

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

September 1-15, 2000

## The slaughter of Pulicat's fish

(by P J Sanjeeva Raj, Professor of Ecology)

The North Chennai Thermal Power Station (NCTPS), part of the unbridled industrial development of Ennore, is the latest threat to an area where we will soon see a major environmental and human tragedy unless action is taken immediately.

For more than a year now, fishermen in the Pulicat Lake have been complaining that water, from the lake is now being drained through the Bucking-

ham Canal in the south, into the NCTPS to serve as a coolant for the plant. Their complaint adds that along with the swift current drawn by heavy suction pumps, even the prawns on which the fishermen depend for their livelihood, are being pulled towards the NCTPS. The fishermen have been pleading with the NCTPS and even threatened to block the Buckingham Canal to prevent such loss of water and threat to

the fisheries. But there has been no response from the NCTPS. Now the fishermen have noticed coffee-coloured effluents from the NCTPS being discharged into the Buckingham Canal and flowing into the Pulicat Lake.

On the late evening of August 4th, the discharge of this effluent was greater than usual, extending for a distance of about 20 km. The dense colour did not permit anything unusual being noticed but on the morning of 6th August mass-mortality of fish and crab was noticed in the Buckingham Canal, from the NCTPS to the Pulicat Lake mouth. Mass mortality of fish is ultimately fishermen's mortality too in a poor country like India.

Basketloads of 20 to 25 species of fish and three species of crabs were killed overnight, most of them thrown ashore by the high tide at night or floating close to the marginal waters. Local fishermen were shocked at this first mass mortality of fish during the lifetime of the oldest fisherman here.

A scientific survey showed that the species killed were mostly the slow-moving ones that could not escape the massive pollution. They were chiefly bottom-dwelling (benthic) species, and so a bottom pollutant like the slurry from the NCTPS, settling at the bottom could have been the cause. Eels, as long as one metre, seabass, as heavy as two and a half kilos apiece, and crabs as large as 16 cm across their shell, all resistant species and sizes, were killed. One species of mullet was in its breeding season. Strangely, prawns mortality to any great extent was not noticed, perhaps because they have a tendency to burrow into the bottom slush, when the

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## Environmental education — yet no concern for the environment

(By A Special Correspondent)

In 1999, the C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre (CPREC) surveyed the environmental content in the syllabi of the Education Boards of Andaman & Nicobar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. From the survey it was clear that the children are being given a lot of information on specific aspects of the environment, such as animals, plants, and chemical processes. All the syllabi have been excellent in increasing the knowledge base of the children. However, at the end of schooling, the survey finds, the child develops no concern for the environment. There is no emotional bonding, no sense of responsibility.

Environmental education needs a holistic approach. It is very important that the child is made aware of the environment in its totality. The education system must inculcate the belief that it is the duty of every human being to protect and conserve what nature has given us and that the lack of such protection would only lead to devastation.

The CPREC has under-

taken a project to 'Strengthen Environmental Education' in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This will be done with the aid of curriculum developers in each state.

The aim of the project is:

- to strengthen the existing environmental education efforts in the states;
- to help the education department and its various wings in curriculum development;
- to bring in a holistic approach to environmental education;
- to incorporate and integrate various environmental concepts into the different subjects.

As a first step, a state level workshop was recently organised in Andhra Pradesh for State Council for Education Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) faculty. The workshop is to be followed by other state level workshops in Andaman & Nicobar, Orissa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Join  
INTACH's  
Heritage Awareness Movement



To care for our natural and cultural wealth

Virasat is a national movement to galvanize people to take up the cause of heritage preservation. We need organizations and individuals who can participate in various programmes that have been drawn up by INTACH. We also need writers, painters, artists, cameramen, speakers...  
Tell us how you would like to help in protecting our heritage.

write to

INTACH

The Indian National Trust for  
Art and Cultural Heritage  
TAMIL NADU CHAPTER

1, Second Street, Wallace Gardens  
Chennai 600 006. Telephone: 827-1759, 826-6878.  
email: ptkmini@satyam.net.in

## INTACH campaign for awareness

(By a Staff Reporter)

*It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.*

Fundamental Duties 51-A –  
Constitution of India.

Virasat 2000-2001 was launched by INTACH, jointly with like minded organisations, government agencies and voluntary groups on August 16, 2000 in New Delhi and elsewhere. It will be followed by a calendar of events and programmes to create greater awareness of heritage issues among people from all walks of life.

The campaign is expected to appeal to all segments of society, as the pressures of un-

planned urbanisation and dwindling natural resources are increasingly being felt in both rural and urban India. A people's movement can have a catalytic influence on policy-makers and decision-takers to make heritage preservation one of the priority issues of our time.

Heritage preservation has today reached a critical point. Its linkage to sustainable development has given an added urgency. Government alone is not in a position to ensure full protection of heritage properties. The Virasat campaign is therefore basically an invitation to the public, to local communities, to resurgent industries and to other NGOs to join hands in

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# Poor maintenance, NOT age, the danger

When tragedy struck a second floor ward of a General Hospital building, the Ministerial reaction was to urge demolition of old buildings like this one, described as "shaky structures", and build new multistorey blocks. The *Man From Madras Musings* was glad to hear a couple of days later that several hospital authorities as well as staff at all levels had expressed the view that age was not a major factor in the collapse. They did not appear to be particularly concerned about the structural stability of this 100-year-old building. With one voice they charged that the collapse was due to poor maintenance. In fact, there is almost a total lack of building maintenance in the sprawling Park Town complex.

This is a problem common to every Government-owned building in the State, whether old or new. There is little maintenance done in any of them, usually because the funding for maintenance is inadequate, say those whose job it is to tend these buildings. But these caretakers should also take responsibility for the fact that what little maintenance is done is done so haphazardly and in such a slipshod manner that the maintenance work itself is an endangering factor. In this instance, imagine emptying the floor below to carry out major repairs without paying heed even to whether the patients above would be discomfited in any way by the work! Surely if major work was being carried out on the ceiling, the floor above should have been emptied before work began! Not to have done so could only be described as callous carelessness — and for this the hospital authorities should share some of the blame, for allowing major repair works that would undoubtedly disturb patients around, to begin without moving the patients out of the disturbed zone.

Yet another aspect of this tragic accident is what role all the new multistorey buildings in an already crowded campus had to play in the collapse. All the building of multistorey blocks in recent years using heavy equipment for the work would well have affected the condition of old buildings in their immediate vicinity. This is what *Madras Musings* has been warning the authorities about in the case of the multistorey block planned for the Museum complex. Pile driving, *Musings* has held, will affect every old Museum complex building nearby.

## A pressing need

Among the issues that arise out of the tragedy at the General Hospital are a couple that have been discussed in several fora taking up heritage concerns. Several suggestions *The Man*

From *Madras Musings* has heard made have not gone beyond the room. And that is the tragedy of most workshops, seminars and committee meetings.

Those responsible for the maintenance of Government buildings haven't the foggiest idea about looking after old buildings, particularly those built with techniques little used today. Yet, most important old buildings, many of them that should be listed as heritage buildings, belong to Government. The suggestion has therefore been several times made that Government should set up a special cell of engineers to be given specialised training in maintenance of such buildings. MMM believes that idea has not even been discussed at any decision-maker level, thereby leaving untrained personnel to deal with maintenance problems they know little about.

Another suggestion made is that the half a dozen trained conservation architects in the City be empanelled by the Government building maintenance sections and that their help be sought whenever maintenance work is to be undertaken in old buildings. Members of this panel could also

wondered. But then, with all the speeches being about responsibility, investigation and analysis, the journalism to emerge would undoubtedly need comparable space and time to live up to the vision of those promoting the College and Institute. Nowhere during the evening was it mentioned that journalism could also be fun and should entertain; it almost seemed to MMM that such aims might be a sin. Indeed, there was hardly any mention of those most important to the media, the readers.

But let not MMM spoil the party for the 61 young enthusiasts, the women a slight majority to the delight of Subhashini Ali of the All India Democratic Women's Association. They should have fun with the Electives which include 'Deprivation', 'Making Sense of Politics', and 'Business Reporting', presumably of the corruption-free sort Ram sought when he said journalism in India, especially business reporting, was beginning to suffer from the same form of corruption that, starting from India, was enveloping world cricket. Pointing out that the Elective titled 'Gender

news on such programmes, felt the ex-New York Times man in charge of syllabus at the only Ivy League college to teach journalism — courtesy of Pulitzer.

The highlight of the courses at the College will be the 10-week course BBC World will be conducting for students of the audio-visual medium with its own training staff, and the highlight of the evening was the CPI (M) Politburo's Sitaram Yechuri who made a brief and eloquent off-the-cuff presentation — indeed, he was the unexpected guest at the occasion — which had more home truths in it about the careless state of today's journalism than all else had been said about it before. A pity he and Subhashini Ali were at the tail end of the proceedings and had lost an audience by then.

## A master check-up

When the Centre for Contemporary Studies held a day-long seminar to discuss the 'Review of the Indian Constitution', *The Man From Madras Musings* found T.N. Seshan,

restricted to two terms (a total of ten years) in Parliament and State Legislature.

- The total strength of a Ministry, both in the Centre and in the State legislatures, should be ten per cent of the total strength of the House.
- No educational qualification should be prescribed either for becoming an MP, MLA or a Minister.

But who'll listen, MMM wondered, except to the last point!

## Canal concern

A former IAS officer who wishes to remain anonymous wrote to *The Man From Madras Musings* the other day about MMM's concern over the Sethusamudram Canal (August 16th) not becoming a reality after a century of deliberations. He wrote:

"The real road block which stands in the way of the project ever taking off is that if the canal materialises, the number of ships calling at the Colombo Port would considerably come down. Any loss of revenue to Colombo Port will have an acute adverse effect on Sri Lanka's economy which is already in tatters due to internal strife. Sri Lanka will have to prop up its economy by allowing Colombo to be a naval base for some international power. Earlier it was either USSR or USA and now only USA (and perhaps China?). India would not like an international power to have its naval base at Colombo.

The other point is that the resources for the construction of the canal can be gathered only with massive financial assistance from international investment institutions. It is a moot point whether these international investors would be allowed to get involved in a project which would shatter the economy of a small nation and introduce far-reaching changes in the international balance of power."

that "extinguished Civil Servant" as he called himself, and Dr H V Hande, whose peregrinations have now taken him into the BJP executive, providing the entertainment needed to enliven a humourless debate.

Seshan held that "instead of modifying and mortifying the Constitution", the laws should be amended to hasten the judicial process, criminals should be barred from contesting elections, and the honest and the Legislatures should be provided greater security. An emotional Hande accused the Congress (I) for being responsible for this state of affairs by "daring to change" the basic character of "Dr B R Ambedkar's Constitution". Looking at the review of the Constitution through a doctor's eyes, he compared it to a master medical check-up which everyone after the age of 50 should undergo. It was a prescription MMM found many in the audience not exactly in favour of.

Among the recommendations at the end of the day were the following:

- Introduction of proportional representation in elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- To exclude criminals from contesting elections.
- Members of Lok Sabha and State legislatures should be

— MMM

# The VIPs who passed by

(Continued from last fortnight)

Edward Elliot's Road housed some of the earliest South Indian industrialists too. Industrialist Anantharamkrishnan, who acquired various ancient British companies on Mount Road, lived on this road. His family still does and the palatial home of Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer is owned by them. A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar, who founded the Tube Investment Group lived in what is now Woodlands Hotel. His family called it *The Laurels*. These two great industrialists dedicated a part of the earnings from their enterprises for some social good, such as educational institutions and hospitals.

The great movie moghuls S.S. Vasan and A.V. Meyyappan also lived on E.E. Road. The A.V.M. family still lives here, but Vasan's house across the road from the Music Academy is empty, but is used for film-shootings from time to time. Both families contributed to education — Vasan by making his journal a haven for trainee journalists.

M.L. Vasantakumari, the eminent Carnatic musician, and her husband 'Vikatam' Chandru lived on E.E. Road for many years. MLV trained many who are now popular singers. In that sense, she too was someone connected with education of a different kind. MLV deserves credit for publishing and popularising Purandara Dasa's Kannada *keerthanas* in Tamil Nadu. It is little known among the Chennai music lovers of today, that it was her mother Lalithangi who collected many of these *keerthanas* and taught them to her daughter in their original ragas. MLV and Chandru's daughter is the film

and TV-serial star Sri Vidya, who is also a renowned *Bharata Natyam* artist.

The Travancore sisters — Lalitha, Padmini and Ragini — were other dancers who gravitated to E.E. Road when they had established their popularity. At one time, the sisters owned thirty or forty bungalow type houses on a spur of E.E. Road, bought out of their earnings by their guardian angel and mother Saraswathi Amma. Only a brother of the trio, and his daughter, the multi-lingual

Music Academy and the Raja Annamalai Manram. Shobhana, an accomplished *Bharata Natyam* dancer besides being an award-winning film star, appears on the city stage now and then, especially during the Music Season.

Contemporaries of the Travancore sisters were the three Kerala Sisters, who despite their talents and stage presence, did not come up to the level of the Travancore trio. One of the earliest 'family girls' to give a *Bharata Natyam* recital



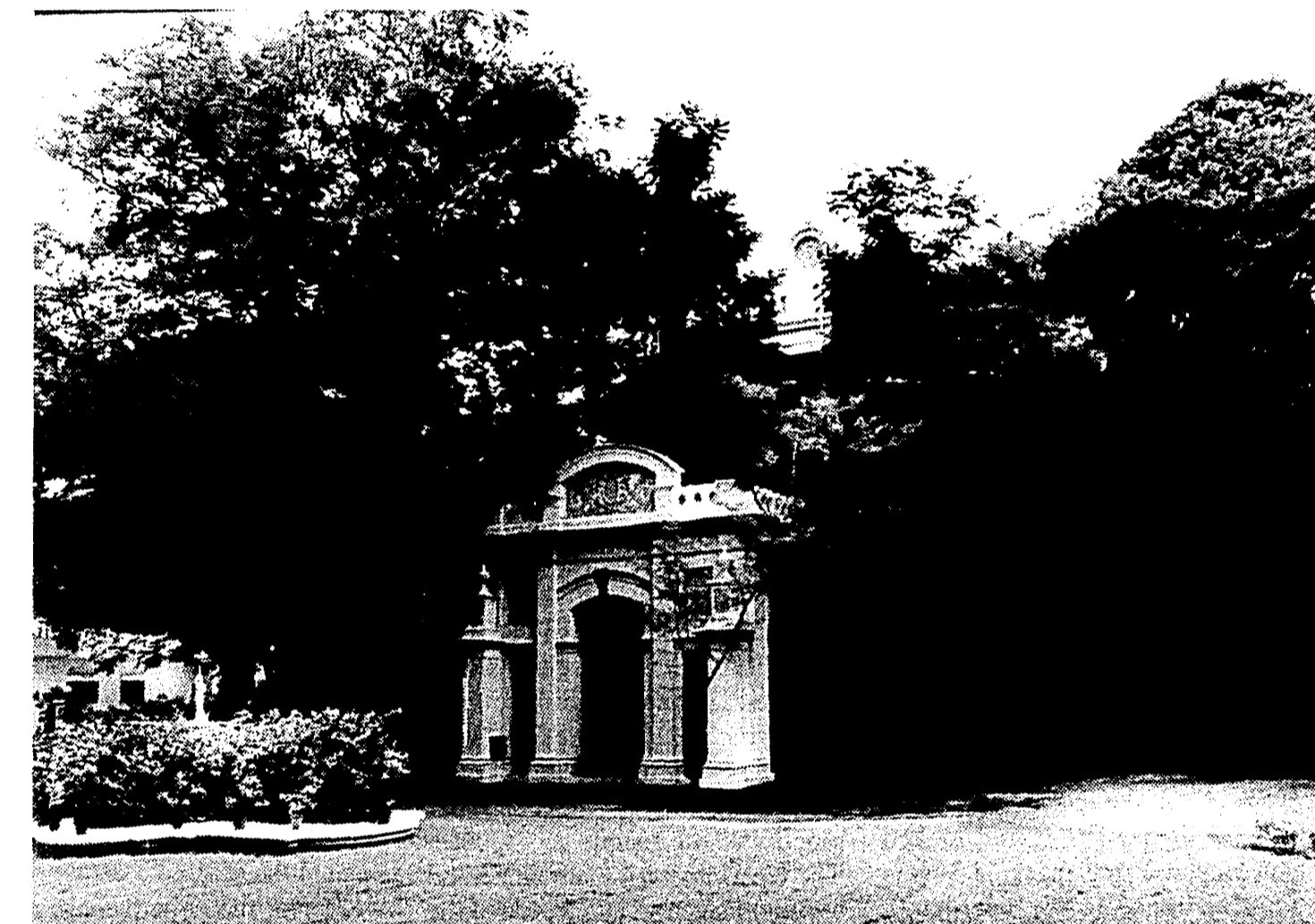
S.S. Vasan's house.

abhinayam and other aspects of *Bharata Natyam*.

Among the journalists here were S.S. Vasan, the founder-editor of *Ananda Vikatan*, and his son S. Balasubramaniam (alias Seval-kodiyon). Another icon from *Ananda Vikatan* who subsequently blazed his own trail with his own group of

joined the movement. But because of their connection to "the loyal servants of the British government" they were not taken seriously by the Congress nor did they fit well in their own families. A few of them did not do well, but their spirit of nationalism did not flag till their end. Others chose careers with the government and universities, or in the professions and several reached the top rungs. Amidst us today are: Prof. R. Narasimhan of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, R.S. Murthy, retired Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, and S. Subramaniam, I.P.S. a retired D.G.-ranking police officer who will be remembered for organising the Special Protection Group for V.I.Ps. They were young lads when they lived on the E.E. Road.

Many V.I.Ps of later days travelled down this road regularly. Every Chief Minister, except three, elected after a general election has used this road for going to Fort St. George and back. Prakasam, Omandurar and Kumaraswamy Raja were Chief Ministers before the Constitution came into effect. After the first General Election in 1952, it was Rajaji who like Cincinnatus was called back from the plough. (The then Madras Legislative Assembly was a hung one, with no single party having a majority, but the Congress was the strongest. The Communists were represented by a strong contingent of young and intelligent legislators. The fear of the older Congressmen was that if these young men came to power, they would go about dispossessing everyone, the landlords, the zamindars, the chota princes and establish a government in which state was supreme. Kamaraj was only then emerging from the chrysalis of Satyamurthy and was still not a powerful force to reckon with when pitted against some Andhra politicians. An acute water scarcity was prevailing in Madras. There was also resentment against rice rationing which had been introduced in the wartime. The situation called for an acceptable leader, and thus it was that Rajaji was recalled from retirement. Rajaji cobbled a majority government



Anantharamkrishnan's house, now the family's office, much of it hidden by greenery. This was once Sir P.S. Sivaswamy's home.

film star Shobana, now live on this spur from E.E. Road. The trio of sisters presented group dances on the stage and called them Oriental dances as the programme consisted of a mix of *Bharata Natyam* and Kathakali. Their thematic presentations, 'Sampurna Ramayanam' and 'Dasavatharam' drew many a full house at the

magazines was Manian, who, also lived on a spur of the road. The names of K. Santanam, retired Editor, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, and his son, K.S. Ramanujam, Business Representative of that national paper, also spring to mind, for they resided on a branch from E.E. Road.

Old timers recall the legendary Dr. Rangachari who lived on Poonamallee High Road motoring down, parking his car at the junction of Edward Elliot's Road and Royapet High Road and going on to take his daily brisk walk to the Edward Elliot's Road beach and back. There were also admirers for the Inspector General F.V. Arul, for his professional trimness, and his later successor Bob (R.M.) Mahadevan for his geniality and smile to everyone along the way. Both of them travelled on the E.E. Road to and from the I.G. of Police's office.

A few of the teen-agers of the Forties were attracted by the national movement and



It was 'The Laurels' — when AMM Murugappa Chettiar owned the property.

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## OUR READERS WRITE



### Notable omission

Raghu Tagat's memories of Edward Elliot's Road (MM, Aug 1st) takes us down memory lane, as many of the eminent persons had been friends of the family.

However, while mention has been made of various members of C.S. Iyer's family, the author has missed out on Iyer's eldest son, Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, the world-renowned astro-physicist and the second Nobel Laureate in his family. Dr. Chandrasekhar spent all his adult life in the USA, completely devoted to research and his various discoveries, till he passed away a few years ago.

Mrs. S. Rajagopal  
20, Rutland Gate IV St.  
Chennai 600 006.

### A pedestrian affair

As a pedestrian much agitated over the steady erosion of his rights on our Chennai roads, I read with much interest the letter "Whither pedestrians?" (MM, July 16th). From the point of view of the authorities concerned, the letter could be appositely titled "Whither Pedestrians!"

Pedestrians on Chennai roads do face the problem of lack of platforms on the roads, but even where footpaths exist, there are other inconveniences. On several roads branches of trees from private buildings slant over the compound walls where the pedestrians willingly have to stoop to conquer (in my own area in Gopalapuram there are several such stretches). Then there are "ramps" in front of the highrise buildings. Do the rules permit these to be on the road rather than inside the buildings?

The paving of platforms with slabs itself causes inconvenience sometimes. While the urinary output from those who ease themselves on our roads used to get absorbed by mud in days of yore, now rivulets flow down these platforms and form veritable pools here and there.

Who said walking on Chennai roads is a pedestrian affair?

C. Kesi  
20-21, Conran Smith Road  
Gopalapuram  
Chennai 600 086.

### Pressure before harvest

I was recently standing in front of the main gate of Kapaleeswarar temple, Mylapore. There was a traffic jam on North Mada Street. A fellow citizen commented that a road across the tank from the temple gate connecting Kapaleeswarar East Tank Bund road and R.K. Mutt road would be useful. Who knows? In a few years, a huge high rise building with an excellent basement might be constructed within the tank! What a wonderful sight it will be!

Thirunermalai lake is an important lake near the causeway across the river Adyar near Pallavaram. People are merrily carving out portions of poromboke land for themselves here. In a few years, the lake will not exist.

Filling the Kapaleeswarar tank with water is a simple task. Rain falling inside the temple and the roads nearby is sufficient to fill the tank with water. That applies to the remaining 38 temple tanks in Chennai. No. We will not do that, but we will go about encouraging the people of Chennai to do rainwater harvesting. Not that I am against the people going in for rainwater harvesting, nor against Metrowater establishing a cell for the purpose. But, I am against Metrowater diverting its attention from the main issue, which is the zero pressure in the water distribution mains. Let me repeat. Rainwater harvesting will not improve the pressure of water in the mains. Pressure must be applied by the people on Metrowater to improve the pressure in the distribution mains (see my article in MM, July 1st).

M. Susikaran  
8, First Street  
Nandanam Extn.  
Chennai 600 035.

### Forgotten Tamils

I cannot agree more when you say (MM, July 16th) that "even the cultural divide between the two (i.e., the Sinhalese and the Tamils) is far less than that between Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils."

You have referred to the differences in approach and attitudes to various aspects of "culture".

The Sri Lankan Tamils have always tried to distance themselves from the Plantation Tamils in that country. This was true not only in their native country but also in Malaysia, where the 'Jaffna Tamils' enjoyed a higher status and looked down upon Tamil-speaking Malaysians of Indian origin, who had a plantation background. Visiting Malaysia in 1985, Mr. Thondaman, the

acknowledged spokesman of the Plantation Workers of Tamil origin, bemoaned the utter neglect of these people by the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan Government and the undisguised contempt displayed by Sri Lankan Tamils of various political persuasions. Referring to the ongoing peace negotiation at that time, he said that he and the people whom he represented could have nothing to say on this process, especially whether the percentages offered at that time were enough or not, because, he said in picturesque Tamil, "Engalukku elaiye podalai; appuram thame payasam poduma endra pechu" Where's the question of serving payasam when we have no (banana) leaf to eat on? It is strange that the 'Dravidian' parties of Tamil Nadu speak very little about the Plantation Tamils, who still remain outside the purview of all the constitutional process being hotly debated in that country. On the other hand, through mistaken linguistic chauvinism, they vie with each other in eulogising the LTTE as the saviour of Tamil and Tamils. If Eelam comes about, the situation is likely to worsen for the Plantation Tamils in the rest of Sri Lanka, as they will lose the leverage they now have with the Central Government.

As for the point about ethnicity made by Professor Sudarshan, this is true of all of South Asia.

T.G. Ramamurthi  
Editor, Africa Quarterly  
10, Veerabadrin Street  
Nungambakkam  
Chennai 600 034.

### Well-maintained

I differ with R K Sridaran (MM, July 16th) on the Universal Temple of Sri Ramakrishna of Mylapore.

There are more than 12 security personnel monitoring and counselling devotees. They help the aged to climb the stairs. Besides, they are very strict in not allowing children below 7 years to enter the temple, lest the sanctity of the temple gets spoiled. The lawns are well maintained and watered regularly. By the side of the temple is a well maintained coconut grove.

On the whole, it is a pleasant sight and gives a sense of religious feeling at the temple.

A free chappal and shoe stand is there. The boys there insist that devotees use the door mat to remove dust.

P.A. Ranganathan  
24, Vedachala Garden  
Mandaveli, Chennai-20.

### Of serials...

When the Ananda Vikatan functioned in The Hindu's old building at 100 Mount Road (MM, Aug. 1st), the late Sri Devan (R. Mahadevan) turned out most of his well-known and well received serials like Miss Janaki, Gomathiyin Kaathalan, Kalyani, Sriman Sudarshanam, CID Chandru, Lakshmi Kataksham, and his magnum opus Justice Jagannathan. If I remember right, this was the time Madras was rocked by the Alavandar murder case.

\* \* \*

### ...and pedestrian plight

Plight of the pedestrians in the city has been well brought out by Srinivasan Patto (MM, August 1st). Perhaps the Government and the municipal body want every citizen to become an owner of a vehicle thus ensuring there would be no pedestrians. Presumably those who cannot afford a car are unfit to live.

M. Sethuraman  
6/16, Mahalakshmi Nagar  
Second Cross Street  
Chennai 600 088.

### Conference of scholars

Radha Padmanabhan (MM, Aug. 1st) has painted a picture of gloom through the dawn conversation of several stalwarts of yesteryear who now stand tall on Chennai's Marina. The people of the Metropolis apparently do not realise that by honouring these giants in the society, they are dishonouring by leaving them to the crows.

I share the same feelings as the author that the statues should be properly kept in tune with the lofty

ideals for which these stalwarts lived in centuries past.

A small mani-mandapam over the statues or at least a canopy over them will be a fitting way to protect them from the ravages of nature.

Lalgudi G. Kanakasabai  
"Greenlands"  
Lalgudi 621 601.

### Foreign solution?

Congratulations to Radha Padmanabhan for her engaging and realistic imagery in "To whom we shall then pray?" (MM, August 15).

If memory serves me right, our Worshipful Mayor is supposed to have brought out details of remedial measures against the defilement of the statues by crows, after an overseas visit.

Can MM secure the kind attention of the WM?

Most MM readers should be having NRI offspring and heirings. Why cannot they find out how this problem is solved there? If it is crow here, it is pigeon there!

N. Dharmeswaran  
21 Kumarar Nagar  
Guduvancherry

### Start language earlier

We commemorated Maria Montessori's birth anniversary (August 31st) this year by organising a seminar entitled Connecting through Language.

The Second Language is introduced now in regular schools at the level of Std. I when children are almost 6 years old. We know, however, that the child's greatest natural ability for language learning is from birth to 6 years. However pre-school programmes neglect the Second Language. The enormous bilingual and trilingual potential of early childhood and of effortless learning is, thus, lost.

The methods used to teach the Second Language in our schools today, even at the higher levels, also deserve a close look. The syllabus seems to limit the learning process, rather than being a starting point for a child's exciting voyage of discovery.

It is in this context we chose to focus on that early introduction of the Second Language at this year's event. Meeting not just to state problems, but to work out concrete solutions were teachers from the Montessori schools of Chennai who presented papers on various aspects of the topic and shared ideas. In the afternoon session, an exhibition of Second Language materials was held for the public.

Secretary  
(The Madras Montessori Study Circle)  
36, IV Main Road  
Kasturba Nagar  
Adyar  
Chennai 600 020.

### Should be our pride

It is indeed a tragedy that the National Anthem is not played anywhere now (MM, July 16th) except at some Government functions. I think there is also a law which prevents the unfurling of our National Flag by the public except on Independence Day. This is in total contrast to what I have seen in the United States. Every morning the local gas station manager used to unfurl the US flag and salute it with pride before beginning his work for the day.

The right beginning in India could be that the National Flag should be unfurled by children in every school each morning followed by compulsory singing of the National Anthem both in the morning and in the evening when the flag is lowered.

S. Shanker Dev  
"Rylas"  
6, Giri Road  
T. Nagar  
Chennai 600 017.

### An English view

The letter from Anna Varki about access of public buildings for the infirm struck home, because we are just trying to digest the Disability Discrimination Act, which will by 2004 make it illegal to offer goods and services to the disabled at a lesser quality than that offered to the able.

Disability means anything from poor hearing and sight, mental or physical handicap or even something like dyslexia. We will have to provide physical access i.e., ramps, hand rails, lifts all over the place and, for instance, put information onto tape if for some reason the customer can't read conventional print. If a mentally handicapped person shouts in the middle of an opera this will not be reason to eject him, and hotels and pubs must offer accessible lavatories, dining areas and a proportion of bedrooms. Estate agents will have to provide details of their houses for sale on tape for dyslexics and reception areas in public buildings will have to have induction loops for the hard of hearing.

English heritage is sending out guidelines as to how its historic buildings can be opened up for the disabled, though presumably even this Act won't require a lift to take someone to the top of Powys Castle, or Gloucester Cathedral Tower.

As a user of facilities for the disabled (we have a relative in a wheelchair with dementia, one partially sighted and very deaf, a totally deaf niece and, of course, I help lots of children from the Special School to learn to ride) I can see it will make life much easier, but as a provider we can only think of the cost, the disruption and the fact that such alterations will spoil buildings like ours, which will end up resembling nursing homes, with ramps and wall bars everywhere.

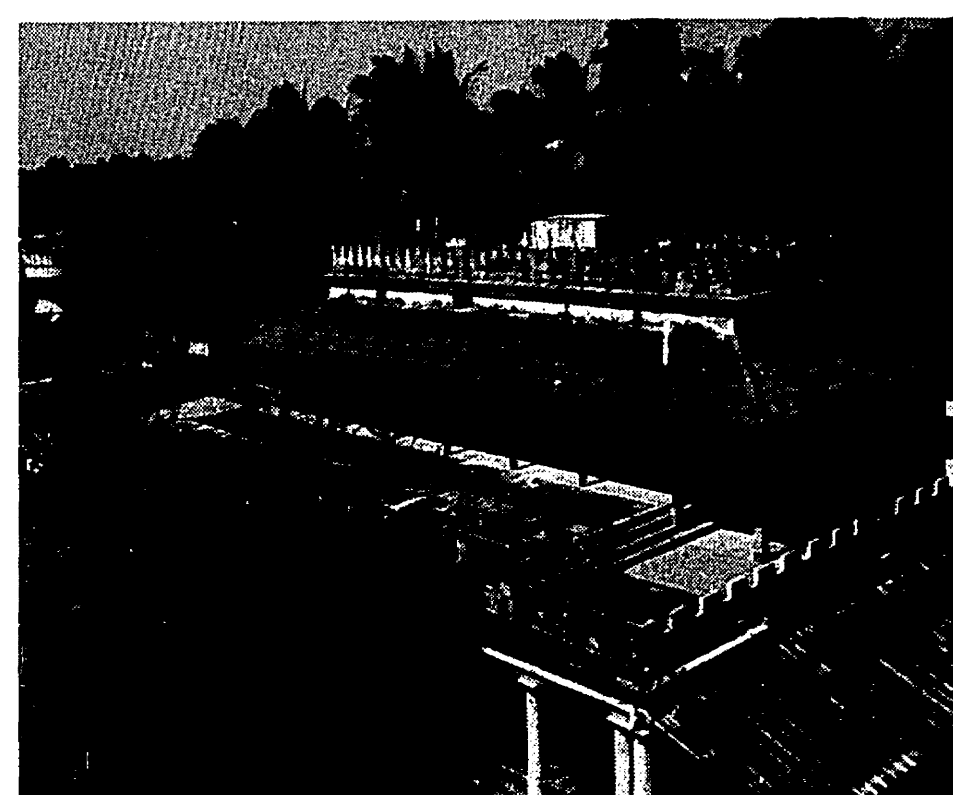
Ironically enough the two areas which are exempt are education and transport — because the taxpayer/government would have to foot the bill. New transport does have excellent facilities and we took Harry (Miller, an old friend) onto one of our low loader buses to get him into Gloucester. He nearly had a heart attack when I told him we were going on the bus, but Narayanan wheeled him on and off and Harry loved it.

### PLEASE NOTE

• All letters for The Editor's attention should be addressed to The Editor, c/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

• All business correspondence should be addressed to The Director, Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

# When Leith Castle was home to a minister



Leith Castle in the 1980s.

Beautifying the environment was an important consideration in the past. Today, the thrust is on economy of space. As a consequence beauty has been replaced with blocky structures. It is thus heartening to learn (MM, June 15th) that INTACH has come forward to seek preservation of heritage sites on the basis of antiquity and beauty.

We lived in Royapuram in the early 1920's. Apart from the striking station was the impressive masonry railway bridge to the west. It was built by the Madras Railway Company in 1856, as I discovered on the lamppost on the bridge. St. Peter's Church is another heritage site. Royapuram was named after the Church — Raya means rock and Peter also means rock (in Latin).

In the Twenties, the main means of public transport were the trams operated by the Madras Tramways Co. If you had to go to Spencer's on Mount Road and boarded the tram from Customs House to Mylapore, you had to get off at Smith's Corner (now Bharat

Buildings). From there, you either took a hand-pulled rickshaw or walked. It was at this spot that tram line turned towards Royapettah. The tram line terminated at Luz Corner. There was a shuttle from this point onwards which took you as far as St. Raphael's School. There was no means of public transport either for reaching Adyar or what is now Foreshore Estate area. It is interesting to note that a stone slab placed by the erstwhile Madras Tramways Co., close to the gate of St. Raphael's School, shows the mean sea level at that spot. It looks like a monument to the defunct company.

As a resident of San Thomé in the late 20's, I note that Leith Castle is not on the list of heritage buildings.

I recollect, as a student, having seen the document relating to the property. It showed that it was once owned by a Braithwaite. Braithwaite was the British General who, together with General Bailey, was taken prisoner of by Tippu Sultan, to Srirangapatnam.

My father, the late Dewan Bahadur R.N. Arogyaswamy, acquired the property in 1923, on his retirement as Superintending Engineer, P.W.D. The property extended from San Thomé High Road eastwards, right into the beach sands. My father retained Leith Castle, and 22 grounds. In the remaining area, from the western compound wall by the San Thomé High Road, which was a sandy coconut grove, he developed three roads. The areas between the roads were partitioned into plots for building sites and handed over to a cooperative society for sale. It may, thus, be said that it was my father who in a way resurrected Leith Castle and brought it into the limelight.

While erecting the fountain in front of the building, a beautiful, white marble statue of the Buddha was recovered. It was possibly a part of the booty the General acquired during some campaign or other. This statue is at present in the Madras Museum.

A portion of the compound wall, on the northern side, was built of massive laterite and could not be demolished. It is possibly a part of the old fort on whose site Leith Castle rose.

My father was a student of the Madras Christian College in the latter part of the 19th Century, when Dr. William Miller was the principal. He obtained the first rank with first class marks in all the examinations right through his career. On joining Engineering College, he maintained the same record among the first batch of graduates in 1895, standing first with a first class degree in Bachelor of Civil Engineering (B.C.E.).

In 1926, he was nominated as a candidate in the general election

by the Indian National Party, supported by the Indian National Congress. He won the election and was appointed Minister for Fisheries, P.W.D., Health etc. He "Indianised" the medical services by appointing Dr. P.V. Cheria as Superintending of the Madras Medical College (Hospital), and Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar as Superintendent of the Women's and Children's Hospital. He inaugurated the sanatorium at Madanapalle, Chittoor District, which was named after him as 'Arogyawaram'. He resigned his ministership in deference to the call of the Indian National Congress to boycott the Simon Commission. He remained an unopposed member of the Legislature until his death in January 1933.

Among the condolence messages received from various leaders, one was from Mahatma Gandhi; he sent it on a half-anna postcard from his cell in Yeravada.

My father's remains were interred in St. John's Cemetery (now St. Roque's), Washermanpet, adjacent to the grave of his father, Sir R.N. Pargasaam. During the funeral oration by the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, it was proposed that suitable arrangements be made for perpetuating the memory of the Dewan Bahadur. No follow-up action was taken at the time.

Perhaps it can now be by declaring Leith Castle a 'heritage' site and naming the roads leading from it to the San Thomé High Road, as 'Arogyaswamy Streets' in memory of the person who resurrected the 'Leith Castle' area from oblivion.

R N P Arogyaswamy  
Flat E 1  
101, Velachery Road  
Chennai 600 032

## Wither the tree?!

Whenever anybody came to Madras and enquired about what sights ought to be seen, I would promptly say, "Don't go without seeing the Banyan Tree in the Theosophical Society gardens". Many people must have seen the tree in its former splendour. Under the shade of this gigantic tree were cement benches on which you could spend hours in meditation or read.

The last time I saw the tree was years ago when it was on the verge of collapse and efforts were being made to prop it up with the aid of steel, wooden supports, ropes etc. Recently, my grandchildren from America came on a visit when the temperature was at its highest. Even so, I was determined to show them the Banyan Tree in Adyar. They said they had seen pictures, but I told them that's not enough.

The gates close at 4 p.m. after

which they do not allow visitors in. So we started by 2.30 p.m. and reached in time. We promptly set out to see the banyan tree. There was a banyan tree all right, but nothing like what I had described to the children. The trunk was not gigantic, there was an expanse of roots not very far apart, there were no benches and the ground was covered with a blanket of dried leaves. The entire campus, once upon a time so beautiful, wasn't anything like what I had seen or remember.

Kalakshetra had shifted to Tiruvanniyur and the weaving centre was also no longer here. We sat down on some rocks and I tried to describe how wonderful it was all once upon a time, adding a bit of history about Annie Besant and Jiddu Krishnamurti. Hearing these two names the watchman perked up his ears and told us he could show us Leadbeater's and Annie Besant's

houses and Krishnamurti Ayya's temple, but all the other things I mentioned to him he knew nothing about. "Never heard of them in the 30 years I've worked here." So I gave up and we walked back and I swore that I would never bring anybody to see the banyan tree again. I am told the trunk of the tree was attacked by a virus, eaten up and was being allowed to grow afresh.

A footnote from a letter of my cousin Maya, a freedom fighter: I had written to her about my visit to Adyar, "I have spent many happy hours under the Banyan Tree when I was in college. I too lament the fate of the Tree, but then we must remember all things pass — even banyan trees."

Mrs. Anna Varki  
9, Central Street  
Kilpauk Garden Colony  
Chennai 600 010.

### Day-night matches

'Cricket on the Marina again' was a poignant report by 'The Corner Flag' (MM, August 1st).

It is to be wished that the Marina ground recaptures its lost glory and becomes a fitting memorial to the great 'PD' Subbu.

However, without meaning to throw a spanner in the works, I would request whichever corporate body finances the revival, to see that proper watch and ward are posted, otherwise, thanks to the nearby slums, matches of a different kind will transpire behind the pavilion at night.

C.G. Prasad  
9, C.S. Mudali Street,  
Kondithope  
Chennai 600 079.

### Who were they?

Many are not aware of the role played by the ISI cadets during the freedom struggle in India. In 1942, Bhashyam and 17 others were arrested for the anti-national activities and espionage. The then British Government appointed Justice Mack

as a Special Judge to conduct the trial of the ISI cadets in the Madras jail.

Mack sentenced all 18 cadets to be hanged in 1943. The trial was completed in 8 months. These days, criminal and civil trials go on for many years. What a contrast!

Will any one of the older generation list the names of the 18 ISI cadets and from where each of them hailed from?

C.A. Reddi  
57, Rundals Road  
Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

### Stick no bills

It is common in all Metropolitan Transport buses in Chennai fully pasted with advertisements. But in Coimbatore, we can't see a single bit of advertisement paper. If we want to make our Chennai 'Singara Chennai' government should take severe steps to stop this practice.

P. Muni Pratap  
No. 24, Bharath Street  
Pachaiamm Nagar  
Minjur 601203

## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

- Who is the new BJP President?
- One of the progressive lights of Urdu literature, a Jnanpith awardee and author of the acclaimed *Sarhad*, passed away on August 1st. Who?
- Syed Salahuddin was in the news recently. He is the head of which organisation?
- Who is the world's highest paid football player in history? He has an annual salary of \$6.5 million.
- Which Royal luminary completed a century on August 4th?
- What world record, in technology, has the Delhi Main Station established?
- Who was called the Pure Romantic, the Byron of Indian Cricket?
- What did the world, especially the youth celebrate August 2nd and 6th as?
- What new contemporary subject has the CBSE introduced for Classes IX and X in the current academic year?

\* \* \*

- Which Chennai-based chess player became the country's latest International Master?
- Where in the city were two new flyovers inaugurated on August 12th?
- The century-old *Sundar Mahal* on Padmavathi Road in Gopalapuram was the retreat home of which Royal princesses?

\* \* \*

- Name the veteran Parliamentarian, Deputy General Secretary of DMK and the State's Revenue Minister who passed away on August 1st.
- Name the retired nurse of CMC Vellore who was honoured with an MBE on August 1st.
- For which scam was the former Transport Minister, K.A. Sengottaiyan sentenced to four years' RI?
- In which temple near Srivilliputtur is the Almighty worshipped in 'Siva-Vishnu Swaroopan'?
- Which Dalit leader of the State was honoured with a commemorative stamp on August 15th?
- Which is the second largest city of the State, after Chennai?
- Many visited Tirunallar on August 3rd. Why?
- Name the two extremist groups allegedly working with Veerappan.

(Answers on Page 8)

# Road rage

Road rage, once the preserve of the US of A and especially of LA, spewed forth a whole lot of psychiatric literature and sent people to sanatoriums to recover their equilibrium. It has landed with a bang in Chennai.

Nowhere is it more evident than at the Panagal Park junction in T'Nagar where three busy roads converge on to the square around the Park. Here the rage is so tangible that it engulfs you and murder is upmost in your mind! Definitely an area to be avoided during rush hour. Following close on its heels are Kodambakkam High Road and the Haddows Road - College Road ring (supposedly one way but beware of this after 10 pm; trucks and autos that believe that they are a law unto themselves come hurtling down in the opposite direction). It's a common sight to see people giving each other the finger, loud abusive arguments and, in many instances, violence.

## What has led to all this?

Well, for one, construction of all the mini flyovers hasn't helped. The constant digging of the roads to lay stormwater drains, telephone lines, power cables and now the new fibre-optic IT cables reduce traffic to a snail's pace. With the monsoon just weeks away, we can look forward to new potholes opening up.

Potholes in Chennai are classified into:

- Man eaters: These are where people disappear.
- Medical: Whiplash, ball breakers or guaranteed to give you piles.
- Let's Help the Automobile Spare Parts Industry: Potholes designed to do mechanical damage to your car or 2-wheeler.
- Aliens: These are potholes capable of locomotion and metamorphosing into all of the above or suddenly turn into speed-breakers. Talking of which, when I was in Jamaica, all speed-breakers had a road sign which read, 'Caution - Sleeping Policeman'!

In fact, I'm sure Exnora, that environmental watchdog of the city, would do well to institute a Pothole-of-the-Week Competition. I am sure road-users would flood them with entries.

A few words about combating road rage:

- For starters, never believe the hand signals of an autorickshaw. What you think is signalled as a right turn is usually a U-turn or get the hell out of my way.
- Watch out for MTC buses at bus stops. They will cut into

your lane without any warning.

- The cacophony of horn sounds does not mean you are in the way - it's just that most people chose the same time to check if their horns were working. I usually ask them to check their lights as well.
- Just because you have a green signal, don't believe that the way is clear. There will always be a colour blind idiot who will chase the red.
- Stock up on drinking fluids and snacks, because you never know when the police will divert you and how long you'll be in traffic.
- When all else fails, pull over, park your car and walk - you can be assured that your car will be taken care of; the police will tow it away!

Harry Miller once wrote that 'Madras drive with a death wish'. His words have never been truer than today. The East Coast Road and the new flyover at Adyar offer ample evidence of this.

If you are among the many who suffer from road rage, go, see your psychiatrist. As for me, I've just applied for a gun licence.

Mithran Devanesen

## INTACH's campaign for awareness

(Continued from page 1)

a national effort - to come forward, to contribute, to preserve our past so that we may enrich the country and bequeath a richer future to the generations to come after us.

The two major activities to be undertaken, as they are at the crux of the long-term goals to be achieved by INTACH, are:

**Listings:** A listing of built and natural heritage in INTACH format, and the data to be amalgamated at a later date into an all-India INTACH National Register of our built and natural heritage.

**Heritage Legislation:** State Governments have to be impressed with the need to introduce regulations/legislation to save national heritage. A similar exercise has to be undertaken by the Convenors with their Municipal Offices and other local bodies. Draft heritage regulations along with the regulations notified by the Government of Maharashtra for Mumbai and by the Government of Andhra Pradesh for Hyderabad have been handed over to Convenors to serve as models.

— To make a success of the Virasat Heritage Awareness Campaign, INTACH urges schools, colleges, manage-

ment institutions, computer classes, specialised interest academies of art, music etc. to help with the drawing up of a list of heritage sites and monuments with brief descriptions.

- Come together for a Virasat Walk on a Sunday.
- Hold group sessions in their locality to adopt some trees
- Take part in activities that enhance their environment.
- Hold essay competitions on heritage subjects or have a photographic exhibition in their hall, and so on.

A similar exercise can be undertaken with NGOs. Corporate houses, business groups and the trading community can be major players in the campaign, feels INTACH. Many have budgets for community work and enjoy tax benefit for such activities. Will they sponsor a

- communication programme? Can they adopt a heritage site and take care of it?
- Will they support programmes pegged to some conservation-related or other landmark dates like:
- World Ozone Day - 16 Sept, 2000
  - World Tourism Day - 27 Sept, 2000
  - Green Consumer Day - 28 Sept, 2000
  - Wildlife Week - 1-7 Oct, 2000
  - World Habitat Day - 5 Oct, 2000
  - World Ecology Day - 1 Nov, 2000
  - Children's Day - 14 Nov, 2000
  - INTACH Founder's Day - 27 Jan, 2001
  - World Wetland Day - 2 Feb, 2001
  - World Forestry Day - 21 Mar, 2001
  - World Heritage Day - 18 Apr, 2001
  - Earth Day - 22 Apr, 2001
  - World Environment Day - 5 June, 2001
  - World Population Day - 11 July, 2001

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A painting by M. Pakkiri.

Till September 3: Ganesha in Art. (At the CP Art Centre Mini Gallery).

Till September 10: 'Harvesting Water', an exhibition organised by the CPREEC. (At the CP Art Centre).

An exhibition of 'GANESHA' - paintings, sculptures and metal reliefs. (At the Vinyasa Art Gallery).

September 13-17: An exhibition of paintings by M. Pakkiri and K. Srinivas. (At the Vinyasa Art Gallery).

September 12 to 30: Print making organised in collaboration with Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai (At the CP Art Centre).



A painting by K. Srinivas.

## Hospital waste — Rules in place, but no facilities

All healthcare institutions in Chennai together have a bed strength of around 28,000. In the process of offering one of the best healthcare facilities in the country, these institutions generate as much as 20 tonnes of hospital waste every day - most of which finds its way into the community. (A recent survey by the Health Ministry has calculated the amount of waste generated as 2 kg/bed.) But barring a few hospitals most healthcare institutions in Chennai do not have the basic infrastructure for waste management, do not provide adequate training for employees, and have no proper treatment and disposal facilities in the city.

According to the Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules 1998, issued by the Central Government, cities like Chennai, with a population of 30 lakh and above, were to comply with the rules by 31.12.99. By an amendment in March 2000, this date was extended to 30.06.00. In order to achieve a workable waste management system by this date, various steps were taken up by the State.

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) has made the Authority responsible for ensuring implementation of the rules. The TNPCB have inventoried various healthcare institutions in the city and organised conferences to increase awareness before the rules were enforced. They have also been preparing the 'authorisation forms' under the rules.

The TNPCB also monitors the air and water quality of healthcare institutions under the Air and Water Acts. Since the law requires treatment of effluents prior to discharge, many healthcare institutions of the city have a sewage treatment plant through which all their effluents are subjected before draining into the main sewerage line.

The Environmental Training Institute (ETI), the training wing of the TNPCB, included hospital waste management as an area of training in the ETI syllabus in 1995 - even before the rules came into existence. A three-day training module for Hospital Waste Management covering various aspects of the subject is conducted four times in a year.

The Corporation of Chennai has also taken up the issue with its hospitals and healthcare centres which contribute 1000 beds in the city. Some months ago, the Corporation issued a tender inviting private entrepreneurs

to carry waste from all its health-care institutions to a centralised treatment and disposal facility for which land had been demarcated. This is potentially a very positive step towards effective waste management in the city, as this facility could be used by other institutions also. But the unit with hydroclave incinerator and a mobile microwave is still to be set up.

The CMDA under the UNCHS-sponsored Sustainable Chennai Programme, had proposed a lead demonstration project in co-operation with the Chennai Corporation. This project was to impart training to all the healthcare institutions in an area, initiate segregation within the institutions and then, carry the waste to the final treatment and disposal site. The proposal is still pending with the Corporation due to lack of funds.

The medical fraternity of the city has begun to pay greater attention to waste management, with the rules coming into effect soon. Some of them have initiated training for all staff members and segregation of waste at points of generation. One or two have installed incinerators and autoclaves. But much work remains to be done for better hospital waste management in the city. A cohesive strategy needs to be worked out between healthcare institutions, the government and volunteers and NGOs working towards this end - (Courtesy: CAG Reports).

Megha K Rathi

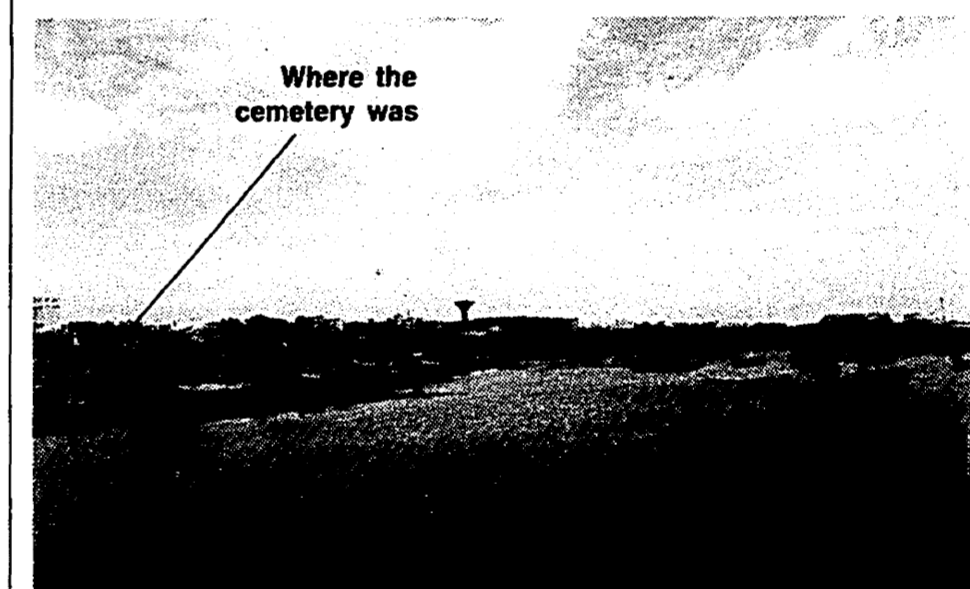
## THE SLAUGHTER OF PULICAT'S FISH

(Continued from page 1)

water above gets polluted. But if they had died in the slush, they would not have floated up like fish. No one can assess as to how much of microscopic life, like plankton, would have also been killed.

If it was the slurry that caused such mass mortality, it could not be thermal (heat pollution but chemical pollution, from oxides of sulphur. The low-grade coal normally used in thermal power plants has a high sulphur content and when burnt, results in sulphur oxides and, eventually, sulphuric acid. Local fishermen complain that their silver anklets turn black after they have walked in such water. They have even felt slight stinging sensation. Samples of water and sediments have, therefore, been sent for chemical analysis.

The possible long-term ef-



## THE OLD... & THE NEW

Our OLD this fortnight is a rare picture of a bit of Madras history that your Editor had been looking for from the 70s and received details about only a couple of years ago, with the confirmatory picture featured here (far left) turning up only a couple of weeks ago, courtesy of Isaac Joshua. It is a picture of the first Jewish Cemetery in the City, established in Mint Street in the 18th Century when several Sephardic Jews lived in Coral Merchant Street and traded in diamonds and coral. During World War II, two Jewish soldiers who died in Madras were also buried here, side by side with some of the early Jewish merchants. The OLD had been renovated by a Kelly Raeburn (Sudka) during his visit to Madras in 1903. He had got Municipal permission to do so and this was recorded above the entrance, as may be seen in the photograph.

When the OLD fell into disuse after World War II, it became a grazing ground and refuse dump. But when the Municipality wanted to take it over for residential construction, the few remaining Jews in Madras objected. They agreed, however, for it to be converted into a park where the tombstones would be tended. But what happens to all Madras parks befall this one too and the Corporation was, finally, given the land in 1953 to be used for building a school (top right), which was opened in September 1954.

The tombstones in the Cemetery were moved to Kasimedu in 1953 and the city's second Jewish Cemetery developed across the road from the main cemetery and overlooking the fishing harbour. When the move began, the two soldiers were moved to the War Graves Cemetery in St Thomas Mount, where 11 other Jewish soldiers were buried, the Star of David marking their graves. The site today is to be seen on the left in the picture on left. When this site was threatened by erosion in the Eighties, the cemetery was moved to a corner of the General Cemetery in Lloyd's Road, our NEW, middle left, and there it is now tended by the Joshua family. (Pictures of the NEW and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

fects of such slurry-laden effluents from the thermal power plant could result in the rapid siltation of the Buckingham Canal, north of the NCTPS, and in the southern region of the Pulicat Lake. This would, in turn, result in loss of depth, preventing navigation and even loss of fisheries. It is very likely that the prawn fisheries in Pulicat Lake during the ensuing monsoon will be a total failure, since all the prawn-seeds have very likely been killed by this repeated pollution of the nursery grounds.

**Human dimension:** The human side of this calamity has been that fisherfolk from nearly 29 fishing villages in the southern region of the Pulicat Lake have been affected. As a protest, nearly 2,000 fishermen laid the entire 100m width of the Buckingham Canal, just north of the NCTPS. This 3m high barrier prevented the flow of the polluted water from the NCTPS into the Buckingham Canal and ultimately into the southern Pulicat Lake. This was followed with a total hartal in Pulicat Town for three or four days. From August 5th, till the time of writing, August 19th, no fishermen went out fishing either in the sea or in the lake. The seafood export business in Pulicat town has come to a standstill.

It will take a long time for the Pulicat Lake ecosystem to be restored to normalcy. If the slurry settles at the bottom of the lake, without being flushed out by a flood into the sea, the original or natural biodiversity at the bottom is unlikely to be restored soon. This will affect the fisheries and the livelihood of nearly one lakh fisherfolk, dalits and tribals, who have been depending on fishing in this lake.

A barrier across the Buckingham Canal would, on the other hand, spread the effluents from the NCTPS onto the adjacent wastelands, salt-pans and even inundate the villages in the area, polluting groundwater, land, grass vegetation, and above all, human health.

Any coastal industry is designed to discharge its fully-treated effluents far out at sea, certainly not in restricted inland waters. But this has not been the case with the NCTPS. The short-term and long-term impacts of such effluents on the surrounding environment and the people should therefore be considered as an utmost priority. That priority should be to immediately start work in dredging the Pulicat Lake and restoring life back in it.

# The VIPs who passed by

(Continued from page 3)

with the support of the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party and the Vanniar Tamil Sangham. The clout of the Vanniars in Tamil Nadu politics was manifested even during the 1952 general elections. This was probably the first coalition government formed after Independence.)

Rajaji used to travel in his Fiat car from Bazullah Road, T Nagar, to the Secretariat and back on Edward Elliot's Road. After him it was Kamaraj who used to travel in his MDT 2727 from his residence on Thirumalai Pillai Road, also in T.Nagar, to and from Fort St. George. The road missed the next Chief Minister, Bhaktavatsalam, who lived on Luz Church Road.

After a span of some years, the road again became the route of the next Chief Minister, Annadurai, who lived on Avenue Road, Nungambakkam. The crowds lining either pavements to watch Annadurai began to grow. Annadurai was a great crowd-puller because of his eloquence. Before the elections that brought him to the seat of power (he was an M.P.), a mammoth election meeting — the like of which has not been seen since — was held on the Edward Elliot's Road Beach. On the platform appeared, along with the D.M.K. luminaries, Rajaji, then heading the Swatantra Party. Rajaji asked the Brahmins of Mylapore and Triplicane to cast aside their inhibitions and vote for the D.M.K., at this meeting. It was

widely perceived at that time that he was settling scores with Kamaraj who had sent him to Coventry.

Some years later, Kamaraj and Rajaji joined on the platform at the same Edward Elliot's Road Beach to ask the people to throw out the Congress of Indira Gandhi. Another early occasion when there was no space to drop a pin was a solemn one, when a British Governor, Sir Archibald Nye, walked the sands in stockinged feet with the casket containing the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi to be cast into sea. Edward Elliot's Road was also a sea of humanity when thousands followed Annadurai's mortal remains.

Annadurai's successor Kalaignar in all his three stints at the helm cruised and still cruises down E.E. Road to and from the 'Kottai'. MGR, until he moved to Ramavaram, was another celebrity Chief Minister who used to regularly travel to work using this road. His wife Janaki did not do so as she lived in Ramavaram. Jayalalitha was also a patron of the road in more senses than one. Her journeys to and from work were characterised by motorcades and stoppages of traffic. Even essential repairs to the public utilities on the road had to be carried out in the night when she was in power.

This then is the history of Edward Elliot's Road by a street-patriot. Similar histories could also be written about Luz Church Road, Mowbrays Road

(TTK Road), and the four Mada streets around the Kapaliswara temple in Mylapore. Elsewhere in the City, Poonamallee High Road (the Harley Street of Madras) and Harrington-Spur Tank Roads and Lloyd's Road also can provide enough matter for articles. I look forward to seeing them in *Madras Musings*.

(Concluded)

Raghu K. Tagat

## With so many quizzes-for-prizes today, here are a few hints on... How to become a good quizzier

**Instant solution:** In this information age, where there seems to be an instant solution for every problem, there is no such thing as an instant formula to become a good quizzier. Diligence and hard work stand a quizzier in good stead as he or she grows up. Let's have a look at the traits and qualities required to be a good quizzier.

**Voracious reading:** This trait is the most important feature of a good quizzier. You should read just about everything under the sun, be a zealot and interested in all types of subjects. Though it is difficult to read and assimilate everything, it is quite worthwhile to read the fundamental aspects of any discipline. The hunger to read has to be nurtured and developed meticulously (even if it means taking out a piece of paper from the dustbin and reading it as if it has appealed to you).

**Good memory retention:** This again is an important feature. You may read a lot but the resultant knowledge will be of no use if it is not recalled at the right moment. In any quiz, you have to recall information very fast and, with fellow quizzers breathing down your neck, there is very little margin for error. People with elephantine memories get a wonderful opportunity to make use of their natural talent. But this should not discourage those not so gifted as there are many methods of having that skill.

**Intelligent guessing:** Smart and intelligent guesswork is sometimes more effective than just memory recall. There have been many instances where intelligent guesswork has won the day for a team. Those who feel that they have not been endowed with a good memory can take this route to success. Here however the risk factor is more.

Every prospective quizzier should remember those great lines by Alexander Pope:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing, Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring..."

Man's thirst for knowledge has made him perform many arduous tasks, but those who have performed those tasks have also derived immense pleasure in the process. This great mindsport which has caught the imagination of generations of followers is here to stay and is all set to enchant, influence and attract those who have not yet become addicted to it. I conclude by quoting from Richard Bach's novel *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*:

"Heaven is not a place... Heaven is not a time..."

Heaven is pursuit of knowledge and trying to be perfect...

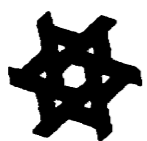
The race to learn has just begun — (Courtesy: *Matrix*).

— Yashwant Saran

## Answers to Quiz

- Bangaru Laxman; 2. Ali Sardar Jafri; 3. Hizbul Mujahideen; 4. Brazil and Barcelona's Rinaldo; 5. Britain's Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth; 6. Largest Route Relay Interlocking System; 7. Lala Amarnath, who passed away recently; 8. Friendship and Sisters Day respectively; 9. Introductory Information Technology;
- Sundararajan Kidambi; 11. At the Music Academy and Eldam's Road-TTK Road junctions; 12. The Jeypore princesses.
- \* \* \*
13. Nanjil K. Manoharan; 14. Valerie Ann Bothamley; 15. Jeeva Transport Corporation case; 16. Sankarankoil; 17. Irattamalai R. Srinivasan; 18. Madurai; 19. To worship Saniswaran on the occasion of Sani Peyarchi; 20. Tamil National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT).

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