

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

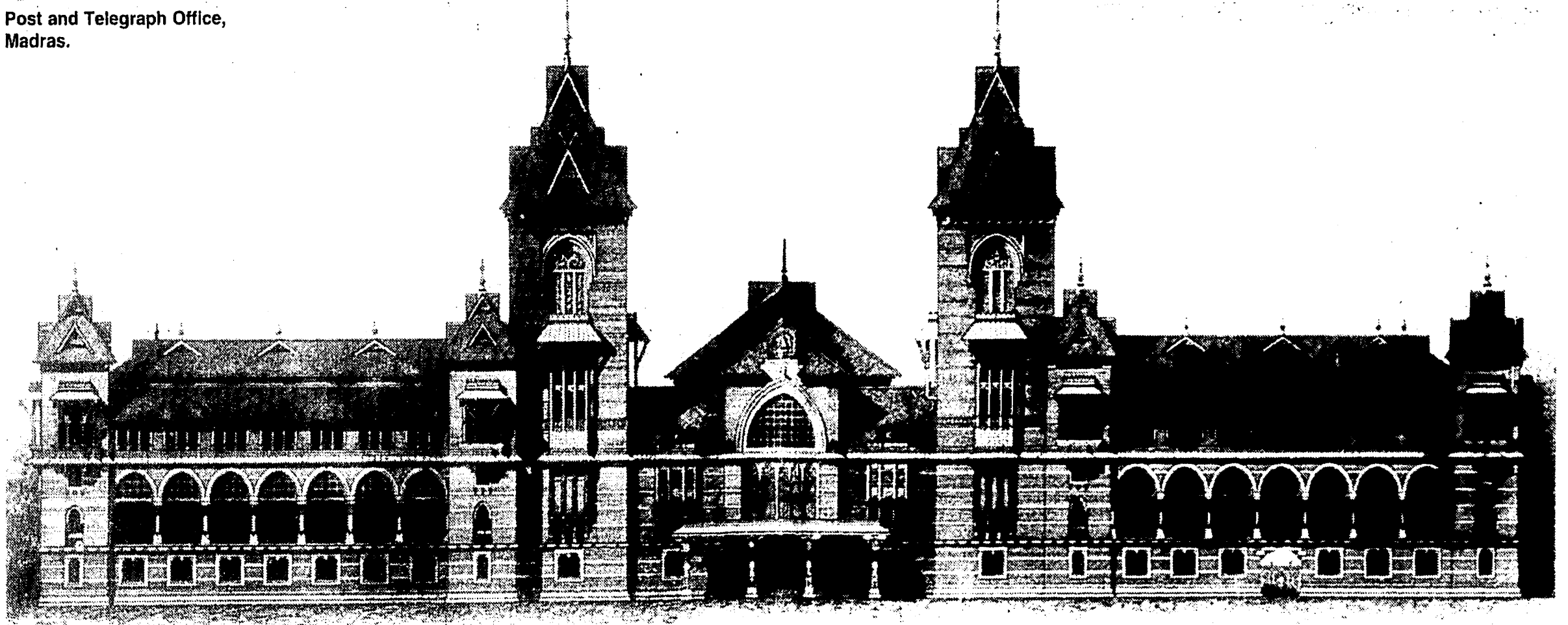
INSIDE

- So few subaltern studies
- Cleaning up the waterways
- Man of courage & foresight
- Music & dance archive
- In India's Chess capital

Vol. X No. 21

FREE ISSUE

February 16-28, 2001

Post and Telegraph Office,
Madras.

Will this help restore them?

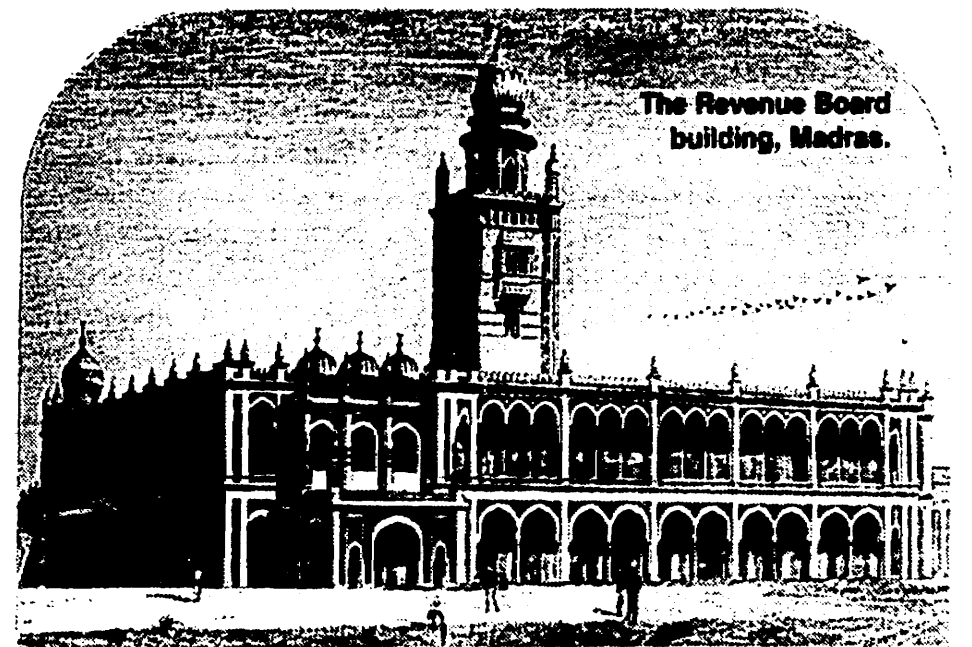
(By S.Muthiah)

It may have been a bit of serendipity, but I hope that bit of fortune — and the pictures published here today from that find — will help restore some of the city's finest buildings, among the best examples of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the country.

The pictures here come from a book I came across a few weeks ago by chance. Calling after years on a young kinsman who is an avid reader and has an eclectic taste in books, I was invited to take a look at his library. How I envied him, the space, storage and atmosphere, though not necessarily the collection. Nevertheless, spotting a title or two that interested me, I decided to browse, taking advantage of an invitation to spend as long as I wished in the polished wood-and-leather-rich comfort of the

room. And that's when I came across a book I'd never heard of but is a treasure everyone interested in the architecture of the British period in India should possess or, at least, read. It's called *An Imperial Vision — Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* and is by Thomas R. Metcalf, at the time the book was published, 1989, a Professor of History at the University of California. Perhaps because the book was published by a university or because Metcalf had no contact with Madras during his

several visits to India — to conclude from the lack of mention of anyone in Madras in his acknowledgements — the book never turned up here as far as I recall. Neither do I remember reading anything about it in the Indian Press at the time — and I was well into my interest in Madras by then. But as they say, better late than never and I was delighted to catch up with Metcalf's work. It's truly a treasure-trove on the work of men like Chisholm and Irwin, Mant and Jacob, Lutyens and Baker

The Revenue Board
building, Madras.

— and even Benfield, whom I credit with kicking off the Indo-Saracenic form, rates honourable mention.

One thing I found from the book — something that our archaeologists and architects might well be aware of but certainly do not reveal in their work — is that the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, has a fantastic library and photographic archive with a wealth of material on India. Journals like *Indian Engineering*, *The Building News* and *The Builder* — and no doubt many others — all cited in the book, also appear to have a wealth of illustration and detail about the buildings British architects did in India in the hundred years between 1857 and 1957. I wish the Madras Museum or the Tamil Nadu Archives would make every effort to get copies of at least the material concerning the former Madras

Presidency from these sources so that there may remain a record of them here for the future.

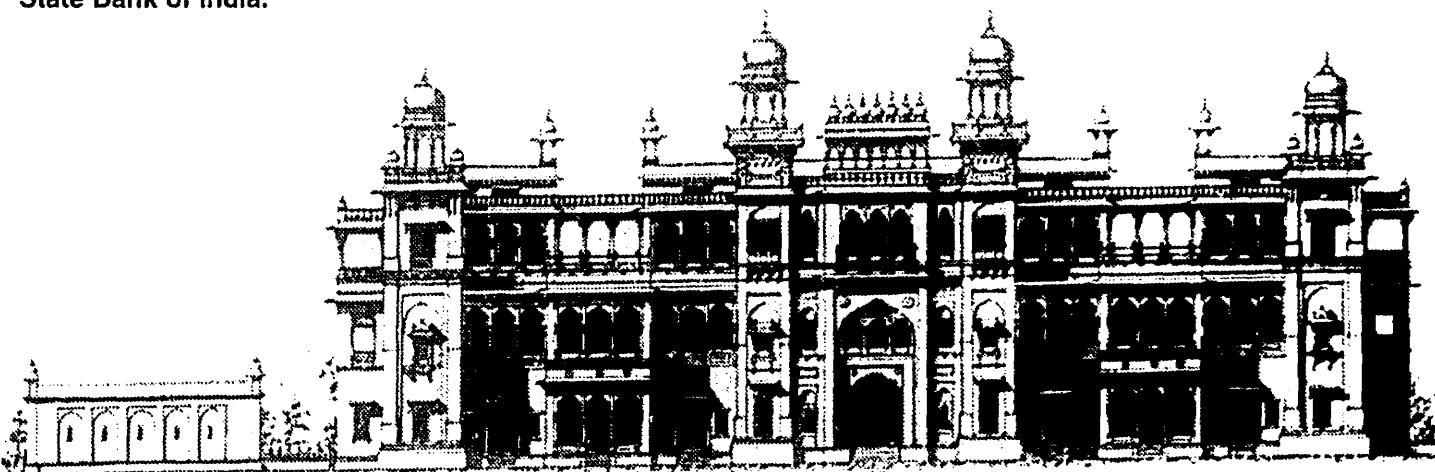
The second discovery in the book was the sketches featured here, revealing how spectacular these Madras buildings were when first built and they can again be if, following these drawings, they could be restored. The pictures on this page are:

Page top: The Post and Telegraph Office, Madras, designed by R.F.Chisholm. From *The Building News*, 27 November 1874, in the RIBA Library.

Page right: The Revenue Board Building, Madras, designed by R.F. Chisholm. From *The Builder*, 31 December 1870.

Page bottom: Bank of Madras, now State Bank of India, main branch office on Rajaji Salai. This was the competition prize design by Swinton Jacob

(Continued on Page 7)

Bank of Madras, now
State Bank of India.

Effective composting starts at home

(Continued from last fortnight)

Establishing an effective composting operation does not start at the gate to the composting plant but right back at the household. The primary and secondary collection systems have to be set up to be as appropriate to the particular city or town as the composting plant. This high percentage of organic content in the waste gives high waste densities. Typical densities to be expected as we go along the collection hierarchy are shown in Table 2 using Ho Chi Minh City as an example.

tricycles at a time – truck capacity around 2 tonnes. — Small trucks go to the transfer station to transfer the waste into larger trucks – capacity 10 – 20 tonnes; and — Large trucks take the waste to the landfill – up to 25 km. The major problem with this system was the loss of time and the double handling involved in transferring from the tricycles to the small trucks. Consultants working with the City Council (Manus Coffey Associates) developed a scheme based on using small transfer stations (STS) in the community. These local stations, whilst small and low-cost, allowed the tricycles to

Table 2: Waste densities in Ho Chi Minh City

	Waste density
Primary collection (tricycle)	250-350kg/m ³ (1)
Local transfer into	
small trucks (2 tonne capacity)	400-500kg/m ³ (1)
Vehicle to landfill (non-compactor)	450-650kg/m ³

(1) There are established recycling routes for materials such as paper and plastic, which are typically removed at these points increasing the density.

We need to forget about using wheelie bins and compactor trucks which are typical in industrialised countries with high paper and plastic content in the waste stream. The system of collection needs to be designed based on the individual communities. For example, in Ho Chi Minh City, much of the primary collection is by tricycle.

At first sight this might appear to be primitive and an area for radical change and upgrading. However, the system is low cost, self-funding (householders pay for the collection directly), relatively high capacity (waste densities up to 300 kg/m³) and the tricycles fit into the narrow streets. In addition, the tricycles are also rapid emptying. The real input needed at this point in the system is to ensure greater coverage and a more regular service with improved working conditions for the tricycle operators.

The difficulty with the Ho Chi Minh City plant was the waste collection hierarchy, which was essentially as follows: — Tricycles collect the waste from the house hold — capacity upto 300 kg; — Tricycles wait (in some cases for several hours) at rendez-vous points for a small truck to collect from up to 7

discharge, without waiting, into 15 tonne containers which were then hauled directly to the landfill. This eliminated the need for the small 2 tonne trucks, eliminated the tricycle waiting time and provided sufficient local storage of waste to allow transfer to the landfill at night. The night time delivery was essential because in HCMC there is a ban on trucks on the road in the day time due to the very high level of road use by bicycles and motorcycles. Taking trucks off the road in the day prevents the traffic coming to a standstill.

There is considerable flexibility in this type of system. For example, if a need for composting was established, then the containers could be sent to the compost plant rather than the landfill.

Establishing an effective composting system

In relation to composting, what is needed is a low capital cost, well-managed system that fits in with local requirements. These requirements revolve around such things as: — Deciding on an appropriate composting system, e.g. centralised, community-based, etc.;



Ten years ago, conservation and restoration of art forms was little heard of in India. A recent exhibition at the Madras Museum demonstrated what restoration can achieve and since then, Dr. V. Jeyaraj, Curator, Chemical Conservation and Research Laboratory, has received numerous enquiries about how the lab can help persons and institutions with old paintings, maps, photographs etc.

The lab recently trained a team of students from the Government College of Arts and Crafts, Painting Department — Anandakumar, Balaji, Ramesh, Senthikumar and Thamarai Mandan — and, involving them, undertook the three-month project to restore the pictures that were on display. These included old paintings of Raja Serfoji and Ramaniya, photographs from the Government Eye Infirmary, including those of E.F. Drake Brockman, the first Superintendent of the Eye Hospital and sporting his signature, Divan Bahadur Dr. K. Komam Nayyar, the first Indian Superintendent of the Eye Hospital, and Dr. K.C. Shankara Menon and other heads of the institution, besides some oil paintings from Madras Medical College and from a private collection.

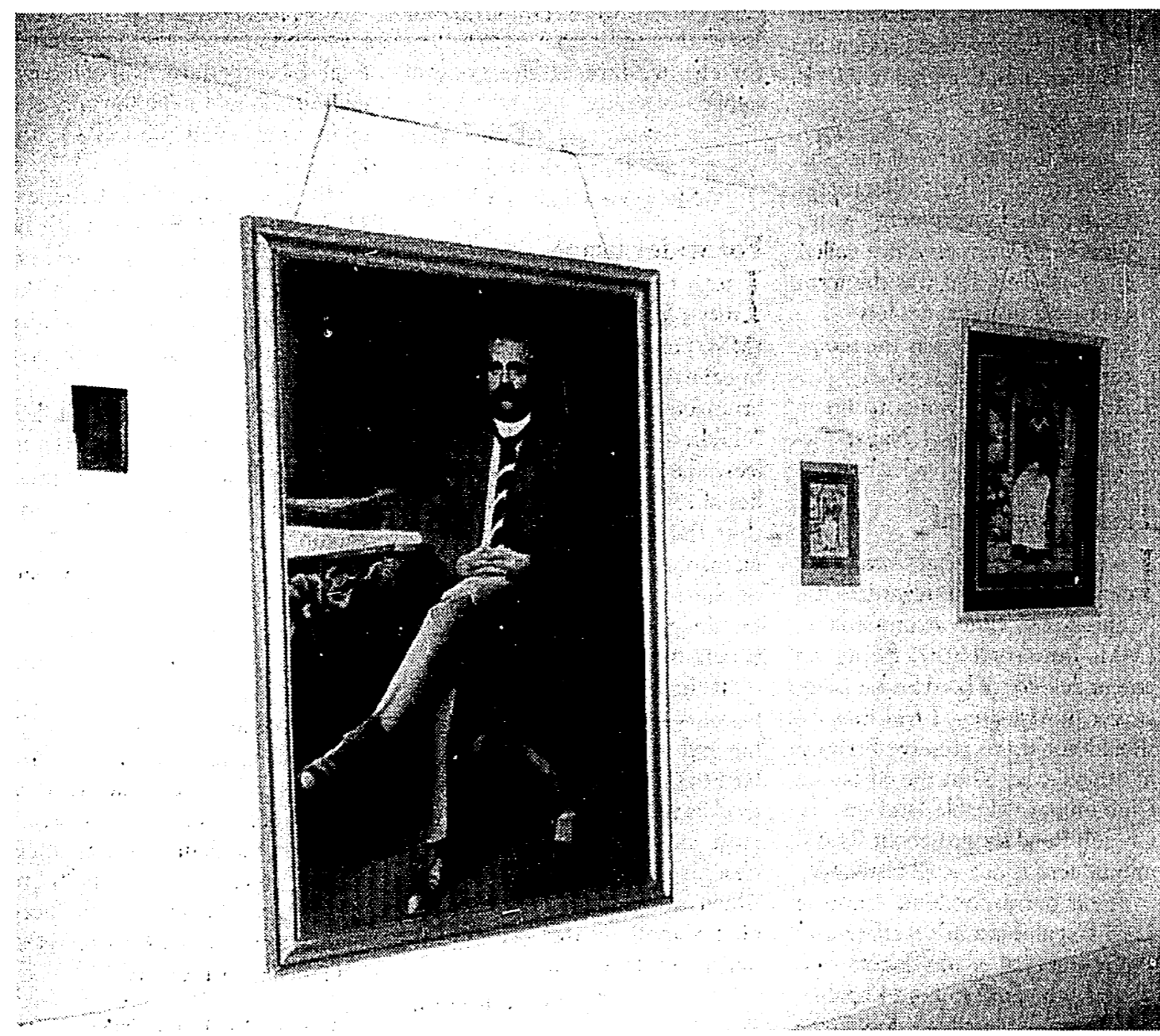
THE OLD... & THE NEW

A 1929 cloth-laminated map of Madras Presidency (about 188 x 162 cm), belonging to the Southern Railway, came to the lab browned by acidity, with the paper in one corner torn and lost, the folds broken and the map detached from the cloth in many places. In an exercise which went on for about a year and a half, the map was restored and was the centrepiece of the exhibition.

Thanjavur paintings damaged by cracking, loss of pigment and with the gold darkened, have also been restored. Speaking to Madras Musings, Dr. R. Kannan, Commissioner of Museums, said photographs and paintings had also been restored at Madras Christian College and the Royapettah Hospital.

Our OLD and the NEW this fortnight are the before and after versions (above) of a photograph of Lt. Col. Kirkpatrick, IMS, Superintendent of the Eye Hospital, that were displayed at the lab's exhibition. How the OLD and the NEW were presented at the exhibition is shown below, the miniatures being photographs of the un-restored work. The large portrait however is an artist's 'copy' based on the original and not a restoration.

Rajind N Christy



— Selecting locally sourced equipment, or at least imported equipment that could be easily maintained locally; — Establishing an operating protocol which ensures a safe, readily marketable product; and — Establishing a long-term secure market.

If expertise does not exist locally in-house, then there is a need to work with experts who are aware both of how the composting process works and how to set up composting systems appropriate to the local conditions. This collaboration can either be through a direct link with consultants and/or

contractors who have the necessary expertise or with individuals who have been appropriately trained.

Several UK companies are making progress in these markets by tying their expertise with local companies. This type

(Continued on Page 5)

• The money's promised...

Now to clean up the waterways!

The Tamil Nadu government has at last launched a project to clean up the major rivers and waterways in the City and prevent pollution. This Rs. 1700-crore project is part of the National River Conservation Project and it will be extended to a dozen other places in the State.

The 'The Chennai Waterways Project', initiated by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, is expected to be completed in 2003. The State and Central Pollution Control Boards, the National River Water Conservation Directorate, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Chennai Corporation are all involved in the project together with Metro-water.

The sewage interception and diversion and treatment parts of the project, estimated to cost Rs.720 crore, will get a Central grant of Rs.491.52 crore. The remaining Rs.228.48 crore would be met by the Metro-

water which has already got the work underway.

Other aspects of the project include macro drainage network at a cost of Rs.236.90 crore to be implemented by the PWD, micro drainage network at a cost of Rs.109.25 crore to be implemented by Chennai Municipal Corporation, relocation of slums at a cost of Rs.613.50 crore by Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and

• by
A Staff Reporter

project formulation, monitoring etc. at a cost of Rs. 20.20 crore by C.M.D.A.

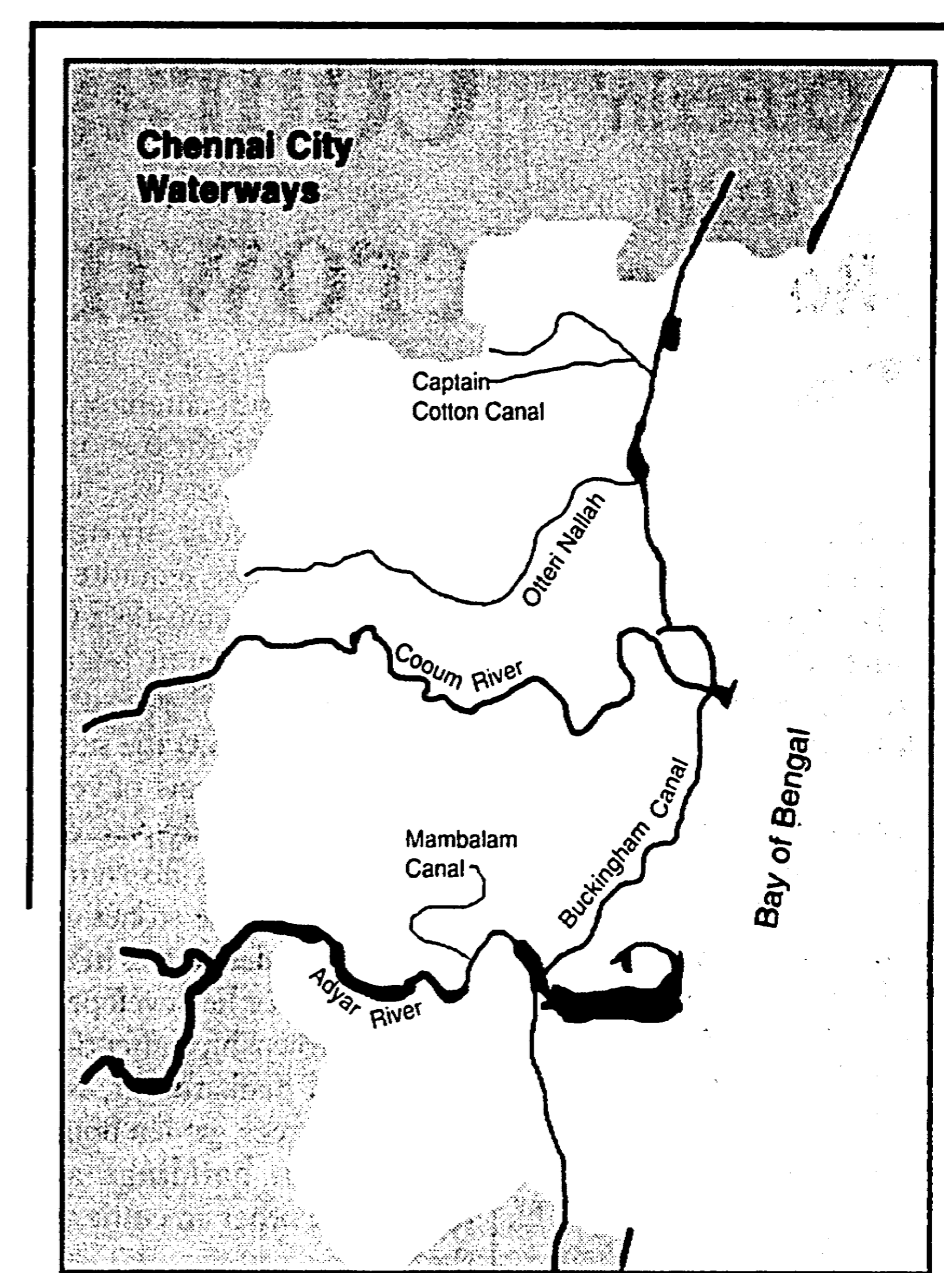
Chennai has got the single largest grant for a single city under NRCP.

Other major rivers and two lakes in the hill stations in the State are also to be cleaned up under different conservation projects. These include the Kaveri River conservation project covering

Karur (Rs. 35 crore), Tiruchirappalli (Rs. 120 crore), Thanjavur (Rs. 70 crore), Kumbakonam (Rs. 46 crore), Myladuthurai (Rs. 42 crore) and Tiruvarur (Rs. 36 crore), the Vaigai River conservation project to clean up Madurai at a cost of Rs. 150 crore and the Tamaraparani River conservation project at a cost of Rs. 60 crore. Tiruchendur and Rameswaram come under the Coastal Pollution Abatement project and Rs. 9 crore will be spent on it.

Udagamandalam and Kodikal lakes would be restored under National Lakes Conservation Plan at a cost of Rs. 3 crore and Rs. 9.5 crore, respectively.

With Rs. 300 crore financial support from Hudco, Tamil Nadu last year launched its 'Millennium Project' to clean up the Chennai waterways. The project is being implemented by the Public Works Department. This work will be further improved in the new project.



Two rivers fed by the Cortelliar

Of the two rivers within the city, the Cooum enters the Bay of Bengal in the vicinity of Fort St. George, and also fills the moat. The Adyar, to the south, enters the Bay by the Theosophical Society gardens. These two rivers are characterised by meandering courses, a feature of rivers flowing through plains with a low gradient.

These two rivers when traced westwards, i.e., upstream, join a wide river known as the Cortelliar. This river flows northwards and enters the Pulicat Lake. It has given rise to a wide alluvial tract near Ponneri, known as the Cortelliar Basin, which is an important source of groundwater. Tubewells of large diameter abound in this area and irrigate extensive paddy fields. These tubewells also supplement the water supply to the northern parts of the city.

When the Cortelliar in turn is traced upstream, it joins the Palar near Vellore. Hence geologists consider the Cortelliar an abandoned course of the Palar. The Palar appears to have changed its course in recent times.

Abundant artefacts found on the banks of the Cortelliar go to show that it was an area of ancient civilisation. The wonderful collection of stone implements and pottery gathered by that famous geologist of the Geological Survey of India, Robert Bruce Foote, stands testimony to the antiquity of the area. The Foote collection can be seen in the Madras Museum.

The Cooum joins the Cortelliar near Cooum village and evidently draws its water from that river. The Adyar gets its supply of water from the overflow of the Chembarambakkam lake, which, in turn, is supplied from the Cortelliar.

R.N.P. Arogyaswamy

Composting begins at home

(Continued from Page 4)

of arrangement then utilises a range of local skills to design and build the appropriate equipment. It is these skills after all which make these economies 'rapidly developing'. Cayenne Ltd., for example, have been involved for many years in India working on a range of composting plants for mixed municipal solid waste. These range in size from 150 to 700 tonnes per day in large cities such as Calcutta, and in each case working with local companies has been the key to success.

Many overseas specialists have spent time in the UK with universities and/or industry to develop expertise in the composting area. An excellent example of this is Professor Tinoco Pereira Neto from the University of Vicosa, Brazil, who has an acknowledged expertise on waste recycling and composting.

Following his research at the University of Leeds, the two Universities have worked closely together on appropriate composting systems for developing countries. In the latest phase of this work, over 150 small cities in the state of

Minas Gerais, Brazil, are implementing small scale recycling and composting facilities.

These schemes involve 'signing up' the city council and then developing an appropriate small scale system utilising low cost labour. The small scale composting scheme uses turned windrows where all the turning is done by hand. The compost produced is used locally to improve the quality of the soil and hence its productivity.

At the other end of the spectrum in terms of size, companies such as Binnie, Black and Veatch offer a complete package for waste management with an increasing emphasis on composting systems. Recent work by the company included a feasibility study for the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, part of which covered the technical-economic evaluation of small footprint composting plants for the city. Currently, as part of the Solid Waste Master Plan, discussions are in progress for a 700 tonnes per day composting plant. The proposals include a design-build-operate (DBO) option which will ensure that local expertise in design and operation is developed.

A group at the University of Kebangsaan, in Malaysia under the leadership of Professor Hassan Basri, has worked for some years with Universities in the UK to develop a series of expert systems focussed on waste management issues in developing countries. One of the most recent developments is for the design of composting systems. The advantage of these systems is that they bring a range of expertise electronically to the end user avoiding the cost of employing individual experts. Whilst the system is not designed to totally replace established expertise, it can be used to develop a familiarity with a new concept and in some cases to go beyond that.

The UK composting industry has its own association, The Composting Association, that ensures the dissemination of good practice. In these days of Internet use, there is no reason why developing economies should not set up similar local networks to support one another. (Courtesy: TPI [Technology Partnership Initiative], July 2000.)

(Concluded)

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.

Name

Address

.....

.....

Note: Overseas postage extra. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Gulf: Rs. 375/year. US & Europe: Rs 425/year. Cheques payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period January 16th to January 31st. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu).

1. Name the African leader who died after being shot by his bodyguard on January 16th.
2. With what prestigious national award have 12-year old Sunil Singh and 13-year old Mukesh Kumar, both from J&K, been honoured?
3. Which Asian President was forced to quit on January 20th in the face of public criticism?
4. Where was the epicentre of the earthquake which hit Gujarat on January 26th?
5. Who was the Indian the Pope named a Cardinal on January 21st?
6. Name the two warships commissioned into the Navy on January 22nd.
7. Which sport has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001?
8. Who have been awarded the Bharat Ratna this year?
9. Who has been chosen for the 1999 Jnanpith Award?

10. Where was a marble pillar to commemorate 50 years of the Republic unveiled in Chennai on January 25th?
11. Which country's PM was conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the Madras University on January 20th?
12. Bus trivia. Which route operates with a staggering 143 per cent load, yields the maximum revenue to the MTC?

13. Name the American who built the first bridge across the Adyar at Saidapet.
14. After whom is the Tri-Service auditorium in the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington named?
15. Name K. Balachander's 100th film.
16. Which was the first church to be built in Fort St. George?
17. What is the *Mozhippar Thyagal Manimandapam*?
18. Which former United Nations Under Secretary General has been awarded the Padma Vibhushan?
19. What is the preferred community name of the Nattukkottai Chettians?
20. Where was the State's first and the country's second multipurpose permanent exhibition complex opened on January 31st?

(Answers on Page 8)

Courage and foresight crowned with success

January was the centenary of the birth of the late S.N.N. Sankaralinga Iyer, the promoter in 1946 of India Cements, the first major industrial unit to be established in Tirunelveli District.

R. Ramjeedas Iyer, who was to join the Board of the new company had wondered, when invited to do so, how a banker, though successful in his line, had the boldness to start an industry, without himself having the requisite know-how of a cement factory. At that time, no other industrialist of Tamil Nadu had embarked upon or even thought of entering the field. Sankaralinga Iyer dared.

Before the cement factory was erected in Talaiyuthu (Tirunelveli District) the site of the factory was devoid of vegetation, except prickly-pear and shrubs. There was no sign of water. Rocks, loose stones and pebbles abounded. It was in this uninviting place he developed a beautiful township, affectionately called Sankarnagar, with huge shade trees, garden houses and modern buildings and schools and other amenities for the staff.

An avid reader, Sankaralinga Iyer took a special interest in developments elsewhere in the world in a variety of areas. Mechanisation was one of those areas of interest.

When after the war, he began concentrating on agriculture, purchasing extensive fallow lands, he developed the lands by mechanised means. To work in his three farms in Tirunelveli District, he imported heavy earthmovers, combine harvesters, manure spreaders and other equipment.

He brought mechanisation to gypsum-gathering in 1947/48. He found men and women in Coimbatore District engaged in picking the ore from the ground was a time-consuming process and resulted in cement plant having to wait for supplies of gypsum. He imported equipment to mechanise the process and speeded things up.

Then he found what he called salt pan gypsum in the waste from the pans that was thrown away.

This deposit obtained while manufacturing salt was the equivalent to mineral gypsum in quality. Salt pan owners were willing to let him take away this 'waste' for free. But Sankaralinga Iyer insisted on paying and worked out the price himself. A by-product that had been going waste, Marine Gypsum, thus, became an essential raw material for the manufacture of cement on account of Sankaralinga Iyer's progressive spirit.

Born in 1901 in Kallidai-kurichi, which has given Tamil Nadu many pioneers in commerce and industry in free India, Sankaralinga Iyer, a self-taught man, began life as an indigenous banker.

His first important act of consolidation was to convert his

private banking business into a limited concern. He established the headquarters of the Indo-Commercial Bank at Mayavaram and collected together a group of friends who continued to be his associates for life. While the bank grew steadily in the early years, his own mind was occupied in exploring certain industrial lines. Eventually, the Bank was merged with Punjab National Bank.

A Centenary Feature

The Nanco Printing Ink Factory and Nanco Rubber Factory were his first industrial ventures. But he was dreaming of bigger things. When the suitability of local limestone for cement manufacture was discovered and Sankaralinga Iyer realised that cement production would expand rapidly to support the public works programme expected after World War II, he knew where his world lay.

Not many know the strong and permanent interest this man, who read everything he could lay his hands on in Tamil and English, developed in Hindi. He was a staunch advocate of Hindi as a link language.

It was Avadhnanadan, who was conducting Hindi classes under the auspices of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras, who taught Sankaralinga Iyer Hindi in 1927-30 when he was living in Linghi Chetty Street and doing business. So great was his interest in Hindi that in a very few months' time he became profi-

cient in the language. Just then Avadhnanadan's book, *Hindi-English Self Instructor*, written in collaboration with a colleague, M. Satyanarayana, was published by the Hindi Prachar Sabha. The Sabha wanted to publish a translation of the book in Tamil. Sankaralinga Iyer offered to translate the book. He was not very proficient in Tamil grammar, but he at once began to study Tamil grammar in order to make the translation accurate. The *Tamil-Hindi Self Instructor* still bears his name. He not only made a free gift of the translation to the Sabha but also paid for the printing of the first edition of the book.

Avadhnanadan, recalling Sankaralinga Iyer's association with the Hindi Prachar Sabha, of which Gandhiji was patron, wrote on the death of his student in 1972, "Although he was a businessman by profession, he was a true nationalist at heart. He wore khadi and appreciated the services of Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders". Gandhiji started the Salt Satyagraha in 1930. His famous Dandi March filled the whole country with a spirit of defiance against the then Government. Thousands of people were courting arrest every day. The workers of the Hindi Prachar Sabha too were eager to throw themselves in the movement. But Mahatmajji, the life-president of the Sabha, stated that whosoever wanted to join the movement must resign from

of the medieval European Theatre through the church. This stage version takes up many aspects of the medieval mystery plays, their theatrical practices and mode of playing that are reminiscent of similar theatre traditions in India. The presence of Kathak and Bharata Nattam dance elements add more local flavour.

In the dance at Bauhaus, Kurt Schmidt's choreography presents colourful, life-size geometric dance figures, vaguely reminiscent of humans, that are controlled from the back by hidden dancers, so that there are always abstract images relating to a particular tableau on stage. (At Kalakshetra Theatre, at 6.30 p.m.)

February 21-24, 26-28: The New Berlin: A slide show. (At 7 p.m. at the Max Mueller Bhavan)

February 21: Architecture in Berlin after 1989: A lecture by Hans-Joachim Abel, Director-Technical, HOCHTIEF (India) Private Limited, to inaugurate an exhibition focussing on Berlin's development since the fall of the Wall. The architectural development of the Potsdamer Platz, Reichstagsgebäude, Bundeskanzleramt, Embassy Buildings etc., planned by famous architects, will be on view. (At Max Mueller Bhavan, 7.30 p.m. Exhibition all days February 21-28.)

February 24 and 25: Workshop at Dakshin Chitra. Chettinad beadwork on the first day and *Home Remedies* on the second. Also pottery workshops on all weekends. For details, Tel. 4918943/4462435.



S.N.N. Sankaralinga Iyer.

the service of the Sabha he served. He did not want the constructive work of spreading Hindi to suffer. This threw cold water on the workers' plans. The workers were poorly paid and the Sabha had no funds to support their families while they were in jail. "One fine evening I gave this news to Sankaralinga Iyer. He thought for a moment and said: 'I shall pay half the salary of those workers of the Sabha for the period they are confined to jail, for taking part in the nationalist movement'. Many workers of the Sabha took advantage of this generous offer and joined the movement."

Sankaralinga Iyer was a voracious reader. He was, as a result, well informed on a wide range of subjects. He would make a study in depth of every subject he got interested in. His reading covered books on travel, history, geography, autobiographies and biographies, fiction, geology and even defence strategy.

H. Balarama Rao in 1972 recalled that "in the early years of the War, when Hitler was invading and conquering one country after another in Europe and when the fall of Paris was imminent, Sankaralinga Iyer would at our tea/coffee sessions in the Bank's premises, explain to us with the aid of maps every move of the invading army and predict the possible course of the battles to come with amazing accuracy." Indeed, Sankaralinga Iyer was a man of many parts.



February 19: Theater der Klänge, in collaboration with Estampie (Music), under the direction of Jorg U. Lensing, presents in co-operation with Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, *Ludus Damielis*, a medieval mystery play, and *Dance at the Bauhaus*, the mechanical ballet.

The former is a well-known story about the mysterious apparition of the *Meine, Techel, Phares* and its deciphering by Daniel, as well as his rescue from the lion's den. It is part of the renaissance

Planned to make a cultural difference

Renowned sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar and his talented daughter Anoushka captivated a discerning Chennai audience in the concert of the year held recently at the Music Academy. The event was intended to be a fund raiser for SAMUDRI, the Subbulakshmi Sadasivam Music and Dance Resources Institute, whose home will be raised at Sirudavoor, off the old Mahabalipuram Road. The maestro is the Chairman of SAMUDRI's apex council.

SAMUDRI was established in February 1999 by the Sruti Foundation, Chennai, which publishes *Sruti*, India's premier music and dance magazine. Founder and Chief Editor of *Sruti*, N.Pattabhi Raman, who conceptualised SAMUDRI, says, "The perception that culture is as much a basic need of our society as food, clothing or shelter is fast diminishing. Rather alarming are the disturbing trends in the presentation of the performing arts and the ignorance of unique aspects of our cultural heritage. To meet these problems and create and utilise opportunities for the further development of the fine arts, within an institutional framework, is imperative. And so, SAMUDRI."

Conceived as a resources institute, SAMUDRI aims at:

- Preservation and promotion of quality of performances through improvement mainly of the teaching-learning process.
- Development of a future constituency for Indian culture, especially for the arts of music and dance.

It will be unique among cultural institutions, undertaking research, experimental work, pilot studies and workshops. It will also offer innovative and practical strategies, and learning materials for individuals or institutions. It will NOT undertake direct training of musicians, dancers, or critics. Relying on the development and utilisation of a broad-based, multi-tiered global network of professionals and institutions, supported by a minimum headquarters staff, it will provide the vision and the leadership for them as well as the information they will need.

With a unique Storage and Retrieval System in place at SAMUDRI, it will be possible to retrieve information or material belonging to any classification (textual matter, photographs, drawings, cartoons, paintings, audio materials, audio-visual materials or artifacts) on any individual, institution, art form, instrument or topic stored in the archives. This will also be supplemented by an International Register of Indian Performing Arts (IRIPA) available in VCDs or online.

SAMUDRI will have six function divisions: The Archives and Library Division

by Shobha Menon

(A&L), the Learning Resources Centre (LRC), the Centre for Creative Interaction (CCI) and the Research Studies and Documentation Centre (RSDC) will look into aspects of preserving the integrity and enhancing the quality of music and dance performances. Creating a better awareness of India's civilisation and cultural heritage among

youngsters and inculcating a positive attitude towards heritage is the specific mandate of the Centre for Cultural Orientation. The Centre for International Cultural Interaction aims to create better awareness of the impact of foreign cultures on Indian civilisations and vice versa.

SAMUDRI's apex body, the General Assessment and Advisory Council, will ensure accountability to sponsors and supporters. Besides its Chairman, Pandit Ravi Shankar, its membership will include Dr. Abdul Kalam, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Mrinalini Sarabhai and Girish Karnad.

To make SAMUDRI a sustainable venture, the projected budget is of about Rs.10 crore

Will this help restore them?

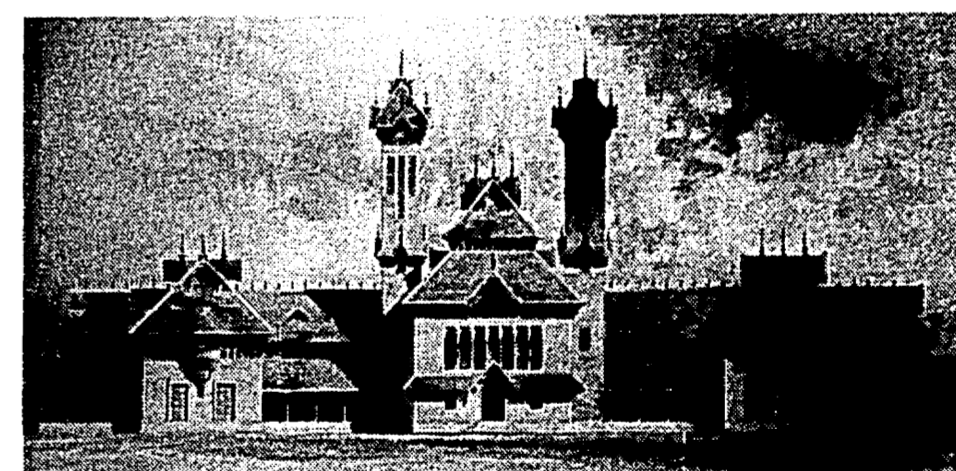
(Continued from Page 1)

and the major elements of his façade were incorporated into Henry Irwin's final design as built. From *Indian Engineering*, 4 April 1896.

The third and fourth finds were truly revelations. For over 20 years, I've been writing about the buildings of Madras, but no one, not one government official, architect or historian, has pointed out that some statements of mine about Chepauk Palace and the GPO, particularly with reference to 'county caps', needed revision. According to Metcalf, what I had always taken to be part of the original Chepauk Palace building, built by Paul Benfield a century earlier, had in fact been designed by Chisholm and integrated with Benfield's *Humayun Mahal*. Metcalf goes on "Completed in 1871, the Revenue Board building retained, so *Indian Engineering* described it, 'the general lines of the old structure', but took its 'details and many forms from purer (presumably more 'Saracenic') types of the style'. Chisholm further raised in the courtyard between the two palaces a Record Tower (SM: I've always called it the 'Imperial Tower') which, the Public Works Department reported, 'groups the whole series of buildings in a pleasing manner'. The entire work cost nearly two lakhs of rupees and won praise not only from Lord Napier (SM: The Governor who was Chisholm's champion), but, so *The Builder* reported, from 'Europeans and Natives' alike."



Sketch of house in Trivandrum by R.F. Chisholm.



Design of Napier Museum by R.F. Chisholm (1874). Both sketches from RIBA library, London.

As for the 'county caps' — those pyramidal caps atop the towers with dormers (gabled windows) — that I usually mentioned with reference to the GPO building and the Town Hall (Victoria Memorial Hall) — they, according to Metcalf, derived from a style Chisholm had spotted and sketched in Travancore houses and then first adopted in his design of Travancore's Napier Museum (SM: Chisholm's 1872 sketches from the RIBA Library on this page). Though such gabled windows in 'caps' atop towers are to be seen in the counties in 'mofussil' Britain, Metcalf holds that Chisholm was inspired by the "native Architects" of Kerala who created "high-pitched...roof over roof..."



M.S. Subbulakshmi and Late T. Sadasivam of SAMUDRI.

(Rs.5.75 crore for infrastructure development and Rs.4.25 crore for programme corpus). The bulk of the funds is expected to be raised from the corporate sector, but SAMUDRI hopes that trusts, other cultural organisations and individuals will help out.

Says Pattabhi Raman, "There is a need for concerted action on a war footing in order to preserve the integrity, social relevance and economical viability of our dynamic music,

dance and folk traditions and crafts. And we need to do so on a long-term and sustained basis, if we wish to prevent the alarming erosion they are being subjected to by globalisation, Westernisation, consumerism and, yes, mongrelisation. Together we can make a difference."

All payments and enquiries can be mailed to: Director General, SAMUDRI, Alapana, 260, J.J. Road, Chennai 600 018.

stone, as sanctioned in the very beautiful example at Beejapoor, which meets with universal admiration, and from the study of which the projecting canopies have been designed. The arches, columns and all other details are in cut stone, in the Ahmedabad style of art. *The Building News* went on to assure its readers, lest they be apprehensive over the 'adaptations' of 'specimens' so widely scattered geographically, that 'great care has been taken to preserve artistic unity in the whole design'. The overall style, they said, with regard to details 'may be termed 'Hindoo-Saracenic'. With the construction of the Madras Post Office, Indo-Saracenic architecture — with its self-assured mastery of Indic detail and its mingling of elements from across India — took on mature form."

Surely a building as architecturally valuable as this, in the context of the history of architectural development in India, as narrated here, warrants restoration to what it was when it was built?! Will the Postal authorities even now act to restore this heritage building?

As for me, that bit of serendipity has opened new windows on Madras buildings, Chisholm and local architectural history, provoking, among other things, questions like: Was the pitched roof and dormer window a Travancore style that later found a niche in the English counties or was the similarity of styles just coincidental? There are always questions and always something new to discover if your hobby is heritage.

India's Chess capital — Chennai

Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand, India's first Grandmaster and the recently crowned world champion, is undoubtedly of exceptional talent, far ahead of the rest of India's Chess players, most of the rest of them being, like Anand, from Chennai. But Anand, for all his talent and success, owes much to how the game developed in Chennai.

Anand's way to the world crown began in 1975. Much of the way he followed from the time he became the Asian Junior Champion in 1984 and the World Junior Champion in 1987 is remembered. But few recall how Madras laid the foundations for Anand's march to the top as well as for the city becoming the Chess capital of India.

The modern history of Chess in Tamil Nadu, which today has a rare record in the game, is not a very long one. Solar K.S. Subramanya Iyer of Ramani Press may well be called the father of Chennai Chess. In the 1930s, there was a hall in his house-cum-press in Mylapore where Chess was played till the late hours daily by whoever wanted a game. V. Kameswaran, an international arbiter,

says there were times when 20 people played on a single board, each of them arguing over moves on and off the board. A trust in Subramanya Iyer's memory conducts daily coaching programmes and organises an annual open tournament for children. K. V. Neelakantan's home was another place that was 'open house' for Chess. Other places where chess was

• by
A Staff Reporter

regularly played in Madras were the Chennapuri Andhra Mahila Sabha — by the Town Hall in Park Town — the Esplanade YMCA and the Mylapore Club. And in Madurai, its home was the Sri Mappilai Vinayakar Soda Factory. But there was little organised chess and few competitions anywhere in the Presidency.

Efforts to develop Chess as a major competitive sport in Madras State were inspired through the performances of one Madras player who was to dominate the Indian Chess

scene in the Fifties and Sixties. Today, 65-year-old Manuel Aaron, nine times National Champion and India's first International Master, is less known in the wider world than his son Arvind Aaron who has covered extensively in print Anand's exploits during the last few years. But it was the Burma-born Aaron Senior's achievements that particularly caught the attention of Chess enthusiasts in the State and his Asian-Australian Zonal triumph, beating Purdy of Australia in the final, that inspired a generation of Chess players in Madras.

Manuel Aaron came to Chess through watching his parents, Raja and Pushpam Aaron, playing the game at home in Burma. Raja Aaron, a school teacher there, legend has it, used to play without a 'queen' to enthuse his young son, Manuel. By helping him to 'win' games, father got son hooked on to the sport!

The family moved to Madras in 1942 when Manuel Aaron was six years old. As he grew older, he played often at the then Chess haunts in Madras. But he improved his game by correspondence. He played with several players at home and abroad, simultaneously posing his moves and awaiting the response. Some of these games went on for more than a year at a time. But they made him a more complete player.

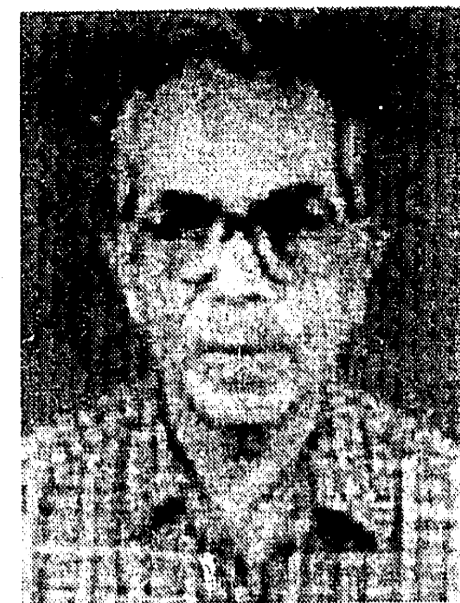
Manuel Aaron won the National Championship for the first time in 1959. Offered a job with the Indian Bank soon afterwards, he worked there till his retirement in 1995. Soon after he joined the Bank, he be-

came, in 1961, India's first International Master.

The founding of the Madras District Chess Association in 1970 and the sponsorship by the Soviet Cultural Centre the same year of the Tal Club, giving the next generation a chance to play more competitive chess, were the impetus the game needed. But it was to be 1978 before Madras produced the country's next two International Masters, V. Ravikumar and V. Ravisekhar. Chess played at a higher level, however, was now on its way.

Ever since the Tal Club was founded, every chess player from in and around the city has benefitted as much from friendly matches and the lightning Chess competitions played there as they have from its Chess library, which, besides a wealth of Chess books and magazines, offers publications from the numerous Tal Clubs round the world. The Tal Clubs, named after the 1960 world champion Mikhail Tal, have done more to spread the Russocentric game around the world than any other institution. It was at the Tal Club in Madras that, encouraged by players and administrators like Manuel Aaron, World Champion Anand as a child honed his game by participating in speed chess and any other chess activity the Club offered during the four days a week it was open.

Another Chess centre that grooms players in Chennai is V. Dakshinamurthy's T'Nagar residence. This retired Accounts Officer from the AG's Office is passionate about chess, and keeps open house for players who also benefit from his personal Chess library and the advice he offers promising young players. Some of them who have climbed the rungs to success include International Masters V. Saravanan, R.B. Ramesh and G.B. Prakash, and



Manuel Aaron

first rank players like T.S. Ravi, S. Mari Arul and A. Shankar.

Manuel Aaron and the Tal Club who put Indian chess on the modern world chess map producing, apart from those mentioned, Chennai talent like Grandmaster K. Sashikiran and International Masters T.N. Parameswaran, Lanka Ravi, N. Sudhakar Babu, P. Konguvel, V. Koshy and International Women's Masters S. Vijayalakshmi, her sister S. Meenakshi, and Under-19 Asian girls champion Aarthi Ramaswamy. Also from Chennai are Sundararajan Kidambi, Under-19 Indian champion, and M.R. Venkatesh, former Under-14 Indian champion. The current national champions are both from Chennai, Sashikiran and Vijayalakshmi.

With such a galaxy, Chennai is indeed the Chess capital of India, but ensuring that it continues as a flourishing nursery of Chess talent there are more and more Chess academies being established, both in schools and out. One of them is Manuel Aaron's. And it is dedicated chess stalwarts like him and Kameswaran, Secretary and Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Chess Association, who ensure the momentum is not only kept up in Chennai but that the game is spread to other parts of the State and nurtured wherever it takes root in Tamil Nadu.

Answers to Quiz

1. Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo; 2. The Bharat Award for Bravery; 3. Joseph Estrada of The Philippines; 4. Bhuj; 5. Ivan Dian, Archbishop of Mumbai; 6. INS Mumbai (missile destroyer) and INS Kirch (guided missile corvette); 7. Soccer; 8. Lata Mangeshkar and Ustad Bismillah Khan; 9. Punjabi novelist Gurdial Singh.

* * *

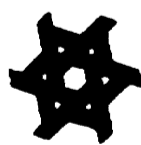
10. Kamarajar Salai; 11. Sir Anirood Jugnauth of Mauritius;

12. 21G (Tambaram to High Court)

* * *

13. Coja Petrus Usca; 14. The first recipients of the Param Vir Chakra from the three wings of the Services; 15. Paarithale Paravasam; 16. Church of the Capuchins, built 50 years earlier than St. Mary's Church; 17. A memorial to 220 Tamil language martyrs, inaugurated in Chennai on January 25; 18. C.V. Narasimhan. 19. Nagarathar (the townsfolk); 20. Nandambakkam outside Chennai.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



Amalgamations Group

APCOM

Apcom Computers Ltd.



Ashok Leyland



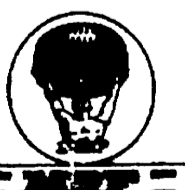
Bank of Madura Ltd.



India Cements Ltd.

KASTURI &
SONS
LTD.

LOKAVANI
HALLMARK PRESS
PVT. LTD.



MRF Ltd.

Rane

Rane Group



Murugappa
Group

The

SANMAR

Group

Sf

Sundaram Finance
Limited



Sundram Fasteners
Limited



TATA



Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd

TVS-SUZUKI

TVS Suzuki
Ltd.