

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

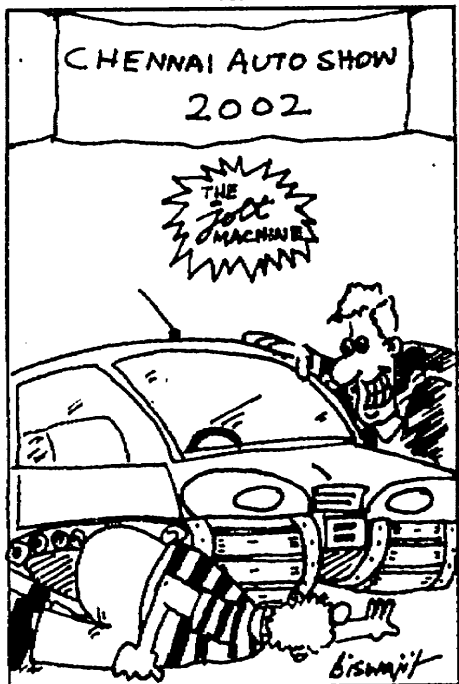
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FREE ISSUE

January 16-31, 2002



"The new Jolt machine, Sir. It comes with all-terrain wheels ... Ideal for Chennai roads, Sir."

Oh, my seat!

Remember all those adventure stories we used to read as kids? All about dragon-slaying knights, death-defying warriors, not forgetting our own heroes, who whacked demons and taught rakshasas salutary lessons?

If you think they don't make people like that any more, my advice is - think again.

Anyone who has travelled the Chennai roads over the last few months deserves to be placed alongside these derring-do guys in a Hall of Fame. Driving around in the city these days is more like you're an inadvertent participant in a violent, action-packed thriller.

One moment you are bowling along, albeit a little roughly, along a city road. Then, suddenly, without warning, you find yourself on one of those circuits used by those cute little dune-buggies or you are experiencing a sudden breathless, weightless feeling when your vehicle descends into huge craters that are placed cleverly in least expected areas.

And when the rain gods, hitting a rare generous mood, decide to oblige, not only do pedestrians and vehicles battle for the middle-of-the-road position, resulting in nightmarish chaos, but some roads, confused about their true nature, become raging rivers, giving you some idea of what Noah went through.

The city's only answer, to the more nervous among our citizenry, could well be a quote from a certain black-and-white movie from another era: "Fasten your seat-belts. It's goin' to be a bumpy ride." Oh, my seat!

Ranjitha Ashok

Our roads are killers!

CAG demands immediate action to stop this danger

In a memorandum sent to the Corporation of Chennai and the Tamil Nadu government, the Consumer Action Group (CAG) has stated, "The Corporation and the State Government have made absolutely no attempt to repair and maintain the public road system in Chennai. Though a few privileged areas had been touched up, this is in no way a solution to the dangerous menace of bad roads. Despite being responsible citizens, for the first time we are forced to question the necessity to pay property taxes and other charges to the Corporation.

"Therefore, we the residents of Chennai, demand that the Corporation of Chennai and the State Government immediately repair and maintain all roads across the city of Chennai so as to put an end to this problem permanently."

The memorandum pointed out that "the pathetic status of the public road system in our city directly defeats the Central Government's priority of fuel conservation. The Union Road Secretary, Mr. Ashoke Joshi, IAS, while announcing the National Highway Accident Relief Scheme, has sought the co-operation of all concerned to achieve the Government's objective of bringing down road accidents in the country by 12-15 per cent. It has been over a year since the inauguration of the scheme, but the Corporation of Chennai has taken no initiative whatsoever in improving the condition of the roads."

Amplifying the problems road-users in the city face, the memorandum stated,

"All around Chennai we find roads dug up for laying cables which remain un-repaired, roads covered with

(Continued on page 7)



It's a major city artery, Nungambakkam High Road. Can a road get more nightmarish?!

Winds of change in the railways

(By A Special Correspondent)

Indian Railways (IR) is trying to give itself a new look — at least in a few areas.

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), which started operating a few months ago, is one of the new initiatives of the IR and it hopes to run in a professional manner the catering services of the entire railway.

Talks are on with several domestic and international food chains and caterers like McDonalds, Nirulas, Haldiram, and Oriental Cuisine among others.

Absorbing seven thousand direct employees in IR's catering services and almost three thousand commissioned vendors operating in trains or on stations and/or training many of them, IRCTC plans to improve not only food on trains but the serving manners of the catering staff as well through a food auditing company of repute,

which will train 400 cooks and waiters and also assess the quality of food being served.

An area where IRCTC is treading for the first time is tourism — a largely neglected division in the railway history. To tap the 200 million domestic tourist market it is discussing with various States and their tourism development corporations and tour operators ways of effecting changes in the profile of rail tourism.

An MoU has been signed for the Mumbai-Thiruvananthapuram package, while the Ahmadabad-Goa and Mumbai-Goa package MoUs are under discussion. As per the agreements, the States will undertake the responsibility of the tourists' boarding, lodging and sight-seeing within the state, while IRCTC will ensure safe travelling from destination points and confirmed tickets.

IRCTC also plans to build

'budget' hotels in surplus railway land adjacent to stations. The idea behind setting up budget hotels is to make available to travellers the best possible package in a composite way, since surplus railway land is usually in the central part of many towns/cities, making commuting and sightseeing easy.

IRCTC has started looking for consultants for the hotels project, who will scout for partners, who will be responsible for the building and day-to-day operations. The only equity from IRCTC's side will be the land. Since State-run hotels in many places are in trouble, IRCTC feels private participation is the way to go.

Success of these projects would be a gain not only for IR, but also for the long-suffering public — provided the initiatives do not go the way most government projects do.

Why don't we want this exam?

Now that it has been announced that a Tamil Nadu schools' public exam for Standard 5 has been put off, there's a huge sigh of relief that *The Man From Madras Musings* has noticed in not only homes but also in schools. The decision to discuss the matter further and come to a consensus is welcome, considering the amount of dissent that the Government faced when it made its announcement about its intention to introduce such an exam.

Those for it felt that it would help schools improve their standards, particularly as little attention was paid to early education in most schools and the last two or three years were spent in intensively coaching the students to pass the School Final in the Tenth. In fact, this school held, the poor quality of much of the school education in the State was entirely due to this lack of laying a good foundation and conducting cram courses thereafter.

MMM should add in this context, this is not the case in many of the best institutions in the State, but it is certainly the case in large numbers of Government schools (which are the majority) and in several of the new schools being set up to meet the mushrooming demand for education.

Against the suggestion are many — especially from the better schools — who feel the children are already overburdened with the curriculum and its demands, that the teachers are overworked trying to meet those demands, and that if children get through, as they now do, the School Final without the necessity of an earlier exam, surely there is no need to have such an exam, if it is not going to help increase substantially the numbers passing.

Certainly there are two sides to the argument, but going by the past experiences of several generations of students MMM has had contact with in different parts of the world,

an examination at what might be called Middle School level does not seem a bad idea. In MMM's schooldays, there was the Junior Cambridge taken in Standard Seven and the Senior in Standard Nine, and neither MMM, his classmates nor the teachers were the

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

worse for it. If MMM remembers right, there used to be a local Middle School and High School exam too. And in the U.S. there is a Middle School and High School concept which, even if public exams are not involved, moves those lacking in academic promise in Middle School into Vocational School.

Against that background, MMM is rather inclined to back a public exam in 'middle school' here — NOT in Standard Five, BUT IN STANDARD SEVEN. Such an exam has numerous advantages provided the whole edu-

cation system is looked at afresh. In the first place, the build up should be much wider spread, with greater course content especially in Classes 5, 6 and 7, enabling 8, 9 and 10 to be not as overburdened as they are. By spreading the burden over six or seven years instead of two or three, the students will certainly find themselves less burdened. Then again, a good education upto Class Seven should be good enough to move the less academically talented into vocational streams and reduce the numbers in 'high school'. A strengthening of the vocational curriculum would also help to meet a badly felt need in the country — an educated workforce of craftsmen, artisans and technicians. If their salaries/wages are made attractive, perhaps we'll one day get rid of this lust for degrees, no matter how little education those degrees provide.

Such a school pattern needs not only a revision of the syllabus,

increasing vocational educational opportunities and upgrading their syllabus, but most important of all, in MMM's view, going on a drive to make teachers better qualified and teaching an attractive profession — even in rural areas. If there are enough good and dedicated teachers available, there will be no difficulty in their handling a more broad-based syllabus in 'middle school' and that will enable a Standard Seven exam to be introduced to judge the quality of the education provided till then and assess the student to see whether he or she should seek a vocational stream or take the path of higher education. Maybe a debate in the days to follow will help the Government and educationists crystallise their thinking and reach a consensus.

Restoration plans

A Government not willing to spend a few crores on what was once the heart of the State's pride, the Senate House of the University of Madras, has decided to give Rs. 3 crore to help the Government Museum, Chennai, restore its historic building. *The Man From Madras Musings* is delighted to hear of this present to the Museum on its 150th birthday. Nevertheless, MMM has a couple of concerns.

One, is this funding merely to restore the main building or is it for restoration of all the important buildings in the campus, like the National Art Gallery and the Museum Theatre, all of which are sorely in need of restoration?

Secondly, being historic buildings of architectural significance, are institutions or personnel with experience in restoring SUCH heritage buildings — like the Archaeological Survey of India, or conservation experts from the city or, if preferred, from Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata where much more good restoration work has been done — being involved in the planning and execution of the intended work or is it to be done by the PWD, which has no experience in such work?

Thirdly, having restored the buildings, well or indifferently, is there going to be funds made available to (a) make the presentation of displays more striking, and (b) ensure regular maintenance, even on a daily basis?

It should also be pointed out that model restoration work costs time and money. The Government requested the Archaeological Survey of India to restore that splendid Irwin-designed Reading Hall in the Connemara Library. Work has been going on for a couple of years and though it appears to be excellent work, it has been taking time, not least because the necessary funds have not been forthcoming. MMM hopes that those funds will be made available at the same time the Museum gets its largesse, that the Connemara Library can get its pride back again and the whole Pantheon Road Complex could gleam as a whole at the same time.

— MMM

Irish-American creator of Tamil film classics

When the Coimbatore-based producer A.N. Maruthachalam Chettiar heard his usual director Manik Lal Tandon suggest that his American college-mate and friend, newly arrived in India, direct his next Tamil film, Chettiar was certainly not amused. He was even upset! A young American stranger in his twenties directing the prestigious project he had planned? But when Tandon told him that his friend was from Hollywood, the word worked like magic. Chettiar at once signed the newcomer to direct the film.

The young man was Ellis R. Dungan and the movie was *Sathi Leelavathi* (1936) which created history at many levels. It introduced many new faces to Tamil cinema who went on to create history: M.K. Radha (noted star and hero of the Gemini Studio-S.S. Vasan magnum opus *Chandralakha*), T.S. Balaiah (one of the finest character actors of Indian cinema), the 'Charlie Chaplin of India', cult figure, and comedian par excellence, N.S. Krishnan (this was his first film, but his second film, Raja Sandow's *Menaka*, was released earlier, in 1935) and last but not the least, a struggling and unknown stage actor named M.G. Ramachandran in a minor role as police officer! It was also S.S. Vasan's first brush with the movies — he was the story-writer. And, of course, it was Dungan's directorial debut.

Over the next decade, Ellis Dungan became a memorable Tamil film-maker and was responsible for several classics in Tamil. He created many milestone movies based mostly on its classics, epics, folk myths and stage plays. Yet, he knew not a word of the language, or its culture, customs or traditions. His

successes included *Sathi Leelavathi*, *Iru Sahotharagal* (1936), *Ambikapathi* (1937), *Kalamegham* (1939), *Sakunthalai* (1940), *Meera* (1945), *Ponmudi* (1950) and *Manthrikumari* (1950), a cult film.

He was a master technician, an expert cinematographer, excellent editor, master make-upman, creative director, and more. He also wrote scripts. Thus, he was the 'complete' film-maker. One of the earliest movie masters of South Indian cinema, there was no department of film-making that he was not an expert in. But his mastery over the movie camera was his most extraordinary asset. He introduced many technical innovations in motion picture production in Madras through the use of the camera. He realised early, even as a student of cinematography in America, that a movie was only what the camera could record on film! He also learnt that you could paint with light. And he understood that cinematography was essentially a chemical reaction. Of course, all this was before the birth of the electronic medium.

Dungan was not just another successful Tamil film-maker, a freak who clicked and garnered fame. No, he was highly creative, a hard-driving taskmaster who sought perfection in his work. And he showed the way by learning all that he needed to know about the film on hand. For every film he made, he made it a point to study the rituals, rites, tradition and beliefs of the period of the film he was making. He sat in on every story discussion, film treatment, and the final screenplay of the film with his writers and assistants. He had every word translated into English and typed double-space for him to study and work on. Thus, he knew exactly what was going on around him. His involvement was total. To Dungan, his film was the be-all and end-all of his life, his very breath.

His attention to even trivial details was almost an obsession.

Dungan encouraged his assistants, often permitting them to do things on their own and gave them full benefit of his knowledge and experience. That was a period in Indian cinema when most film technicians kept their knowledge to themselves. Dungan was a happy exception.

In *Kalamegham* (the hero was the immortal *nadaswaram* legend, T.N. Rajaratnam Pillai, his only movie), Dungan shot a sequence never attempted before in South Indian cinema. *Kalamegham*, a famous Tamil poet, had the gift that ensured his curses coming true! In anger, he once cursed a seaside village, saying it would be destroyed by storm and flood! To shoot this exciting sequence, Dungan took some shots in a village, then erected life-sized copies on the sands of the Bay of Bengal beyond the Adyar. In those days, there were no Besant Nagar, Valmiki Nagar and other such neighbourhoods, it was all a vast, open stretch of sand by the sea! Here Dungan shot the storm and flood scenes using fans, churners and other equipment. The effect was breath-taking! People cheered in the theatres when the scene was seen on the screen! He operated the camera himself for this scene.

* * *

Dungan, of Irish descent, was born in a small town, Barton, in Ohio on May 11, 1909. As a boy, he was imbued with the spirit of adventure and was determined to travel. As a teenager he went west to Long Beach, California, near Los Angeles, and joined the Long Beach Junior College where he studied for two years.

Then he took off for Europe, 'the continent of culture', and took pictures with his box camera of whatever interested him. One



A memorial feature — Ellis Dungan died a weeks ago.

Ellis R. Dungan 1909-2002.

such picture won him a prize in Paris.

Back in Los Angeles, he joined the Department of Cinematography and Motion Picture Production of the University of Southern California (USC), determined to master the art and craft of screenwriting and cinematography and film direction. USC is well-known for its film school and has produced many outstanding and noted film-makers. There, Dungan made friends with two fellow students and the three formed a group. The two were an American, Michael Omalov, and an Indian, Manik Lal Tandon. M.L. Tandon, now sadly forgotten, was a successful Tamil film-maker of the 1930s-1940s. As already related, it was thanks to Tandon Dungan came to India.

After hectic and successful 15 years in India, Dungan went back home in 1950 due to personal and family reasons. He settled in Wheeling, West Virginia, where he continued to make historical documentaries. (When this writer met him last, in the summer of 1997, in Los Angeles, he was working on a film about the history of the early American Navy. And he was in his 88th year!)

Warm, friendly and outgoing he made close friends with many South Indians. The list is long and included Rajaji, T. Sathiasivam, M.S. Subbulakshmi, 'Hindu' K. Srinivasan, S.S. Vasan, S.D.S. Yogi, T.R. Sundaram, MGR, T.S. Balaiah and Marcus Bartley. And, of course, this writer.

Dungan passed away (or 'passed on' as he was fond of saying) some weeks ago in his native land. A man of much charm, wit and humour, he will be missed by all who knew him. The man may be gone, but his movies like *Meera* will live forever.

Randor Guy

OUR READERS WRITE

The new tollgate

The government, along with the Tamil Nadu Road Development Company Ltd., is setting up a tollgate for automobiles at Uthandi for the use of a safe highway built between Uthandi and Markanam, a stretch exceeding 100 kms.

But the toll will also have an impact on the residents of the East Coast Road who have to commute to work to Madras daily.

We have been residents of Karikatu Kuppan, Muttukadu, for over nine years now. The tollgate is located 4 kilometres down the road from us and I need to pass it every day.

Apparently, a stiff fee in excess of Rs. 20 per day per car is being proposed. It frightens me to think that in a home like mine, where we need to make three trips to town (since I have my retired father and a schoolgoing child who need to commute at different times), we will be out of pocket by almost Rs. 60 to Rs. 75 a day!

Will the government please consider the following?

- Citizens like us who stay out of the city, are helping to decongest the city. While the government needs to be commended for building a safer highway, it must also consider the financial impact of a high toll on potential residents.

- Unfortunately, most residents who live within 5 kilometres south of the tollgate have no alternate, viable route to reach their homes from the City.

- Quite a lot of residents on this road are retired persons, pension earners and associated with NGOs, such as Senior Citizens Resort, Creneo and Cheshire Home.

- That in the interest of town planning and not congesting the city, residents, long distance travellers and

tourists ought to be differentiated for the purpose of the toll — and dealt with accordingly.

Since most residents who commute to Chennai stay within a few kilometres of the toll booth, Government should consider exempting residents or charging them a nominal fee depending on the stretch of road they use.

Currimbhoy
23, Evening Bazaar Road
Chennai 600 003.

Bigness not enough

When Asia's biggest bus terminus opens (MM, December 16th), it will be a proud moment for Chennaiites. But bigness alone does not guarantee greatness.

The bus terminus should not go the way of the nearby vegetable market which was also hailed as the biggest in Asia but is being shabbily maintained, making the area unhygienic and an eyesore, not to speak of lack of other amenities to the public.

As pedestrian and vehicular traffic will increase manifold around these complexes in due course, they should form separate approach and exit roads.

The road junction at Ambedkar Statue, where the Inner Ring Road intersects P.H. Road, requires a multiway flyover to regulate the round-the-clock traffic.

The feasibility of rail-link to the area from Ambattur and Tambaram can also be studied, as this would enable train travellers from distant places to catch mofussil or city buses without hassles.

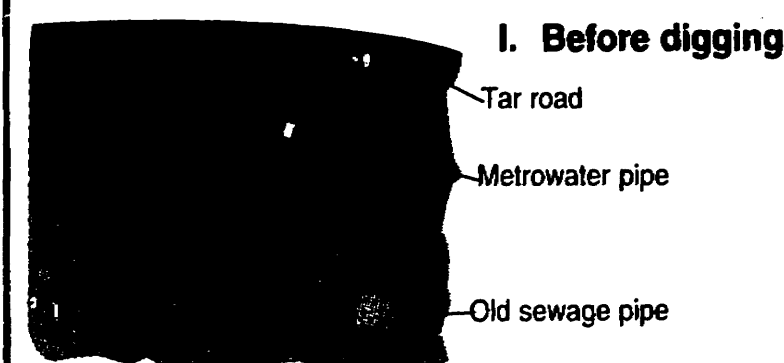
M.R. Pillai

H64/5, Central Avenue
Korattur, Chennai 600 080.

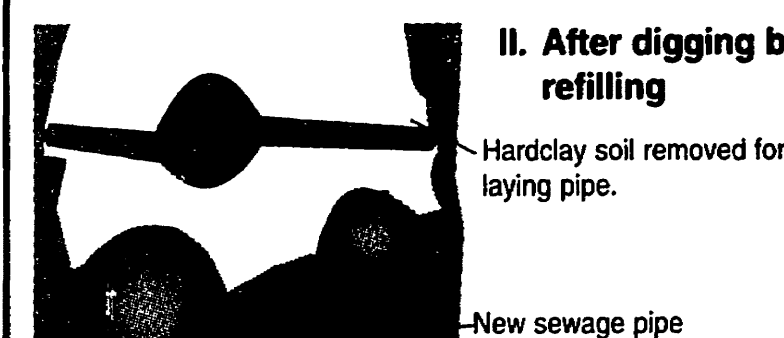
Lack of maintenance

I am a regular commuter by EMU trains. I observe that most hanging grip handles have given way in the EMU coaches and are not

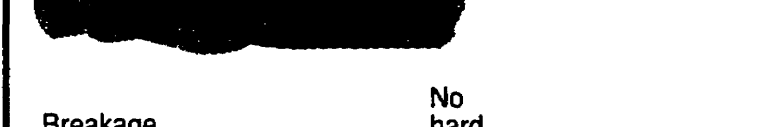
Standards for refilling also needed



I. Before digging



II. After digging before refilling



III. After refilling with plain sand

After rains, plain sand sinks and surface traffic in the absence of clay and tar applies pressure on weak water pipes and breaks pipes leading to leakage and wastage. Removed clay soil seems to have been sold. Hope Corporation is aware.

Prem Kumar

Flat No. 3B, Rear Block
Sri Venkatesa Nilayam
107, St. Mary's Road
Chennai 600 018.

repaired / replaced. This causes much hardship to passengers who vainly search for a hand grip when the train is in motion.

Can't the Railway authorities attend to this basic requirement of passengers in EMU coaches?

S. Sambasivan

Old No. 27, II Cross Street
S.B.I. Colony
Chromepet, Chennai 600 044.

Dancer remembered — I

We lived in Gandahareswarar Koil Street, Purasawalkam, for a long time in the 1930s and '40s, and five of us brothers studied in Sir M.Ct. Muthiah Chettiar High School. By the time I, the youngest, came to high school, the Purasawalkam Sangeetha Sabha

was a popular music *sabha* there, and the monthly music and dance programmes of the *sabha* used to be held in our school hall.

We were regular visitors to the programmes and I remember vividly seeing Baby Kamala's performance (MM, December 16th) and that of Anandi and Radha every year in our school hall. Anandi was Kalki Krishnamurthy's daughter and Radha, of course, was MSS's daughter. Incidentally, Radha acted and danced as the young Meera in MSS's *Meera*. I can even now recall Kamala dancing to *Kaalai Thooki* in Edukula Kambodhi *ragam*. Those were the days!

R. Krishnan

3G, Ramya Regent
648M, I Main
Indiranagar, I Stage
Bangalore 560 038.

* * *

Dancer remembered — II

The text and footnote on E. Krishna Iyer (MM, December 16th) made me recall what my father, the late Dr. N. Natesan, used to recollect with delight: namely, that Krishna Iyer danced on a *tambalam* (brass plate) with great finesse and without losing his balance or creating any sound!

I recall my seeing with my elder sister the film *Nandavaru* at Kapali Talkies in Mandaveli, which was more or less a real 'Mandaveli', rarely frequented after dusk, due to darkness, fear and presence of drunken 'toddlers'.

N. Dharmeswaran

21, Kumaran Nagar
Guduvanchery 603 202

Environmental lapses

Fourth Street, Dr. Radha Krishnan Salai, Mylapore, laid at considerable cost three decades ago by a few enterprising officers of

the Indian Oil Corporation, then surrendered to the Chennai Corporation, is in a shambles today.

The signboard located at the entrance has disappeared. The street and its two bylanes were kept so neat and tidy once. They are battered beyond recognition today. Construction and demolition work and the plying of heavy commercial vehicles have caused damages to them. Potholes get formed, rainwater stagnates and they are converted into farms for mosquitoes to thrive. One streetlight at the end of the street is dead for months together. Outside vehicles driving in and out of the street have a field day, raising dust, blaring horns and causing pollution. TNPC Board officials visited the site a few times. They did not care to measure the pollution level to alert the residents. Even a new wall built near the eastern bylane is disfigured with mud. An already not-so-wide street and its bylanes are thinned for so-called gardening encroaching on them. Property tax is promptly collected but the officials fail to protect the property. A legacy of the late High Court Judge Vepa Ramesam has been razed to the ground.

K.N. Narayana Pillai

Shrinidhi, No. 3
Fourth Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai
Chennai 600 004.

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, Greaves Road, Chennai 600 006.

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

Helpful associations

With best compliments & Seasonal Greetings

INFORMATION GUIDE

FEDERATION OF WEST VELACHERY (BRINDAVAN NAGAR) WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS, (CHENNAI DIVN. 153 - ZONE X)
P.NO.29, 5TH CROSS ST.,
L.H. NAGAR, II LAYOUT,
WEST VELACHERY, CHENNAI-600 088.
☎ 2442827 / 0807

CONSUMERS' COUNCIL OF INDIA (REGD.)
BRANCH: WEST VELACHERY (BRINDAVAN NAGAR)
Dn. 153 - CHENNAI-600 088
3/106, VII CROSS ST., M.L. NAGAR,
ADAMBAKKAM POST, CHENNAI-600 088.
☎ 245 5300

EDITOR'S NOTE: Member associations are AG's Colony, Andal Nagar, Brindavan Nagar Extn., EB Colony, Ganesh Nagar, Krishnaraj Nagar, LH Nagar, Joseph Colony & RS Puram, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Mohanapuri & Bagiyammal Nagar, New NGO Colony, Vel Nagar, VV Colony & Shawallace Colony and Brindavan Nagar Flat Owners' Association.

Pickbrain's passion

Pickbrain is his middle name! And that is his passion and profession too!!

Nor many are fortunate enough to make their passion into a lucrative profession. But 30-year-old quizmaster Giri Pickbrain Balasubramaniam, the CEO of Quizbrain.com, is one such fortunate soul. An active quizzer and debater during his school and college days, Balasubramaniam strayed into selling newspapers and space for *The Times of India* (ToI), where he began a quiz column under the by-line Pickbrain. It started him off on a more lucrative way to earn a livelihood — pursuing his passion at the same time — by picking other people's brains. Today, he is one of the three most highly paid quizmasters in

A graduate of University of Bangalore, and a student of The Times School of Marketing, New Delhi, where he studied management, Balasubramaniam, after two sprints with the ToI, including helping to start its Bangalore edition, and then taking care of Walt Disney India's southern operations, decided in February 2000 to make his passion his profession. He accepted the offer to head a quiz portal, Quizbrain.com, an affiliate of Indiainfo.com. Meanwhile the once staid question and answer competition was becoming a glitzy event, thanks mainly to Doordarshan's 'What is the good word' and Siddharth Basu's quiz shows. Nevertheless, all these quizzes had limited appeal. When KBC hit the Star

● by V. Jagannathan

the country, the other two being Siddharth Basu (general knowledge) and Derek O'Brien (corporate/brand quiz). Balasubramaniam's speciality is IT quiz shows, and he has no reservations in telling you that he bills around Rs. 1 lakh a quiz show.

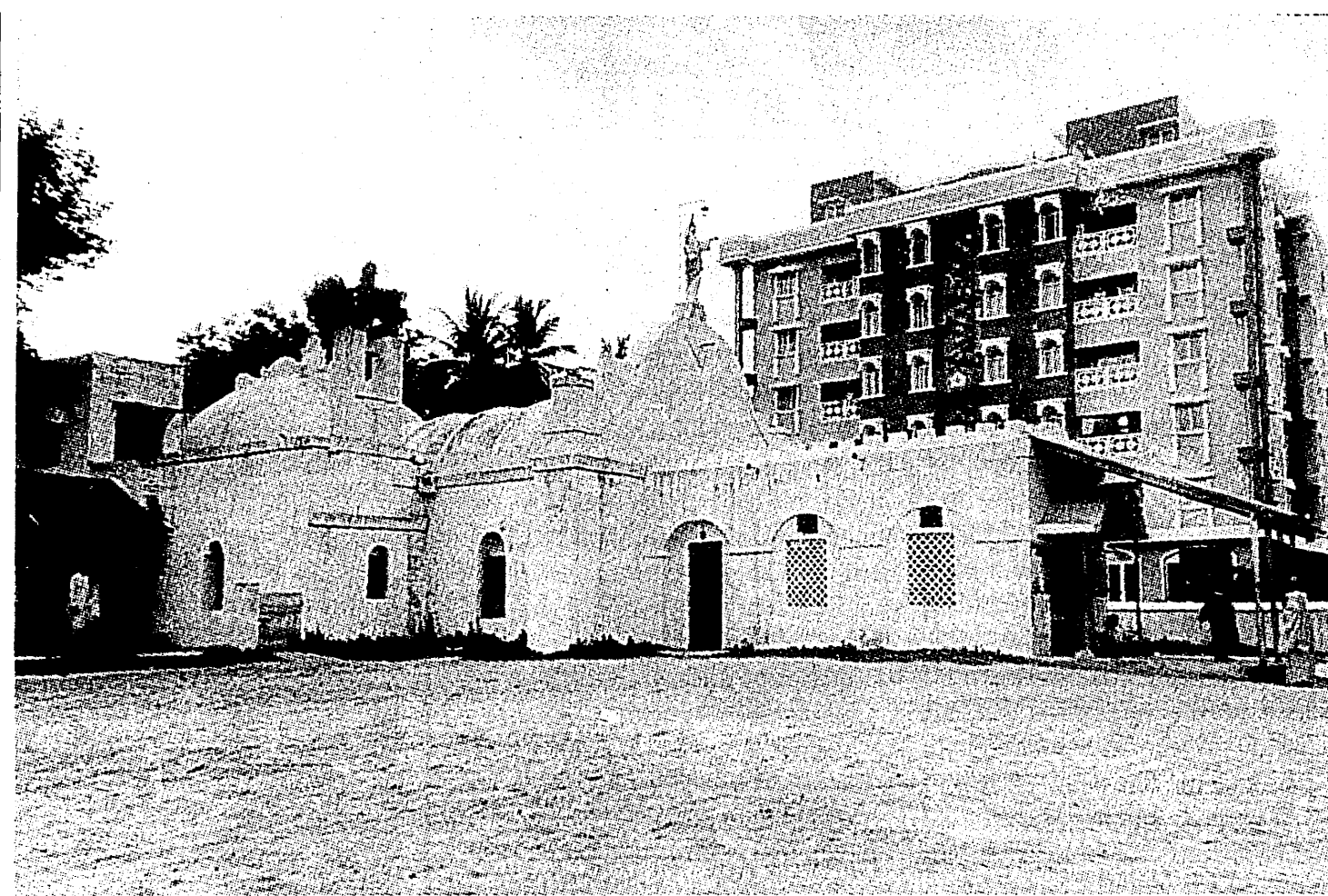
"I decided to focus on IT as no one else was doing it. IT is my USP," says Balasubramaniam. His recent book *Know IT Better* was sold out within a week of its release in Bangalore.

In the past 1½ years, Balasubramaniam has conducted 27 IT quiz shows at 12 locations, and that includes one in a rural area in Karnataka. "Rural students do not lag behind in knowledge, they only lag behind in confidence. A quiz goes a long way in helping them express themselves," he points out. Balasubramaniam today conducts annually 60-65 quiz shows on a wide variety of subjects and in various formats. Quizbrain.com which he heads, has a turnover of around Rs. 16 lakh per year and that provides a handsome profit.

TV screen, everything changed; the programme caught the imagination of the masses. "KBC has done a lot of good for quiz shows. Any kind of question is better than seeing the hero chasing the heroine around the trees," Balasubramaniam quips.

With awareness about quiz programmes increasing, the number of events went up. Corporates too started to look at quizzing as something to support. KBC also ushered in a quiz presenter. Quiz shows became a team event, with technology sharing centrestage with the quizmaster. "Research became just one component of the whole show," Balasubramaniam says. "Today, the success of quiz shows is a combination of packaging, presenting and entertaining."

According to Balasubramaniam, there is an ocean of difference between a quizmaster and a quiz presenter. "The former is generally an active quizzer and has a good grounding in research. A presenter is basically a celebrity. All he is expected to do is to conduct the

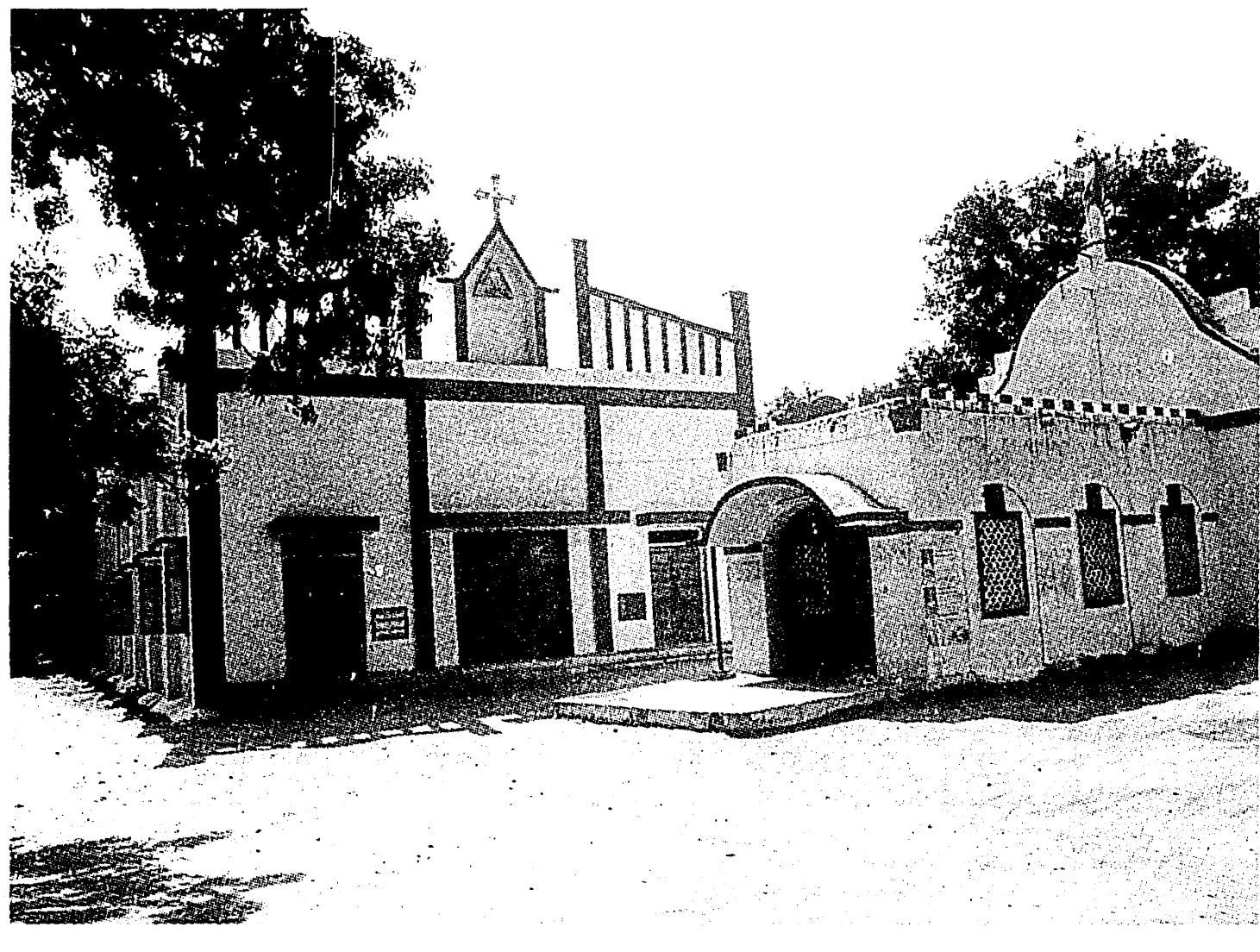


Our OLD is of the Church of Our Lady of Vistation, but is better known as Ellapatha Mutha Kovil or the Church of Our Lady who Offers Rest to the Weary. The more popular name of this historic church on St. Mary's Road derives from its Portuguese name, Descanço Church, the Church of Rest. It's a name that goes back to that article of faith, the legend of St. Thomas.

Doubting Thomas, the legend goes, lived in a cave in what is now known as Little Mount, and walked every day to the beach at Mylapore to preach. On the way, he stopped to rest in two mango groves. And in the first of them there came up Descanço Church, built by Cosmo Lourenco Madeiros, a member of the family after whom Madras was named, according to one school of thought. He is believed to have built the church sometime after he retired from a militia command in Fort St. George in 1681. He died in 1703 and was buried in the Church.

Our NEW is of what has happened in the Descanço Church campus. A new church was built here in a style sharply contrasting with the OLD and was consecrated in 1999. The new church, its dark reddish brown edgings sharply contrasting with the dominant off-white, completely hides the view of the OLD as seen above.

The OLD, which was restored in 1783 and renovated in 1976, received similar coats of paint after the NEW began to be used for service. Today, there is service only once a week in the OLD; it is to be hoped that that at least will continue, for disuse will only lead to lack of maintenance and consequent deterioration of a building that is a heritage building by any standards.



show without a glitch". Quiz presenters are good for TV shows that are pre-recorded, he says. On the other hand, quizmasters are the ones who can conduct live shows and add value. "Their subject knowledge comes in handy in guiding the contestants towards the right answer and also in deciding the marks in case of half-answers." A spontaneous reaction to a tricky situation, a good sense of humour and deft handling of audience are other prerequisites for a quizmaster.

The easygoing Balasubramaniam dons the professional quizmaster's role with ease when occasion demands it. At

the Chennai leg of Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) QuizIT.com 2001, Balasubramaniam got down from the stage and mingled with the 1450-plus students while conducting the show. He also handled well the boisterous student crowd, using wit to do so; the teachers present would surely have learnt a trick or two.

While Balasubramaniam is the public face on the stage, an eleven-member technical/research team assists him.

Is it because of his talent or is it economics that made TCS have a common quizmaster for all centres? Says K. Jayaramakrishnan, Vice-President, TCS, "The quizmaster is really good. Never has he repeated a question till date, though he has conducted several shows."

ducts this annual quiz show in several cities, like Bangalore, Trivandrum, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata, and Balasubramaniam has been retained as the quizmaster for all the centres.

While Balasubramaniam is the public face on the stage, an eleven-member technical/research team assists him.

A journey into the heart...

You've seen her on CNN, of course.

Seen the face, heard the voice, and watched the reports. That still doesn't prepare you for the smile — the overwhelming, carry-all-before-me, smile.

She laughs when you tell her so and confides that those closest to her have always summed her up in one word: ENERGY.

Yes... That's Anita Pratap, all right.

Reporter, journalist, CNN's New Delhi Bureau Chief till 1999... and now author of her very first book, *Island of Blood*, a collection of her experiences in various flashpoints in South Asia through the Eighties and Nineties, reporting eyewitness accounts of ethnic strife and war that serve as dark, chilling monuments to Man's infinite capacity to inflict inhumanity on Man.

How did Anita Pratap find this particular life-path...or was it the other way round?

"Senior Cambridge exam results," she answers. "Being good in both Science (especially Biology and Maths), and Literature, I was heading towards choices like medicine and engineering."

Astute teachers recognised her talent with words and writing. Acting on their advice, Anita opted for English Honours in Delhi.

At the end of three years, with "no other skills except my writing", Anita wondered, "What next?"

Journalism was the obvious answer. Once she "got into" journalism, she discovered that she "loved reporting."

A course in Mass Communication in Bangalore, an internship in Delhi with the *Indian*

Express under Arun Shourie, a job offer to meet her "hunger for work". That's where it all began, in 1979. But it was 1983 before the "biggie", as she puts it, came along, catapulting her to fame and taking her career to a whole new level. It was her coverage of the July '83 riots in Sri Lanka. She was with *Sunday* at the time, with M.J. Akbar as her editor.

The very first Indian journalist to go to Sri Lanka at the time, she was also a pathbreaker as far as women war correspondents in India went on the action front.

As a woman reporter, she feels, she brought in different elements to both content and style of reporting. Emotion into play, in addition to crisp details and news analysis. Throughout her career, she has never ignored the fact that these are people she is writing about. People caught up in history, yes, but ultimately, just men, women, children, mothers,

● by Ranjitha Ashok

fathers, brothers, wives, and sisters.

These stories — did they just happen to come her way as part of her job, or did she ask for these assignments?

"I asked for them," she answers.

Why? Her answer: "I like being in conflict zones." She likes to be "where things are happening, where history is in the actual process of being made", and no distractions, dangers or discomforts are allowed to intrude.

Doesn't she ever experience pure and simple fear?

"No," she claims. She goes

... amidst forays into conflict

to add that in that respect, she has what she calls a very "Hindu" approach in her belief in Destiny, in doing her *dharma*, and allowing consequences and results to take care of themselves.

"It is all about getting the story."

She was already a mother at the time, you point out. How did she balance her very real responsibilities to her family with her predilection to walk into areas of conflict and danger for a story?

"By using an intelligent approach in handling situations," she answers. You do not stu-

pidly blunder into war zones on a whim. On high alert, you plan ahead, use all the astuteness at your disposal, you prepare the groundwork before you jump into the fray. She believes that the courage of her convictions and commitment towards her work are in themselves safeguards.

"I do have a god who is protecting me."

I am intrigued, and curious. As she states in her book, "she smiled her way through life" as a youngster.

A sheltered, secure childhood, a loving home ("my father treated me like a prin-



Anita Pratap

cess"), ... There was nothing in her protected, well-ordered life before "journalism-time", to have instilled in her any kind of preparedness for the things she did later in life.

How did this girl from a secure, mainstream background rush headlong into assignments that were a combination of danger and horror under some very rough physical conditions and take them in her stride?

She agrees totally that the two images are hard to juxtapose.

"I always like to be in the middle of action. My father called me the 'Road bird'."

Did that mean that in the midst of all that security and love, there was a restless sense of some other voice calling, some need that had to be appeased?

"Certainly," she says. "I need constant movement in my life. I need to move every three, four years," she smiles. "I'm a gypsy," she bursts out laughing.

She saw horror, and the results of barbaric savagery, but kept going back to them, even at the cost of sometimes falling physically ill under the sheer weight of emotional trauma.

Why does she do it?

"Because people need hard-core information," she explains. "Someone has to go out there, see for themselves, and report these events from the heart, so that somewhere, someone will listen."

Sometimes policy-makers themselves have very little idea of the actual horrors they unleash by their decisions. It isn't and should not merely be a report of unfolding political events. These stories have to be viewed as beginning and ending with people.

Can she give an example where a report of hers actually acted out its given role as an instrument of information and change?

She cites one that occurred right here in Chennai in 1981. It was one of her first stories, and helped convince her of the power of journalism. It concerned a woman missionary in Anna Nagar who was running an orphanage, established at a time when the locality was still relatively new. Then came the

80s and the area hit a real-estate boom. Vested interests realised that the woman owned prime property and began to harass her into vacating by implying that her land-records were not alright. Anita, herself a resident of the locality at the time, came to know of the situation through a friend. She did a story on it for *Sunday*, and it worked. The Government intervened; the missionary's records were all regularised, and she was left in peace.

"That was when I saw the actual effect of good, honest reporting," recalls Anita.

Chennai obviously holds memories of deep, emotional sentiment for Anita Pratap.

Does she ever see herself coming back here? Working out of here?

"No," she shakes her head. She's basically a restless soul who has no roots anywhere. "I have to move every three, four years," she smiles. "I'm a gypsy," she bursts out laughing.

She travels light, and avoids unnecessary baggage... in every sense.

People being always more important than places, her roots are of the emotional kind. Her parents, her son, Zubin.

At the same time, here is a person who obviously values and expects an equal return of loyalty and trust. At the first hint of betrayal, she walks away from the concerned person or situation with no regrets or post mortems.

Isn't it a stroke of luck that she found a profession so much in sync with her soul? That does not happen to most people.

"Exactly," she states emphatically. "And that is why I believe so wholeheartedly in destiny." She recalls that when she chose literature as an option after her school finals, she had no clue at the time that she was about to find her calling. This was her first brush with Destiny as a force in her life.

She also credits "supporting, understanding bosses who recognised the spirit behind my dedication," she says. Talent cannot function in a vacuum or in isolation.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

A nursery for medicinal plants in Guindy Park

By A Staff Reporter



An exclusive nursery for medicinal plants has been set up in Guindy Children's Park with 36 species that will include climbers, herbs and shrubs.

The nursery is divided into 2 metre by 3 metre plots for each variety. Species nurtured here will then be given to other nurseries and also be planted in forests and sanctuaries.

"The nursery, it is hoped, will help in regenerating endangered species of medicinal plants. Some of the medicinal plants identified for planting are *Tynospora* (Centhil), *Gymnima sylvestris*, *Cissus quadrangularis*, *Caperis* species, *Vinga rosia*, *Kovaikai*, *Nochi*, *Adu thoda*, *Nanjarupan* and *Assium*.

The Park already has an exclusive nursery for ornamental plants.

Quizzin' with Ramnan

(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period December 16th to 31st. Questions 10 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Who are the new National men's and women's tennis champions?
2. Name the 'Big Bull' of Indian bourses who passed away on December 31st.
3. Which cartoon character's statue did the President unveil in Pune on December 17th?
4. Which entrepreneur has been selected as *Business India's* 'Businessman of the Year 2001'?
5. Who has been voted FIFA's 'World Player of the Year'?
6. Name the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan who has been recalled.
7. Name the eminent mathematician who has been elected to the prestigious Royal Society of London as a Fellow.
8. What global media honour has been given to the former New York Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani?
9. Name the actor, who played the famous Sir Humphrey Appleby character in the 'Yes Minister' series, who passed away recently.

10. Who are the new Navy and Air Force chiefs?
11. Name the INL general secretary and the Vaniyambadi MLA who passed away on December 17th.
12. Which famous 'historical' institution's 150th birthday celebrations were inaugurated in Chennai on December 17th?
13. Which famous temple of the State featured in one of the four stamps issued under the 'Temple Architecture' series on December 22nd?
14. Name the new Director of IIT-Madras.
15. Which Tamil work got the Sahitya Akademi award for 2001?
16. Where was a new EMU service inaugurated on December 23rd?
17. In which case was the former Chief Minister Jayalalitha acquitted on December 27th?
18. What Rs. 1 crore facility has been constructed at the Anna International Terminal of the Chennai airport?
19. Simple one. Who was the first Chief Minister of Madras State?
20. How many towers or *gopurams* does the Madurai Meenakshi Temple have?

(Answers on Page 8)

The star of a star-rich George Town

(Continued from last fortnight)

T. Balasaraswathi's grandmother was Veena Dhanammal who lived in George Town almost her entire life (1868-1938). Her life is the kind that inspires writers of historical novels. In brief, Dhanam was the grand-daughter of Kamakshi, a dancer and singer in the court of King Serfojee of Tanjore. The family's wealth was their music, learnt from disciples of the Trinity. When the Tanjore court all but vanished in 1799, they moved to Madras and settled in Nattu Pillaiyar Koil Street, George Town. Dhanam was born there. Her brothers and uncles were musicians. Women of the family specialised in 'jodi' singing, i.e., rendering songs as a duet. Dhanam's grandmother Kamakshi and mother Sundaramma were one such combination. The next generation saw Dhanam and her sister Rupavati teaming together. But when Dhanam was introduced to the veena by Chinna Singaracharlu (see MM, January 1st), she was so taken up with the instrument that she became associated with it forever. Rupavati shifted to Hyderabad where she lived till the 1950s.

Dhanam learnt songs from almost everyone who knew any in those days. One source was Boljee Baladas Naidu, a blind singer who specialised in *padams* (slow romantic songs). Baladas Naidu's patrons were the family of M. Venkataswamy Naidu (forefather of Buchi Babu) and he lived with them at *Luz House* in Mylapore. Yet another source was Tiruvottiyur Tyagier (see MM, January 1st) who, despite his gout, would think nothing of walking every afternoon from his house on Ramaswamy Street to Nattu Pillaiyar Koil Street, just to hear Dhanam sing his compositions.

In the 1880s, Dhanam met Dharmapuri Subbarayar, at the house of Tiruvottiyur Tyagier (see MM, January 1st). Subbarayar was working in a Government office in Hosur as a clerk. He was a gifted composer of *padams* and *javalis* (fast-paced romantic pieces). His patrons included the Maharaja of Mysore, the Mylapore Naidu family and the Vizianagaram Royal family, who were also patrons of Dhanam. So taken up were Dhanam and Subbarayar with each other that this association spurred him to compose some brilliant pieces, two of which speak of their mutual ad-

miration. Subbarayar also placed most of his wealth (he came from a tehsildar family) at Dhanam's disposal.

Dhanam was not a person of frugal habits. When the legendary Gauhar Jan, the 'Cuckoo of Calcutta', visited Madras and gave performances at the Victoria Public Hall, Dhanam, hosting her, ordered the catering from Harrison's of Broadway. The bill came to over Rs. 1000. Dhanam's daily quota of betel nut and spices alone cost Rs. 10. She was soon faced with debts and was declared insolvent and the house at Nattu Pillaiyar Koil Street was auctioned. A last minute appeal to Subbarayar was fruitless, as he was attending on an ailing daughter in Salem. Dhanam and her four daughters were given shelter by Jalatarangam Ramanaiah Chetty (see MM, January 1st). Subbarayar, when he came to know of his Dhanam's travails, was overcome with remorse. He gave her a priceless jewel in compensation — a song which talks about a lover not keeping his tryst. He soon passed away, leaving Dhanam a lonely soul.

Concluding the series for The Season by V. Sriram

Ramanaiah Chetty, using his influence, found Dhanam and her daughters a house, No. 6, Ramakrishna Chetty Street, in 1910, where Dhanam was to live till a few days before her death. The rent was Rs. 35 a month. Dhanam still maintained a cook and a maid at a monthly salary of Rs. 2.50 each! Here were born her talented grandchildren, T. Brinda, T. Muktha, T. Ranganathan, T. Vishwanathan and T. Balasaraswathi. Dhanam's daughters continued the *jodi* singing tradition, with elder daughters Rajalakshmi and Lakshmi-ratnam singing as the Dhanamma Daughters for the mother who was already a legend. Blind at the age of fifty, Dhanam continued giving soulful performances on the *veena* every Friday. The small hall in the first floor of her house stands unchanged and it is easy to imagine patrons such as T.T. Krishnamachari, S.Y. Krishnaswamy, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty crowding the narrow staircase at 6.00 pm sharp, to listen to a couple of hours of delectable music.

Complete silence would be maintained during the programme. Nobody could get up, no-



Tiruvannamalai Matam Hall.

body could noisily keep the beat, clear their throats or even sneeze. Neighbours who took pride in "their" Dhanamma, would ward off vendors from the street itself. Even today, the street is a haven of silence in noisy George Town. At 8.00 pm, the cannon would boom from Fort St George and Dhanam would stop her performance. This would also facilitate many of her admirers to catch the last tram. But such was her music that if she did go on beyond 8.00 pm, they preferred walking all the way from George Town to Mylapore rather than leave early. Tiger Varadachariar often preferred to spend the night on the *thimmai* of the house opposite her house and go home in the morning.

Right through the day, musicians would visit her. She would teach them songs and would, in turn, acquire some of their repertoire. By the time she died, her own repertoire amounted to

many thousands of songs of the masters. But Dhanam remained a chamber artiste, rather than a stage artiste, all her life. She shunned accompaniments and her *veena*, being small, had a low volume.

Much against her own instincts, Dhanam allowed herself to be persuaded into releasing eight gramophone discs of her songs. These are today the only testimony of her greatness.

A few days before her death, Dhanam moved to Aravamudan Gardens, Egmore, to live with her third daughter Jayamma and granddaughter Balasaraswathi. There she passed away on October 15, 1938. TTK was one of the pall bearers at her funeral. A condolence meeting was held at *Senate House*, with C. Rajagopalachari in the chair and S. Satyamurthy presiding. It was decided that a memorial would be built in her memory. Nothing came of it. A statue was made of her, for daily worship, by her admirer R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar. This still stands outside the residence of her granddaughter, T. Muktha in Gandhi Nagar, Adyar.

Nattu Pillaiyar Koil Street is home to the Tiruvannamalai

(Concluded)



Crowds — and a boom-boom maadu, a bull which tells fortunes — look at the kolams drawn in 45 minutes (with the flour and space supplied) drawn on North Mada Street (above). The kolams ranged from the traditional to one on the chaos in Chennai Today (below).



The photographic exhibition, focussing on Mylapore 25 years ago, drew crowds...



It was entertainment time on East Mada Street with the Dummy Horse dancers and other entertainers (above), and the stilt-walkers and gambolling tigers (below).

Festival of Mylapore

There has been for the past few months talk — reported in these columns — of a Chennai Festival to be organised next year, comprising festive activities in such stretches of roads as alongside the Marina and the Museum complex, and on Cathedral Road—Radhakrishnan Salai. Taking a head start, and successfully taking its first steps, has been a mela organised by the Mylapore Times, which could be a prelude to an annual Mylapore Festival during the Music Season and which, during its first effort in the first week of January, provided plenty of food for thought for the organisers thinking about the Chennai Festival.

Blocking off North Mada Street and East Mada Streets from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., with the blessings of the police and all the shop owners and the residents of the area, the mela was a grand success, drawing the attention of hundreds of passers-by during its two days. Around 350 contestants participated in the kolam competition. The kolams were drawn in the thoroughfare — and from the prize-winning ten on each day, the three eventual winners were chosen. Folk dances — such as Poikkal Kuthirai, Kummil and Kolattam — entertained the crowds who also watched a live pottery-making display as well as a photographic exhibition of Mylapore 25 years ago. Roadside stalls offered fast foods and a variety of knick-knacks for souvenir-hunters.



... and so did the potter at his wheel, bringing the village to the town.

(Continued from Page 1)

potholes of varying sizes and depths, deep trenches and craters, loose gravel, steep edges, etc. And with the rains and the consequent waterlogging, these dangers of the road are not seen, only rudely felt.

Unlike earlier years, when at least the arterial roads were regularly maintained, this year, even roads such as the Nungambakkam High Road, Anna Salai, Haddow's Road, Poona-mallee High Road, C.P. Ramaswamy Road, Mogappair road etc., which function as the backbone for commuters, are all in a terrible state of maintenance, making daily travel an absolute nightmare. With the Corporation making absolutely no attempts at improving the deplorable conditions of the roads, the danger of utilising this indispensable facility is causing grave mental and physical health hazards to motorists. Some of the effects (of this state of affairs) are as follows:

- **Accidents:** More people are killed in road accidents than because of any disease — 75,000 persons die in road

Our roads are killers!

accidents every year. At a seminar on 'Road accidents and Prevention' held in Chennai, the then Joint Transport Commissioner, Tamil Nadu, stated that "the number of accidents in Tamil Nadu has been on a rise over the past five years, with one person being killed every hour". The President of the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) stated that Chennai has emerged as the third most accident-prone city in the country. Most of these accidents may be directly or indirectly attributed to poor road conditions. Swerving to avoid potholes or manholes and manoeuvring through ditches and black holes invariably cause devastating accidents, which result in irreparable damage to life, limb or property. Also, insufficient street-lighting causes other vehicles to drive with their headlights on, making road

visibility bad which, with the added condition of poorly maintained roads, makes the roads more accident-prone.

- **Endangered Pedestrians:** According to a statistical report of the Chennai City Traffic Police, 786 pedestrians were victims of road accidents in the year 2000. Due to absence and poor maintenance of the pavements, pedestrians are forced to walk on the road and compete with motorised transport for road space.
- **Vehicular Damage:** Apart from severe vehicular damage caused by accidents, bad roads cause extensive wear and tear of tyres, strain on the body of the vehicle, reduced engine life, excess fuel consumption and technical deficiencies. The cost of this damage has to be borne by individual vehicle owners.
- **Toll on drivers:** An immediate consequence of bad

roads is the reduced speed of travel, causing time-loss, mental fatigue and physical stress. This further creates a situation wherein accidents become a logical conclusion. Dr. Arjun Rajagopal of the Sundaram Medical Foundation opines that the stresses and strains imposed on the spinal column by travelling over potholes and torn road surfaces, worsen the plight of those who suffer from spondylitis and other bone and joint problems. It also starts off the problem in those who have hitherto been free of complaints. This is apart from all the physical and mental stresses (such as migraine and hypertension) imposed on the driver due to pathetic road conditions.

- **Emergency delays:** In times of acute emergency, when there is a need to get patients to a medical facility in a hurry, delays engendered in transport may make the dif-

ference between life and death. That a citizen must lose life due to bad roads is a shame.

- **Congestion:** Bad roads in turn cause congestion which leads to travellers having to spend more than the usual time on travel, exposing themselves to large loads of inhaled pollutants which, according to Dr. Arjun Rajagopal, aggravate the condition of asthmatics and those with chronic bronchitis. Bumper to bumper traffic causes great wastage of fuel and energy.
 - **Other health hazards:** Water-filled potholes and open manholes form breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other insects. This unhygienic maintenance of roads makes children, vendors and pedestrians susceptible to deadly diseases.
- All these examples pertain only to the immediate damage caused, not mentioning other effects such as the adverse impact on the environment, and economic losses caused by accidents and delays. ▶

Roots in Chepauk

He was a popular figure in Madras cricketing circles from the late Fifties to the early Seventies and was good enough to represent the State in one Ranji Trophy match. Like cricketers of that period, he played the game for the fun of it, for the love of it. On the field, he caught the viewer's eye. Of medium height and rather stocky build, his very fair complexion and a mop of curly hair never failed to attract attention. Off the field, he was an engaging personality. Fun-loving and a good communicator, he was the life of any party or dressing room as he kept the conversation going, whether the subject was cricket or anything else.

Then one day in 1973, Jawad Hussain migrated with his family to England. Last month, almost 30 years later, he was back in India as the proud father of the England cricket captain. The honour could not have gone to a nicer, friendlier person. He studied at Madras Christian College High School in Chetput and had a brief stint in Loyola College. In school, he developed a passion for the game, and further as a middle order batsman and a good off spinner.

He later played in the lower division Madras league, then graduated to the senior division in which he represented the Madras Cricket Club. With his utility qualities as a cricketer, he proved to be extremely valuable to the side and even captained the prestigious club for a couple of years at a time it had a num-

ber of fine players. More than his tactical acumen, it was his ability as a motivator that saw Jawad Hussain emerge as a successful leader. Some of these qualities can be seen in his son, who earned rave reviews for his captaincy during the first part of the 2001-2 tour of India.

'Joe' Hussain he may be now, but in those days he was Jawad to everyone. And his many relatives in Chennai have vivid



Jawad Hussain

memories both of him and Nasser Hussain. The present England captain was born in the city in 1968 and studied for a short while at St. Bede's High School in San Thome before the family migrated. The Hussains used to live opposite Hotel Oceanic, not far from the school. With his father being a MCC member, it was but natural that young Nasser's first steps towards cricketing fame were taken on the hallowed Chepauk ground.

Nasser's cousin Dr. Safinaaz recalls today that he was a nice child. "He was also very determined. And I am not surprised at his cricketing talent. It is in his blood." Jawad continues his romance with cricket, running a cricket training school in Essex, the county which Nasser

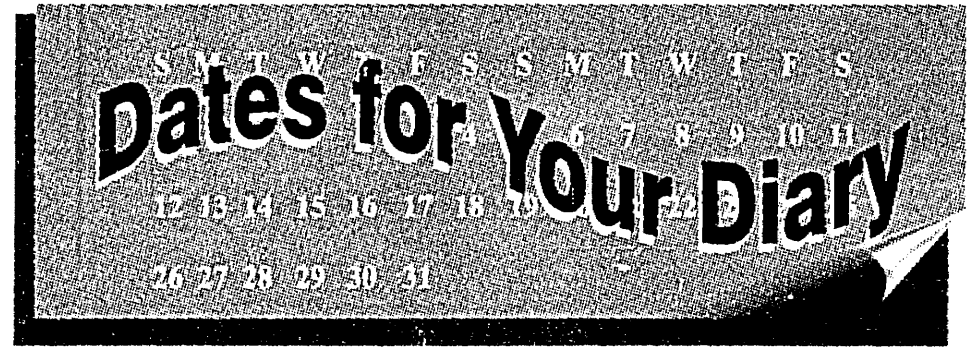
captains and which he's always played for. Nasser's elder brother Mel Hussain was a good club cricketer who spent some time in India and turned out for the MCC for a short while in the early Eighties. Nasser Hussain's other brother, Abbas, is a good football and rugby player. He works for a pharmaceutical firm and visits Delhi often. Nasser's only sister, a ballet dancer of repute in England, is now settled in Australia.

Dr Safinaaz is the daughter of late Nawaz Hussain, Jawad Hussain's elder brother. "My father too was passionate about the game and wanted one among us to play for the country. It is sad that he is not alive today. For, he would be the happiest person to see his nephew lead a national side," she says.

Nasser's aunt, Mehjabeel Nawaz, bubbles with enthusiasm as she talks about Nasser Hussain. "He loves India and Chennai," she said. "And he loves Indian food like biryani and *shammi kebabs*. Although his mother is British, she makes excellent Indian food. In fact, Nasser always goes home every Sunday to eat Indian food." She and the family are waiting to welcome the England captain when he comes to Chennai for the second one-day international against India, to be played on January 25th. "We have made a lot of plans for his visit. We aim to organise a family function, as all the relatives want to meet him. He is a Chennai boy after all." But she has no doubt where loyalties lie for the match. "I will be rooting for India," she said.

As for Nasser, he will be visiting his birthplace after 17 years. It will certainly be an occasion to savour. After all, it is not every time that a son of Chennai comes back to the city as the England cricket captain.

Partab Ramchand



From January 18: Retrospectives by the famous 83-year old painter Paritosh Sen. (Earlier work at the LalitKala Akademi, newer work at Artworld.)

From January 18: Exhibition of the work of Saroja Ramamurthy. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

January 18-28: Traditional crafts people from Madhya Pradesh exhibit their work. Sponsored by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. (At DakshinaChitra.)

January 19: Workshop for members of Junior Junction on memory enhancement techniques. (At 10.30 and 12.30, British Council Library.)

January 20: Max Mueller Bhavan presents a classical Western concert by Ensemble Resonanz. (At the Music Academy.)

The Ensemble Resonanz, comprising highly qualified string instrument players, presents works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, Felix Mendelssohn and Ludwig van Beethoven. The ensemble was founded in 1994 by the then members of the Young German Philharmonic Orchestra (Junge Deutsche Philharmonie). On the one hand it is a classical chamber orchestra, on the other hand, the musicians play in variable soloist formations or in the fashion chamber of music. (At the Music Academy, 6.30 p.m.)

January 20: *New Acropolis*, the Philosophy Club, presents a lecture entitled "Where is the world heading to?" by Prof. Eduardo Arredondo. (At New No. 4, Second Main Road, Kottur Gardens, Kotturpuram 6.00 p.m.)

January 21: A workshop on the art of *Kasuti* embroidery. (At Manasthala.)

January 22: *My Life with Beethoven*, a film by the internationally

acclaimed artist Anne-Sophie Mutter. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan.)

January 25: Workshop on decorations made out of palmleaf. (At DakshinaChitra.)

January 29: Docu-drama by the famous German photographer Beat Presser. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan.)

February 2-7: *The Alps - Dreams and Nightmares*, a photo exhibition by Beat Presser. The collection is a poetic yet critical reflection about a landscape shrouded in an element of mystery. Beat Presser addresses several questions through his lens/eye. The black and white photos are accompanied by captions from the literature of the last 300 years and facilitate the viewer to launch on an exploration which is fascinating at times, bizarre at others. (At Artworld Gallery.)

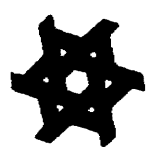
Answers to Quiz

1. Vijay Kannan and Rushmi Chakravarthi; 2. Harshad Mehta; 3. The 'Common Man' of R.K. Laxman; 4. Dr. Anji Reddy of Dr. Reddy's group; 5. Luis Figo of Portugal and Real Madrid; 6. Vijay K. Nambiar; 7. Prof. M.S. Raghunathan of TIFR; 8. He has been voted Time magazine's 'Person of the Year'. 9. Sir Nigel Hawthorne.

* * *

10. Admiral Madhvendra Singh and Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy; 11. Abdul Latheef; 12. The Chennai Government Museum; 13. Rameshwaram Temple; 14. Prof. M.S. Ananth; 15. Sudhantira Daagam by the late C.S. Chellappa; 16. Kancheepuram to Chennai Beach; 17. The 'coal import' case; 18. A 'mega canopy'; 19. T. Prakasam; 20. 12.

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