

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

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Plans for a Knowledge Society

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee recently gave a call to shape India as a super Knowledge Power. To answer this call, a high-level task force was formed, with the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, K.C. Pant, as Chairman and a Member of the Commission, Dr. K. Venkatasubramanian as Member-Convener. The former Director of Public Instruction, Tamil Nadu, and Vice-Chancellor, Central University, Pondicherry, prepared an approach paper to making India a Knowledge Super Power. We publish today extracts from this paper on a subject of vital interest to Tamil Nadu.

- and Enterprise-wide Management, and
- Economic and business strategic resources built on capabilities and opportunities.

Some principal features of the knowledge society:

- Knowledge and information being major sources of creating value
- Rapid changes in technology
- Greater investment in research and development
- Greater use of information and communications technology
- Growth of knowledge-intensive business
- Increased networking and working together
- Rising skill requirements

In the emerging society, as much as, if not more than land, labour and capital, knowledge is the key to creating wealth and improving the quality of life.

The nation is on the brink of a period of profound change in our society. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a time-bound project focussing on exploiting knowledge for our future prosperity and well being, and our development as a knowledge society.

The project should provide a framework for thinking about

(Continued on Page 6)



How was permission given for demolition?

A small school founded in 1849 by the Rev. G.F. Grammar moved to a site on Purasawalkam High Road in 1894, when its numbers and classes increased. In 1898, the school was named the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Fabricius School. The Fabricius it took its name from was the Rev. John Phillip Fabricius who translated The Bible into Tamil (the 'Golden Version'), had it, as well as a Tamil hymnal he composed, published by the SPCK Press, and solemnised the marriage of Robert Clive and Mary Maskelyne in St. Mary's in the Fort in the mid-18th Century. The building which the school moved to in 1898 is the building that was being pulled down last fortnight. At a recent meeting of the CMDA's Heritage Committee, the Municipal Corporation's representative undertook to get the Corporation NOT to authorise any more demolitions without referring what seemed like heritage buildings to the CMDA's Heritage Committee. The destruction of the Fabricius building was not brought to the attention of the Committee, Madras Musings learns. Then who authorised destruction of a building that would be in anyone's Heritage List if only there were Heritage Regulations in place? In Madras Musings' view this destruction is all the worse because an educational institution — which should be committed to preserving heritage buildings — is a party to it. Meanwhile, another building, not quite as old, but of some heritage significance, has been pulled down in recent weeks at the Cenotaph Road-Mount Road Junction. Who gave the permission for this? Madras Musings wonders how many more heritage buildings will fall victim to wreckers granted permission by this Authority. (Photograph by RAJIND N. CHRISTY.)

Bharat Building still in search of a saviour

The Bharat Insurance Building remains a threatened building. Its owner, the Life Insurance Corporation, wants its tenants to quit as the building is "unsafe". The members of the Bharat Building Tenants Welfare Association don't talk of vacating the building, but instead want answers to several questions.

The Association wonders why, before putting up the

(By A Staff Reporter) warning that the building is unsafe, LIC had all the tenants renew their tenancy lease for three years. They had at the time of renewal not written or mentioned that the building had been declared unsafe. Some months later notices were sent to all the tenants to vacate the premises.

The Association claims that though it is LIC's responsibility to maintain the inside of the building, each of the tenants has spent amounts from Rs.10,000 to Rs.3 lakh to maintain their portion of the building "without LIC reimbursing the same".

The Association states the building has not been maintained in the past 15 to 20 years, though periodical increases in rent have been made.

Claiming pressure is being put on its members to vacate the premises, the Association

charges that drainage is no longer maintained, security for the building not provided, night lamps not switched on, sweeping and cleaning ignored and tenants' cars not allowed to be parked, although they are paying rent to do so. In fact, rent at the last settlement was raised from 30% to 300%, the Association states.

Editor's Note: Without going into the charges of both sides, Madras Musings suggests that they sit down with the Chennai Heritage Committee and discuss how they can TOGETHER save this heritage building. To do that, the LIC must be willing to spend on restoring the building and the tenants need to make a reasonable contribution towards that expenditure and accept the position that they will have to pay higher rent thereafter. If that position is not accepted, Madras Musings has no other advice to offer.

Will 1912 bring power back faster?

If the power fails and you are unable to contact the Fuse Off Call Centres or sub-stations, because their telephones are always 'engaged', don't despair. Dial 1912, which has 24 lines with a hunting facility.

A new centralised Fuse Off Call (FOC) management system, based on an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to record complaints, was re-

cently inaugurated in Nandanam.

When you dial 1912, your call will be routed through the IVRS and you can register your complaint and dial your EB account number. The complaint will be registered and complaint number given.

Working with the account number, the IVRS will pick up the consumer's address from the

database and the complaint will then be transferred to the local fuse off centre. Simultaneously, the IVRS will transfer the message to a FOC vehicle in the vicinity which will have electricians with paggers.

The system provides for a feedback report to be sent. A consumer can call again after 30 minutes to check the status of the complaint.

Development sans infrastructure: Gridlock ahead

A recent item in *Madras Musings* (July 16th) about the Railways' plans to build a ten-storey building abutting Central Station's rear, in the southwest corner, had its echo at a meeting of the CMDA's Heritage Committee, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands. INTACH Tamil Nadu, MMM is told, mentioned that the plan for Central was not an isolated one; that the Railway Ministry was planning on developing the air space over several stations in the country, most of them heritage buildings. The INTACH spokesman, MMM learns, stated that while he expected INTACH headquarters to take up the overall issue with the Railway Ministry and the Central Government, INTACH Tamil Nadu's immediate concern was what was planned for Central Station.

INTACH's spokesman wanted the Committee to take up the issue with the Railways, pointing out that the concern was not with the design — which certainly made an effort to be heritage-friendly — but with the consequences of letting out the space for commercial use. Such a use will increase the traffic many fold in an already congested area and with the neighbouring Poonamallee High Road one of the major arterial roads and Wall Tax Road a major lorry thoroughfare, gridlock was likely before long if the project went through. The Heritage Committee did not show the greatest enthusiasm for taking on the Railways. MMM wonders whether the Police will show greater concern about these plans; after all, they are likely to be one of those most affected by the fallout.

A rather similar problem MMM recently heard about — and hopes is not true — is the fate that awaits the Congress Grounds in Teynampet if negotiations for its sale now underway are successful. The plans that MMM has heard spoken of are the construction of 14 blocks of commercial-cum-residential highrise (ten stories each, is mentioned) and the City's first multistorey carpark to serve them. The multistorey car park might be of some help for those using the complex, but imagine what's going to happen to traffic on GNC Road and Anna Salai, just before the flyovers. It's time the Police protested over sanctions to such major projects and it's time sanctions for them are considered not on some theoretical norms but on the basis of discussions with all the stakeholders concerned (like the Police, Metrowater, garbage cleansers etc.) followed by public hearings. If such a procedure is not implemented, woe is all that there is ahead of this city, certainly not 'Singara Chennai', MMM is convinced.

Can the city planners and its plan-sanctioning authorities begin to look at plans more realistically, will they adopt a more transparent attitude by holding discussions with all departments concerned as well as by holding public hearings? It is only by such means that we will be able to save this city from collapse.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Painting the Varsity

With the National Academic Accreditation Council team due, the University of Madras went to town and painted itself red. In the process ruining its buildings, not having bothered to find out how old buildings, or even newer buildings built with different techniques, should be painted. Of course, little was done to improve *Senate House*, once the pride of the University, today its shame.

New hostels were ready for showing off, the hostel kitchen got itself updated, the telephone exchange got a more complicated modern facility, toilets were spruced up and even the railings in the grounds got a lick of paint that'll soon disappear. *The Man From Madras Musings* sincerely hopes the cosmetic touches impressed the visiting team and that it went back convinced that any institution able to pay so much attention to cosmetics must also be capable of paying equal if not greater attention to academics.

Shopping stop

If as those running Shoppers' Stop hope, the city's newest de-

partment store becomes its most successful one, how are those most likely to patronise it to manage for parking space? *The Man From Madras Musings* can't help wondering about this after seeing the crowds that turned up in the first couple of weeks and made quiet, peaceful Harrington Road bedlam.

MMM is told that the premises has parking for 100 cars, but with the five storeys above the shop occupied by an IT company, the parking lot gets filled with the cars of its employees. After all, in the IT world today, cars are more important than computers for the employees of such companies, MMM has begun to believe. Losing out to the IT world's vehicles, what does a shopping stop do?

Well, there's ground behind this plot that could be developed as a car park, but the owner of the entire property is determined to put up that hotel he promised Madras a long time ago — (MM, August 16th) — and that will only add to the chaos that is developing at the Harrington Road junction with parked vehicles increasingly taking up roadspace.

MMM wonders whether the inspection team was as obliging as all that or whether it sought answers to staff strength, facilities available and syllabus. MMM is no longer as closely in touch with the ancient university as he used to be, but he does keep occasional touch. And he finds that a department he once knew well is now minus three of his old friends, but no replacements have been recruited. Working at 50 per cent strength, what can this department really achieve? In another department MMM used to know, computer equipment by the dozen was necessary several years ago to meet the advanced requirements of any up-to-date course the Department taught. The reality is that the Department is still awaiting addition to its lone computer. Other departments which should be working in close coordination with each other, even ensure that their students avoid possible contamination by yet other departments.

In such a scenario, the NAAC team would have had its work cut out for it, if it really went examining what crawled in the wood-

— To be successful in much of IT, you need sound basic expertise in some other field. How many really have it?

— IT requires good communication skills. How many have it, particularly with English language skills being eroded by the day?

— What has happened to the Humanities? Once the IITs took pride in the level at which they taught the Humanities. Now they're paying little attention to this area of academia and other engineering institutions are paying less. Do these institutions believe the Humanities are no longer necessary to make the world go round?

Sadly, that seems the prevailing view among today's students hired by IT companies desperately short of manpower. MMM recently heard a story that is of some relevance in the context of the points mentioned above.

An IT major had arranged for English Improvement Classes for its new recruits. When the HRD manager found the students paying decreasing attention after the

English number plates were first used. *The Man From Madras Musings* has seen several buses with both sets of plates — and he has no quarrel with that.

But there are a few issues that need further clarifications — and ACTION.

— Can ONLY Tamil number plates be used?

— Can Tamil numbers instead of Arabic numbers be used in number plates?

— Can Tamil alphabets and numbers — as well as English ones — on number plates be so artistically stylised when used that they are unreadable?

MMM has seen examples of all three cases on Chennai roads. They seem to be moving about with total immunity, policemen waving them on without paying the least attention to them. Is MMM, then, to take it that such number plates, or their use in the manner in which they are used, are permitted? If they are not permitted, will action be forthcoming?

A way to help

When The Banyan recently marked its seventh anniversary, founders Vandana and Vaishnavi sent out an invitation with a drawing of a bee on it and the words "According to the Law of Aerodynamics, the bumble bee cannot fly". But it does. And so does The Banyan, which seven years ago was dismissed as "a flight of fancy", it was pointed out.

The sheltering canopy of The Banyan has provided a home for over 300 mentally ill destitute women and enabled 200 to return to their homes after rehabilitation. It is the faith and dedication of two young women — whom many would describe as belonging to a world where there was no want — that has made this possible.

But what struck *The Man From Madras Musings* at the anniversary function was not all the richly-deserved tributes paid to the founders, but the advice of Sudha Murty, Chairman, Infosys Foundation, the Infosys wing that contributes millions to charity in the South, in particular.

In her keynote address, Murty pointed out that if every Indian gave Rs.10 and offered two hours for a social cause (presumably every year), there would be no need for NGOs. MMM certainly sees merit in the thought, but how do we implement it?

Till about twenty years ago, he was a regular and indefatigable library bird. Though his health does not permit him to visit libraries now, his appetite for books has not abated. A visit to S.R. is bound to be fruitful in terms of animated conversation on a variety of topics in English spoken as 'one to the manner born'. His vision may be partially impaired, but age has not withered him, he retains an alert razorsharp mind and phenomenal memory and articulates his views with conviction, emphasis, clarity, punch, and fiery indignation.

As a critic of books, men and matters, S.R. is forthright and does not mince words. He can be as sharply humorous with his tongue as with his pen. Presiding over a meeting, he once said in his concluding remarks, "After listening to

MMM



The Elphinstone Bridge across the Adyar has attracted the attention of the CMDA's Heritage Committee which would like someone to sponsor a proposal to make the old bridge a walking mall and birdwatching site, following a plan drawn up by the INTACH Tamil Nadu Chapter. What has been responsible for the plan not being implemented over the last couple of years are the hoardings at both ends of the bridge. But now there are fresh problems. Construction workers have built huts on the bridge and live in them (picture on left). And at the entrance to the bridge, the Corporation has built 'shops' for a market and put up a wall effectively blocking the entrance to the bridge (picture on right). By permitting all this activity and not following up on the INTACH plan, it would obviously seem that the Corporation does not consider restoration of this bridge as part of any 'Singara Chennai' plan. Or does it? (Photographs by RAJIND N. CHRISTY.)

Bridge encroachment

Beyond the wall erected to enclose the new flower-fruit market ('The bridge to nowhere', MM, July 1st) are rows of sheds, built with iron sheets, occupying quite some area on the Elphinstone Bridge. These came up when work on the flyover began and were meant, it was said, to house those employed on the project. This work is over, but the sheds and the occupants remain, and people can

be seen bathing in the open space between the wall and the sheds. Perhaps these will become permanent eyesores on the bridge. Similar structures have come up on the river bed also, some distance to the west of the bridge.

K. Narayanan
3/1, Seventh Cross Street
Karpagam Gardens
Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

Instrumentalists:

Gottu Vadyam (now Chitra-veena): Budalur Krishnamurthy Sastrigal, Mannargudi Savithri Ammal, Narayana Iyengar.

Veena: Chitti Babu, E. Gayathri

Nadaswaram: Karukurichi Arunachalam

Ghatam: Vilvadari Iyer, Alangudi Ramachandran

Mridangam: Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman

Professor P.Sambamoorthy had made extensive research in the field and had brought out several books and had also started a *Sangeetha Vidyalaya* in the premises of the Raja Annamalai Hall at G.T. His scholarly works cannot be brushed aside as insignificant. His name should have found its rightful place in the articles.

their formation. All Indian languages have letters which represent a compound sound individually; hence they need all kinds of appendages. This is practical; adopting English as our national language is not, for it will not gather support since emotion rather than mere practicality governs our language choice.

N. Dharmeswaran
Plot 21, Kumaran Nagar
Guduvancherry 602 202.

Missing 'T'...

The letter in MM, September 1st, titled 'Of serials' was from T.M. Sundararaman of Chennai 600 004 and NOT from M. Sethuraman of Chennai 600 088.

* * *

...& wrong names

The photograph that appeared with the article 'The Madras Mathsman' (MM, Aug. 16th) was not of Ramanujan's house but of the house of the Mathsman P.K. Srinivasan. Also, the Mathsman taught not in Ramanaickenpalayam, but in Lakshminakkenpalayam.

P.K. Srinivasan further advises us that, 'Y2K WMY was a three-day Mathematics Book Fair'. It should really read 'A three-day Mathematics Book Fair marking Y2K WMY etc.', since Y2K WMY means Year 2000 World Mathematics Year.

Note to Editor: We regret the errors. Our apologies to readers T.M. Sundararaman and P.K. Srinivasan.

OUR READERS WRITE



EE's nonagenarian

Off Edward Elliot's Road, on Chandra Bagh Avenue, lives a nonagenarian. Bearded, bare-bodied, orthodox to a fault, Prof. S. Ramaswami — S.R. for short — is a familiar figure in academic circles.

He was part of the intellectual coterie of those days — the Mylapore circle — which included stalwarts like P.S. Sivaswami Iyer, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, T.R. Venkatarama Sastri, Prof. K. Swaminathan, D.S. Sarma and others. Besides an Honours Degree in English, S.R. qualified for the then combined M.A. Degree in Economics, History and Politics in 1935. After a brief stint of service in private colleges, he entered the Madras Educational Subordinate Service, as it was then called, as Assistant Professor of English. After a spell of teaching in Andhra Pradesh in the composite Madras State, he joined Presidency College, Madras, in 1944, where he taught till 1950. After a break, he returned in 1954 to his alma mater where he worked first as Additional Professor and then as Professor of English. Six years prior to his retirement in 1969, he was elevated to the post of Chief Professor of English on the strength of his academic standing and scholarship. By the same token, he was recognised as a Ph.D. guide though he himself was not a Ph.D. He was the only person to be appointed Chief Professor without being called for a formal interview before the Service Commission.

Till about twenty years ago, he was a regular and indefatigable library bird. Though his health does not permit him to visit libraries now, his appetite for books has not abated. A visit to S.R. is bound to be fruitful in terms of animated conversation on a variety of topics in English spoken as 'one to the manner born'. His vision may be partially impaired, but age has not withered him, he retains an alert razorsharp mind and phenomenal memory and articulates his views with conviction, emphasis, clarity, punch, and fiery indignation.

As a critic of books, men and matters, S.R. is forthright and does not mince words. He can be as sharply humorous with his tongue as with his pen. Presiding over a meeting, he once said in his concluding remarks, "After listening to

the speakers, I am convinced that we should start another SPCA — Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Audiencies." Reviewing a book, he wrote, "The book under review is more voluminous than luminous!"

S. Jagadisan
13/48A, Tarachand Nagar
Virugambakkam
Chennai 600 092.

The child specialist

On Edward Elliot's Road, there lived in the 1950s in a red-coloured house (opposite the TNEB and adjacent to the late Justice P.N. Ramaswamy's house near the A.V.M. Rajeswari Kalyana Mandapam), Dr. S.T. Achar. He was the first paediatric physician of the Government General Hospital. He had his training in U.S.A. under a very eminent paediatrician, Prof. Nelson. He wrote a book on paediatrics that is still a 'Bible' to child specialists all over the world.

Traffic pollution

This is with reference to the piece on "Traffic Pollution — Chennai can take a leaf out of Mumbai book". (MM, June 16th).

I read somewhere that complaints against autos can be made to ACP Traffic Investigation (North) — Nodal Officer, Office of JCP Traffic, Vepery, Chennai 7 and copy to the Citizens Consumer & Civic Action Group (CAG), 7, 4th Street, Venkateswara Nagar, Chennai 70.

In 1951, when I was an 8-year-old, I fell seriously ill and was taken to Dr. Achar's residence. He examined and directed me for a lab exam at Ehrlich Lab at Balaji Nagar. I was later admitted in the Children's Ward at GGH. He took a class for medical students/doctors standing around me and analysed my illness as due to Intestinal Tuberculosis. He prescribed streptomycin injection and *Isnex granules*; just introduced in India and available only at Appa & Co. opposite the Madras High Court.

S.G. Mahmood
19, Ganapathy Street
Royapettah
Chennai 600 014.

More information

In the write-up about 100 Mount Road, (MM, August 1st), there are certain gaps in information. This building, which was earlier the seat of *The Hindu*, was a prominent landmark until the daily shifted to its new location in 1939. It was then used as an auxiliary to the main office. When *The Indian Express* (a bitter rival of *The Hindu*) office at Mooker Nallamuthu Street in George Town was gutted by fire in 1940, *The Hindu* graciously accommodated *The Indian Express* in this building. After it was vacated by *The Indian Express*, the premises were occupied by *Ananda Vikatan*. When that Tamil weekly moved elsewhere, it was rented to the Telegraph Department and it became the seat of DE/T / Madras.

From its position as the jewel on the face of Mount Road, it became the sloppiest of buildings, collecting grime and dust, characteristic of a Government building. After the Telegraph Department vacated it, it was more or less in disuse until it was pulled down in 1996.

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

C.G. Prasad
Naga Vilas, 9, Conjeevaram
Sabapathy Mudali Street
Kondithope, Chennai 600 079.

The music makers

As pointed out by Meena Venkateswaran (MM, July 16th), it is not only the name of Harikesanallur Sri Muthiah Bhagavathar that is omitted. Of course, in an article of this size, it is not possible to mention all the doyens of the Carnatic music. I cannot help feeling that the following should have been included for they enriched the Carnatic music: Vocalists:

Madurai Mani Iyer, Madurai Somasundaram, T.V. Sankaranarayanan, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and his illustrious son Santhanam, D.K. Jayaraman, Alathur Brothers.

Use Roman script

Reference reader Reddy's letter (MM June 1st) adopting roman script for all Indian languages will mean enormous savings — one typewriter keyboard will suffice — and convenience in that anyone who can understand any language, but cannot read its letters, can follow the contents; there are many more benefits too.

Incidentally, roman script represents elemental sounds in a minimum number of letters. It is simple in form, needing no appendages in

Bridging the digital divide

Will India one day see the rise of a new caste system based on the information haves and have-nots? "We have to work towards reducing the digital divide," warns Madhavan Nambiar, IAS, Transport Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Nambiar recently returned from a six-month fellowship at the Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University. He chose to do a course on Information Technology and Development. Having worked as Chairman and Managing Director, ELCOT, Nambiar was involved in several state government initiatives on information technology (IT). This spurred him to explore ways in which IT could be effectively used in developing countries.

A realist, Nambiar emphasises that it will not be easy to take IT tools like the Internet into the villages. Listing the hurdles he says, "Inadequate bandwidth, telephony and lack of education." He also points to the need to create Internet content in local languages. "You are inhibiting the power of the Net, if you confine it to English speakers only."

Nambiar would like to see IT bring about greater transparency in government departments. "If all information was available online, it would make administration, planning and monitoring projects that much easier. All government forms should be downloadable."

In a country with a population of one billion, there are a little under a million Internet users. "That leaves so many people out of the loop," says Nambiar. "There are so many groups like women's organisations and non-governmental organisations that can benefit from websites and access to global information. "As people of conscience", he says spiritedly, "we have to see that they are not left out." — (Courtesy: The Newsletter of the British Council.)

Want to muse with MUSINGS?

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

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A mile high for twinship

Chennai (Madras) became the seventh sister city of the mile high city of Denver in 1984. Denver which had joined the twinning programme in 1948 and has relationships with nine cities, hosted for the second time the sister cities' annual international convention and drew more than 1500 people from 137 countries.

Indians now are travelling more and more, but are also facing unwelcome surprises. I was shocked in Chicago when United Airlines informed me there was no seat available, in spite of my having booked three months ahead and had it confirmed two days before. A young Indian in charge of customer services somehow helped me to get a seat. And United Airlines was supposed to be the convention airlines, giving preference to those travelling to the convention within the United States; even the 5% discount was not given!

Denver's airport takes your breath away; it is the airport of tomorrow. Teresa Antony and Bill were there to greet me. I was so tired I could hardly walk and Teresa immediately summoned a wheelchair. It was my first introduction to the wheelchair culture in the United States. There was a slight drizzle and the weather suddenly became very chilly.

On the eve of the convention, Mrs. Genevieve N. Fiore and Antony Parimanath were honoured; they had both played a vital role in linking Chennai with Denver. After their responses, a group of young people called the 'Young Music Ambassadors', comprising six school children from Chennai, appropriately dressed, sang a Tamil song. They were scheduled to represent India at an international music cultural exchange programme in Colorado, called 'Songs Across the Seas' which was started in 1995.

The highlight of the opening ceremony the next day was a parade of nations, featuring the countries of the nine sister cities of Denver. There was a mistake with the Indian national flag, but fortunately Don Curtis, who had been an American Peace Corps volunteer in India during the Sixties, spotted it, rushed to the nearby museum and brought the right flag. I proudly carried it leading our small Indian delegation of five. The Japanese had over 250! The temperature in the Civic Centre Park was over 100°F. How I wished for an Indian shamiana!

The next day we met Mayor Wellington E. Webb in his office and presented him with a traditional shawl, sandalwood garland and a plaque with the peacock, the national bird of India, embossed on it. The Mayor presented the city of Chennai a flying eagle with a rosewood base and plaque reading, "The Mile High City Hosts Sister Cities International 2000. Denver, Colorado — Chennai, India, Est. 1984. Wellington E. Webb, Mayor." The soaring

by
Dolly Simon

handsome eagle was the handwork of a well-known young Denver sculptor, Tim Joseph. The Mayor also released the first copy of *Legacy of the Dream*, a collection of articles, or, rather, lectures given by eminent personalities at the Indo-American Association, Chennai, over the years. A few of them were the Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Lectures.

After the meeting, we were invited to view the lovely Chennai exhibit built around the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the City and County building next to the Mayor's office.

At an informal reception to the five delegates from Chennai at Mrs. Fiore's home, there was Alfonso Doss, who had exhibited his paintings in Cherry Creek, Denver. We honoured Mrs. Fiore and presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to the Antony Parimanaths, who had befriended and hosted almost every Indian who had visited Denver. I was presented with a plaque which read: "Presented to Dolly Simon in appreciation of your lifelong dedication and outstanding service to foster friendship between India and the U.S.A. Denver-Madras Sister Cities Committee."

Before leaving Denver, I made a quick visit to the Denver Zoo. From 1989, when the



The Flying Eagle presented to the City of Chennai by its sister city, Denver, Colorado, U.S. The author, the Hon. Secretary of the Indo-American Association, Chennai, received the memento when she attended the International Convention of Sister Cities, 2000, held in Denver recently.

Denver Zoo was in the doldrums, the Indo-American Association has been helping in a small way by maintaining Krishna the peacock. We are known as Zoo parents. The zoo is very affluent now, but we are continuing the project since it is India's national bird.

Teresa and I met Ms. Joyce Meskis, the owner of Tattered Cover Books Store and discussed the possibilities of a Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture in collaboration with the Denver Chennai committee, every year. Ms. Meskis is the moving spirit behind this unique institution, for it is not merely a book store, but a house of ideas. This programme is similar to the United States Information Service collaborating with the Indo-American Association, Chennai, on the Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Lecture, every year.

Before concluding this memorable trip, our heartfelt thanks go to Ms. Rosy Griffiths who hosted Dr. Alfonso Doss, Mr. Dan Sundaresan and Mrs. Fran Walloch who hosted Ms. Hope Moses, Mr. David Dinakaran who hosted Pauline and Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Antony Parimanath who hosted me, Ms. Sandra Vinnik, Ms. Rosilla Dilgar, and a host of others like Bill and Mr. Don Curtis. They had all "ferried" us to and fro all the programmes, smiling and cheerful all the way, in spite of the temperature reaching a high of 100°F on the last day, the highest experienced by the Denverites in many years.

It was President Kennedy who had said that the last

moments of the day belong to God. No trip to Denver will be complete without a visit to Mother Caprini's shrine. Many Indians have immigrated to the United States but many are not aware that St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1815 to 1917) is considered "the mother of the immigrants". The Hamids, a wealthy Pakistani family, who entertain many Indians visiting Denver, drove us to Mother Cabrini's shrine, located beyond the foothills of Golden Colorado near Denver — prayers offered there have been answered. Thrice I had gone there in the earlier years and prayed that I visit Denver again, and it has happened. A cool spring of water still flows today after Mother Cabrini found it on the barren hilltop. This water is supposed to have a miraculous cure for many diseases, and many sick people make a pilgrimage and to this day miracles happen.

A Muslim Pakistani guiding us to a Christian Catholic shrine, could there be a finer example of tolerance and understanding? The mile high city has fulfilled its mission of PEACE through people to people.

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.

Nostalgia

Seen no more in the City

In the eternal tangle between antiquity and modernity, old and the new, events and scenes, customs and traditions of other eras fade as new ones emerge. Where have they gone, these sights, of a not so old Madras.

I used to wake up to the sonorous voice of the soothsayer, sounding his *guduguduppai* (a tiny, two-headed drum), and heralding happy days ahead. Gladdened householders would shower him with alms — money, rice, foodstuffs. Dressed in old clothing of variegated colours, wearing a turban with a stylish slant, and sporting a waistcoat and baggy *pyjamas* he was an eye-catcher. Tales abounded about how these soothsayers prayed at remote temples at odd hours and about their visits to crematoria for sessions with midnight's spirits to acquire the power to foretell events! The gullible gulped these down.

by
OCTOGENARIAN

Another frequent visitor was the bedecked cow, horns and hooves painted bright, its body draped with assorted cloths in a riot of colours. She would be led by her master, as colourfully attired as the soothsayer. In the question-answer session between the man and the animal, the latter would nod approval to a series of questions suggestive of good days and auspicious happenings ahead. A percussion drum played by the master sounded BRUM BRUM and hence we had the Brum Brum cow road-show.

The sight of the traditional rickshaw-puller, heaving for breath, bare-bodied, exposed to sun and rain, with his shoddy *dhoti* drawn between his legs and tucked in the rear — the typical *Madras Kilpachi* — was only a little less obnoxious than the *dolis* carried pilgrims in which four men would carry pilgrims, all the way up the Thirumala hills. Mercifully, both are now things of the past.

Lots of tears were shed when tram-cars abruptly ceased to operate in the early Fifties. The strident ring of the rope-operated bell was no longer heard. Gone with them were a few drivers who were the cartoonists' delight. With their faces loudly sporting their caste-

mark, the *namam*, the white paint thickly plastered ear to ear, with the red streak shining in between, this loud Vaishnavite version seemed a forerunner of Kunnakudi's currently famous facial tattoo.

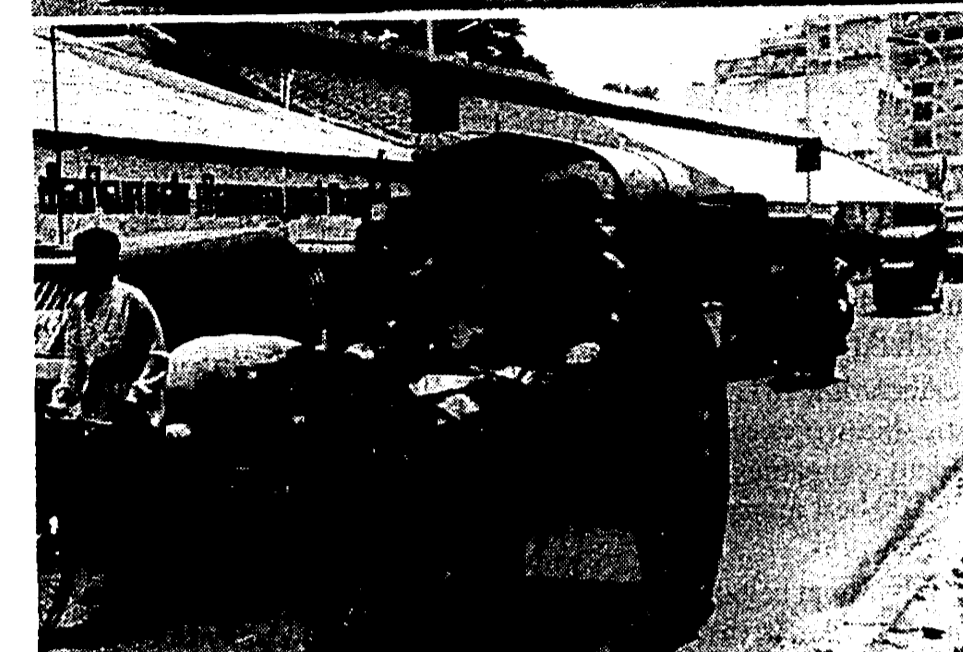
How the middle-aged, unable to take the right leg across the bar, mounted bicycles in those long-ago days, was a clown's comedy. A metal-stud, fitted into the rear wheel hub and protruding some six inches on the left, was the launching pad. The rider would go right behind the rear-wheel, legs on either side, stooping forward to hold the handle-bars a la a Spanish matador holding the bull by its horns. He would then place the left leg on the stud, keep pushing the vehicle, through jerks and hops, for quite a distance, until balance was achieved and then, with another mighty jerk, he would push himself forward and

dressed gypsies, wearing countless beads and with a monkey as companion in beggary used to sell needles, herbs, aphrodisiacs and other oddments, all offered to you in a dialect that was in a pidgin cocktail of many Indian and other languages. Consuming avidly the leftovers on leaves thrown out of marriage houses, they presented a miserable sight. Their transformation to an orderly domestic life, discarding their old habits and sending their children to schools is a social transformation that has hardly been noticed. In the Seventies there used to be an exclusive hostel for the reformed Narikuravas at Saidapet, opposite Panagal buildings, where elegantly dressed girls would delight visitors with their chaste Tamil and Sanskrit and Tamil recitations. Only a stray Narikurava is spotted nowadays hunting birds with his catapult.

When kitchenware was mostly of copper, that needed periodic lead-lining, particularly on the eve of marriages, specialised service-providers were in demand. A hole would be dug in the soil, filled with charcoal pieces and a leather bellow connected to it. This would activate the fire to melt the lead-ingots placed over a crucible. Dexterously the pedlar would apply the hot liquid evenly on the inner surface. These service-providers exited with the arrival of stainless steel utensils and, later, the teflon and corning varieties.

Koodams, passages annexed to kitchens in old-style homes, used to reverberate to the sound and noise of the pounding and grinding of cereals and pulses in the unwieldy granite *ural* (a stone mortar), *olakkai* (a long and stout pestle for pounding), and *yendiram* (rotating grinders), especially on the eve of marriages, festivals and special occasions when *appalams* and other food products were daily home-made as enjoined by tradition and orthodoxy. With these items now readily available at every grocery store, these heavy appliances have become outmoded and otiose.

The popular eateries of the common man were those provided by Palghat Iyers, some of them exclusively for brahmins while others had private rooms for them. The way the servers



T. MURUGAVEL is the Faculty Advisor of Phoenix, the student journal of Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering. A collector of stamps, old picture postcards, coins and other memorabilia, he is also a dedicated environmentalist. It is to him that we owe our OLD today, a late 19th Century photograph of a

THE
OLD...

...& THE
NEW

jakta that was featured in a picture postcard published by Higginbotham's at the time. More than the styling of the jakta, it is the emaciated condition of the horse that is striking in the picture. Certainly the horse which pulls one of the few juktas left in the City, a 1930s-40s version of the vehicle, is in better condition.

Our NEW uses a different kind of horsepower, but the condition of the taxi in RAJIND N. CHRISTY's picture is the exception rather than the rule. In a city where metered taxis are few and far between and don't ply the roads for fares, preferring to stay put in a few locations, this taxi seems in better condition than most; the majority almost make you wish for a jakta, one more bit of Madras that's vanishing.



moderated the sizzling heat of coffee, pouring and repouring it from two tumblers held far apart and the incredible ease with which the upper castes, for whom sipping was taboo, would hold the coffee-filled tumbler almost a yard high and pour it unerringly into an upturned and wide-open mouth was a sight that stunned and amazed foreign onlookers, to whom it seemed that South Indians drank yards of coffee! These Iyer restaurants dominated the scene for decades, yielded ground to the Udipi Brahmins who still continue this lucrative trade.

Sports, too, had its casualties. Ball Badminton, very popular throughout South India, played with a taut, woollen ball in the open, generally in the mornings (as singles, doubles and fives) was the rage of an earlier era. Derided as a pregnant lady's game, it was, in truth, amongst the more tiring

and physically exhausting games. Champions of those days were household names, Thirumeni, Dakshinamurthi of the Thirties and Pichayya in the Forties. The emergence of the shuttle in the Fifties, with its global spread, caused its eclipse.

Sports lovers will shed a tear for the demise of the annual Presidency match at Pongal, when Indians battled the Europeans, and the S.I.A.A. Park Fair which conducted an annual *rekhla* race. A *rekhla* was a tiny open cart with just a bare wooden seat for the rider, and was drawn by a pony. It used to be a spectacular sight to see *rekhlas* competing with their riders urging their animals on with whips. The chariot race in Ben Hur was not far off the mark!

But life is all about change. And as these delights of the past vanish new ones will take their place. But for old-timers these will remain unforgettable.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period August 16 to 31st. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Name the Russian nuclear submarine that was marooned at the bottom of the Barents Sea.
2. The first indoor international cricket match was played on August 16th between Australia and South Africa. Where?
3. According to U.S. based magazine *Industryweek*, which two Indian companies are among the top 100 best managed companies in the world?
4. What item belonging to Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen is to be displayed at the Nobel Museum in Stockholm?
5. Name the high profile BJP leader who quit the Lok Sabha and a party post recently.
6. Name the well-known music director of such films as *Upkaar*, *Don*, *Himalay Ke Gadh Mein* who passed away recently.
7. Which covered role is Daniel Radcliffe to play in a Warner film?
8. Which software personality's foundation has donated 3,00,000 to Rajasthan to combat AIDS?
9. Carl Barks who died on August 25th is credited with giving which lovable Disney character his distinctive personality?

10. In which city temple, dedicated to Shiva, is Indra supposed to have dropped *vibhuti* in the temple's tank?
11. In which city hospital did a portion of the second floor (the TB ward) cave in on August 20th?
12. Which private agency has agreed to run a 15-acre compost yard, to compost a minimum of 65 tonnes, in Pallikaranai?

13. In which railway station was a video camera installed to study the movement of passengers?
14. The Union Minister, P.R. Kumaramangalam, who passed away recently was the sitting M.P. of which constituency?
15. What distinction in field of spreading literacy has Tamil Nadu achieved?
16. To mark the centenary of which educational institution was a commemorative stamp released on August 16th?
17. Which Tamil Nadu player won the Pentamedia Grandmaster chess tournament held at Kelambakkam recently?
18. Who has been chosen to receive this year's Annamalai Chettiar Award?
19. Name the four literary figures from the State whose recitations are to be preserved in the Library of Congress in Washington.
20. Name the waterfall on the Cauvery which is used to generate electricity.

(Answers on Page 7)

Till September 21: An exhibition on Baskets and Mats from Chettinad.

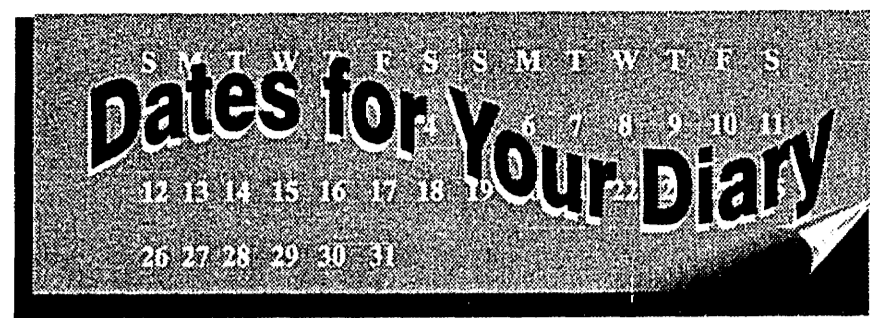
Basketry and mat weaving is one of the very oldest of man's creations done by joining grass with grass and interlacing leaves, with the minimum of tools. In India, bamboo, cane, jute, reed, grasses and palm leaves are used as raw material for Basketry and Mats.

Chettinad baskets have intricate patterns made with the help of coconut and palm leaves. These patterns are as fine as embroidery and are a speciality of Chettinad. (At Manasthala)

September 23: The 40th anniversary of the Max Mueller Bhavan, Chennai, falls at the same time as the inauguration of the German Festival in India. It was on August 20, 1960 that the Institute, formerly the German Library, was formally inaugurated and named after the famous Indologist Max Mueller. Like all its sister institutes in India, it is a branch of the Goethe-Institut. The many documents relating to the 40 years of the Institute's history in the archives at the OPEN HOUSE, on this day.

September 23 and 24: Batik workshop providing basic information on waxing and dyeing techniques (At Dakshin Chitra. For details, tel: 4918943 or 4462435.)

September 27: The Madras English Association will meet at the British Council, Chennai.



between 3-5 p.m. Topic for discussion: 'Contemporary British Fiction'.

September 28 and 29: *Housing the Urban Poor*, a seminar with Dr. Jurgen Oestereich, Ratingen in collaboration with The German Returnees Association, IIT Madras, The Indian Institute of Architects, Tamil Nadu Chapter.

Housing for the poor emerged as a major theme of the MMB's symposium on "Sustainable Urban Development" last year. Nearly 25 lakh people live in the slums of Chennai, a little less than half of them in Government-recognised slums where they can aim for a legal tenureship at a later point in life.

In spite of the presence of such a body as a Slum Clearance Board which is a unique feature in Tamil Nadu, the condition of the slums is pathetic. The seminar entitled, *Housing the Urban Poor* will address the situation from the point of the three actors — the occupant, the planning agency and the governance — in order to identify and establish the links and arrive at pragmatic, cost-effective and user-sensitive solutions. The German expert Dr. Jurgen Oestereich, is

an architect and town planner and will address the topic, 'Self Organisation in Slums and the Role of Agents in Change'. 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. by invitation. (Max Mueller Bhavan)

Till September 30: 'Graphic Expressions Print Show 2000', an exhibition supported by British Council and organised by Cymoroza Art Gallery, Mumbai and The CP Art Centre, Chennai.

This exhibition showcases the breadth and depth of graphic art. The techniques of graphic art are varied and embrace silk screen printing, computer prints and even bio-prints, to mention a few. On display, are exclusive prints by 94 artists. (10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the CP Art Centre)

As art forms go, print-making is one of the youngest in India. The British introduced Indian artists to print-making as late as the 18th Century. But the output in prints has been prodigious. It wasn't until the arrival of the Daniells, an uncle-and-nephew duo, that prints were embraced and Calcutta was an early subject. The Daniells are also credited with inventing the process of aquatint — a print-making tech-

nique of acid-biting areas of tone rather than lines.

The prints of Raja Ravi Verma, who had his own press at Lonavala, used technique for oleographs that was unique.

It was only recently that the art world accepted prints as true art. Intricate intaglio, relief and planographic techniques abound. Print-making is an art form that invites and inspires experimentation and innovation. Exhibition like the 'Graphic Expressions Print Show 2000' emphasise the art world's acceptance of print-making.

September 30: Six Rhodes Scholarships (India 2001) are available for Indian students between 19 and 25 years of age who wish to do a degree programme at the University of Oxford from October 2001. The scholarship, tenable for a maximum of three years, covers return airfare, tuition fee and living costs in the UK. Completed applications should be sent before September 30, 2000 to the Secretary, Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee for India, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), PO Box No. 10504, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi 110 067. Information is also available at the British Council, Chennai.

September 30 to October 9: Dassera Festival at Dakshin-Chitra.

b(H)ooked on!

— *That's what this bookshop hopes that children will get*

On August 15, 2000, the usually quiet neighbourhood of 4th Street, Abhirampuram, witnessed a strange and surreal sight.

An 18th century Indian Emperor, gloriously and regally attired, as befitting one who was once known as the Tiger of Mysore, visited a local bookshop called 'GoodBooks'. He was accompanied by his wife, three sons and a lady-in-waiting.

At the end of his visit, using a neat 'Trick of Time', a 21st century journalist interviewed him. And that was the best part of a thoroughly enjoyable evening even members of The Madras Players enacted two scenes chosen from their very successful play, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, written by Girish Karnad and directed by N.S. Yamuna.

Vasanthi Sankarnarayanan, as the *suradar*, explained the background history of the play to the young ones crowded into the room.

She also played the part of the modern day journalist, interviewing the Emperor Tipu, against Thotaa Tharani's imposing fortress-like backdrop.

And the children loved it.

After all, how many opportunities do you get to explain 'motor-bike' and 'airplane' to a 200-year-old emperor?

Asim Sharma, as Tipu Sultan, carried the day. Not merely did the children receive a real life, albeit brief, history lesson, they also shared Tipu's anguish over the changes in his beloved Mysore and Srirangapatna. "Where are all the trees I planted?", bemoaned Tipu, as he coughed his way through the pollution-ridden haze that marks modern cities. The children were also given an idea as to how a strong ruler dealt with law-breakers in his day... something they appeared to appreciate if the clapping and cheering was anything to go by!

* * *

"The evening just happened," twinkles Radhika Menon of the publishing house, Tulika, of which 'GoodBooks', the bookstore, is the marketing arm.

Bringing together children and books, showing them the worlds that await them if they acquire a reading habit, providing distinctly Indian images to grow up with — all within an activity centre which is creative, thought-provoking and, most important, fun to be part of. This is the vision and modus operandi of Tulika. "There was never any major business plan," says Radhika.

(P. Bhaskaran) poems. It means 'featherquill'."

They edited, designed, and printed for publishers. There was never any shortage of work, but Radhika's dream, of publishing children's books, had to be put on hold.

In the early '90s, with her husband Shashi Menon taking up Asianet, she moved back to Chennai and Tulika continued doing further brochure work and the like.

Radhika, meanwhile, handled a Malayalam teaching programme on Asianet, based on the Sesame Street concept. She found the response overwhelming. Children learnt the language with ease and interest. "It struck us that if we produce good books, they will sell."

With a bank loan taken in '94 and a small office Tulika entered the publishing business at last. Initially, it published around 10-15 books a year. The production of corporate diaries and calendars helped keep the money from running out, grins Radhika.

"I had a real problem every time I tried project-based teaching on anything Indian."



Getting children b(H)ooked on books at the GoodBooks bookshop.

Indian stories were for the most part not very well written or presented, including the books based on mythology. Yet, there was this huge 'pool' of knowledge and talent around, if only it could be tapped.

Around this time, she moved to Delhi with her family. She continued to teach, and handled the library in her children's school. She was "looking at books all the time", and this only increased her awareness of the desperate need for indigenous books for children.

Then, destiny appeared to take a hand when Apple Macintosh began to revolutionise the world of desktop publishing. Radhika and her sister-in-law, Indira Chandrashekar, "got themselves two computers and began work."

Why 'Tulika'? "We took it from a line in one of my father's



A scene from *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, performed at GoodBooks to get children interested in the shop and b(H)ooked on books.

more business sense. But the store had to be a child-friendly place that was a little bit more than just a shop.

When their printer vacated the premises on 4th Street... Radhika and her team thought, "Why not?" And the bookstore was born. On the premise that all books are good, both Indian and foreign books are sold under one roof. But the focus remains Indian. "We want to give our children images of India they will retain for ever... in all its diversity and change."

For those of us whose mindset dictates that an 'Indian story' can only exist within the confines of our epics and myths, it is a rare treat to walk into a bookstore and feast your eyes on titles like *Andamans Boy* and *Aditi* and the one-eyed *Monkey*. Books like *Eyes on the Peacock's Tale* and *Magic Vessels* help make a diverse network of Indian folktales accessible to each child. In fact, Radhika points out that for all the talk on "multi-culturalism" in the West, "We are the ones who are naturally multi-racial and multi-linguaged. That is our strength." Yet there is a strange mindset on the part of parents.

"They are willing to spend money on English (read foreign) books, but expect 'language' books to be cheaper, Radhika points out.

Isn't it strange that children today have to seek outsiders to "tell" them stories? What happened to traditional storytellers...? Like grandmothers, for instance.

"Oh, they are there," laughs Radhika, "but today's child is

also on the look-out for unique and different experiences." They turn up in large numbers whenever any activity is announced. Events help to draw children... and get them interested in learning more through reading.

Those at Tulika believe the reading habit begins at home. There is no rule, they say, that the presence of a computer, TV or the Internet necessarily cuts into a person's reading.

Tulika today has nearly 75 authors on its list. But more are needed. What about the so-called 'famous' authors... the ones who come with their own mediablitz? Are they willing to give Tulika a shot?

"You'd be surprised at the number of writers who are a little nervous about writing for children", laughs Radhika. After all, not everyone can write for children.

GoodBooks is about loving books, making friends with books, allowing books right into a child's life. GoodBooks is for all those youngsters who are unafraid of imagination, dreams and knowledge. Maybe that's why their logo is the common crow - totally Indian, and known for its bright curiosity.

GoodBooks claims that it is a store for children and young people. It is also for those adults who haven't forgotten the days when they too sat in stuffy classrooms and gazed out of windows... thinking, dreaming... imagining.

Ranjitha Ashok

Plans for a Knowledge Society

(Contd. from page 1)

the sort of future India wants, and define the context for the Government's research, science and technology investments to make India a superpower in the new millennium and a super knowledge society. The Government invests substantially in research, science and technology to generate new, innovative, economic, environmental and social capacity. However, it cannot work in isolation, and innovation must be focussed on the needs of end-users — whose lives, environment and enterprises will be affected by new knowledge and technological change. The Government needs confidence that its research, science and technology investments will be rapidly and effectively exploited to make India a knowledge society.

The Government's Science and Technology Departments can think of 'Science Envelope Goals' covering Innovation, Economics, Environment and Social Science, which are all inter-related, to make India a Knowledge Society.

The Innovation Goal is to accelerate knowledge creation and develop human capital, social capital, learning systems and networks in order to enhance India's capacity to innovate. Science and Technology should generate new knowledge, help develop human and

network capacities, and stimulate an entrepreneurial culture. This goal links directly to the Government's aspirations to create an enterprise economy.

The Economic Goal should increase the contribution knowledge makes to the creation and value of new and improved products, processes, systems and services in order to enhance the competitiveness of Indian enterprises. It provides a context for Government investment in key areas consistent with the policy that investment should generate widespread net benefits over time, without displacing or otherwise creating disincentives for investment by others.

The Environmental Goal should increase knowledge of the environment and of the biological, physical, social, economic and cultural factors that affect it in order to establish and maintain a healthy environment that sustains nature and people. This knowledge will underpin sustainable management of India's environments (terrestrial, marine and atmospheric), and minimise hazards and risks to the environment.

The Social Goal aims at an increased knowledge of the social, biological, environmental, cultural, economic and physical determinants of well-being in order to build a society in which we can enjoy health and independence and have a sense of

belonging, identity and partnership. This is perhaps the most important goal, as the knowledge explosion should try to take the poor majority to decent living levels and, ultimately, ensure abolition of poverty.

In order to make India a 'Knowledge Centred Society' a framework for a nationwide network of knowledge management has been developed by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India and a member of the Knowledge Task Force.

He advises that for the development of a knowledge society in India, government should first and foremost, ensure that infrastructure development for knowledge dissemination is given top priority, in order to provide better communication and universal access to information.

The Task Force, for its part, will focus on:

- Communicating public policy issues that relate to the emergence of India's knowledge society.
- Working with disadvantaged groups in their efforts to participate in the knowledge society.
- Developing public awareness programmes.
- Researching issues related to the knowledge society.
- Working with the creators and developers of knowledge management systems in

their efforts to express Indian culture through the information and communications infrastructure.

- Encouraging the development of, and link with, other groups with related interests.
- Creating a national forum for public debate on issues pertaining to a knowledge society.
- Creating an exclusive website on India's knowledge society.

To implement these concepts, the Task Force will draw on the talents of everyone concerned with the knowledge platform, from eminent vice-chancellors, administrators and industrialists to ordinary knowledge workers to deal with global networking, education for development, promotion of a vibrant government-industry-academia interaction in policy-making and implementation, and setting up of an Education Development Finance Corporation for the needy and the deserving.

India was a Knowledge Force in the ancient days. Let us restore Bharat to this status again. Let me quote Dr. Abdul Kalam:

"A developed India by 2020, or even earlier, is not a dream. It need not even be a mere vision in the minds of many Indians. It is a mission we can all take up — and succeed."

With the Gopalan Trophy getting underway later this fortnight in Colombo, here's a feature that remembers many who took part in that series...

My all-time greatest Tamil Nadu XI

— by Partab Ramchand

Senior Editor, Cricinfo

Picking the all-time best or greatest teams is a favourite pastime of cricket lovers. Having been a close observer of the Tamil Nadu cricket scene for about 40 years, here is my all-time greatest Tamil Nadu XI.

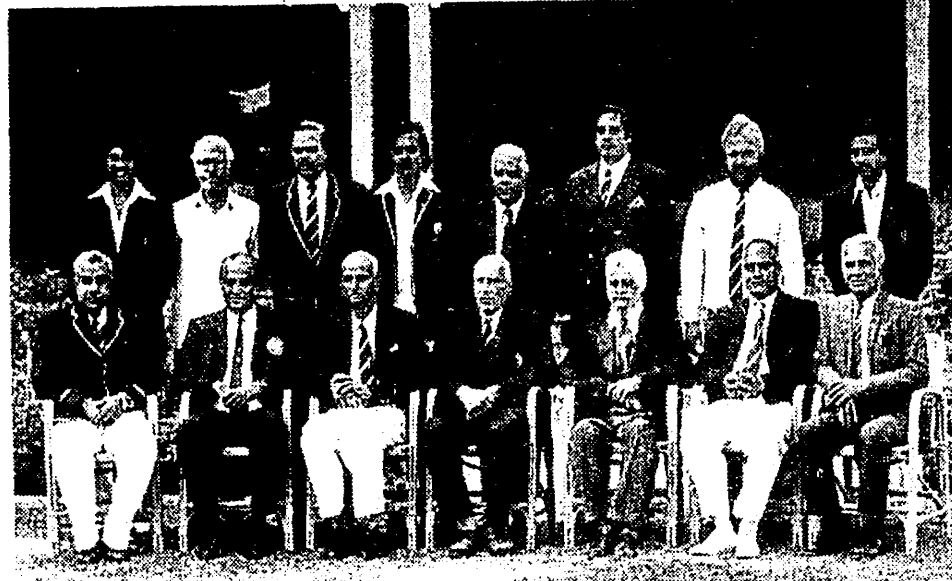
K. Srikanth,
P.K. Belliappa (wkt)
A.G. Milkha Singh,
C.D. Gopinath,
A.G. Kripal Singh,
C. Ramaswami,
A.G. Ram Singh,
M.J. Gopalan,
S. Venkatraghavan
(captain),
C.R. Rangachari,
V.V. Kumar
12th man: Robin Singh

I can't think of a better opening pair than the swashbuckling Srikanth and the stodgy Belliappa, who also kept wickets. The former scored over 2000 runs both in the Ranji Trophy and Test cricket besides playing in 43 Tests, captaining the country in four of them. With his breathtaking style of batsmanship, he was tailor-made for one-day cricket and it made him one of the leading entertainers in world cricket in the 80s.

Belliappa was not an easy choice as Srikanth's opening partner. There were other seri-

ous claimants for both the opener and the wicketkeeper's slots. But Belliappa won my vote on sheer longevity. A dedicated cricketer, Belliappa played for the State from the late Fifties to the early Seventies, scoring over 2000 runs and claiming over 100 victims behind the stumps, one of the very few cricketers with this double distinction in the country's premier national competition. He also captained the State creditably, leading it to the final in 1967-68.

The middle order batting presented no problems whatsoever. Milkha Singh was an automatic choice for No.3. A dashing left-hander, Milkha scored over 2000 runs and was the side's leading batsman from the late Fifties to the late Sixties. That he played in only four Tests was a result of selectorial indifference. No less automatic a selection was C.D. Gopinath at No. 4. A stylist with a wide array of strokes, Gopinath was the State's premier batsman in the Fifties. He aggregated over 2000 runs in the Ranji Trophy



A 1970s picture of players from Madras/Tamil Nadu who had won Test caps. Many of those in the author's XI find a place in the picture. Namely, C. Ramaswami, M.J. Gopalan, Ram Singh, C. Rangachari, C.D. Gopinath, Kripal Singh, Milkha Singh, S. Venkatraghavan and V.V. Kumar. Not in the picture are K. Srikanth, P.K. Belliappa and Robin Singh.

at an average of 51 and played for the country eight times, touring England in 1952 and Pakistan in 1954-55.

No one could possibly argue with Kripal Singh coming in next, at No. 5. The State's leading all-rounder in the Fifties and early Sixties, Kripal Singh was also an astute captain. An aggregate of over 2000 runs and 100 wickets in about a decade speaks volumes of Kripal Singh's all round skills. He was one of the stalwarts of the State's maiden Ranji triumph in 1954-55. He also represented the country 14 times. Besides making a century on his Test debut, against New Zealand in 1955-56, he toured England with the Indian team in 1959.

The tall and burly C. Ramaswami comes in at No. 6. His powerful hitting would be just the kind of batting required in the middle order. A pioneer of the game in the State, son of the famous Buchi Babu, and a prominent figure in the early days of the Ranji Trophy, the left-hander, despite his advanced years, played much good

cricket for Madras in the formative years of the national competition. At 40, he was selected for the tour of England in 1936 and headed the Test averages, ahead of Vijay Merchant, Mushtaq Ali and C.K. Nayudu.

The two all-time greats of cricket in the State take their appointed places at No. 7 and No. 8. Ram Singh and Gopalan are names inseparable when recalling the early years of Madras cricket, when the side entered the Ranji finals in 1935-36 and 1940-41. It was nothing for the two stalwarts to score a half century or be the top scorers and then take five or six wickets in an innings or even ten in the match. Gopalan played in only one Test, though he was a member of the 1936 tour of England. Ram Singh was even more unlucky. He did not represent India in an official Test and only played for the country in two unofficial 'Tests'.

If selecting the batsmen and the all-rounders presented no problems, that was the case with the bowlers too. Venkatraghavan and Kumar would find a place in everyone's list. Venkat took 530 wickets in the Ranji Trophy, Kumar 417. The leg-spinner was also the first bowler to cross the 300- and

400-wicket mark in the national competition. Venkat's figure is second only to Rajinder Goel's 640. He played 57 Tests, took 156 wickets, was a member of the famed spin quartet and led his country in five Tests besides the first two World Cup tournaments. Kumar, perhaps one of the unluckiest Indian cricketers, played in just two Tests due to selectorial indifference.

The side's first choice opening bowler is C.R. Rangachari. With opportunities being so limited in the Forties and Fifties, Rangachari still managed to cross the 100-wicket mark. He also played four Tests in the late Forties, besides making the 1947-48 tour of Australia.

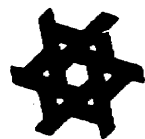
The side bats forcefully till No. 9, what with Venkatraghavan scoring over 2000 runs in the Ranji Trophy. If anything, the bowling is even stronger. Rangachari and Gopalan to open, Ram Singh providing the left arm spin, Venkat the off spin and Kumar the leg spin. Can anyone ask for a more balanced attack?

The only problem I encountered was picking the captain. With a side having an embarrassment of riches in tactical acumen and shrewd leadership — almost every one in my team led the State side at one time or the other — I had to deliberate long before giving the captaincy to Venkatraghavan.

Finally, before I am accused of selecting an 'old timer's eleven'. I must mention the name of the players I considered seriously before they had to be reluctantly dropped. Robin Singh almost made the team, before being finally made 12th man. Other players who came close to selection included Bharath Reddy, W.V. Raman and V. Sivaramakrishnan. — (Courtesy: Straight Bar)

Editor's Note: Do our readers have a different choice?

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KASTURI &
SONS
LTD.

LOKAVANI
HALLMARK PRESS
PVT. LTD.



MRF Ltd.

Rane
Rane Group

Murugappa
Group

The
Sundaram
Group

Sf
Sundaram Finance
Limited



Sundram Fasteners
Limited



Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd

TVS-SUZUKI
TVS Suzuki
Ltd.