

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

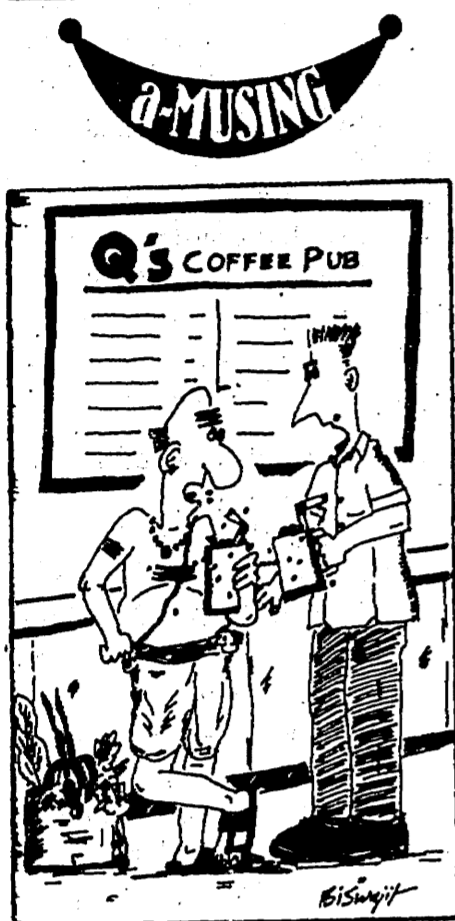
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FREE ISSUE

February 16-28, 2002



I love it! What a change from Kumbakonam Degree Coffee!

It's only coffee

A cup of coffee.

Good old quintessentially southern coffee, with its accompanying images of *davara*-tumbler, a newspaper, a couple of easy-chairs, a home bustling with morning routines...

If you were Topol, you would go "Thradishun" in full operatic throttle.

At least, you would have a while ago.

Today, this bastion has been stormed by people noticeably lacking in grey hair, and coffee has suddenly gone all cool and contemporary on us.

Now this is a shock, particularly for those of us who grew up in the days when Bachchan was young, and the height of cool was a certain soft drink.

Have you seen the number of places that have sprung up, dedicated to the ol' cuppa?

You should have... it's where your children hang out these days.

These shrines to the coffee bean, with their very client-specific ambience, have transformed the home-brew completely. Some of these 'transformations' are so delicious, they are almost decadent.

"It's only coffee," you scoff, proving thereby that you belong to a particularly low variety of *ignoramus homo sapia*, complete with large feet and red ears, who still believe that 'Kaapi' is what parents and grand-parents drink.

The times, they are a-changin'. Time to wake up and smell the... (Er... no. That's too obvious, isn't it?)

Ranjitha Ashok

Condemned – the easy way out

When faced with neglected heritage buildings

(By A Staff Reporter)

Unsafe for human habitation, seems to be the stock advice given by the building section of the Public Works Department whenever it's faced with old buildings – many of them that would be on anyone's heritage list – that are run down because no one has maintained them. The buildings are then evacuated and allowed to be further run down, when they are finally condemned, pulled down and a new building in PWD architectural style built, for which there always seems to be money.

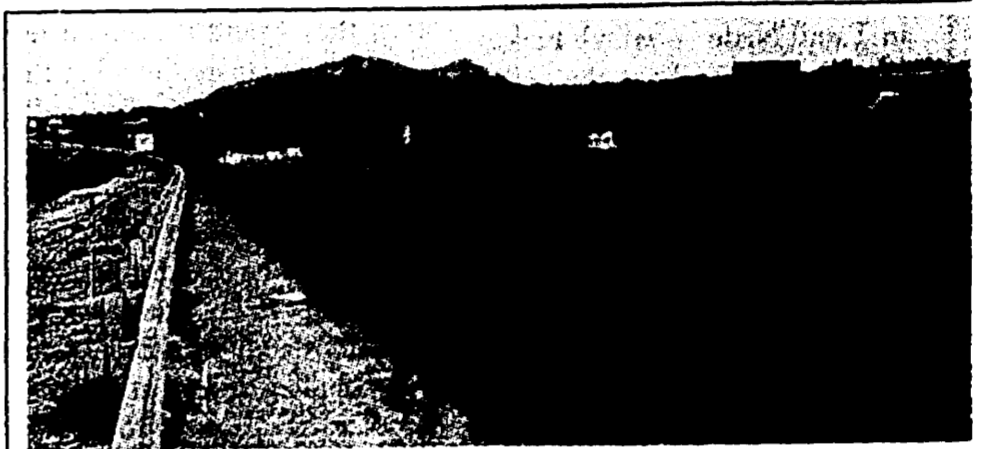
Madras Musings has been noticing this happening from the time *Bentinck's Building* was left derelict. Since then, the main building at General Hospital has been pulled down and buildings in the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology and Queen Mary's College have had the PWD declaring them unsafe, causing the heads of the institutions to empty them and leave them to the elements – or vandals.

Buildings on two more campuses, *Madras Musings* learns, have also been the subject of such warnings. These are at the College of Arts and Crafts and the Teachers' Training College in Saidapet, some of whose buildings are used by the Mother Teresa University.

The general excuse for not regularly maintaining such buildings is NO FUNDS. Curiously, to pull such buildings down and build bigger ones in their place, there seem to be ample funds. Why can't those funds be made available for the restoration of the best of these buildings, most of them certainly of heritage value?

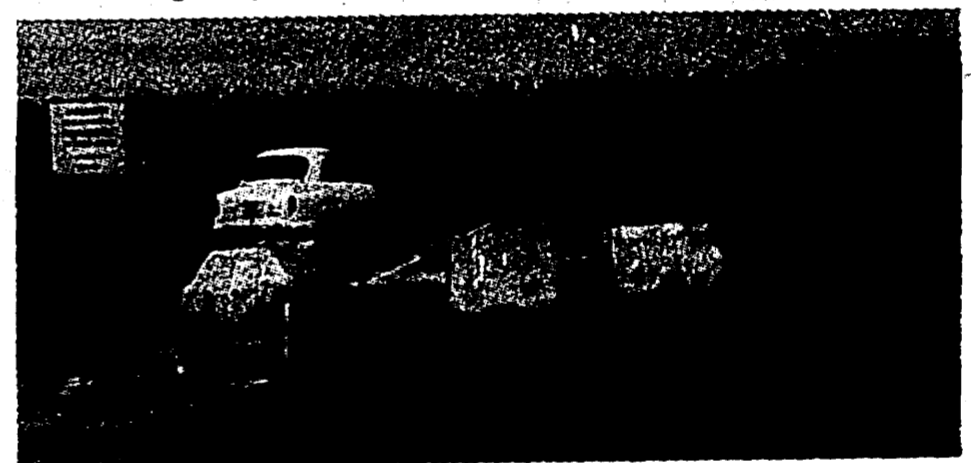
It could just be that there is a lack of expertise in the PWD for maintaining and restoring such brick and lime constructions a century and more old. But there is other expertise available in the city, for one thing and, for another, what prevents PWD from getting some of its engineers trained in such work and establishing a special cell to maintain and restore heritage buildings? Such training won't be difficult to get and imbibe. But there needs to be the will to

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The new Tambaram-Poonamallee Bypass Road, branching from NH45 at the Irumbuliyur Bridge is ready, though a board (below left) warns vehicle-users 'not to use the road'. That, however, doesn't stop many a vehicle. Once this road is officially opened, it will help ease the traffic congestion on GST Road and prevent the long queues now seen at several places on the GST Road in Greater Chennai.

With the Mofussil Bus Stand at Koyambedu nearing completion, all State Express Transport buses will begin using this route, whose main junction looks like something out of the developed world's transport scenario.



Some light on new number plates

A variety of vehicle number plates in several colours is seen on the roads today, creating a confused scenario. Shedding some light on this confusing scene is this clarification from the Automobile Association of South India in its journal *Southern Motorist*.

As per new regulations, the number plate of Non-Transport vehicles should be in white board with black letters. The number plate would be distributed by the RTO through authorised agencies. The new number plate will be a high security registration plate and will contain a chromium-based hologram of size 20mm x 20mm which will be hotstamped on the top left hand corners of both front and rear plates. The hologram will include the Ashoka emblem and the inscription Bharat Sarkar and Govt. of India on each side. The letters of the registration mark will be only in English and the figures will be in Arabic numerals and

the letters and numerals also will be embossed and hot-stamped. The registration plate would be made in such a way as to be guaranteed imperishable for a minimum of 5 years.

Apart from the above, a permanent identification number with a minimum of 7 digits assigned by the RTO will be laser branded into the reflective sheeting on the bottom left hand side of the registration plate with a numeral size of 2.5 mm. The hotstamping film to be applied on the letters/numerals of the licence number will bear the inscription 'India'.

A third registration plate in the form of a self-destructive chromium-based hologram sticker of size 100mm x 60mm will be affixed on the inner side of the left hand corner of wind-shield of the vehicle and the details on the sticker will be the name of the registering authority, registration number of the vehicle, laser branded permanent identification number,

engine number and chassis number of the vehicle. On the bottom right hand corner of the sticker, the chromium-based hologram in smaller size of 10mm x 10mm will be applied. In this sticker, the registration number of the vehicle will be in the centre with a letter size of 10mm in height. The name of the registering authority would also be on the top part of the sticker in the letter size of 5mm. All the other details will be in the size of 2.5mm.

The registration plate fitted to the rear of the vehicle will be fastened with a non-removable/non-reusable snap lock system with two such locks.

The new plate will be supplied by the authorised vendor on the authorisation of RTO and that too only after the old plate is surrendered and destroyed.

The system will be introduced for new vehicles by June 30, 2002. Existing vehicles should replace their old plates before August 22, 2003.

A way of settling disputes amicably

Mediation by a trained neutral mediator is urged as a quicker and more amicable means of dispute resolution by a new centre set up in Chennai, the Indian Centre for Mediation and Dispute Resolution. Recommending mediation as "the no-loss option to litigation" for companies, and the best and most inexpensive way of resolving family disputes, the Centre recently held three workshops in the city to familiarise people with the concept.

About 80 senior professionals from over 50 major corporates attended the first one and heard N. Vaghul (Chairman, ICICI Ltd.) urge companies to use mediation to settle disputes. He argued that, for the business community, legal rights/wrongs were less important than the need to protect and strengthen business relationships even against the background of disputes. Mediation, he felt, had

the ability to address this vital issue.

A senior member of the Bench, Justice Jayasimha Babu of the Madras High Court, urged the business community

• by A Special Correspondent

to take full advantage of the initiative of policy-makers who have strengthened the legal mechanism for Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) with the passing of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

Justice Prabha Sridevan, Judge of the Madras High Court, pointed out at the second workshop how dispute resolution could preserve family relationships that might

otherwise be destroyed by conventional adversarial processes.

Justice Subhashan Reddy, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, who has been fully supportive of the concept of mediation, felt at the third workshop that the awareness of the benefits of mediation would grow through its increased use in the resolution of disputes. Justice V.S. Sirpurkar, Judge of the Madras High Court, added that mediation was not new to India, the Panchayat system having provided such a mechanism for generations.

The three workshops were conducted by Mr. Firdosh Kassam (Mediator, Arbitrator and Solicitor, Bombay), Mr. Sriam Panchu (Senior Advocate and Founder, ICMDR) and Ms. Apama M. Vasu (Advocate & Director, ICMDR). Judges, senior members of the Bar, corporates and lawyers participated in every workshop.

You are an Indian, if ...

Here are 32 points to prove that you are of Indian origin.

You are an Indian, if...

1. Everything you eat is doused in garlic, onion and tomatoes.
2. You try to eject food particles from between your teeth by pressing your tongue against them and making a peculiar noise that sounds like tshchick, tshchick...
3. You are standing next to the two largest size suitcases at the airport.
4. You peel the stamps off letters that the Postal Service missed cancelling.
5. You recycle wedding gifts.
6. You name your children in rhythms (honey & money, sita & gita, ram & shyam).
7. All your children have pet names, which sound nowhere close to their real names.
8. You take Indian snacks anywhere it says "No Food Allowed".
9. You talk for an hour at the

front door when leaving someone's house.

10. You load up the family car with as many people as possible.
11. You use plastic to cover anything new in your house, whether it's the re-

• This is not about Chennai ... or even Tamil Nadu, but we're Indian, aren't we? Particularly when we look at ourselves like this!

12. You have a vinyl tablecloth on your dining table.
13. You use grocery bags to hold garbage.
14. Your kitchen shelf is full of

jam jars, varieties of bowls and plastic utensils (got free with some household items).

15. You carry a stash of your food whenever you travel (and travel means any car ride longer than 15 minutes).
16. You fight over who pays the dinner bill.
17. You majored in engineering, medicine or law and now... are after Software and Software no matter which field you belong to.
18. You live with your parents and you are 40 years old (And they prefer it that way).
19. You feel like you've got a good deal if you haven't paid tax.
20. You never learnt how to stand in a queue.
21. You can travel only if there are at least 5 persons to see you off or receive you, whether you are travelling by bus, train or plane.
22. If she is NOT your daughter, you always take an

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The mediation process

Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator, a trained neutral, facilitates negotiation between disputing parties, assists them in understanding their substantive interests and arriving at a mutually acceptable agreement. While the Mediator guides the process, the parties retain control over the outcome to the dispute. The Mediator assists the disputants in identifying issues, focussing on their long-term interests, and works with them in creating and refining options for settlement, which lead to an agreement. Monitoring, review and follow-up measures and mechanisms are frequently part of such agreements.

Mediation is a no-loss process, since no decision can be imposed on the parties who can terminate the mediation at any time before the stage of recording an agreement. Statistics show that parties usually honour agreements reached through mediation.

In India, with the enactment of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, Parliament has given recognition to alternative forms of dispute resolution. Mediation, which is termed "Conciliation" under the Act, is dealt with in Part III of the Act. A settlement reached through mediation shall have the same status and effect as an arbitration award and, thus, is enforceable as if it were a decree of court. The Act also protects confidentiality of the proceedings.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes, gaining popularity worldwide, save time and money, and reduce the tension and stress that accompany conflict. Some of the advantages of mediation are reduced legal costs, reduced time spent on litigation, increased party involvement in the process, and confidentiality.

Mediation works where relationships, commercial, contractual or personal, exist between the disputants. It is also a useful first-try remedy in other types of disputes. Disputes that are commercial, financial, family, intellectual property, employment, banking, insurance, environmental, personal injury and public have been found to be responsive to mediation.

The first step is the agreement to mediate, which parties may reach themselves or with the help of an Institute. Once this is done, they should decide on a Mediator. This could be done either by mutual consent or through an Institute, which has a panel of Mediators to choose from. The Mediator

establishes the ground rules for the mediation and an initial joint session, where representatives of all parties are present, follows. Each party makes an opening statement, presenting the facts of the case and the issues involved.

The Mediator encourages the parties to speak openly, to be aware of the weaknesses and limitations of their case, to examine their alternatives to a negotiated settlement and to reveal barriers to settlement. If a party requests the Mediator to keep some particular information confidential, the Mediator shall not disclose the same to the other party. These processes allow parties to focus on their long-term interests and generate various options for settling the dispute. Thus, the parties reach common ground where they are all engaged in finding solutions to the problem. Once agreement is reached between parties, such agreement is reduced to writing and signed by all parties.

The Indian Centre is an organisation of lawyers and others who strongly believe that, in many instances, mediation is an appropriate process of dispute resolution. Some of the Centre's members have undergone formal training and have experience in conducting mediations.

The Centre offers the following services:

- Evaluation of a dispute, advice to parties as to which process of dispute resolution would be most appropriate.
- Training workshops to qualify persons to become Mediators and to equip and inform lawyers who will represent parties in mediations as to what their role would be.
- Awareness programmes for companies, associations, institutions on mediation and its relevance for them.
- Facilities to conduct mediations.
- A panel of trained neutrals whom disputants can call upon to act as Mediators.
- Consultancy on drafting appropriate ADR clauses in agreements.
- The Design of Dispute Resolution Processes, including fact-finding, expert opinion, mediation and effective arbitration.

An Institute established in India to help with mediation is the Indian Centre for Mediation and Dispute Resolution, 10 Beach Road, Kalakshetra Colony, Chennai 600 090 (Tel: 91-44-4914451, Fax: 91-44-4919083 e-mail: mediate@vsnl.net).

New life for an old hall

The handsome Free Masons' Hall on Commander-in-Chief Road, Egmore, was recently re-dedicated after renovation by the Regional Grand Lodge of Southern India.

It was on January 26, 1923 that the foundation stone was laid for the Hall by the then Governor of Madras Presidency, Lord Willingdon. The building was inaugurated on February 27, 1925.

A fine piece of colonial architecture, the Hall was built in a symmetric form, with four imposing circular ionic fluted columns. The ceiling and the interior walls were enriched with considerable embellishment.

But the records tell us that ever since its construction, the building has had a history of chronic disrepair. Several reasons were attributed for this, ranging from settlement of foundation and faulty design (including absence of lintels or insufficient bearing) to bad workmanship in the initial stages of construction.

The result was that the condition of the building slipped slowly but surely over the years from a dilapidated condition to a dangerous one. There were instances of brethren having narrow escapes from falling ceiling plaster and walls, which resulted in the first floor of the building being declared uninhabitable and, ultimately, closed down.

The Free Masons' Hall, Chennai, being the headquarters of the Regional Grand Lodge of Southern India, the renovation of the building became the collective responsibility of all the brethren. Almost the entire nearly Rs. 1 crore needed for the restoration was collected by the end of 2001.

The renovation work was started in September 2000, with the work commencing on the Western Lobby, Northern Corridor and winding staircase, all on the Ground Floor, and the Western Lobby, RGM Room, Tyler Room and the Second Temple on the First Floor. The work involved both strengthening the structure as well as plastering and decorating the ceiling and walls.

• by G.K. Selvarajan Deputy Regional Grand Master

The first phase of the work was completed in March 2001 and the renovated Second Temple was declared open. In acknowledgement of the substantial contribution made by Lodge Accountants No. 194 towards the renovation, this temple was named the Accountants Temple. Thereafter, renovation work of the First Temple along with other areas was taken up. The renovated First Temple was declared open in June. To commemorate the substantial contributions made by the brethren of Lodge Srinivasa Gopala No. 190 and the brethren of Bangalore, the First Temple was named Temple Lodge Srinivasa Gopala and Bangalore.

The final phase of the work took up the Third Temple on the ground floor and other areas of the building, such as the Committee Rooms, lobbies and Main Dining. In recognition of the substantial contributions made by brethren of Mount Lodge No. 14, and Lodge Chennai No. 317, the Main Dining Hall is now called by the names of these two lodges.

In order to cater to the needs of an increasing membership, the following additions/alterations were made:

1. Modern toilet blocks were constructed on the ground floor and first floor of the building and annexed to the main building.
2. A regular staircase has been provided annexed to the main building, in order to reduce the load and traffic on the existing winding staircase.
3. The existing Committee Room and toilet area on the ground floor were removed and the area was extended on the east to make it a big hall and this was remodelled to synchronise with the architecture of the building.
4. Marble flooring has been laid throughout the building.
5. Airconditioning, formerly available only in the Third Temple, has now been provided in the Temple Lodge Srinivasa Gopala & Bangalore and Accountants Temples.

A unique feature of the building was the extensive cornice work found in all parts of the building. It was decided to retain this beauty and grandeur. Extensive photographs were taken by the contractors before the start of the work and all the cornice bands were recreated and redone with meticulous care by expert workmen from Karaikudi and elsewhere.

Much of the exquisite teak woodwork extensively used throughout the main building was in a damaged condition before renovation. The joinery was fully repaired wherever possible and replaced with first class teak wood elsewhere.

A look back at the 1925 building

The Committee appointed to draw up the schedule of requirements of the headquarters of the Regional Grand Lodge of Southern India stipulated that it must be of two storeys, with a large Lodge Room, capable of accommodating about 200 brethren and a small Lodge Room, suitable for Masonic meetings with attendances upto about sixty, on the first floor; that in accordance with tradition the first floor must be approached by a winding staircase

to be ascended in an anti-clockwise direction; with one dining room to accommodate about 150 diners and also a smaller dining-room. It was further laid down that it was essential that the Lodge Rooms should run truly East to West; scrupulous care was taken to see that this requirement was faithfully complied with.

As the surrounding properties hid the east and south sides of the building, these elevations were of little importance and,

consequently, the kitchens, store-rooms and service-rooms were arranged on these sides. A porch for emergency use in wet weather was provided on the south elevation and not at the main entrance, as the architect felt very strongly that a porch on the west side of the building would detract greatly from this important elevation.

The east bank of the River



Our OLD is of the Free Masons' Hall off Commander-in-Chief Road (Ehraj Salai), before renovation, showing the main entrance (on top) and the ionic columned facade (above) that is more visible as you enter the campus. ...& THE NEW THE OLD... The NEW (below) is of how these two features have been transformed by the renovation which, it is to be hoped, will spark restoration of several other buildings in the city in the days to come.



Coom was regulated and turfed, and a terrace wall with seating accommodation was provided on the river front of the building. In the middle of the wall, there was a marble slab well suited for an inscription.

The two Lodge Rooms were decorated with Masonic emblems formed in plaster and gilded. There was a large gilded star at the centre of each ceiling. The joinery in these rooms was of rosewood, the entrance doors to the large Lodge Room

being particularly handsome. Rosewood furniture was provided for the large Lodge Room.

The floors of both Lodge Rooms were paved with grey marble. The organ was in an organ-chamber on the north side of the large Lodge Room, with the keyboard in the thickness of the wall, so that the organist was seated inside the room. The rosewood grilles around the openings to the

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A look back at the 1925 building

(Continued from Page 5)

organ-chamber were a prominent feature of the decoration of the room.

The winding staircase was constructed of Sholingar stone with a wrought iron hand grille. With the exception of the Lodge Rooms, the principal rooms and the verandahs were paved with Italian tiles, those on the first floor having a border of Craft Masonry blue.

The War Memorial, the opening ceremony tablets, the bronze ventilation grilles in the Lodge Rooms, the wrought iron railings to the staircase and first floor verandahs, and the rosewood furniture in the large Lodge Room were all of local

workmanship, each in its way an excellent piece of Madras workmanship.

The design of the building, which was finished internally and externally with fine polished Madras plaster, was based on Greek motifs, modified where necessary, to suit modern conditions of planning and Indian conditions of climate. The building relied very largely for its external effect on the Ionic colonnade forming its northern elevation. Internally an architectural feature was made of the winding staircase, which was semi-circular in plan, and this was emphasised by framing it between two columns of the Greek Doric Order.

The architects were Messrs. (R.) Jackson and (H.W.) Barker of Madras. The general contractor was Mr. K. Raman Menon who was responsible, amongst many other things, for the joinery and fine plaster work. The marble flooring in the Lodge Rooms was by Messrs. Lakshmi Ratans, Ltd., the bronze grilles, metal masonic symbols, War Memorial and Opening Ceremony tablets were executed by Messrs. P.Orr & Sons Ltd., the Lodge and Dining Room furniture were by Messrs. Spencer & Co., Ltd., and the curved wrought iron railings of the staircase were by Messrs. The Crompton Engineering Co., Ltd.

You are an Indian, if ...

(Continued from Page 4)

- interest in finding out whose daughter has run away with whose son and feel proud to spread it at the velocity of more than the speed of light.
23. You make long distance calls only after 11 p.m.
24. If you don't live at home and, when your parents call, they ask if you've eaten, even if it's midnight.
25. You call an older person you've never met before "Uncle".
26. When your parents meet strangers and talk for a few minutes, you discover you're talking to a distant cousin.
27. Your parents don't realise phone connections to for-

eign countries have improved in the last two decades, and still scream at the top of their lungs when making foreign calls.

28. It's embarrassing if your wedding has less than 600 people.
29. You list your daughter as 'fair & slim' in the matrimonial ads, no matter what she looks like.
30. You've seen the ground while using the lavatory of a train.
31. You have mastered the art of bargaining while shopping.
32. You have really enjoyed reading this article.

— Caught in the NET and sent by S. Chandrasekaran

Answers to Quiz

1. Arjan Singh; 2. Mark Mascarenhas; 3. Thomas Johansson and Jennifer Capriati; 4. Sitara Devi; 5. Sahara Airlines; 6. Gangubai Hangal and Kishori Amonkar; 7. Insat-3C; 8. VAT; 9. Snooker title; 10. Flying the Indian flag.

* * *

11. Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan; 12. The first Indian woman to qualify as a doctor in the then Madras Presidency; 13. George Hardinge; 14. Virudhunagar; 15. Madras Eye Infirmary; 16. 86060; 17. Chindatripet (Chinna tari pet); 18. Madurai Kamaraj University; 19. T.N. Ramanathan; 20. Saint Thyagaraja's.

Dates for Your Diary

Till February 24: An exhibition of Paintings, Sculptures and Drawings to mark 36 years of Cholamandal Artists' Village (Daily from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. at Cholamandal Artists' Village, Injambakkam, Chennai 41.)

Till February 28: A festival of khadi and the handloom featuring Sunaina Suneja, Prana, Creative Bee, Sridevi, Sangita Patel & Bharat Laxman, followed by Neetika Swarup (at The Gallery, Wallace Gardens).

Till February 28: The Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society display for sale — Orissa Lac, handlooms, Khewda mats and boxes and patchwork items. (At DakshinaChitra)

February 21-March 10: Learn the story of digital animation from Tikki, the fascinating digitally animated characters of Toonz Animation, Trivandrum. Learn about and participate in Toonz's all India storytelling contest during your visit to DakshinaChitra. Your story could be selected for animation, including a one-month stay in Trivandrum to work with Toonz Animation.

February 21: Reproductions of the work of Rembrandt by K. Muradli (at Vinyasa).

February 22-24: Giant puppets in a theatre production by John Devaraj of Gondwana Gondwana and Children of Gondwanaland (at DakshinaChitra 3.30 - 4.30 p.m.)

February 23-24: Workshop on flower arrangement and garland making (at DakshinaChitra).

February 24: Discover the secrets of Michel de Nostradamus. (At the New Acropolis at 6 p.m.)

February 27: *Dance III — Spaced Out* by the Hot Shoe Dance Co. An unusual love story in contemporary dance, directed by Jeffery Vardon. (at The Music Academy, 7 p.m.)

March 1-4: A festival of puppetry and animation.

Puran Bhatt: Contemporary Rajasthani performance Caravan.

G. Venu: Yakshagana glove puppets

Ratnamala Nori: Contemporary Panchatantra Tale of the Clever Frog from Hyderabad.

Kumara Thripalu: Shadow puppeteers from Andhra Pradesh performing the Mahabharata (all at DakshinaChitra, 10.15 a.m to 5.30 p.m. daily)

March 6-10: Festival of puppetry and animation

Kogga Kamat: Exquisite marionettes in an age-old ritual performance from Karnataka.

Krishnankutty: Famed Kerala temple shadow puppets on the Ramayana.

Sudip Gupta: Taming of the Wild Contemporary performance with life-size puppets from Calcutta.

Prabhitangsu Das: *Janmadin* from Tripura.

Selvaraj: One of Tamil Nadu's premier shadow puppeteers (all at DakshinaChitra, 10.15 am to 5.30 p.m. daily).

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