Reg. No. G/TN/Chief/PMG/451/2001 Licence No. WPP 234/2001

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

INSIDE

Vol. XI No. 12 FREE ISSUE October 1-15, 2001

Options for City's water needs

Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) is in the news again and will die away again, too, when the water supply position improves, because RWH is encouraged as part of the management of a water crisis only. During the last 30 years, planners have thought of a Veeranam project, a Krishna project, and a Hogenakal/ Pallipalayam project, none of which has been adequately investigated. In recent times, desalination has been in the news, with Metrowater planning a third project even before the first two projects are commissioned. RWH has never been investigated scientifically as a water supply project.

While the Krishna project is a reality, but with no water, the Kaveri project is still on the drawing board and will probably take several years to be completed. Water from the Kaveri project can be drawn during the summer months, which is a major plus point for the project. Desalination is at present very costly, demanding enormous quantities of power. It can only supplement the city water supply, after all other sources of water are exploited. Desalination to supplement water supply will be the ultimate need when we think of supplying **adequate** water (how much?) instead of the present system of rationed water.

RWH is of two types:

1. RWH of groundwater (RWHGW) and
2. RWH of Surface Water (RWHSW).

RWHGW is advocated today for the simple reason that Government can stop with advising others and need not implement it wholeheartedly, wherever feasible, in Government Institutions. RWHGW is important, but the quantity of water available from RWHGW is much less than that from

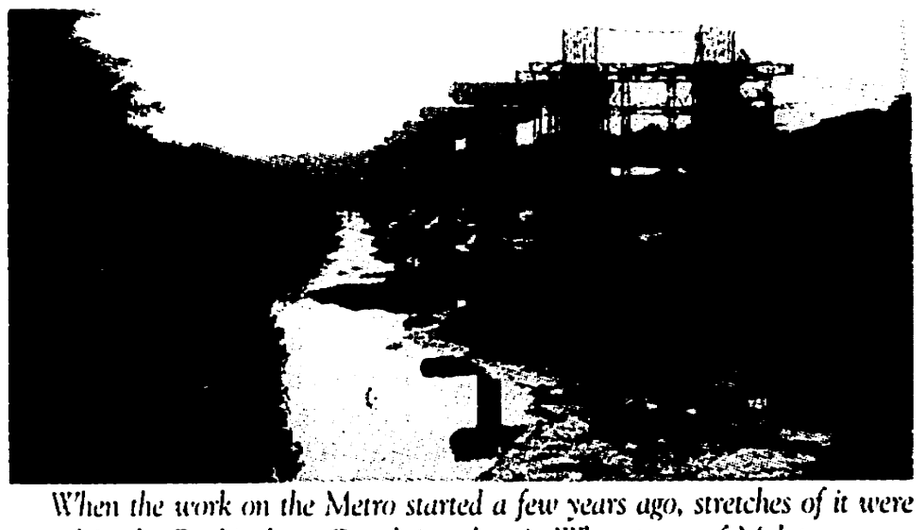
● by **M. Susikaran**

RWHSW. At present, the run-off from terraces in many buildings is connected to sewers, causing sewers to overflow through manholes and also overloading the sewage treatment plants. The surface water run off within the city flows into the water courses and is wasted.

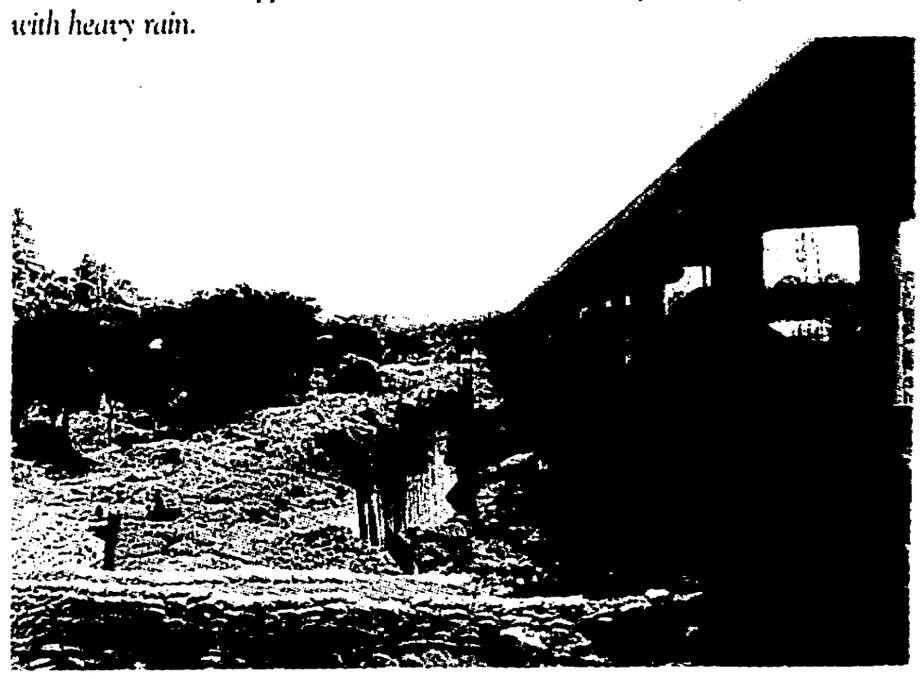
At least 25% of the water requirements of the city can be obtained from RWHSW. Investigation of RWHSW has to be carried out scientifically and methodically. It is worth noting that RWHSW can be split into many components and implemented one by one to achieve benefit within a period of six months. The cost will be less than desalination or bringing water from Veeranam, Kaveri or RWHGW. Here are a few points about RWHSW to ponder over, none of them exactly new:

1. Filling the 36 temple tanks listed in MM (August 1st) with surface water run-off, treating and supplying it to the people. The efforts of the NGOs, though laudable, is not adequate. Each temple tank should collect adequate RWHSW from a scientifically designed system of stormwater drains taking into account parameters like the run-off. Incidentally, low level areas will not be flooded if the stormwater drains are properly designed, well constructed and regularly maintained. Also major floods occurring in the water courses will be prevented. The RWHSW system of each temple tank should be integrated with the vast Metrowater network.
2. Exploiting the Thiruneermalai Lake. Will it be possible to save it from the nexus of land sharks and politicians?
3. Does the lake inside Raj Bhavan still exist and, if so how best can we fill it and exploit it? I recall that the P.W.D. had a project

(Continued on page 5)



When the work on the Metro started a few years ago, stretches of it were rooted in the Buckingham Canal (as above). When parts of Mylapore were flooded a few years ago, one of the reasons given was the raising of the Metro in the bed of the Canal, thereby preventing the waterway from being an outflow for the excess water. At present, the railways appear to be making use of the Buckingham Canal once again – this time to raise a Metro station in Taramani. I wonder what will happen to the area near this stretch of Metro if we are blessed with heavy rain.



Ponds not for building over

— *Supreme Court*

● In a recent judgement, the Supreme Court has ruled that village ponds, even if they fall into disuse, cannot be allotted to others for construction of houses. It added that "it is important to note that material resources of the community, like forests, tanks, ponds, hillock, mountain etc. are nature's bounty. They need to be protected for a proper and healthy environment which enables people to enjoy quality life which is the essence of the guaranteed right under Article 21 of the Constitution". The ruling came when a villager in Uttar Pradesh had challenged the authorities who had allotted the land, saying the pond had shrunk and was falling into disuse.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We presume that what applies to ponds and lakes applies to other water bodies as well. In which case, are the Railways ignoring what is a Supreme Court decision with the construction activity featured above?

Rainwater harvesters draw up plans

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Tamil Nadu unit of the National Water Harvesters' Network recently organised a discussion on Rainwater Harvesting to facilitate networking among various civic groups involved in rainwater harvesting and to step up the awareness campaign on rainwater harvesting.

The issues discussed included the following:

1. The present groundwater draft, which is far higher than the sustainable level, reflecting in the depression of post-monsoon water levels, and in the increasing importance of borewells and their progressive deepening.
2. The problem of sea water intrusion in coastal belts due to over-extraction.
3. Inadequacy, uncertainty and high cost of additional supplies from surface water resources and, hence, the need for rainwater harvesting.
4. Initiatives by individuals and civic groups as well as Government to promote RWH are limited in relation to the size of the problem. A mass campaign to persuade all groups (individuals, businesses, industry, public institutions, government agencies, builders/architects) about the necessity and importance of RWH is needed.
5. Information on designs, costs and impact of work which have been done so far. The relative simplicity of design in the case of residential buildings and the relatively low cost (relative to the cost of the building) involved.

(Continued on page 7)

The tragic case of the Eye Institute

This journal in its September 1st issue reported that the Lawley Ward and the Camp Ward of the Regional Ophthalmic Institute were scheduled to be pulled down. *The Man From Madras Musings* is glad to report that the threat to the buildings is not something that is likely to happen today or tomorrow. But that the wreckers will move in, not only into the old campus but into a part of the new campus, to pull down many more buildings than the two named is certain, unless plans are drawn up to save the heritage buildings in these two campuses and then implemented as soon as possible.

The fate of the buildings in the Ophthalmic Institute's two campuses is a classic example of the threat to built heritage in this city and the virtual inability of anyone to do anything about it. But by recording in brief what could be a model study of such threats, *MMM* hopes that some twinges of conscience could be triggered – and, perhaps, lead to restorative action that will show that there's still hope for this city.

The Regional Ophthalmological Institute is the successor to the Madras Eye Infirmary, the second oldest eye hospital in the world, Moorfields in London its elder by just a year. An institution with that record deserves better; not only should its campus be retained as a model of architectural heritage but its facilities should ensure that it remains a centre of excellence. But while *MMM* is in no position to comment on the Institute's medical equipment and capabilities, the campus and its buildings are something else.

The Institute's campus is divided into two halves by Marshall's Road. The old campus, developed around Lawley Ward, is a vast tree-shaded area with a variety of British Indian architectural styles – Indo Saracenic, Kerala-Chisholm, and early 20th Century *Sarkari*, all of them rich with woodwork and splendid staircases, including a splendid old amphitheatre-like, wood-dominated classroom. The buildings here comprise a veritable architectural museum. Across the road, there is the post-Independence 'New Block', raised in the early 1960s in the gardens of *Shawfield*. That old residence, used till recently as nurses' quarters, is itself a splendid example of a late 19th Century-early 20th Century garden house, replete with magnificent staircase and marble-and-Chettinad-tile floors.

Lack of funds plus, to a degree, indifferent maintenance – you just have to look at the wild growth and untended gardens in the old campus to realise that the existing staff are not doing their jobs, as is the case in almost every Government institution – have resulted in the old buildings in both campuses deteriorating. That unhindered deterioration has led the PWD – after its experience of a bit of first floor flooring falling down in the General Hospital – to condemn several of the buildings in both campuses as being unfit for habitation. And with such an opinion given to them, the hospital authorities had the alternatives of demanding funds for maintenance and restoration or evacuating the condemned buildings.

Given the Government's attitude to restoration and maintenance, evacuation was an easier option – and that is what the hospital authorities took, though in parts of these buildings there remains some activity because the new block, though not overcrowded, is not enough to handle ALL the patients.

Thus, there is no immediate threat to the condemned buildings; they are not going to be pulled down tomorrow. But unused, untended buildings deteriorate faster, endangering tree growth in them – as in the old nurses' quarters – become rampant, and vandals begin to move in and despoil the buildings further. At the end of the day, what happens is that, as in the case of *Bentinck's Building*, it becomes easier to order the wreckers in.

It is to prevent that happening that *Madras Musings* and *MMM* once again raise their voices and hope that ways will be found to save and restore this heritage campus as a model bit of conservation in the city. With its rich variety of buildings restored, with its gardens maintained as they once used to be, and with enough space in a hospital less crowded these days, the old campus can once again be made the main hospital and school in surroundings that can be displayed as the pride of the city, while other use can be found for the new campus.– *MMM* hopes that all those who qualified in the Elliot School here and others who have worked in this campus will team together to find a way to save their alma mater as well as, given its proud history, one of the city's most significant bits of heritage.

Still talking

It's over a hundred years since the Sethusamudram Canal was mooted, to save ships travelling round Ceylon/Sri Lanka when going from India's East Coast to West or vice versa . And still nothing has materialised, despite several studies made, plans being drawn up and political pressure applied. Now *The Man From Madras Musings* finds we are back to Square One, with the Central Government proposing to float a global tender for a feasibility study to be made!

As in the case of the several studies made and reports written on the waterways of the City, and now another study being mooted, so in the case of the Sethusamudram Canal too, with yet another report being sought. Making all previous efforts a waste of the taxpayers' money. And at the end of the day, will the new report be implemented – or will it too be pigeonholed?

The only aspect of the new Rs.6 crore study proposed that *MMM* finds heartening is the second part of the two-part investigation suggested. The first part will focus on the socioeconomic and technoeconomic viability of a shipping canal to link the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar. And this has been done in several ways over the years, the most recent study that *MMM* heard of providing once again a positive outlook. The second part is a new look at the project taking into consideration concerns that have become more prevalent in the world in the last 10-20 years, namely the impact on the environment. The Environment Impact Study certainly needs to be done to address the concern of the Greens on both sides of the Palk Strait.

Of course, there's a chicken and egg situation here, as *MMM* sees it. Should a level of usage and therefore socio- and techno-economic viability FOLLOW the study of the alternatives of environmental impact, or should what is viable be first decided on and then an assessment made of what the environment impact of that would be? *MMM* would think the former — while the latter seems to be preferred by the Central Government which is asking the Tuticorin Port Authority to commission the study on its behalf, perhaps because it offers the easier opportunity of throwing out the project, whereas that will be more difficult in the case of the former, which will more clearly state how much traffic and other activity the environment will be able to handle.

But whichever way the study goes, *MMM* is inclined to think it's another Rs. 6 crore down the drain, because after years of reading about the century-old suggestion, *MMM* does not think the Canal will ever be built – merely because no Government has the commitment to pursue to completion the project.

Safer numbers

There's been some new thinking on car number plates in the country and that conform to styling of lettering and numerals, will also have a chromium-based hologram hot-stamped in one corner, a permanent identification number branded on it by the RTO and a locking system that will also be locked at the RTO. Another hologram with details of the vehicles will be hot-stamped on the rear window. None of this appears to have happened to the yellow plates, so will they happen with the white plates when they make their appearance?

With the citizen's life at RTOs difficult enough as it is, how much more difficult it is going to be when all this is implemented is better imagined than experienced. More important, will the police, already unable to cope with traffic chaos, be in a position to check all numbered traffic to see whether they are following all these guidelines? As it is, blatant violations of number plate styles – as pointed out by *MMM* in the past – are being ignored; what makes anyone think enforcement will be any better just because new number plates with all these safety devices are ordered?

In brief

★ One Government had wanted individual AC sheet homes to be built for slum-dwellers. Now our new Government wants the idea scrapped and multistorey tenements built to relocate slumdwellers. *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders whether anyone who has seen those tenements in the fishing *kuppams* on San Thomé beach would ever endorse building multistorey tenements again! Those tenements in San Thomé are not only an ill-tended eye-sore, but, worse, all the space around them has been occupied by new shanties, creating a ground-level slum around a highrise slum, a sight far worse than any slum with thatched or asbestos-roofed huts. A point made against multistorey tenements in the past needs repeating again too. During inspections of such tenements in the past, the 'flats' were found to house goats and poultry as well. That's no surprise, if anyone takes the trouble to understand that slumdwellers are only trying to recreate in urban areas the rural lifestyle they've been used to.

★ The immediate reaction in Indian aviation circles after Black Tuesday was that security at Indian airports is much better than in American ones, particularly after the Kathmandu hijacking. There was undoubtedly more security in Indian airports before Black Tuesday, *The Man From Madras Musings* agrees, but how effective was it? *MMM* has heard of a report which states that during checks made by civil aviation security officials during the last 20 months, 385 breaches of security were detected! Considering that all it takes is ONE breach of security to cause a disaster, that report is not the most confidence-building of ones. There have been several such breaches in Chennai too, *MMM* has seen reported. But after Black Tuesday, perhaps the checks will get even tighter here – despite passenger complaints – but as always, excitement dies down, passenger complaints grow, complacency creeps in – and, bang, you'll once again have a Black Tuesday or a penetration of a maximum security airport like Colombo and it'll start talk of greater security once again.

★ Getting students to look at current issues, concerns far removed from what they find in their textbooks and which are not the focus of their exams, is not the general educational pattern in Indian schools and colleges. Which was why *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to hear that B.Com students of APEX College, Adyar, had held a seminar on 'US 64 – the UTI Crisis,' and had discussed how it happened and how public confidence could be restored in UTI. The College also planned a workshop on understanding the stock-market. *MMM* wonders how many other educational institutions in the State keep educational, pace with the daily headlines. *MMM* had suggested to a particular faculty in Chennai just a couple of days after Black Tuesday that the whole Department meet in a seminar to, in-house, discuss terrorism with a couple of outsiders who have studied the subject. It's a few weeks now since that suggestion, but *MMM* is still to hear of the seminar materialising.

MMM

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

OUR READERS WRITE

Hearing the verdict

Regarding the events that took place in the courtroom in the Madras High Court on the day in April 1945 when the judgement was delivered by Justice Vere Mockett in the Lakshmikantam Murder Case (*MM*, September 1st), I would like to add a few points as one who was present in the courtroom on that day. (I was a 2nd year student in the Madras Veterinary College.)

Justice Vere Mockett finished his address to the jury by about 3.30 p.m. and retired to his Chambers. The jury (nine in all) left for their room for consultations before giving their verdict. All the accused were quite cheerful and were confident of acquittal. Friends and relatives of the accused, including T.A. Mathuram, the wife of N.S. Krishnan, were in the High Court Campus with garlands to greet them on their acquittal.

As time dragged on without the jury returning to the courtroom, a restless M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar was seen wiping the sweat on his face frequently with his hand towel. There was less tension in the faces of N.S. Krishnan and the others.

At about 8 p.m. all the accused except Constable Arumugam were given life imprisonment by the judge based on the majority verdict of the jury. Constable Arumugam was hugged by his colleagues on his immediate release. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar and others began to understand their conviction only when they saw constable Arumugam being released, while they were kept confined to the accused box.

While the convicted persons were shocked beyond words Vadivelu (A-1), who was accused of stabbing Lakshmikantam (a stabbing which subsequently proved fatal) kept throwing up his hands in the air to protest against the verdict. Soon after the verdict, policemen holding the hands of the accused, led them away through an exit leading from the accused box to the floor below.

All the accused were released on appeal to the Privy Council as the statement of an approver, of a conspiracy hatched at Wall Tax Theatre to murder Lakshmikantam, was not corroborated.

M.S. Jayaraman
10, Shrinivas Apts
10, Turnbulls Road
1st Cross Street
Nandanam, Chennai 600 035.

Unfair parking

With no preventive action forthcoming from the authorities against putting up new shopping complexes without proper parking areas for the convenience of the shoppers on the ever-busy and congested Usman Road T. Nagar, builders are making merry. As a consequence, streets abutting Usman Road have virtually become parking lots much to the discomfiture of the residents and passers-by.

I do not understand the logic of allowing parking of the public's vehicles on residential streets. If a person has business in a specific place, it is but natural that he keep his vehicle at that place till his work is over. Likewise, shoppers have no business parking their vehicles anywhere but where they go to shop. When shopkeepers themselves do not allow parking in front of their shops of even their clients' vehicles, how can parking of these vehicles elsewhere be permitted.

With the festival season about to begin, T. Nagar will see heavy crowds. It is, therefore, time that the authorities took strict measures to save the residents of the area from coming under a virtual siege because of the indiscriminate parking of vehicles whose owners have business on Usman Road and not in the lanes abutting it.

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

A forgotten project

Your article on Yellapragada Subba Rao's contribution to science (*MM*, August 16th), should inspire young students of science to emulate his example. I suggest that you feature another who has been little recognised in India. Sir S.V. Ramamurthy, I.C.S., who envisaged the Rampadasagar Project as a master plan for solving the water problem of the Rayalaseema Districts (Anantapur, Kurnool and Cuddappah) that face constant drought. Sir Ramamurthy suggested the scheme during the period when Andhra was part of Madras Presidency. The scheme was probably not implemented for political reasons or due to some policy of the then Government. But the Report can now be made use of in a profitable manner by Government in the national interest.

R. Chellappa
1, M.K. Amman Koil Street
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

Holmesamania

It is in fitness of things that this foremost fan of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Krishnamoorthy (*MM*, September 1st), lived in Chennai, as this City has some parallels with the world of Sherlock Holmes:

1. The odour of the Cooum is almost as deadly as the *Devil's Foot Root*.
2. The city abounds with *Crooked Men*.
3. Several notorious gangsters operate in the city, turning it into a *Valley of Fear*.
4. Like the butler in the *Musgrave Ritual*, some Chennaiites fatally fall into ditches, pits and borewells thoughtfully dug up by the Corporation.
5. Of course, Holmes dare not step into Chennai with his fondness for smoking opium. He would be booked in a trice under the Narcotic Substances Act.
6. The evil geniuses of Chennai make Prof. Moriarty look a child.

The world of Sherlock Holmes is truly addictive. No wonder Dr. Krishnamoorthy was hooked. So is yours truly.

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

Ensuring water

Though I am no expert, I would like to comment on the water scarcity in IIT campus (*MM*, July 16th) in spite of its having a vast area receiving the seasonal rains.

Water infiltrating to the ground is dependent on the porosity and permeability of the soil. A clay-predominant soil like what we have in Chennai retards infiltration of water, while evaporation takes away most of what remains on the land. Years ago, there were innumerable shallow areas everywhere in the city on private and public lands, roadside, etc. where water collected stood for days after the rain, thus aiding infiltration. The natural force of running water has levelled the shallow areas over the years and Man also contributed to it with his levelling of land and cementing it.

At my residence in Valasaravakkam, I use an ages-old rainwater harvesting practice. Thirty years ago, when I dug my well, the water table reached 18 feet below the ground level. Some of the wells nearby were stone-dry. Now, the entire stretch of the forty feet wide road in front of my house in Ramakrishna Nagar is tarred and the stormwater drains on either side cemented with great precision ensuring that not a drop of water can reach the soil. (The stormwater drains are, in fact, stagnant, polluted and mosquito-breeding *shakkadai*.) However, I have not cemented the land around my house and well, though this is a little inconvenient on rainy days. My 1½ ground plot is consciously landscaped in such a way that the rainwater including that coming down from the terraces reaches the shallow places around the coconut and other trees and away from the well. Believe it, not a drop of water had run off from my backyard after any rain. Even after the occasional very heavy rains, water would remain for at least a day. The water-table in May this year was twelve feet below the ground level, a great improvement! Now, in August, it has, of course, gone further down. But there's water.

K. Sathrugnan
5, Ramakrishna Nagar
Kamarajar Road, Valasaravakkam
Chennai 600 087.

Legislation needed to stop encroachments

In the metropolitan areas of old Madras, apart from the three natural waterways, Adyar, Cooum and Otteri Nullah, there were more than 100 small- and medium-size tanks, ponds and lakes. The urban pressure of modern Chennai swallowed most of them and we are now left with hardly a handful. All those tanks now exist only in the name of roads like Tank Bund Road, Lake View Road and New Tank Street. Lakes that were converted as housing colonies are now called Lake Area (in Nungambakkam), Ambattur Lake Housing scheme, etc. The width of the rivers has been reduced to half and even to quarter in some stretches due to encroachments on the banks, thereby restricting the flow of rainwater and leading to flooding adjoining areas during monsoons. Instead of allowing the flow of fresh water, these waterways serve as carriers of sewerage water.

Every day, additional encroachments appear on the banks of rivers and lakes of Chennai. They usually happen on a large scale during summer. They are in alarming scale if that Summer happens to coincide with a change of government. All of a sudden during May-June, 2001, numerous encroachment appeared in several public areas of Chennai.

On the other hand, Government itself is converting big lakes and adjoining areas into housing colonies under the guise of being unused agriculture lands. Irrespective of developments in lake-areas, the average rainfall and the quantum of water collected in catchment areas are the same. But there is less penetration into the ground due to the increased number of built-up areas and road covers. The water is supposed to be collected there, but it spreads to adjoining areas. The situation is further aggravated when disposal canals and waterways are encroached in. That is the reason for even a spit of rain resulting in the city's roads being flooded.

Existing laws for water bodies do not have any provision to punish encroachers. The enforcement provisions are cumbersome. The existing development control laws do talk about the development control over the lands adjoining water bodies but are silent on the fate of the water body itself. That is why vested groups, under the poor people's banner, are always keeping eye on these areas for profit. If there is strong legislation with a specific provision for imprisonment to punish encroachers, I am sure the rate of encroachments will come down. And if it is followed with strict enforcement, a hundred per cent result can be assured.

A couple of years ago, when there was an incident on eve-teasing, government immediately brought in special legislation. Encroachment in and along waterbodies requires similar special legislation to stop it.

R. Ramaraju
10, First Floor
829, Anna Salai
Chennai 600 002.

Good old times

Nowadays, when you try to step on the road, you find Marutis, Omnis, Esteems, Altos, WagonRs, Tata Sumos, Santros, different makes of mobikes, innumerable scooters, autos with front engines and rear engines, buses and trucks, not to speak of the giant water tankers, all whizzing past, polluting the air so much, it becomes difficult even to breathe normally – the poor pedestrian has no place to step on the road and the pavements are occupied by the vendors. Oh! what a stage we have reached.

In the good old days of 1940s and 50s, we used to have a nice evening stroll from Presidency College to Queen Mary's College, sit on the sands eating *thengai, mangai pattani chundal* or groundnuts sold by a few vendors and stroll back, breathing the salubrious fresh air. In those days, we used to have only a few good old Standard, Fiat and Ambassador cars and a few mobikes on the roads. No autos or scooters or the giant water tankers. Oh! How we used to enjoy our evening stroll. Oh for those good old times, again!

K.V.Ramakrishnan
1/1, Sixth Street
Gopalapuram, Chennai 600 086.

Paying for comfort

Reader C.G. Prasad (*MM*, August 1st) is wrong both on fact and logic, when he opposes the concept of entry fee for railway platforms.

First, there IS certainly consideration — you are provided with shelter, comfortable seats with fans, toilet facilities and so on.

Secondly, the entry fee goes towards maintaining and improving the facilities inside the station. In fact, the Railways should check ticketless platform visitors, as they have need to constantly improve the sanitation and orderliness in the station premises. But they must, necessarily, take urgent and effective steps to make purchase of platform tickets easy, to prevent inconvenience to visitors, as narrated by reader, C. Lakshmi Narain. In fact, they could increase the cost of tickets to, say, Rs. 5/-.

Lastly, we citizens must accept the concept of paying for comfort and convenience.

B.S. Doraiswamy
12A, Jeevika Apartments
46, Pulla Avenue
Shenoy Nagar, Chennai 600 030.

Birds of the city

C. Ramakrishna of the Madras Naturalists' Society writes that he sighted the following birds near his house in the Boat Club Area, South Madras, one day in August. Koels with several juvenile ones, lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker, Indian Tree Pie, Spotted Dove, Small Green Barbet, Red-vented Bulbul, Common Babbler and Jungle and House Crow.

* * *

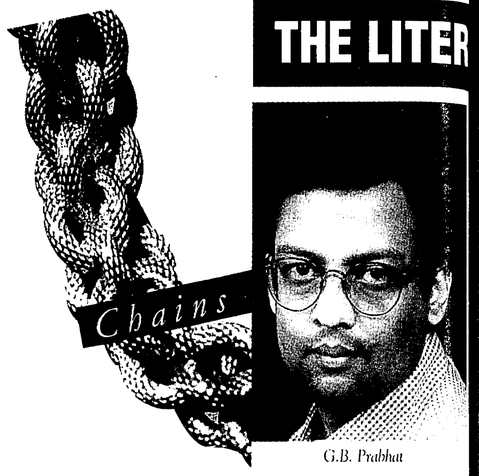
Visit to Pallikaranai

The Madras Naturalists' Society also writes that on a visit to Pallikaranai marsh one August afternoon, its members saw 16 species of birds, including Purple Heron, Yellow Bitten, Chestnut Bitten, Pheasant-tailed Jacana (a few of them in breeding plumage), Purple Moorhen, Coots and Indian Moorhen. The highlight of the visit was the presence of several young Dabchicks. Will the Pallikaranai marsh, an important breeding ground for several species of birds, be allowed to survive, wonders the Society.

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.**

The return of yet another native



G.B. Prabhat

THE LITERARY SCENE

— Observations of the one-who-stayed

"Saints, rivers, companies. Judge them not by their past, but by their future."

Thus speaks a character in G.B. Prabhat's book, *Chains*.

This nugget of wisdom is meant to ease the path of the chief protagonist, the NRI, Janakiraman.

You can extend that argument to include more aspects of life.

Maybe all prodigals ought to have access to this knowledge during that very first confrontation when they contemplate the old-new world they've returned to. A world that appears familiar, with tantalising flashes of memory playing hide and seek, but one that also contains so many frighteningly new elements.

Reality begins to splinter, and the result is hazy confusion.

Prabhat's hero is a man who left his homeland, as Janakiraman, enjoyed a number of decades as 'John' (as our white brothers cannot possibly say 'Janakiraman'.... and don't even pretend to make an attempt), only to return to his mother country and his identity as Janakiraman.

And it is this world, this mixed-up world where different cultural norms clash, where old habits confront acquired ones, where nature clashes with nurture and recent experience... it is this world that Prabhat finds endlessly fascinating.

You might say that Prabhat is himself a person who moves to and fro between different worlds.

* * *

A mechanical engineer from PSG, Coimbatore, he has an MS in Computer Science from IIT, Chennai, and is at present a Director in a Sathyam company.

He is a writer of both fiction and non-fiction.

Which particular facet led to *Chains*?

Is writing in his blood? His father is a well-known Tamil writer, G.S. Balakrishnan. Certainly, he credits his father with having inspired his "love for the written word", inculcating in him an enviable reading habit that appears both vast and varied.

Prabhat feels that stories have a way of reaching out to you. Core reasons are often shrouded in a mist. Something calls out to you, takes root, an idea that just has to be born, and the writer becomes a means to an end. He says he constantly compares the art of writing to the birth process, with all the inherent agony, discomfort, and inevitability.

* * *

The dilemma of the NRI is indeed intriguing to observe.

It becomes even more complicated when the NRI, particularly the US of A variety, is juxtaposed to the ethos inherent to family-run businesses right here in Chennai.

And this situation is topical, given that the next few years might be witness to more and more Janakiramans, looking to find a place in the business world here.

Prabhat expects a 'reverse-exodus', particularly in the 25-30 age group, especially since, all problems notwithstanding, India's progress towards professionalism is most positive.

Given his educational qualifications, was he never tempted to be part of the 'westward ho' migration, like most members of his generation? It is hard to believe that nothing attracted him

● by Ranjitha Ashok

– the money, lifestyle, working environment or the hard-work-to-success ratio.

Prabhat is very clear. His answer is a pretty resounding **'no'** with absolutely no trace of regret.

How come?

The answer carries a distinct touch of tongue-in-cheek, but it is an answer nevertheless, if you can ignore the slightly sardonic grin.

Business, he states, in so-called developed countries is boring. Everything is so consistent, so perfectly run. And that is in itself a mind-numbing frustrating process. There are no challenges left.

But here.....

To start off, a person never knows whether he is ever going to reach his office. The reasons could be anything from temperamental traffic signals, minor and major confrontations between vehicle owners, to sudden strikes and processions. Reaching his building is no guarantee of making it to his cabin. Lifts may or may not work, given the rather uncertain temper of our power.

Why would he ever have been tempted to live anywhere but here?

Why, indeed?

Are things really so different?

At the most basic level, are the rules and goals that operate in 'those' (read 'American') business and corporate worlds really so different from the ones that govern our own business worlds?

For example, there is a fascinating character nicknamed 'Wart' in the book. A thoroughly familiar figure, inherent to not merely business circles, but to large families as well. For he is the eternal fixer. The one whose signature tune is: "I'll take care of it" (*Naan Paathukkiren*).

Surely there must be 'Warts' elsewhere in the world. Of course there are, Prabhat agrees. But they are hardly ever as colourful as the fixers you find here. They would probably be either suave, gelled-haired, European-suited urbane professionals, who'd also "take care of it" for you, or they'd mostly be faceless agencies.

Isn't human nature the same all over in its essentials?

Yes, certain emotions are common to all human beings. Fear and Greed, in his opinion, are probably the most compelling emotions the world over. But the intensity, or even the manner with which a person responds to these emotions, is based on his culture, experience, and learned behaviour. This has been his experience in his dealings with an extremely culturally varied set of people at work.

* * *

What else is typical only of the Indian business scene?

In a word, **Dichotomy.**

'L.N.' – yet another character in the book – is probably the best symbol of this aspect. Dichotomy, be it between cultural mores and habits, social patterns, or business practices. Urban India straddles many worlds. Life is one long list of choices. Prabhat is fascinated by this characteristic, and feels that nowhere is it more apparent than in the life of the 'poor Indian CEO'. The Indian CEO is one who has to constantly walk thin lines in a work ethos that announces that professionalism and aspirations coupled with intensity of pursuit are certainly the paths to success, but so is changing a desk position to satisfy *vaasthu*.

And therein lies the sheer, totally unique Indian flavour. The confusion is intense in the corporate world today. For the first time in some 50 odd years, job security is being threatened. There are no long-term assurances and life-long guarantees in a world that is so dynamic. This means that the choices a person makes become critical.

Like which is more important? Choosing a propitious time, or focussing on fine-tuning quality?

What makes for a good business?

Homegrown street smarts or learnt-it-in-business-school savvy?

Both. A judicious synthesis of common sense and business instincts, and never losing control over the links between productivity and output. Yes, it is true that many family-run businesses did not start out with degree-wielding, jargon-swinging entrepreneurs. But there is no doubt that if you are to take on the world market, focussing on dividing tasks with a view to increase productivity, there has to be a successful blend of instinct and educated expertise.

* * *

Prabhat tries to deny it, but his passion, albeit sometimes coated with exasperation, for Chennai-that-was-Madras is ever-present. It shows in the amused affection with which his characters are drawn, even those with slight shades of grey.

For a man who has travelled extensively, he has never been tempted to set down roots anywhere but in his own home right here in the city which is still very much 'Madras' to him. (He hated the changing of the city's name to Chennai.)

A word on Chennai's changing face?

Prabhat feels roads have improved, and actually has the courage to admit he likes flyovers. There is a definite sense of accountability and responsibility on the part of the citizens - the ones in power as well as the common man. He points to the TNEB as an excellent example of the general movement towards increased professionalism. The professional touch shows even in the way they answer the phone, he says. Agencies trying to increase civic awareness of the importance of a clean environment are another case in point.

Lifestyles are changing gradually, but not every aspect is something to feel pleased about. There is this air of frenetic pursuit of "mindless airheadedness".

Strongly put, but you can see the point of what he's saying.

Does he then see a certain 'sameness', which isn't really very attractive and is indicative of a gradual loss of something rare and special?

Yes, he admits, especially in young people. Because 'globalisation' appears to have taken on the patina of distinct 'americanisation'.

Colonisation comes in three forms, he warns. Political, economic and, perhaps the most insidious and dangerous one of all, cultural.

We must retain the ability to question, and keep our capacity to contemplate intact. Avoid unquestioned acceptance of peer pressure, and use a sense of discrimination. Instead, he notices in some sections a certain herd mentality with an increasing obsession for loneliness.

Colonisation broke spines in more ways than one.

Having said that, Prabhat makes it very clear that he does not want to pass judgement or preach.

* * *

Does moving away really change the very essence of the

earlier experiences? After s was the only home you t one point in time.

how could you forget so ? You grew up here; you what's what. Why should e so much trauma?

re the toilets really that Did a *dosai* really taste that

calls it "temporary amnehich is the natural fall-out kind of separation.

w come, individual stories t successful, while others

e ease or difficulty of tran depends entirely upon each individual history, the reasons they went away, the reasons they come back, and maybe what they come back to. Children of returning former NRIs settle down faster, in his view. Because children have less baggage, less external influences. It is the adults who are 'prisoners of illusions'. We carry already-written scripts in our minds and are wary and frightened of re-writing them. Adult fears result in people taking refuge in being patronising, and all adults tend to justify limitations.

Children, on the other hand, are true philosophers – till they grow up.

On the other side, you'll find an eagerness to please in an adult trying to settle down in a new environment. Janakiraman did not object to his name being changed to 'John', did he? Nor did he say: 'If you cannot get my name, I cannot get yours'.

* * *

In a changing, shrinking world economy, the dilemma of the NRI makes for an intriguing study. As both a writer and a member of the corporate world, Prabhat is a watcher with access to unique insights.

Today's world is one of the "knowledge economy". Knowledge is king – an old idea, yes, but made much more significant today, thanks to the democratisation of knowledge.

Chains show up more today simply because life has acquired so many more shades and colours when compared to previous, more insular times.

Chains of past experience, chains of nature, chains of nurture, chains of childhood, and the shiny brand-new chains of today's experiences.

Because the chains of the present are as powerful as those of the past.

And some chains are hard to break.

And thereby hangs a tale.

Our OLD is the home of P. Orr and Sons as designed by Robert Chisholm and built in 1873. Its clock tower was once connected to Madras Observatory and signalled standard time to the residents of the city.

The building was extended in 1896. At that time, one of its main architectural features, the clock tower, was pulled down and what is seen in the NEW was erected over the entrance. A new clock was also installed.

Peter Orr, who founded the firm in 1849, was a talented engineer and is credited with having invented a mechanical process to work the city's punkahs *by steam.*

THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

Over the next few years, he developed the firm as the South's leading jewellers and silversmiths. The firm's 60-foot by 30-foot showroom still retains vestiges of the splendour it once boasted. Shining tiles, embellished walls, gleaming ornamental rosewood showcases were all part of an experience intended for rajahs, nawabs and other leaders of Madras Society.

P. Orr's was also well known for its clocks and watches in all their variety and its range of surveying, drawing, optical and other instruments. Brass compasses, universal sun dials, barometers, thermometers, pocket magnifying glasses, magneto electro machines – a curative agent for nervons and other diseases at the time – and milk testers/lactometers made for household use were some of the items the firm offered, apart from its renowned jewellery and silverware.

Its workshops that made or maintained its entire range were among the best equipped and with the most talented staff in the country.

Letter from a literary landscape

ecently, I found myself drivg through Fittleworth. If esn't ring any bells, conhat to reach Fittleworth, I driven through Warbl-, Emsworth (passing close *reepwood House*) and n. There should now be a n of bells ringing and all ected with one literary — P.G. Wodehouse.

hat has this to do with Ma-Well, apart from the fact Wodehouse is still a great ite in India, some time last r I gave a talk at the Maclub on 'Sex and Violence he novels of P.G. ouse'.

the regular reader of the s *Musings* who may wonder all this has to do with a l that takes its committo Madras seriously, the ction, albeit a tenuous one, MM kindly reviewed that an amusing article written ujitha Ashok in the March 998 issue. This article be seen as a follow-up to iginal talk.

e reason for my writing to inform all and sundry places from where Plum many of the names of his ters in the Blandings nov-*Blandings Castle*, itself alas, ever a real place but was sed to be modelled on *n Place* in Shropshire, a home that was recently nue for yet another round s on the Northern Ireland No doubt Lord Emsworth have been alarmed at the e traumas inflicted on the es of Blandings by the pres- so many politicians and men.)

e noble lord himself was d after the village of orth on the Hampshire/ border, a mere couple of from where I now live. It is a small seaside place, heavily frequented by amateur sailors at weekends. Midweek, the village is less busy and that is the time to take a quiet walk along the shore and feed the swans on the Mill Pond. There is a marvellous description of what it must have been like when Wodehouse lived there in the 1920s in 'A Damsel in Distress', where it was renamed as 'Belpher': "Ten years before, Belpher had been a flourishing centre of the South of England oyster trade. It is situated

● by Jaspar Utley
Former Head of the British Council, South India.

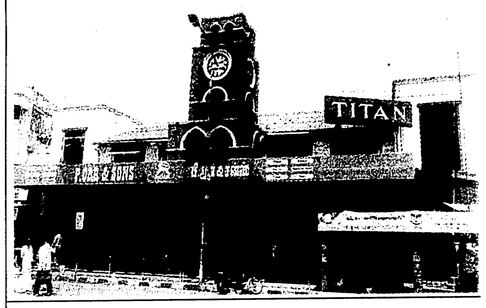
by the shore, where Hayling Island, lying athwart the mouth of the bay, forms the water into a sort of brackish lagoon... The shallow water is still there; the mud is still there; even the oyster-beds are still there, but not the oysters nor the little world of activity which had sprung up around them."

Wodehouse had friends there who taught at Emsworth House School, now demolished and replaced by a nursing home. He eventually bought himself a house there which bore the name of *Threepwood* (it still does and also bears a blue plaque commemorating its former owner) from which he took the name for Galahad, the Earl's brother and, of course, for Freddie Threepwood, the Earl's second son.

A few hundred yards from my house in Havant is the locality of Warblington; one of Lord Emsworth's sisters was Lady Ann Warblington. And three miles further along the coast from Emsworth is the picturesque fishing village of Bosham, which figured on the Bayeaux Tapestry as the place from where King Harold sallied forth to meet William the Conqueror, but which is better known as the name of the Earl of Emsworth's eldest son and heir, Lord Bosham.

And what of Fittleworth with which these thoughts began? Well, it is a charming little village high on the South Downs in West Sussex and, of course, 'Boko' Fittleworth, is a close chum of Bertie Wooster and a stalwart member of the Drones Club — but that is another saga and another circle of names.

The area in which I now live in Hampshire fairly bristles with literary connections. Charles Dickens was born eight miles away at Portsmouth, not too far from where Conan Doyle practised as a doctor before he established his reputation with Sherlock Homes. John Keats wrote at Bedhampton, even closer to Havant, while Jane Austen lived and wrote for some time at Chawton, only a few miles north of here and not far from Selborne, home of the celebrated naturalist, Gilbert White. However, the world of P.G. Wodehouse is closer both geographically and emotionally and on that recent day, when the weather was unusually hot and sunny, without a cloud in the sky, I was reminded of *Blandings Castle*, where it is eternal summer and where the Earl of Emsworth lives forever. As I write, however, it is raining.



OPTIONS FOR CITY'S WATER NEEDS

(Continue from page 1)

designed for this purpose fifty years ago drawing water from the Adyar.

4. What are the other water storage points, e.g. Porur lake, in and around the city, which can be exploited for providing water?
5. How much water can we utilise from the waterways by restoring to storage in the waterways themselves? Pollution of the waterways need to be eliminated especially by Metrowater, which is estimated to discharge upto 50% of the sewage into the waterways.
6. Can rainwater be collected along the length of the Telugu Ganga Canal?

The entire project of RWHSW has to be treated first as an engineering project and then as an agricultural and socio-economic project. The first Veeranam Project and the subsequent attempts to revise it failed because engineers treated it as a political project, not as an engineering project.

Metrowater has to change its mindset before it can investigate such a project, as it has not shown any inclination for a long range planning and has been satisfied with day-to-day functioning. A separate consultancy cell is needed to study the various alternatives: RWHSW/ Veeranam / Hogenakal / Pallipalayam / Desalination. Sufficient expertise is available in this country and there is no need to engage foreign consultancy firms.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

1. Name the famous doctor, the first to perform a heart transplant, who passed away recently.

2. Whose record did Michael Schumacher overhaul by winning his 52nd Formula One GP at Belgium on September 2nd?

3. Which computer major has bought Compaq for $ 25 billion?

4. Which video won the Best Video of the Year at MTV video music awards recently?

5. Name the Mira Nair film which won the Golden Lion for Best Picture at this year Venice Film Festival.

6. Where was the World Conference Against Racism held recently?

7. Which militant group in Kashmir has decided to enforce the wearing of *burqa* by Muslim women?

8. Who won the U.S. Open tennis singles titles recently?

9. Simple. Name the edifice in New York destroyed by terrorist attacks on September 11th?

* * *

10. Who is the new Chief Justice of the Madras High Court?

11. Which college recently re-created R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi*?

12. What new innovation, a first for the Chennai division of Southern Railway, has been added at Tirumailai?

* * *

13. Tiruchendur, Thiruparankunram and Pazhamudircholai. What are the other three names in this list?

14. Who is the new leader of the Tamil Maanila Congress?

15. INTACH Tamil Nadu has offered to study the possibilities of making an old Dutch settlement a model destination for eco- and heritage-tourism. Name this place!

16. Where in the State has the Bombay Natural History Society decided to establish a bird study centre?

17. According to an amendment passed on September 14, what status has been bestowed upon Anna University?

18. Continuing on the college theme, how many Government aided and self-financing engineering colleges are there in the State?

19. What British sobriquet is given to Coimbatore?

20. In which temple could one worship Shiva as 'Ardhanareeshwarar?

(Answers on Page 10)

Electricity and telephones arrive

The modern age started when man tamed electricity and began using it for multifarious purposes.

The Italian scientist Volta invented the electric battery in 1800. Michael Faraday, the Englishman, invented the electric dynamo in 1831. The American Samuel Morse made the electric telegraph possible in 1882. Alexander Graham Bell of America invented the telephone in 1876. Thomas Alva Edison of America discovered the incandescent lamp, using electricity to light the world in 1879. Further research on the nature of electric waves was made by Hertz of Germany who, in 1888, postulated his theory of electrical waves. Four years later, Steinmetz of America enunciated the laws of alternating current, and Tesla, also of America, prepared the first alternating current electric motor. With these many discoveries and inventions, the electric age dawned on earth.

In India, the first official telegraph line was opened in 1851 between Calcutta and Diamond Harbour (24 Parganas). And, the first hydroelectric power generation station was set up in Darjeeling in 1897-98.

Electricity being a dangerous thing to handle, the Indian Electricity Act was promulgated, in 1903, to regulate its use. In another three years, Madras got its first electric lights.

Government records for 1906 indicate that electricity was installed in Government House, Ooty, in January 1906. The Mount Road postal building was among the first Government offices to be electrified in the City. Installation of electric lights and fans in residential quarters in the General Hospital was approved in February 1906.

Among industrial concerns, Binny & Co., was the first to make use of electricity. In March 1906, the Police Commissioner of Madras informed Government that Messrs. Binny & Co. had given notice of their intention to put a dynamo in the premises of the Buckingham Mill for "electrolysing and lighting".

Installation of electric lights and fans in Government House, Guindy, was, however, for reasons unknown delayed till October 1906. Installation of electric lights and fans there were executed "departmentally". Probably the desire to have the work done "departmentally" was the reason for the delay.

The general public of Madras also received attention. In May 1906, tenders were invited "for the supply of electric energy to the City of Madras" and tenderers were asked to provide Rs.10,000 "in Government Promissory Notes" as security.

Two British firms, Messrs. Orr, David and Brightwell and Messrs. Crompton & Co. competed for the assignment. Cromptons were assigned the job, but some behind-the-scenes moves made them finally agree to give up the job in fvaour of a newly formed Madras Electric Supply Corporation. A Government Order of June 1906 says, "Government have approved the deed of assignment of the Licence for the supply of electric energy to the City of Madras from Messrs. Crompton & Co. to the Madras Electric Supply Corporation."

● Going through our old clipping files, we came across a series of five articles R.A. PADMANABHAN, a veteran journalist, wrote for the now sadly defunct Indian Review. *Today, the subjects of these articles have become commonplace or have vanished, but we publish the series as a reminder of their beginnings. This is the third article in the series.*

— The Editor

'The lighthouse was ordered to be inspected for electrification in the middle of 1906.

The Parsee Theatrical Company of Bombay, on a tour of Madras, installed electric lights in People's Park where its shows were held. The Electrical Inspector to Government informed Government that he had "inspected and passed" the installations.

The Electric Tramways in Madras city were ordered early in 1906 "to carry out certain precautionary measures required for the guarding of the aerial lines of electricity". The Tramways had ideas of their own on the subject, but Government "declined to modify" its original orders and the "precautionary measures" were then carried out.

Although electric fans had come into use, a nostalgic endearment for the old *punkah* seems to have survived in some quarters. A communication was received by "the Consulting Architect to the Madras Government" conveying to him "the Report by the Electrical Inspector to the Government of Bengal on 'Perry's System of pulling *punkahs* by Electrical Power' in use at Rangoon." The Report was "recorded" without any action recommended.

While electricity for office and domestic use was thus coming into being in the city, the telephone, that ubiquitous instrument of present day life, was also arriving in Madras.

Probably the earliest telephone was installed in Fort St. George. This seems to have taken place in late 1905, when a telephone was also installed in Government House, Guindy "on an annual rental of Rs. 295/-".

The telephones were operated by the Telegraphs wing of the Post & Telegraphs Department.

Early in 1906, telephone facilities were extended to many mofussil towns, mainly for use in public offices and other institutions. In Vellore, a phone connection was established in February 1906 between the Municipal Office and the Water Works. In March 1906, a Telephone Exchange was established in Madras.

Not all Government Offices in Madras, however, had telephones. As late as June 1906, we find the Board of Revenue without a phone. In August that year, a Government Order informs us that "the Superintendent of Telephones, Madras Division, is requested to set up a telephone connection between the Board of Revenue and the Exchange at the annual rent of Rs. 120/-".

Similarly, another G.O. "requests the Superintendent of Telegraphs, Madras Division, to arrange for the early connection of the Maternity Hospital." Purchase of "3 telephone instruments for internal use" in the Maternity Hospital was sanctioned in September 1906.

While telephone connec tions were thus increasing in th City, a Central Exchange fo Telephones was established i Fort St. George, under the co trol of the Superintendent o Telegraphs, Madras Divisio This was the main Exchange i the city, though another E change functioned at the Ge eral Post Office.

The latter received instru tions from the Madras Gover ment on and off to provid connections to more offices i the mofussil. A Governmen Order dated October 8, 19 instructed telephonic conne tion to be provided between th Treasury and the Branch Ba of Madras at Cocanada an Calicut, and between th Collector's Office and th Taluk Office at Trichinopoly.

Obviously, there were n fixed priorities, but *ad hoc* a rangements in the matter of e tending telephonic conne tions!

Madras got a "Trunk Tel phone Exchange" only towar the end of 1906, although Gu ernment stated as early as Ju that year that "It was in favou of establishing Trunk Tel phonic connection between th Central Exchange at Fort S George and that at the Gener Post Office."

Telephone rates even withi the city were varied, dependan on the distance between th Central Exchange at the Fo and the individual connectio For example, a "Table Tel phone instrument" was ordere to be "placed in the office-roo of the Secretary to Gover ment, Public Works Depar ment at Chepauk" at "an an nual charge of Rs.75/-" Bu "the revised annual rate" for telephone at the King Institute Guindy was Rs. 510/-, "plus R 40/- for shifting.'

It is not known, howeve whether telephone users tho days had the bitter experienc of "excessive billing" that th often complain about in th Press now. Perhaps, the tele phones those days easily "go your man" and still more easil the calls were accounted cor rectly. 'Letters to the Editor columns of the newspapers o those halcyon days are surpris ingly free from this commo complaint of today! (Courtesy: *The Indian Review*.)

... And now we have e-villages

Eighteen year-old Vinod is the only one in his village to have an Internet connection. Every day about a dozen farmers in and around Melpattambakkam village near Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, visit Vinod's Internet kiosk on the main road to find out the prevailing prices of agri-products in other villages and hear about the weather. They are followed by students and youth not in sizeable numbers though, who come to browse. To add substance to his venture, Vinod has in his premises a telephone booth and an ice cream parlour. "I earn about Rs. 2500 per month from these," says Vinod, who is doing a correspondence course in Computer Science. With operating the kiosk all day to be a sustainable and a profitable proposition, Vinod has decided against leaving his village for a job in the city.

The periphery of Cuddalore town is a prosperous countryside, whose economy revolves around the three sugar mills in the area. EID Parry's first sugar factory was established here, in Nellikuppam, more than 150 years ago. And the 20,000 farmers in 300 villages here have, in some way or the other, been associated with the mill for generations. It was this symbiotic relationship between the mill and the villagers that made Parry network the villages. About 150 villages here have telephone connections – a fairly sizeable number. A pilot project with n-Logue Communications (P) Ltd., a Chennai-based company involved in rural networking, took shape in January 2001 and a test base of 38 connections was established. The CorDECT-based Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) was implemented keeping in mind the sparse subscriber density, even in the future, and the need for a simultaneous toll quality voice and Internet connectivity. An Access Centre was established at the Parry's premises at a cost of Rs. 12 lakh and with a dial-up connection from Sathyam, the local ISP.

The Access Centre acts as a private EPABX and has a base station tower, that can reach out to villages within a 20 km radius and can sustain about 1000 Internet connections.

"We selected farmers who have the financial capacity to manage the kiosks," said R. Muthukumar, systems administrator, EID Parry. The kiosks were naturally called *Parry's Corner*! The participating farmers and their families, who were hesitant at first, were trained for about a week and were given Pentium II systems and a wallset with Internet Port. This was in tune with n-Logue's business model whereby it will identify and partner with a local entrepreneur (the Local Service Provider – LSP). And along with the LSPs, n-Logue will set up an Access Centre to provide the last mile access and assist them in obtaining the connectivity to the Internet and Telecom backbones. Since the technology is easy to deploy, the LSP can concentrate on selling the service and creating awareness about the Internet. They could make additional revenue through value-added services like hosting web pages and providing local content. The kiosk operator can, on the other hand, augment the income he gets from selling Internet services by using the PC to do job typing, provide computer classes, etc.

Vinod, 18, Melpattambakkam, earns Rs. 2500 per month from his Internet kiosk.

In Nellikuppam taluk, there are about 38 Internet connections (including those at the eight divisional offices of EID Parry and police stations in two villages). "From the kiosk operator, the farmer can get information about loan repayment, weather and crop prices among other things," says G.A. Jalaludeen, operator (control), EID Parry. "The divisional ofices, on the other hand, provide info about crop cultivation and the stock positions." Besides, the company operates an Intranet portal, *indiagriline.com*, complete with multi-media, content in local language and voice-over to make sense to the farmer. Only registered kiosk operators (about 15 of them) have access to this Intranet site. "Farmers give us inputs about the prevailing prices in nearby markets. They pass on the information by phone before 10 a.m. every day and we update it in the server by 11 a.m." says Jalaludeen. At present, eight village markets are covered in the portal.

Parrys now has ambitious plans for its second phase; a paid subscription mechanism, increase its offering, including a chat room moderated by scientists from the Agriculture University, Coimbatore, and provide communication software worth Rs. 20,000 to each kiosk operator to make it become a full-fledged profit centre. It also plans to increase its subscriber base to 150.

Meanwhile, n-Logue expects to have more than 500 subscribers in rural Cuddalore by the end of 2001, growing into 800-1000 in the next two years. This represents a first in terms of rural teledensity in India and a breakthrough in terms of rural Internet penetration. — (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist.*)

Refai Salafis

The Butterflies of IIT

About 35 species of butterflies have been observed in various parts of the 630 hectare IIT Madras campus next to the Guindy National Park. The campus, consisting of original forest areas, has quite a number of native plants as well as large number of species introduced for gardening and horticultural purposes. It was observed that most of the butterflies recorded here were abundant in areas where native wild species of plant were seen. Plants belonging to the *Crotalaria* spp. *Rauwolfia*, *Vinca*, etc. were found to be the favourites of these butterflies. Another observation was that Lime Butterflies were seen in their hundreds on the campus during July. The larvae fed on the tender leaves and shoots of *Prosopis*.

This is a list of the butterflies seen

1. Tawny Coster (*Acraea violae*)
2. BlueTiger (*Tirumala limniace exoticus*)
3. Common Crow (*Euploea core core*)
4. Dark Blue Tiger (*Tirumala septentrionis dravidarum*)
5. Glassy Blue Tiger (*Parantica aglea aglea*)
6. Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus chrysippus*)
7. Striped Tiger (*Danaus genutica genutica*)
8. Bright Babul Blue (*Azanus ubaldus*)
9. Common Pierrot (*Castalius rosimon rosimon*)
10. Pale Grass Blue (*Zizeeria maha ossa*)
11. Blue Pansy (*Precis orithya*)
12. Chocolate Pansy (*Precis iphita iphita*)
13. Lemon Pansy (*Precis lemonias lemonias*)
14. Peacock Pansy (*Precis almana almana*)
15. Yellow Pansy (*Precis heirta heirta*)
16. Common Castor (*Ariadne merione merione*)
17. Common Leopard (*Phalantha phalantha phalantha*)
18. Great Eggfly (*Hypolimnas bolina jacintha*)
19. Tamil Yeoman (*Cirochroa thais thais*)
20. Common Blue Bottle (*Graphium sarpedon teredon*)
21. Common Mormon (*Papilio polytes polytes*)
22. Common Rose (*Pachliopta aristolochiae aristolochiae*)
23. Crimson Rose (*Pachliopta hector*)
24. Common Emigrant (*Catopsilia crocale*)
25. Common Grass Yellow (*Eurema hecabe simulata*)
26. Common Gull (*Cepora nerissa nerissa*)
27. Common Wanderer (*Pareronia valeria hippia*)
28. Common Jezebel (*Delius eucharis*)
29. Great Orange Tip (*Hebomoia glaucippe australis*)
30. Mottled Emigrant (*Catopsicia pyranthe*)
31. White Orange Tip (*Ixias marianne*)
32. Yellow Orange Tip (*Ixias pyrene sesia*)
33. Lime Butterfly (*Papilio demoleus*)
34. Grey Pansy (*Precis atlites*)

Susy Varughese

(Courtesy: *Blackbuck*, the journal of the Madras Naturalists' Society.)

PLANNING TO HARVEST RAINWATER

(Continue from Page 1)

Impressions of impact of the work already carried out.

6. Differentiated approach to RWH in different categories of users/institutions: residences; government buildings; buildings of non-government public institutions; public spaces; existing water bodies; commercial and industrial complexes.
7. The need to adapt designs to specific local conditions (terrain, underground formations).
8. The available information base and experience in design and installation. The need to strengthen and expand these capacities.

An action programme:

- to spread the message in each locality and get residents to take a look at some of the works in each locality.
- help document costs, designs and problems encountered in different localities for works done during the last 2 or 3 years.
- Impressions on impact on water supply and use.
- Organise/commission community level studies to assess present sources and uses of water and status of groundwater in different localities.
- Disseminate information on designs suitable for different parts of the city and on individuals, organisations experienced in design/installation.
- Measures to strengthen / expand design capability.
- Help/cooperate in systematically monitoring performance and impact of selected RWH works in each locality.
- Networking and periodic meets to implement these programmes.

October 1-15, 2001 MADRAS MUSINGS

Making the seas safe for fishing

• Fishing at sea is probably the most dangerous occupation in the world. Data from those countries which collect data show that occupational fatalities in their fishing industries far exceed their national average. For example, in the USA, the fatality rate is an average of 160 per 100,000, 25-30 times the national average; in Australia, the fatality rate for fishermen is 143 per 100,000 compared with 8.1 per 100,000 nationally; in 1995-1996 in the UK, there were 77 fatalities per 100,000 fishermen as opposed to 23.2 per 100,000 employees in the mining and quarrying industry (the next highest category in that year). However, very few countries are able to supply this data. The fatality rate in countries for which information is not available are very likely much higher than those mentioned. Thus, the number of global fatalities might be considerably higher than the figure of 24,000 deaths worldwide every year that are estimated by the ILO.

Excessive fishing effort; increased competition; reduced profitability; economies in vessel maintenance, equipment and manpower; fatigue; recklessness; fisheries management measures (which do not take sufficient account of the human element or fishermen safety into consideration); diversified fishing operations unaccompanied by training, traditional experience OR skills these are some of the factors which have resulted in fishing being the most dangerous occupation in the world.

In countries like India, where the artisanal and small-scale fisheries is the dominant sector, the existing mechanisms, including those for enforcement, are inadequate to ensure the safety of these fishers at sea. The consequences of loss of life fall heavily on the dependents and can be quite devastating, without there being no state support for the families.

The FAO's Bay of Bengal Programme, long headquartered in Madras/Chennai, takes up this vital issue in a Regional Workshop (October 8-12th, in Chennai), that is its last project before the Programme winds down and leaves implementation of the guidelines emerging from the Workshop to any successor programme.

The fisheries sector plays a very important role in India's socioeconomic development; it provides gainful employment to about 3.8 million full-time or part-time fishermen and another 2.1 million occasional fishermen. If subsidiary industries are included, fisheries is a source of livelihood for more than six million persons, most of them from the poorest sections of the society.

India, with a long coastline of 8,118 km and jurisdiction over 2.02 million sq km of sea, comprising 0.86 million sq km on the west coast, 0.56 million sq km on the east coast and 0.06 million sq km around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, apart from a large area under estuaries and backwaters, ranks 10th in the world in marine capture fisheries and accounts for 4.2 per cent of the global fish production.

Its marine fishing fleet has about 220,000 craft (including some 44,000 motorised traditional craft); there are also 53,000 mechanised boats and some 170 large fishing vessels of about 20 metre length. The traditional craft as well as the small mechanised boats concentrate their fishing activities in areas in the 0 to 70-80 metre depth zone.

Issues relating to the safety and security of these fishermen while at sea have come to the fore in recent times.

Casualty figures are very high in developing countries due to poor safety systems, fleet limitations, and inadequate legislation to enforce strict safety measures. Further, fishers in the coastal belt of developing countries have to perforce seek new fishing grounds because their traditional grounds have dried up. But their fishing craft are unsuitable for offshore operations – from the standpoint of design, construction and equipment.

The International Maritime Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the U.N. have jointly prepared a code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels. These 1980 guidelines are voluntary and mainly aimed at larger fishing fleets, they are not adequate to improve the safety at sea of artisanal fishermen.

The UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (ratified in 1982) specifies that every state shall take several measures to ensure safety at sea: these relate to the ship's construction, equipment, seaworthiness, the manning of ships, labour conditions, training of crew in the application of instruments, use of signals and maintenance of communications, etc.

There is now a general consensus about promoting safety at sea by making safety training obligatory; by linking fishing permits to safety requirements; by insisting on seaworthiness of vessels, working conditions in sea vessels, etc.

Sea safety problems

Very often, there is a dearth of technically trained personnel to serve as crew members, trainers or inspectors. The infrastructure for organising Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and Safety at Sea is inadequate. Enforcement of laws and regulations is lax. There are not enough controls on building standards; inspection of fishing vessels is unsatisfactory. Since accident rates are high, insurers are reluctant to provide coverage. Further, as inshore resources are overfished and under pressure, it is essential to diversify fishing. But both skills and equipment are lacking. When inshore fishermen are forced to venture into offshore areas, they run the risk of engine breakdown due to poor maintenance, lack of spare parts, etc.

No minimum requirements have been laid down for offshore fishing – such as carrying navigational equipment like a compass, charts, transistor radios and radar reflectors / lights.

Steps enacted

The Marine Fishing Regulations Acts enacted by all the States except Gujarat regulates/restricts or prohibits fishing activities within specified areas, licenses fishing vessels, etc. It also contains provisions to earmark fishing areas for different sectors such as traditional and mechanised boats. But additional provisions to ensure safety need to be incorporated. For example, it should be obligatory for fishing vessels to carry minimum navigational equipment and provide training to fishermen in sea safety measures.

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard has been entrusted with the major task of rescuing fishermen in distress, besides patrolling EEZ areas. And, active fishermen are registered with the State/Union Territories and insured for Rs. 50,000 against death or permanent disability and Rs. 25,000 in case of partial disability through the Fishermen Co-operative Federation.

The future

There is an acute need to promote awareness among fishers of sea safety measures and of the principles and benefits of fisheries management. Periodic inspection must be carried out to ensure compliance with safety requirements. Vessel design may have to be modified for this purpose. R&D is necessary to develop reliable and cheap life-saving equipment. An effective and efficient network of early warning systems must be installed. Legislation to cover occupational hazards and the safety and health of fishermen at work needs to be given immediate attention. Communication equipment for reception and transmission, life saving appliances, etc. need to be made available in all coastal states. – (Courtesy: *Bay of Bengal News*)

Nita Chowdhury
Joint Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Govt. of India.

Where's the safety for small-scale fishermen?

• Every day thousands of artisanal and small-scale fishermen in the Bay of Bengal embark on fishing trips to earn a livelihood. Some of them drift – for what seems to them an eternity — and end up in alien land. Some survive the ordeal and return. But the uncertainty their families face while they are missing can be traumatic.

What about fishermen who perish at sea, leaving wives and children in a state of shock and almost destitute overnight? The families' misery unfolds immediately: no savings, no alternative means of livelihood, few income opportunities. The families either migrate to urban areas to take up menial jobs, and be cruelly exploited; or they beg for a living. Some, crushed by debt to money lenders, become bonded labour.

What's behind this human tragedy is well-known — a poor standard of sea safety in artisanal and small-scale fishing crafts. Government, the boat-owners, the fishermen — they are all equally to blame for this state of affairs. Simple safety and communication equipment on board could save many of the lives lost at sea.

Unlike many other seas, the Bay of Bengal is rough for most of the year. Cyclones are frequent and come with little warning. Monsoon winds increase the perils of fishing at sea. Artisanal and small-scale fishing vessels are not equipped to meet these challenges. Fishers in the region are best suited for fishing in near-shore waters. With resources in coastal waters dwindling, fishermen are venturing deeper into the sea, oblivious to the risk.

Accidents at sea occur mostly because of engine failure, navigational difficulties, rudder damage, fuel shortage, lack of safety equipment, etc. These are not insurmountable problems. But much effort and a long-term programme is needed to inculcate the habit of sea safety among these fishermen and reduce loss of life and misery.

While commercial vessels and industrial fishing boats have a large workforce and strong maritime unions to bargain for better safety and welfare measures, artisanal and small-scale fishermen are unorganised and at the mercy of middlemen and uncaring boat-owners. For those fishermen who own fishing vessels, the turnover and profits are too meagre to install safety and navigation equipment.

Regulation mechanism is another issue. Regulations to govern boat construction, onboard safety and navigation equipment and weather warnings are either non-existent or poorly enforced in the region. Therefore bad weather and turbulence at sea lead inevitably to boat capsize or to boats drifting at sea, possible rescue in neighbouring countries and the ordeal of long periods in jails or detention centres. Prevailing legislation governing maritime infringements in many countries of the Bay of Bengal region is poor; procedures for release of fishermen are protracted and cumbersome.

To ensure integration of sea safety into the everyday lives of fishermen, it is essential that they be built around the entire community and not the fishermen alone. The school curriculum in coastal areas should include chapters on sea safety. This would go a long way towards inculcating safety disciplines in fisher boys. Extension programmes for fisherwomen, so that they persuade the menfolk to use safety measures at sea, would be another useful step.

In sum, safety at sea should be an integral part of fisheries management. Sea safety programmes should include mandatory regulations, a sound mechanism for implementation, training and education, prevention and survival strategies and extension. To make such programmes sustainable, the burden of implementation should be shared with governments by the fishermen.

Y.S. Yadava
Editor, Bay of Bengal News

Bridges and flyovers

the past couple of years I ave had the chance to visit ee metros and Hyderabad l Bangalore. Mumbai, ged by traffic jams at crucial les, has been adding flyovers he cityscape in the past two ades. The Eastern Express- along the airport land is still ieged by the construction of wers, with the Andheri one uted to be the worst in terms unpredictable movement of ffic.

Delhi is the city of many new overs, thirty originally nned, but new ones added, h construction begun every days or so. Both the ring ds around the city are being de more navigable with mul- e bridges at many junctions. e first clover leaf flyover is ng built to ease the conges- n of the Indian city with the st number of cars. Trouble is ng taken to landscape and nt trees and saplings in the a around the bridge to inte- te the new construction with e general ambience of the y. But, this is the capital, lhi, where a large amount is nt on infrastructure, unlike other cities.

Chandrababu Naidu, the hno-savvy Chief Minister of ndhra Pradesh, was the pio- er of the 'Flyover Revolution' the South in recent times. s meticulous planning and ecution of the project has pt the disruption of normal ffic to the minimum. Roads ngside the construction site e driveable. Bangalore is also t to be left behind in the eupmanship of Chief Minis- s' plans for infrastructure de- lopment of the capitals of ates to lure foreign invest- nts. A hurried blueprint has en drawn to throw in a few overs in the city.

The image of beautiful apier Bridge at the end of the arina towards RBI and Rajaji lai is part of the instant men- l identification of Chennai's mous views. The beautiful owstring girder bridge, painted hite, the sea on one side retching to infinity and the sta of *Ripon Building* and entral Station on the other are ched in the minds of ennaivasis. The whiff of the oum, of course, is also part of at scene as you cross the idge to enter the land occu- ied by the Armed Forces and e famous Island Grounds.

The Elphinstone Bridge over e Adyar River, built in 1840, was famous in old Madras. Today, a new bridge has been built alongside the old one. Heritage people and environmentalists have been fighting to develop the old disused bridge as a tourism promotion site. Plans have been drawn up to landscape, decorate and develop it as a walkway and as a bird watcher's platform. It would be a great place as a promenade for the city dwellers. The project has been put on hold until some bright spark can revive it as a revenue earner by removing Chennai's infamous gigantic hoardings and cutouts.

Chennai hit-chat

Padmini Natarajan

The crossroads of Nungambakkam High Road, Cathedral Road and Mount Road were a big traffic jam area. Gemini Studios, the Drive-in Woodlands and the Cathedral grounds gave that area a very big green belt. The US Embassy was constructed and the visa seekers aggravated the congestion. Gemini Studios closed and the grounds were parcelled out. The first flyover in Chennai was constructed. With vision and town planning skills, the flyover could have eased traffic patterns in that whole area. With typical shortsightedness, it has only mildly relieved the congestion in the Anna Salai sector. The unrelenting lineup of vehicles humping over the bridge, between 8.30 a.m. and noon and again between 4.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m., and the cacophony of impatient hornhappy cars, buses and autos all add to the pollution and noise decibel levels, making commuting unbearable.

The new flyover fever has also attacked Chennai. New flyovers have been built and inaugurated between Peter's Road, Music Academy, Royapettah High Road-Dr. Radhakrishnan Road and C.P. Ramaswamy Road-Alwarpet Junction. Needless to say, this is the area in which the political bigwigs travel most between office and home. Two more flyovers have been built in Adyar, Malar Hospital-Theosophical Society towards L.B. Road and near IIT Madras-Kotturpuram junction towards Raj Bhavan. Most of these flyovers allow only single lane traffic. The traffic in the other direction is squeezed into very narrow lanes by the side of the new construction, thereby causing more congestion. Bus stops and pedestrian ways have been eroded and fast-moving traffic given predominant importance.

A flyover on Pantheon Road has been built, along the Museum and Connemara Library. The heritage brigade is up in arms as the pile driving has caused structural problems to the old buildings. The planning of the bridge anyway does not help traffic patterns in a major way in the area. A flyover is also under construction in the Purasawalkam-Vepery area.

So where does all this lead to? The explosion of vehicular traffic in the metros has woken the administration to the need for better circulation on navigable roads. Unfortunately, the planning is not visionary and practical, as too many factors have to be taken into consideration, like politics, muscle power and pelf. Even simple factors like bus stops, pedestrian rights of way, two-wheeler routes are not identified as prerequisites in planning these behemoth flyovers.

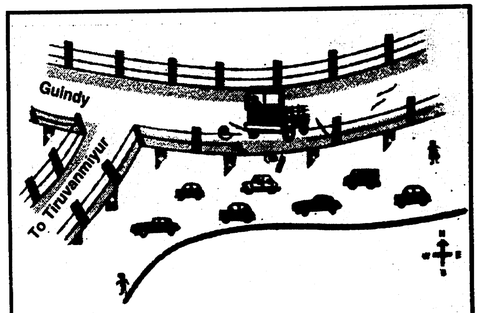
The build-up of traffic jams only aggravates tempers, resulting in road rage. The lack of control in strict vehicular routing creates more chaos. The rajas of the road, auto, bus and lorry drivers with powerful unions, cannot be brought to observe road discipline. Two-wheelers are mostly driven by the educated, but they lose their road sense when they mount a vehicle. No strict licensing authority is in force. Money can buy licences that allow untrained drivers loose on the public.

There is now talk of making road discipline a compulsory subject in schools. This would be a move in the right direction as, hopefully, the future roadizens would be more amenable to stricter adherence to road rules.

Regular maintenance and good quality construction of roads and drains are totally lacking. One bout of rains and the roads collapse into potholes and corrugated surfaces. Roads are ill-lit, subways dangerous spots that become prime spots for mugging and looting. Roadside vendors hog space on the sides of main roads, forcing pedestrians to walk on the roads resulting in danger to life and limb. Pondy Bazaar, Anna Salai, Usman Road, Vadapalani, Flower Market, High Court area, Burma Bazaar are some of the most dangerous areas for pedestrians.

Is there a remedy? The answer to all this comes pat from administration and the citizens of our beloved country — **"We are like this only"!**

The flyovers have given a facelift to the modernness of the city. But whether they have helped traffic movement is moot.



Encouraging speed

There have been several accidents on the Adyar flyover (*Ed:* and elsewhere too). And it is a disquieting trend.

Not so long ago, a lorry ripped off some of the rails on the flyover at the Adyar Signal Junction early one morning (see sketch above).

According to the police, there was a slight drizzle when the accident took place. The lorry which was travelling from Madras Harbour towards Pallavaram, is said to have skidded before veering towards the rails. "The owner of the lorry was asked to set right the railings which had been disturbed," said the police.

Several cases of skidding have taken place on this flyover, especially during the rains. Most of the accidents have been late in the night, when the road is deserted and motorists step on the gas, add the police.

A few months ago, another lorry was also involved in an accident on the flyover. Here too the rails were damaged. In both cases, the vehicles did not providentially go over the edge.

According to Deputy General Manager, Sankaralingam of L&T-ECC, safeguards have been incorporated in the flyover to prevent vehicles from crashing over the rails of the flyovers.

"We have constructed cement kerbs and installed rails to act as crash barriers. These would protect the vehicles from toppling down if they abide by the speed limits," he said. (ED: But what if they don't?) "The design of the flyover has been approved by the Ministry of Surface Transport and was provided by our client, the Corporation of Chennai, for execution by us," he added.

The speed limit on the city roads is 40 kilometre per hour. But accidents are inevitable if the drivers fail to abide by the speed limits. There are occasions too when drivers travelling towards Sardar Patel Road have been surprised by a rogue lorry or van which comes on the flyover from the opposite direction!

The wing of the flyover which leads towards Adyar Depot has often attracted criticism. Within a couple of days of the flyover being inaugurated, MTC buses coming from Mylapore and San Thomé towards the Adyar Depot stopped plying on the flyover.

These buses were not able to negotiate the left turn on the sharp curve of the flyover. Now they ply on the road below the flyover to avoid potential mishaps.

Since the Sardar Patel Road-Adyar Bridge Road and Durgabai Deshmukh Road stretch encourages vehicles to speed dangerously after peak hours, and since the Traffic Police prefer to work late only at the junction of Greenways Road because of the VIP traffic, little is done to discourage those who flout the rules of the road here. — (Courtesy: *Adyar Times.*)

EDITOR'S NOTE: What happens in Adyar is happening elsewhere too. No flyover is free of dangerous driving. Here is a tragedy waiting to happen.

Helping cricket in the districts

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association has for over a decade now been extending facilities for the development of cricket in the districts of the State. Over the years, the number of District Cricket Associations has steadily increased and at present there are 28 of them in Tamil Nadu.

The latest report of the TNCA states that about Rs. 35 lakh has been expended towards promoting the game in the districts. This works out to an average expenditure of approximately Rs. 1.25 lakh a year per district. Last year, the sponsorships received towards District Tournaments was Rs. 8.4 lakh averaging Rs. 30,000 per district. The net outflow from TNCA funds, thus, works out to approximately Rs. 95,000 per district per year. Whilst the districts are trying their best to run their respective Associations through collections from local clubs, donors etc., this situation needs improvement and I suggest to the TNCA and the District Associations the following scheme which may help to improve the finances of the district associations and, at the same time, save a lot of clerical work at the TNCA office.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has taken a decision to distribute to their member State Associations 70 per cent of the income they receive from Doordarshan sponsorship. It is understood that each State Association will receive from BCCI Rs. 95 lakh-Rs. 105 lakh subject to the recipient associations being able to spread the game and develop it in different centres. TNCA is considered one of the better run cricket organisations in India and you can be sure that they will receive this contribution for four more years at an average of Rs. 98 lakh per year.

The TNCA should allot Rs. 2 lakh a year to each District Association for five years, whereby after the fifth year, each district association should run itself wthout having to depend on the annual remittances from the TNCA. This would be possible in the following manner:

The TNCA should place Rs. 2 lakh in a fixed deposit in the joint names of each district association (first named) and the TNCA in any Scheduled

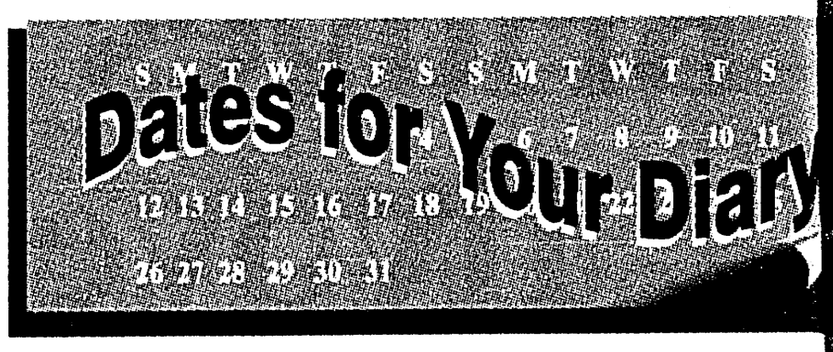
● by
U. Prabhakar Rao
Former Hony. Secretary and Treasurer, TNCA

Bank at the district level (the District Association could negotiate with the bank to obtain an interest of at least 13%). The interest earnings would be at least Rs. 26,000 in the first year and will go up proportionately when the deposits increase by Rs. 2 lakh each year. Each District Assocation will, from the sixth year onwards, receive Rs. 1,30,000 as interest which should enable them to run the association without looking up to the parent body in Chennai for any remittances.

The District Forum will have to be fully involved in this arrangement, as it will have to take the responsibility to contact manufacturers of cricket balls, nets and mats and place orders for supply to the district associations conducting their respective tournamens and coaching camps.

The Forum should undertake to identify at least two centres in the districts where good cricket grounds can be laid with a minimum four turf wickets in each ground. The TNCA could earmark from out of the surplus earned from international matches in Chennai amounts for developing two grounds at each of the two centres. The respective district associations where these grounds are located should take the responsibility of maintaining the ground in good condition. The TNCA could arrange for a Ranji Trophy, Duleep Trophy or Deodhar Trophy match to be played in such centres so that these associations can retain any surplus money from conducting these matches and utilise this money for the maintenance of the grounds. I am quite certain that the districts will be able to manage to conduct such matches and, once other infrastructural facilities are available in the district centres, even an international match could be played in these centres.

With these arrangements, the TNCA will help itself by saving on paper work, time and staff overheads. Will the powers-that-be consider my suggestion? – (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)



October 7th: One-day seminar on Indian English Poetry in the New Millennium at Chennai on October 7th, 2001. The main focus will be on the various aspects and problems related to Indian English Poetry. (For more details: Telephone 660 4610.)

October 17th-22nd: Puneet and Rama Kaushik – An exhibition of gold and silver jewellery (... the Apparao Galleries.)

From October 22nd: Iranna Pooja Iranna – A two-man ex... bition of paintings. (At ... Apparao Galleries.)

October 6-17: 'The Embryo' ... solo exhibition of paintings ... Puneet Kaushik. (Apparao ... leries.)

Answers to Quiz

1. Dr. Christiaan Barnard; 2. Alain Prost; 3. Hewlett Packard; 4. *Lady Marmalade* (collaboration featuring Christian Aguilera, Lil'Kim, Mya and Pink); 5. *Monsoon Wedding*; 6. Durban; 7. Lashkar-e-Jabbar; 8. Venus Williams (women) and Lleyton Hewitt (men); 9. World Trade Center.

* * *

10. Justice B. Subhashan Reddy; 11. Ethiraj College; 12. A sop... cated burglar-alarm system.

* * *

13. Tiruttani, Pa... Swamimalai. They are ... Aarupadaiveedu; 14. G.K. V... son of the late G.K. Moopana... Pulicat; 16. Point Calimere; ... is now an 'affiliating university' ... 222; 19. Manchester of the S... 20. The Tiruchengodu.

Want to muse with MUSINGS?

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

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Note: Overseas postage extra. Rs 450/year. Cheques payable M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

Published by S. Muthiah for 'Chennai Heritage', 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018 and printed by T J GEORGE at Lokavani-Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., Chennai 600 006. Edited by S MUTHIAH.