

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

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Army to begin restoration in Fort

(by Rajind N Christy)

Restoration work on some of the Army's historic buildings in Fort St. George is to begin shortly. 'Fort House', a General Officer's Home, the two moats, the biggest barracks building in India, 'King's Barracks', and 'Building No. XIV' are all scheduled for restoration starting in the next few months.

The work will be undertaken by the Chief Engineer, Chennai zone, the Commander Works, Chennai zone, and the Army designing unit with inputs from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Tamil Nadu Chapter.

The 1,10,000 sq. ft. King's Barracks with its lofty Madras terraced ceilings and pillars will be documented in detail and structurally evaluated before work begins on it. Major C. Suresh, Chief Engineer,

Military Engineering Service (MES), speaking to *Madras Musings*, said the building would be restored in phases as funds become available. But the space it offers is urgently needed by the Army, he pointed out.

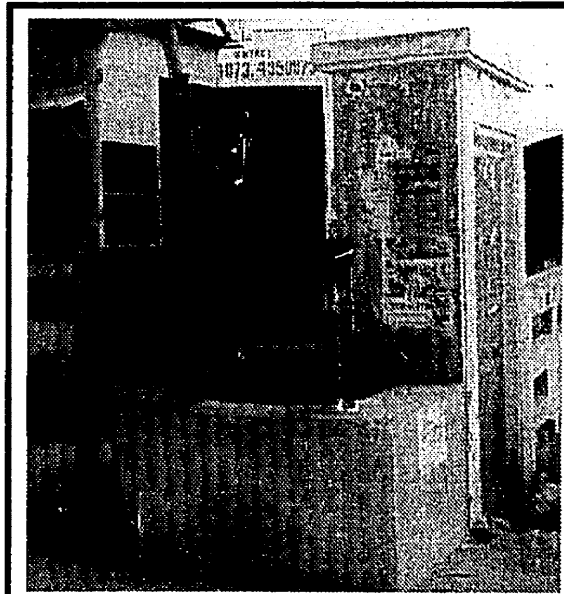
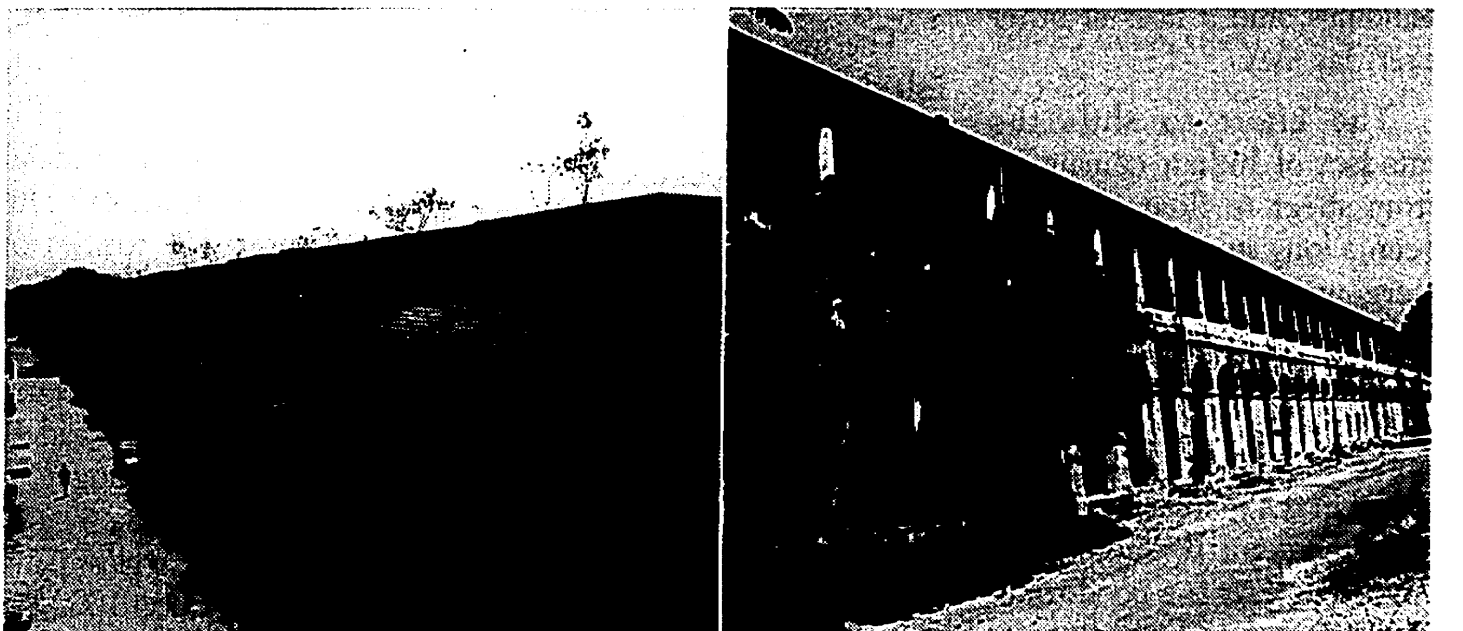
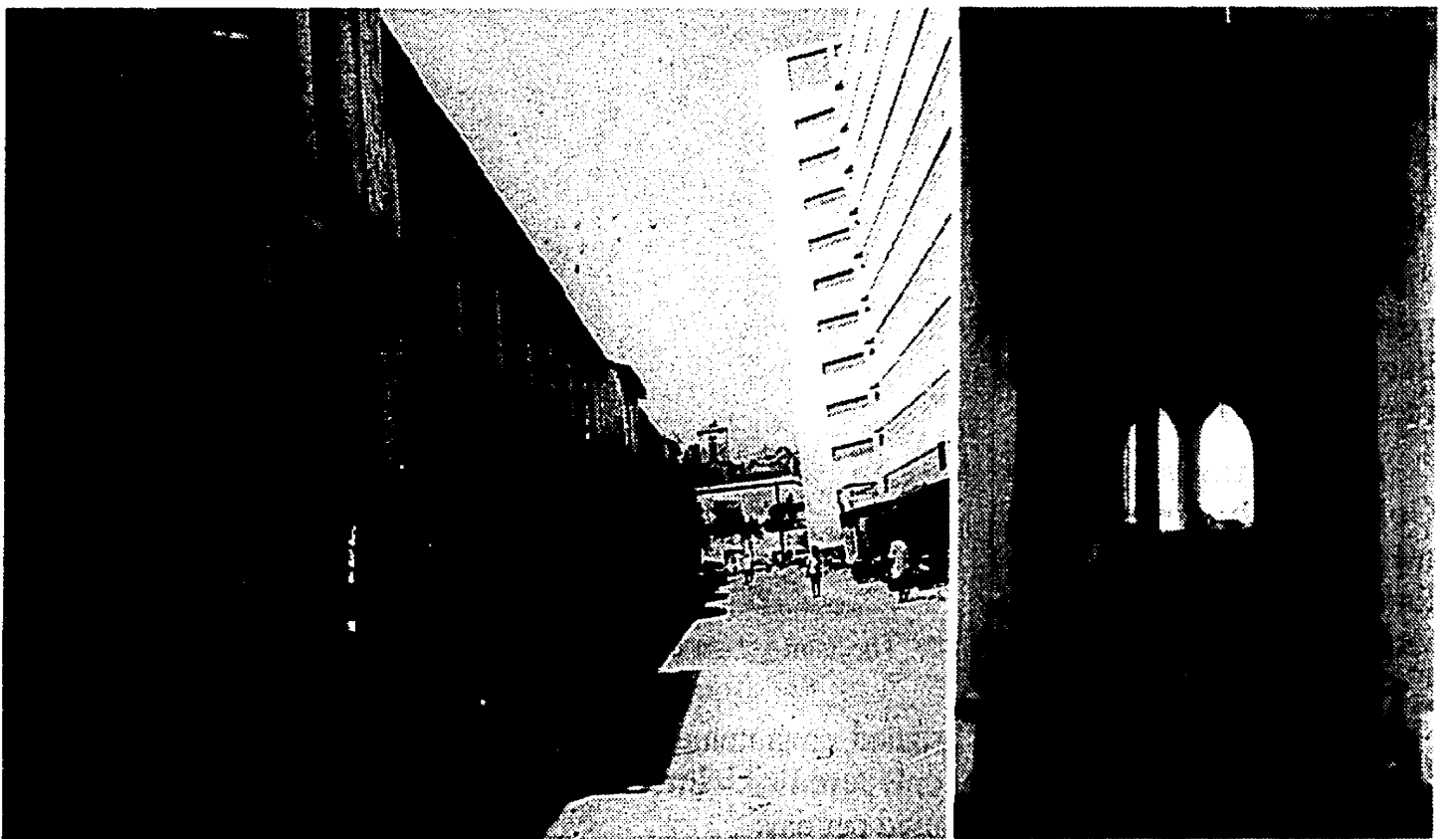
The pillars and the high walls of the King's Barracks are in good condition though some pillars might require strengthening. The tiled roof will probably have to be completely done, as will the plastering of the walls with lime and mortar, the electrical wiring, and replacement of rotting wooden windows and doors. Vegetation sprouting from the building will have to be removed.

King's Barracks today houses the Canteen Stores Department, the area nursery school, the Station Canteen and living quarters for some of the troops.

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The OLD (above) is a view of the King's Barracks, to the right, and the parade ground in front of it in the 1910s. The NEW (below) is King's Barracks awaiting restoration by the Army, to the left of the new multistoreyed Secretariat complex built in 1975. To the right of this picture ...& THE NEW is the massive stone door found in the King's Barracks and below it is another view of King's Barracks showing vegetation sprouting from the building. Bottom left is Block No. XIV near the Married Quarters. (Picture of the Old by VINTAGE VIGNETTES and the New by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



• This historical plaque commemorates the great merchant and leader of the Armenian community in Madras, Coja Petrus Uscan who built the first bridge across the Adyar at a cost of Rs. 1 lakh in 1728, to enable access to the Mount of St. Thomas, located at the northern end of the Maraimalai bridge in Saidapet. With the New Metropolitan Transport Corporation opening a bus terminus, the plaque was in danger of being knocked

down. For months *Madras Musings* had been campaigning to move the plaque to a safer place. What the belated response by the MTC finally has been is to build a protective 'wall' around the pillar with the plaque. Not the ideal solution, but something is better than nothing.

Madras Musings hopes landscaping will now be added to the scene to prevent it becoming a dumpyard.

Rajind N Christy

From Versailles to Sriperumbudur

It is an hour's drive from Chennai. Travelling 46 km on the Chennai-Bangalore NH4, you enter a vibrant industrial park, with green trees planted on the sides of the broad, welcoming roads, the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu's (SIPCOT) 2400-acre park.

The latest attraction at Irungattukottai is a newly developed, blue-topped factory site. This is one of the world's largest, state-of-the-art, glass manufacturing plants, Saint-Gobain by name.

A French company, it is a 100 per cent subsidiary of the parent Saint-Gobain Vitrage, the world's largest manufacturer of glass, which operates in 46 countries and has an annual turnover of Rs. 101,600 crore. It is ranked 165 in the Fortune 500 list.

Saint-Gobain has invested Rs. 525 crore in the Chennai plant to produce world class float glass.

Saint-Gobain has its origin in 1665 as part of the plan devised by Louis XIV and Colbert to re-invigorate the French economy. Glass for the world famous Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles was the first order received by the company. The company broke with the factory tradition by organising glass production on an industrial basis. Thanks to the invention of glassware casting (1688), Saint-Gobain established a near-monopoly in 17th century Europe and ousted Venice, the then leader in this sector.

Through the years, Saint-Gobain, by innovating and manufacturing large size glass at lower costs, has made glass affordable to the common man. Today, one out of every two cars in Europe uses Saint-Gobain glass. Saint Gobain's products are also used in trains, buildings, and a host of other everyday uses.

The effort to shift the mindset of Indian consumers from sheet to float glass has been a long story. Early players were successful in doing the bulk of the work. And so the mission for Saint-Gobain is not to canvas for float glass, but to make an impact of its own brand in the market, said Managing Director B. Santhanam: "Sheet to float is a good transformation, but from float to

international float is our goal." The response in the first few months has been positive. The company shipped its first consignment of export in August. A yield of 85 per cent is considered very good in the industry. The plant at Chennai has been able to achieve a record 80 per cent yield in a very short time. In the first two years, Saint-Gobain expects to export 30-35 per cent of its production. A large chunk of this will go to Europe and the Asia Pacific. The Chennai plant has capacity to produce 650 tonnes of float glass per day. The plant requires 3-4 lakh litres of water for operation per hour and draws it from the nearby Chembarambakkam Lake. Much of this is recycled and used. Thanks to the well-de-

loss of quality. There are therefore four levels of redundancy for power.

Saint-Gobain has spent three years in researching on the right source of silica, calcite and dolomite. And in the end, Tada has been identified for supply of silica. The company has setup its own dolomite plant inside the SIPCOT complex. Quality consciousness has driven Saint-Gobain to establish its own soil-beneficiation plant at Tada. With an investment of Rs. 4 crore at SIPCOT and an addition of Rs. 20 crore at Tada, Saint-Gobain has established the most modern processing facilities for silica sand and dolomite. The company has invested an additional Rs. 4 crore on a raw material testing laboratory.

produce good quality float. It can produce glasses as thin as 1.6mm to thick ones up to 19 mm. Saint-Gobain also has the capacity to produce glass in colours such as green, bronze, grey and blue. These have been introduced in India for the first time.

The plant in Chennai is the latest and the 26th float plant of Saint-Gobain. Much of the facilities available here are not found in the other plants of Saint-Gobain.

All Saint-Gobain plants across the world are networked and the plant manager of one country can at any time access the quality of glass produced in any other plant of Gobain. Information is shared among them. Thus, the experience of

Getting employment at Saint-Gobain means you are one among many who have successfully crossed hurdles. You may wear ties, you may be commuting in a Lancer. But if you want to apply for a post in Saint-Gobain, you have to prove your mettle by, besides your other merits, running 100m sprint in 15 seconds or covering one km in just six minutes carrying a weight of 16kg! It is a test of your endurance. In an emergency, the Managing Director himself has to take a spade and feed the furnace, as a world class float glass plant cannot afford a shut down even for ten seconds, says Allen Mathew, team leader-HR.

There were at Saint-Gobain as many as 5840 candidates applying to be technicians and after various levels of screening, jobs were offered to just 130. There were occasion when interviews went on for six long hours leading to late night stays. The company application form runs into 14 pages asking for details on personality traits.

A culture of hierarchy does not prevail in the organisation. There are only two positions. One is either a team member or a team leader. The key factor is performance and not formalities, explains Allen Mathew. Right from picking up a glass of water or a cup of coffee to typing the most crucial documents, it has to be done by the person himself.

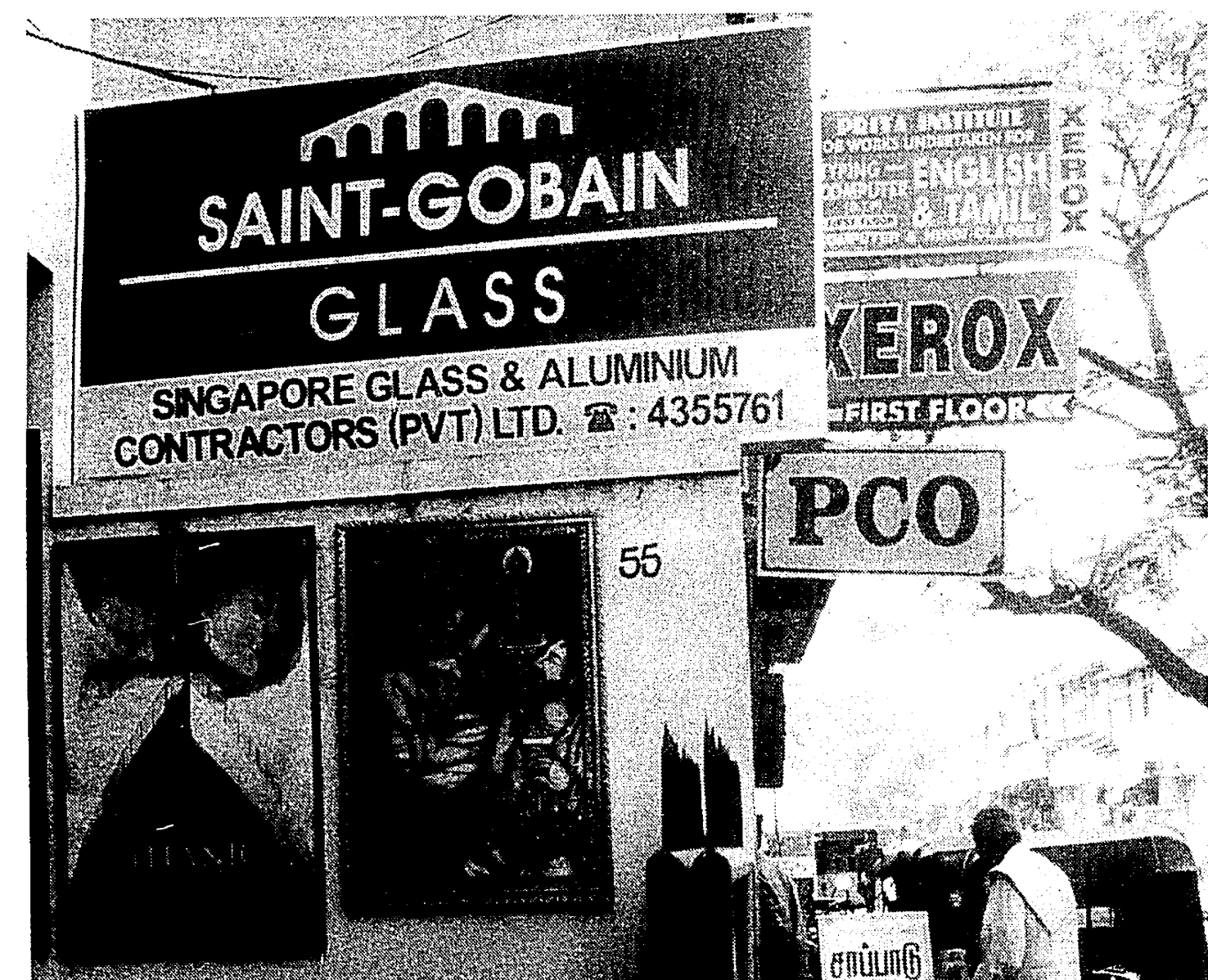
There is not much grey hair in Saint-Gobain. The average age is around thirty. Like all MNCs, the company has a fascination for IITians and IIMs. Santhanam, the Managing Director, is a civil engineer from IIT-M and a product of IIM-A. There are lots of others down the line.

France is a technology leader in several hi-tech areas including aerospace, aluminium, atomic energy, power equipment, telecom, transportation, food processing and beverages. But economic relations with France have been on a stop-go-stop-go mode. Despite France identifying India as a major partner for economic co-operation, its neighbour, the British and the Germans, have been more effective and aggressive both in trade and in investments. It is to be hoped that the quick success of Saint-Gobain will attract more French investments into Tamil Nadu and the South. — (Courtesy: Industrial Economist.)

Suchitra Srinivas

The Man From Madras Musings is on holiday. His column, Short 'N' Snappy, will be resumed on his return.

— The Editor



The Saint-gobain sign is now being frequently seen in Chennai these days. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

signed programme of recycling only seven lakh litres are being used per day.

The life of the plant established will be 12-13 years and all through this the plant will have to be in continuous operation to achieve high levels of efficiency. It cannot afford to have a power failure of even 10 seconds, for this would mean a heavy loss in output and great damage to the quality of glass produced. This is because technical parameters like temperature levels in the furnace are set to micro levels of precision and even a slight deviation will result in a huge

loss of quality. There are therefore four levels of redundancy for power. Saint-Gobain has spent three years in researching on the right source of silica, calcite and dolomite. And in the end, Tada has been identified for supply of silica. The company has setup its own dolomite plant inside the SIPCOT complex. Quality consciousness has driven Saint-Gobain to establish its own soil-beneficiation plant at Tada. With an investment of Rs. 4 crore at SIPCOT and an addition of Rs. 20 crore at Tada, Saint-Gobain has established the most modern processing facilities for silica sand and dolomite. The company has invested an additional Rs. 4 crore on a raw material testing laboratory.

Saint-Gobain's plant has the capability to produce the widest range of products. Starting from a glass sheet measuring 4 sq.ft. weighting 1.5 kg to a glass pane of 240 sq ft weighting 1000 kg, the company can comfortably

350 years of manufacturing float glass is available online.

More than 10,000 man-days have been spent on training the employees by sending them to different Saint-Gobain plants located in Europe and America.

Saint-Gobain has a unique tradition of starting its production process at the hands of a virgin and naming the furnace after her. The Chennai plant, true to the Saint-Gobain tradition, has been named after Ashaita Mahajan, a 16-year-old, who initiated the plant at 10.55 am on May 28, 2000.

Montages of Madras Rainbow on the Roadside

• *Rainbow on the Roadside* is a long prose-poem written by the multifaceted Chandralekha — dancer, choreographer, graphic artist, activist, writer — and originally published in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* in 1968, now brought out as a work by Earthworm Books. We publish below excerpts from the book.

Right in the heart of the city hidden behind the main road a little away from my house there is a colony of huts

not one of those slums-tin sheets
planks
gunny
rags for walls-bricks
stones
mudpacked pots
broken buckets
to hold the roof from the wind

a sewage nearby
thick
black
viscous
belching gases
mosquitoes multiplying
in geometric progression
filth-smearing pigs
the squeaks

bending over the sewer
an old
amputated
tamarind tree
leaves red dust-coated
sun cannot reach

exhaust fumes and dust clouds
and diesel vehicles bearing
people-people

* * *

to return to the colony i was
describing
not a slum
more a village
some fifty huts or so
huddled together
yellow mudwalls
cramped hutfronts
swept
cowdung sprinkled
kolam decorated
huddled they sat
and shivered
the firewood was wet
it wouldn't burn
the lungs were tired
breath grew short from blowing
in the pouring rain

* * *

with the rains
often came a storm
it sprang from the sea
naked and stark

and lashed the sky with whips of
winds
it lashed the city-
old walls crumbled without
warning
trees swayed and fell across the
roads
and crashed on people rushing for
shelter
their roots up in the air.
lightning struck a family of four.

* * *

sometimes I saw some women
bathing and washing in the puddle
an end of the saree
tied in a knot to the waist
and wrapped round the body

of brinjals
cluster beans
raw bananas
lady's fingers
spinach
drumsticks
yam
plantain flowers
green chillies
ginger
tender pepper
green turmeric
mango-ginger
coriander
pumpkins
ash gourd
ribbed gourd
round gourd

A FEW WORDS...

At one time in my life, in the midst of an active dance career, I asked myself what else could do if I did not want to continue dancing.

The answer came — a spasmodic outpouring, an outburst of a flow of writing, in staccato rhythm. An impressionistic world of my immediate environment peopled with familiar and ordinary folk — workers, vendors, domestics — and Kamala, our maid, who became the main thread of the narration. For me, women like Kamala are great achievers of our times — their achievement — survival itself.

The long, what I then called, 'prose-poem' was first serialised in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* in the late '60s and was warmly received in literary circles, besides a flood of letters from readers. Later, *Pace*, a student magazine in Madras, carried extracts from the work, bringing young friends and admirers to my home.

Madras, in the '50s and '60s, had the feel of an over-grown village — a random cluster of many villages. Right next to my house in the centre of the city, at the meeting point of Mount Road and Nungambakkam High Road, there were rice fields and open grounds. Today this is the busiest business area in the city. Even the slums those days were like little hamlets shyly hiding behind the main roads, jealously guarding their village identity.

And the peacock-blue sea, the Bay of Bengal, stretched long and wide, dotted with fishing villages all along the vast coastline and great beaches of Madras. Even today, when often the power fails, seaside Madras retrieves the look of the fishing village it was a few hundred years ago.

Today things have changed. There are no *sumathangis* and rice fields and open lands and thatched huts in the middle of the city. It is all concrete, arterial roads, high-rise buildings, apartment blocks, offices, hospitals, hotels and sprawling industrial slums.

Air, water, sounds and smells have changed insidiously and, though you cannot pinpoint all the changes, you can sense them in your body, skin, breath, mouth.

But what has changed beyond redemption are human relationships. In a world of constant bustle and rush, time and relationships are institutionalised, packaged, computerised, marketed and consumed to their decimal limits.

Kamala belongs to a different time.

Chandralekha
Chennai, December 2000

the other end tied to a branch
or a pole a little afar
and stretched across the air
the washed half of the saree
fluttered and dried in the wind
while she stood in the puddle
wet and dripping
and waited to wash the rest
this was a familiar sight
and those women too looked
much alike
only the colour of the saree varied-
red
or yellow
or blue
or brown
stretched across the
afternoon air

* * *

a market on the pavement -
colourful piles

bitter gourd
bottle gourd
snake gourd
all sizes and shapes
also the rejects
withered
bashed up

decayed
evenly divided
ten paise a portion
on the pavement market
for the poor
and the vendors weighed
brusquely
in cunning balances
and lashed out with vicious
tongues
if their prices were challenged
shopping was a daily war

and dried up women chewed
and spat

the trees burst in burning blotches
the heat is heavy
laden with scent
pierced by cuckoos
the trees hum
the mango blooms yield to a
million bees
squirrels run
sunlight shuttles on silvery
threads
shadows sweep
the parrots shoot and screech
and merge with the green
every leaf smells a flower
roadside trees shed powdery
yellow
soft pools of petals
the rice ripens under a phallic sun
women athirst
the stuffed silk-cotton cracks its
pods
fluffs float

and quarrelled
as they sold flowers
strung jasmynes
kadambam
kanakambaram
by armlengths

* * *

sometimes a child ran across the
road
stopping a speeding car
with a screech of brakes
and stood frightened and guilty
and uncomprehending
as the driver cursed —
and from the huts
some wild woman rushed out
straight across the road
and pulled the child by the arm
as if to hug him.
then with a spasm of strange
violence
shaking her from her roots
she hit him across the face
shouting - you fool, you fool.
with strange and secret feelings
I often watched
such ways of women's love

Our summer comes
like a kathakali king

fairy feelings
the cuckoo's cry comes tearing
the senses
stab upon stab
the air throbs with young girls'
longings
the sinuous jasmynes

* * *

Along our east
mile on mile
an endless sea
the land lies flat
level with the sand
from distant waters suns float up
and large midnight moons
from dawn
to dusk
to night
the sea spills watery hues
peacock blues
bird greens
and silver and gold
of russet silks

and flaming sunset skies

* * *

four o'clock in the day -
the sea is smoky
the sky sullen
men and women are out
workers
vendors
milkmens
domestics
a thatch crackles
flares
white vapours in the sun
whipped by the wind
they leap and lash and lick
eighty huts and nine catsheds
trapped inside the huts
a sixtyfive year old woman
unable to move
an eightyseven year old man
bedridden
forty buffaloes, cows and calves
and children of three and four
and five and seven
men are away
women are out at work
delivering milk
cleaning pots
sweeping floors
in the huts only the infants and
the old

* * *

The city was swelling
people
and queues
queue for rice
queue for kerosene
queue for coffee seeds
queue for oil
queue for milk
queue for water
and for buses, trains, cinemas,
jobs
standing in queues itself
was a fulltime job
prices soared higher and higher
pressures piled up on wan faces
queues swelled with more and
more people
of all strata -
dark haired women
wearing herb-dyed silks
and jasmynes and diamonds
stood in the queues kerosene tins
in hand
along with the shun women

OUR READERS WRITE



Unsung heroes

Here is a little bit of subaltern history (MM, February 16th). I wonder how many today remember V.M.A. Kadir, S.A. Anand, Mohamed Ghani, K.A. George, C.P. Eapen, L. D'Cruz, S.C. Bardhan, Bonifacio Pereira, Mathen Mammen, C.G.K. Reddy, K.K. Govind, M. George, Anandan Aldo, Fouja Singh and six others, all of them India Swaraj Institute Cadets (a wing of the INA). They were sent to India in four batches in September 1942, were caught and detained by the British under the Enemy Agents Ordinance. They were tried for conspiracy to wage war against the King, an offence punishable with death. The trial was before E.E. Mack, a Special Sessions Judge and it was held, *in camera*, in Fort St. George. Of the 20 cadets, four were ordered to be hanged, one was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, one turned approver and the rest were detained in jail till December 1945, though acquitted.

In the early hours of August 9, 1943, the first anniversary of the launching of the Quit India Movement, Abdul Kadir of Vaikom, Kerala, Satish Bardhan from Bengal, Fouja Singh from Punjab, and Anandan Aldo from Travandrum, Kerala, were hanged with the words 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' on their lips. Those hanged were a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian and a Sikh. The last letter of Abdul Kadir to his father in Vaikom is said to be a moving letter which should be made compulsory reading for every school/college student in the subcontinent.

Memories of yesteryear

Kacheri (MM, February 16th) was a term widely used in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu until recently. The word means a government office. In these districts, you would come across nameboards in Tamil like Taluka Kacheri, Munsiff Kacheri etc. These names disappeared when Tamil purists renamed them. Another meaning for this word is 'concert'. Sadir kacheri and Pattu kacheri are still in use.

Here is another observation on creations of the past. One who might well have regularly visited kacheris in another age was Thomas Munro, remembered in the Statue on The Island. Many readers would undoubtedly have read of the Munro statue. Briefly, it recounts that the sculptor forgot to include the stirrups. He realised his fault too late. Overcome by shame and remorse for his lapse, he committed suicide!

No such thing happened. Munro was a keen horse-rider and spent his free hours touring the countryside on his horse. As he found stirrups more a hindrance than help while riding over rough country, he often rode without these appendages. It is likely that he himself might have asked this sculptor to show him astride a horse without stirrups!

There is a convention in sculpting horse riders. If the statue was made during the lifetime of the rider, the horse was depicted standing on all four legs. If it was made after the death of the rider, the horse was made to rear, standing only on its two hind legs, the forelegs up in the air.

Rajaji and Hindi

The article about S.N.N. Sankaralinga Iyer (MM, February 16th) was very informative. It is a pity that the name of the author of this fine write-up has not been given.

C.G.K. Reddy commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of the four comrades at Vaikom in September 1993 and wrote an article 'Lest we Forget' in *The Hindu*, wherein Abdul Kadir's letter to his father, translated into English, was published.

The then British Government amended the ordinance retrospectively to pave the way for hanging by review. Sir Sidney Wadsworth, the Review Judge of the Madras High Court, held that all the 19 were guilty (the approver excluded) and should have been sentenced to death. But he expressed his inability to do so as the ordinance did not empower him to review the punishment. Renowned advocates argued in the High Court that it was inhuman to send the young men to gallows by bestowing power retrospectively on the Review Judge. The arguments of the advocates saved those not sentenced to death. The hangings took place after the Review Judge passed the final orders.

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

Chola grant

Here is more information about Buddhism in the South (MM, February 16th) especially at Nagapattinam.

According to the writer Kalki, King Maara Vijayothunga Varman, son of Magaradwajan Choodamani-varman, of Sailendra dynasty, which ruled Malaya (then called Srivijayanaadu) built at Naga-

pattinam the great *Choodamani Vihara* in memory of his father. The Chola kings were very friendly towards Buddhism and permitted Buddhists to practise their faith freely. King Rajendra Chola, son of Sri Raja Raja Chola, donated the village Anaimangalam and surrounding areas to the Buddhists. His grant was inscribed in 28 copper plates (measuring 14" x 5") which are at present in Holland at Leyden and are called Leyden copper plates by certain historians. As the grant was for the sole purpose of the maintenance of the *Choodamani Vihara*, no wonder Buddhist bronzes abound there. The full details can be found in the 10th Chapter, Part III of Kalki's *Pommiyin Selvan*.

Water for tanks

It is gratifying that the city's water ways are to be cleaned before the year 2003 (MM, February 16th). While cleaning these much-abused waterways, it is imperative that inlets are provided for the temple tanks in the city from these waterways so that these empty tanks will get adequate water, without waiting for the seasonal rains which often play truant. The Kapaleeswarar Tank was once fed by the Mambalam Lake and later by the rainwaters drained through the P.S. Higher Secondary School playing field and other adjoining areas. After the blockage of these sources, the temple tanks in Mylapore became totally dry and consequently there has been no percolation of water.

T.M. Sundararaman
19, Nallappan Street
Mylapore
Chennai 600 004.

Neglected grounds

Every time I pass by the Marina Grounds near the Kannagi statue on the Marina, I see it going to seed faster. It was once the playing field for Presidency College and, in those days when there was

I have a copy of the *Hindi-Tamil Self Instructor* which I purchased to learn Hindi in the Forties. I used to wonder as to who this translator could be, as his name is not in the common run of Tamil names. Thanks to your article, the mystery has now been cleared.

The book is simple and well-balanced, ideal for a beginner. The best part of it is a Foreward, a spirited call in Tamil by late Rajaji who, in his persuasive way, exhorts the Tamil people to learn five more languages including Hindi!

M. Sethuraman
"Sankrithi"
New No. 6, Mahalakshmi Nagar
Second Cross Street
Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

* Editor's Note: It was a compilation from the tributes paid by several persons to Sankaralinga Iyer on his death.

physical instruction and sports classes for students of the Intermediate course, these classes would be held there. It was also the venue of inter-collegiate and league cricket matches. It was then well-kept.

I don't know why it is being so sadly neglected now. It should be used again for the same purpose — cricket matches and even other sports. Chennai has need for more such grounds and facilities for the young to improve their skills in sports.

I am afraid that the present neglect may be the precursor to some other use for this open ground in a prime location of the City — such as a bus depot. What a pity that would be! This heritage ground must be restored and preserved.

N. Harinarayana
120, Big Street
Triplicane
Chennai 600 005.

Reappraisal needed

If India enjoys a place among the comity of nations, it is positively due to its numerous temples, monuments and sculptures of marvellous beauty, its epics, and its undying spiritual contribution to the welfare of the world. True heritage does not represent or depend on peripherals and, least of all, clubs and the like.

Temples were built thanks to the immense devotion, rare dedication and selfless philanthropy of great-hearted men and women and the profound, single-minded dedication and sacrifice of artisans etc. Today, they stand unhonoured, unwept and unsung, while pygmies are honoured.

Temples are starved of funds. Most of the properties do not yield the income which they would fetch if owned by private individuals. T.S. Balaji has correctly raised the issue (MM, February 16th). Temples are denied their due under the pretext of some statute and the like — in many cases callously. If a temple and its presiding deity are taken as legal entities and persons, failure to pay the normal dues amounts to illegal gain to the occupiers and cheating.

The Government, the Commissioner and the executive authorities of all temples should make a reappraisal of all temple properties, the income derived from each in the context of prevailing rentals, and the need and necessity to retrieve the properties if the needs of the temples or other institutions warrant it. There is no scope for politics in this and there shall be no corrupting interference either.

May a time-bound massive scheme be ordered, launched and executed by men of commitment without delay! May those who are enjoying the properties without paying the proper dues all along willingly come forth and surrender the properties to the lasting glory of themselves and their progeny? May the names of such good individuals be written in letters of gold!

'Garland' Rajagopalan
Carnatic Classics
3, 24th Cross Street
Indira Nagar
Chennai 600 020.

Changing course

Many years ago, K.R. Srinivasan, who was then Superintendent of Archaeology, Southern Circle, said that the River Palar was once

flowing near Trivellore and it had changed its course centuries ago.

An anicut was built over the Palar near Arcot by the British and a supply channel brought surplus water during rainy seasons from Palar to Kaveripakkam Tank (which was once full). The Maclean Channel from the Palar fed several lakes in lower North Arcot and Chingleput Districts, and ultimately reached Chembarambakkam Lake.

In my native village, Perumbulipakkam (87th km on National Highway 4, Chennai-Bangalore Highway), we used to see floods in the Maclean Channel. The women of the area offered worship whenever fresh floods came. It was said that the water was from the Bethamangalam Lake in Karnataka, which had been let into the Palar. The water from Bethamangalam lake or from Karnataka was reddish in colour as it came from a long distance. My parents told me nearly 70 years ago, that a flash flood in the Palar once wiped out Vaniyambadi.

The place where exactly the Palar changed its original course to the present one may be below Vellore.

P.S. Venugopalan
160/2, Lake View Road
West Mambalam
Chennai 600 033.

Officer behaviour

Conran Smith (*Madras Musings*, February 16th) was the Commissioner of the Madras Corporation in the late 20s and early 30s. My father served under him as Revenue Officer, the first Indian to hold the post.

Smith was greatly liked and respected by all his subordinates. He was also very efficient.

I remember as a young child seeing his wife. She was very beautiful. She used to be the rallying point for the members of the Ladies Recreation Club on Commander-in-Chief Road where my mother was also a member.

Smith was not the usual run of the mill Englishman as the following incident, which my father was very fond of narrating, shows.

In those days the Commissioner along with his subordinate officers used to visit different parts of Madras. Once, he, my father and the Assistant Revenue Officer went to inspect at Otteri or Perambur, a place suitable for dumping garbage.

Inadvertently, the Commissioner put his foot on what he thought was hard ground. Unfortunately down went his foot in the slushy soil for nearly a foot. Of course, the officers with him prevented his falling down and helped him to a safe spot. Immediately my father rushed to call the peon and driver standing a little away. But the Assistant Revenue Officer — I forgot his name — immediately took off his *angavastram* (the gold-bordered cloth worn on the shoulder along with the coat) and knelt down and cleaned the foot — boot and all.

When my father who came rushing with the peon and driver saw this, he got scared thinking the Commissioner would frown on him for not doing what the Assistant Revenue Officer did. But what do you think Conran Smith said — addressing the Assistant Revenue Officer by name — "Mr _____, I expect

my officers to behave like officers — not kneel down and clean, like peons. Look at Mr. Mudaliar (my father)!"

The Assistant Revenue Officer who was expecting accolades for his act was crestfallen.

Mrs. N. Shanmugasundaram
Flat A6, Ivory Towers
(Old) 21 Lake View Road
West Mambalam
Chennai 600 033.

The concert scene

The review of the private concerts of T. Viswanathan (MM, February 1st) was pleasant reading. By nature, Viswa is soft, as soft as his melody. It is a matter for entry in the Guinness Book of Records that a single family should have amassed so many titles of repute without canvassing. He is the unofficial but accredited ambassador of the gracious great arts of South India in the New Continent.

"The accent throughout the concerts was more on *bhava* than virtuosity." I feel that where *bhava* in essence and spirit is displayed or portrayed, virtuosity is its in-built merit. Purity of *bhava* presentation and virtuosity are like a word and its meaning, inseparable, integrated and whole.

N. Rajagopalan
3, 24th Cross Street
Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020.

Heritage hall

The threat to Sastri Hall, mentioned in the letter "Sastri Hall — a clarification" (MM, February 1st), makes disturbing reading. In the 50's, as a schoolboy, one of my first visits on my newly acquired bicycle was to that building. It was then known as *Ramade Hall*.

The end of the lease — should not lead to demolition and construction of flats. Heritage crusaders should move in to see the lease is extended.

N. Dharmeshwaran
21, Kumaran Nagar
Guduvanchery 603 202.

The names they had!

'Cricketer Masala', (MM, January 16th) brought back memory of my cricketing days when I captained Presidency College, was University wicket-keeper etc. In those good old days, everyone had a fancy nick name!

N.J. Venkatesan, the freak slow bowler, was called 'Kurru'. Srinivasa Raghavan of TCC was called 'Ganta'.

My big scoring teammate was 'Kitheri Muthu'. MRC's fast bowler P.S. Ramachandran was 'Pattu'.

Wicketkeeper SVT Chari was 'Thingudu'.

PLEASE NOTE

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

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

Kalakshetra Colony is drying up

The great poet S.T. Coleridge, in his vision, could not have expressed the prevalent mood of the residents of Kalakshetra Colony better than his famous lines, "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink".

It may be recalled that this colony was carved out of the large tracts of land that once belonged to the world-famous art school. The vast grounds then had large stretches of virgin soil where stood expanses of greenery; and where the land ended, the sea began. Thus, there was not only plenty of groundwater available, but it was also sweet. But with the advent of urbanisation the green expanses of land have been replaced by a host of flats.

Recently, a study was undertaken to check the potability of water in this colony. A portable digital meter, which measures the amount of Total Dissolved Salts (TDS), was used to check levels of TDS at various places in the colony. As per international standards laid down by WHO, water is considered potable when the TDS is 500 to 1500 ppm (parts per million). In other words, the less the amount of TDS in the water, the better it is. (Though TDS is an important parameter, it is not the only indicator of potability.)

The survey was conducted by collecting water samples from wells and borewells in about 100 houses/flats in the area bounded by the coastal road in the east, Thirumurugan Street in the south, Lakshmpuram Main Road on the west and Seventh Avenue on the north.

Umpire Ramachandran was 'Laddu'.

The Physical Director of Presidency College was 'Subbu'.

Spin bowler Sundaram was 'Pongal'.

Spin bowler T.S. Parankusam was 'Pin Cushion'.

MRC's famous C.R. Pattabhiraman was 'Nagaraj'.

Nicknames or petnames will ever be there! Life will be dull without them!

V.T. Krishnamurthi
Bangalore

Confusing prices

In the larger interest of the consumers, the Government, some time ago, issued an order mandating all manufacturers to indicate on their product the date of manufacture/expiry/batch number and its maximum retail price (MRP). While this is being complied with by the manufacturers, consumers find the MRP intriguing.

Since the manufacturers themselves are indicating the MRP, it is assumed that they take into account factors such as commission payable to various intermediaries, incidence of local taxes, etc. In the customer's view, therefore, the MRP is the ultimate rate at which a shopkeeper can retail the product. What, however, surprises the consumer is the availability of the very same product at different rates — all well below the

The survey reveals that the quality of water is deteriorating. As one goes westwards, away from the coastal road, the quality gradually becomes better and better. In a few houses near the coastal road, the value of TDS showed a high of 2000 to 5800 ppm. The alarming factor was that in one complex next to the Metrowater well, the reading of TDS at monthly intervals showed a steep increase from 800 ppm during end-December 2000 to 2200 ppm during late January 2001.

The bane of Metrowater's water supply system in Chennai is not the erratic nature of the monsoons as it is often made out to be, but the gross inadequacy of the storage capacity of the three reservoirs. The Satyamurthi Sagar in Poondi, the last of the reservoirs, was built in 1941 when the population of the city was a million. Today's population is close to 5.7 million.

In order to meet the additional demand, there was a proposal for building two more reservoirs — in Ramancheri and Thirukkandam — but due to opposition from the local population and others, the proposal was kept hanging for 15 years and finally dropped altogether two

The results of the survey unmistakably indicate that there is a slow but steady intrusion of salinity from the Bay of Bengal into the fresh water aquifers of Kalakshetra Colony. Unless drastic steps are taken immediately, it will not be long before this colony is flooded with salt water.

MRP! An electric bulb, whose MRP is Rs.11, can be got at Rs.9.50 or even less. While this is only an example, my main point is the disparity between the MRP and the actual selling price.

The buyer gets the impression that a shopkeeper rakes in a profit even if he sells a product far below the MRP! Thus, the very mention of MRP not only causes confusion but has no meaning and is, hence, a MISNOMER.

V.S. Jayaraman
31, Motilal Street
Chennai 600 017.

Lethality of DDT

Rajesh Rangarajan has highlighted the dangerous consequences of DDT spraying (MM, January 1st). It is a matter of grave concern that the deleterious effects of the indiscriminate use of this chemical are serious. Hence utmost care should be exercised by the Corporation staff when spraying is carried out.

The medical fraternity should wake up to the ramifications of this problem and warn the public through a widespread campaign.

R.K. Sridharan
2, East Circular Road
Santhomé
Chennai 600 028.

The primary causes for the present state of affairs are apparently threefold. Firstly, it is the over-exploitation of the available meagre natural sources of supply; secondly, the failure on the part of the residents of the colony to implement rainwater harvesting in their houses/flat complexes, and thirdly, the poor annual rainfall during the last three seasons, which failure could be attributed to the denudation of forests and greenery, overpopulation and other associated ills of multi-storied buildings.

years ago with no alternative sites being considered. It is true the bunds of the existing reservoirs were raised some time back, adding a little to their holding capacities. But more can be done. The Poondi reservoir and the Red Hills, Sholavaram and Chembarambakkam tanks are now almost dry. This is a valuable opportunity to desilt these tanks at a cost much less than what it would involve constructing new reservoirs. Such desilting would add valuable additional water storage capacity, which will come in handy in the ensuing monsoon a few months from now.

A few steps need to be taken by all the residents to try and reduce the salinity of water. The first one is of course to continue to pray to the Almighty for rains. But, as all of us know, we have no control over His actions. Hence we must resort to self-help, for, as the adage goes, God

Sekhar Raghavan

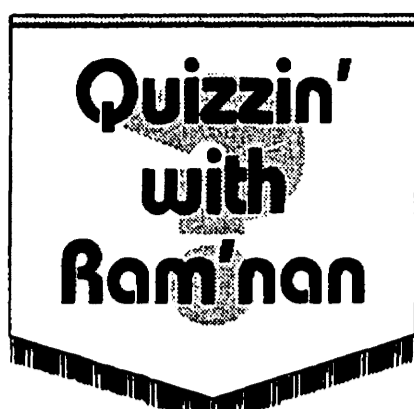
The survey was carried out by the Mrs. Sitalakshmi Raghavan Memorial Social and Charitable Trust. For more specific details, readers may get in touch with Sekhar Raghavan, D15, Bayview Apartments, Kalakshetra Colony, Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090, Ph: 4918415.

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I hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
(Signature of the Publisher)



(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period February 16 to 28th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu)

- Which Indian Venture Capitalist has topped *Forbes'* Midas list of investors?
- What major maritime event, the eighth in a series and the first in the sub-continent, was held on February 17th off Mumbai harbour?
- What major disease broke out amongst the livestock in Britain recently?
- To which group took both the Best Record and Song of the Year prizes at this year's Grammy Awards ceremony?
- Which company has been sold the Government's 51 per cent stake in BALCO leading to controversies all around?
- The 'Boy from Bowral' passed into history on February 25th. Who?
- The Taliban has ordered the destruction of 2000 year old Buddha statues, leading to global condemnation. Where are these statues located?
- As per the Union Budget, what is the new postal tariff for postcards and letters?
- Name the veteran CPI leader and the longest serving Parliamentarian who passed away on February 20th.

* * *

- With which private firm has the Chennai Corporation signed a MoU for the path-breaking waste-to-power project?
- What national distinction has Chennai Central achieved as regards communication facilities?
- What eco-friendly measure was introduced at both the National Park and Children's Park in Guindy recently?

* * *

- Which Tamil Nadu based industrialist was honoured with the prestigious JRD Tata Corporate Excellence Award?
- Which university based in the State has decided to delete a prescribed lesson on Mohd. Azharuddin following his suspension?
- What ambitious education project did the CM launch on February 17th?
- The Madras Regiment won the Best Overall Contingent award at the Republic Day Parade recently. When was the Regiment raised and where is the HQ of the Regimental Centre?
- Who acted as the State's Governor when Ms. Fathima Beevi was away on Haj?
- Name the spiritual monk, popularly called *Visiri Samiyar*, who attained *samadhi* at Tiruvannamalai on February 20th.
- What does the Sethusamudram Canal project intend to do?
- What State sporting federation was started in December last with a team called *The Chennai Cheetahs*?

(Answers on Page 8)

Who killed de La Hay?

(Continued from last fortnight)

When the two boys, S and K, were charged with the murder of de la Hay and produced before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on October 24, 1919, Thomas Richmond, that leading lawyer of the time, appeared for S and, on a dramatic move Richmond presented a petition to treat his client as an approver and Crown witness. He also filed a statement from his client of what he knew about the murder of the Principal. It was strongly believed in legal circles of Madras that the statement was drafted by lawyers acting under S senior's instructions and the minor in prison knew little about the contents until he signed it!

The petition was allowed. The evidence of S, the approver, pointed to K as the culprit! The accused engaged one of the leaders of the Madras Bar, Dr. S. Swaminathan, to defend him and the junior helping him was V.L. Ethiraj.

Dr. S. Swaminathan was a dynamic person and he studied not only the case papers but also the situation in Madras city. The sensational murder, its aftermath, the mood of the European community in the city, the feeling of Indians about the case, all these and more had created an electrifying and even tense atmosphere in Madras. Under such circumstances, Swaminathan wondered how the accused could get a fair and impartial trial in Madras. In an unprecedented move, the innovative Swaminathan applied for transfer of trial to a place outside the Madras Presidency. Eventually, the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford ordered the transfer of the trial to the Bombay High Court.

The case was posted for hearing before the Bombay High Court Original Criminal Sessions by Justice L.C. Crump but suddenly a change was made by the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir Norman MacLeod, who decided to hear the case himself. At the trial, Sir Norman added to the ambience by sitting in the ceremonial robes of judges in England presiding over a criminal trial, a sartorial trait never followed in India mainly due to the tropical climate. Full judicial wig, knee-breeches, silk stockings and shoes, a bright red silk gown, he wore them all! And his lady in all her finery sat in Court right through the trial.

K was defended by R.D. Wadia, one of the leaders of the Bombay Criminal Bar, assisted by Dr. Swaminathan and his rising junior, Ethiraj. W.L. Weldon appeared for the Prosecution, assisted by the Public Prosecutor of Madras, Sydney Smith. J.D. Davar held a watching brief for the approver, to protect his interests. Normally, no lawyer ever appears for an approver and this case was an unusual instance in the legal history of India.

Among the many who travelled from Madras for the trial were a large court staff from Madras including Bench clerks, stenographers, interpreters and subordinate staff, and police officers. There were many Brahmins among the staff and in that period of strict orthodoxy, they brought with them their cooking utensils and provisions and spent much time cooking their meal.

The trial began with a jury of nine citizens in February 1920 and provided high drama particularly by Wadia. He went after every prosecution witness hammer and tongs, and made mincemeat of them all. He was in particular severe on S. His cross-examination of the approver is considered one of the best ever heard in an Indian court of law and has earned a deserved place as a classic example of the difficult art of cross-examination. It is quoted at length and discussed in many text-books on the Law of Evidence. Under Wadia's cross-examination S wilted and often contradicted himself.

According to the prosecution's case, K had forced S to join him in the killing and to accompany him upstairs where he (K) had shot de la Hay with a 12-bore gun taken from the room downstairs. The Principal had called him a "Tamil boor" which had provoked him. He took S along, with instructions that the approver should shoot de la Hay dead in case he (K) missed the target in the darkness. Did it mean by inference that S too had a gun in his hands? Wadia grilled S on this point. There was evidence that there were two similar bore guns in that room and a boxful of cartridges. S had been seen on many occasions handling the gun and so was familiar with its use and power.

Wadia's case was that K had nothing to do with the killing and the real culprits were S and U. U was a close relative of

the rajah - whom de la Hay hated like poison. That was the motive for U to plan the murder of the Principal. As he knew little about guns, he brought in S with whom he was friendly because his sister had been proposed in marriage to S.

Another witness T, stated that he saw K running away, gun in hand, from de la Hay's bedroom and dropping the weapon from the first floor to the ground. Wadia, realised that if this boy's evidence, if believed, could prove very damaging to his case, took the bold step of discrediting the witness by punching holes in his character.

He hurled a thunderbolt at T with his very first question asking him if he was a pimp for his friends at Newington! When the startled witness shied away, the cross-examiner went after him, till he admitted that he had been admonished by the Principal for indeed tendering such services to some of his fellow-students.

The elder U who was also at the College, went into the box and said on oath that he was aware of the conspiracy to kill de la Hay by shooting but he had told nobody because he was scared that K would shoot him too! Wadia sliced him to ribbons and forced him to admit that he was one of Mrs de la Hay's lovers and that K had pulled him up, which was why he was testifying against the accused.

The evidence of C, another student, seemed damaging to the accused. He swore that he saw K going up the winding stairs that night and he had a gun in his hand. He also knew about the conspiracy to do away with de la Hay, but, scared of the consequences, had told nobody. Wadia pitched into him and got him to admit that he was in the habit of stealing things from his friends' rooms at the College! Answering a question by the Chief Justice he said that he saw

Randor Guy

(Concluded)

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only the back of the person going upstairs. The boy had curly hair, and was tall and sturdy and hence he presumed that the lad was the accused!

K was not tall and did not have curly hair. S had! He was tall too.

A firearms expert from Madras told the court that the gun he examined had no dents, no scratches, to show that it had been dropped from the first floor to the ground, forty feet below. Indeed, if a gun of that make and bore were dropped from such a height it would have broken! And the cartridges would have been scattered helter-skelter. Not neatly arranged as the police saw them!

Weldon and Wadia addressed the jury, each stressing his case but counsel for the defence had the edge. His devastating cross-examination brought to light that most of the witnesses were morally unsound, and no reliance could be placed on their evidence. Wadia remarked that whatever was taught in Newington College, honesty and speaking the truth were not in the syllabi!

It was a fact that Hay had been murdered, but who had shot him? There was no clear evidence. S had been an accomplice and so no reliance should be placed on his evidence. Especially in view of his poor performance in the witness box. The only witness who could have thrown a great deal of light was Mrs de la Hay. But she had been permitted to go away to England. Why? Did the Madras police feel that her evidence would not be favourable to them? So ran Wadia's arguments.

The summing-up by Sir Norman MacLeod to the jury was in favour of the accused and not surprisingly the jury returned a verdict of "Not Guilty". Wild cheers greeted the announcement of the verdict and one of the VIP cheerers was Lady MacLeod!

Thus ended the most sensational trial of the Twenties. In the light of revelations, Newington College was closed. Indeed no Rajkumar College was ever established thereafter in Madras or anywhere else in South India.

The humble gourd as art object

They come in various shapes and sizes.

They revive memories of old-world adventure stories and fables. Of tales of dangerous journeys that involved contact with genies and magical creatures. Their real setting, you think, lies within the pages of an old book, one filled with illustrations in aging colours. Images flash - of travellers, of wanderers, people going from one village to another - selling water - or maybe magic potions. They are gourds.

An exhibition of Gourd Art was held at Amethyst, Sunder Mahal, between 23rd and 28th February, 2001.

What are gourds?

The artist, Mrs. Indira Venkatasamy, smiles at your question, then counters: "Ever heard of the humble 'sorakkai'?" There's your answer.

Gourds are members of the cucubita family. They are hard-shelled durable fruit.

Gourds have been part of civilizations the world over for many centuries now. They are used as ornaments, decorative pieces, and as utensils to carry water, toddy and food.

They are widely used in Peru and Africa, where gourds are worshipped as abodes of spirits. They are also used by brides to store jewellery.

Fascinated and inspired by the long and colourful history of gourds, Indira Venkatasamy read about all she could on gourd art. Being an artist and creative person, she began to use her talents on gourds to turn them into objects of art. Her daughter, Vijayalakshmi, ably supports her in this venture.

Mrs Venkatasamy hails from Udumalpet, very close to Coimbatore. She travels to villages and explores the rural countryside around her hometown in search of gourds.

"The villagers call me 'sorakkai-amma', she laughs.

When the fruit is picked, one is always left behind on the tree to dry. It is from this fruit that

face, using pencils and knives. The designs are either of Mrs. Venkatasamy's own creation or taken from embroidery patterns. Lines are scorched using a soldering iron. Intricate designs in thin lines of black appear on the natural golden surface of the gourds. Polish is then applied. In some cases, the designs are gouged out, but very



What Indira Venkatasamy does with the humble gourd. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

seeds are later collected to facilitate the next planting. The fruit, if left unopened to dry on the vine, never goes bad.

The entire process from seeding to drying takes about eight months.

Once the gourd is chosen, it has to be cleaned, a process that takes nearly three days. The fruit stays unopened at this stage.

Once the gourd is ready to be worked on, designs and lines are chosen and drawn on its sur-

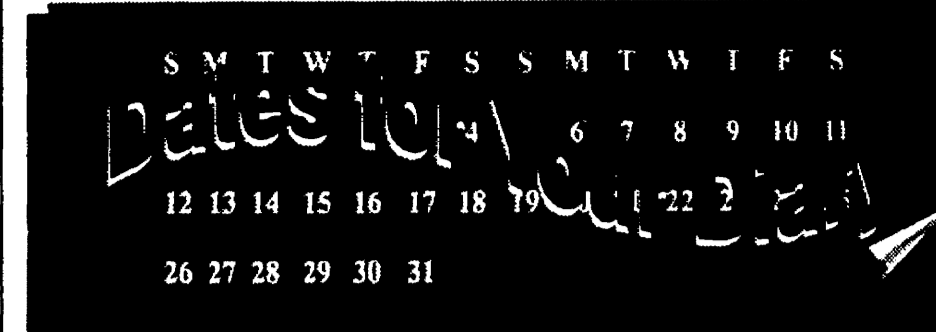
face, so as not to damage the gourd.

One can either colour the gourd or leave it natural. Varnish, polish, even boot polish, are used in the final stage of preparation. Some gourds are left whole, while some are hollowed and the seeds and pulp removed. Gourds may be etched on, chiselled or painted. Henna, charcoal and boiled betel nut are used. Acrylic pencils and paint are also used. Mrs. Venkatasamy retains

the natural shapes of the gourds. She is able to work and complete around ten gourds per month.

Indira Venkatasamy has been in this line for four years now. Her first exhibitions were held in Coimbatore. She has now held shows in Bombay, Hyderabad and Chennai. She supplies gourds to shops in Bangalore, Delhi and DakshinaChitra, in Chennai.

She does not view her art as a commercial proposition. For



March 15-30: An exhibition of paintings by Maya Burman. (At the Appa Rao Galleries.)

March 17: 'Gateways to Weimar' - Max Mueller Bhavan & Masquerade presents a photo exhibition. Idea and concept by Franka Gunther and the partners of the exhibition are Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Stadtarchiv Weimar, Kulturstadt Europas 1999 GmbH, and Goethe Institut. Mr. Schluter, Director, Kunstfest Weimar will inaugurate the exhibition. (At 5.30 p.m. at the Max Mueller Bhavan.)

March 18: 'Vegetable carving' - A one-day workshop on vegetables that can be used for carving and decorative finishing. (At DakshinaChitra.)

March 19: 'Collector's Art' - An exhibition of paintings and sculptures from Vinyasa's own collection. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

March 20: 'Ugadi Celebrations.' DakshinaChitra invites you to attend their weeklong celebrations (17th-25th) leading to Telugu New Year's Day on the 26th. In honour of this occasion, attend folk performances, enjoy the food delicacies, and the textiles and crafts from Andhra Pradesh.

March 22: 'City Maps' - Max Mueller Bhavan in collaboration with *Koothu-pattarai*, Chennai, presents a modern dance production by Imlata Dance Company. Admission on first-come first-served basis. (At 7.00 p.m. at the Music Academy.)

March 24: 'Photo Competition' - Max Mueller Bhavan & ICCR presents Ingo von Wilke, the magician as the finale to the German Festival in India. Entry passes available at Max Mueller Bhavan. (At Museum Theatre, 6.30 p.m.)

March 26: Poetry reading at British Council by W.N. Herbert. (At 7.00 p.m. at the British Council.)

W.N. Herbert straddles two languages and intersects two worlds - Scots and English. He speaks in mellifluous verse with poems that reflect the dramatic tensions of bilingual writers.

March 27: A poet on a walkabout, reading and signing at Crosswords, Shopper's Stop, Harrington Road, Chennai, 6.30 p.m.

March 27: Poetry reading at Crosswords, Shopper's Stop at Harrington Road, by W.N. Herbert. (Contact British Council for timing.)

March 28: Creative writing workshop for young, aspiring poets.

her, the pleasure comes from the sheer artistic expression of creativity. The travelling, the exploring and the interaction with the villagers are a bonus. She feels that the gourds have actually brought variety and ever-broadening experiences and vision into her life as "they bring me into contact with people from huts to the elite who visit my exhibitions".

Spoken by one who loves art for its own sake.

Ranjitha Ashok

ARMY TO BEGIN RESTORATION

(Continued from Page 1)

Building No. XIV, near the married officers' quarters, is much in the same condition as the King's Barracks.

Plans to desilt the two moats and providing proper outlet to the Cooum river are also being drawn up. Once this is done, recreation facilities, such as angling (as in the past) might be encouraged. The moats, at present, are clogged with food left-over, garbage and refuse from the Fort, sewage and degradable and non-degradable waste let into it by a variety of activities in the Fort.

The massive St. George and the Wallajah gates will also be restored when grant on the work is undertaken.

Within the 107.505 acres of land in Fort St. George there are 36 heritage buildings and 13 centrally protected monuments listed by the ASI. The ASI list includes: The Arsenal (designed by Col. Patrick Ross and opened in 1772); Big Warehouse, Chaplain House, Clive House (The Admiralty House and now the ASI's office); the Garrison Engineer's Depot; Guard Room (Public Relations Office, Ministry of Defence); King's Barracks; 'Snob Alley' - the oldest house in the Fort and with a carved staircase; Nurising Sisters' House; the old British Infantry Officers' Mess (now the Fort Museum and before that the Public Exchange Hall and Lighthouse); the Ramparts, the

Gates, the Bastions, the Ravelins with vaulted chambers and water cisterns underneath (once they could hold water for 6000 men for upto 4 months), the Moats and the glacis, St. Mary's Church and Wellesley House.

The construction of the Fort began soon after the French were ousted in 1749. All the barracks were concentrated in one block, which was built to the west of the Portuguese Square. The King's Barracks was built in the Choultry Gate Street in the 1750s. The Governemnt approved the plan of concentrating all the barracks, including the officers quarters, in the block which extended to 223 feet in length. In

1751, quarters were constructed for the new barracks whose first residents were the King's Regiment (39th Foot-1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment commanded by Lieut. Col. Adlercron and the buildings came to be known as King's Barracks).

The barracks were extended in 1762. The streets and the buildings of the Fort and the interior of the barracks were lighted by globe lamps burning coconut oil. Much of the work in the Fort and its walls was done by Paul Benfield till well into the 1770s.

The restoration work ahead is by no means likely to be easy. It will involve removal of salt deposits from the bricks,

removal of paint coat, plastering of cracks on the walls with the original lime and mortar, restoration of broken drainage pipes and roofs, improving sanitary conditions and electrical systems, restoring damaged wooden flooring, doors and windows and removing wild growth on the structures of building.

Once King's Barracks is restored to its former splendour, the Army promises maintenance of a quality that will ensure that the sorry fate that has befallen the building never happens again. It will be a proud monument to the birth of the Indian Army in the place where it was born, all engineers working on the project agree.

When India beat the 'Aussies'



Lindsay Hassett

● With the Australians scheduled to play their final test in Chennai from March 18-22, Madras Musings features here a nostalgia bit about the first Australian team to play in India in the post-World War II era.

Australian cricket teams have played more Tests in Madras than at any other venue in the country. At traditional centres like Bombay and Calcutta they have played only six test matches, whereas they have played seven Tests in Madras, the first three at the Corporation (later the Nehru) Stadium and the next four at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk.

Prior to the first official visit to Madras by an Australian team in October 1956, two teams from Australia played at Chepauk. These were Jack Ryder's side which came in 1935-36 and the Australian Services team which toured India ten years later. In both cases, the tourists played the last 'Test' at Madras — and India won the matches, giving the city's cricket venues the reputation of being India's lucky grounds. In 1935-36, India won the fourth 'Test' by 33 runs to level the series at two matches all. And in 1945, the teams met in the third 'Test' after the first two games at Bombay and Calcutta had ended in high scoring draws.

The Australian Services team was a fairly strong side. The squad comprised Australians who had served during World War II in Africa and

Europe and who the Australian government had felt could signal the return of peace to the world by a revival of international cricket. The team came to India after drawing a series of five 'Victory Tests' against an England team of near Test strength. Given this record, there was no doubting that they would test India to the full. But what caught the imagination most was that it was a team full of colourful personalities.

One of them, Lindsay Hassett, captain, had made his Test debut against England in

become the leading and most flamboyant all-rounder in the game. It was in India that he first exhibited his dynamic qualities.

Besides the two, there were other enduring characters in the side like Keith Carmody, Jack Pettiford, Dick Whittington and Cecil Pepper, all of whom went on to achieve varying degrees of success in the game over the years. Carmody became famous as the inventor of the 'Carmody' or umbrella field, a semi-circle of close catching positions. Pepper was



1938 and was already one of the leading batsmen in the world. One of the smallest men to represent Australia, Hassett was an attacking right hand batsman, who exhibited superb footwork. He was also a witty speaker and a practical joker.

Another charismatic personality was Keith Ross Miller. Tall and handsome and a brilliant all-rounder, Miller was to make his Test debut later in the season and, in course of time,



Keith Ross Miller

one of the finest Australian all-rounders ever to have played in a Test. Whittington earned fame as a cricket writer and author, collaborating with Miller on many books. Pettiford, an attractive middle order batsman, came to Madras having hit centuries both at Bombay and Calcutta.

Despite lacking the experience of international cricket since the visit of Lord Tennyson's side in 1937-38 (except for a short tour of Ceylon prior to the start of the series against the Australian Services team), India acquitted itself creditably. Some of the pre-War giants like C.K. Nayudu, Mohammed Nissar and Amar Singh (who had passed away in 1940) were not available. But Vijay Merchant, Mushtaq Ali and Lala Amarnath were still around and with Vijay Hazare, Vinoo Mankad and Rusi Modi

joining the ranks, the Indian team looked good enough to test the Aussies.

The batting duels between Merchant and Hazare during the War years had marked them out as two players with an insatiable appetite for runs. And in 1944-45, Rusi Modi had emerged as another with a penchant for tall scores. Then only 20, Modi had hit 1008 runs in the Ranji Trophy that season and that stood as a record for 44 years. Mankad, who was discovered during the series against Lord Tennyson's team in 1937-38, was by now one of the two leading all-rounders, the other being Amarnath. But Mankad had to miss the Madras 'Test' as he was getting married. Mushtaq Ali, of course, remained Indian cricket's gay cavalier despite scurrilous treatment from the selectors. In fact, it was only on public demand that he was brought in belatedly to play in the second 'Test' at Calcutta.

This then was the nucleus of the two sides who batted it out during the three 'Tests' and, not unexpectedly, it was a close series. With the first two 'Tests' being drawn, the teams came to Madras with everything to play for.

The match was played at Chepauk from December 7 to 10, 1945. Opting to bat after winning the toss, the Australians bolstered by Hassett's 143 and Pepper's 87, scored 339. Shute Banerjee took four for 86 and Chandu Sarwate four for

94. The total posed no problems, however, for the Indian team. Modi led the way with 203, Amarnath got 113 and useful contributions from Gul Mohammed (55) and C.S. Nayudu (64) saw the home team get 525. Modi, who batted only 304 minutes, hit 22 fours.

In the second innings, the Australians faltered after an opening stand of 133 between Carmody (92) and Whittington (67). Again, Banerjee (4 for 82) and Sarwate (4 for 118) caused most of the damage as the Australians were all out for 275. The Indians hit off the required runs for victory for the loss of four wickets to clinch the series. The officials for the match were M.G. Vijayasarithi and T.A. Ramachandran both of whom went on to become Test umpires.

Partab Ramchand
Senior Editor
Cricinfo India Pvt. Ltd.

Answers to Quiz

1. Vinod Khosla (founder of Sun Microsystems); 2. The International Fleet Review; 3. Foot-and-mouth disease; 4. U2 for *Beautiful Day* from the album *All that you can live behind*; 5. Sterlite; 6. Sir Donald Bradman; 7. Bamiyan; 8. 50 paise (from 25 paise) and Rs. 4 (from Rs. 3); 9. Indrajit Gupta.

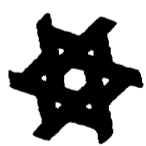
* * *

10. EDL India; 11. It is offering the 'first Internet business centre' at a railway junction in the country; 12. Banning of plastic bags.

* * *

13. Sundaram Fasteners' Suresh Krishna; 14. Periyar University; 15. The Tamil Virtual University; 16. 1758 and Wellington; 17. Dr. C. Rangarajan, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh; 18. Yogi Ramsurathkumar; 19. Connect Palk Strait with Gulf of Mannar; 20. The Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union.

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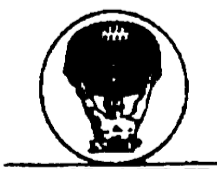
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