

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Vol. X No. 20

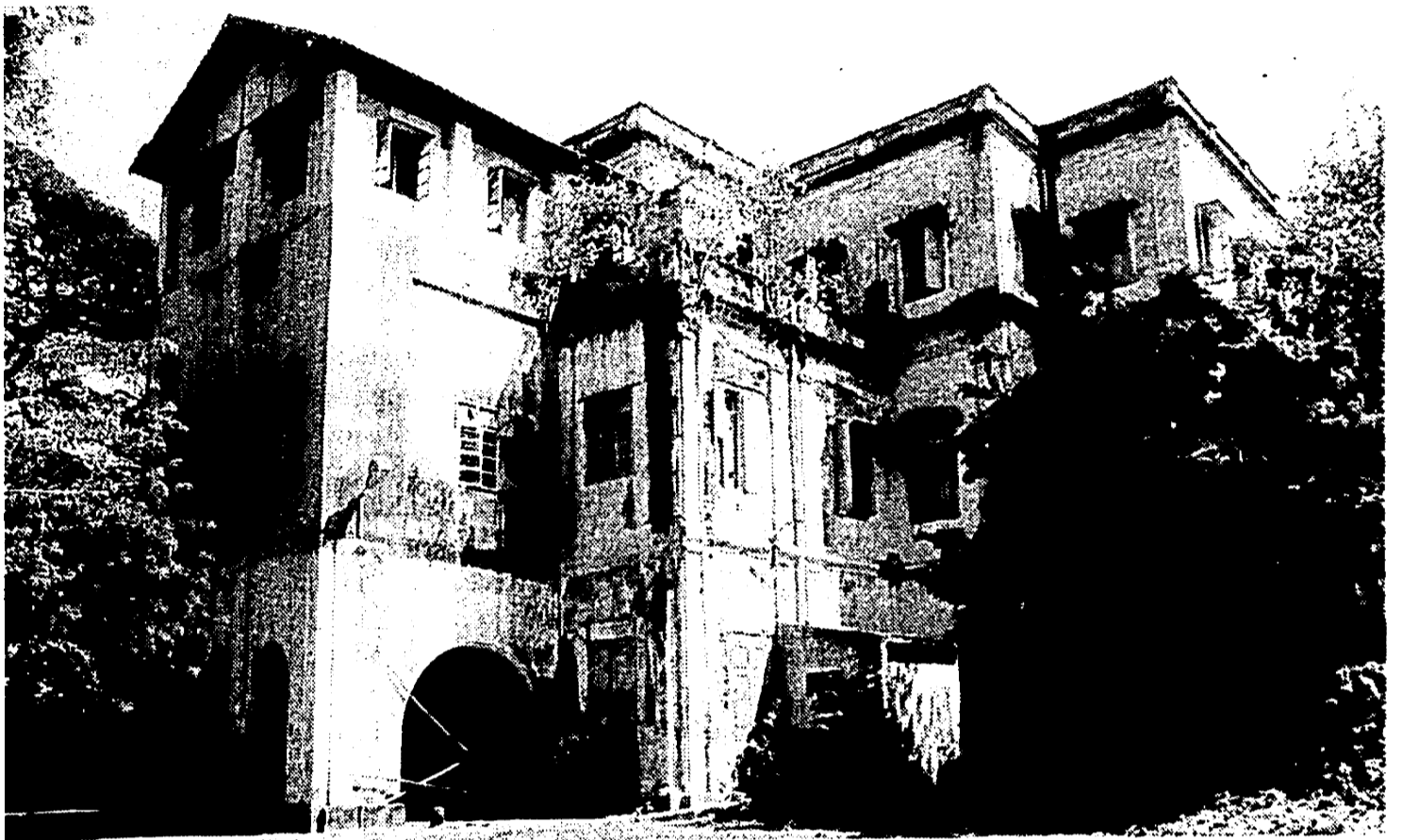
FREE ISSUE

February 1-15, 2001

Another old bungalow under threat...

With the Heritage Regulations getting delayed, yet another building that might be lost is under threat — the *Minor Bungalow* within the tree-lined Directorate of Medical Services compound in Teynampet. The government offices which function in the building have been evicted. The bungalow is today empty and lack of maintenance has led to trees sprouting from the building. In the portico, casuarina poles have been placed to prevent entry and the Madras terrace slabs from falling down.

Over a hundred years ago, the building is said to have housed Newington College, an exclusive educational institution for the sons of *rajahs* and *zamindars*. It is also stated that Newington College was run by the De la Heys. The more handsome of these young men, it is related, enjoyed a special relationship with the lively young Mrs. De la Hey and one such relationship led, it is alleged, to the murder of the husband. The legal battle that followed the murder in the early 1920s was a *cause celebre* of early 20th Century Madras.



Minor House, now under threat of being pulled down. Note the green growth sprouting from the crevices in the walls.

Tolls on the East Coast Road

In the light of recent infrastructural developments in the city, especially with reference to the improvements being made to the roadways, a proposal that has made the rounds is that a toll ought to be imposed on the users of the new facilities. This article examines the legality of such an imposition and attempts to make out a case against the imposition of tolls on the East Coast Road.

In general, if a toll is imposed, it should be of such a nature that it is commensurate with the service being provided. Thus, information on the expenses involved in carrying out the 'improvement' and 'maintenance' services should be made available to the public. Further, the toll collected should be checked so that it can be applied once the expense plus a reasonable profit have been covered.

The question is whether the toll imposed with respect to the East Coast Road would be legal or not. The following issues are for consideration.

The toll sought to be imposed could be conceived as bearing the nature of a toll traverse. Such a toll is normally imposed by the owner of the land with respect to the temporary use of the land, and for this purpose only. However, if this was the true purpose of the

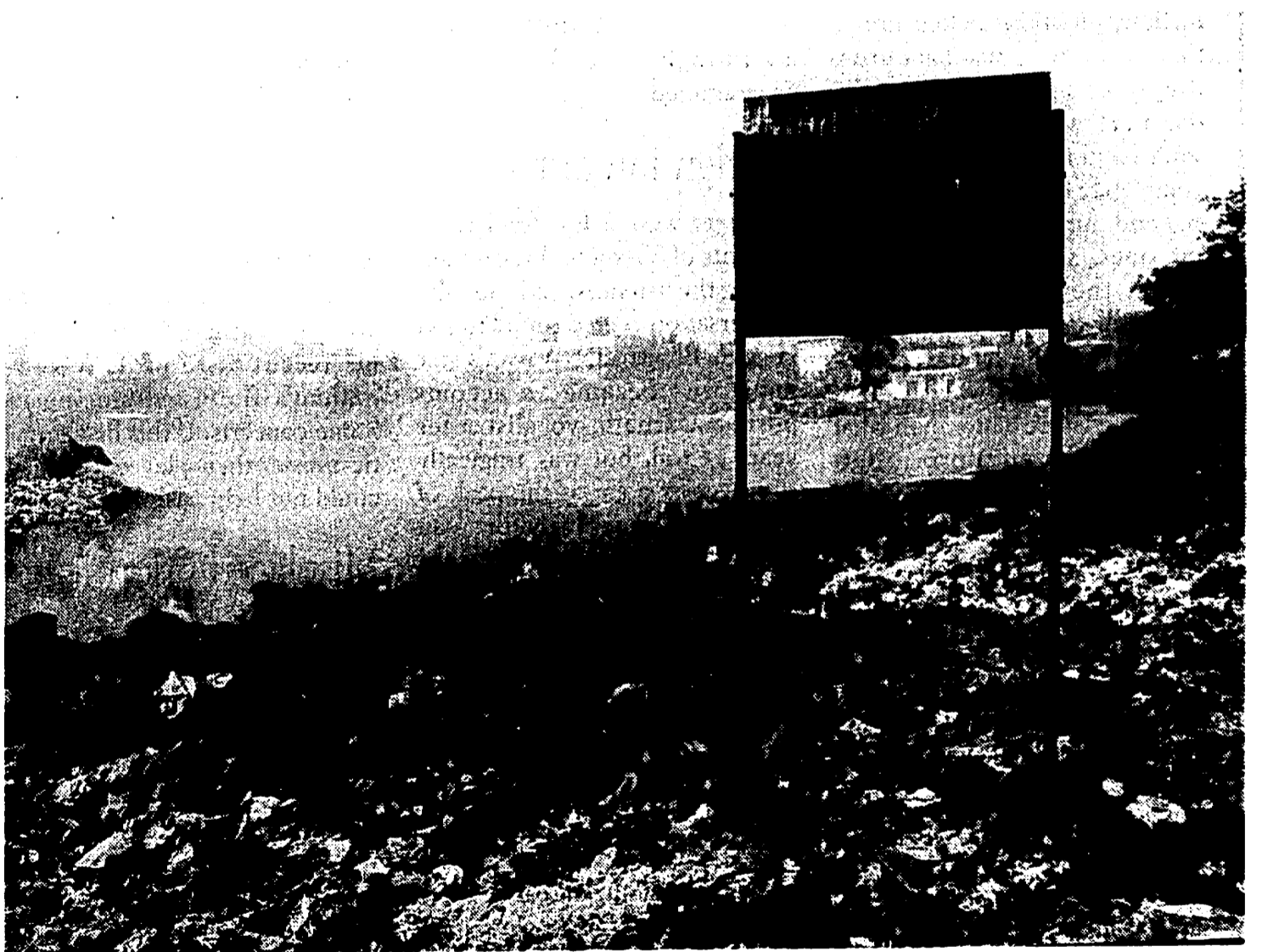
Government in imposing the toll, then it ought to have been imposed in the first instance when the East Coast Road was first made open to the public. Declaring a toll traverse at this point of time exposes it as a money-making exercise.

The above proposition notwithstanding water could probably mean that the toll sought to be imposed could be in the nature of a 'toll-through'. This is the right granted to a person (who may not be the owner of the land, for instance a private contractor) for the performance of some service like the improvement or the maintenance of the land. If that is the case, it must be remembered that the imposition of a toll is not the rule but rather the exception.

(Contd. on Page 4)

A point of view

...and a water body too



A waterbody, near Golden Flats, Mogappair, is slowly vanishing with the periphery of the waterbody being taken over by waste dump.

The wastes, both degradable and nondegradable are also burnt leading to the pollution of the water.

A notice put up by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board warns of consequences, but the activity goes on unabated. Residents wonder why no effort is taken to conserve the waterbody at a time when the monsoon has failed and water will become a precious commodity in the days to come.

Rajind N Christy

If this be Carnatic music, play on...

The Man from Madras Musings finds much that could be improved in the way the Chennai music season festival is organised — with little or no coordination among the many *sabhas* that get into the act year after year, poor acoustics all round, audiences that have made a fine art of doing the vanishing trick during the percussion solo, and tired, overworked musicians trying hard to make something of the event. And he keeps giving vent to such feelings in these columns at the end of each "season". MMM was however fortunate with a different kind of musical experience that came his way recently. He attended a couple of memorable private or house concerts featuring septuagenarian flutist T. Viswanathan, brother of legendary Bharata Nattam dancer Balasaraswati, and head of the Department of Ethnomusicology at the Wesleyan University, Connecticut, USA.

MMM was not quite prepared for the complete contrast from the Season's *cutecheries* these intimate recitals before select, invited audiences presented. For one thing, the listeners were all avid followers of the Veenai Dhanammal School of Music which the descendants of Dhanammal, including 'Viswa', have been upholding, and which may soon vanish for lack of disciples to carry the torch forward. For another, the champion flutist plays a brand of mellow, emotion-soaked music that is so contagious that during the joyous moments, most of the listeners were sporting huge smiles and nodding their heads, completely immersed in the music, and during the deeply moving ones, shedding tears over which they had no control. Mercifully, there was no amplification and the natural acoustics of the rooms where Viswa performed were better than what most of our auditoria offer. Spontaneous *shabashes* and *bhale-bhales* occasionally punctuated the peace and quiet and discipline.

The accent throughout the concerts was more on *bhava*, or feeling, rather than virtuosity and there was much give and take between singer and listener, with special requests being fulfilled by the artist and unusual insights and sidelights being shared by him with the audience. Often, he would keep his flute down and sing a part of a song or sometimes a whole composition, read the lyrics and their meaning in English from a typed handout that everyone had been furnished beforehand. Some of these lyrics had deep emotional and philosophical significance and when he first read the words and later sang them, there was a rare hush in the room. He was assisted on the flute by a self-effacing disciple who however played quite superbly when Viswa chose to sing. The violin and *mridangam* accompaniment on both occasions was perfectly

compatible with the brand of music on offer, not noisy or jarring, as is sometimes the case. If veteran violinist V. Tyagarajan, a long-time associate of Viswa, accompanied him with practised ease, adding his own delicate and thoughtful touches to the recital, young Sriramkumar on the second day played reverential second fiddle to Viswa, but to wonderfully evocative effect. The *mridangam* by Umayalpuram Mali and Trichur Narendran on the two days, was so gentle yet full of complex rhythmic nuances that *The Man of Madras Musings*, not known for his music knowledge, was left thirsting for more.

An unexpected bonus was the spontaneity with which Viswa's cousin Mukta, sister and erstwhile singing partner of the late Brinda, sometimes joined in the music, perched in her seat in the audience, to everyone's utter delight. Past 85, the surviving partner of arguably the greatest vocal duo in Carnatic music — at least on the distaff side — still a voice that can be heard without a mike, and tunelessly so, she chipped in with gusto every time the *vidwan* of the evening forgot the words. Amazingly, she seemed to remember every song that she had ever learnt and sung on stage. There was family pride between the cousins that translated into a unique chemistry on stage and transmitted itself to an admiring audience. The audience too seemed to be old hands at all these exchanges and anticipated every move of the evening as though it had all been programmed.

Foreign interest

There were a few foreigners, students of Viswa or Tyagarajan, among the listeners, and soon the conversation veered round to Jon Higgins Bhagavata, Viswa's star pupil who became an accomplished Carnatic vocalist after years of toil, but was tragically run over by a car at the peak of his prowess. Amazingly, the man was an accomplished Western Classical musician before he decided to pursue Carnatic music, essentially as part of his scholastic pursuits. Also discussed was Matthew Harp Allen, another scholar who researched *padams*, the songs composed for dance, and who became a friend of the family and learned to sing *padams* rather well. In the audience was a young Carnatic violin student of Tyagarajan, who was finding it difficult to balance her time between Western and Indian music.

A great contribution to the evening's success during the second of these concerts MMM attended was made by veteran composer and vocalist Thanjavur Sankara Iyer, a man whose genius was recognised rather late in his life. MMM was deeply moved to discover that Iyer who finds even walking on level ground a painfully difficult proposition after he suffered a stroke, actually climbed two steep flights of steps

to listen to Viswa. The old friends greeted each other warmly and exchanged a few salient observations about the history of a few of the compositions sung that evening — which one was Viswa's guru's favourite, which one reminded Iyer of some concert from the distant past, and so on.

At the end of it all, MMM could not help wondering whether, after all, Carnatic music was meant to be performed and enjoyed in the kind of intimate atmosphere witnessed at these concerts and not on a proscenium stage with inappropriate amplification, as that German connoisseur of Carnatic music, Ludwig Pesch, was fond of saying. MMM remembered how incensed he had been a decade ago when this self-appointed critic of Carnatic music had made what MMM thought were condescending *frangi* remarks on the *cutechery* scene. Pesch later proved his credentials, so to speak, with his splendid work for *Sampradaya* — an archival institution which, among other things, unearthed some of Thanjavur Sankara Iyer's work — and in the

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

construction of Sitrangam, the small stage on Island Grounds, but the full import of his wise words eluded MMM till these concerts.

For someone with little prior appreciation of the classical music of South India, MMM could not help yearning for more, after his recent taste of T. Viswanathan's flute and singing in home concerts. If this be Carnatic music, then play on, MMM could not help wishing.

Misplaced priorities

On a recent visit to Chepauk, the Man from Madras Musings was appalled by the lack of spectator response to what ought to have been billed as one of the major events of the Indian cricket season, but, sadly, was NOT. It was the second Test between India Under-19 and England Under-19, and there were a handful of exciting performances by the future Test cricketers of the two countries, but the number of dogs resting in the stands outnumbered by a fair margin the humans watching the cricket. A great pity, as the match not only produced some fine batting and bowling performances but also demonstrated talent of a high order promising much hope for the future of the game in both countries where it is, at present, undergoing much soul-searching.

The sad part of the story is that MMM was one of only a

mere handful of spectators at hand to applaud the astounding feat of a near-400 run opening partnership and twin double centuries by the Indian openers, Vinayak Mane and Gautam Gambhir, in a match-saving situation. There was no radio or television coverage, and only a sprinkling of newspaper reporters at the ground to cover this extraordinary feat, albeit against a tiring attack of inexperienced bowlers on a beauty of a batting track. That the captain of the Indian colts team was a young man regarded by many as India wicketkeeper material to be blooded earlier rather than later is another reason why cricket enthusiasts should have flocked to the ground.

MMM has on several occasions praised the knowledge and impartiality of the Chennai crowd, not to mention its sense of aesthetics that enables it to differentiate between pedigree and workmanlike effort and applaud a victorious opponent generously as it did on the occasion of a historic Pakistan win. MMM is indeed proud of the fantastic sporting spirit and good cheer of the Chepauk audience. MMM also remembers the large numbers of spectators that watched Tamil Nadu Cricket Association league and Hindu Trophy matches and the much larger numbers who turned up for Ranji Trophy and other first class games in the past. It was particularly disappointing to find precious little spectator support for a game as vital as this Under-19 Test match.

While *The Hindu* and *Sportstar* have been following the U-19 tour by England with more than ordinary interest and allotted it considerable column-centimetreage, the rest of the print medium appears to have chosen to give the tour no more than cursory coverage, MMM notes. The electronic media have completely boycotted it, but Cricinfo, true to its reputation of being the leading cricket portal in the world, has been the only publication to give it the importance and publicity it deserves.

Disturbing aspects

What is even more disturbing than all this lack of public support is the failure of the BCCI, the protectors of the game in India, to depute anyone of note to watch the Test match. Not a single national selector of either the senior Test selection committee or the Under-19 panel was present at the ground, except T.A. Sekar for a while — in his personal capacity, MMM guesses. Except for Roger Binny, the U-19 team coach, and National Cricket Academy physical trainer Arjun Rana, there was not a single key person involved in junior cricket deputed to watch and evaluate the youngsters.

MMM has often decried the undue importance given to

cricket in this country at the expense of other sport. Unfortunately, even in cricket, only one day internationals, Test matches of the senior team and 'suchlike' cash cows are given importance in the Indian scheme of things. MMM was shocked to learn that the tour itinerary had been put together hastily after someone forgot to bring up the subject at the appropriate programmes committed meeting. It was equally shocking to hear that a day before the two teams left for Hyderabad to play against each other in the third and final Test, no one seemed to know on which ground the match was to be played, though MMM later found that it started at the Lal Bahadur Stadium, not regularly used for cricket for many years now.

Contrast this attitude with the seriousness with which the English seem to monitor junior cricket. On this tour, the two officials, Tim Tremlett and Tim Boon, have been a great source of guidance and encouragement to their wards. They have helped the boys maintain a high morale despite their shocker of a defeat at Mumbai. They have devised several drills to improve their batting against spin on the slow Indian wickets, they have studied and analysed the bowling actions of the Indian spinners and the batting idiosyncracies of their opponents, though without much success, as recent results indicate. They make considerable use of a laptop computer and make extensive notes. Already, we see that the English U-19 batsmen have improved their batting on Indian wickets, showing a far more positive attitude than on Day One of the tour.

It is high time that Indian cricket officialdom paid much greater attention to junior cricket than it is doing now. Take a leaf out of the Sri Lankan book, MMM strongly urges. Preparing sporting wickets is of paramount importance as, otherwise, our youngsters will continue to make huge scores at home, the way India U-19 did at Chepauk, and continue to fail abroad. For, it was obvious to MMM and the dozen or so, people who watched the Chepauk Test, that the poor technique overall of the Indian batsmen would have got them into serious trouble on wickets abroad.

The neglect of youth cricket is nowhere worse exemplified than in the utter confusion surrounding the choice of the NCA's new director, which is yet to take place following the resignation of Hanumant Singh, its first director, and its coach Vasu Paranjpe. The matter is made worse, MMM hears, by the politicisation of the issue, with Karnataka staking its claim for directorship because the NCA is located in Bangalore, and Tamil Nadu bidding for the shifting of the NCA to Chennai. It seems to MMM, from long experience, that, in the end, all parties will be happy, but Indian cricket will remain stagnant as ever. God save Indian cricket!

— MMM

OUR READERS WRITE

Krishnan's letters

I am fortunate enough to have exchanged letters in Tamil with Krishnan, during the last decade of his life. Some of them have lasting value. Several of our readers might have been his correspondents. I am eager to contact him and publish his letters in Tamil. I solicit the co-operation of our readers in this regard.

Ezhilamuthan

198 D, North Car Street Extn. Near Patrakaliamman Koil Tuticorin 628 002.

Remarkable work

The work of R.K. Nehru (MM, 1 December 16th) and his wife remarkable and will create an awareness among the young people to struggle in the dark.

P.S. Krishnamoorthy

34, Ramanatha Iyer Street, Gobichettipalayam Erode District 638 452.

Sastri Hall: a clarification

What reader R. Sankar's letter states regarding Sastri Hall (MM, January 1st) is not true.

The Srinivasa Sastri Hall owned our Association, built in the year 1955, has no heritage to it and it is being leased out on an hourly basis to our hirers. The building is very well maintained with our limited resources. Moreover it is on a leased land and we have been asked to vacate as the lease period is over.

J.R. Iswaran

Secretary (South Indian National Association) 40, Luz Church Road, Mylapore Chennai 600 004.

No trees cut

With reference to a comment made (MM, Dec. 16, 2000) about the Cosmopolitan Club, we have not cut any tree, much less a lone one, disturbing the environment. We are raising a small building, adjacent to the compound wall, to accommodate a trans-

How to be safer on our roads

(By A Staff Reporter)

Do's for cyclists

Ride on the left side of the road, giving way to faster moving vehicles. Take a turn only after signalling. Keep the bicycle in good repair and use a lamp and reflectors on mudguards during night.

* * *

Don'ts

Holding on to a fast moving vehicle and taking a free ride and carrying a heavy load on the cycle.

* * *

Two wheeler riders and car drivers

Two wheelers are for two.

* * *

* * *



Is leprosy infectious?

MM (January 1st) has raised the above question and has probably left doubts in the minds of the readers. Almost 40 years ago, I participated in a rural education programme aimed at creating awareness of treatment of leprosy under the guidance of Dr. K.V. Ranganathan, one of the best health educators in the State Directorate of Health Services. During our first visit to Kuthambakkam — a village in Chingleput Dt. — Dr. K.V.R. counted over 100 patients, as we walked along one of the streets there. I then gathered information on leprosy from specialists, physicians and social scientists, which I furnish below for the benefit of readers.

R. Gandhi

"Erode House" New No. 66, (Old No. 47) III Main Road, Gandhi Nagar Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

Shivaji in Chennai

'Heritage Quest - Peep into T.N.'s Maratha Heritage' (MM, December 16th) was well researched and written, but the quest ought to have commenced from Chennai — the Kaligumbal temple in Thambu Chetty Street in fact — where Shivaji (not to be confused with Sivaji Ganesan) worshipped the deity on 3.10.1677 (so says a tablet).

C.G. Prasad

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

Room for hope

Thomas Taru (MM, January 1st) has raised some pertinent points in regard to the restoration of the fire ravaged G.P.O. buildings; but he need not be so pessimistic, as the Dept. of Posts has a full fledged P&T Civil Wing of CPWD with qualified architects who are there to oversee the departmental buildings. When it comes to the question of restoration of such a heritage building, no doubt this wing has to see to it that every possible action is taken to restore it to the former glory. But the advice and views of experts in the field have to be obtained and heeded before resorting to restoration. I am sure the Department will spare no pains to restore this remarkable building.

T.M. Sundararaman

No. 19, Nallappan Street Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

Dismissal not the way

I was pained to read in MM, January 1, that a poor watchman lost his job because somebody suspected he had leprosy. According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, leprosy is the least infectious of diseases — being less infectious than even a common cold. The majority of leprosy cases are non-infectious, and even the few that are infectious, can be rendered non-infectious, if treated properly for a very short time.

How to be safer on our roads

(By A Staff Reporter)

Do's for cyclists

Ride on the left side of the road, giving way to faster moving vehicles. Take a turn only after signalling. Keep the bicycle in good repair and use a lamp and reflectors on mudguards during night.

* * *

Don'ts

Holding on to a fast moving vehicle and taking a free ride and carrying a heavy load on the cycle.

* * *

Two wheeler riders and car drivers

Two wheelers are for two.

* * *

* * *

became resistant to this drug later on and multiple drugs had to be used to effect cure. In the later stages of the disease, it cannot be cured entirely. Only, further deterioration of the disease could be arrested.

5. Patients in the early stages of the disease were more infective than the patients in the later stages of the disease. Some patients in the later stages of the disease probably became non-infective. But, even these patients are believed to become infective for short periods of time.

6. Patients who had undergone treatment for short periods had become less infective.

7. Only some people attach stigma to the disease. A vast majority of people are not bothered. "The individual suffers because of his karma". At any rate, the woman who lends her child to a leprosy beggar does not attach any significance to the disease. The disease is spread more by the early sufferers of the disease, who are not recognised as patients.

8. Attempts to produce a vaccine have not been successful. Forty years ago it was postulated that BCG administered to children for preventing tuberculosis could be an effective preventive for leprosy also. Millions of children have been administered BCG during the last forty years. It is not clear if the status of these children has been monitored.

Many selfless workers have devoted their entire lives towards treatment of leprosy. Dr.

Ernest Fritchi, a foreigner and young student of Madras Medical College lived in Pammal, a small village next to Pallavaram, in the forties and attended college. After qualifying as a physician, Dr. Fritchi has spent a lifetime treating leprosy patients in Karigiri, near Vellore.

NGOs too have devoted their time and energy in caring for leprosy patients.

Leprosy had been virtually eradicated in Palestine mainly by quarantine and segregation. In India, there are different groups of patients. Some undergo treatment voluntarily. Some undergo treatment for short periods and give up. Others do not undergo any treatment at all. As a community, we have been talking of karma and not compelling patients to undergo treatment even when necessary. We have also been spreading the wrong message that leprosy is not infectious. A multipronged approach to identify every patient in the early stages of the disease and treat him continuously till he is free of the disease is necessary to eradicate the disease from the country within the next 50 years.

The important question is how to handle the patients. Many patients could be engaged in gainful employment. There need not be any stigma attached to them. Others have to be segregated and taken care of by society at least till they are declared non-infective.

M. Susikaran

8, I Street Nandanam Extn. Chennai 600 035.

If a person is suspected to have leprosy, the correct thing to do is to have him tested in any of the centres available for such testing and then, if confirmed, start him on treatment. The country will be rid of leprosy only if the stigma associated with it is removed and not by rounding up the beggars, as suggested.

I do not understand why leprosy should be associated with beggars — the disease can affect the rich and the powerful also. The irony is that the people with sores and other visible signs have the non-infectious type! The infectious type can move around undetected.

People with leprosy are also human beings.

Vasanth Ramakrishnan

K.P. Puram Chennai 600 028.

Regulate water suppliers

With the monsoon playing truant, 'Singara Chennai' is under the grip of a severe water crisis. The situation will turn worse in the months ahead, necessitating migration to other places.

While the City Water Regulatory Board, CMWSSB, is trying its best to ease the situation, the State Government too is chipping in by knocking at the neighbouring State's doors. While all this is nothing but crisis management, it is a pity that succeeding governments have done nothing to address the problem.

V.S. Jayaraman

B-2, Anand Flats 31, Motilal Street T. Nagar Chennai 600 017.

COMPOSTING

Some thoughts on the way to go

• There is enormous potential for composting in rapidly developing countries, where waste streams have a high organic content. For it to work and stay working, however, the composting operation must be tailored to local requirements, writes Professor Ed Stentiford, University of Leeds.

Those who work with waste must dream of being in the chemical engineering business. Of having a constant feedstock of known composition and availability. Unfortunately with waste, the feedstock only varies widely even within a particular city or town. These variations are a result of:

- seasonal changes — either related to crops, diet, climate and in many cases tourism; and
- rich and poor within communities having different consumption and waste profiles.

Table 1 gives some examples of waste from countries undergoing rapid industrialisation.

With 'development' generally comes an increasing rate of consumption and related waste. An additional environmental impact occurs as the rate of industrialisation outstrips the rate of application of environmental controls. In many cases, a highly sophisticated production industry is transplanted from an already highly industrialised country taking advantage of low local labour costs. The various wastes created by that industry then become the responsibility of the local authorities who may not have the infrastructure to deal with them.

The normal disposal route for over 95% of the collected wastes in these countries is through landfill. However, the final disposal point is mostly a dump. The sites seldom make any attempt to control leachate or biogas emissions and are often the home for scavengers.

The figures given Table 1 show that in many of these countries the scope for traditional recycling from the waste stream is restricted because the 'high value' components — paper, metal and plastic — are present in relatively low

concentrations. The major component, organic waste, is the main cause of leachate and biogas problems at the landfill, but it can also provide the feedstock for another recycling route i.e. composting.

Local soils in many of these countries are low in organic content. This reduces their productivity, particularly important in relation to moisture holding capacity. This problem is exaggerated as many of these developing economies are in hot climate areas where moisture in the plant root zone is essential to good productivity. Compost has a proven beneficial effect in these circumstances and these high organic content wastes make a good raw material for composting.

Will the need for compost in many of these areas create a market for the product? Experience with farmers is that the value of the material has to be proved to them. An example comes from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where farmers routinely dig organic material from the landfill, screen it by hand and then use it on their land. However, the mechanised composting plant, which opened in 1975 closed shortly afterwards in 1981.

In most industrialised countries the final point of disposal for wastes has a charge set against it which is passed on to the waste generator. This gives a financial incentive for looking at lower cost routes. This is the thinking behind the landfill levy in the UK. It currently stands at £11 per tonne for organic waste going into the landfill giving total landfill cost for the production typically in the £25-40 range. Alternative operations, such as composting, can be set up to operate at a surplus based around getting a similar payment for receiving the waste. The availability of an additional income stream, e.g., from sales of compost, then adds to the profitability. As the cost of disposal alternatives exceeds this £25-40 envelope, plant operations have to rely on other income streams to make a profit.

In developing economies waste disposal is not high priority and no charge is made to the waste producers for disposal,

Table 1: Typical municipal solid waste characteristics in rapidly industrialising countries (% by weight)

Component	HCMC Vietnam	Accra Ghana	Guadalajara Mexico
Organic	62.2	65.1	54
Paper	0.6	5	10.4
Plastic	0.5	3	9.2
Metal	0.3	2	1.4
Glass	0.3	2	4.3
Other	36.1	23	20.7

Source: Data taken from Warmer Bulletin Nos. 67, 68 and 69.

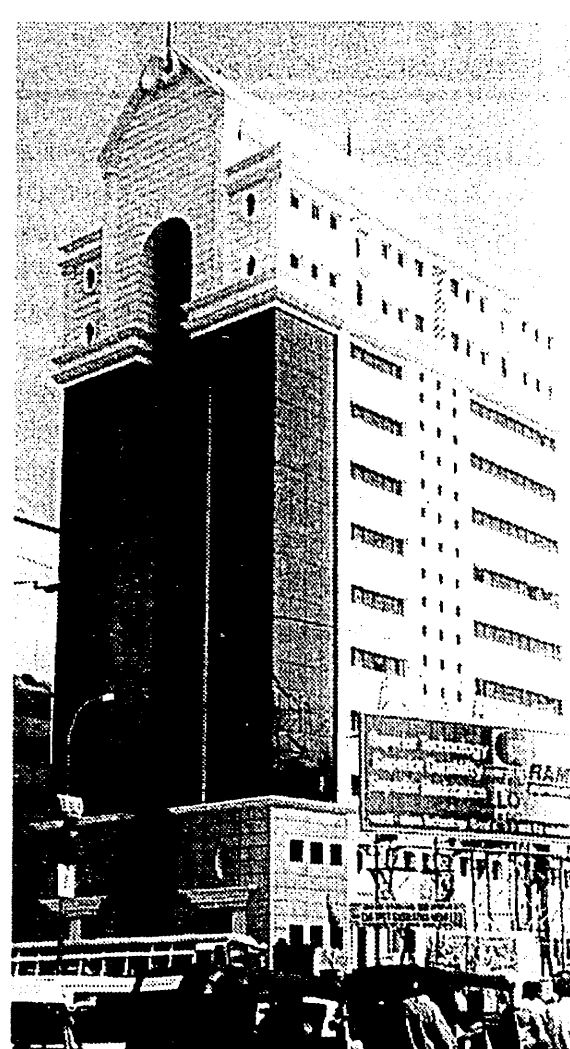


...& THE NEW ▶

The NEW (right) is the Arihant Ega Trade Centre on Poonamallee High Road, a new shopping-cum-commercial complex. This eleven storey building with a floor space of 11,400 sq.ft. is studded with imported glazed glasses and a granite-finished exterior. It has a car park on the basement. The building also provides an electronic security and safety system, capsule and highspeed lifts, and a private pantry for each office. The terrace sports a penthouse with an 'Om' sign crowning a peak that echoes the gables and 'steeple' of old. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

◀ THE OLD...

The OLD is a shop-cum-residence building on Mint Street, with a gabled house on the terrace. The building has much intricate woodwork and embellishments.



TOLLS ON THE EAST COAST ROAD

(Continued from Page 1)

Thus the burden lies upon the Government to prove the following:

1. That the improvement being made is so substantial that the cost of improvement will not be satisfied from the budgetary allocation made by the Government.
2. That the cost of maintenance is such that it cannot ordinarily be met from the budgetary allocation made by the Government.

The imposition could then take on the colour of a charge imposed on rights enjoyed as a result of temporary use. Tolls are supposed to be only for the temporary use of land. However, the residents along the road will be hit by an unfair and possibly illegal recurring expenditure. This is because they possess a right of easement over the road which is a permanent right. As separating the residents (and others who possess a similar right of easement over the road/land upon which the road is built) from others is impracticable as the imposition of a toll on this stretch.

Another facet that needs to be examined is whether the imposition of a toll along the East

Coast Road amounts to double taxation. It is well known that the East Coast Road was recently improved substantially and at great cost. The money that was used came from the public exchequer to which every citizen contributed through taxes. Now, a very little time after the first expense has been incurred, the Government is proposing a second expense in the form of a toll which is in the nature of a compensatory tax. This can be because the Government did not do the first job properly, which is not something for which the citizen should be made to pay as his obligation is discharged with the initial contribution and anything else would amount to double taxation.

The imposition of a toll along the East Coast Road would amount to a violation of the fundamental rights of the citizens. The Government is under an obligation to provide roads of a basic minimum quality to the citizens of the country. This was sought to be achieved by building the East Coast Road in the first place. The imposition of a toll on such a road would amount to a message that what is being done is

not the provision of a right but the rendering of a privilege that has to be paid for, which is wrong. It would amount to privatising what the citizen is entitled to by virtue of Art. 19 of the Constitution of India. Further it must be remembered that the construction of the East Coast Road phase I was itself plagued by allegations of environmental spoilage and there were large scale efforts to stop it for this very reason. The only reason for further improvement could conceivably be commercial transportation. Any increase in this form of traffic would surely be ruinous environmentally speaking, the East Coast Road is on the fragile coastline of India.

The reason given for the construction of the East Coast Road is, and has always been, local development. In the context of the relatively poor citizenry who live along the region where the road is built, it is difficult to see how the imposition of a toll would do anything but inconvenience them further. (Courtesy: CAG Reports)

Veena Ramani
Aarti Sivanand

- difficult to maintain with local support; and
- an inability to sell the product on which the economic viability was based, through poor, or non-existent marketing.

The majority of the plants have been funded through loans or aid packages. The few that remain in operation do so at a fraction of the throughput. Even where the sites are still operating, the composting methodology has often been simplified and little of the original equipment installed is utilised.

We need to ask what is the way forward. A more realistic approach is for a city to have a series of smaller composting sites which are large enough to justify basic equipment such as front loaders and turning machines yet small enough to be managed and maintained locally. (Courtesy: TPI [Technology Partnership Initiative] July 2000.)

(To be concluded)

Some ways to stop air pollution

According to the World Resources Institute, a Washington-based research institute, India is among the world's top producers of greenhouse gases... which are responsible for global warming and environmental imbalances and disasters the world over.

'Air quality in Indian cities ranks among the worst in the world'.

While these comments are absolutely true, the situation is much worse now. A lot of corrective action is needed to deal with all sorts of pollution, but the worst is air pollution which affects people round the clock throughout the year. Most of the time it is industrial pollution that people talk about, but the biggest culprit is automotive exhaust pollution belching out of all types of Indian vehicles these years now. And the apathy of the people — from the public to politicians — have brought things to disastrous levels. It has also been quantified as an unbelievably shocking number of around 52,000 people died and 25 million people needed medical attention (in '95), the highest anywhere in the world — caused by years of automobile exhaust pollution alone in India. The cost of neglect and indifference is now being paid and will continue until and unless the country cleans up its act!

India has the highest rate of respiratory diseases and disorders in the world amongst its population. This is, besides climatic and other factors, a direct outcome of foul air quality. In other countries has the kind of direct automobile exhaust pollution. Madras and Calcutta like huge gas chambers during peak hours on major roads. The suffering of road users in particular has continued steadily for years now causing more allergic, lung and respiratory problems besides cancer. Periodically there are seminars, discussions, symposia, etc. organised in India, some even international in scope and nature, but nothing has translated into real, worthwhile action that results into availability of cleaner, acceptable, breathable air quality in Indian cities and towns. While some cities like Bombay are victims of air pollution, places like Madras, Calcutta and even some smaller cities have gone from bad to worse with their air quality for human breathing. New Delhi's auto pollution, which is considered worst at one time, has reduced substantially

due to concerted efforts of concerned authorities — an example to show, 'where there is a will there is a way!' This kind of sincerity and willingness is certainly missing in Madras and several other cities/states. Basically it boils down to the kind of public, politicians, government and administration that determine if any serious and harmful problem like this is realised and anything concrete done about it at all or not.

Automobile pollution contributes about 80% to air pollution in Indian cities and towns. The rest comes from tons of dust, sand, smoke from burning of rubbish, trash, rubber etc. by slums/poor people (to keep warm in winter, especially in northern/other states which have cold climate and people do not have any means to keep warm except to burn whatever they can!), and road construction authorities who melt tar and use old tyres and rubber which causes severe carbon smoke. There are multiple other reasons including industrial pollution. That concern and practice of cleanliness, especially the environmental one, is nearly missing in Indian public life as against a high degree of personal hygiene is indeed a contradiction few can explain/understand.

Most of the air pollution in India is a controllable phenomenon. The following steps are needed to arrest it immediately and provide the first basic need for human survival — pure, clean, breathable quality air that would not have adverse effects on a population of a billion people (approx. 20% of humanity).

1) For automobile pollution, the first thing to do is to turn the exhaust pipes of all diesel heavy vehicles vertically upwards — pointing towards the sky, like in tractors — so that the obnoxiously suffocating and dangerous emission that is thrown directly on people's faces is stopped. Though this is not the only and ultimate solution, it will have to be enhanced by controlling the quality of emission. This will only give some desperately needed immediate relief.

How to do this? (i) The thousands of existing vehicles

need to get this alteration done, say within 90 days — a sufficient time — to modify their existing tail pipes to go upward vertically; (ii) The end of the pipe should not be lower than the highest part of the vehicle's body — mostly at the point of roof height. This is to avoid smoke spilling out/spreading/affecting the occupants of the vehicle; (iii) The tail pipes

• by
Mukesh Kumar

should be surrounded/enclosed with thermal insulation to prevent heat in its surrounding areas; (iv) Standard fittings for this modification can be easily manufactured by companies making trucks, buses and LCVs. There are only a handful of manufacturers of these vehicles and these conversion fittings can be standardised. For new vehicles, this should be a



Belching vehicles... a constant threat in the city

standard feature at the time of manufacturing. It should be mandatory for the manufacturers of all types of diesel vehicles, including jeeps and LCVs, to provide vertical exhaust pipes.

2) The long-term effective solution has to be drastic changes in emission control norms and design of fuel systems. This implementation can be effected in about a year, at the most. Along with stricter emission control standards to be incorporated in Indian vehicles, auto manufacturers must be made to improve fuel efficiency of vehicles with each new model as done in many countries. Unleaded fuel has to be freely available at every petrol pump throughout the country always.

3) Dieselisation in India: There has been a mad rush to dieselise every type of vehicle on the road. Several ignorant zealots think diesel exhaust is less harmful than petrol. It is a myth. But with the volumes of diesel exhaust, it is extremely harmful — more so since most vehicles are ill-maintained. Manufacture of cars with diesel

engines should be stopped or allowed only with very strict emission control standards. The government allows taxis, private cars, even 3-wheeler autorickshaws and some motorcycles with diesel engines for fuel economy. But at what cost? A few people's fuel economy means an enormous amount of foul air for the entire population. Singapore and many other countries have diesel taxis/cars, but with very high pollution control standards which are strictly enforced in all sincerity. The prices of petrol and diesel should be equalised.

4) Two and three wheelers with 2-stroke engines are the next major contributors of auto pollution after diesel vehicles. Hero Honda motorcycle is the only bike with a cleaner 4-stroke engine (that does not mix petrol and oil, the cause of grey fumes from 2-wheelers) right from the beginning. It is only recently motorcycle makers have come out with 4-stroke engines more due to competition rather than environmental reasons. Most others have two-stroke engines including the 3-wheeler autorickshaws which profusely pollute Indian cities and towns.

5) All the manufacturers of 2-stroke engine two and three wheelers must be compelled to change over to 4-stroke engines in the next couple of years.

6) The laws on emission control have to be on par with international standards. Some states and cities are alert and awake to automotive exhaust nuisance. But many cities like Madras are totally immune to this! They are either indifferent, ineffective, or even ignorant about it! For instance, in Tamil Nadu/Madras, state transport buses, private and public heavy vehicles like those of P&T, Corporation and Metrowater as well as autorickshaws are the worst culprits merrily fouling the environment everyday.

7) The ministry of environment must have a bench/cell/division for each state headed by two persons who are personally concerned, alert and aware environmentally.

These benches should compulsorily monitor their respective states, cities and towns without any bias or partiality for persons, party in power, local/civic bodies, police, or the like. While it should be the ultimate responsibility of the Central Government to monitor, coordinate and control the air pollution in the country, these

benches should monitor and keep a watch on each of the states, the responsibility for which should be on the state government as also the local bodies and police.

8) Adulteration of fuel is a major problem in cities like Madras. To save on expensive fuel, autorickshaws and diesel vehicles resort to shortcuts and foul methods like mixing kerosene with petrol and diesel. Madras is one of the worst offenders in the entire country in this respect. The autorickshaws adulterate fuel with kerosene and diesel to save petrol and also mix non-genuine 2-stroke 2-T oil, which may be given by the petrol pumps themselves. Trucks/lorries also adulterate diesel with kerosene. Added to this poor, ineffective or no maintenance of vehicles at all, is a major cause of pollution in India. Only a handful of citizens and only a few cities are aware, alert, concerned and action-oriented about the dangers of pollution.

9) Besides the trucks/lorries, buses in both public and private sectors in all the states, especially the former, are not maintained properly at all.

10) Dust on the roads and in public places has to be gathered and dumped/dropped off by the city corporations/municipalities in such a way that it does not need to be cleaned the next day — a typical practice in India for decades now. They are responsible to collect the dust and not sweep/spread them hither and thither solely to give employment to sweepers! Has anybody ever wondered how Singapore and many other countries are almost dust-free? It is not that the earth there is void of dust and sand, but that is well covered, cemented, collected or disposed off in an appropriate manner. Diggings on the roads and construction sites are similarly covered and sealed well leaving no room for dust to be free to fly or lie around.

11) All the above steps will have to be supplemented by large-scale planting of trees and greenery across the country to effectively balance the ecology and recycle hydrocarbons in the environment. Industrial areas must be specifically the places for planting of trees and plants as also public and private roads and places throughout the country.

12) A massive public awareness campaign on the dangerous and harmful effects of pollution, utilising TV, radio, print and other media should be conducted at least for a decade. Along with this, sincere and practical efforts should be made including appropriate legislation.

13) Sanitation, hygiene and cleanliness in cities and towns

(Contd. on Page 8)

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period January 1 to 15. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Which commonwealth country celebrated its 100th birthday on January 1st?
2. According to Sir Arthur C Clarke, what would replace computer keyboards and voice recognition software in the next 100 years?
3. Why was January 4th a landmark day in Indian aviation history?
4. Which missile was 'accidentally' fired in Hyderabad killing a technical person on January 4th?
5. Who was the high profile guest for the String Theory lecture meet in Mumbai recently?
6. Which two Indian families are in the top 50 of Forbes billionaires' list for 2000?
7. Name the high profile film financier whose arrest on January 8th sent shockwaves in the industry.
8. Which mega religious event, which happens once in 12 years, began at the Sangam, Allahabad on January 9th?
9. Who is ANDI?

* * *

10. Who was conferred the Sangita Kalanidhi award in Chennai on January 1st?
11. Which Chennai school educated woman is the President of the global giant Pepsico?
12. Between which places will the metro's first A/C bus service run?

* * *

13. Which is the only tiger reserve in the State?
14. For achievement in which socio-medical field was the State awarded the prestigious J.R.D. Tata Award recently?
15. What massive Rs.1700 crore programme was launched in the State on January 1st?
16. Which is the highest literary award of the State Sahitya Akademi?
17. With relation to the above, who is the recipient of the award for 2000?
18. Name the former DMK MP and Deputy Speaker of LS who passed away on January 10th?
19. Who won the inaugural Nadigar Thilagam Sivaji Award at the State film awards recently?
20. Which indigenous dog is found in the State and used for hunts?

(Answers on Page 8)

A private collection grows as a library

Only in recent years scholars have recognised the value of private collections of imprints in preserving the print heritage of a country and there are attempts at making them accessible to researchers. These collections could provide a new dimension to historiography and enable us to understand our society better. One such collection was in Kottaiyur, near Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu. Roja Muthiah Chertiar, an eccentric bibliophile who started his life as a painter of signs, began collecting books, magazines and other printed material. When he died in 1992, his collection had grown to nearly 100,000 items in Tamil, consisting of books, journals and single sheet materials such as drama notices and wedding invitations. The collection spans over a period of more than 150 years, the earliest being a book *Kandar Andhathi* published in 1804. It is a unique private collection reflecting the whole gamut of Tamil culture and heritage.

The University of Chicago came to know about this collection through scholars like C.S. Lakshmi (Ambai) and launched in 1992, a global effort to preserve this collection. In this effort, the University decided to collaborate with the Chennai-based *Mozhi* Trust, an organisation set up to develop resources for language and culture. At the very beginning, the University of Chicago had decided that the collection will not be moved out of India and will remain in Tamil Nadu to form the nucleus for a research library of Tamil studies. The Roja Muthiah Research Library was established in Chennai in 1994. P. Sankaralingam, who was in the Department of Library Sciences of the Madras University, came to head the library and systematically developed it. A project was drawn up to catalogue and microfilm the collection. He created preliminary electronic catalogue records for all the titles. His dream was to provide under one roof research material and facilities for students of South Indian studies in fields spanning humanities and social sciences. Bibliographers have identified this as one of the

world's two finest Tamil collections, the other being the Maraimalai Adigal Library in Chennai, specialising in literature. The subjects range from classical literature, indigenous medicine, religion and folklore to cinema, drama, women's studies and ballads. It includes non-book material such as drama handbills, filmsong books and even some of his private letters. After the library was set up, other collections have been added to the original collection. The strength of Roja Muthiah collection lies in the variety of subjects in which he collected books and the attention he paid to non-book materials. Hand-

medical practices have also been preserved. Of particular importance is the indigenous animal husbandry practices in titles such as *Mattuvalakam*.

New collections are being added to RMRL. Recently, A.K. Ramanujan's collections have been donated to this library by his wife. Similarly, a part of the collection of Milton Singer has been donated to the library. Recently, a collection of nearly 2000 titles from a private collector of Chennai whose passion was the chronology of *Sangam* works has been received. Almost complete collection of the published works on the Indus script is included in this



Some of the archival material in the Roja Muthiah Library

collection. Part of the collection of Gift Sironmoney, including his publication on the language of the *Narukuravas*, the bird-trapping nomads of Tamil Nadu, has been received. We have also received generous donations of books relating to South Asian studies from scholars such as Kali Charan Bahl. In a major innovation RMRL has suitably adapted technologies developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune, to create

depository of books and documents related to south Indian studies, particularly the cultural and social history of Tamil Nadu. It is the long-term goal of this library will link up with major centres of learning within the country and outside. The library will also offer a model for libraries in their regional languages; all of which share valuable heritage; to develop similar facilities. In fact, RMRL serves as an archive for South Asian cultures, which have long and rich history. (Courtesy: *Indian Folklore*)

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Guts, grit and very hard work

(Continued from last fortnight)



Roja Muthiah

machine-readable catalogue records conforming to international standards. The system is capable of generating a variety of catalogue outputs to meet different needs. At RMRL catalogue data for Tamil items entered in Tamil scripts. The system in use here can display and print the catalogue records in Tamil or Roman script. Transliteration of the data into Roman script is both for display and printing, is automatic. Catalogue records of such change occurs and is entered in this library. The vision of this library is to develop a comprehensive facility that will acquire a variety of printed material — both book and non-book — to serve and maintain through microfilm. The idea is to make a depository of books and documents related to south Indian studies, particularly the cultural and social history of Tamil Nadu.

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see Life as 100 steps. It is any good fortune that I am step 90... but I never forget 89 below," says Sivasankari, a writer, activist and social commentator as she calls, beginning her work within herself when she moved to live in a rural environment. This attitude began to show in her work, which began to reflect social concerns. She was living and changing as a human being. The themes she explored changed her life, her ideas and her perceptions in ways she had never imagined. "This is something writers have to be prepared for," she says. "The themes you choose to write change you forever".

Good writing possesses the very emotions that stirred the writer. More important, those emotions are transferred to the reader. The agonies, ecstasy, anger, restlessness, the searching... the reader must experience it all. Reality checks are also very important. You have to be realistic about your talent, and gauge your work accurately. "Actually, I would advocate a realistic, practical approach to Life as a whole," she says.

The creative process should motivate, not provoke. Everyone has a dark side, perversions within the human psyche. No creative process should bring that out. "That's probably why I never watch horror or even violent movies," she laughs. But then, can repulsion and horror as emotions tap into a person's creativity? Yes, definitely. Something that stirs you, even negatively, can certainly drive you to do something about it. In the case of a writer, write about it. But Sivasankari does not see herself as a preacher. And this is in spite of the fact that she is a social activist both practically and through her writing, and has wrought social change and corrected misconceptions.

For her, the key word appears to be "mutual". The three ingredients necessary for a successful relationship are mutual love, mutual respect and mutual admiration.

Writers are totally dependent on Life for their work. A writer to her is both a watcher and a participant. Other than that she does not believe in definitions or labels.

Does she make a distinction between peddlers and real creators? If there is a difference, where does it lie?

There is a brief silence. Then she says that what distinguishes a writer is the thinking process involved and the depth used in methodology. In her view, there is only good writing and bad writing.

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"No, I do not tell people what to do," she's very emphatic. If the reader sees a message....that's fine by her. But the seeking has to come from within.

Sivasankari has no qualms about putting herself right in the middle of a learning process. During her anti-drug campaign, she insisted the slogan should not read "Say no to drugs". That was too autocratic for her liking. She chose, "Let's say no to drugs"... this meant the message-giver too was included.

Honesty and integrity are also very important ingredients in a writer's work. She put in eight years of research for her *Paalangaal*. Today, it stands as a factual document to generations of rituals and habits. The intentions are right, the work will stand the test of both the reader and time.

Does she have favourites among her works?

No, but she has favourite characters. This could be because those characters have something of her in them; or maybe she aspires to be like them.

Has she ever regretted any piece of work? Does she believe in post-mortems?

Yes, she does post-mortems of her work, but no, she never regrets anything. "I always keep in mind that piece was written by the Siva of that time."

She believes in looking ahead. "Enjoy today's sunset, and await tomorrow's dawn. Do not mourn the dawn that has already passed."

Has she ever written for a specific audience?

Not really, but yes, you do choose your themes keeping the publication in mind. After all, let's face it, the greater the appeal and reach, the better. (The practical touch, you note.)

She is a writer whose works have been translated into other media forms like TV and cinema. Has she ever encountered clashes consequent to the



different demands, or expectations, of each medium?

Well, she never compromises on her work, or her belief in her own creative pieces, but she does keep an open mind. It is important that you understand that each medium does demand its own changes and patterns. "I do give suggestions, but I also accept some."

She sees such collaborations as a team effort, and is mentally prepared for change.

Does anything ever frighten her?

Yes, any form of dependency, she replies candidly. Blindness or paralysis. She believes in taking good care of her health through regular habits and exercise.

What does she read?

All books, except horror. Today, she is into books dealing with self-help and analysis.

Music?

She has an in-depth knowledge of both classical dance and music. She also likes *bhajans*. She likes light music too, but prefers the softer varieties. "I can't take noise!"

In her work, in her manifold social activities, is there any underlying philosophy, any particular intellectual attitude?

"I've spent nearly 33 years writing," she smiles. It is like unfolding one petal at a time. But through it all she believes in keeping her inner self "clean and bright". Dust will come, sweep it away; cobwebs will gather, brush them away. Let the winds of change blow — but remain constant, with an ongoing willingness to learn. A sense of humour helps, because it keeps the child in you alive. Toddler, child, daughter, wife, writer, activist, she sees the many facets of her life like distinct pearls, joined together on the string of her own humanity.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you — that's good rule to follow, she says. Never break the process of evolving into a good human being.... after all, we have been given the gift of choice. We should use it well. She never provokes people unnecessarily, nor gives others the power to provoke her. "I try not to react."

Anything and anyone can prove a guru. "My pet dog taught me all about unconditional love."

What is Sivasankari doing now?

For nearly eight years now, Sivasankari has focussed completely on her prestigious *Knit India through Literature* project.

Sivasankari was struck by a certain realisation ten years ago. We in this country know of one another's cuisine. We know where to go for marble and silk, but we've never really taken the trouble to learn about the people who share this country with us. This realisation, as she explains in her preface in the first volume of the book, is probably when the seed of an idea was born. The aim of this project is to literally knit Indians into a comprehensive whole by bringing to them knowledge of each other's cultural heritage.

Literature by its very nature reflects the essence of the land and the people of its origin. Each volume contains the works of selected writers from a particular area, accompanied by interviews, and brief travelogues containing descriptions and information about each region.

The North, South, East and West of this diverse land will learn of one another. Not only will this understanding help us realise our common problems and therefore come up with common solutions, it will also bring home a much-needed lesson in seeing ourselves as a colourful, varied but ultimately one unit.

Her 'Knit India' project, she feels, will be her contribution towards preserving the unity of our country. Her dream is to see all the volumes of 'Knit India' present in every school, college and library across the country.

* * *

The question remains....are Sivasankaris born or made? Like most things in life, it is a mixture of both. Picture a human being born with immense universal potential, which could go to waste or, even worse, realise very little of itself. Instead, the potential flowers in a nurturing atmosphere are just right for it.

The person evolves into someone who sees the moment, seizes it....and grows, not merely because she "had it in her anyway", but because she brought guts, grit, and very hard work to a hungry soul. Such people light up everything they touch. "Like pearls on a string," as she said earlier.

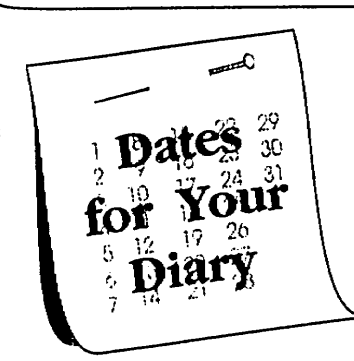
Pearls... that's a good example.

For they too are made painstakingly, layer upon layer, and they are iridescent:

Like Sivasankari.

Ranjitha Ashok

(Concluded)



February 3: Exhibition of South Indian Bronzes. (At C.P. Arts Centre).

February 5: 'International Painting Camp', by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in collaboration with Government College of Arts and Crafts,

Chennai, in connection with the 10th Triennale - India, an International Exhibition of Contemporary Art at New Delhi. (At Government College of Arts and Crafts, Chennai.)

Till February 10: Exhibition of paintings by Viji Nagashwaran. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

Till February 27: 'Premier Art Show'. Exhibition of paintings and sculptures. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

February 3: A symposium on South Indian Bronzes organised by the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research.

Scholars participating include, Dr K.V Raman - South Indian bronzes; Dr. Srinivasa Desikan - Bronzes in the Madras Museum collections; Dr. Chandramurthy - Inscribed bronzes.

There will be a slide show of South Indian Bronzes by V.K. Rajamani.

February 5 - March 3: 'Ecosystems of India' - a preview of the exhibits (typical flora and fauna of some unique habitats of India) that will decorate the CPREEC's permanent exhibition at the Arignar Anna Zoo, Vandalur. (At the C.P. Arts Centre).

• *Another step towards...*

Making Chennai coaching capital

That Chennai is fast becoming India's coaching capital, at least where cricket is concerned, was underlined recently by the launching of 'The Nest' a cricket academy run by former Test opener V.B. Chandrasekhar.

Chandrasekhar or VB as he is known to everyone, is a cricketer who brought a great deal of passion to his cricket in his playing days, even if it tended to be unbridled on occasions. He was a brilliant strokemaker at the top of the order, aided by a very good eye and sound technique, until one memorable, electrifying innings in the Irani Cup permanently changed the way he approached his batting. (At least that is how I have understood the transformation in VB's batting from being freestroking to almost reckless after that fateful match).

Though he did not make a mark at the international level, Chandrasekhar continued to amass runs in domestic cricket

and earned a reputation for being a positive, aggressive captain, who played to win. He has led teams in the highly competitive Tamil Nadu Cricket Association league at Chennai, the most notable of them sponsored by India Cements, his employer and the Goa Ranji Trophy side. Though he has his share of detractors, few have questioned his commitment and passion for the game.

• by
V. Ramnarayan

The word 'passion' recurs in any conversation about this dynamic, sometimes controversial cricketer who once knocked down the stumps at both ends after a couple of bad umpiring decisions! According to his well wishers, VB has succeeded in controlling that passion and channelising it into constructive outlets, coaching young players being the most promi-

nent of them. Three years ago, he started the V.B. Chandrasekhar Cricket Academy at the Guru Nanak College ground in a suburb of Chennai, getting it inaugurated by former Australian captain and coach Bobby Simpson.

On January 7, the Nest launched a new facility at a spanking new cricket ground located at Kelambakam, some forty minutes' driving from the city. The ground looked like a massive green carpet and at the pavilion end stood an impressive building which will house trainees during weekends and summer coaching camps.

At the new facility, VB plans to hold matches and net practice sessions throughout the year but only during weekends. He will also be inviting Test cricketers and senior coaches to address the boys on the finer points of the game. 24 trainees are expected to attend every weekend through the year and during vacations.

The Kelambakkam ground boasts nine different types of turf wickets with a view to providing varied exposures to the trainees. Preparing these wickets has been a labour of love on Chandra's part and he has had the assistance of a willing and capable curator in P.R. Viswanathan, a former cricketer himself. Even if that sounds like a bit of overkill, you cannot but admire the thoroughness with which VB has approached the task.

The turnout on the inaugural day had to be seen to be believed. Parents, trainees, fellow cricketers, media and officials thronged the residential complex ground. India Cements Managing Director N. Srinivasan promised VB, one of his employees, every possible help, visibly moved by the response to the opening. Special guest Rahul Dravid offered his services any time VB wanted them and T A Sekar promised to take promising fast bowlers from the academy into the MRF Pace Foundation.

Going by the magnificent response that VB's academy has so far elicited, there is every



V.B. Chandrasekhar

prospect of the school going to become one of Tamil Nadu's leading cricket centres.

SOME WAYS TO STOP AIR POLLUTION

(Continued from Page 5)

have to be upgraded on a war footing. China has an appreciably better quality of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation than India. So we cannot have an excuse of over-population, lack of resources etc. What we really lack is the action to recognise, accept and solve a problem of this importance.

14) Alternative sources of fuel that are environmentally cleaner and cheaper must be found and encouraged as a national policy to run vehicles, industries and other energy-consuming equipment/products. Brazil is one of the countries which have increased the use of alcohol as fuel for vehicles which is much more cleaner environmentally and efficient. In a country like India, solar, wind and sea-waves energy are available in plenty and can be used for several applications.

Until the people get into the habit of keeping the environment clean, both the people

and the government will have to make conscientious, determined and dedicated efforts for the very basic requirements of human beings — clean, fresh and breathable quality of air is a demanding task, but certainly possible! Several other nations of the world have cleansed themselves and are continuously doing so for the people's sake and for the sake of the world at large. And India should wake up to the evils of a foul environment taking a huge toll on its population through respiratory and other chronic sufferings and deadly diseases like cancer. While all sorts of pollution affects humanity there is none that affects faster than air pollution, the prime culprit of which is the automobile exhaust pollution. We owe it to ourselves to keep our air clean — for our sake and for the sake of generations to come. Indians, the government and the administration have it in them to do this bare minimum task for their own sake.

Answers to Quiz

1. Australia; 2. Brain Caps; 3. The indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft had its maiden flight; 4. Milan anti-tank missile; 5. Stephen Hawking; 6. The Premji (\$6.9 billions, 43rd place) and Ambani (\$6.6 billion, 46th) families; 7. Bharat Shah; 8. The Maha Kumbh; 9. He is the world's first genetically modified monkey.

* * *

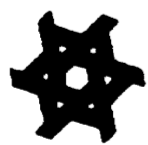
10. R. Vedavalli; 11. Indra

Nooyi; 12. Tambaram and High Court on the 21G route.

* * *

13. The Kalakadu-Mundanthurai tiger reserve; 14. Excellence in reproductive health and population programmes; 15. To create a comprehensive sewer system to clean the major river water systems; 16. Kural Peetha Virudhu; 17. Prof. A.S. Gnanasambandam; 18. G. Lakshmanan; 19. Kamal Haasan; 20. The Rajapalayam.

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