who are new generation businessmen, business leaders of Chennai are in the third or fourth generation in business. Most of them are owners of solid brick and mortar businesses of sustained profitability and growth. It should be presumed that it is easier for them to pull together.

Chemplax's N Sankar took the initiative to involve business leaders of Chennai to save the publication *Madras Musings*, the fortnightly on heritage and culture, when it announced closure. Surely, a Seshasayee, Ramakrishna, AC Muthiah or Venu Srinivasan can take such a lead to stop Chennai from its march towards decay. If only the political leadership cares to give them due recognition and leeway. And makes deliberate attempts to free itself from the all-consuming pre-occupations with party politics, films and *putti mandrams*.

The crucial difference lies in a political and bureaucratic leadership acting as a powerful catalyst. In Hyderabad and Bangalore, the constant interactions of the chief ministers and senior bureaucrats have with business leaders explain the difference. R Venkataraman, as industry minister, maintained such a rapport with business leaders in the Fifties and the Sixties. For many of the business leaders of those times, new to industry, RV liberally provided tips and guidance on the licences and opportunities available. With some of them like M A Muthiah Chettiar, RV persisted for long to get them to understand and appreciate the opportunities and advantages of investing in industry. The Chettinad Cement Corporation at Karur turned out to be a gold mine!

The Chief Minister should woo diplomats, Central ministers and senior bureaucrats and chairmen of public sector corporations visiting Chennai. He should also establish rapport on a continuous basis with business leaders of the city. Business is the repository of large resources. He would do well to tap this for improving the living conditions of Chennai metro, which is rapidly becoming more and more unliveable.

## Remembering Subbu — and Presidency

The passing or, rather, fading away of the legendary 'Subbu' (P.R. Subramanian) brings back nostalgic memories of Presidency College in the Forties when Subbu strode the cricket, tennis, athletic and boxing arenas like a colossus in an institution known for its academic excellence.

I completed my SSLC from Voorhees High School, Vellore, where the only private tutor my father engaged was the school's physical instructor who commented to his maths colleague that this was his first and possibly last earning from private tuition! My brother and I entered the portals of Presidency College when Prof. Papworth was the Principal, he was followed by the first Indian Principal Dr. B.B. Dey, the legendary Professor of Chemistry. They were both from the Indian Educational Service.

Some of my contemporaries were Vizzy (PVG Raju of Vizianagaram, who was in school with me), Parlakimedi, Appa Rao of Viyur, Pithapuram, Gopal (son of Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan) and his equally distinguished nephew, Narasimham (Finance Secretary and Governor, Reserve Bank), Aga Shahi (earlier his brother Aga Hilaly, ICS) who became Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, G. Kasturi and Bhagwandas Goenka of the well-known *Hindu* and *Indian Express* families, C.K. Haridas and Tirumalai with whom I shared the University Prize (Tirumalai also stood first in the IAS batting order), M.M. Ismail (Chief Justice and Vedic Scholar), Pai of the Supreme Court and a host of Chettiars and Coorgis. The desks in the classrooms were etched with the names of successive generations of students who were the backbone of the ICS, law, academic and scientific communities that guided the initial governance of the country after Independence.

I was fortunate to be awarded the Madras Presidency Scholarship of £ 400 for standing first in the Federal Public Service Examination for entry into Dartmouth as a prelude to being commissioned into the Royal Indian Navy. I was quizzed in Tamil by Sir S.V. Ramamoorthy ICS to satisfy the Board that I was indeed a 'Madras!' Subbu's certificate of my sporting activities must have helped.

We were residents of the equally illustrious and action-filled Victoria Hostel which had an Anglophile warden, Prof. Franco, who administered this prestigious adjunct of Presidency College on the Oxford / Cambridge pattern but with Indian-style dry sanitation! The pecking order was the Westernised gentry, Telugu- and Malayalam-speaking expatriates

and 'kudmis' who, put together, reflected the cosmopolitan and cavalier flavour of this institution bereft of caste, creed or religious prejudices. I had a single room overlooking the 'Gosha Hospital', which was the high watermark of a senior honours student. We were victualled by 'Pedda Nair', the head cook of the coconut oil section of the kitchen. Fifteen of us bought a car (with no hood) for Rs.200 for the daily five-minute journey from Victoria Hostel and across the Buckingham Canal to Presidency College with all of us on board. The vehicle was invariably parked next to the Queen Mary's College bus which transported the girl students in strict seclusion with a motley crowd watching this whimsical morning event which was almost akin to 'changing of the guard' in London! We had unfortunately to pay for the car to be towed away to the scrapyard after a full six months of service!

In this environment, Subbu propelled the College to the forefront of sport, Guindy and Christian College its main rivals. He promoted talent and ensured that Presidency had a sporting reputation besides an academic one. It is interesting to note that most good sportsmen at Presidency were generally good students as well. Subbu was a simple individual who was fair in his dealings and emphasised the need for a healthy style of living. Although still in my teens, I was the captain of the tennis team and also played cricket for the College in spite of being involved in the Students' Union which was in the thick of the 'Quit India' movement.

On every occasion that I passed through Madras in later years, I invariably met Subbu and our old professional 'Gootlan' (good length) who tended our cricket pitch with motherly care. They were both institutions in their own right.

My last meeting with Subbu was in 1976 when I was commanding the aircraft carrier *Vikrant*. Invariably, thousands of visitors came on board. I had reserved a day only for Presidents. I was invited to speak to the College Union and ensured that officers from the ship were present. They included the present Vice Chief of the Indian Navy, Vice Admiral Jacob who is from Chennai. *Vikrant* was a great favourite after the Bangladesh War with the then Chief Minister MGR serving the sailors himself at the State lunch given at the port of Madras. My interaction with the charismatic MGR, invariably in Tamil, almost landed me with a Rajya Sabha seat, witness to which was former President R Venkataraman at the reception given at

## Looking back

# A road full of memories

*It was Edward Elliot's Road then*

Edward Elliot's Road is a little longer than a mile. Starting from the Marina at the eastern end, it runs straight until it joins Mowbray's Road (now TTK Road). Nearly half the road from the Marina end to the Kalyani Hospital used to be flanked by coconut groves. When these were converted into residential plots, spurs were formed from the main road to provide access to the most interior plot. Many such spurs from the main road run into the interior and form cul-de-sacs. There are now numbered lanes of Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai, which Edward Elliot's Road has become. The road was lined with great, big trees — the banyan, the neem and the acacia mostly — on either side. Their foliage provided a bower-like canopy. Even in those days summer temperatures were over 100°F, but the intensity of heat was not felt because of the shade provided by the trees.

Starting from the eastern end, there was one solitary residential house just behind Queen Mary's College. Known as *Beach House* it was occupied by Sankara Iyer, a legal luminary. The stately I.G. of Police Office was also there. But for these two buildings, the rest of the stretch upto the present day C.S.I. Kalyani Hos-

pital was only coconut groves on both sides. The *saanams* carrying two or more pots of freshly brewed, frothing toddy balanced on poles slung across their shoulders was a familiar sight. The aroma of toddy was nauseating to the orthodox people and their wards going to or returning from the Beach for an evening walk. But many others relished the aroma.

From Kalyani Hospital to Mowbray's Road junction it was residential. Each house-plot was on an average five grounds (about 12,000 sq. feet). And in each a neat two-storied mansion

crinkle-free dress. Girija, 30 Edward Elliot's Road, his residence, was as famous as No. 10 Downing Street (to an ebbing generation) or 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue (to a rising generation). The lawn in front of his house was a green carpet well manicured and maintained. When Dr. Radhakrishnan was in the City, it was a familiar sight to see him minus the turban and his closed coat. Exposing his mop of silver hair, and clad in his informal dress of white muslin *dhoti* and *libba* worn like an Andhra that he was, he would pace about the periphery of the lawn.

From Kalyani Hospital to Mowbray's Road junction it was residential. Each house-plot was on an average five grounds (about 12,000 sq. feet). And in each a neat two-storied mansion

accommodating a single joint family nestled, surrounded by coconut palms, mango, plantain and guava trees and jasmine, *parijatham*, *sembanathi* and *arali* flowering plants. The fruits of these trees and the flowers were required for the daily pujas in most homes.

What a lot of eminent persons lived on this road at various times during the last seventy years! It would be well to start the catalogue with Dr. S. Radhakrishnan after whom the road has been renamed. To the young men of those days Dr. Radhakrishnan was a speaker who should not be missed. Sound amplification was not widely in use then. Yet Dr. Radhakrishnan's powerful voice, clear diction (be it English or Sanskrit), rich and precise language and exposition of the subject on hand were a feast worth travelling any distance to listen to.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's achievements and attainments are well chronicled and hence not repeated here. There was a majesty in his personality, his erect stance, his grand turban, and his

Often other eminent professors used to drop in on him and when there were such visitors, chairs would be laid on the lawn. To the young men of the times, flocking to see an eminent professor was as edifying a pastime rushing to see a film star is to the youth of today. This they did to their satisfaction by peeping through the trellis on *Girija's* compound wall.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's family members also reached eminent positions in later years. His son Dr. Sarvepalli Gopal is a well-known historian and 'Nehruologist' (if such a word can be coined). Dr. Radhakrishnan's daughters were married into the families of distinguished professors and professionals. A son-in-law of his became a judge of the A.P. High Court. His grandson, M. Narasimham, was the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and became the Director of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad.

No turban sat more elegantly on a South Indian's head than on Dr. Radhakrishnan's. By the



The Lady Sivaswamy Iyer Girls' School, Myslapore.



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and his home, Girija.

same token, no turban sat more pedestrianly than on the head of another great personality who lived on one of the spurs of E.E. Road. That head belonged to the one and only South Indian to be appointed a member of the Privy Council of the House of Lords — the highest court of appeal in British days — the Right Honourable V.S. Srinivasa Sastry. Rt. Hon'ble also was an educationist, a vice-chancellor and one who has been praised as the best speaker and writer (practitioner) of precise and phonetic English in all of the British Empire of that time. Sastry's English lectures on the Ramayana were popular at one time because of their different interpretative approach to the characters and the incidents. Their English reprints are collector's pieces today. These lectures have been translated into Tamil by the scion of another Myslaporean great and were published recently.

We are getting focussed on educational personalities, which is only appropriate considering that Dr. Radhakrishnan's birthday, 5th September, is nationally celebrated as Teacher's Day. Sastry and Radhakrishnan were eminent in the higher education fields, and their achievements and attainments were mostly individual. There lived on E.E. Road a person much senior to them in age who belonged to the field of law but contributed much to the spread of elementary and secondary education, and that too among girls. He was another British-knighted person, Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer. Hailing from an ordinary home in Thirukattupalli, Tanjore District, and said to have studied in his younger days under the light of the oil lamps in the local temple, Iyer rose to eminence in the Madras High Court.

By dint of his professional connections he was acquainted with many British administrators. The latter were just beginning to feel that the scope for women's primary and secondary education in south Madras was becoming laggard, even though there were St. Thomas' Convent and Queen Mary's College to provide them secondary and graduate education. Coming to know

of this, in stepped Iyer, who had no children. He founded the National Girls' School near the Kapaleeswarar temple to provide elementary education for girls. When funds and more land were required to expand the school to the secondary stage, Sir P.S. sold his palatial house (now owned by the Anantaramakrishnan family) and turned over the proceeds to the development of the school and he himself moved into an unpretentious small house on Sullivan Garden Road (now renamed after him) for the rest of his life.

If this happened to a palatial house on one flank of the present New Woodlands Hotel, it would be more than a coincidence that another palatial building on the other flank of the hotel also should have been sold for the spread of education but on a different plane. This is the *India House* (later *Gemini House*) owned by C. Rajam. Recollection is that the grounds included also the area now occupied by the Hotel Saveria. India House had been a stately house built with the best of building material imported from other provinces and abroad. Rajam owned the Negapatam Steel Rolling Mills, which rolled out steel sheets out of melted scrap, and which also turned out the sturdy Negapatam steel trunks and cabin trunks. He also owned a few electricity distribution companies in the Tanjore District.

Grieved that many deserving Brahmin students were being kept out of the engineering and technical colleges because of the operation of the communal G.O., Rajam sold India House to found the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT), Chromepet, to give the deprived students a chance to become engineers. In its early years, MIT awarded only diplomas (DMIT), not degrees, but in the employment market these diplomas carried more weight than degrees. MIT has since merged with Anna University. A distinguished alumnus of MIT is A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the father of India's Missile Technology.

(To be continued next fortnight)

Raghu Tagat

### Want to muse with MUSINGS?

If you would like to be put on *Madras Musings'* mailing list, just fill in the form below (use block letters/type) and post it to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd, 62/63 Greames Road, CHENNAI-600 006.

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## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period June 16 to 30. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

- Who has been chosen for this year's Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award?
- Which famous portal launched its Indian version on June 29th?
- What is India's 'improved' ranking according to the latest UNDP annual report?
- Codenamed 'Williamette', it was released on June 28th. What?
- Who recently became the first woman to head a nationalised bank in India?
- What important medical/scientific breakthrough was announced on June 26th?
- Who would be the first Indian filmstar to have a wax model at Madame Tussaud's?
- Which Indian journalist has been given this year's Amnesty International Award for Human Rights journalism?
- What first did the Olympic Flame achieve on June 27th at the Great Barrier Reef?

- Which part of the Buckingham Canal has reportedly become navigable again?
- On June 23rd, Chennai Telephones launched a service with a bank to accept payment of bills through the Internet. Which bank?
- Which team won its maiden Senior Division football league title in the city recently?

- According to the National Readership survey 2000, which two Tamil newspapers are in the top 10 for readership?
- Where on June 26th was the State's second VSNL earth station, to provide Internet backbone, commissioned?
- How much has the State sanctioned for the Anna Marumalarchi Thittam 2000-01?
- History. In which year did the Vellore Mutiny take place?
- Who built the Kailasnath Temple in Kanchi?
- Which famous Greek writer visited Madurai in the 3rd Century B.C.?
- Connect Tamil Nadu with India's first woman judge of the Supreme Court?

- In the epic film, *Thiruvilayadal*, who plays Nakkeeran in the famous segment featuring Dharmi (played by Nagesh)?

(Answers on Page 8)

# Not as described...

(Continued from page 1)

the reality is all about. What is planned – in sympathetic style, the IRCON engineers insist – is a completely NEW building at 90 degrees to the existing buildings and facing that ill-conceived tower block that was raised on the site of Moore Market. That discovery may let us breathe a sigh of relief. But there is still a question or two in our mind.

Won't a ten-storey tower-block – undoubtedly to generate funds for the Railways to,

perhaps, even maintain the existing buildings – prove aesthetically disruptive where the heritage building is concerned? And won't the techniques used to construct the new tower block prove a threat to the stability of the old building? In either case, shouldn't such plans have been discussed with the Heritage Advisory Committee of the CMDA, even if that is as yet still not a mandatory requirement? Surely if the Railways meant what it has been saying this past year about its concern for its wealth of heri-

## A battle to save Pantheon complex

(Contd. from page 1)

shade and comfort to whole area. Under no circumstances should you permit this tree to be touched, as it is a part of the heritage of our city.

\* \* \*  
2.6.2000  
The Member Secretary  
CMDA

The effect of this huge construction coming up – involving the cutting down of many precious botanical specimens is of grave concern. The pollution that would be caused by the large number of people that may be housed in this building along with the tremendous increase in vehicular traffic with pollution of fumes and noise apart from the high temperature the surface of the building will exude is of serious concern to the residents surrounding this property.

The building construction has to be approved by you and we do not know if any application has been filed and sanctioned by you for such a construction. I would be grateful if you would look into this matter and see to it that the sanction for such a construction is not accorded in view of the inherent ecological problems that will be created by such a construction.

\* \* \*  
8.6.2000  
The Commissioner  
National Arts Gallery Museum

Such a huge construction will most certainly generate a great amount of pollution from human occupants in such a large structure which will obviously house hundreds of workers/tenants, each generating not only refuse but smoke and dust from the vehicles they will

bring into these sacred areas. Our peace will also be disturbed by dust and noise created by all these people who will invade this building...

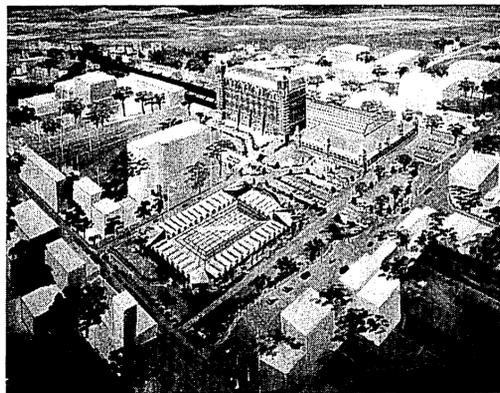
A building of this dimension will add "body heat" which will be transmitted to the whole area further adding to the deprivation of fresh air to the already overcrowded area of Egmore. The huge water requirements of the building will deplete the already scarce source of ground water in this area...

\* \* \*  
12.6.2000  
The Member Secretary  
CMDA

In response to my letter – SJP/GEN/AZB/16 dated 2nd June 2000, your Planning Engineer, Mr. V. Ganesan, when I telephoned him informed that as per your records there was no proposal from the Museum authorities for the construction of a multistoried complex nor had you given any such approval. We since understand the said building is to be constructed by Tamil Nadu Senthamizh Sorpirappiyal Agara Mudalithita Eyakkam, and so the application may have been made in that name... Please see if approval has been granted, and whether the strong concern voiced by the Association has been given thought to before any such sanction may have been approved by you to the above organisation.

\* \* \*  
14.6.2000  
The Member Secretary  
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board

I would like to draw your kind attention to your communication to Thiru Francis Sekar Raja – contractor, ICSA Cen-



An overview of what Central Station will look like when the new block and a parking lot are added. But doesn't that new block rather overwhelm the aesthetics?

tage, surely then it would have volunteered to discuss these plans with the CMDA's Heritage Advisory Committee?

In this context, though some of our fears have been allayed,

we still have several concerns about the building proposed. Perhaps it's time for all concerned to sit down and talk about it.

tary machine is used for pile driving so that there will be no damage caused by such activity.

\* \* \*  
15.6.2000  
The Commissioner  
National Arts Gallery and Government Museum

A contractor who has been obviously awarded the job of driving of the piles on which this building must stand, has, along with the pile driving frame, moved in lot of his workers who have pitched camp under the forest trees and started living there. They are just 40 to 50 feet in front of my dining room...

I ask you Sir... as Commissioner of this most prestigious establishment of the Government, and caretaker of all the HERITAGE PROPERTIES of our City, you should have ensured that this contractor's workers are housed by the contractor in the many lodges close by, and not despoil the sanctity of these premises. Also some thought should have gone into the loss of our privacy and more so the POLLUTION such outdoor living would create...

\* \* \*  
28.6.2000  
The Director Public Health  
Of very great concern... is the putting up of 6-7 thatched huts to house the labourers who will occupy the valuable Heritage site for as long as it takes to put up this building.

As usual, in the slum that has been created here, there is no provision as we have seen, for a proper bathing place, and more IMPORTANTLY... a proper TOILET. The unfortunate workers are already using the remaining part of the forest for this purpose.

## Gopalan Trophy Series again 23 matches later

● It has been announced, quasi-officially that the MJ Gopalan Trophy Series that did much for Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka cricket is to be revived, the first match of the renewed series to be played in Colombo in the third week of September. No one could be happier over this revival than Madras Musings which has long sought this resurrection. Long live the series.

The Gopalan Trophy, named after M.J. Gopalan, the first Madras and Indian cricket-hockey double international, was offered for an annual contest between the Ceylon Cricket Association and the Madras Cricket Association. The prime movers in this venture were V. Pattabhiraman and K.S. Ranga Rao, both old friends of Ceylon Cricket. Pattabhiraman and D.L. Narasimha Rao donated the trophy. The annual Ceylon/Sri Lanka vs Madras/Tamil Nadu series was the first and longest continuous effort to get the Island's cricketers used to the international level of the game. Public donations were invited by the Ceylon Cricket Association to provide air fares for the team and Rs. 3,340 was collected for 14 player and the Manager. The list was headed by Board President J.R. Jayewardene who contributed Rs.500.

The inaugural 3-day game was played at famed Chepauk, then a tree-lined park with an old English-style pavilion started on February 7, 1953. It won the first game in the series comfortably. A good team under the astute leadership of F.C. de Saram, Ceylon's best batsman, brought the satisfactory result. The best performance came from young Stanley Jayasinghe, who hit a scintillating 79 runs in the second innings.

Matches were played alternatively in Madras and Colombo. There were matches in 1954 and 1955, but no match in 1956. From 1957 to 1962, matches were played every year. There were no matches in 1963 and 1965. A match was played in 1964, then regularly from 1966 to 1977. The Board of Control sent an U-25 team in 1980/81 and Tamil Nadu came on a return visit in 1983.

The 1954, the match was won by an innings and 108 runs by the CCA. The highlight of this match was the 127-run

partnership for the 8th wicket by C.W. Bartels (88) and M.A. Caffoor (50) for the CCA. In the first innings Madras lost their first three wickets for 0 to C.T. Schaffter and Prins and totalled 133.

The last game of the series was when a Sri Lanka Board President's XI in January 1983 – retained the Gopalan Trophy by virtue of its first innings lead in the match played in Colombo. Duleep Mendis played one of the best innings in this series, scoring 189 runs, and added 34 to them in the second innings. A.L.F. de Mel at No. 9 scored a blazing 100 and with S Jeganathan (49) put on 123 runs for the 8th wicket.

Here is a synopsis of what happened between the 1954 and 1983 matches:

The 1955 game was the third consecutive win for the CCA. Led by V.G. Prins, the Ceylon team won by an innings and 14 runs. Two schoolboys,

A.C.M. Lafir (107) and B. Claessen (64), had fine debut performances for Ceylon.

The CCA won for the fourth time in four matches in 1957. The victory was mainly due to the CCA opening bowlers, South African Oxford Blue J.A. Arenhold (6 for 17 and 5 for 26) and K.M.T. Perera (2 for 23 and 4 for 45). Exploiting a wet pitch, these two had Madras out for their lowest total till date, 56 in the first innings.

The 1958 match saw Madras win for the first time – a 2-wicket win due to some fine leg-spin bowling by V.V. Kumar who had a match bag of 12 for 108. The next year, 1959, was C.I. Gunasekara's year. His 212 (176 on the first day) is still the highest individual score in the series. He hit one 6 and 32 fours in his 285-minute stay. The CCA also hit its highest total of 481 for 9 declared. It was a heavy scoring but drawn game at the Colombo Oval, producing the highest match aggregate in the series (1095 runs).

The first game at the new Corporation Stadium in Madras was in 1960 and saw low scoring. The three days produced 629 runs and Madras beat CCA, with Kumar having a match bag of 8 for 94.



The teams that figured in the inaugural Gopalan Trophy match – Ceylon Cricket Association vs Madras Cricket Association (1953). Seated extreme left is V. Pattabhiraman, and fifth from left is M.J. Gopalan (Madras CA). To his right is F.C. de Saram (CCA captain).

C.I. Gunasekara led the CCA in 1961. A good batting double by M.H. Tissera (61 and 62) and fine bowling by Polonowita, who had a match analysis of 29.4-14-32-8, enabled the CCA to win by 169 runs. CCA won again by an innings and 66 runs in 1962 after totalling 456 for 9 declared. There were no centuries, but Madras fell to the left-arm medium pace of L.R.

at Chepauk in 1969. Weerasinghe scored 92 and Sahabandu had a match bag of 11 for 137 in the drawn match.

In Colombo in 1970, A.P.B. Tennekoon led the CBP XI for the first time. For Madras, Venkataraghavan had match figures of 10 for 187 and Satwender Singh scored 89 in the drawn game.

In 1964, the CCA won by six wickets. D.W.L. Lieversz Jnr., with 6 for 29 in 21 overs, had the Madras batsmen "all at sea". In 1966 the Ceylon team played under a new designation, the Ceylon Board President's XI. The CBP XI fought back with 345 in the second innings to earn a draw. This was due to Dr. H.I.K. Fernando (102 n.o.) and opener Nihal Kodituwakku (87). In the Madras team there was one who was to prove Ceylon's chief destroyer in the years ahead, S. Venkataraghavan. In 1966 he made his first appearance and had figures of 4 for 48 and 3 for 123. V.V. Kumar and he took 14 of the 20 wickets that fell. Madras totalled 398 due to A.G. Satwender Singh (89) and P.K. Dharmalingam (73).

Another fight back by the Ceylon team in 1967, this time in an effort at winning, saw 225 runs scored in 135 minutes at 7.3 runs an over. Set to make 227 runs, David Heyn (101) and Polonowita (51) put on 102 for the 5th wicket in 45 min-

utes, still the fastest partnership at Chepauk.

The CBP XI won in 1968 by 105 runs. Venkataraghavan and Kumar took 16 of the 20 wickets in the CBP XI's totals of 168 and 190. But Madras could reply with only 123 and 130. Wimalaratne (10 for 88) and Nihal Samarasekara (6 for 92) did the damage. D.H.A. Weerasinghe led the CBP XI

doggedly in a 48-run stand for the 10th wicket that almost brought Sri Lanka to victory. In 1974, Duleep Mendis contributing 104 in his second knock. Then, in 1975, at a new venue, the Mahatma Gandhi Stadium, Salem, Sri Lanka Board President's XI gave a poor batting display. Tamil Nadu went on a scoring spree to hit 414 for 7 declared, its highest in the series. M. Dalvi's 179 runs came in 346 minutes with 22 fours, the highest individual score for Madras/Tamil Nadu. Dalvi's 100 took 250 minutes, but the additional 79 came in 65 minutes. Venkataraghavan added another bowling double (11 for 140) to his earlier feats.

The 1976 match at the Colombo CC Grounds saw the SLBP XI led by B. Warnapura win by 22 runs in a thrilling, low-scoring game. One of the finest innings in the series was played at Chepauk by Duleep Mendis in 1977. He scored 194 in 5 hours and 5 minutes, hitting 3 sixes and 26 fours. Indian sports-writer N.S. Ramaswami regretted that "only a mere 100 spectators saw this fine innings". With Mendis' departure, Tamil Nadu's troubles did not end. The SLBP XI's 10th wicket put on 134 runs in 101 minutes, G.R.A. de Silva (75) and F.R.M. de S. Goonatilleke (79) boosting the SLBP XI total to 459.

Then in 1981, the SLBP XI led on the first innings in a drawn game in Salem and in 1983, the SLBP XI took the honours on the first innings in a drawn match in Colombo. When the 1984 match was called off, both Associations let the series fade away quietly. But here is a series that needs revival, giving young players a chance to gain competitive experience. – (Courtesy: *The Janashakti Book of Sri Lanka Cricket* by S.S. Perera; Distributed by EastWest Books Ltd., Chennai.)

## Looking back with S.S. Perera

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## An encounter with an elephant

# The warning crack

On two separate occasions, I have heard an elephant break a branch of a tree with a crack as a warning or signal of its presence. This is the story of one such incident. Some years ago my friend K. Raghunathan and I were involved in census work for the Tamil Nadu Forest department in the Amaravati-Chinnar area. The census started at Dharmapuri and we were to walk through the forest to the Chinnar check point, to reach the bridge that crosses over to Kerala.

This walk was made more interesting by our finding a dead elephant, a tusker, floating in a bend of the Chinnar river. Apparently in a colossal fight between two tuskers, this one was gored and killed. It had fallen into the river off the steep bank and there it was for all the world to see. The elephant carcass was streaked with the white lines of vulture excreta. It would occasionally twist and twitch while it floated. This we were told was due to crocodiles

worrying this huge hulk of meat.

There were quite a lot of onlookers and a big discussion was on as to what to do as the carcass was polluting the drinking water of the township of Dharmapuri. We slipped out of the place as we were being drawn into the elephantine problem of its disposal; after all

going to Tamil Nadu came to the check point, Raghunathan pulled and dragged me into the bus.

The elephant tracker of the Tamil Nadu Forest department who was standing by, seeing us get in, jumped into the moving bus. This action of his probably saved our lives. At least he had a torch with him.

We marched along talking in low tones; the tracker and I in front with Raghunathan trailing behind. The tracker and I walked shoulder to shoulder when I faintly heard the word "Anai" in my ear. Within the next second a branch cracked resoundingly on our front left. We were rooted to the spot. How long we stood there with bated breath, I do not know, for time had stopped. The imminent charge did not materialise. The tracker now took half a step backward, and so did I and waited. Time under these circumstances is not measurable. Another half step wait for the charge. Slowly the half steps became full steps. The giant behemoth made no sound. After a while, when we had retreated a distance which our tracker deemed safe, we turned around and walked back to our original place with many a look to our rear.

Once again we were clustered around dithering what to do? Where to go? A car passed by but reported no elephants. We summoned up what little courage we had and decided to walk back to camp. Believe me when I say that I have a very good idea of the feelings of a prisoner being led to the executioner's block. Each step we took was like our last. Was the elephant still there, would we hear the trumpet of doom as it charged? And so we walked, the tracker and I shoulder to shoulder, one slow step after another. And then suddenly the little bridge was there, glow-

ing white in the starlight. We had passed the spot where the elephant was and with unbounded joy, we realised that we were through. We hastened, lengthened our steps and soon the lights of the camp were below us. Half an hour's fast walk brought us to our camp. We forgot to thank the tracker as we left by the early morning bus. Some people can smell elephants. It is true the tracker did. In the above incident the elephant signalled its presence by breaking a tree branch and perhaps warning us not to come closer. - (Courtesy: Blackbuck.)

• by  
**R.K.G. Menon**

we had a census to take care of. Ultimately we finished our census at the Chinnar check point. That evening we were seated at the check point barrier where cars, buses etc. had to stop before entry into Kerala and vice versa. It had already turned dark when a bus came from Tamil Nadu and they announced that there was a herd of elephants about 5 km down the road. When the next bus

The bus trundled along and dropped us at approximately the spot where the elephants were supposed to have been. I still recall the Stygian darkness that enveloped us and I remember looking back at the red tail light of the bus with longing as it pulled away. I was filled with a feeling of loneliness, of being left all alone in the world. We stood in the darkness for a while undecided as to what to do. In the bus we were told that the elephant herd would advance towards us, so our tracker started casting around for a suitable place where we could hide. But there was not even a single tree of suitable dimensions nor a large enough rock for us to climb on. For a while we dithered there but as there was no sign of the elephants (we would not have known what to do if they had come), we decided to retrace our steps back to our camp, full 5 km away.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Dhanraj Pillay; 2. Yahoo!;
3. 128 out of 174 countries; 4. Intel's new Pentium 4 chip; 5. Ms. Ranjana Kumar, the new CMD of Indian Bank; 6. The completion of the working draft of the Human Genetic Code; 7. Amitabh Bachhan; 8. P. Sainath; 9. It went underwater

Thoraipakkam; 11. HDFC Bank; 12. Chennai Customs

\* \* \*

13. Daily Thanthi (top position) and Dinamalar (10th position); 14. Coimbatore; 15. Rs. 75 crore; 16. 1806; 17. Rajasimha and his son Mahendra in the 8th Century A.D.; 18. Megasthenes; 19. The present State Governor, Ms. Fatima Beevi, has had that distinction; 20. Director, A.P. Nagarajan.



July-August: 'Artist of the Month' S. Ramachandran, who has travelled widely with his black and white camera for decades. He won the SIPATA Award of the Madras Amateur Photographic Society in 1968. (At Max Mueller Bhavan.)

Till July 29: 'Beyond the Finale...' An exhibition of recent paintings and drawings by Sajitha.

A painter, illustrator and poet, Sajitha finds her inspiration in her life, her childhood in Kerala and her deep friendships. Sajitha reflects her deep concern for the problems of human existence through her work. As a woman, Sajitha depicts the potential of women, be they mothers, neighbours, rebels. At the Alliance Francaise Gallery).

July 29 & 30: Knocks, a theatre performance (At Alliance Francaise 6.30 pm 29th and 3.00 pm 30th).

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