

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

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Now that we have laid the new road, can I ask the various departments to draw up their "digging" schedules?

Have spade, will dig

Psst!

Did you know that there is a beautiful avenue, with broad sidewalks and lovely old trees in '... Nagar'?

Make sure you don't tell anyone. Because if you do, the digging squad will descend on it like a dark cloud of retribution and begin its fell work.

You have to wonder.

What is it about the sight of a straight, well-laid road, with no pot-holes and no unexpected ups and downs, that brings out the worst in our maintenance people? They react with such prompt severity that, within hours, the road looks like it has been in a fight of truly gigantic proportions, with no hope of recovery.

Those Chennai-ites who walk, leap from crag to peak like graceful deer, while others check for physical injuries at the end of each sortie.

Do you sometimes get a feeling that departments within the powers-that-be complex never seem to speak to one another?

One bunch arrives, digs, lays pipes, disappears. Then another bunch appears weeks later, digs at the same spot, lays wires and cables, disappears. Weeks later, yet another team appears, rips it all up to put down something else, and vanishes. And get this: No one ever fills up the holes.

Wouldn't it be easier for all concerned if these guys sat down, friendly-like, and talked it over, deciding to do their digging and their installing at more or less the same time?

Shhh!

Word is on the street — a short stretch of road in '...puram' is smooth and clean.

Remember —

You did NOT hear it here first.

Ranjitha Ashok

Will TN sign MOU with INTACH?

Two Memoranda of Understanding, the seventh and the eighth, were recently signed by the Gujarat and Orissa governments and INTACH for heritage and environmental conservation. These were on lines similar to memoranda earlier signed with other States. INTACH's Vice-Chairman S.K. Misra recently visited Tamil Nadu and briefed the Chief Secretary on the main features of the MOU signed with Andhra Pradesh and gave him copies of other such strategic partnerships with State Governments. These are now being considered by the Tamil Nadu Government.

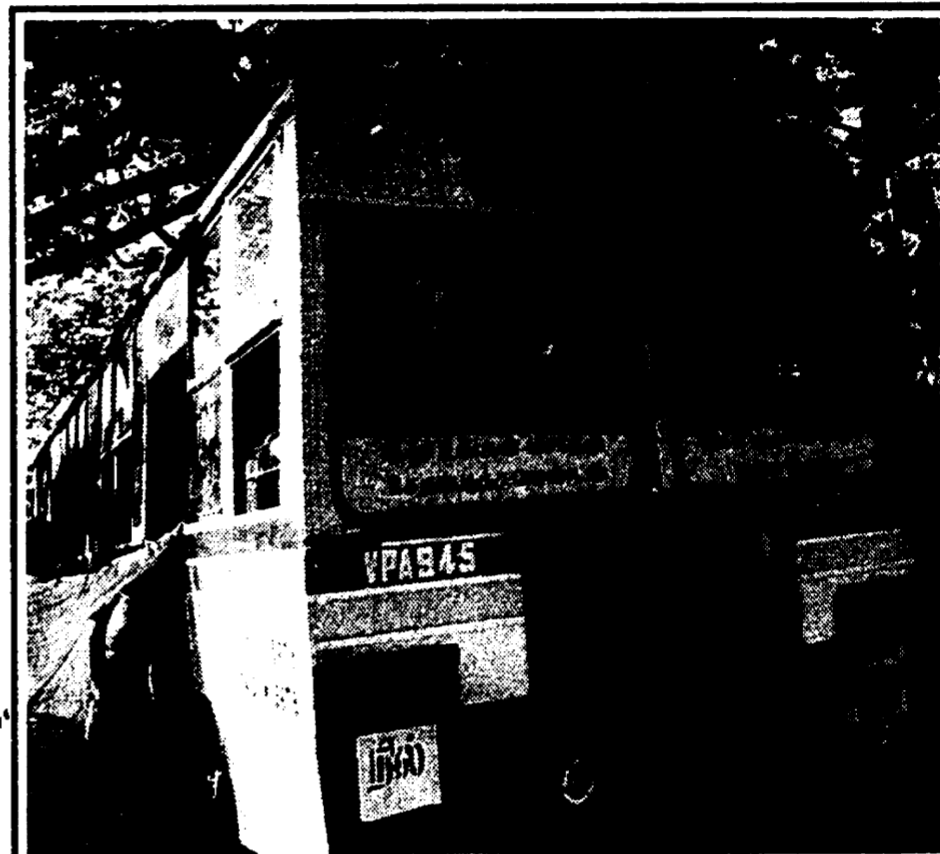
At the meeting with the Chief Secretary, Misra also pointed out that the existing Tamil Nadu Ancient Monuments Act was inadequate for incorporating provisions related to heritage preservation as it did not link up with the urban planning process. It was therefore necessary to incorporate heritage regulations under the master plan for Chennai, and pass a heritage act to cover the entire State.

Subsequent to the MOU, INTACH had a preliminary meeting with the Principal Secretary, Rural Development, and Commissioner, Tourism, Gujarat, to identify projects which could be taken up in the heritage tourism sector.

Vice-Chairman Misra assured the Gujarat Government that INTACH would extend all possible help in evolving project concepts and integrated heritage plans, and also undertake implementation on assignment basis. INTACH would offer its expertise in restoring and preserving pictures and wall-paintings through chemical treatment of art objects.

In Orissa, general discussions were held on activities to be taken up with the participation of the Tourism Department, such as setting up of an interpretation centre, a crafts museum, training programmes, design inputs for crafts people and the overall development of heritage villages by way of approach roads, water supply, toilet facilities, etc.

(Also see pages 7 & 8)



Let's preserve our property

A. Sankaran of 3/12, Kandasami Street, Chennai 600 028, writes: Chennai buses have started carrying the advice "This is your property — Do not damage it". Do I discern an attitude of treating the citizens as subjects in this platitude?

"This is our property — Let us preserve it" — would surely be better.

(Also see page 9)

MRTS slowly makes headway

(By A Special Correspondent)

Thirumailai (why not plain, simple Mylapore, we do not know) railway station is a busy one nowadays with office-goers happy. There is an increased frequency of service, and users are taking the trains to work.

The rush is from the South

Madras neighbourhood. A ride from Adyar to Mylapore by bus or on a two-wheeler, and a train journey to north Madras now take just less than 30 minutes, whereas a ride through the town from home in Adyar to office in Parry's Corner takes at least 40 minutes.

The increased services are between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. from Thirumailai and between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. from Beach. A train leaves Thirumailai station every ten minutes, though the frequencies drop on Sundays.

There has, however, been some overcrowding at the Park and Beach stations at peak hours because of 'rationalisation' of the car rakes to suit the Railways scheduling, but this will improve, it is promised. A greater need is linking bus services. MTC needs to operate buses

from Thirumailai to residential belts in Adyar-Velachery-Madipakkam at the peak hours.

This will enable office-goers from these areas to opt for a bus-train transport mode. And if a bus-train season ticket is offered for the daily commuter, traffic on this sector will further improve and take the load off the city's roads in the south-north corridor.

Later this year, the MRTS will operate beyond Thiruvanniyur in the South, with stops at Indira Nagar II Avenue, Kasturba Nagar, Kotturpuram and Velachery. At present, trains run from Beach to Thirumailai and back from 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., with six trains an hour on weekdays between 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. and from 5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m., with two or three trains per hour during the rest of the day.

Work begins on ECR widening closer to Chennai

(By A Special Correspondent)

Work has commenced alongside VGP Golden Beach in Neelankarai and Kottivakam to widen the East Coast Road from Thiruvanniyur signal to the Toll Plaza.

The project, commissioned by the Highways Department, under the Central Road Fund, is expected to cost Rs. 22 crore and is scheduled to be completed in 18 months' time, when it will be a four-lane carriageway, with a central median with traffic signs and reflectors on either side. It will have avenue plantations; drains and pavements will also be provided in heavily built areas.

While the ECR from the Toll Plaza to Pondy is a modern highway, the stretch from Neelankarai to Thiruvanniyur is still a nightmare, with much of it encroached on. Removing the encroachments is one of the biggest hurdles to completing the project.

First steps to moving out of Fort St. George?

So at long last another Government has realised Fort St. George is too congested and has begun to address its mind to tackling the overcrowding. *The Man From Madras Musings* is glad to hear that the Government is considering building an Administrative City on a 2000-acre site on the way to Mahabalipuram. Whether the Legislative Assembly is also to be built there, MMM is not quite sure, but what all reports agree on is that the new 'city' will be home to the Secretariat and to a large number of the people working in it.

A new Secretariat elsewhere in the City has been thought of on a couple of earlier occasions, but all thinking came to nought, mainly because it was felt that a complex in the city would not solve the already existing problems of the metropolis. To that extent, the decision to move into the suburbs is a better one. But only for now. As it is, the road to Mahabalipuram is becoming quite heavily built up, with the population moving into these suburbs, which seem to be developing mainly on either side of the highway. This ribbon growth is only going to continue — to judge by the land being offered further down what promises to be an excellent 4-lane highway. But when that further development takes place and the Secretariat complex also comes up, you might well find even the 4-lane highway is insufficient to handle the traffic. And with the development of contiguous residential suburb after suburb, with the accompanying service providers also settling alongside, the already weak infrastructure along this stretch is bound to break.

It should also be considered that making the East Coast Road, being developed as one of the State's major tourist circuits, a congested residential area and home to the State's Government Departments could prove disastrous to tourism. International tourists are unlikely to welcome a crowded highway, no matter what the tourist attractions likely to be found on it; tourists of the international kind always want easy accessibility.

All of which is why MMM, even if he thinks the present solution is a better one than others before it, does not feel moving the Secretariat into the suburbs is going to offer any long-term solutions.

Thinking in the long-term, MMM still believes that what several officials, planners and journalists — including the Editor of this journal — have expressed several times in the last 20 years is the only solution to the overcrowding in Madras. And that is to move the capital and to leave Madras to commerce and restricted industrial use.

It was during Chief Minister MGR's stewardship that it was almost decided to move the capital to a 'capital district' developed on the banks of the Kaveri

between Trichy and Thanjavur. Ancient history as much as anything else put paid to that plan, but MMM feels the best answer to Chennai's problems would be to revive that proposal but to shift the proposed location to somewhere between Tiruchirappalli and Madurai.

A new capital district, with Legislature and Secretariat, infrastructural facilities, accommodation for all who work in its buildings and the support and the lifestyle of the staff they'll need, will half empty Chennai and make it a more manageable city. With it also being focussed on commerce and industry, the private sector is bound to take a greater interest in its public services. With the new capital city likely to have a population more manageable, Government will have an easier task keeping it the way a capital city should be.

More importantly, moving the capital to the centre of the state will indicate a greater concern for the people. As things are, Chennai, the centre from which the radial rays spread equidistantly through the Madras Presidency, finds itself at one end of the State that emerged when the Presidency was truncated. This lopsided positioning of Madras has meant long travel for anyone with business in Fort St. George and long, unwelcome travel for those from Fort St. George with work in several important parts of the State as well as for legislators from the far-flung districts. An administrative capital in the centre of the State will make life a lot easier for the citizens as well as legislators and officials.

Finally, MMM holds that the cost of building a Secretariat and the infrastructure necessary for it and its occupants is not going to increase substantially if an

Assembly and legislators' complex are added to it. So it becomes a case of 'in for a penny, in for a pound'... and that pound would not be too difficult to access from institutions like the World Bank (given Tamil Nadu's record with it), a Capital City tax and loans from infrastructure institutions. It would also mean not spending much on commercial Madras for many years, for what exists would be more than sufficient to handle a population reduced by the Government moving out, provided subsequent growth of the city is

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

controlled by insisting that all new industrial growth must be in less populated parts of the State.

MMM urges a government that has already thought of partly relieving the congestion in Fort St. George to go all the way and relieve the overcrowding in Madras by moving the capital out. Is there anyone listening?

Ruining the Marina

The other day, it was announced in the Assembly that:

— a token amount of Rs. 1 crore was being allotted to start work on "a massive project to preserve the beauty of the Marina"; and

— it was proposed to establish a Maritime Museum "near the lighthouse" at a cost of Rs. 16 crore.

All that is needed to make the Marina as beautiful a place as it was in the past is, in *The Man From Madras Musings'* view, to ensure that its sands and the water off it are kept as CLEAN as

they were in the past. That needs ENFORCEMENT of LAWS THAT EXIST — and NOT spending money on construction activity that might be part of "a massive project" of beautification.

As disastrous as such grandiose ideas of BUILT beauty, as opposed to NATURAL beauty, are plans for a maritime museum to be built near the lighthouse, which plans also call for the beaching of, MMM hears, a submarine to be gifted by the Navy. MMM is all for a maritime museum — which, MMM hopes, will shed factual light on the maritime traditions of the Tamils and not artistic impressions — but the Marina Beach, particularly the area near the lighthouse, is not the place for new buildings that would only mar the beauty of one of the most beautiful stretches of beach in the WORLD if only it was kept CLEAN.

Cleaning up of the Marina was a project undertaken by some NGOs a couple of times in the past couple of years, but the efforts could not be sustained. Now a Public Interest Litigation has been filed seeking the cleaning up of the Marina and ensuring it lives up to its status as a prime example of the city's Natural Heritage. MMM considers the issues raised in this petition so important, he foregoes some of his space to publish a comprehensive gist of the plea which, MMM hopes, all those concerned with "massive plans" for the Marina and Maritime Museums will read.

Last but not least, MMM wishes to draw the attention of the powers-that-be that in October 2003, over 1500 persons from the Indian and international travel trade will descend on

Chennai for the International Skat Congress. That will be a great opportunity to 'sell' them Chennai and Tamil Nadu as a better destination than the traditional northern circuits. But that 'sale' will be effective only if the city looks spic and span and moves smoothly. Many things must be ensured between now and then for that impression to be given — and perhaps one of the most important of them must be the cleaning up of the Marina.

Listening to others

The Government is to be congratulated on its bill to ban plastics. But *The Man From Madras Musings* only wishes that the wording of what was stated had been more specific. As stated, MMM had visions of policemen eyeing him in his bath with a view to nabbing him for using a plastic bucket. In this context, it is a happy augury that the Government has agreed to appoint a select committee to go into the nitty gritty of the proposed legislation and MMM hopes that it will hear sufficient representations to come up with a meaningful schedule to be attached to the legislation.

Perhaps, with so much spending proposed on the Marina and so many interested in this public space, it might be prudent on Government's part to also appoint a committee including those referred to below, who recently stated they would be willing to work on getting corporate sector participation to ensure sustainability of a 'Clean Marina'. That might result in a more meaningful conclusion that might yet save the Marina.

— MMM



Action on a clean Marina sought

Appalled by the state of the Marina beach (see picture above, taken a couple of weeks ago), a new NGO, the Citizen Rights Action Group (CRAG), filed a writ petition in the High Court recently requesting it to order the State's agencies concerned to maintain the BEACH in a condition fit for public use. The Green Bench's decision is awaited.

Meanwhile, here are the highlights of the affidavit submitted by the petitioner, Dilip R. Mehta,

the founder and the managing trustee of CRAG.

- What the Taj is to India, Marina Beach is to Chennai. But its litter-filled sand, faeces floating on the water and its unhealthy atmosphere reduce the Marina into an embarrassment to the residents and the authorities of Chennai.
- The Marina at dawn presents an appalling scene of fishermen lined up to answer the call of nature. Needless to say the faeces-infested water will

deter any sensible person from putting his leg into the waters of the Marina.

- Ships along the coast wash their tanks and allow the oil to be let out into the sea near the Marina, which affects the marine life and also the coast. Recently there was a report of sea turtles near the Marina being affected by such oil spill.
- The other serious problem faced in the Marina is that a lot of non-bio-degradable material, such as plastic,

cellophane, glass, etc. are thrown on the sands and in the waters by irresponsible beach-users, as much due to a lack of awareness about environmental pollution caused by such acts as a lack of enforcement on the part of the authorities and the non-availability of enough litter boxes.

- "The Petitioner submits that while the Respondents have a

(Continued on page 9)

The best colleges in the country

In the annual *India Today* survey of Colleges in India — around 450 made it to the final list — Chennai and Tamil Nadu colleges topped three of the five categories and they and several others figured in the top ten in each category. Presidency was No. 1 in Arts, Loyola in Science and CMC Vellore in Medicine.

In the top ten lists, Madras Christian finished third in Arts and Loyola 7th, in Science, Presidency was ranked 5th, MCC 6th and Stella Maris 9th. In Commerce, Loyola was 4th, MCC 7th and Presidency 9th. In Engineering, IIT Madras was 5th and College of Engineering, Guindy, 9th. In Medicine, JIPMER, Pondicherry, was 3rd and Madras Medical was 8th. In Law, the Faculty of Law, University of Madras, was 9th.

Assessed citywise, in Chennai, Stella Maris and Queen Mary's were 4th and 5th in Arts and Commerce while in Science, Queen Mary's was 5th. While congratulating the three toppers, *Madras Musings* is pleased to report how *India Today* correspondents looked at them.

Presidency

Established by Professor Eyre Burton Powell in 1840, Chennai's Presidency, the second-oldest college in the country, remains a frontrunner in education.

Traditionally considered a factory of the best scientific minds — Sir C.V. Raman leads the pack — the "Mother of Madras University" has surged

ahead in Arts. It is perhaps the only college that offers the maximum number of arts and science degrees in two languages. The economics, history and political science departments conduct undergraduate courses in both English and Tamil, as does the science faculty. "There are many who are not proficient in English but have a sharp mind to pursue either discipline," says Principal C. Natarajan.

Yet another reason why this autonomous institution excels is its effort to provide education to the underprivileged. Besides free tuitions, 40 students are given free noon meals. The college has also taken 40 visually impaired students under its wings.

Political science remains the most coveted subject. Says Pro-

supplier for civil services and politics. Its revised syllabus, to be introduced in 2001-2, aims to acquaint students with the perks of choosing the private sector as a career option. BA (history) will include two papers on tourism and archaeology, while public administration will include environment administration and human resource management.

Research has also always flourished in the Presidency. In 2001-2, doctorates were awarded to 34 scholars, including 20 in Arts. But it's not the numbers that count. It's the value it commands.

Loyola

"When you are in pursuit of excellence, all roads lead to Loyola," says a young Loyola product.

• This is how Chennai colleges look in the latest *India Today*-Gallup survey of the colleges of India.

fessor V.N. Viswanathan: "Our students pursue politics as a profession. A few of them are panchayat members too." No wonder that the college's list of political heavyweights includes former Union Minister V.K. Krishna Menon, former President S. Radhakrishnan and Chennai Mayor M.K. Stalin. Public administration is another sought-after post-graduate subject.

But 162-year-old Presidency is shedding its image as a prime

Much of this success is attributed to the college administration's futuristic approach.

While drawing from its 76-year-old tradition, Loyola has made a conscious effort to blend academic excellence and history. Its restructured syllabus, in effect from 2001-2, is something many educational institutions are trying to emulate. Besides streamlining the academic schedule, the syllabus includes topics such as world religion, heritage, personality develop-

The college also organises seminars on individual student projects and has made computer education compulsory for the students. Social work is also part of the Loyola campus life. With 525-odd students in the Science stream, 557 in Arts and 172 in Commerce, the college seeks to lay claim on quality and quantity without compromising either.

The students' service centre at the college has managed to woo business houses to the campus to recruit students even when the economy has looked gloomy. Former RBI Governor and Andhra Pradesh Governor C. Rangarajan leads the pack of Loyola's alumni. If such academics gives the impression of a classroom-oriented campus, Loyolites like Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand, and tennis stars like Vijay Amritraj and Anand Amritraj instantly allay such fears.



Loyola College, first in Science, fourth in Commerce and seventh in Arts — building on a 76-year-old tradition.

ment, social analysis, computer literacy, arts for science, science for arts and skill-based training in the last semester.

"Nobody disagrees with Loyola's hallmark assets like excellent faculty, enviable infrastructure and focussed learning," says Principal Father V. Joseph Xavier matter-of-factly. "And Loyola is proud to be a trendsetter in developing the student beyond the knowledge of textbooks."

Science education here has taken on an all-new dimension with the formation of the Loyola Institute of Frontier Energy (LIFE), an inter-disciplinary group working on projects involving the basic sciences departments. With more than 80 published works since its inception in 1995, LIFE enables even undergraduate students to participate in research-oriented projects. The Chemistry Department has to its credit a patent on a low-cost method of coating lead with chromium for application in the country's major power reactors. The projects are funded by the Department of Science & Technology and the Department of Atomic Energy.

CMC, Vellore

Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore's social commitment combined with a research-oriented academics has given it a fine edge.

Founded in 1918 as a medical school by Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder, daughter of a missionary, CMC has now grown to become a credible centre for medical care.

As an institution run by a council of churches, 45 of the 60 meritorious students admitted each year are selected from among the members of different churches. "The entrance test is framed to ensure we get the cream of students," says principal Dr. Ravi Jacob Korula.

CMC reserves four seats for students from the economically disadvantaged sections. The cost of education too is comparatively low. While the tuition fee is Rs. 3,000 a year, the total expense adds up to Rs. 18,000. Students are not taxed as CMC is flush with funds coming from more than 50 institutions. The rich pool of the college comprises 550 doctors, 122 professors, 56 associate professors and 156 lecturers.

And the students? They are a class apart. Says a final year MBBS student: "You can't pass out of CMC without becoming a caring doctor." His long-term plans are to serve the poor in one of the peripheral hospitals in his native state.



Presidency College, first in Arts, fifth in Science and ninth in Commerce in the country... as seen nearly 100 years ago. (Courtesy: Vintage Vignettes)

OUR READERS WRITE



Federate, NGOs

In Short 'N' Snappy (MM, April 16th), you have rightly underlined the need for several organisations engaged in civic, social and economic causes to come together under a federal setup. All these organisations can get affiliated to a Federation of Associations and work in a coordinated and concerted fashion. Such a federation can be named People's Initiative (PI or π) or something similar. We can thereby pool together the talents and resources of many specialists and work in a focussed manner. Individual associations will not lose their identities or freedom. But in causes where we need to carry more people, the federation can be the focal point.

Why not persuade organisations like Vigil, Catalyst, Fifth Column and CAG, for instance, to take the initiative and bring themselves and others under one roof? That will pave the way for more to join.

S. Radhakrishnan
16, Krishnapuri
Raja Annamalaiapuram
Chennai 600 028.

'Killing' protection

We keep planting saplings with a vengeance. While this is

laudable, how many of them survive is a different matter altogether. But it is nice to know that at least some have not only survived but grown to become full-blown trees. How do we know this? By the presence of the tree guards!

A few years ago, I wrote a letter pointing out the existence of these guards even where the trees had outgrown them. As an example, I had mentioned a tree on Maharani Chinnamba Road, Alwarpet. How nice to know that after the appearance of my letter the guard was removed.

Alas! That was the only tree guard removed! There are many, many instances (ironically in the same area) where the girth of the tree has exceeded the circumference of the guard and where the latter literally prevents the growth of the former. Two examples are Venus Colony, Alwarpet, and Burkit Road, T. Nagar.

It behoves the Corporation to remove the tree guards when they are no longer necessary. Exnora, tree wardens, tree lovers may also take an interest in the matter.

B. Gautham
137 (Old 122)
Wallajah Road
Chennai 600 002.

Misuse of information

Your a-Musing columnist sounds unhappy about the mere distortion of names (MM, April 16th), but maybe she has only herself to blame if, among other possibilities, she happens to be a credit card user. Those who submit the application form without holding a magnifying glass over the fine print in the declaration would have in effect signed away all rights to the use (and misuse) of not just their names, but also all other personal and financial information.

Apart from a lot of questions regarding personal details which are irrelevant to the specific issue, the forms contain some dense text in largely unintelligible legalese, including a clause on the following lines: "...I authorise XYZ bank to disclose, from time to time, any information... to any other card issuer, credit bureau, financial institution, any parent/affiliate and associate... and to third parties engaged by XYZ... for purposes such as marketing... other administrative services...".

Of course, the card sales people may tell you very sweetly that all information will be treated confidential, but if you call up the manager he will ultimately admit that not one word of the declaration can be altered, for instance, by adding a sentence that any disclosure will only be made with the knowledge and prior consent of the customer. Such lack of privacy is a good excuse for my not opting for the 'convenience' of a credit card so far, though the fact may be that I am an unemployed pauper and don't want 'them' to know it. Anyway, I don't want my name on junk mailing lists.

Selling of lists of addresses and personal details is apparently big business these days and there are specialised agencies to process such information for 'targeted marketing'. Many seem to think it is a good thing, but the danger is that in today's computer world data can be transmitted and misused without leaving traces. Under cover of the foregoing declaration an employee in a 'third party' organisation may be able to find out the bank balance, spending pattern or recent transactions of some big customers and pass it on to those who can benefit thereby. Those who are vulnerable may wish to ponder over this not-so-a-Musing matter.

Thomas Tharu
'Kasyap'
A-7, Nehru Nagar Fourth Street
Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

Cheapening 'Dandi'

The Dandi ad on some TV channels for a new brand of salt is not only against the tea trade (MM, April 16th), but is also in poor taste. It is strange that no voluntary or other organisation has taken up cudgels against the ad that has been appearing for months.

Even in the United Kingdom, for example, no part of the Lord's Prayer is allowed to be used in advertising for any product or service. Though there is nothing spiritual or religious about Dandi, the name evokes, next word to God, great memories of Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha at the Dandi Beach in Gujarat, a major landmark in our freedom struggle.

It is a pity that while Gujarat is already in the news for very grave happenings, another piece of Gujarat's (in fact of India's) history is being exploited/sullied for purely commercial purpose of selling a brand of salt.

It will be fitting for some relevant NGO to agitate for the removal of the Dandi salt ad and for the Trade Marks authority to consider suitable action to prevent the cheapening of names and phrases evocative of sacred events / memories.

C.R. Ramaswamy
No. 20, 1st Cross Street
R.K. Nagar
Chennai 600 028.

Remembering Mali ...

Mali's caricature of the famous Mangudi Bhagavathar (MM, February 16th) refreshed my memory. My maternal grandfather coaxed him to enter the *Harikatha* field. He was an FA with a firm footing in Sanskrit. My grandfather accompanied him in the initial stages playing as a *pinpaattu*.

His waist size was so much that he could not reach the food in the plantain leaf before him. He had food served on his right side to make things easy for him. In Trichy, he used a chair for being taken to the 1000-pillared *mantapam*. But once he started his *Harikatha* he would forget about his weight and size and danced and jumped!

He had six daughters (if I remember correct) and no sons and on his demise each one got scores of gold rings, medals and broad zari-bordered *dhotis*.

He was intolerant of people who became inattentive and talkative during his discourses and would berate them even abusively.

* * *

... & talking of food

Reader Janaki Krishnan has not revealed what were the ingredients that went to make *Antee Baji* (MM, March 1st)!

Blackgram flour *Pachadi* is the *Daunger Pachadi* she talks about in the concluding para. *Daunger Pachadi* is served in the marriages for dinner with *vathakkuzhambu* as the two go hand in glove!

K.S. Kandhaswamy
6/6, Rajagopalan Street
Valmiki Nagar, Chennai 600 041.

Question of etymology

Reader Janaki Krishnan's suggestion that 'tiffin' is the combination of tea + bun (MM, March 1st) is false etymology. It is an Anglo-Indian word from tiff — tiffing meaning 'drinking' (accompanied by light refreshments). The consonant 'g' lost its accent gradually.

Pachdi is a Hindi word. It means 'substance aiding digestion'.

Daunger is probably from Sanskrit *dadhi* + *smgavera* meaning (compound of) curd and ginger!

R. Soundararajan
1/46, Sivasakti Nagar
Opp. Men's Polytechnic
Nagapattinam 611 003.

History in food

Daunger Pachadi (MM, March 1st) apparently comes from the word *urad* or *udad* (blackgram in Marathi and Hindi). There are other words in Tamil derived from Marathi

Shall we start with rats, flies and mosquitoes?

Madras Musings of March 1st highlighted the need to build infrastructure to promote better living. In addition, Housing, Garbage Collection and Disposal, Cattle Sheds, Veterinary Services, the Marina, Parks, Playgrounds etc., all need attention. They all also require a lot of money. Hence, I highlight here a few civic services which can vastly improve the quality of life in Chennai but which do not need much finance.

Civic services should improve continuously. Instead, they continue to deteriorate and there seems to be no hope of reversing the trend. This is true in almost all aspects of civic services. But can't we change that trend at least in respect of rats, flies and mosquitoes?

If you walk along the pavement on the Marina, you will notice hundreds of large, well-fed rats fearlessly moving about on the adjoining lawns even during the day. The City Health Department may well have identified similar areas where large number of rats thrive. Periodical destruction of rats in these areas, say once in two months, will bring the rat population down. House owners, wherever possible, could prevent, or at least reduce, rat

breeding in their houses merely by preventing access of water and food, especially waste food and cereals, to rats.

Similarly, if you look at city's dust bins, you will see swarms of flies flying around them as well as resting on them. Killing the flies will reduce the fly population considerably. The Health Department should also identify the obvious breeding grounds of flies and try to eliminate them.

As flies are responsible for transmitting intestinal communicable diseases, food outlets must have their food covered by fly-proof nets. I have personally tried to influence the owners of these food outlets and find they are not averse to covering food with nets. At least one of them is meticulously following the procedure. The Health Education Department should become active in this field.

Mosquitoes cause agony to the entire population of Chennai. The diseases they transmit — Dengue, Filariasis and Malaria — cause misery to the affected. In April/May 2001, the Health Department was informed of the possibility of an outbreak of Dengue. The story of neglect continues. It is easy to blame the river

courses, and the discharge of toilet wastes from slum houses on the banks of the Buckingham Canal. A grandiose scheme to clean the river courses is to be shortly implemented and the citizens are expected to get relief. But will they get relief? Mosquitoes breeding in the water courses probably bite the citizens within half a kilometre of the breeding places. What about the other areas?

There should be a project to address all aspects of mosquito breeding and it should be committedly implemented. Some of the aspects of mosquito control are:

- Elimination of water storage wherever feasible.
- Piped water supplies at adequate pressure so that the number of underground sumps is reduced, if they cannot be eliminated.
- Examination of wells and overhead tanks for mosquito breeding and steps taken to prevent breeding/ to destroy adult mosquitoes.
- Water stored for domestic use/fire service should be periodically emptied.
- Wastewater flowing or stag-

nating in open channels should be connected to the sewerage system.

— The sewerage system should be examined for mosquito breeding.

— House drains should be examined for stagnant water and irregularly used toilets for mosquito breeding, and

— Mosquito breeding should be controlled in watercourses without waiting for grandiose schemes.

The Health Education Department should be actively involved in this.

The effect of control of rats, flies and mosquitoes cannot be quantified in the usual visible manner, by counting the number of insects. The benefits to the people may be invisible. However, the morbidity and mortality rates can be denied only by paying attention to vectors of infection like rats, flies and mosquitoes. Further, the quality of life of nearly 40 lakh people in Chennai will improve.

M. Susikaran
14/8, First Street
Nandanam Extension
Chennai 600 035.

The City beneath the sea

The article on 'Lost Mahabalipuram?' (MM, April 16th) was really interesting, but not very surprising. Considering the fact that several continents and cities have submerged in the sea over countless years, the findings at Mahabalipuram are not too great a surprise.

Let me quote some interesting facts about undersea exploration by the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa.

In October 1961 there was a report about the finding of a *lingam* off Trincomallee Port believed to have been worshipped by Ravana, which had prompted me to write to the Press about the finding of a *lingam* off the shores of Poompuhar at the beginning of the 20th Century. This *lingam* was believed to have been in one of the seven temples (named *Saptha Chayavanams*) which submerged in the sea and called 'Uttara Someswarar'. At present there is only one Chayavanam near Poompuhar. At the time I had hoped that undersea explorations would be undertaken, as several interesting finds would come to light about the submerged port city of *Silappadikaram*-fame Kaveripoompattinam.

In October 1983, exactly 22 years after I had written that letter, it was reported that "the reconnaissance of a 20 sq. mile area to locate the ancient Chola port capital of Kaveripoompattinam conducted by the National Institute of Oceanography (Goa) off the Poompuhar coast two years ago, has revealed very interesting results which warrant a further detailed study of the area".

The *Hindu* observed in its editorial on 18.10.1983, under the caption 'Verifying the legends', "The submergence of whole continents and of ports of great renown in ancient times has provoked marine archaeological exercises to test unproven but fascinating popular speculation about the habitats, culture and traditions of a hoary past... The Tamil University is keen on intensifying research on Poompuhar (on the east coast) of *Silappadikaram* fame, while the site of the epic port town of Dwarka in Gujarat has begun to supply some answers to historical teasers bordering on the satirical about this great city of Krishna and the incidents mentioned about him and the city in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata Purana*.

"Marine archaeological explorations here have brought to light jars, bowls, the unique stone

mould of a coppersmith and dishes which could be assigned, on the evidence from other on-shore sites, to 1500 B.C. Dwarka was destroyed by the sea thrice and some relics pertaining to each of these incidents have been recovered by the experts of the National Institute of Oceanography. On the east coast, NIO research has thrown up some proof of structures in the sea bed about five kilometres from the shore on the estuary of the Cauvery. Fishermen have for long claimed that there are ruins resembling a temple extending in width to about 100 metres. Research with the help of sophisticated equipment has corroborated this claim."

So there is absolutely no need to be sceptical about the finds at Mahabalipuram' and further undersea exploration is bound to throw more interesting light about our ancient civilisation.

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

* * *

I read with interest the feature on the submerged cities off Mahabalipuram and in the Gulf

of Khambhat (Cambay) in Gujarat (MM, April 16th).

It made me recall Dr. S.R. Rao, formerly of the Department of Archaeology, videographing the remnants of Krishna's city of Dwarka and his relentless follow-up to show it to the outside world. When I was Adviser, Tourism Development, Government of Gujarat, I brought to Dwarka the chief of an Australian underwater construction firm who had constructed the famous Sentosa in Singapore. Dr. Rao joined in the discussions. The Australian firm felt that though it would be difficult to expose the undersea structures to tourists because of the rough and muddy sea, they would be able to project it on a screen nearby and create the same effect. (In places like Seychelles and Mauritius, where the sea is crystal clear, you can walk under the sea in special suits and view the structures.)

Projects of this kind are costly, but they should be vigorously pursued by state governments and help sought from the UNESCO and the World Tourism Organisation.

Dr. G. Sundaram I.A.S. (Retd.)
'Burma House'
33/18, 9th Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road
Chennai 600 004.

to go to the 'last'. The 'last' turned out to be a wall thoughtfully built for the clientele to douse with their urine and smelling like a gas chamber. It was better to run out and urinate into an open drain next to the hotel watched by a couple of black pigs wallowing in the filth there. Such are our public (in)conveniences!

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

Relief at bus-stands

Reader Dr. K. Shanmugavelayutham's article (MM, March 1st) truly reflects the present state of affairs in Chennai, especially at bus-stands. For instance, at the Broadway and mofussil bus-stands from where hundreds of buses leave the city or arrive in it daily, there are no decent toilets available for commuters. People who have travelled for some hours usually need a toilet as soon as they reach the bus-stand and invariably use the open space for the purpose, leaving a big patch of wet, stinking space.

It is the duty of the Corporation of Chennai to provide a sufficient number of decent toilets with water facilities free of cost. Those Pay and Use Toilets, where someone collects a nominal fee, are also equally dirty in spite of the payments made at the entrance.

Adequate toilets at every bus-stand are an urgent necessity to keep the city clean.

C. Lakshmi Narain
Rita Kuil, Plot No. 45 C
Lakshmi Narain Road
Thulasi Nagar, Senneerkuppam
Poonamallee, Chennai 600 056.

Deplorable condition

I recently went to Thiruverkkadu to receive *darshan* from Sri Karumari Amman. There is no public convenience near the temple. As a result, you have to go to the one near the bus stand. Though this is a 'pay and use' facility, its condition is deplorable.

It strikes me that even if public toilets are established, as Reader Shanmugavelayutham suggests (MM, March 1st), Do's and Dont's must be made clear. The user must flush the toilet after use and, thus, help the attendant keep it clean. Sufficient water and cleaning powder should be made available to keep the toilets clean, as only then will users have the inclination to use them.

V.S. Jayaraman
B-2, Anand Flats
31, Motilal Street
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017.

Life-saving doors

We regularly read the horrible news of death of some young persons — no, not due to action on the battlefield — but under the wheels of our LOCAL BUS SERVICES! A few days ago we read of the tragic death of an unfortunate medical student. This is not an isolated incident. What is preventing the authorities from preventing this happening? By insisting that, for instance, buses be fitted with doors that are closed before the bus leaves for the next stop? We can very easily do this simple thing. It will in no way result in loss of revenue to the transport Corporation.

We also lost man-hours and the precious time of the doctors and

other staff at hospitals where the victims are taken. Doors will more than make up for the cost of caring for these unfortunates. Not that lives can thus be equated, but there are people in government departments who calculate such costs and who can thus offset the cost of fitting such life-saving fixtures which are standard in any civilised society.

S.J. Prabhakar
11, Manohar Avenue
Off Casa Major Road
Chennai 600 008.

Looked after

Patronage for cricketer by the boss of Burmah Shell (MM, March 1st) reminds me of my own connections with Burmah Shell as a Table Tennis player. Despite being an outsider, Burmah Shell management in Delhi was so friendly to me. Khushalpal Singh, Chief of North, who eventually retired as Chief of IOC North, was one of the finest managers I have come across — a man with rare understanding of the people.

Satish Chandra
166, Vasant Enclave
New Delhi 110 057.

Exciting matches

The piece by V. Ramnarayan about 'The Hindu Trophy' (MM, March 16th) brought back pleasant memories. Those '30 overs a side' matches provided enough excitement to players and spectators alike.

ODIs were unheard of in those days. The 2-day and 3-day matches more or less ended in draws. So the 30-over version was a big success. I

remember the finals at Marina in the early 80s where the crowd strength matched those at Ranji and Duleep Trophy matches.

None of the present day tactics of pressurising the umpires, was on display then. The matches were fun and brought out the best in technique. One cricketer the writer forgot was Michael Dalvi. His square cuts were a treat to watch, played with absolute ease. The laziness with which he executed the shots made spectators feel that batting was a pleasure. It is unfortunate that he did not go places.

Could we hope for the revival of 'The Hindu' Trophy?

K.N. Krishna Moorthy
D 104/A, Sowbhagya Colony
Chennai 600 078.

Improving TN cricket

To improve the standard of the game in Tamil Nadu (MM, April 16th), more turf wickets must be laid. The water problem should not come in the way of preparing lively wickets even for league matches. Talented players must be given additional incentives. Caste, creed and religion should not come in the way of team selection.

The Press should play a key role in giving good coverage of prominent players in the local league. This is done in Mumbai. Left-hand batsmen and bowlers must be given maximum encouragement. The TNCA must also appoint experienced coaches to train the players.

C.K. Subramaniam
A 101, Syndicate Bank Quarters
Plot 28, 29,
Sector 17, I Floor
Vashi 400 703.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period April 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Why was South Africa's Mark Shuttleworth in the news?
2. Why is the 'NEC Earth Simulator' in the news?
3. Name the xenophobic and extreme right-wing National Front leader who contested Jacques Chirac for the French Presidency.
4. Something to jog your memory. Who received the baton of the Marshal of the Indian Air Force in New Delhi on April 23rd?
5. Name the Norwegian explorer, leader of the famous Kon-Tiki expedition, who passed away recently.
6. According to NASA's data, based on Hubble Telescope's findings, what is the age of the Universe?
7. How is the Booker Prize going to be renamed?
8. Business quiz. Who is the new president of Confederation of Indian Industry?
9. Name the creator of Barbie, the world's most popular doll, who died recently.
10. Where is a 7-year, Rs.110-crore project for India's first national marine park to be initiated?
11. Where in the city is a maritime museum being planned at a cost of Rs. 16 crore?
12. Name the eminent historian, a biographer of Nehru and the son of a former President, who passed away recently.
13. Name the Chennaiite who won his maiden National grasscourt tennis crown recently.
14. What must car drivers and front-seat passengers mandatorily do in pursuance of a State Government directive?
15. Name the Chennai-based sailor whose recent good showing in an Asian meet earned him a spot in the World Championships.
16. Which city police district will have the distinction of getting the State's first 'mobile police station'?
17. Name the DMK MLA who was suspended from the recent session of the Assembly for 'threatening' the Speaker.
18. According to many an account, where did the then CM, MGR, favour shifting of the State's administrative capital in the 1970s?
19. Film trivia. Who is composer of the hit-song 'O Podu' from Gemini?
20. How many new wildlife and bird sanctuaries is the Government planning to create in the State?

(Answers on page 8)

Of sparrows and pigeons



Rock pigeons are making themselves at home in the city. (Pictures by author.)

The worldover, the common house sparrow population is on the decline and at an alarming rate at that. Max Nicholson, a bird expert, conducted a survey in Kensington Gardens, UK, in November 1925. Of 3,900 birds he recorded, 2,603 were house sparrows. He repeated the study in 1975 in the same garden and found that there were only 500 sparrows. In 1995, the population declined to 81 and just 8 in 2000. This shocked the bird-lovers and ornithologists globally.

Even in India the sparrow population has been on the dip, particularly in metropolitan cities like Chennai. The possible reasons pronounced by Western scientists may be applicable to the Indian scene also. The high level of pollution in our metros and the use of pesticides have removed the small, soft-bodied insects that the sparrows depend on to feed their chicks during the first few days. It is also believed that sparrows

might have migrated to places where they find grain. Moreover, most experts believe that the change in people's lifestyle has an impact on the sparrows. We have converted our conventional thatched and tiled houses to modern highrises. Apartments, which are now ubiquitous, do not provide the nooks and corners like our traditional houses. The sparrows were left with no place to nest.

But what has been hostile to sparrows, has been the good fortune of another species, the Rock Pigeon. Nowadays rock pigeons have become very common and you don't need to be a

keen bird-watcher to identify the species. The rock pigeon, with its dark bluish-gray head, neck, and chest with glossy greenish, and reddish-purple iridescence along its neck and wing feathers and two dark bands that run across its wings, is very easy to identify. Both the sparrows and pigeons eat grain and small invertebrates. They are also very comfortable with the food humans eat.

Like sparrows, the rock pigeons prefer cities. In the wild, the pigeons nest in the caves in crags and cliffs and on rocks close to open shrub or agricultural vegetation. The city's con-



crete jungle probably provides a simulated natural cliff environment for them, in the form of building projections, rafters, girders, beams and windowsills. In Chennai, pigeons used to be predominantly seen only near temples and mosques in the past but, of late, their population has increased sizeably. They are already in good numbers in other metros.

Pigeons by nature prefer to live away from humans, unlike sparrows, which prefer to live close to humans. While sparrows do not mind nesting even inside houses, pigeons prefer the outer side of buildings. They may be seen promading on the projections of the buildings, bobbing their heads forward and backward and gliding from one building to another. If you take the trouble to climb up a pipeline or walk on the sunshade, you might find a pigeon's nest, a fragile structure made of twigs.

Thus, the change in lifestyle in Chennai has its own impact on its avian fauna. But nature has provided creatures with a certain capability that helps them to overcome the adverse conditions and survive. For instance, there is, of late, a perceivable increase in the sightings of sparrows in Chennai. However, they seem to have avoided concrete houses; they are seen in fairly good numbers in areas where huts and thatched roof houses are common and also in market-places. At present, certain areas in Perambur, Ayanavaram, Parrys, Choolaimedu, Aminjikarai, Koyambedu, Porur, T.Nagar, and Poonamallee have quite a good population of sparrows. But only population studies of the sparrow can tell us whether this increase in their population is evidence of their comeback and how it happened. There is much work ahead, especially to determine the reasons for the status of sparrow population in metros like Chennai and its suburbs.

undulating land, was developed on the orders of the Marquis Tweedale, the then Governor of Madras, by McIvor, a Kew Royal Botanical Garden-trained expert. He followed Lindley's system of layout and completed the task between 1848 and 1867.

An extensive lush green lawn of kikiyu grass that botanists call *Pennisetum clandestinum* welcomes a visitor with its fascinating undulated surface. A century-old fern house with 127 species of ferns, a newly constructed glasshouse, and a tissue culture laboratory for the multiplication of flower crops are other attractions in the Garden. A 20-million-year-old fossil tree trunk that gives a glimpse of the past is on a pedestal for viewers. The Rose Garden, the Central and State Government Emblems formed with flowery plants, natural ponds with aquatic plants and the lily pond are other attractions. The Garden has more than 2000 species belonging to 117 natural orders. Now 50 highly valuable native and endangered specimens are there to greet visitors. — (Courtesy: PIB-GOI).

M. Jaya Singh

Two pages on the National Heritage Workshop

Planning a National heritage policy

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) jointly held a workshop on National Policy for Heritage Conservation and Management recently in New Delhi. The workshop was designed with the specific objective of formulating a comprehensive national policy covering all facets of heritage regulation, and presenting the recommendations for consideration of Government.

INTACH and ASI stated that the aim of the workshop was:

'In order to catalyse and create a movement to conserve, protect and undertake sustainable use of our heritage, we at INTACH and

the ASI believe it is now time to frame a National Policy for Heritage Conservation & Management that would outline a conservation philosophy in India and set objectives and benchmarks for conservation. There is need today to deliberate minimum standards for conservation techniques, site presentations, site access, community involvement, training for stakeholders, site management and heritage tourism amongst other aspects affecting heritage. Amongst India's urgent requirements today is the introduction of heritage regulations that would move away from the 'building-centric' approach to emphasis on sustainable 'heritage precincts' which would benefit both residents and visitors. India is a country with a large body of wisdom and knowledge content as its cultural heritage and undoubtedly will have to take some lead in providing the world with an enlightened Heritage Policy which is able to encapsulate and present this great wisdom and heritage to subsequent generations.'

INTACH Vice-Chairman S.K. Misra said that the time had come in India "for a wake-up call" when it was necessary to get together governmental, non-governmental, international agencies and corporate bodies and decide how best to preserve our heritage for the future.

At the workshop, Conservation Architect Rahul Mehrotra drew attention to a major lacuna that exists in India - conservation of architectural heritage in India is detached from the larger urban planning process. Blanket development control rules and rigid land use criteria fail to protect historic areas in the urban context. Laws and policies that take into consideration the physical characteristics, and economic and social realities of each area, are essential prerequisites for their protection and preservation.

Mehrotra stated that in Mumbai, with the designation of precincts in the 1995 Heritage Regulation, conservation areas could potentially become precedents to herald a new approach to city planning at a

broader level. In fact, in the Mumbai case, by the introduction of Heritage or Conservation areas in the Planning Regulations, the idea and importance of integrating conservation with the planning purpose was given recognition by the city's planning authorities. The designation of the Fort area together with several other conservation areas, and a year later the same legislation being applied to the Parel Mill area signalled an important shift in the State Government's planning mechanism - the recognition of differences and that different planning areas required different approaches to respond to the pluralism that is intrinsic to our varied urban landscapes in India.

Thus, unlike modernist planning theory, where all urban areas, irrespective of their historical value, were to be re-planned according to a rigid set of architectural and land use criteria, the conservationist ideology holds that some areas may be special for a variety of reasons and, thus, require a very particular planning approach. It is therefore crucial that architects as also Urban Arts Commissions, Heritage Committees and Conservation Groups widen their emphasis from the present obsession with 'architectural conservation' to issues of urban form. In order to conserve precincts within a city or for that matter even to create new city centres, it is not solely the style or architecture that needs attention but overall urban form that will make possible an appropriate architecture, he advised.

Shyam Chainani, Secretary, Bombay Environmental Action Group and INTACH Legal Expert on heritage legislation, provided details on the current status of heritage protection. He cited the example of the UK which has 16,000 scheduled monuments but nevertheless protects 500,000 listed buildings and conservation areas. Even a comparatively young nation like USA has over 1.16 million 'contributing resources' in their National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, they have 2200 towns with 'historic building' regulations; and in New York city alone there are 1073 individual landmarks and 78 historic districts covering

Recommendations of the workshop

Long-term steps

1. Establishment of a National Heritage Board constituted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, along with representatives of the Ministries of Environment and Forests, Urban Development, non-official professionals/experts.
2. Drafting of a National Policy for Conservation and Management of Tangible Cultural Heritage within three months.
3. Formulation of the Policy on the basis of proposals made by the Working Groups on the following:
 - a. Designation and listing of tangible cultural heritage
 - b. Legislation/regulations
 - c. Fiscal mechanism
 - d. Training and management
 - e. Functioning of the National Heritage Board, which will include:
 - Integrating mechanisms for legal protection of natural and built heritage policies and incorporating heritage areas in Master Plans.
 - Monitoring compliances with National and International Conventions and obligations for heritage sites.
 - Constituting State Boards to implement its policies.
 - Taking necessary action, including emergency measures, to prevent destruction of heritage sites.
 - Establishing Heritage Cells and Heritage Advisors in the Ministries of Culture, Urban Development, Defence, Posts & Telegraphs and

Finance. Also establishing similar cells at the State level and in the Offices of District Collectors.

Immediate steps

- Beginning a compilation of the National Register of Tangible Cultural Heritage involving local agencies, educational institutions and communities.
- Using relevant existing legislation to protect heritage sites.
- Making Cultural Impact Assessments mandatory on the lines of the Environmental Impact Assessment, especially where infrastructural development projects are proposed.
- Evolving a Disaster Management Plan for Heritage Sites in vulnerable areas. This is crucial, and must link multiple government and professional agencies, local residents and NGOs to mitigate the impact and develop a strategy for addressing the historic fabric in times of disaster. It must include documentation and emergency stabilisation.
- Preparing Fiscal Mechanisms for owners of heritage properties, such as regulation of property taxes, rent control, housing repair loans, etc.
- Initiating training workshops, short-term courses and dissemination of information. This includes heritage awareness programmes for Municipalities, Panchayats, Public Works Departments, and other elected representations. Heritage education must also be incorporated in schools and colleges, and outreach programmes for women.

22,000 properties under the protection of their historical regulations. He highlighted how these figures contrast dramatically with those of India where just 7000 monuments are under ASI protection in spite of centuries of recorded history and heritage, while thousands of other historical and architectural assets across the country languish in neglect.

The Model Draft Regulations for Conservation of Heritage, (1995) (both natural and man-made) framed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which have been widely circulated to all States and Union Territories, offer a glimmer of hope, felt Chainani. The results though positive remain miniscule. Only Mumbai,

Hyderabad, Nagpur, Calcutta, and the Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani region can boast of heritage protection, and Delhi to a very limited extent.

Richard Engelhardt, Regional Advisor for Culture (Asia & Pacific), UNESCO, stated that UNESCO categorically holds that because heritage assets are a trans-generational public trust, government has an obligatory and inalienable duty to protect the heritage and to ensure its future survival. And when, as is the case in India, the pace of development outrips the pace of conservation, a tough policy of mandatory cultural impact assessment

(Continued on page 8)

The Singapore experience

In spite of all the limitations land severity with which conservation in Singapore has been dealt with, there are some pointers for the planning process that are relevant. In Singapore the Conservation Department is part of the Planning Department and, therefore, part of the planning process. Some of its noteworthy features are:

- A conservation master-plan prepared in 1989 where conservation/heritage properties and areas were indicated on par with other city planning decisions.
- A voluntary listing scheme (once the advantages were clearly articulated) - much like the voluntary disclosure scheme for Income Tax - whereby people put in requests for their properties to be considered for listing, to stall road widening or other planning implications on their assets. It thus engaged community involvement.
- Conservation was linked to the removal of the Rent Control Act (like Mumbai) instituted in 1940.

T. Murugavel

JOTTINGS

by Vincent D'Souza

Saving Pondy's heritage

Some places grow on you. Pondicherry is one. The Union Territory is making a concerted effort to focus on heritage. Officials, enthusiasts and experts got together recently to discuss all that they could do to celebrate this heritage.

As most of you know, Pondy boasts of a unique living history that reflects the French and the Indian, in its architecture, lifestyle, people, customs and language.

A heritage that takes you back to the 17th Century.

The entire neighbourhood covering the French and the Tamil quarters is a heritage zone.

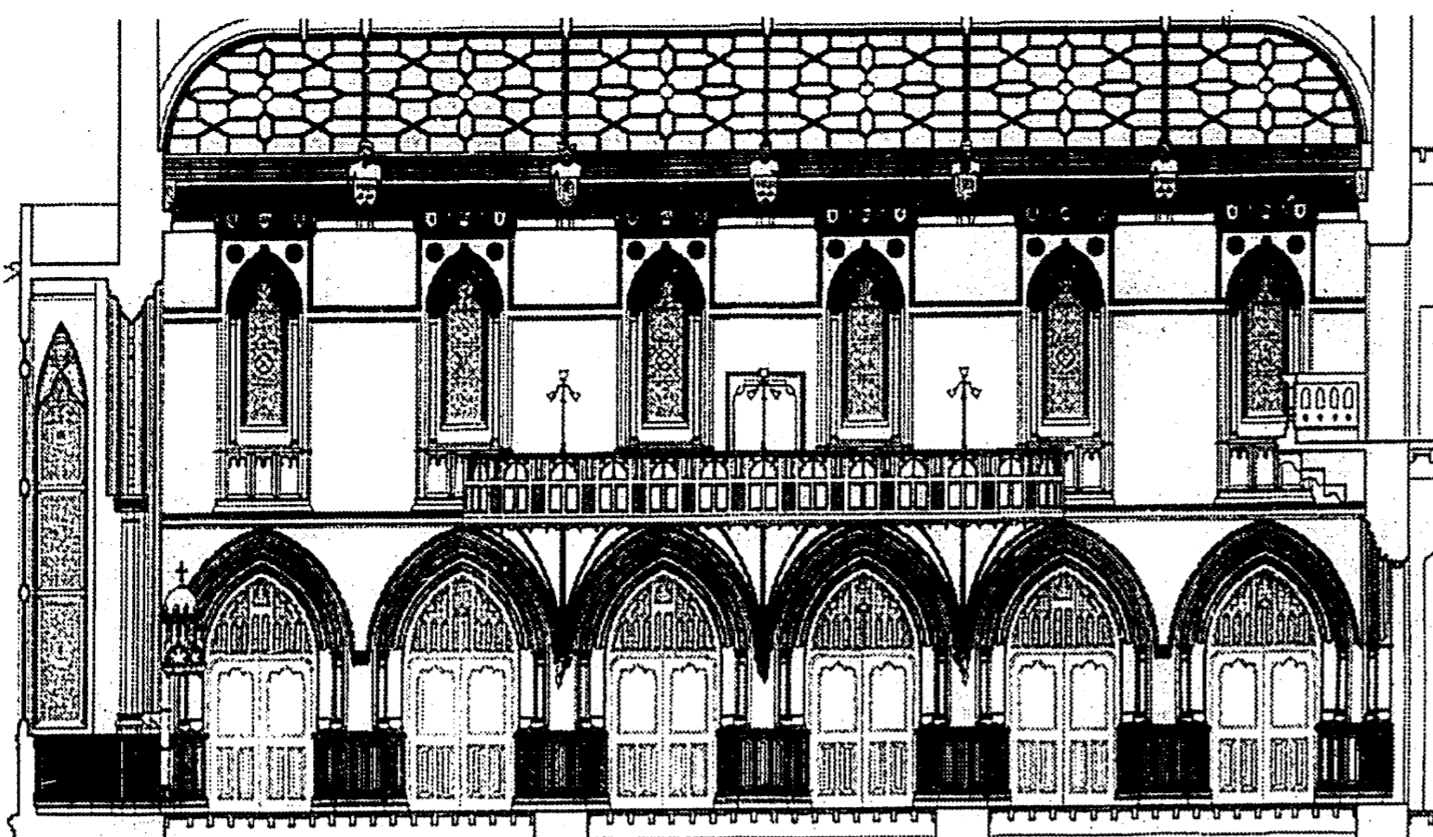
However, almost 600 unique houses in the Tamil quarter have been lost in the last decade and further damage is anticipated.

At this juncture, an interested group in the community here is setting out an action plan that enables Pondy to preserve and encourage heritage which could be its USP.

The effort is going to be challenging. Because most people who own the wonderful houses in the Tamil area look at heritage with a great deal of suspicion. And they wonder why preservation must be pushed when the economics of real estate development weigh heavily.

Heritage enthusiasts now realise they need to take the community along with them if conservation has to succeed.

Sensitising the community and working closely with it, is intrinsic to any campaign in neighbourhoods. (Courtesy — *Adyar Times*.)



A sketch of the Corporation Hall after restoration.

Mumbai Corpn. wins award for restoration

The prestigious Mumbai Urban Heritage Award was recently awarded to the Municipal Corporation for the outstanding restoration of the Corporation Hall. The work had been undertaken by INTACH, with the help of eminent conservationists and professionals in the field.

The Corporation Hall of the BMC was ravaged by fire in the early hours of January 13, 2000. A Gothic Revival style building, designed by Fredrick William Stevens, who also designed the Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, it was one of the few buildings of this genre that still retained its original interiors.

There was extensive damage caused by the fire, ranging from structural damage to the wooden ceiling of the first floor foyer, cracking of external and internal Porbander stone walls, burning and charring of wooden members, deposits of soot on all exposed surfaces, and melting of the stained glass.

The restoration work in the Hall involved a wide variety of specialised skills, like lime masonry repairs, stone masonry repairs which included carving new stones and repairing *in situ*, gold gilding, and cleaning and repair of stained glass, etc. Experts from INTACH's Conservation Institute of Lucknow carried out the cleaning of metal artefacts and marble busts, cleaning and repair of the chandeliers and restoration of paintings of the city fathers.

The restoration of the Corporation Hall was a path-breaking project and set new standards for conservation. It could prove a guiding light to other Government bodies to restore and maintain the beautiful buildings in which they are housed.

PLANNING A NATIONAL HERITAGE POLICY

(Continued from page 7)

is required with each and every infrastructural development.

Cyrus Guzdar, Founder Member, INTACH, attributed Mumbai's success to the unique partnership between several environmental groups of the city and a cluster of enlightened bureaucrats resulting in the final 1995 Notification. Mumbai heritage regulations cover many key elements like incentives to owners, scope for changes, transfer of development rights, etc. The regulations are based on some key premises. Firstly, the approach adopted is at variance with the conventional 'archaeological' one of freezing a

building in time and isolating it from its surrounding development. It is only "if a building is kept in use, can there be a continuing commitment to keep the building alive and its fabric in good repair". Secondly, there has to be application of reasoned judgement, based on a thorough understanding of the listed buildings' key heritage values, balanced with an appreciation of the social, technological and economic forces driving urban development. Thirdly, the framework relies heavily on the mechanism of city government for its effective operation. Finally, it is professional competence of the city's Heritage Conservation

Committee, its independence and sensitivity (both to local pressures and to historical integrity) that sustain the success of the conservation policy. It can therefore be said that a meddlesome State Government, political pressures or corruption of public servants can easily derail any conservation policy. Guzdar felt that the ten years of operation of the Mumbai Regulations provide a laboratory of rich experiences and experimentation, by way of both its successes and failures, for taking into account while framing a National Policy on Heritage Conservation.

Elaborating on the Mumbai experience, Guzdar put it "in a nutshell" when he stated: "There are plenty of statutes or enactments on the statute books of India both at the Centre and in the States, and they are at our disposal... the one I am going to give emphasis to today is that of the Regional and Town Planning Acts... generally empowering the State Government to frame regulations and rules by which a whole host of things can be done and land use can be determined and in particular, aspects of natural,

archaeological, historical, etc. heritage can be preserved. As to what happened in the case of Maharashtra was that, taking the cue from the Charles Correa National Commission on Urbanisation which met in the late 80s and early 90s, the Maharashtra Government took the bull by the horns and they turned the conservation paradigm on its head saying we cannot deal anymore with a protective mechanism which the ASI would like where you can best deal with empty monuments frozen in time on isolated sites, but we need a flexible instrument to work within the instruments of town planning and which will respond to and work within the framework of constant urban growth and development. And so to put it in a nutshell what they said was that the protective powers should be exercised by the local planning authority which in the case of Mumbai was the Mumbai Municipal Corporation."

Ravi Boothalingam, currently Chief Executive of Manas Advisory and earlier associated with the Oberoi Group of Hotels, stated that manage-

ment of heritage tourism entailed a synthesis of managerial skills and the strength of the corporate world with the aesthetics, discipline and value system of the environmental fraternity. Lease agreements and partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organisations were surely the path of the future.

Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Jagmohan candidly said the problem of heritage management was not drafting of a national policy or drawing up regulations but the culture of governance, and creating a mindscape where there is political will to administer the laws. During January and February he had visited and listed 107 culturally significant sites from Kanniyakumar in Tamil Nadu to Bodh Gaya in Bihar. In several parts of the country he encountered instances where laws had been bypassed with impunity, and mostly by the authorities themselves. He assured the workshop that efforts would also be made to incorporate some of its recommendations. In fact, the first step in this direction had already been taken — the setting up of a nodal agency,

Action sought to clean Marina

(Continued from page 2)

statutory and a constitutional duty to provide a pollution-free environment, the residents of Chennai, especially the beach-goers, have a corresponding right to enjoy a clean, pollution-free, litter-free beach."

- This beach is also slowly losing all its sand because of illegal quarrying by some elements during the dark hours.
- Arrangements for the posting of lifeguards need to be made, as recently there have been quite a few instances of deaths due to drowning in the waters off the Marina.
- The petitioner has, as a consequence, sought "a writ of mandamus or any other appropriate writ or direction, directing the respondents to implement various measures to ensure a clean and pollution-free Marina Beach". The measures sought are:
 - Prohibiting the accumulation of any rubbish, excreta, filth, garbage and non-biodegradable obnoxious matter in the sands of the Marina Beach and prohibiting any person from throwing these on the shore and in the waters of the Marina.
 - Surface cleaning the sands, and the parks and footpaths annexed to the sands of Marina Beach twice a day, including Sundays and public holidays.

Recovering charges and fines from any person littering the sands and waters of the Marina after publishing information about the fines to be levied on the spot by designated officials from any person found littering and causing nuisance that affects the cleanliness and the sanitation of the Marina.

- Building and maintaining more toilets in the Marina and also in the fishermen's colonies and strictly preventing the using of the sands and water off the Marina as an open toilet.
 - Setting up an exclusive police station on the Marina to prevent anti-social activities and consumption of liquor.
 - Providing comprehensive and adequate lighting facilities on the Marina.
 - Setting up an autonomous task force to prepare a scheme for the beautification of the Marina and to monitor the compliance of the above-mentioned directions.
 - Appointing enough lifeguards for the Marina to prevent people drowning in its waters.
 - Planting more trees by the footpaths and in the park alongside Marina Beach.
 - Declaring the Marina a NATIONAL HERITAGE precinct.
- The petitioners also seek compliance on the Court's orders on the above within ten weeks of its directions.



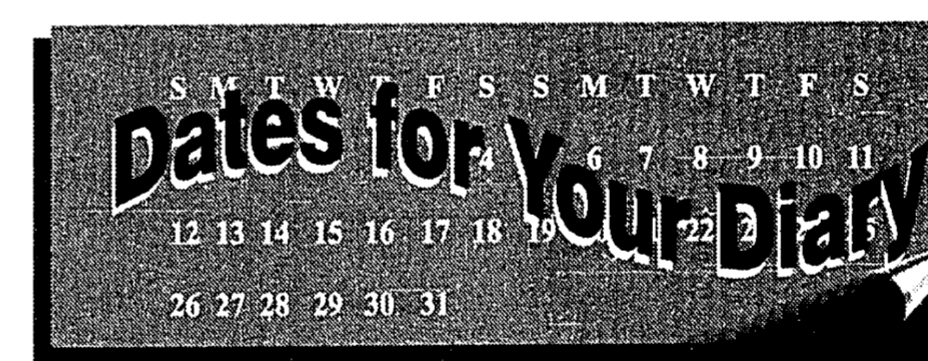
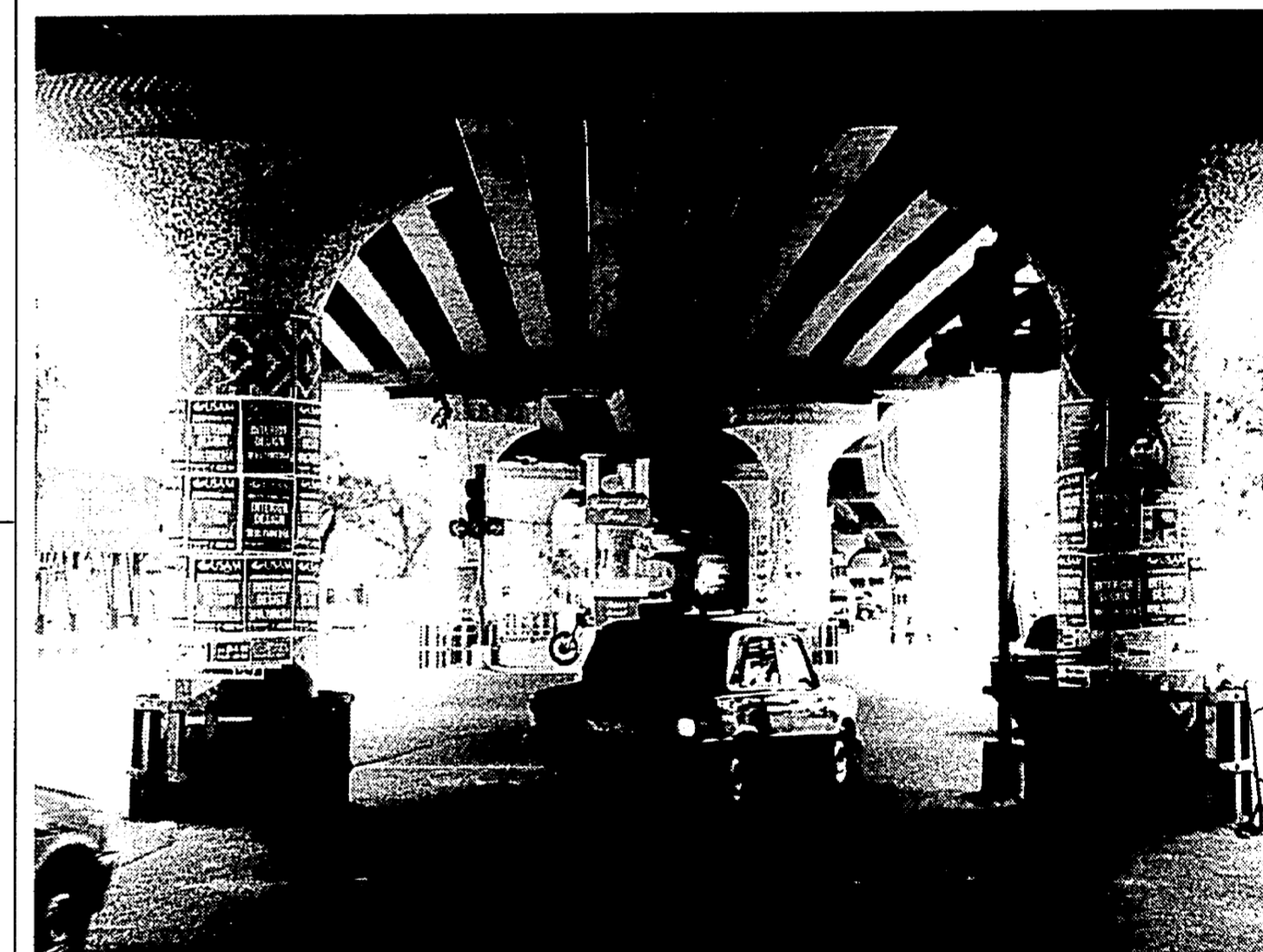
Instead of an OLD and a NEW this fortnight, we give you a YESTERDAY and a TODAY, revealing how quickly in Singara Chennai we make the NEW OLD, despite all the deterrent laws in the world.

When the flyovers were built, Madras Musings questioned their necessity in many areas and pointed out how they were endangering the road-user in several places. Later, when the flyover creators sought sponsors to embellish the flyovers, Madras Musings questioned the necessity of such expenditure, pointing out how soon the embellishments would be defaced. And today's pictures show that is exactly what is happening every day to the flyovers these days.

In the top row, the picture on left shows a pillar that has not been defaced. The two pictures alongside and below show the kind of defacing that's been going on, much of it by every political party around, whose members should be protecting public property. And the picture at the bottom shows how the flyover pillars look when cleaning is attempted and left midway, as soon as the text and pictures are removed.

Only recently we heard the Police stating that action would be taken against all those defacing public property with graffiti and posters. That promise will result in a clean city only if every one of the individuals or organisations mentioned in the posters — with or without their knowledge — is heavily penalised. If that's done, they will soon stop their minions doing what they are doing to the aesthetics of this city.

— THE EDITOR



May 24 and 25: Shell Craft workshop on making beautiful decorative items like screens and shell flowers using shells. (At Dakshina Chitra, Tel: 491 8943/446 2435).

June 7 and 8: Workshop on the techniques/methods for stitching

beads and sequins and make them into attractive bags. (At Dakshina Chitra, Tel: 491 8943/446 2435.)

June 21-22: Workshop on doing attractive murals on terracotta tiles — taught by master potter. (At Dakshina Chitra, Tel: 491 8943/446 2435.)

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As the train was entering the Western Ghats, my heart was filled with happy recollections of how well my first season in first class cricket had gone for me and the exalted company in which I was now moving. My teammates were getting ready for dinner, putting away the card packs after a long session of rummy and ridiculous games invented on the spot by the man sitting next to me, the former Nawab of Pataudi, and, by far, India's most charismatic cricket captain. I was reading a much reread old PG Wodehouse favourite and whistling a Lata Mangeshkar song from the film *Mughal-e-Azam*, hardly aware I was doing it. "Do you know what *raag* that is?" my neighbour asked in a school-masterly tone that obviously did not expect an answer.

I happened to know the answer to that one and promptly replied 'Kedar'. 'Tiger,' for that is how Mansur Ali Khan was known to everyone in cricket circles, was suitably impressed and he actually lifted one eyebrow to show he was, just as Beach the butler would have done in his salad days.

The conversation that followed went along predictably enthusiastic lines, as it often happens when two people have discovered a common interest. I learnt in the next half hour of the many wonderful concerts Pataudi had listened to in his ancestral home in Bhopal and of a particularly memorable recording of a great Hindustani vocalist performing for the royal family when he was very drunk. "You must come home and listen to it one day," he said, now in an expansive mood after a few drinks himself. Unfortunately, I never got round to listening to that gem by that celebrated Ustad who happened to be my favourite.

The Pataudi family was keen

on music and reputed to be close to Begum Akhtar, the great exponent of *ghazals*, *dadra* and *thumri*. Tiger himself was known to play the tabla.

Ravi Kichlu was my teammate in Calcutta where I turned out for Rajasthan Club during the 1968-1969 season. He was an opening batsman who played Ranji and Duleep Trophy cricket, but his greater claim to fame was as one half of the well-known Kichlu brothers, vocalists of the Agra *gharana*, if I remember right. Ravi passed away a few years ago, but his brother Vijay is the director of ITC's Calcutta-based Sangeet Research Academy. I don't know if he played cricket, but I remember spending delightful hours fielding in the slips listening to my neighbour Ravi giving me impromptu samples of *alap* and *khyal*.

Many, many cricketers of my time were fans of the Hindi playback singer Mukesh, a trend started by the incomparable leg spinner B.S.Chandrasekhar. A couple of them were good singers in their own right. Bombay's left arm spinner Padmakar Shivalkar sang well enough to give light music concerts and so has Sanjay Manjrekar in recent years, just as his father Vijay did in his time.

Closer home, I have had the pleasure of playing cricket with Radhakrishnan of Bunts Cricket Club fame, as well as his son Unnikrishnan, who might have gone on to play State level cricket had he not decided to

concentrate on developing his considerable musical talent instead. Sivakumar and Burma Shankar were both my teammates in the TNCA cricket league in the Sixties. Sivakumar, as we all know, is D.K. Pattammal's son and a *mridanga vidwan* in his own right besides being the father of Carnatic music's new star, Nitayashree Mahadevan. Burma's son, the hugely talented Sanjay Subrahmanyam, is crazy about cricket too. I believe he spends more time thinking about cricket than about Carnatic music!

• by
V. RAMNARAYAN

I am sure the annual cricket match among leading Carnatic musicians is common knowledge by now. I happened to officiate as umpire in one of the games some years ago. The intensity of the competition had to be seen to be believed. Ravi Kiran, T.M. Krishna, Sanjay and Unni would give nothing away; there were a few other equally fierce competitors, but I don't remember their names. At least one of them gave me a withering look when I gave him out lbw, a decision that obviously did not satisfy him. That was when Vijay Siva whose idea it had been to invite me, must have had second thoughts about the wisdom of my ap-

pointment. I might add that I have never again been asked to umpire in this gala affair, but I do hope I will get another chance in the future. Who knows, I may have the pleasure of giving a Sangita Kalanidhi out, provided the Music Academy relaxes the age criterion a bit in honouring its vidwans.

Music lovers and musicians are few and far between among cricketers, but the few I know are diehard *rasikas*. Kedarnath, an accomplished opening batsman of yesteryear, was a trained *mridanga vidwan*, who forsook music for cricket. He is a wonderful mimic, who can imitate some of Carnatic music's greats. His take off on M.D. Ramanaathan is pretty impressive, but he can do an equally creditable Pattammal. His contemporary, the late Devendran, played the *mridangam* on the concert stage.

Fast bowler Kalyanasundaram – the man who once took a hat-trick against Bombay – is a dedicated concert-goer whose knowledge of music seems to be good enough for him to discuss its technical aspects with musicians and even advise them sometimes. I must ask Unni what he thinks of Kalli's expert observations, as I believe he has reserved him for special attention, having known him as a cricketer.

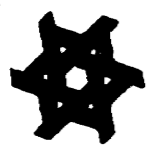
M.O. Srinivasan is well known in music circles as the founder of Dasanjali, a one-man crusade to teach a large number of school children music, especially of the *bhajan* or light clas-

sical variety. I wonder how many people in music circles know that he played for India as a wicketkeeper in what were known as Unofficial 'Tests' in the late Forties-early Fifties. He was highly respected as an efficient wicketkeeper and stubborn batsman. His son M.O. Parthasarathi, naturally known as Mop to one and all, was a Ranji and Duleep Trophy player, who bowled fastish leg breaks with a Paul Adams-like action, except he was a right arm bowler. He was also a hard-hitting batsman, somewhat unorthodox, but successful. He learned Hindustani music and does a very reasonable imitation of singing – he almost sounds like the real thing. He is a familiar figure at Hindustani music concerts in Chennai and has stopped listening to Carnatic music, I believe, after the demise of Maharajapuram Santhanam.

S.D.Sridhar the violinist, we all know, is the proud father of Sriram who has played for India. Sriram too learned the violin for a few years before the pull of cricket proved too powerful. Former Ranji Trophy cricketer S.V.S.Mani, an elegant batsman who played for Tamil Nadu and South Zone with considerable success in the Sixties, and once fielded as a reserve against England, is the son of Kothamangalam Cheenu, that talented singer, who faded away after a stint in films.

S. Radhakrishnan (Ambi), a consistent batsman who could also bowl off spin, played for several seasons for Parry's in the league and the Hindu Trophy. Once, a century by him in the league led to a newspaper report which said Radhakrishnan, the son of Semmangudi Srinivasar, had scored a century, thus revealing to the world at large a musical ancestry only friends had hitherto known. — (Courtesy: www.sangeetham.com)

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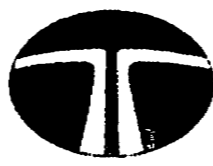
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