

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

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What'll help ease water shortage?

We were truly amazed to read the other day that Metrowater was on the look-out for firms/organisations to advise citizens seeking advice on water harvesting. Obviously neither those "overwhelming" numbers of citizens nor Metrowater officials read *MADRAS Musings* where over the past couple of years we have had several articles on water harvesting and even listed a few people who could advise on water harvesting techniques for the home.

But let's leave that for the nonce. Maybe Metrowater's concerns were not correctly presented. So let's look at it from the point of view of something else journalists may have got wrong. We rather thought that there were CMDA regulations, or at least plans for such regulations, insisting that all new apartment complexes should have water harvesting facilities. There is at least one developer who does ensure water harvesting facilities in his complexes. But if this is not done by others, so why is it not being done? If there are regulations, why are they not being enforced? And if they were only plans for regulations, why were the plans dropped? Certainly, if the CMDA had at sometime talked of water harvesting, it must have some knowledge of the subject and perhaps Metrowater should suggest sharing of that knowledge in its present quest for information.

Forgetting the past, however, surely it is not too late for Government to insist that all new buildings — houses, apartment and office blocks, factories etc. — MUST have approved water harvesting facilities and that old buildings must put them in before a deadline. Perhaps that's what Metrowater should be talking to the CMDA about and developing technol-

ogy, not searching for names of water harvesters.

Another aspect of the water shortage in the City is the amount of encroachment that goes on in waterbodies in and around the city and the drying up of traditional water tanks and other sources on account of this or over-building in the surrounding areas. This again is something Metrowater should be talking about. Perhaps it would like to catch up with what INTACH and the Madras Main Rotary Club have been talking about for some time. With about 40 major temple tanks in the city dry for one reason or another, the

• By The Editor

Rotary had a few years ago restored three or four of them and had been considering others. But before long, they were dry again. INTACH then took up a study how one of these tanks, the Tiruvanmiyur tank, could not only be restored but its SUSTAINABILITY ENSURED. Perhaps Metrowater should be talking to both organisations, judging whether the INTACH proposal as now evolved is feasible and, if so, ensuring its implementation through official or non-official organisations like Rotary.

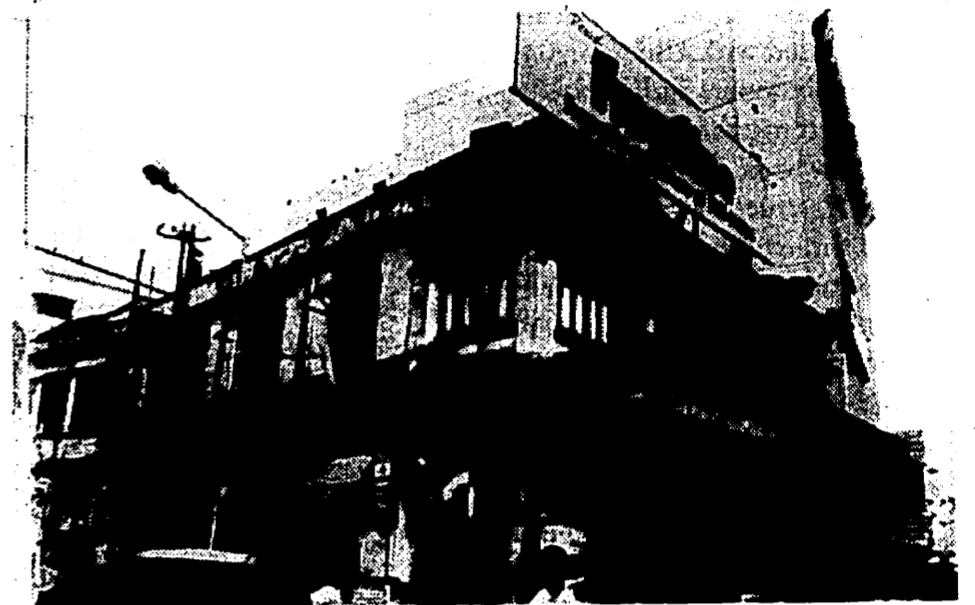
Apart from tanks drying up, who's looking at waterbodies that are endangered by planned or illegal reclamation and occupation? We recently heard of a waterbody between the two Mahabalipuram roads being partially earth-filled without any official permission being obtained in order to create an access road to an educational institution. If ignored, this violation will lead to the encroacher filling the entire waterbody and claiming occupancy rights as has happened in another institution nearby run

by a political figure. But such encroachment is not practised only by the rich or the underprivileged; Government is not averse to it either, it would seem, particularly when it begins to look at places like the Pallikaranai marsh. What's Metrowater going to do about such practices, official and unofficial?

Then there's all that rainwater run-off. Surely, Metrowater should be looking at ways and means of storing the monsoon riches? And if that means the building of new reservoirs, perhaps Metrowater should be talking to Government about such plans to be implemented post-haste.

We recently heard that the Business Council of a country with major investments in Chennai was wondering how it could help improve the quality of life in the city. There was even talk that some investment was possible. Perhaps the Council should be talking to Metrowater.

If all these not very original ideas were looked at a little more earnestly by the powers-that-be, perhaps the water situation in the city would not be so serious even in a bad year.



THE OLD...

...& THE NEW

Our OLD was once a famous address, 100 Mount Road, where Mount Road curves into Wallajah Road and from where Bell's Road starts. This was the building. The Hindu built for itself and moved into in 1883, five years after it had started as a weekly in Mint Street. Shortly after moving in, The Hindu became a tri-weekly, coming out every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. By the time it moved to its present premises, in 1939, it had become a daily morning paper. 100 Mount Road was occupied by The Indian Express until it moved into its Club House Road property after the War. 100 Mount Road then became a storehouse until it was rather sadly pulled down in 1996. On its debris rose Kasturi Centre, our NEW, to spot which you will have to go behind a hoarding or two.

Kasturi Centre is to be the home of the Asian College of Journalism and the Asia Media Institute set up by the Media Development Foundation. Classes are expected to commence here on August 24th. Befitting its new look, Kasturi Centre, will be equipped with a state-of-the-art print lab, TV and radio studios and a variety of digital equipment. One-year postgraduate courses will be offered in Print, Radio, TV and New Media journalism, with BBC instructors contributing to the Radio and TV courses and Columbia University lecturers to various aspects of



journalism from time to time. The College itself was founded a few years ago in Bangalore by The Indian Express, but has moved to Chennai after Sashi Kumar, formerly of AsiaNet, and N Ram of The Hindu family took it over. (Photographs: The OLD by SUSHHEELA NAIR, the NEW by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Is officialdom adopting an ostrich approach?

Some months ago, ostrich farming was seen as something that could develop into an important foreign exchange earner in Tamil Nadu. Today, those plans are endangered with a hue and cry being raised about ostrich farming which is now being described as cruelty to animals.

At a recent meeting by Animal Welfare Board, activists and non-governmental organi-

sations called for a review of the ostrich project taken up by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS).

V. Sundaravasan, Director, TANUVAS, Centre for Production Studies, says the ostrich farming being undertaken at the Centre is a study. If the study proves successful and the adaptability of the bird is established, ostrich farming will be

taken up as part of wasteland development in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. This will be a source of income to the farmers in a part of the State where earning a livelihood is a struggle, he adds.

About 40 chicks have died from the 100 birds imported from a Malaysian family. The others have grown since and are

(Continued on Page 7)

Campaigning to eliminate corruption

One recent Saturday was a day *The Man From Madras Musings* was tempted to designate 'Anti-Corruption Day', for he spent the whole day listening to people discussing ways and means of eliminating corruption in a country which is in the bottom quarter of the international corruption rankings that rate 100 countries. It started with an early morning meeting organised by a new organisation that calls itself 'Fifth Pillar', more of which anon, and ended with Chief Vigilance Commissioner, India, N Vittal, racing through a presentation on his new book, *Fighting Corruption and Restructuring Government*, and three other recent books on our corrupt society. In between, there was a lunch where much time was spent on discussing the rather healthy accumulation of wealth by our cricketers-turned-businessmen and businessmen-turned-cricketer administrators.

Everyone agreed that corruption was terrible and that it should be rooted out with the utmost vigour. Vittal was particularly emotional about it at one point, when he was asked whether it was really necessary to include as a fundamental right the right to corruption-free service by government servants. And the cricket discussion ranged from the grand Jethmalani overview that misdeeds should be viewed with mercy to how a set of scoundrels have let the national cap, tie, blazer and flag down. But at the end of it all there were cynics like MMM who wondered what would happen the day all corruption in India came to an end.

Vittal was confident that India would then grow by leaps and bounds and be in the international forefront of the nations of the world. Such optimism and faith are wonderful, but, wonders MMM — echoing several others in the audiences for the day — will make corruption-free India more disciplined, more efficient, more service-oriented, more action-oriented, more law-abiding, more polite, less malingering? Will it help it become make India lift the 650 million into at least the bottom layer of the 350 million? Will it eliminate poverty and hunger? Will it emerge one of the top three cricketing nations? And will it make us a sporting power?

Somehow, MMM does not think any of that will happen. The picture before him is of that story he read in a local newspaper column which described the queues at the immigration counters at the airport. There is no bribery or corruption involved here. All that is necessary is getting a passport stamped as quickly as possible so you could leave the country or come into it. Ever wondered how slow the queues here are compared to anywhere else in the world? To MMM it is just a reflection of the total lack of commitment to service in the

country, a lack of concern for a fellow being's comfort.

But let MMM stop calling a spade a spade lest someone think that he's anti Vittal, anti-Fifth Pillar (God forbid it's not a Fifth Column) and anti-anti-corruption. By all means let's encourage the Vittals and the Seshans and the Five Pillars to put the fear of them in the minds of all those taking a bribe AND all those offering a bribe. But at the same time, let's get our priorities right. What are they doing to make this a more efficient, more-disciplined, more law-abiding, more polite, more service-oriented country? By focussing so single-mindedly only on eliminating corruption, will they make the country improve in all these sad, sad areas and make us a better country?

The Fifth Pillar

At the early morning meeting, *The Man From Madras Musings* heard it said that the Fifth Pillar was raised to strengthen the other four — the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and the Press. It was not a strictly formal body, it was stated, seeing itself as a loose

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

coalition of citizens' organisations. It talks of being an umbrella body for voluntary citizens' organisations, and says it represents 63 organisations. It is on this count it is clearest. It says, "Fifth Pillar is a union of all non-political, non-profit and non-government organisations. It is a coalition of such organisations. It will be an Organisation of Organisations. Its aim is to protect the Nation from all its enemies within, particularly corruption." But for an informal body, it has a very clearly stated set of objectives and has drawn up detailed structural plans for Fifth Pillar Fronts (Chapters) to be set up.

In stating its objectives, Fifth Pillar categorically states it will "spearhead movements for communal harmony, human rights protection, education of voters, uplifting of democratic institutions and a nation devoid of corruption." Not a word about a disciplined, law-abiding, polite, service-oriented, efficient nation. "A crusade against corruption" appears to be its main focus, and it made that very clear at the recent workshop it organised on "Issues relating to good governance", when little else was discussed but corruption and how to tackle it.

MMM, looking back on the discussion, doesn't intend to spend time on such dramatic suggestions as secret cameras, videos all over the place and a corruptionbusters' organisation. He'd

rather look at a couple of pieces of information presented at the workshop that, because they lacked drama, didn't get the response necessary.

A way to go

With every Government department expected to make available to the public its charter stating clearly what the public is entitled to get from it, *The Man From Madras Musings* feels that these charters must not await the citizen but must reach out to him. In other words, the charters as well as simplified step-by-step procedures for all routine transactions MUST be publicised widely in the entire media. Fifth Pillar MUST demand that Government allocate such funds for not only publicising the charters in the media but to announce in the same outlets the simple, step-by-step procedures to be followed in every government department. These announcements must also set down a timeframe for completion of each type of transaction.

The Catalyst Trust would ap-

pear to have little faith in this happening and so it has brought out a booklet listing the steps to be followed in several transactions with Government. But how does every householder get a copy, wonders MMM, who had difficulty even finding Catalyst's office. Nevertheless, MMM must congratulate Catalyst for a far more positive step to help the citizenry than merely tilting loudly at windmills.

Fighting corruption

The lunch session that discussed idols with feet of clay wondered why ALL those who played for India in the last decade were not raided. A comparison of incomes might have been revealing, it was felt. It was also wondered why one idol who forgot a lockerful of money in a private club was not raided after the discovery hit the headlines. Such selective raids, it was suggested, did not exactly instil confidence in the public mind that a procedure was being launched for a total, or even a comprehensive, clean-up, *The Man From Madras Musings* heard it said.

Vittal in the evening, MMM found a totally different story altogether. Though he started out by mentioning the "honest corruption" of Southeast Asia, where things got done or your money was returned, and the

matter to grievance cells — and, if necessary, beyond. HELPING THE PUBLIC TO GET SERVICE should be the primary aim, rather than trying to capture the headlines with corruptionbusting.

In brief

★ We at *Madras Musings* keep getting letters saying 'New Number X, Old Number Y'. Someone has even painted a number outside the house of *The Man From Madras Musings*. Who did it, MMM does not know. Nor does he know whether it is official. If the Corporation of Madras is responsible, surely duty, leave alone courtesy, behoves it to write to every householder and inform him/her of the change of number of his/her premises. Without such a document or any other information from the Corporation, how is the householder to accept a sign-painter's work as officially blessed? And can MMM or anyone else without such sanction go about informing the public in print that his old number is now this new number? MMM urges the Corporation to straighten this record rightaway.

★ It's always struck *The Man From Madras Musings* as intriguing how publicly articulate ex-administrators get about the woes of the public that have not changed one what from their tenures of office and before. Perhaps it has something to do with coming out from behind much-guarded doors and having to face the woes of reality without that horde of protective minions that was at their beck and call. The thought struck MMM when one of this ilk recently pointed out that 30 per cent of traffic in the City comprised pedestrians, 14 per cent cyclists, 38 per cent bus commuters and just two per cent cars, but the maximum priority has been given to the last category. But have things ever been any different, wonders MMM. Hasn't the pedestrian for the last 50 years been losing his space to one intruder or other — the hawker, the encroacher, the pavement-dweller or the road? And what has any administrator done about it? But more important, now that they go about speaking from public platforms about flyovers and other means of traffic management not only taking up but endangering pedestrians and cyclists, what are they going to do to stop this kind of planning? Can MMM expect them to get court orders on the flyovers scheduled and can MMM expect them to insist through the courts on pavement space and cycle lanes by the side of the flyovers that have already come up in the City?

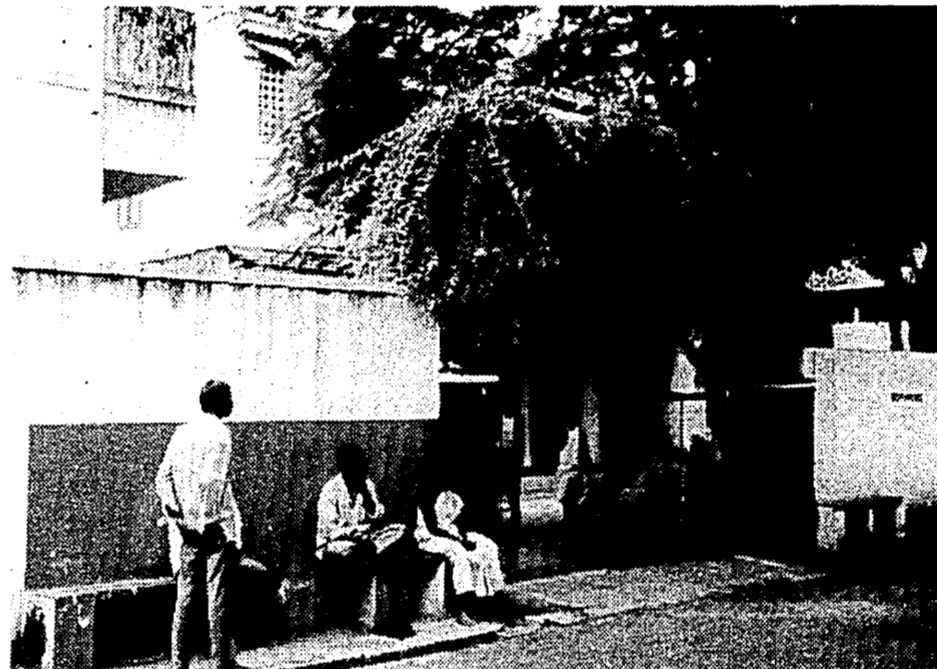
MMM

Looking back on Edward Elliot's Road

Gifts to Learning, Law and Medicine

(Continued from last fortnight)

A different version of Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer and C. Rajam was N.K. Thirumalachari, another resident of EE Road (his residence is now the Bank of Madura and McRennet's). NKT was a lawyer of modest means and not well endowed himself to donate for the cause of education. However, in the course of his professional career, Thirumalachari had become a friend of Mevery Statham, the legendary Director of Public Instruction (DPI)



The Children's Garden School.

of the Madras Presidency. The latter was keen to spread girls' education in all parts of the city. Christian missionary societies had filled this lacuna in areas like Purasawalkam, Royapuram and Perambur, which had the mixed populations and where the caste-divide was not so prominent. Thirumalachari dived wholeheartedly into the mission he had set himself, collecting donations from the affluent members. The result of his work is the N.K.T. Girls' School. Its open air auditorium was the largest of its kind in Madras at one time, capable of seating over 1,300 strong audience for the popular dramas staged by the TKS Brothers, R.S. Manohar, Cho and K. Balachander's Ragini Recreations. Thirumalachari has passed into eternity. The Girls' School which he lovingly built inch by inch is in a state of disrepair and became embroiled in litigation over trusteeship. The philanthropy of the Brahmins until the turn of the century was mostly to endowing land and resources for feeding pilgrims at choultries, or gifting ornaments and fitments to temples. The three Mysoreans mentioned at the start of this instalment marked a

change in that attitude. When they faded from the scene, in came another to take up and continue their work. This was Ellen Sharma, a German, whose husband Sharmaji was an Andhra.

Ellen Sharma introduced the German system of 'kindergarten', through its English translation, as Children's Garden School on Edward Elliot's Road. With the need being felt for more schools, the school could not have been founded at a more opportune time. It did wonderful work and grew under the Sharmas. When the

of the milkmen). These emigrés from rural areas had begun to realise that education was the key to the future for their children. And St. Ebba's Girls' High School — a Church of England (later Church of South India) school — gave many of them their opportunity, admitting students without reference to their caste, creed, colour or even the educational attainments of their parents. This school with its spreading campus in sylvan surroundings has contributed much to the spread of education in Madras without minding whether its record was backed by a hundred per cent success in public examinations. Any local history of E.E. Road would be incomplete without a tribute to the services to the poor and the not-so-bright and not-so-rich by the two C.S.I. institutions — St. Ebba's and the Kalyani General Hospital.

Still on the subject of education, there was that eminent historian Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastry, who lived on a spur off this road. His contribution to history have to this day not been matched. On this spur also lived (not contemporane-



The CSI Kalyani Hospital.

ously) another person from whose personal appearance it would have been impossible to believe that he was the best Professor of English in the Presidency. He taught at Presidency College. Professor S. Ramaswamy, whom you could have mistaken for a temple priest, was a respected figure in the field of English literature and British University dons visiting Madras always paid a call on him.

Prof. Nallamuthu Ramamurthy, the illustrious Principal of Queen Mary's College for many years, was another who lived on this spur off E.E. Road. Ms. Nallamuthu, a non-Brahmin, married a son of the liberal lawyer. T.R. Venkatarama Sastry, T.V. Ramamurthy, who was an actuary. Both enthusiastic tennis players, their love



NKT Girls' School, Triplicane.

sprouted on the tennis courts. This was one of the earliest inter-caste marriages and eyebrows were raised but that did not deter the Sastry household from accepting the newcomer into the family.

Edward Elliot's Road made an important contribution to law and medicine, as it did to education. In law, we had K.S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, who was considered an authority on Hindu Law. A son of his could be said to be the pioneer of visual education in schools through his 'Projection of India Pictures'. R.N. Iengar (note the spelling), about whom the author is not able to throw much light, was another legal luminary who lived here T.R. Venkatarama Sastry was respected as much for his knowledge of constitutional law, as for his brilliance in criminal litigation cases. Vepa Ramesam and Pappu Somasundaram, who occupied adjacent homes (now housing the Yellow Pages

general hospital for both men and women. A dedicated staff and very modest fees (with waivers for the very poor) have made this hospital a much-sought after one. One of the earliest eye-surgeons in Madras (that was how they were called) was Dr. E.V. Srinivasachari. This doctor was skilled in his profession, but he was better known for his colourful turbans and the witty abuses he used to hurl at pedestrians who came within a yard of him when he was driving his Chevrolet. Dr. E.V.'s professional fees were relative to the patient's ability to pay and if he gauged that the patient was poor, there would be no charge at all. Dr. E.V.'s revolutionary outlook showed when instead of bowing to the orthodox dictates of the times, he persuaded his child-widowed daughter Kalyani to take to studies and qualify in medicine. Dr. E.V. Kalyani, now an octogenarian, became a household name in Mysore and beyond as a gynaecologist and obstetrician. The nursing home she founded, the Kalyani Nursing Home, situated alongside C.S.I. Kalyani Hospital, has been doing yeoman service for years.

Edward Elliot's Road was home to three pathbreakers, if not pioneers, in the field of special medicine. One was Dr. K.R. Doraiswamy, whose Premier X-ray and Radiological Institute, was one of the first, private X-ray institutes where patients could have their X-rays taken on referral instead of having to queue up at the government hospitals. This institute became famous for radiotherapy and cobalt-therapy for cancer patients during Dr. K.R.D.'s lifetime.

Dr. V.S. Subramaniam, though not a pioneer, was a much sought-after E.N.T. specialist in the 50s and 60s. Dr. V. Shanta, a relative of Dr. Subramaniam, who has dedicated herself wholly to the Cancer Institute, Adyar, used to live on a spur off E.E. Road and travel to Medical College on the tram. Her mentor, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, was also a resident here. Also Sister Subbalakshmi.

In medicine, the C.S.I. Kalyani Hospital has long been a landmark here. Originally a maternity hospital it has in the last two decades become a

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Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period July 1st to 15th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

- To celebrate what event did the French sit down to the biggest picnic in history on July 14th?
- In which zoo did more than ten tigers die recently, leading to public outrage?
- After eight weeks of unrest, Ratu Josefa Iloilo is the new President of which Asian country?
- Which is the latest Harry Potter bestseller? It was released early July.
- By winning his 13th Grand Slam singles title at Wimbledon, whose record did Pete Sampras overhaul?
- Which bourse celebrated its 125th anniversary on July 9th?
- Who achieved the dubious distinction of being the first cricketer to be suspended for ball tampering?
- Who are the winners of this year's National Award for Best Actor and Actress?
- Which high-profile global airlines began its operations in India on July 6th?

- * * *
- Which team took the honours in the Madras Cricket Club-Murugappa hockey tourney, which concluded in the city recently?
 - Which of the city's lakes is to be developed and made into a small reservoir to address the water problem?
 - Which assembly constituency has been chosen as a pilot project for commencement of online issue of Electors' Photo Identity Cards?

- * * *
- Where in the State is the University of Madras starting a new PG extension centre?
 - Name the three pioneers of the Indian film industry, particularly Tamil cinema, in whose honour special postal covers were released on July 10th.
 - Where is the State Government planning a Tamil Isai Manram to foster Tamil isai and culture?
 - Which film took the National honours for 'Best Tamil Film'?
 - Which auto component firm has bagged General Motors' Supplier of the Year Award for the fourth year in succession?
 - The kumbhabhishekam of which famous 'Aarupadaiveedu' Murugan temple was performed on July 5th?
 - Where did the Prime Minister dedicate the Test Station of the Centre for Wind Energy Technology on July 5th?
 - The State Forest Department has proposed to start three sanctuaries in the State. Where?

(Answers on Page 7)

A promise fulfilled

● S. Vijayalakshmi has just become India's first Woman Grandmaster. Madras Musings congratulates this young Chennai champion and recalls that it was a fellow City publication, that was, perhaps, the first to recognise her as an achiever and feature her on its cover. Writing about her in its issue of July 25, 1995, *Eves Touch* prophetically headlined the "Close Encounter" its correspondent SUMITRA had with Vijayalakshmi, *The girl who would be Grandmaster. This is that Eves Touch story.*

She was 3½ years old and stripping over her own feet when, clutching her father's hand, she toddled after him into the Tal Chess Club in Madras. Lifted onto her seat, she sat gazing in wonder at the big checker board and the curiously shaped chessmen ranged on both sides of it. Guiding her little hand which would hardly grasp and hold the pieces, her father introduced her to the game of chess.

The child is a big girl now. Her steps are sure and firm and set on the path to achievement and recognition. She has blazed a wining trail through tournament after tournament to become the country's National Women's Chess Champion — at 15!

Vijayalakshmi's story perhaps begins even before she was born. Subbaraman, her father, came to Madras to try his luck. He had one obsessive dream — of becoming a champion in some sport or the other. When he could not achieve his dream, it became a burning ambition for his children-to-be.

As he nurtured Viji and his ambition, she grew into a slightly-built, intelligent child. Her physique ruled out any strenuous sport. Then Subbaraman hit upon chess. From the sports columns in the newspapers, he had an idea that the Russians were the world leaders in the game and, so, decided to approach the Soviet Consulate General for help. There he discovered the existence of the Tal Chess Club.

The Club had all the infrastructure to train players. Members could watch others in action, practise there and participate in matches. It was the ideal atmosphere to nurture and hone budding talent. So Viji's father learnt the game himself and became her coach.

At the Club, Viji was gradually exposed to other players and started participating in tournaments conducted by the

State and National Chess Associations.

Her first taste of the limelight came when she upset the visiting Cuban player Walter Arancibia in a simultaneous tournament. She was just a child of 8 and he was of world championships class. Suddenly all attention was riveted on her and there has been no letting up since. She entered the Inter-State and National tournaments and proved a winner all the way. She won her first National title (a junior title) when she was 9 years old and others followed.

"From the beginning I was serious about the game," Vijayalakshmi says. "I never thought of it as a hobby. Many people, after a point, choose career and marriage and give up the game. For me, this is my life's mission. I hope to be a Grandmaster one day..."



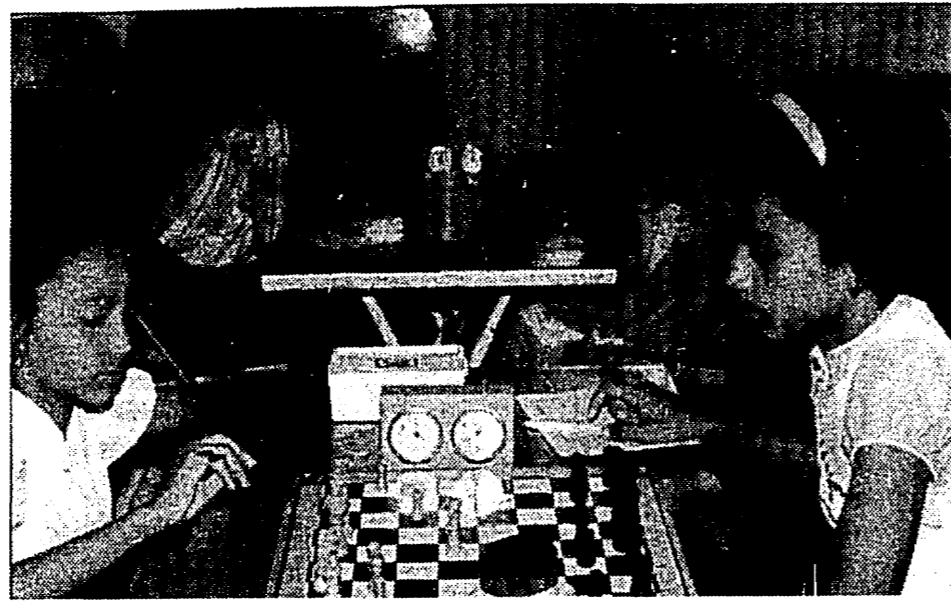
The Subbaraman family: (from left to right), Vijayalakshmi, A.S. Subbaraman, Banu Priya (in front of him), Meenakshi and their mother, Rani Bai.

As she expressed her hope, there is a glint of determination in her eyes. Indeed, she has what it takes — talent, focus, drive and the backing of a supportive family.

With each win in national and international tournaments, accolades flowed thick and fast and she was showered with attention and praise from the media and enthusiasts of the game. None of it, though, seems to have gone to her head.

She says with engaging modesty, "Everyone is so encouraging and there are so many people watching me, I feel I have the responsibility of playing my best so as not to let them down."

Now, by the looks of it, her father's ambition will be achieved threefold. For, Viji's two younger sisters show promise of becoming champion players too. Meenakshi is an international level player and Banu Priya is all set to follow suit. Meenu is shy, reticent, gentle and quietly determined. Banu



One of the pictures that appeared in the *Eves Touch* article. Its caption, was perceptive about the future, for it read "Vijayalakshmi (on right) — Grandmaster in the making, even before her teens."

is an irrepressible 9 year old with "more than a fair share of fighting spirit," her eldest sister says.

With three champions in the making, the family's life revolves around chess.

"Our parents have made any number of sacrifices for us," says Viji. "All my father's spare time is spent coaching us. They have very little leisure and hardly any social life. This takes up so much of their time, energy and resources too. When I was younger, one of them had to accompany me to tournaments. Matches go on for 8-9 hours at a stretch and you need someone to fetch milk and biscuits —

A computer presented to her by *Sportstar* magazine recently after she won the national title — has made a big difference to her practice sessions. She doesn't have to set out the pieces for each game. At the press of a key, they arrange themselves in position. "The two programmes 'Chess Base' and 'Fritz 3' have over 2,00,000 games between them. They are games played by players in international tournaments and demonstrate various styles and techniques," Viji explains.

While Viji admires Kasparov's style of play and Anand's speed, she feels most inspired by Judith Polgar, the Hungarian woman Grandmaster, another teenager.

Viji's day is structured around her rigorous practice sessions. School, classwork and exams take back seat, in spite of which she manages to secure adequate marks to maintain progress in school.

Chess is a demanding game requiring high levels of mental and physical stamina. Physical fitness is a must. Her mother Rani carefully monitors the diet of her three daughters and sees to it that they eat their *dhal* and vegetables and take their daily dose of multivitamin tablets.

Viji's one wish is that she would like to have more time for her friends, of whom — her father feels — she has too many. A gregarious soul, she loves people and easily makes friends.

"She talks too much, that's her problem," says the more reserved Meenu. "If she goes out shopping, she'd meet someone on the road, start talking and lose track of time..."

"Oh, but I think she talks too little," interjects Viji.

The children enjoy an easy and comfortable relationship with their father who is their mentor, teacher and guide.

"We can be so free with him," says Viji, her eyes glowing with affection as she talks of her 'best friend'. "He treats us as equals and we can be frank and open and discuss anything with him."

"But when it comes to chess," she says, "he is a different person altogether. He is a tough taskmaster and will not brook carelessness or playfulness."

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Cricket again on the Marina?

(By The Corner Flag)

Will we soon see First Division TNCA cricket matches on the Marina again? Will Presidency College soon be playing its matches on a ground where the turf will stretch beyond even the boundary? The *Corner Flag* hears that this might be entirely possible, if negotiations going on over the

Marina Grounds of Presidency College are successfully concluded.

The *Corner Flag* understands that Simpson & Co. have offered to restore the grounds to the splendid state P R Subramaniam (Subbu) had once en-

sured it was always in. The pavilion too would be restored to suit a first class ground. And any team sponsored by Simpson's for TNCA competition and Presidency College would share the ground on mutually agreeable terms. Those terms are expected to be finalised any day now.

Companies like India Cements, India Pistons, SPIC and Sanmar have been responsible for the revival and maintenance of several splendid grounds in the city. But the Marina Grounds is the most historic of them all — which is why *The Corner Flag* would be delighted more than ever if the negotiations prove successful.

There is just one suggestion that *The Corner Flag* has to offer. If the grounds are restored, it hopes they will be named the Subbu Memorial Grounds and not the Simpson-Presidency Grounds. No one did more for cricket on the Marina than Subbu.

THAT LAST VISIT

As though having a premonition of his approaching death on June 3rd, P R Subramaniam, my uncle, asked me suddenly on the evening of May 26th to take him to Presidency College. He was excited to see the beautiful building. Much against my advice he climbed the twenty-odd steps to the first floor, read the scroll of Principals and remembered his joining in 1930 as a staff member when Fyson was the Principal. He spent over an hour in the office midst the staff and members of

the faculty, recalling many notable events during his tenure. Those present were amazed at his sharp memory, his senses of hearing and sight and his physical strength at the ripe age of 95. Finally, he wrote a letter in his own hand addressed to the Principal pleading that steps be taken to restore the Marina ground to its former glory. He left after handing it over.

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Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

AN OSTRICH APPROACH

(Continued from Page 1)

expected to lay eggs in 2 or 3 years. The eggs will be hatched and the chicks will be given to the farmers for rearing, Sundaravasan said.

Radha S Burnier, Beauty Without Cruelty, Chennai Centre, on the other hand, wonders what was the need for this experimental project which subjects cruelty to imported birds.

Sriram Panchu the lawyer suggests a public hearing on the issue.

Surendra Mehta, founder Ahimsa Research Foundation, says that he has heard that the surviving birds are in a pitiable condition. He wonders why breeding for slaughter is being encouraged in India.

EDUCATION, LAW & MEDICINE

(Continued from Page 3)

Dr. S.T. Achar, who was a son-in-law of A. Madhaviah, is generally regarded as the father of paediatric medicine in Madras. And P. Venkata Rao, who had a long-winded designation, Chemical Examiner with the Government of Madras, was probably the forerunner of the latter-day and more sophisticated Department of Forensic Medicine.

Among others of the medical profession should also be listed Dr. M. Radhakrishnan who set up the first dental clinic in the area and Dr. S. Balasundaram, who set up the Ehrlich Laboratory. Currently residing on this road are Dr. J.G. Kannappar and Dr. B.P. Rajan who are both distinguished oral hygiene specialists.

Raghu Tagat
(To be continued next fortnight)

The day he played a holy stroke

● Dr. A.V. Rajagopal, one of the leading cricketers in the City in the Forties and Fifties, passed away recently. Much of his best cricket was played for the Mylapore Recreation Club, then one of the two cricketing powerhouses in Madras, and it was for the MRC that Rajagopal scored a century before lunch, a local League cricket record that stood for many years. Many years later, he joined the Madras Cricket Club, one of its first Indian cricketers, and we publish in tribute today these reminiscences of his days in the Chepauk sun. They are from *The Spirit of Chepauk, the story of the Madras Cricket Club.*

C.P. Johnstone a man of few words who believed strongly in the proprieties of the times, was often seen by many Indian — and even Europeans — as aloof and distant. But if you played good cricket... you were his friend. Dr A.V. 'Sixer' Rajagopal, the ophthalmologist, one of the early Indians to play for the Madras CC, remembers Johnstone coming in to the pavilion rather irritated after Rajagopal had taken a wicket, brilliantly catching Johnstone in the slips and then collared the MCC bowling to score 70 or 80, thus enabling Mylapore Recreation Club to win the match and avoid relegation. That score included a six off Johnstone that wrung the comment "Holy Cross"; Rajagopal, then a major in the Army, responded tartly, "I'm glad you found something holy in the stroke". A short while after the match was over, an immaculately dressed Johnstone — that he al-

ways was — came out of the pavilion and stopped by Rajagopal who was sharing a beer with Ward and remarked "How did I miss you all these years?" then added, "Why don't you become a member?" Rajagopal had already been proposed for membership, but that question made things easier.

The Madras CC's first championship win was in 1949 and was fashioned by the batting of C Ramaswami, Bert Wensley the MCA coach, H W Horton, T Murari, A R Srinivasan and A V Rajagopal — the last three named, were, in that order, the first Indians to play for the Club's first eleven — and the bowling of R J Taylor (left-arm slow), J Tate and the consistent E W D Jeffares. C.N Reid captained the team, which also included J B Beardsell, V R Lakshmi Ratan, P N Krishnamma, P Whiteley and G V Cockburn.

Dr A V Rajagopal joined the Club late in 1947; a cherished dream had long been to play as a member of the Club at lawned, turfed and tree-girt Chepauk, "which had the atmosphere of an English cricket ground". Johnstone, gave him the opportunity, but it took him a year or two to make the Club 'A' team. A member of the Club who was one of its most enthusiastic sports participants, Rajagopal also played tennis, squash, table tennis and billiards. In cricket, he headed the batting and bowling averages of the Club for two consecutive years.

A PROMISE FULFILLED

(Continued from Page 6)

ness. He is a very serious and demanding coach. He watches others' games, observes techniques and tells us that our opponents are our best teachers.

"Chess is a game everyone must play," enthuses Viji. "It trains the mind to concentrate and sharpens it too. You learn to become focussed to the exclusion of everything else around you."

"You know, in a way the game prepares you for life," observes Viji, suddenly sounding wiser than her years. "It develops your mind to think of vari-

ous options and their differing outcomes — because that is what you learn to do in the game. So I feel you generally make the right choices and seldom make mistakes in life..."

But the larger game of life has, for now, been banished to the wings. What holds centre-stage is chess. As Viji sits down at her computer and flicks it on, the screen comes alive with the checkered board and pieces. All in a flash, she has tuned out the rest of the world and tuned into the game on screen and the girl who would be Grandmaster concentrates on her goal.

Answers to Quiz

1. Bastille Day; 2. Nandanakan Zoo; 3. Fiji; 4. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*; 5. Australia's Roy Emerson; 6. Bombay Stock Exchange; 7. Pakistan's Waqar Younis; 8. Mohan Lal and Kiron Kher respectively; 9. Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airways.

10. Punjab & Sind Bank; 11. Porur Lake; 12. Royapuram.

* * *

13. Vriddhachalam; 14. K. Subrahmanyam, AVM, L.V. Prasad and also on Warwick's Electric Theatre; 15. Seerkazhi; 16. *Sethu*; 17. Sundaram Fasteners; 18. Palani; 19. Kayathar in Tuticorin District; 20. Hogenakkal, Kodaikanal and Meghamalai.

* * *

Looking Back, Looking Forward:

Therukkoothu to help rural development

The growth in modern technology that our country has witnessed in the last few years has led many pundits to believe that products of technological advancements such as the Internet and the e-commerce can solve much of our nation's socioeconomic problems. In reality, this growth has only deepened the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. Most development efforts in our country suffer on one crucial front: bringing about the desired behavioural changes among the target populations and the voluntary participation of the community. In short, this problem arises due to lack of innovative communication strategies, incentive-free community mobilisation efforts, and convergence of various Government departments at the field level to improve the quality of the services provided to the people.

The Centre for Development Research (CFDRT) and the Koothu-P-Pattarai (KPP) Trust decided ten years ago to work in this area. Due to several reasons, the proposed work could be started only in 1999. A recent, five-day programme was a step towards achieving the dream to bring about the desired behavioural change among the people of Anukkavur Panchayat Union of Thiruvannamalai District, in such key development areas as public health, nutrition, education, environment, women's issues, old age, childcare and the traditional performing arts of the region.

The project operates on the premise that desired behaviour change can happen only when we try to first understand the social, cultural, economic and other related aspects of the target population; analyse their existing knowledge systems and cultural practices, action



Muthuswamy's message

based on the existing levels of knowledge and practice, and try to raise these levels. Only when levels of knowledge are raised, will the desired level of behavioural change be achieved.

To achieve this desired level of change in a cost-effective and sustainable manner, a novel approach was followed, of using village men and women, who were initially sensitised about our dream and to the fact that the work they do is voluntary, with no financial commitments. This process of finding a handful of volunteers took us a few months. During this period, we trained them to collect information about the socioeconomic, cultural, health, old age and other problems of their village. We held regular village

level meetings to introduce our volunteers to their respective villages. This painstaking process generated considerable interest and the handful of volunteers grew to about 60 volunteers from 56 villages. The volunteers, both men and women from various ages and socioeconomic groups, have begun to participate in our various programmes.

During this period, we started working with four Therukkoothu (a traditional folk theatre of North Tamil Nadu) troupes, one from Dharmapuri and three from the Anukkavur region. The troupes were introduced to incorporating development-related issues within the traditional performance context, without obstructing or damaging the traditional performance form and structure. The performers were also introduced to how theatre performances could be made to relate to current social issues.

A five-day programme, comprising workshop and performances was held, in connection with the work of the volunteers, and the participating Therukkoothu troupes in Purisai and Anukkavur near Kanchipuram. In Anukkavur, volunteers have also been experimenting with non-formal education, by adopting four villages and providing basic education to school dropouts.

N. Muthuswamy
(Koothu-P-Pattarai Trust)

S. Venkataraman
Centre for Development
Research and Training



July-November: As part of its educational awareness programme Apparao Galleries has designed a seven part illustrated lecture series on *Traditions in Indian Painting*. Register with Rachel at Apparao Galleries (restricted participation).

Mughal Miniatures 28th July; Rajput Miniatures 25th August; Bazaar & 19th Century painting 22nd September; Ravi Varma 29th September; Modernism and the beginning of the art movement in South India 27th October; 1st Generation South Indian Artists & Art Activity 28th October; and Current Trends in the South Indian Contemporary Art 24th November. (For details Tel: 827 2226)

From August 5: 'The Outreach Programme' of Apparao Galleries offers the following courses.

Paper making (adults/young adults, 10 sessions)

Waste & Mythology (6-14 years, 12)

Calligraphy (adults/young adults, 6)

Jewellery-making (8-14, 6)

Kids' craft (4 and above, 12)

(Details from the gallery, Tel: 827 2226)

August 9-19: An exhibition of photographs by Mohan Das. (At the Alliance Francaise).

August 21-27: 'German Dance Theatre' 30 years: A photo documentation exhibition by Chandralekha. With dance, and videos on August 25-29 and excerpts from *Six Circumstances* by Tripura Kashyap at August 26th.

August 23: Book release. *Selected Poems* by Jacques Prevert. (6.30 p.m., at the Alliance Francaise).

August 25-27: *Daughters of an Ocean*, a contemporary dance theatre production by Anita Ratnam and the Arangham Dance Theatre — based on Dr. Shobita Punja's book. (7.00 p.m., at the Museum Theatre. For schools' performance, Tel: 852 4917/435 2123.)

August 28: India at the Tip of your Pen — How to write about a multi-faceted country. Twenty Years as a German Writer and Journalist in India? A lecture at the Madras Book Club by Dr. Martin Kampchen. (6.30 p.m. at Hotel Connemara.)

Dr. Kampchen first came to India in 1971. Later, he obtained an M.A. in Indian Philosophy in Madras and a second Ph.D in comparative religion at Santiniketan. At Santiniketan from 1979, Kampchen has worked as a writer, translator and editor. His books include his Santiniketan diary, three books of short stories and a novel based on rural Bengal life, a book on Francis of Assisi seen from an Indian perspective and several books on comparative religion. He regularly contributes to several German language journals, including, the German national daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, as well as to a number of German radio stations.

August 1-31: 'Treasure Chest' — a package of children's films in collaboration with Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan Senior Secondary School. The films are being screened as part of a curtain-raiser to a Indo-German children's film programme and seminar to be held in October. While PSBBSSS will be given priority as the main partner, the programme is open to all interested schools with prior booking; the schools have to make their own transport arrangement and send a staff member accompanying the children from the school. The seminar room of MMB, which is the venue for the programme can seat 60 children comfortably. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan, excluding weekends, 17th & 18th, at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

August 29: 'Modern Indian Literature in German Translation — A Difficult Encounter'. A lecture by Dr. Martin Kampchen. (7.00 p.m. at Max Mueller Bhavan.)

**Sport on
Page 6 & 7**

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