

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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- A folk arts festival
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Vol. XI No. 22

FREE ISSUE

March 1-15, 2002



Locating the panther's my  
'top' priority!

## Mr. Carnivore, I presume?

Let's get something clear — I have nothing but respect-filled affection for the various species with whom I share my planet... even if some of them have more claws, teeth, hair, and testier dispositions than is desirable in any acquaintance.

But I wish we'd all stick to our own territories.

It's bad enough battling bad roads, water shortages, heat, dust, mosquitoes, and hysterical traffic, without having to worry about a huge, rather irritated member of the cat family peering into our homes or car windows any moment now.

Yet, ask yourself. If you were a cat who was part of a cushy zoo system that cared for you, would you wander off on your own, even assuming for reasons one cannot even begin to imagine, someone forgot that an enclosed area usually means four walls? I don't think so.

Or is he an outsider looking to get in on a good deal?

The Big Cat is also probably a little put off by being constantly addressed as "the carnivore" by the media. After all, maybe he is a gentle soul happiest amongst his sprouts and salads.

I'm sure the Big Cat will turn up soon, rather abashed at having caused all this fuss and bother.

I only hope that we humans receive him with the courtesy he deserves.

Ranjitha Ashok

## Is WTC scrap we got toxic?

by Rajesh Rangarajan  
Regional Coordinator, Toxics Link Chennai

The m.v. *Borzna* recently arrived in Chennai, carrying 33,000 tonnes of World Trade Center (WTC), New York, steel scrap. Two other ships, the *Shen Quan Hai* and *Pindos* were to reach the West Coast. Was what they carried SAFE? Or was it CONTAMINATED scrap laying a toxic trail in India?

Let us examine the history of this scrap.

When the twin towers of the WTC collapsed to the ground on September 11, 2001, they were bathed in at least 91,000 litres of jet fuel carried by the aircraft that rammed into them. This fuel incinerated humans and objects inside the building at extremely high temperatures. After the incident, the US Government declared the site a 'Superfund site' — one that is extremely contaminated and would require sizeable funds for cleaning up. This is because the objects inside the building ranged from computers and electronic items to various other kinds of internal fittings such as tube lights, bulbs, asbestos, plastic wiring, insulation, furniture, etc. These, when burnt, are capable of releasing a variety of toxic substances which would undergo various chemical reactions given the conditions.

The WTC debris is being gradually cleared under conditions of utmost safety. The steel scrap so cleared is now being offered by the New York Port Authority (NYPA) internationally for recycling. Various importers in India have ordered this scrap from the NYPA through contractors worldwide. Alan Ratner, President, New York's Metals Management, one of the major contractors of the steel, acknowledges that 70,000 tonnes of scrap have been obtained from the ruined twin towers, some of which

have been shipped to Southeast Asia. Ratner added that there still were "very dense" steel girders from Ground Zero, which could finally yield 250,000 to 400,000 tonnes of scrap for recycling.

Experts feel there is every possibility that toxic substances could be impregnated in the steel scrap. These substances are known to be part of the general ambient contamination due to the fire and explosion and subsequent collapse of the WTC. Some of the hazardous materials that have been identified as contaminants of the

(Continued on page 2)



Can there be greater clutter on the roads, and above them, in a city than what this evocative picture shows? Madras Musings is told that there are 29 different kinds of traffic on the roads of Madras — and we are not sure whether this includes pedestrians, elephants, cattle, dogs and what have you. Our picture shows only a fraction of these users, but that appears to be enough to clutter just one junction. And if you look just above that bit of chaos, you will find how we have cluttered SPACE with hoardings, bunting and a variety of other sales promotion gimmicks that do nothing for the beauty of the city except block out a view of blue skies. Does a metropolis aiming to become a beauty deserve such clutter?

## Toilet-short Chennai stinks!

by Dr. K. Shanmugavelayutham  
Co-ordinator, Chennai Slum Dwellers' Rights Movement

Chennai is one of the dirtiest cities in India. Large numbers of people defecate in the open or urinate against the walls in public places. Flies, known to be vectors for many diseases, abound as a result. The city's citizens are faced with this situation because of a lack of toilets. Yet, the toilet was one of the greatest inventions of modern times.

According to the 2001 census, Chennai has a population of 4.2 million. But the total number of Public Conveniences maintained by the Corporation is only 850. And most of these have been shut down because there is no one to clean them. The women are the worst sufferers as, without toilets, most of them have to relieve themselves before sunrise. In Chennai, there is just one toilet for every 3,000 students in Corporation schools. It is not surprising that they use school backyards as toilets. That is also the case with the slums, which have few public conveniences — most of

them without doors or latches. There is no water in them also. In the state in which they are, slum residents are left with no other option but to defecate in the open; public toilets, they find, are a hell.

There are several allegations of irregularities and misuse of public toilets run by the Corporation of Chennai. These include:

- Sub-letting of premises
- Drug peddling
- Illicit liquor business
- Prostitution being carried out
- Misuse of water and electricity connections
- Overcharging of users
- Lack of maintenance, particularly during the rains.

The Madras City Police Act, 1888, Sec. 73, specifies penalties for "Committing nuisance in public places". These provisions are never implemented. But to even think of implementing them would be an injustice, as without providing the public toilets how can one be punished?

A recent study in the Velacheri Resettlement revealed that 55 per cent of the slum-dwellers were using the toilets provided and 45 per cent were not using them because of the lack of maintenance. Lack of water supply, inadequate number of toilets and distance of the toilets from their houses were other reasons for not using the toilets.

In the case of Pay-and-Use toilets, like those of Sulabh, if a person uses the public toilet, he/she has to pay a minimum of 0.50 paise. If calculated at twice a day per person, for a family of four, they will have to pay a minimum of Rs. 120 a month. As a result, the poor end up paying a lot more for basic services than the well-off.

The Corporation directly maintains some PCs with its own staff, for which Rs. 600 is paid per month towards maintenance. No charges are collected at these PCs. But in PCs

(Continued on page 5)



# Showing India the way with quality

Indian industries need to learn a lot from the Chennai-based, 27-unit, Rs. 7500 crore TVS group. Two Deming Awards (to Sundaram Clayton and Sundaram Brake Linings) in quick succession, and what seems to have become the annual 'Supplier of the Year' award to Sundaram Fasteners from General Motors, USA, are not something easy to achieve, nor has any other Indian industrial group, been able to do it.

The winds of excellence are blowing across all the group units in Padi, irrespective of size. Sundaram Brake Linings (SBL), the latest company to win the prestigious Deming award, closed last fiscal with a turnover of Rs. 81.87 crore.

The point to note is that only five companies in the world have won this award in 17 years after the Deming Prize was made open to the world. And SBL is the first friction material brake-linings, clutch-facings company in the world to get the award from the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers.

Talk to company employees and others in the industry, and they will tell you about SBL chairman and managing director K Mahesh's obsession with quality to the extent that even the accounts division practises TQM (total quality management) concepts. Mahesh is a man who speaks of management concepts that are seldom heard in India. He proudly says that his order-book position is just three days' supplies. "Customers should not be put on wait," he explains. Such a philosophy has a direct benefit on the company's finances, as not much money is locked up in inventories while plant efficiencies improve a lot. "Take care of your employees, and they will take care of your customers," is another of his concepts.

SBL's quality excellence strategy started 14 years ago, at a time when the majority of Indian industries were blissfully unaware about various quality and customer satisfaction concepts. "You don't prepare for Deming all of a sudden. Our achievement is the result of 14 years of conceptual change," Mahesh says. "Deming was not on my agenda until a Japanese quality consultant sowed the seed in my mind."

From an obese company initiated to TQM, SQC/A team practices, SBL today boasts of implementing concepts like TPM (total project management), TQM and lean manufacturing practices simultaneously. "The days of better quality fetching premium prices

are over. Today, quality is taken for granted and the war is over the price," he says when asked about the quality-versus-price equation.

About the Deming prize he says: "We have caught a tiger by the tail. There is now no escape route, as we have to hold on to our achievement. In the quality race there is no finishing line."

Excerpts from an interview with him:

*Two TVS group companies have won the Deming Award. Another company wins the 'Supplier of the Year' award from General Motors, USA, year after year. What is it that drives the group companies towards quality excellence?*

Commitment to our customers and our obsession with quality permeate throughout the group — at boardrooms and at shop floors of group constituents. For many other industrial groups it exists only in seminars and conferences. Right from the beginning, the group has focussed on customer satisfaction for growth in all activities. For instance, TVS service stations

• by V. JAGANNATHAN

showed how an automobile service station should be — and should satisfy its customers.

*With the group as a whole practising quality excellence concepts, is it not better to have a separate outfit, like the Tatas, to guide the companies?*

The TVS group consists of just 27 units, unlike the Tata group that has 300. Given this situation, it is better if each company follows its own path towards quality excellence. However, we do share information with other group companies. Brakes India and Lucas India are the other companies that practise quality excellence concepts in detail.

*Why Deming, instead of the American Malcolm Baldrige model?*

The US government introduced the Baldrige model, which has a pro-American slant and focusses on results, instead of process. On the other hand, the Japanese model is more focussed on getting the processes right, holding that the results will automatically follow. Further, the Deming model gives more weightage to social commitment. But it is unfair to compare two systems. All I can say is that a company that practises TQM should show good profits.

*What does SBL's new tag, 'A Deming Company', mean to your overseas markets? Will this result in increased sales?*

No doubt it's an added advantage. We are exporting to 55 countries and our plan is to increase this by 12 more in three years' time. In the US, when we

*Your path towards the Deming Award included a lean manufacturing system, TPM, TQM and other concepts. What impact have these practices had on your bottomline? How does your performance compare with that of global majors?*

Well, returns and rejects came down drastically, thereby reducing losses. Customer returns, which were at 3000 parts per million (PPM) four years ago, came down to 450 PPM. The plant rejects came down to 1.5 per cent from the earlier levels of 5 per cent. The machine-related scrap came to almost nil. The raw material turnover touched 50 times and the work-in-progress is just one day. The equipment efficiency went up to 80 per cent and the inventory turnover increased to 45 times from 6.5 times. The set-up and shift change overtime reduced a lot. Similarly, productivity per worker, too, went up. In our passenger car brake-lining line, the productivity per man per shift went up by 424 per cent. The lead time improved tremendously and our order book position is not more than one

*What is the future of the domestic auto component industries? New vehicle manufacturers who import kits and assemble vehicles here are clocking good sales, while Indian vehicle makers are registering lower sales?*

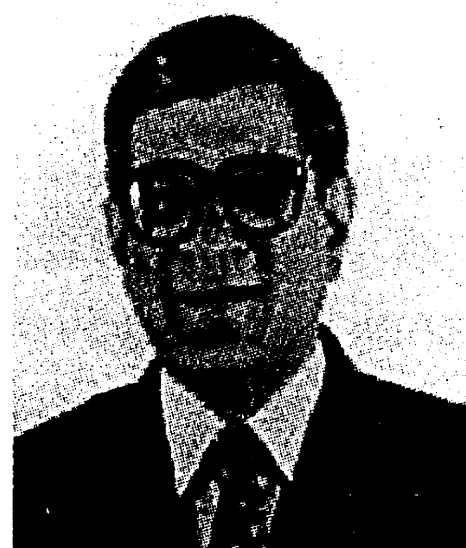
A similar situation existed in Mexico. There, 30 to 40 per cent of the existing component suppliers closed shop. Compa-

ny. As regards benchmarking with other global players, I don't have their figures. It should be noted that they don't execute small orders. Strictly speaking, my figures can't be compared with them.

*Labour strikes in the TVS group are an unknown phenomenon. Your company hasn't lost even a single day during the last 25 years due to a strike. How did you achieve this? Is it due to a better pay package?*

We rank among top three in terms of wages in this area. But salary is only one part of labour relations. We take workers into confidence in all our activities. I made a pledge that not one worker will be sent out as a result of rationalising our production process, and we stuck to that. There is transparency in all our dealings. 'Take care of your employees, and they will take care of your customers' is the motto of our group. Six per cent of the time is allotted to train workers.

*No doubt it's an added advantage. We are exporting to 55 countries and our plan is to increase this by 12 more in three years' time. In the US, when we*



K. Mahesh

ny ours is a Deming company, there are two kinds of reaction. One, our clients are proud to deal with such a company and the other is one of surprise.

*Post-2003, India is expected to see global auto component players setting up shop here. How are you going to meet the challenge?*

We are waiting for somebody to come and set up shop here. Even if the import duty is zero, they can't match my costs — we can compete in price as well as quality. At the global level, consolidation is happening in our industry. As and when needed, we can increase our production.

*What is the future of the domestic auto component industries? New vehicle manufacturers who import kits and assemble vehicles here are clocking good sales, while Indian vehicle makers are registering lower sales?*

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## IS WTC SCRAP TOXIC?

(Continued from page 1)

dust/debris, include asbestos, lead, fibreglass, mercury, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, isocyanates, silica, and non-specific respirable dust.

Cate Jenkins, a research chemist at the US Environmental Protection Agency, has accused New York City's Health Department of "giving the public a false sense of security" by grossly exaggerating the amount of airborne asbestos that can be considered safe. A US Geological Survey team found last September that some of the dust from the site was as caustic as drain cleaner, because of the high concentration of cement dust.

Indian environmental groups have raised the alarm over the steel scrap pointing to its probable hazardous nature. So far, no official authority in the US has certified the scrap as being contaminant-free. Given that the port authorities only do routine checks, it is unlikely that they would have done any satisfactory testing. Comprehensive testing becomes absolutely imperative, with the methodology of testing done through a consultative process and results made transparent.

It is indeed sad to note the

panies that neglect quality and customer satisfaction will have to exit from business.

*Will setting up plants in China give our auto component units an edge over the rest?*

Setting up a plant overseas doesn't give any great advantage. Moreover, having a plant in China is like chasing your own shadow. China gives me the shivers. In my opinion, China is a powder-keg. Why aren't manufacturers doing well there? Five years ago I went there as part of a delegation and came back as confused as before I went. For our product range, China is not a major threat; one has to get quality approvals from different countries to enter OEM (original equipment manufacturer) lines.

*As for your future plans for Sundaram Brake Linings...*

The plan is to become the No. 1 friction material manufacturer in the country and figure in the Top Ten players in the world. Our presence is strong in the truck segment and we would like to become one of the Top Three in the commercial vehicles segment in the world. Two years down the line, we are planning to become the Tier-I supplier by selling the complete brake panel assembly for two-wheelers. We would like to proceed in stages. Now we are in Tier-II. The other plan is to diversify the business by technology transfers. (Courtesy: www.domain-b.com)

apathy of both the US and Indian Governments. Neither has come forward with any official evidence indicating that the scrap is not contaminated. It is the responsibility of the relevant official agencies of India and the US to put all concerns to rest by furnishing evidence that the steel scrap is not contaminated with asbestos, dioxins, PCBs and other toxics.

While the opposition is not targeted at the import of steel scrap per se, it must be understood that abundant precaution is necessary in the case of these particular shipments, considering the circumstances under which they were imported. Further, this is a clear case for exercising the 'Precautionary Principle', as it attracts the provisions of the Basel Convention (Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes). In the event the scrap is found contaminated, India, being a party to the Basel Convention (though the USA is not), should immediately send the consignment back to where it came from.

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

— The Editor

# Infrastructure

— the need... and the way forward

by M. Subramaniam  
Sr. Vice-President, Reliance Industries Ltd.

The Indian Economy is on the downside. The euphoria of Economic Reforms and Liberalisation of 1991 has evaporated. Growth has got stumped due to the infrastructure creaking at the joints.

Inadequate logistics has prevented manufactured goods reaching destinations as well as imports reaching factories in time. The same is the case with Agriculture/Horticulture produce reaching the large markets in India and abroad. Since 1994 Indian Infrastructure Development has been put on the priority list and talked about at Govt/Professional/Business Forums. But there has been little forward movement due to the gridlock at the centres of power in the Centre and States.

The Government of India (GOI)/States' fiscal deficits, with a total National Debt at Rs. 1.25 million crore and Annual Borrowings of Rs. 0.12 million cr. do not provide any leeway for Direct Budgetary Investment in our crying INFRASTRUCTURE need. Therefore, there is no way out for the country except a massive privatisation effort which would bring in public investments.

### Roads

We have 36,000 km of roads. However, goods traffic is hampered. We have the dubious distinction of having the world's highest Accident Rate/Fatalities, around 300,000/100,000 respectively. The direct impact works out to Rs. 5000 cr. annually and indirect Fuel/Operational Losses are Rs. 10,000 cr./annum. We need additional road connectivity augmentation of 35,000 km at a cost of Rs. 400,000 cr.

### Ports

The average total Waiting/Turn Around Time in Indian ports is six days, while it does not exceed 12 hours in Singapore. Consequently, Global Berth Occupancy is 70% whereas in India it is 100%, leading to demurrage and Opportunity Cost Losses etc. assessed at Rs. 2500 cr/annum. The present 250 million tonne port capacity has to be doubled at a cost of Rs. 75,000 cr.

### Airports

India does not have a single independent cargo airport. While it takes 24 hours for air cargo to reach India from abroad, locating and clearing it takes up much effort/follow-up: about seven days, if it has not been stolen by then. As far as passenger comfort at airports is concerned, the torture is known to all.

The present 16 million passenger capacity at airports has to be doubled at a cost of Rs. 75,000 cr.

### Water supply

Globally, tapwater even in bathrooms, is stated to be good for human consumption. But in India, even the municipal outlets are havens of physical/bacterial/chemical impurities and unfit for direct human con-

• We stray from the beaten track with this article, but publish it because it is relevant to several issues facing Chennai and Tamil Nadu in their attempts to improve the quality of life here.

sumption. Neglect of the water sector will convert India's urban centres, catering at present to 30% of the population, into cess pools. This is more so since sewage treatment upto the tertiary stage of effluent, before outfall into sea/rivers, is non-existent. Sometimes I wonder whether the mineral water business, with a Rs. 1000 cr. turnover at present and a 20% C.A.G.R., has a vested interest in continuance of this miserable state of affairs. In order to improve the system and provide this basic facility to all in India, we would need Rs. 100,000 cr.

### Power

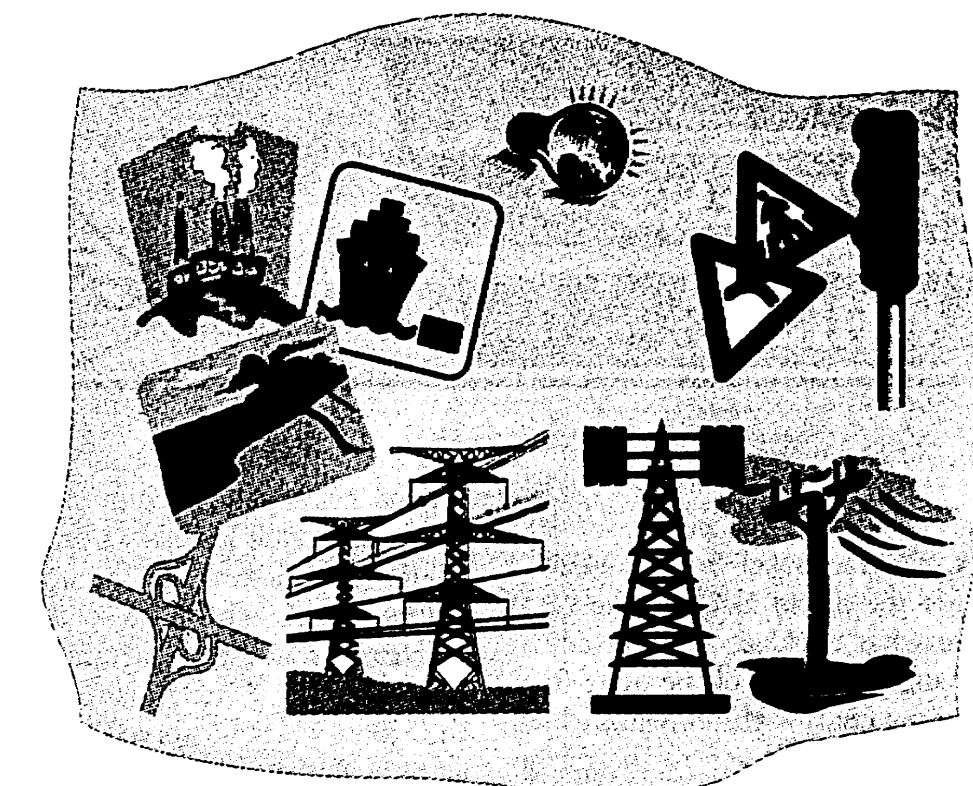
We have a 100,000 MW power capacity, of which only 70,000 MW is available, with 40% of produced power lost in transmission/distribution losses primarily due to thefts (while the global norm in this regard is 4%). We need 100,000 MW increase in power generation / transmission / distribution net-

work. This is over and beyond setting right the present chaotic/disorganised system and would cost around Rs. 600,000 cr.

The total requirement of investment in Roads/Ports/Airports/Water Supply/Power, on the above basis, works out to Rs. 1.25 million crore (around 265 billion US \$ at a Rs. 47/US \$ rate of exchange).

In order to enthuse investor confidence, infrastructure privatisation involves multidimensional concerns of Government/Public/Promoter/Lenders. So, Concession Agreement should address all of them upfront, as well as their legally enforceable mutually reciprocal obligations/responsibilities.

Infrastructure privatisation involves very large upfront capital cost expenditure and risk to promoters. The present public



have been abandoned and two are under discussion to find common ground.

### Water supply

While five / six international competitive projects were bid for in major cities/industries, none has taken off. They have all been stranded high and dry due to conceptual/structural infirmities.

### Power

We have at present in various states of limbo nearly 95,000 MW committed projects pushed through Memorandums of Understanding and International Competitive Bidding Routes. Of these only 5000 MW power projects including Enron, have been realised. Every one of them is in an unresolved tariff dispute with its Electricity Board due to the inability to operationalise and put in place the committed payment security mechanism of 'escrow'.

The cruel joke is that out of the seven fast track projects with the much favoured GOI counter-guarantee, only one has taken off in 10 years and it happens to be the controversial Enron-Dabhol Project.

\* \* \*

Means/measures must be structured to tap the wealth

### Roads

Enthused confidence has not been achieved so far in the stand-alone concept of Talled Roads. Either they were abandoned at pre-bid or post-bid stage, as only one bidder was reluctantly left in the fray.

### Ports

Out of 42 ports put out for bid, not one has taken off.

### Airports

Out of four International Airports put out for bid, two

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## OUR READERS WRITE



### Let's change again

On assuming power in the Uttaranchal State Assembly after the recent election, the Congress has decided, as reported, to change the name of the State from Uttaranchal to Uttarakhand, which was the name given to the region during the separate State agitation.

In the same spirit, out of a respect for history, and to restore a sense of balance, it is hoped that the Jayalalithaa Government will rename Chennai as Madras.

It will be recollected that it was during the Karunanidhi regime that the name of Madras was changed undemocratically and overnight to Chennai. Needless to say, the return to the original name Madras could be accomplished in a phased manner to avoid unnecessary expenditure.

**Jaiboy Joseph**  
'Priya', 3, Second Avenue  
Harrington Road  
Chennai 600 031.

### Ramanujan's recollections

It is true that Ramanujan stayed in *Summer House* in Tiruvallikkeni for some time (MM, February 16th). My father and another man shared the room with him.

The rent was Rs. 3 per month and each paid Re. 1/-.

It is also true that Ramanujan worked out his mathematical problems sitting bare-chested.

That was the standard dress for men in Tamil Nadu in those days. While at home, they wore only a *dhoti* of four cubits length. If you had to move out on a personal errand, a towel was casually thrown over one shoulder. Only while attending office, did they cover their torso with shirt and coat. Anglo-Indian men alone covered their bodies earning the sobriquet *Chattaiakaran*.

Ramanujan was not very keen on food or personal hygiene. As soon as he returned from his office, he would throw off his shirt and settle on the verandah with a slate to work out his favourite mathematical problems. On hearing the 8 p.m. time signal cannon shot from Fort St. George, his room-mates would drag him to a private mess close by where they dined. He would take a skimpy meal, all the time musing on his mathematics. By 9 p.m., mats would be spread in the room for night slumber. While his room-mates snored off

### PLEASE NOTE

- All letters for The Editor's attention should be addressed to The Editor, c/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.
- All business correspondence should be addressed to The Director, Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

### Quench the stench!

Now that Chennai has been taken over by soft drink companies, it's logical to expect that what goes in must come out too. They happily encourage the thirsty citizens to quench their thirst with these fizzy drinks and we don't hesitate more and more shops to meet this need. Yet, we fight shy to build toilets that the public can use. And when we build them, we don't care for them.

Walk down any street and you'll find men urinating against a wall. Can we modify local building laws to make it mandatory for every shop to have a toilet and for every restaurant and tea stall to provide a toilet that the public can use? Let our builders and architects insist on more toilets in each building accessible to the public. There's good money to be made in toilet waste: compost the waste after certifying the wastewater.

Produce Urokinase from urine collected in public urinals. Recycle wastewater and use it for irrigating plants. The possibilities are endless.

**G. Krishnan**  
3 George Avenue, Rajeswari Nagar  
Selaiyur, Chennai 600 073.

### Metricising cricket

Reader Dharmeshwaran's suggestion on this would be rejected outright as blasphemous. It would also cause considerable difficulty to the record-keepers in comparing performance of batsmen, bowlers, and in various cricket grounds.

What next — metricising time? A year of 10 months; a month of 10 days; a day of 10 hours etc!!

**M. Sethuraman**  
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### Being an Indian

Here are a few more points on 'You're an Indian...'

If — In an auditorium, you reserve the next seats by placing your handkerchief, bag etc. on them, for your friends/relatives who are yet to arrive.

— You think that cricket is the greatest sport and that India is unbeatable except with the help of bad umpiring.

— You believe in the saying, 'keep a thing for seven years and you'll find a use for it' and have accumulated quite a houseful of things that have not been put to use for 17 years.

**A. Sankaran**  
12/3, Kandasami Street  
Chennai 600 028.

### ESLC and Basic Training

Regarding MMM's suggestion (MM, January 16th) of a public exam for 7th standard, I recall that a few decades ago there was an ESLC (Elementary School Leaving Certificate) exam for 3rd form students (i.e. the present 8th standard). For reasons best known to Government this was discontinued.

Without equipping schools in rural areas with proper buildings, classrooms, furniture, laboratory, library and, most important of all, well qualified teachers, with manageable numbers of students, say 40 to 50 per section, and improving the curriculum, how can public exams be conducted for all classes? The cost of such an exercise would be formidable, something government can ill-afford.

MMM also suggests giving vocational training to the 'less academically talented' students. It may be

recalled that Rajaji, in the 1950s, had introduced Basic Training and several Basic Training Schools were also started. But the whole scheme was stoutly opposed by those who stated that students would be compelled to follow the professions of their families and the scheme was discontinued.

**T.M. Sundararaman**  
No. 19, Nallappan Street  
Mylapore  
Chennai 600 004.

### Gastronomy & etymology

Gastronomical reminiscences by Raghu Tagat (MM, February 1st) were a real treat to old timers like me, for it made me go down memory lane.

As a young bride of 14 who knew no cooking at all, I have known my mother-in-law prepare what she called 'Ambatta Pachai'. I couldn't figure out why the word resembling 'ambattan', meaning barber, was used nor what 'pachi' meant. But after some years in Poona I realised that this was 'amtee bajji' — credit for the corruption of the words goes to the Tamil Iyers of Tanjore!

As to the etymology of the word *sambhar*, this is my analysis:

*Sambaram* in Sanskrit means 'to collect'. In Russian, which has many Sanskrit words, *sabirai* is the verb, 'to collect' or 'get ready'. *Sambhar* is a collection of many ingredients as we all know. In Malaysia, a *sambhar*-like gravy is called *Sambhal*. As we all know, 'R' becomes 'L' there.

Is any reader interested in the etymology of the word 'tiffin'? The British had a tea-break around 4 p.m. for 'tea & bun'. This later got corrupted to 'teabun', 'tiffin', and now to 'tiffin'.

Black gram flour in made into a very tasty *patchadi* in Tamil homes.

# A second look at Veeranam, please

The people of Chennai suffered an acute shortage of water in 2001 in spite of receiving over 3,000 m.c.ft from Telugu Ganga. Therefore, Metrowater has begun to look for other sources of water in a hurry. The obvious choice is the Veeranam Project (VP), as the project report is ready for implementation. However, many specialists have suggested alternatives, such as drawing water from the Kaveri. These alternatives, however, have not been studied as carefully as VP has been. Meanwhile, the water storage position has improved so much that Metrowater should be able to supply 400 mld in 2002 compared to 180 mld in 2001, and still have a comfortable storage position as on 1.11.2002. Metrowater should, in these circumstances, switch to a more confident mode, give priority to completing the Telugu Ganga Project, investigate Rainwater Harvesting and take a second, more careful look at the VP, especially as Rs. 720 crore is at stake.

### Telugu Ganga Project

When the Telugu Ganga (T.G.) Project is completed in all respects, water realised by Metrowater from the Krishna River will be 12,000 million cu.ft. Progress in implementing the T.G. project and the expenditure incurred on it have been substantial. The remaining expenditure to complete the project in all respects is comparatively small and for such a small amount, the supply of water can be increased

from 3,500 million cu.ft a year to 12,000 million cu.ft. Metrowater will then be able to step up the supply to 800 mld. The unit cost of Krishna water is low. It would be prudent for Metrowater to pursue the T.G. Project vigorously and complete it before December 2003.

**Veeranam Project**

The VP for which tenders have been called recently, proposes to draw 180 mld from Veeranam Lake at the tail end of the Kaveri. Withdrawal of water from several alternate points higher up the Kaveri has also been suggested. A tunnelling engineer thinks that construction of a tunnel to shorten the distance of the pipeline from Hogenakal will prove viable. These possibilities have to be studied and compared with the VP to select the most viable project. While the T.G. Project does not consume electricity, the VP will consume electricity worth Rs. 5 crore a year for the present. With inflation, the cost of electricity will only increase in the future. It is obvious that VP should wait for the studies to be completed.

### Rainfall run-off

The rainwater run-off below Chembarambakkam and Red

hills properly harnessed will produce the benefits of the VP at less than half the cost. The cost will include the construction of stormwater drains and improvement to existing lakes and tanks. Scientifically designed, constructed and maintained, stormwater drains will improve the stormwater drainage system of the metropolis and the following benefits will accrue: 1. Reduction of water stagnation; 2. When this stormwater is consciously stored in many big and small ponds, the groundwater will be automatically recharged; 3. The damage to the roads will be reduced.

**Rainwater harvesting**

The whole exercise of rainwater harvesting has to be studied in detail. A recent report was headlined 'Renovation fails to improve West Mambalam Temple Tank'. This was because there was no proper groundwater and, as a consequence, there was an absence of link channels. The renovation of the temple tank near Kothandaramar Koil Street in West Mambalam was carried out by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department at a cost of Rs. 26 lakh. Renovation by itself cannot be beneficial. The project should

have included construction of an adequate length of scientifically designed, constructed and maintained stormwater drain, the disposal of the debris from the renovation of the temple tank and from the stormwater drains and, lastly, arrangements for the use of water.

**Conclusion**

1. Metrowater should be able to maintain a satisfactory supply of 400 mld of water till November 2003 with the existing resources.
2. Metrowater should doggedly pursue the Telugu Ganga Project and complete it in all respects by November 2003; it will then be able to increase the supply to 800 mld of water.
3. Rainwater harvesting should be scientifically investigated and implemented.
4. Kaveri water needs more careful study before it can be implemented.
5. A second look at the Veeranam Project is advisable.

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8, First Street  
Nandanam Extension  
Chennai 600 035.

## TOILET-SHORT CHENNAI STINKS

(Continued from page 1)

in some areas, the persons manning the PCs have been collecting money from users and earning Rs. 200-300 every day. Elsewhere, individuals, allegedly with political backing, have taken illegal possession of toilets, posted their own men, and illegally collected tariff from users.

The following suggestions are made to ameliorate the situation:

- Provide adequate number of community toilets with bathing facilities in important places, such as Egmore Railway Station, Central Station, Broadway and Koyambedu market.
- People will use public toilets only if there is cleanliness and good management. There should be electricity and 24 hours water supply. Soap powder should be supplied free for washing hands. The complexes should have separate enclosures for men and women.
- The Corporation of Chennai should construct toilets, pro-

vide basic amenities like light, water and drainage and hand them over to committees representing People's Toilets' Association (mostly of women) for management and maintenance. The name should be changed from Public Toilet to People's Toilet. When people are entrusted with management and are given pride of possession, they will develop a sense of belonging and do their best to maintain and manage People's Toilets. Exnora, for instance, has such an association.

- The Private Sector should be invited to participate in the maintenance of public conveniences. Corporation should fix the tariff rates. The advantages of privatisation are better efficiency and adoption of updated technology. It also greatly relieves the Corporation of Chennai of the burden on wages and servicing costs.
- Maintenance of Public Conveniences could be entrusted to NGOs and Social Service Organisations that can closely

work with the Community Based Organisations (CBOs). In this, the role of community is very crucial both for the success of the programmes as well as for their sustainability. NGOs are better suited to organise the community and evolve suitable structures for such participation by the community.

- Pay-and-Use toilets can be established with bathing, washing and urinal facilities with attendant service round the clock. Users could be charged nominally for use of toilets and baths, but use of urinal facilities could be free.
- Children, disabled persons and those who cannot afford to pay could also be allowed to use the facility free of charge.
- It is vital that any community-wide sanitation programme is preceded by an awareness campaign. The important task here is to tell users clearly and unambiguously the do's and don'ts for a clean toilet. The Corporation and the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board

(TNSCB) should seek to educate the people not to defecate in the open, in lanes, parks, by the railway tracks etc.

• Low-cost public toilets may be a more appropriate and cost-effective option for slums, duly keeping environmental safeguards in mind.

- Government, before giving affiliation to a school or college, should ensure each institution has enough toilet facilities. The Shops and Establishment Act, and Public Health Act authorities should enforce the provisions of the Acts in hotels and shops.

- Petrol bunks, commercial banks, post offices, telephone exchanges and police stations should, as part of community service, maintain public toilets, wherever possible, in their premises.

Only by ending defecation in the open can we improve the environment, community health and quality of life in the city and raise the productivity of the people.

### Costly & adulterated

The article on yesteryears' *Sambhar bonda* (MM, February 1st) and other delicious combinations had me longing for those days when I enjoyed such fare for just 12 annas (75 paise) a week in coffee houses around the High Court area of Chennai. That was in the early 1930s.

Today, I can only dream of such tasty dishes at such a low cost. That golden age will never return. Not only has food become costly, but the ingredients for the preparations, like dhal, rice and edible oil, are so adulterated that even the health of consumers is affected.

**Lalgudi G. Kanakasabai**  
'Greenlands'  
Lalgudi 621 601.

### Food for thought

Propos Raghu Tagat's eloquent tribute to *Bonda-Sambar* (MM, February 1st), the nearest today would be a marriage of a *bonda* from Drive-In (4 p.m.) and *sambar* from Ponds Bazaar Geetha's. In George Town (North Chennai), however, *bonda* has always bowed before *masala vadai* fried at street corners.

\* \* \*

### Audit firm recalled

Re. the names of audit firms Raghu Tagat could not recall (MM, February 1st), one of the pre-eminent Indian audit firms of those days was M/s. M.S. Krishnaswamy and Jagannathan, who had offices in Coimbatore (H.Q.) Trichy and Madras. As a leading firm it had the accounts of some foreign companies as well and many Indian ones now famous.

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

### Errata

The correct names the species of sapling planted in Koyambedu mofussil bus terminus are: 1. Samania saman; 2. Phelto-phorum; 3. Thespesia populrea; 4. Mimisops elangi; 5. Tabebia-rosea; 6. Albeziarachardiana; 7. De-lonex regia.

**Dr. K. Ramadoss**  
4/1, PE Kovil West Mada Street  
Ayanavaram  
Chennai 600 023.

regarding the feature on the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce, no report on the chamber can be complete without mention of its manager. K.N. Venkiteswaran, a man for all seasons who is a trouble-shooter, counsellor, liaison man, linguist and humorist, all rolled into one. The building might go under, but he'll still be buoyant.

### Present Status

Water available from the lakes as on 27.12.2001 was 4,700 million cu.ft. (Maximum storage: 11,000 million cu.ft.) Water which can be realised from

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from 3,500 million cu.ft a year to 12,000 million cu.ft. Metrowater will then be able to step up the supply to 800 mld. The unit cost of Krishna water is low. It would be prudent for Metrowater to pursue the T.G. Project vigorously and complete it before December 2003.

**M.S. Srinivasan, Sr. Partner,**  
an authority on Income Tax Law.

**N.R. Raghavan**  
Financial Controller (Rtd.)  
18, (Old No. 2) 57th Street  
Ashok Nagar, Chennai 600 083.

### A matter of proof

Though it might be hurtful, it makes little sense to board a train, or be put there by your kin, without the required proof for availing of a concession (MM, February 1st). Can "forgetting" your ticket be entertained!

As for being treated as a ticketless traveller, the SR Time Table July 2001-June 2002, in a detailed boxed and tinted note on page 145, clearly states that if proof is not produced en-journey, "They are liable to pay the difference of fare and excess charges" only. This is repeated on p 146.

**N. Dharmeshwaran**  
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Guduvanchery 603 202.

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**Statement about Ownership and other particulars about newspaper**  
(As required to be published under Section 19-D, Sub-section (b) of the Press and Registration of Books Act read with Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspaper (Central Rules), 1956.)

### Form IV Madras Musings (Fortnightly)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Place of publication                                     | : Chennai (MADRAS)   |
| 2. Periodicity of its publication                           | : Fortnightly  |
| 3. Printer's name   | : Mr. T.J. George  |
| Nationality   | : Indian   |
| Address   | : Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd.<br>No.62/63, Greames Road<br>Chennai 600 006.   |
| 4. Publisher's Name   | : Mr. S. Muthiah for Chennai Heritage  |
| Nationality   | : Indian   |
| Address   | : 260-A T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018   |
| 5. Editor's Name  | : Mr. S. Muthiah   |
| Nationality   | : Indian   |
| Address   | : 260-A T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018   |
| 6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper | : 1. Mr. N. Sankar Director<br>S/o Mr. K.S. Narayanan<br>292, T.T.K. Road<br>Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018<br>2. Mr. M.V. Subbiah Director<br>S/o (Late) A.M.M. Vellayan Chettiar<br>10, Boat Club Road, Chennai 600 028<br>3. Mr. S. Muthiah Director<br>S/o Mr. V.V.R.N.M. Subbiah Chettiar<br>2-F, Vijay Gardens, I Cross Street<br>Vijayaraghava Road, T. Nagar<br>Chennai 600 017<br>4. Mrs. Tara Murali Director<br>W/o. Mr. N. Murali, 260-A, T.T.K. Road<br>Chennai 600 018<br>5. Mr. Suresh Rao Director<br>S/o Mr. R. Rao<br>277, T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018 |

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

(Signature of the Publisher)



## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

Questions 1 to 10 are from the period February 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.

1. Who received the Gandhi Peace Prize in New Delhi on February 1st?

2. Name the *Wall Street Journal's* representative who was kidnapped in Pakistan.

3. Who took 25 per cent equity in VSNL in a major boost to disinvestment?

4. Name the younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II, who died on February 9th.

5. What humane order has the Supreme Court passed as regards mental asylum inmates?

6. Where was the World Economic Forum held recently?

7. The Golden Jubilee of what British Royal event was observed on February 6th?

8. Name the main accused in the Kolkata American Center attack, who was deported from the UAE.

9. Which film became the third from India to be nominated for the 'Best non-English language film' Oscar?

10. Which Gulf archipelago was declared a kingdom on February 14th?

\* \* \*

11. Which Chennai-based chess player regained his national crown recently?

12. What new feature, in tune with the times, did the Madras High Court launch on February 6th?

13. *Bronza, Shen Quan Hai* and *Pindos* were the ships which bought nearly 30,000 tonnes of a 'historic scrap' to Chennai Port recently. What scrap?

14. Which places in the State are noted for their 'nadai' and 'kodai'?

15. Name the largest warship to visit Chennai in recent times.

16. What pioneering programme was launched by WHO at the Cancer Institute in Chennai on February 9th?

17. What prestigious title did the Tamil Nadu men's volleyball team win at Payyanur recently?

18. Totally trivia. How many village panchayats are there in the State?

19. Anna University has been chosen by ISRO to jointly develop what?

20. Simple. Name Maniratnam's new film set against the backdrop of a longing for peace and love in Sri Lanka.

(Answers on page 8)

# An adventure with a bittern

I was sipping my coffee on a late June morning when I heard a knock at the door. It was Sudhakar, a close friend, who lives in the next street.

"I have a surprise for you," he said. "Can you come home immediately?"

Sensing the urgency in his voice, I said 'yes' and got ready to leave, hurriedly finishing the coffee and nearly scalding my tongue.

As we entered his gate, he told me to walk carefully. "A largish heron-like bird was moving about in my garden a few minutes ago. It appeared weak and unable to counter the attacks of the crows. Can you catch it?"

"Maama, I just saw that bird disappearing into the shed," said ten-year-old Vamsi, Sudhakar's nephew.

It was dark and gloomy inside the shed, which had an assortment of junk in it. It took a long time to get accustomed to the dull light inside the room and make out what was where.

"What was the colour of the bird?", I asked Sudhakar.

"It was blackish", he replied.

It was impossible to locate a dark bird in the darkness of the shed. We tried our luck for a while and had decided to give up, when Vamsi volunteered to flush out the bird. Shouting wildly he entered the room and a couple of minutes later out came the bird with Vamsi in hot pursuit!

It was a Black bittern, an adult male in lovely plumage. Looking a little bigger than the Pond Heron, it was blackish above with chestnut and buff underparts and a bold, dark line running from throat to belly. It had a yellow streak on the sides of the neck. It had a 7-cm-long dagger-sharp beak, reddish brown with a yellowish tip. The bird appeared to be in a good condition though it looked thoroughly exhausted. It made little attempt to fly and, instead, crouched at one end of the garden.

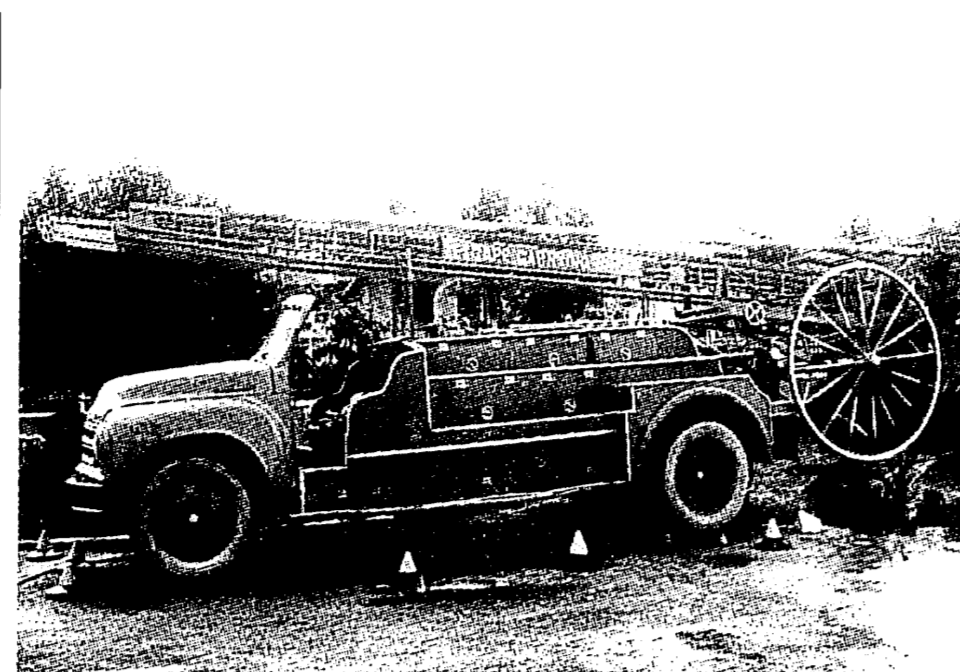
Black bitterns are rather uncommon birds in the neighbourhood of Chennai, seldom seen except on rare occasions in marshy, overgrown ponds and *jheels* with plenty of cover. (A young bird had

turned up in my house a few months before this instance. I appear to have missed entering the event in my diary and am now unable to recollect the date.) Obviously, Sudhakar's visitor was a bird of passage which, exhausted, had landed hoping to rest during the day before commencing its movement again that evening. The crows, spotting it, must have harassed it and forced it to retreat into the dark shed. I felt sorry for the bird.

There is a regular stream of passage migrants that pass through Chennai every year in the summer months, their movements dependent on the water levels in the wetlands of the region. Whitebreasted Waterhens are one such passage migrants and every year I notice several of them either killed by the crows or on the run, trying to escape the attention of the bullies by hiding in the cover of the few bushes in our backyard.

The problem we faced was how to catch this bird so that we could release it in a safer place. I have some experience in handling birds, having worked at a bird ringing camp a few years ago. Yet, the prospect of handling a bird as big as the bittern with its sharp beak was not entirely appealing. Birds such as bitterns and egrets need careful handling and any carelessness could cost a few ounces of blood and, at times, even an eye! I decided to take a chance and called for a towel. Carefully I threw the towel over the bird's head and grabbed it from behind. There was hardly any resistance from the bird. I held on to it, while Sudhakar fetched me a basket, which appeared rather flimsy and vulnerable. But there was no substitute available. So we took a chance, hoping the bittern would not decide to escape. The bird was lowered into it carefully with the towel over its head and we used some twine to close the mouth of the basket.

We decided the best place to release it was the campus of the Theosophical Society, next to the pond in 'The School' compound, some three kilometres away. In any case, Sudhakar was dropping his nephew and niece there in a few minutes. So, off we went in a car loaded with the two children and a bittern for company in the rear seat.



The OLD, to be found parked in the Tamil Nadu Fire Training Centre at Tambaram, is the escape ladder-carrying unit which was in use from 1942 to 1985. The manually-operated rescue ladders in the truck could reach a maximum height of 60 feet by turning the wheel provided at the rear of the truck.

The Merryweather truck had a steam-operated pump that is now kept in the Reception area of the training building, to extinguish fires. Many old timers recall the experience of using the Merryweather truck for drill purposes before it came to be treated as heritage property.

## THE OLD... & THE NEW

The OLD has given way to the NEW, the hydraulic and electronically operated rescue and fire fighting equipment. The truck has a 42-metre ladder for rescue purposes. The city has two of these 30-ton power steering trucks imported from Finland, one at the Ashok Pillar and the other at the Teynampet fire station. The special feature of this vehicle (below) is the hydraulic and electronically operated ladder that extends section by section for rescue operations.



Sudhakar was at the wheel and I was next to him. We were hoping the bittern would behave itself. Vamsi was keeping a wary eye on the flimsy basket. The bird was quiet for half the journey. But as we neared a busy junction, the movement of the vehicle, the noise of traffic and the strange surroundings proved too much for the poor bird and even before we could do anything, the bird forced itself out of the basket and hopped on to Vamsi's lap!

That was too much for him and he let out a loud scream. His elder sister next to him became hysterical. There was no

way we could stop the vehicle in the heavy traffic and put the bird back in the basket. I wasn't sure what people in the other vehicles thought about us — perhaps they suspected we were kidnapping the two children. But, at the moment, I was more concerned about the safety of the bird and did not want it to escape out of the window and crash into a speeding vehicle. We hurriedly raised the window glasses. The bittern now realised it was being taken for a ride and decided it would get a better view of the traffic and the

(Continued on page 8)

# A festival of folk in the city

(By A Special Correspondent)

The National Folklore Support Centre\* is organising a Festival of Indian Oral Epics in Chennai from March 4th to 14th in order to animate urban public spaces in the city, enhance understanding of cultural diversity and to support folk artistes.

The festival will include:

- Exhibitions of folk paintings, featuring Thanjavur, Kalamkari, Madhubani, Warli, Patachitra, Bastar, Pithora, Patua, Kishangarh Rajasthani miniatures and Phad
- An exhibition of folk musical instruments of India
- A festival at DakshinaChitra on puppetry of India
- Ten or more performances on oral epics of India
- An exhibition of photographs on the ethnographic contexts of oral epics.

Oral epics are sung, enacted, and danced. Therefore, several other art forms are directly or indirectly connected with them. Such as:

**Music:** Either Indian classical or folk plays a vital role in narrating an oral epic. String instruments are mainly used in Northern India whereas percussions and wind instruments are used in South India.

**Painting:** While the artiste narrates the story, he often takes help of visual presentations like a scroll painting or a scenery painted behind/beside him. This enriches his story by trying to make it realistic.

**Arts and crafts:** In certain oral epics, painting the face (make-up) plays an important role. The artistes themselves make costumes, masks, headgear, jewellery and other properties used for the performance. The entire preparatory work becomes a ritual and an integral part of the performance.

**Dance:** Dance supplements the music. The style of dance will differ from region to region and on the type of narrative.

**Drama:** Along with music and dance, acting goes hand in hand, with different characters playing different roles.

**Puppetry:** Many oral epics of India are performed as puppetry and it is important to look at the puppet theatre traditions of India for a better understanding of the oral epics.

**Religion and culture:** Epics are based on religious themes as well as on the culture and lifestyle of the people. It is important to know the religious, historical and cultural backgrounds to understand the epics.

The multifaceted world of epics can be divided thematically into three broad categories:

**Heroic:** This includes war, battle, struggle for revenge, lost lands, restoration of lost rights, fighting for power, social obligations, social unity and continuity. In a Heroic Epic, the central theme is based on courage, valour and self-sacrifice.

**Historical:** A historical epic narrates events of the past. It deals with historic facts, myths, and legends. In it are heroic and sacrificial acts, which lead to a happy or tragic ending. The epic singer becomes a historian.

**Romantic:** These have a special atmosphere of beauty, love and humour. The hero or heroine is strong-willed, different from the general mass, cast out or exiled from a social group and has a passion for life rather than martial skills. He or she seeks love and yearns for personal freedom.

## Other attractions at the festival

The festival of oral epics will also feature an exhibition of folk paintings, a puppetry festival from March 1-10 at DakshinaChitra, an exhibition of folk musical instruments and a photographic exhibition on the ethnographic contexts of oral epics curated by R.V. Ramani.

Folk painting traditions will include these categories:

- Thanjavur, Kalamkari, Madhubani, Patachitra
- Warli, Bastar, Pithora
- Pata, Phad, Miniature

\* Telephone 2450553/2448589; E-mail: info@indianfolklore.org and mutha@md2.vsnl.net.in

The exhibitions will be curated by Mrs. Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, a renowned Chennai-based painter, in collaboration with the National Folklore Support Centre. During the exhibitions:

- The processes of executing the paintings will be highlighted with displays of works in progress. Painting demonstrations will also be arranged.
- Details and meanings will be explained.
- Parallel themes running across different genres of paintings will be highlighted through exhibition techniques.

The exhibition of folk musical instruments of India will be held in collaboration with Brhaddhvari, 41, IV Main Road, R.A. Puram, and will display 100 important musical instruments, with the music through tape-recorders, and demonstrate the making of the instruments.

## THE PROGRAMME

Folk Festival on Oral Narratives, Folk Paintings and Musical Instruments of India

| Dates    | Oral Epic Performances<br>Presentation: Koothu-pattarai<br>Time: 6 p.m. (all days) | Folk Theatre                            | Epic Singing/<br>Dancing        | Folk painting<br>exhibition<br>11 am-7 pm<br>March 4-13, 02   | Musical<br>Instruments<br>Exhibition*       | Photography<br>exhibition**                    |
|----------|--|---|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| March 4  | Form Pabuji Phad (Rajasthan)   | Form Terukkuttu (Tamil Nadu)            | Form Khamba Thoibi (Manipur)    | Venue Govt. Museum (10 am-5 pm)<br>Alliance Francaise Amethyst<br>Art World<br>Little India Gallery<br>Manasthala<br>Vinyasa Art Gallery<br>Guided Tours<br>3.00 pm (all days)<br>Artists at Work<br>4.30 pm (all days)<br>Meet the artists<br>11.00 am | Dates March 4-13 2002<br>Venue Govt. Museum | Dates March 4-13 2002<br>Venue Govt. Museum    |
| March 5  | Form Pabuji Phad (Rajasthan)   | Form Terukkuttu (Tamil Nadu)            | Form Khamba Thoibi (Manipur)    | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Manasthala<br>Foundation  | Time 10 am - 5 pm                           | Time 10 am - 5 pm                              |
| March 6  | Form Chitra Kathi (Maharashtra)  | Form Tamasha (Maharashtra)              | Form Child Artistes (Rajasthan) | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Amethyst  | * on folk musical instruments               | ** on ethnographic contexts of oral narratives |
| March 7  | Form Chitra Kathi (Maharashtra)  | Form Tamasha (Maharashtra)              | Form Child Artistes (Rajasthan) | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Alliance Francaise  |   |  |
| March 8  | Form Pata (West Bengal)  | Form Yakshagana (Karnataka)             | Form Ponung (Arunachal Pradesh) | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Art World   |   |  |
| March 9  | Form Pata (West Bengal)  | Form Yakshagana (Karnataka)             | Form Ponung (Arunachal Pradesh) | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Little India Gallery  |   |  |
| March 10 | Form Padam Katha (Andhra Pradesh)  | Form Mayurbhanj Chhau (Orissa)          | Form Villuppattu (Tamil Nadu)   | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Vinyasa Art Gallery   |   |  |
| March 11 | Form Padam Katha (Andhra Pradesh)  | Form Mayurbhanj Chhau (Orissa)          | Form Villuppattu (Tamil Nadu)   | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Little India Gallery  |   |  |
| March 12 | Form Chindu Yakshagana (Andhra Pradesh)  | Form Chavittu-natakam (Kerala)          | Form Chandaini (Chattisgarh)    | Meet the Artists<br>Venue Little India Gallery  |   |  |
| March 13 | Form Chavittu-natakam (Kerala)   | Form Chindu Yakshagana (Andhra Pradesh) | Form Chandaini (Chattisgarh)    |   |   |  |



# The day Durrani kept a promise

● Down memory lane with P.K. BELLIAPPA, from a letter to Baskeran Thomas that was published in *Straight Bat*.

It is good to see that M.J. Gopalan is going strong at 95. God bless him. I had some very good years with him when he was Manager of the Madras

## Nostalgia

team and the South Zone team. A good man, very simple at heart, I still remember him getting the shock of his life at the amount of beer cricketers could consume at the end of each day's play!

Those were great days, when the game was played for the love of it and we were paid Rs. 30 for the three days of Ranji Trophy and Rs. 75 for the three days we played for the South Zone. If you played a Test you got Rs. 250! Wonderful days and great memories of a great game.

Yes, I know about Jawad's son (Nasir Hussein) being captain of England. I am in touch with Jawad and speak to him on and off. Jawad went to school (Madras Christian College High School in Chetpet) with us and also played for the Madras Cricket Club (MCC) with us in the league for quite a few seasons. He also played for Madras in the 60s.

I remember having a head-on collision with Polly Umrigar on the cricket field during a South Zone vs West Zone Duleep Trophy final at Eden Gardens in the 60s. Jai was our captain and Polly was the rival captain. I was the wicketkeeper and while Polly was scrambling to reach the crease, I was in mid-air, gathering a throw from fine leg and we collided, his head against mine!! I was unconscious and was kept in hospital overnight. I was the top scorer for South Zone in the first innings and was also not out in the second, but we lost the match, Baloo Gupte, brother of the famous Subash, taking nine wickets. We had Roy Gilchrist, former West

## Rare patronage for a cricketer in the 1940s

In 1943, I was selected to play for the University XI. For some reason, the Rohinton Baria inter-university tourney could not be played that year. The selected team was asked to play a match on the MCC grounds against a European XI captained by C.P. Johnstone, the boss of Burmah Shell in Madras. I took four wickets, including that of CPJ, and scored 43 runs.

During the tea break, he took me aside and asked me about my college and studies. He then suggested I meet him after my final examination.

I met him the day after my exams. He directed me to see a Mr. Wood, one of the English managers of the company, who asked me to take a written test in English and Mathematics. That same afternoon I was informed of my selection as an Asst. Depot Superintendent. It was a fairly well-paid job considering those were War years when there was a total ban on employment for the civilians.

I was instructed to report to M.J. Gopalan at the Tondiarpet Installation the next day for training.

It was rare patronage for a cricketer of those days. I was, however, in Burmah Shell service only for a short time and jumped into Government service when the ban was removed and competitive examinations held for the first time after the War. — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat*.)

A.R. Sundaravaradhan

## THE BITTERN ADVENTURE

(Continued from page 6)

roads. It flew straight into the windscreen and flopped on to my feet with a thud. Hastily I grabbed the basket and put it over the bird. Fortunately it did not resist much and got into a dark corner. I held the basket on my lap for the rest of the journey, much to the relief of the two children.

Without further adventures, we reached over The School. The principal greeted us with some suspicion. But when we explained the situation, he was only too willing to let us release the bird near the school pond. There was a procession of students behind us as we headed

for the pond. I had hoped to take a few shots of the bird with my camera. So I got into position as Sudhakar slowly opened the basket cover. There was a chorus of 'aahs' and 'oohs' as the bird walked out of the basket, its head held high as though it was aware of the attention it was drawing. I hoped the bird would hesitate for a little while as I fiddled with the controls of the camera. But the bittern had other ideas. Like a model on a ramp, it did its brisk walk and disappeared into the nearby thick bushes. I would need to be more alert with my next bittern if I ever catch one!

V. Santharam

## Answers to Quiz

1. Nobel Laureate John Hume of Northern Ireland; 2. Daniel Pearl; 3. Panatone, a Tata Group company; 4. Princess Margaret; 5. They should not be shackled or chained; 6. New York; 7. Queen Elizabeth II's ascending the throne; 8. Aftab Ansari; 9. *Lagaan*; 10. Bahrain.

\* \* \*

11. Krishnan Sasikiran; 12. Put-

ting up a day's judgements on the Net on the same day; 13. Scrap from the debris of the WTC in New York; 14. Srirangam and Kancheepuram respectively; 15. USS *Blue Ridge*; 16. A hereditary cancer detection and prevention programme; 17. The Federation Cup; 18. 12,618; 19. A communication micro-satellite; 20. *Kannathil Muthamittal*.

Indies paceman, playing for us; another fast bowler from the West Indies, Chester Watson, played for West Zone.

Those were great days when it was customary for both teams to get together in the evenings and have a glass of beer and exchange a few laughs about one another!!

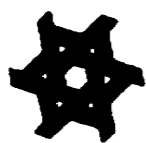
I remember Salim Durrani, a great cricketer, and one of the most colourful characters in cricket. Once when we went to Hubli to play a benefit match for Vijay Manjrekar, there was a great party on the first evening of the match. At the party,

there was a very beautiful young lady collecting autographs. Salim asked her which stand she was sitting at and promised that the next day he would lift the fifth ball he faced for a six into her stand. And he did too!

I played from 1959 to 1974 for Madras and was captain from 1964 to 1971, after which Venkat took over. I was the wicketkeeper and opening batsman and scored a century against England in 1964 playing for the South Zone at Hyderabad.

Those were memorable days, indeed!!

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