R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE Vol. XII No. 4

June 1-15, 2002





Buy our new "walk-in refrigerator" ... ideal to beat the summer heat!

The heat is on

Have you noticed how many songs there are about the sun, summer, and how the livin' is easy during tropical heat waves?

The Chennai-ite is in no mood to listen, though.

Dear Sol has been in fine form for some time now, and any attempt to extol his virtues might lead to unpleasantness.

Every year, Chennai wonders: Was it this bad last year?

The weather stalks you from the moment you waken. You are scared to stay still because you might just congeal and melt and all that will remain as mute evidence of your existence is a small damp spot on the ground. You cannot sit anywhere because every form of seating known to man, floor included, is burning hot. Lean tiredly against a passing wall, and you'll straighten up in a hurry as the very walls sear

Friendly, easy-to-slip-on clothes turn into violent foes that bunch up into bands around your neck and try to choke you.

The gentlest soul is apt to snap, the doll-iest baby turns hostile, and the fluffiest puppy turns into T-rex...and who can blame them?

Many years ago, I overheard a comment made by a sorely tired citizen, who was trying unsuccessfully to mop a streaming forehead.

"The heat is very hot," gasped this worthy.

Indeed it is... and then some.

Ranjitha Ashok

Now, it's 'road-building' in the

Adyar!

(By A Special Correspondent)

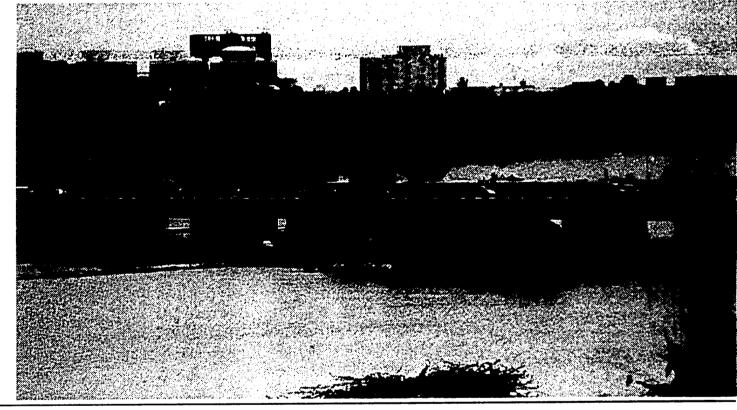
adras Musings recently **IVI** featured pictures of buildings being built on the Adyar riverbed. My pictures today show a road that's been built on the riverbed and mounds of excavated earth as well as a road built on the Gandhi Nagar bank of the river. Enquiries on the spot brought no answers, but on further asking around I found that the Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) had as far back as August 28, 2001 written this letter to the Director-Environment, Member-Secretary, Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management Authority:

Some unknown individual/ organisation appears to have constructed a road connecting the southern bank of the Adyar river (close to Gandhi Nagar Club) to a mud flat of the Adyar

(Continued on page 3)



An earth road built in the middle of the Adyar River and another road built on its Gandhi Nagar bank (above) and a mound of earth rising high in the Adyar river (below) after all these road-building efforts.



Consumers losing out on redressal

(By A Special Correspondent)

Till the end of last year, **▲** 13,366 cases from Tamil Nadu had been filed in the National and State Commissions from the time the Consumer Protection Act was first legislated. A little over 73 per cent of the cases have been disposed of (the rest recorded as 'pending') as against a national average of 67.5% - but well below the performances relating to other Southern States: Kerala 87.3%, Andhra Pradesh 80.2%, Karnataka 78.5% and Pondicherry 93.5%.

Of the 62,426 cases in the District Fora in Tamil Nadu, 6406 are still pending. This compares with 14,771 cases pending out of 1,28,197 filed in Andhra Pradesh, 6537 out of

65,057 in Karnataka, 6045 out of 1,20,074 in Kerala and 42 out of 1868 in Pondicherry – a finalisation of 89.7%, 88.5%, 90%, 95% and 97.7% respectively. The national average is 84.4%.

Tamil Nadu had 7 out of its 30 district for non-functional, whereas Andhra Pradesh (25) and Pondicherry (one only) had all functional, while Karnataka had 2 out of 23 and Kerala 2 out of 14 non-functional.

Consumer activist R. Desikan, commenting on this 'state of affairs' to the Secretary, Dept. of Consumer Affairs, New Delhi, states: It would appear that these citizen consumer courts have become similar to, if not worse than, a civil court.

The very purpose of the Consumer Protection Act has been negated and easy and quick redressal is becoming a farce.

Amongst many reasons for this state of affairs is the fact that the States do not consider this subject important enough, as the ruling parties (whichever they may be) do not consider that any mileage can be obtained from these fora and commissions; perhaps the only benefit to them is an opportunity to employ some of their minions in the fora and commissions as members. Every political party takes full advantage of this facility.

In addition to the disappointments of the consumers, these for and commissions have been converted into lawvers' hunting grounds for making money. I do not mind that, provided the lawyers recognise the fact that this redressal system is meant for quick disposal of cases, not for several adjournments.

More than all this, the way judges (presidents) treat a consumer or the representing counsel is often shocking. Most of the persons appearing as complainants at these fora are simple folk, uneducated in law and the formalities of the courts. To them, these are dispute redressal agencies with two commoners as members. The language of the presidents to complainants is often

(Continued on page 6)

When will we ever find transparency?

The Department of Science

SHORT

Tor several years now this city by officials of the Depart- days when History, Geography, ▲ journal has been writing on the goings-on in the Advar River and on its banks. The Man From Madras Musings has been adding his two cents' worth. And several other journals have followed suit. But do any of us get a clarification about what is happening? Are any of us told which authorities permitted

- a reserved forest area earmarked for a sanctuary suddenly to be no longer thought of as being worthy of sanctuary-status?
- multistorey buildings to be freely built on the banks of the river and all over Ouibble Island and the other reclaimed islands of the estuary?
- sandfill in the Adyar Creek to remain despite Court orders? — building of new government housing on the riverbed?
- construction of roads in the riverbed and the estuary?
- removal of sand from the estuary mouth and the river? - marking of plots on the
- beach by the estuary? garbage and sewage to be let
- into the river? — the devastation of the man groves?

While no one owns up to all this - displaying a total unwillingness to be transparent – plans are announced over and over again about desilting the river and making its waters flow again. But when it comes to reporting the state of progress on what's been announced, the veil

of secrecy falls again.

MMM just can't understand all this need for secrecy, which seems to be an obsession with ALL Government departments. Try, for instance, to find out what's happening with the restoration of St. Mary's Church in the Fort, or the Connemara Library, what the future of the Royapuram Railway Station is, or what's been found in the excavations underway in Mamallapuram or the explorations offshore from them and Poompuhar or any other similar activities, and there's a wall of silence that greets you. We'll tell you in good time, you are told. Only that time never seems to come. And yet there's talk of charters for government departments and information centres to provide everything but the most security-compromising information, both by NGOs and Government intent on showing 'achievements' on paper. If charters and information centres offer transparency and information, as publicly promised, could MMM have answers to the questions on the Adyar asked above - at least be convinced that

Maps & Humanities

everything is by the rulebook?

A glimmer of transparency in a field The Man From Madras Musings has long been interested in glinted as a promise at a recent meeting convened in the

ment of Science and Technology and the Survey of India to organise the celebrations to commemorate the 200th anniversary of William Lambton starting the Great Trigonometrical Survey of the country from St. Thomas' Mount. If what was stated to be in the last stages of formulation and if what is formulated offers everything but military information for maps freely available to the public, this would be the most significant monument to Lambton, that dedicated seeker of knowl-

As things stand in the coun-

ones in Classes 3-7 and only the try, every map published showheritage focus (both manmade as ing Indian territory, be it by a well as natural) in Classes 8, 9 private publisher or any Govand 10, supplementing an Arts/ ernment department, has to be Science specialisation. scrutinised and approved by the Survey of India, which removes and Technology may be intermuch information stating that it ested in promoting map conis following Defence Departsciousness during the Lambton ment guidelines. More detailed Year, but it could take the oppormaps have to be sent ALSO to tunity to interact with the Educathe Defence Department who tion Ministry on the broader isvery often remove further inforsue of a broader-based education mation. Over the years, MMM that will cover several of the parhas seen such information as the ticular issues it is concerned location of MICO, ICF, airport symbols, reservoirs etc. removed from school atlases and tourist guide maps. All this is now set to change, it was indicated at the meeting. As MMM understood it, a national cartographic base with information from all sources was being compiled and computerised, with about 40 items from around 60 available for unrestricted use.

lic here, could still find enough

things to restrict so as to make

an A to Z map of any city use-

forthcoming on the map ques-

tion, even though it is not part

of the Lambton commemora-

tion, they were less forthcoming

on another suggestion pertain-

ing to the need to take another

lock at education in this coun-

try, particularly in high school.

The commemoration organisers

are planning a whole heap of ac-

tivities that will involve children

in the year-long celebration.

These include exhibitions, trea-

sure hunts, quizzes, carto-

graphic exercises and treks. But

what use are these one-off ac-

tivities for those who get little

exposure to the Humanities,

particularly History, Geogra-

phy, the Environment and Gov-

ernance? What use are history,

geography and heritage-oriented

themes to those who only the

MMM has for long suggested

a revision of high school sylla-

buses, taking them back to the

sciences or commerce know?

While the organisers were

SNAPPY with, like Geography and Environment. As far as MMM is con-This computerised information cerned, he'd be delighted if the would be available to any mapmaker, MMM was told, at very Tamil Nadu Education Departnominal royalties. Hooray, ment would consider what has been suggested above. Certainly MMM feels like saying, but let's wait till we see what is available; it could be the subject of some inour security-conscious babus, depth discussion, with a look at who don't seem aware of the satwhat is happening elsewhere in ellite age and the availability abroad of more detailed maps of India than available to the pub-

The Sethu again

nd so we are once again talk-Aing about the Sethusamudram Project, 140 years after it was first conceived. And most of those supporting the project are convinced that the economic benefits to the country will be high, cutting down not only the cost of coast-to-coast freighting and naval movement, but also providing benefits to the hinterland of the Sethu Canal, both from those working on the project and from the investments they will make. Particularly keen on the project was the A Ramaswami Mudaliar expert committee which reported in 1956 that the canal project was not only feasible but also viable and urged that it be linked with the development of Tuticorin Port. Several other teams have reported in similar or slightly modified terms. Now the Tuticorin Port Trust plans to reinvent the wheel – it's asked the National Environment Engineering Research Institute to conduct another feasibility study.

The Man From Madras Musings, however, welcomes the priorities of the study - the envi-

ronment. Those against the ticularly of marrying the needs of Sethu scheme have constantly the ecosystem and of the tourist. Civics and Nature Study (the cited the possibility it holds to Environment) were taught as endanger the environment. Makseparate subjects right through ing an Environmental Impact high school, and not as in the Assessment first is, therefore, the majority of schools now where it wise thing to do. But EIAs also is one subject - Social Studies need to look at the greatest good thing. taught for no more than three for the greatest number. This one years in the most perfunctory will have to look at dumping of manner. MMM has also felt that the dredged material, the impact these subjects, looked at from the point of view of heritage, need to on fishing, and conservation of the biosphere reserve, weighing be taught in school – one year the cost of them to the immedispent on the students' district, a ate area against the economic and second year on the students' strategic benefits the canal might State and the third year on the country. Combining both, this bring the country. could be worked out to offer the four listed subjects as separate

There are never likely to be answers to please everyone, but MMM hopes that once and for all the present study will sink the project or get work started on it before the 150th anniversary of its conception.

★ It would be nice if the Nilgiris Mountain Railway got world heritage status. Certainly the 103-year-old railway, with its rack and pinion system, the only one surviving in the world today. is a monument to early railway engineering and track building round mountain curves, through mountains and overbridged chasms. But while announcing its intention to approach UNES-CO for the status, the Railways have spoilt their own case by introducing a diesel engine "as a cost-cutting measure". With steam engines all over the world attracting heritage lovers and the young travellers looking for something unique, it seems particularly insensitive of the Railways to look at steam from the point of view of cost and not heritage. Modifying the old steam engines is a kind of compromise no heritage buff or heritage statusgiver will accept. If the NMR runs on steam, it will have every chance to get the status it seeks and the Railways will not go broke in the process. With diesel, MMM is fairly sure the heritage status will be rather doubtful - and certainly the Railways will not get rich on it. With the Railways developing Railway museums and establishing a conservation cell to look at various stations, bridges etc., it's time it showed its true commitment to heritage by taking a second look at its decision to dieselise the

★ Eco-tourism is the new buzzword in Tamil Nadu tourism circles. Proposals are being sought for Pichavaram (mangroves and backwaters), Mudumalai (wildlife), the Gulf of Manner (marine park and biosphere reserve), Kodikkarai (birdlife, particularly flamingoes) and Pulicat (birdlife, particularly flamingoes, boating and sand dunes). But the interest is being channelled through local administrators and government departments. The Man From Madras Musings wonders how many in either category are knowledgeable about ecotourism and par-

These are rather specialised areas and it is time officialdom began to look for specialists - and not think all-purpose administrators know everything about every-

Too often government thinks of tourism in brick and mortar terms with what it thinks is five-star comfort, whereas what the tourist wants is nature undisturbed, knowledgeable, fluentspeaking guides and clean accommodation and facilities, even if they are minimal.

The problem usually arise over ground-level definitions of CLEAN, KNOWLEDGEABLE, FLUENT etc. And that's where expert advice could prove useful. Kerala could certainly supply it; but will we seek it?

* On a recent drive down National Highway No. 45, The Man From Madras Musings was pleased to see, at about every 100 km petrol bunks out of the Western travel scene. Toilets, restrooms, play-areas, eat-out spaces, restaurants and fast-food facilities, shopping, banking and post office cabins and, above all, what looked like clean, comfortable rooms. They certainly looked excellent highway stopover or rest facilities. But the sad part of it is that virtually everything except one or two facilities was closed. And speaking to someone who frequently travels this highway MMM learnt that these facilities had been developed several months ago but for some unknown reason were not being opened. On the ground, no one seemed to know when they would be opened - not even the ubiquitous "soon". Which makes MMM wonder about the delay. Is someone having second thoughts?

★ While the Government plans

to appoint a committee to review the 'No Plastics' Bill and while the NGOs welcome the Bill. The Man From Madras Musings was intrigued to see a letter to the Press from the Director-General, Indian Centre for Plastics and Environment. MMM hasn't the faintest idea whether this is a Government or an industrial organisation, but it certainly makes a strong case for a review of the Bill - and urges that the baby not be thrown out with the bathwater. Rightly he points out that it is really a "waste management problem in India" and because we are unable to improve civic consciousness, create the infrastructure to deal with solid waste, involve industry in recycling efforts, and enforce quality standards that ensure non-toxic materials, we cry 'Ban'. But MMM wonders if ever the ban comes in whether enforcement will be better than all the other laws in this country that are improperly enforced at

-MMM

Save, NOT close, this 'costly error'

∧ s A.S. Russell, the British Executive Engineer of the erstwhile Government of Madras, who implemented and completed the Buckingham Canal Project, rightly assessed it, in his preface to the History of the Buckingham Canal Project (1898), "The Canal was originally begun without any regular design, and the costly error was made of purposely running the line through shallow backwaters and very close to the sea... This knowledge could not be acquired until the project was approaching completion". Could this error by the British have been rectified or has it been worsened irreversibly by us, today?

June 1-15, 2002

No doubt, the Buckingham Canal was hastily conceived by a single individual, Basil Cochrane, in 1806, even before the British fully understood the specific meteorological, edaphic, hydrological and, in general, the ecological peculiarities of the Coromandel Coast. Frequent cyclones, storm-surges, monsoon floods, top-soil erosion and its drifting into the canal due to the natural eastward sloping of the Deccan Peninsula, consequent siltation and blockage of the canal, summer closure of the riverine, estuarine (rivermouth) and lagoon bars, have all been the cause for the disuse and failure of the Buckingham Canal, whose very concept, the laborious digging by faminefleeing labourers, the cost of constructing locks and gates on the canal and the cost of frequent desilting, have contributed to this very "costly error".

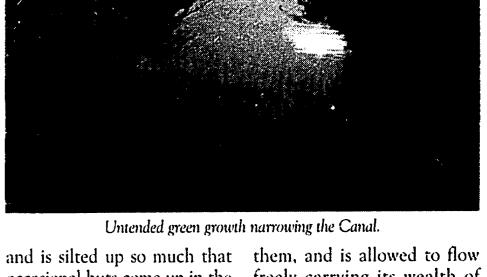
The Buckingham Canal, otherwise called the East Coast Canal, extends 491 miles (737 km), from Kakinada in Andhra Pradhesh to Marakanam near Pondicherry. Even as this canal was being completed, 76 years after work on it was started (1806 to 1882), there were, in 1879, two cyclones, one in March, the other, more severe, in November. The whole North Canal (north of Chennai) was subjected to severe floods and soil-erosion in the catchment area with consequent massive siltation of the canal. In 1882 vet another calamity, the closure of the Pulicat Bar (lakemouth) occurred, so that water level in the Canal went down drastically, handicapping navi gation. Again, in 1892, all bars, the Pulicat Bar, the Ennore Bar and the Dugarayapatnam Bar at the northern tip of the Pulicat Lake, got closed simultaneously, so that unless expensive locks were constructed

across the canal to control the wastes from the slums on its water level in the canal, navigation, the basic objective of the Buckingham Canal, became totally impeded. By the 1920s, the railways and roadways were laid along the East Coast Canal and the competition with them, the increasing costs of maintaining the canal gates and locks, the enormous expenditure incurred frequently in desilting the canal, and the increase in the licence fees for the boats plying on the Canal, all resulted in less demand for the Canal and, hence, greater disuse.

Today, at several points, particularly in Chennai, the Canal is blocked by siltation and heaved-in bunds and it is reduced to ponds and puddles. These are misused and even abused to the extent of using them as septic tanks or cesspools for domestic sewage and as dumping grounds for solid

banks. They have consequently turned into ideal culture ponds for all water-borne pathogens and breeding grounds for mos-In Ennore, north of Chennai, the Canal is a cesspool

of chemical and thermal pollu tion from the nearby industrial complex. This flows northward into the Pulicat Lake and, as it happened in August 2000, causes mass mortality of fish in the southern part of the Pulicat Lake, resulting in depletion of all biodiversity, affecting fisheries and the lives of the local fisherfolk. Further north of Pulicat Lake, in Nellore District, aquafarmers have cut across the canal-bunds to draw canal water for their aquafarms. In south Chennai, several cottage industries discharge their untreated effluents into the Canal and, further south, the Canal is overgrown by vegetation



occasional huts come up in the very Canal itself. * * *

Even if the original functions, the Buckingham Canal navigation and transport of goods, remain unfulfilled, the British seemed to have unconsciously constructed a major stormwater drain for the whole of the Coromandel Coast and particularly for Chennai. Secondly, since the Buckingham Canal is confluent with four major rivers, the Godavari, Krishna, Pennar and Palar, 15 other smaller rivulets. numerous backwaters and the Pulicat and Ennore Lagoons, biodiversity and fisheries as well as mangroves of all these waterbodies are dispersed north and south along the whole Coromandel Coast, rendering the Buckingham Canal a reservoir or inter-state, inter-river canal in refuge for brackish water

Originally, Cochrane meant the Buckingham Canal to be a tidal canal, but the tidal impacts failed miserably due to annual bar-mouth closures. This "costly error" could be corrected today, if only the estuaries (river-mouths) and lagoons on the Coromandal Coast are constantly dredged and kept open so that the Buckingham Canal is flushed automatically by the tidal impacts through

freely carrying its wealth of biodiversity in it.

The East Coast Canal, when it runs through backwaters, inevitably gets silted up and needs to be dredged after each Northeast Monsoon. The canalbunds need to be reinforced with boulders and mangroves planted on either banks to prevent soil erosion. Orchards on the canal banks and aquafarming in the Canal should then be possible. People living on the banks of the Canal should stop dumping waste into the Canal.

An integrated plan to manage the Buckingham Canal Basin should be drawn up, taking particular care that no industry discharges its wastes into an inland canal like this one. This, the oldest manmade India, precariously running north-south, is a pioneering model foreseeing the muchdelayed inter-river grid intended to solve our long unresolved drinking water and

irrigation water problems. The Buckingham Canal, as a model, deserves to be saved for posterity, by ensuring that the "costly error" parts of such grids and their abuse by human interactions are wisely avoided.

P.J. Sanjeeva Raj

NOW, IT'S 'ROAD-BUILDING' IN THE ADYAR!

(Continued from page 1)

This illegal road-like structure is being used by bulldozers and lorries and has already destroved all the vegetation on the mud flat. As you are aware, Sir, this is clearly in violation of the CRZ Notification.

We now learn that over the last few weeks lorries have been excavating sand from the mud flat in complete violation of the CRZ Notification and its prohibited activities.

As you are aware, the Central Government has notified the fact that "CRZ laws are applicable on the Adyar river till

the Kotturpuram bridge". We to the Director of Environment. therefore fail to understand why the State Coastal Zone Management Authority has allowed this activity to take place under their very noses.

Polluting the Canal with thermal power station effluents (above) and garbage

(below). (All pictures by SAMUEL SUKUMAR.)

We request you to immediately and urgently investigate this complaint and punish the offenders by appropriate prosecution under the Environment Protection Act, 1986...

A response of sort to this was received by the CAG at the end of March 2002 where the Member-Secretary, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, copied it a letter he had sent The letter stated:

I am to inform that the site adjoining Gandhi Nagar Club is belonging to Gandhi Nagar Educational Society and the excavated earth of Adyar river by PWD and of Krishna Water pipeline laying work CMWSSB were dumped to raise the level of the site so that it can be used for playground by the Gandhi Nagar Educational Society for their School functioning nearby...

Furthermore that a temporary mud road has been formed by the PWD for removing the

desilted earth from the Adyar

Building a playground for a school, particularly if it is paying for the effort, is certainly a laudable objective in a city short of playgrounds. But the issue of excavating a mud flat in the middle of a river is not answered in this response nor is there any mention whether the "temporary mudroad" will be destroyed after the laudable purpose for which it was built is served. Will this road too remain in situlike much of the sandfill in the Adyar Creek near the Ambedkar Memorial, wonders a CAG member.

With parallel import of LPG per-

mitted, I have been trying to check

on the different mixtures of imported

LPG, to ensure formulation of hu-

man safety standards. The BIS (Bu-

reau of India Standards) appears in-

different; it has still not given me a

response even after a year. For your

information, in Indian climatic con-

ditions it is between 60:40 and 70:30

If any reader needs any clarifica-

tion or further information on this

subject, he can contact me on tel

The huge campus of the Director

ate of Medical Services (DMS)

(MM, May 1st) of the State Health

Ministry, comprising all the depart-

ments, which also houses some other

government departments, has been

There are two Power Houses (

don't think there any other), one at

Kodambakkam and the other at

T.Nagar. They are TNEB power dis-

tributing sub-stations for electricity

and hence the name. In fact, if you

travel by 12B bus, you must specify

the correct power house to alight at,

Lake View Road is the Erikkarai

Theru of West Mambalam. The area

had a lake several decades ago.

Nungambakkam also had a lake

(Lake Area). The urban expansion

in the 40s had eaten up these lake

areas and now we are moving into

the Adambakkam and Velachery

lake areas. Even temple tanks have

How come Lakshmi Viswana-

than does not know about the statue

of U.V. Swaminatha Ayyar on the

Marina. There is an imposing statue

of him in the Presidency College

campus near Old Pycrofts Road

junction facing east. (Perhaps the

canopy of the subway obscures the

views.) That is the reason why the

Tamil Nadu Government did not

raise his statue during the World

Tamil Conference in 1968. The

statue has been there from the 50s.

Also, according to the gossip column

in a Tamil magazine, it was not ac-

tress Vijayakumari who was the

model for the Kannagi statue but a

small-time actress (I forget her name) who lived in San Thome.

▲ bout Reader Thomas Tharu's

existed there till the 1880s. Some old

land documents from that era make

mention of an eri (lake) there (simi-

Dr. R.K. Natarajan

23, Kalyanapuram Street

Apartment 6

Choolaimedu

Chennai 600 094.

P.J. Joseph

The Trinity

No. 5, Kandigai Road

Chennai 600 076

- Butane: Propane.

Names & statues

sited here since the 50s.

as it goes through both.

dried up after the 70s.

OUR

READERS

WRITE



Kannagi vs. Madhavi – I

The article 'A statue for ▲ Madhavi' (MM, May 1st) by Lakshmi Viswanathan bristles with inaccuracies, strange conclusions and odd suggestions.

Viswanathan contends that no statue should have been erected for Kannagi whose stature was not on par with other scholars, literatteurs and poets whose statues adorn the Marina. But it was the decision of savants and elders of the Tamil diaspora to erect the statue of this model woman and there was no dispute about it.

Viswanathan further says that Vijayakumari, the Tamil actress, posed as a model against the wishes of many who preferred the more beautiful Saroja Devi, but she was rejected as a Kannadiga. The real fact is that Kalpana, another Kannada artiste, was the one who posed as model.

Comparisons are odious and when a person says that Madhavi in comparsion with Kannagi stood on a higher pedestal, thanks to her varied attainments in singing, dancing, writing poetry etc. apart from being a paragon of beauty, there will be few takers as everyone knows that Madhavi weaned away the hero of the Silappadhikaram from his dutiful and cultured wife with whom he had a happy life. The nemesis for Kovalan started when he was lured by Madhavi and left home. In contrast, Kannagi was an embodiment of all virtues which a woman should have and also possessed the power generated by chastity which destroyed Madurai.

If anything, the statue of Madhavi may be installed in dance schools and music sabhas. One of her poses in that dance drama Kaviri

Thantha Kalaiselvi may be chosen as a model for the statue.

> M.R. Pillai H 64/5 Central Avenue

Korattur, Chennai 600 080.

Kannagi vs. Madhavi - II

akshmi Viswanathan, in the Loontext of her eminence in the field of arts and culture, has come up with a plea (MM, May 1st) for a statue for Madhavi, the danseuselover of Kovalan in the magnificent Tamil epic Silappadikaram. There are statues galore and there could be little objection to one more and especially for one noted for excellence in art. The plea is original, born of rich imagination. But the reasoning she advances suffers from regrettable

At the outset, regarding the illustrious author of the classic epic Silabbadikaram, Ilango, here is an extract from the book of mine, The Fragrant Garland (1996) based on the illumining work of Reghu-

"Ilango was neither a Prince of the Chera dynasty nor a brother of Cheran Senguttuvan as popularly claimed. Ilango is only the nom de blume taken from the caste of the author (like Kambar, Valluvar, Chetty, etc.). He belonged to Kaveripumpattinam only".

The mighty pen of Ilango presents to humanity two alternative characters to choose from. Madhavi plucked Kovalan from the garden of Kannagi in spite of the warning of dharma as outlined by Tiruvalluvar, tradition, social values and culture! She is guilty, without doubt. When a man does wrong with a married woman, it is adultery. But when a woman does the same with the husband of another woman, what is it? Kannagi and Madhavi are two types of flowers in the beautiful Chola gar-

soon after and went after the second. The flower that legally belonged to one was stolen! Can the danseuse be hailed as a paragon of virtue and of culture? Does art without character deserve to be hailed?

With the example of her statue and its message in front, can innocent young women with their spouses walk arm-in-arm in peace safely? Will not the statue be an inspiration to emulate Kovalan? Will the good women not become victims of never-ending suspicion themselves, even when innocent casual remarks are made by their worthy spouses, like:

den of culture representing oppo-

sites. Who represented the real cul-

ture of life in the context of the In-

dian ethos? Kovalan wedded the

first, chose to desert her heartlessly

"Darling, is not that girl charm-

ing! I admire her deportment." "She is no Madhavi and I'm not Kannagi to be a silent witness, dear! Stop such indulgences!!" could be the reply

Should they be tempted to drag in the venerable name of the finest woman the Tamil epics have presented to the world?

Does Madhavi qualify for a statue at that great centre, the gateway to the sanctified patriotic sands addressed by worthies like Rajendra Prasad, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajaji, Satyamurti, Kamraj and scores of other icons and symbols of sacrifice and patriotism? No. Never. Admire her prowess in arts. Well deserved, indeed. It catapulted not only a rasika's head but carried him off in toto. Her statue there? Heaven forbid! If I continue to have my judicial powers, I shall consider passing an

order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. Should the statue of Kannagi be restored to its original site? Certainly. The good, the truthful, the honest and the virtuous will be safe with her statue there. Her statue was a warning to wrong-doers and an inspiration to the good, virtuous and

> N. Rajagopalan, I.A.S. (RETD.) 7, 24th Cross Street Chennai 600 020.

Misused domestic LPG

The unfortunate situation of diverting domestic cylinders, with and without collusion (MM, April 16th), is an open secret. What is more serious, if human safety has any relevance, is the diversion or misuse of domestic LPG cylinders, officially tolerated, by the auto sector.

The most unfortunate part is, while the Chief Controller of Explosives has confirmed in writing that it is illegal and not at all advisable for human safety, when I checked with an Insurance Company they admitted it was wrong on their part to issue insurance coverage for such illegal fittings, but were doing so as it was approved by Tariff Advisory Committee, a statutory body of Government of India.

The Government has amended, after three years' suspense, the Motor Vehicles Act in August 2001, saying that vehicles should use only fixed cylinders, which are also available. But the abnormal delay on the part of the Government to take timely follow-up on the policy decision, has encouraged this parallel ilegal system that totally ignores hu-

man safety. The Government of India took a policy decision in 1998 to permit use of LPG as an alternative fuel that was cheaper and reduced emission (15% compared to auto fuel, not total as the advertisements say), recommending LPG as being better than CNG. The amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act, LPG Supply and Distribution etc. were promised within a few months.

This 15% reduction for LPG and CNG is not automatic but is based on the quality of the LPG, the driver, the condition of the engine etc. The active intervention of the Supreme Court speaks for the sustained con-

fusion caused by business interests. The latest and sensible recommendation by Dr. RM Mashelkar, Director General, CSIR, that Government should only specify the quality of the exhaust to be emitted by a vehicle and not the fuel, is ideal for the Government to monitor all these illegal options in collusion with some of the statutory bodies, insurance etc and to be freed from getting involved in court proceedings etc.

naming of these after some very famous persons (who nobody living would have heard of though that would not matter to those who decide the changes).

P.R. Chandran Triplicane Chennai 600 005.

Grim reminders – I

D eader N. Dharmeshwaran Ladds: Lakeview Road, Tank Bund Road and Spur Tank Road are all grim reminders of our urban vandalism - by wiping out our earlier water resources and crying ourselves hoarse about RWH late in the day!

Grim reminders – II

D eader T.M. Sundararaman Adds: 'Power House' stops derive their names from the nearby MES substations and 'Lake View Road' from a lake in Mambalam (incidentally, water flowed from this lake to Mylapore Temple tank in the olden days and the Tank was also called 'Mambalam Lake Tank' once). The city was dotted with several lakes and tanks in olden days.

Unfortunately, the waterbodies have now become residential complexes much to the detriment of the groundwater table of the City.

R.A. Puram PO is named after Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar whose estate comprised the present R.A.

Advice on names

D eader Jaiboy Joseph's plea (MM April 16th) to go back to the name of Madras is valid. Chennai brings back memories of Andhra's claim to the city after States Reorganisation on the plea, inter alia, of purchase of the village by the British from Chennappa Naik. The best compromise would be to use Madras in English and internationally and Chennai in Tamil, as was done in the

In this regard, as suggested by the Editor of Madras Musings elsewhere there should be a Heritage Committee in the Corporation or in the Government to advise on change of names of even streets and roads. Some Englishmen had done yeoman service and their names should not be obliterated.

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

Now renaming?!

(MM, May 1st) queries, I can clarify a few. DMS bus stop is called so after the office of the Director of Medical Services and its big campus there. In fact, there is a bus shelter there "in memory of late Dr A B Marikar, former DMS." Lake View Road is after a lake that existed there 600 006. till the 1940s. Tank Bund Road Spur Tank Road are after tanks that

was saddened by Reader Louis Menezes of Transparency International India - Tamil Nadu Chapter (TII - TN) having taken umbrage (MM, May 1st) at MMM's remarks on the inauguration of the chapter. I do appreciate that hope springs eternal in human breasts, and I therefore do not blame the eminent personages in its managing committee for displaying a touching faith in their being able to put the fear of

God into the venal and the cor-

Perhaps TII-TN's Menezes is

rupt in our midst.

inaware that upstaging these personages, there is already a Sadachar Bharati brought into being ten years ago under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Former Indian President R. Venkataraman is its chairman and about 50 renowned public figures from all over India, including scientists, writers, educationists, businesspersons, retired police and defence services chiefs, former chief justices of the Supreme Court and various High Courts, ex-cabinet secretaries and chief secretaries, and the like are its members. C. Subramaniam. Bharat Ratna, was the Vice-Chairman of this organisation which passed several sonorous resolutions, in effect, calling on the corrupt to go to hell. But they have refused, and the Sadachar Bharati had to lump it.

Very much earlier, in 1964 soon after he took over as Union Home Minister, Gulzarilal Nanda made a public announcement in which he took a stentorian pledge to eradicate corruption from India's public life in precisely two years, failing which he undertook to renounce politics. To help bring about this consummation he started a Sadachar Samiti again filled with persons of intimidating credentials. Nanda also declared that anyone could approach him between given hours every day with information about corrupt dealings anywhere in India. The number converging on his residence at 6 Hastings Road grew rapidly from around 100 on the first day to more than 10,000 within a month and threatened to swamp the entire neighbourhood. A giant-size shamiana, with all other supporting infrastructure like toilets, drinking water etc. had to be put in place. The hundreds of thousands of petitions submerging Nanda like an avalanche daily were sorted departmentwise and forwarded to the respective officials in charge for reports, folowed by reminders, and remind-

ers to reminders, and reminders

Meanwhile, the dreaded end

to reminders to ...!

Just two simple tasks for them

to the two-year deadline came, but the end to corruption was nowhere in sight. The ingenious Nanda issued a statement tying himself into knots arguing why there was no need for him to tender his resignation. Nevertheless he must be given credit for setting up a Committee for Prevention of Corruption under one of the founding fathers, K. Santhanam (the same who spent two nights in the filthy Nabha jail manacled to fellow-prisoner Jawaharlal Nehru!), whose report is still the source of all the initiatives that had been taken by the Government: such as, establishment of vigilance organisation in every office, creation of the office of the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, vigilance clearance for sensitive appointments, rules and regulations against delays, codes conduct and much else. The most important of its recommendations was legislation, if not a Constitutional amendment, for the appointment of an indepe dent Lok Pal who would have the powers to initiate investigation and undertake prosecution of all persons in authority from the Prime Minister downwards for misuse of power, possession of assets disproportionate to known sources of income and downright corruption.

Any number of voluntary organisations have sprouted all over India vowing to fight corruption tooth and nail and with al their might and main. Even the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, Mr. N. Vittal, has jumped into the fray by constituting a Council for Clean India. They bring out newsletters containing resonating exhortations. In totality their efforts have been a damp squib for three reasons.

First, being by nature selfcentred and egotistic, they do not pool their energies, resources and strengths together but are content to plough their own lonely fur-

Second, the do-gooders who are mostly retired persons streaking past 60, are at the end of their tether with declining access and influence, besides having to make-do without infrastructural or financial back-up for investigation, enforcement or followup

Third, eminent persons of impeccable background and unimpeachable credibility, being scarce, are in great demand, and readily lend their names to far too many worthy initiatives. Each of the members of the managing committee of the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Transparency International is, to my knowledge, in at least five other outfits sporting various unrelated banners. The result is their involvement becomes notional, confined to attending committee meetings, and

most often not even that. TII's Vice-President S.D. Sharma no doubt had all these in mind when he said that the organisation would adopt Gandhian methods and avoid confrontationist approach. I am sure this was music to the ears of the rapacious rascals with their hands in the till who must have nothing but very best wishes for the new chapter. They have no problem with either Gandhi or declamatory dramatics.

If the TII's mission is only to be publishing the so-called corruption perception index from time to time, its presence will just be of academic interest. If i wants to make a difference, i must gird up its loins and take on the powers-that-be, even if that means a few body blows on the sacred persona of its members from political dadas and goondas Will the highly decorous and de mure members of the managing committee who, by nature, would like to avoid trouble and not disturb the even tenor of their lives gear themselves up for all the rough-and-tumble that a war on

corruption takes?

I just prescribe two simple tasks for TII's Menezes and his well-meaning ilk: One, get the Lok Pal Bill passed by Parliament before the end of 2002. Two ensure that Sukh Ram (an ally of the BJP in the NDA) from whose house close to Rs. 4 crore in fragrant currency notes was recovered from every nook and cranky, and Sidhu of the Punjah Public Service Commission fame the number of whose bank lock ers and the bundles of currency notes they contain are yet to be fully counted, meet their just desserts before March 2003 by constantly prodding the investi gators and prosecutors until the job is done. Why not? After all the entire impeachment proceed ings against the all-powerfu President of the mightiest nation took only six months to be com pleted. One ounce of achievement of this type, one scoundre in politics shoved into jail for life will mean far more than the reams of seminar papers and surveys which are all that tious outfits in this field have so far shown themselves to be capable of.

B.S. Raghavan, LA.S. (RETD.) 3 Second Street Nehru Nagar Chennai 600 020

Thirsty Chennai missed the bus

hennai residents have had high hopes on 'Telugu Ganga' for the drinking water needs of the thirsty city.

The Deccan Chronicle of March 30th under the heading 'Telugu Ganga Aid for Nandyal' stated that "Nandyal Municipal Commissioner N Rajendra Prasad discussed feasibility of water diversion to Nandyal during the summer", a pointer to what could possibly derail Chennai's expectations.

In 1971, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu decided to bring Kaveri water to Bangalore and Chennai.

Karnataka went ahead and successfully commissioned in 1974 the first stage of the project 30 million gallons per day with an inbuilt pipeline capacity to raise it to 60 million gallons per day in the second phase. The Bangalore

raised water from Shimsha to Bangalore in three stages of 500 metres each to a total height of 1500 metres through a steel pipe (inside, concrete lined, and outside, gunited) in a record project schedule of three years. Today, the Kaveri Water Supply Scheme providing upto 120 MGD (574 million litres per day) is satisfying Bangalore's thirst. The whole exercise was a modern day replay of 'Bhagirata Tapas' in

Water Supply & Sewerage Board

The 1924 Kaveri Water Agreement expired in 1974. Karnataka took advantage of the proviso therein that excluded/exempted drinking water extraction from any purview of the treaty.

In Tamil Nadu the identical exercise to bring water to Chennai from the Kaveri ended

without results, since the conceptually wrong prestressed concrete pipes failed under dynamic online test. The matter ended in indictment by the ill-fated Sarkaria Commission.

Karnataka has constructed dams upstream of Mettur and allows only surplus water from the Kaveri to flow past Krishnarajasagar.

Chennai continues to thirst for water and the Kaveri has gone dry in most of its course in Tamil Nadu.

Judicial norm preserves traditional rights and mandates statusquo-ante whenever treaties/ agreements come up for renewal. This was to the advantage of Tamil Nadu in 1974, but the government of Tamil Nadu ill-advisedly withdrew at the hearings commencement stage of the petition, preferring redressal at the Supreme Court.

Karnataka would not have been able to get out of the now disputed minimum water flow stipulation, if Tamil Nadu's Veeranam scheme had fructified.

It is time Tamil Nadu forms a "Think Tank" to look at future events, carry out perspective/prospective strategy and initiate preemptive action as Karnataka has successfully achieved.

(Note: The writer was privileged to participate in the Bangalore Cauvery Water Supply Scheme and vouches for the stated facts.)

M. Subramaniam

Reliance Industries Limited lar to Vepery – eri bordered by vep =JVL Plaza, 5th Floor, neem trees). 501, Mount Road But the writer need not worry Chennai 600 018. Now that these names have been raked up, there is sure to be some re-

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

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

 Madras Musings does not accept letters by e-mail.

Junk device

W/ith regard to junk mail (MM, W May 1st), here's a device used by some weary Americans: Just stuff all the junk you receive into the envelope they usually send (postage paid by them), scribble some choice words on the form they send and post it back to them. Maybe the next time I'll enclose a handful of sand. The idea is to make it inconvenient for them and they just might leave

> Rom Whitaker P.O. Box 21 Chengalpattu 603 001.

Tor some time now, I have witressed snippets on television news showing the authorities hunting and tracking down spurious mineral/drinking water. I am informed that during such raids on shops and establishments, dispensing bottles, jars and sachets containing water without the ISI mark of approval are seized by the officials and the spurious water is poured onto the ground.

While I commend the concerned authorities on their sincerity and earnestness in maintaining public health. I am sure that in a waterstarved metropolis such as ours this water though unfit for drinking could have been put to other uses.

> Suresh Mangaladurai 9, 8th Street Gopalapuram Chennai 600 086.

Feeling let down

Ay great regret now is that Nave surrendered my old Telephone Directory and got three volumes without any Yellow pages. Instead, one of the volumes has yellow patches which is not at all helpful to find what I want. Any product you wanted in the earlier directory with Missing in the best Yellow pages was easy to pick.

Chennai Telephones boasts that a CD is available. How many people have computers? Even those who have, people like me, open the computer to send an Email but find trying to get through to VSNL is a headache. So imagine using a CD for Yellow page reference. It may be good for those who are masters in software, but not for people like me.

Abolishing the old system of distributing directories at petrol bunks is also very unfair especially for Senior Citizens unless they have cars or somebody to go and collect them from Exchanges. Actually, the van coming and distributing at various centres was a great boon. What can you do about people with no imagination or consideration?

Anna Varki 21, Central Street Kilpauk Garden Colony Chennai 600 010.

It is a matter of pride that a num-Lber of our educational institutions figure among the "Best Ten" in different categories (MM, May 16th). But may I point out one or two errors and omissions?

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was an alumnus of Christian College and not of Presidency. Alladi Krishnaswamy was a student of Christian and later Presidency. The list of illustrious alumni from Presidency should include C.R., C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, General Cariappa, H.V. Kamat, C. Subramaniam, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay et al.

Loyola's list should have included tennis star R. Krishnan and athlete H. Rebello.

> S.P. Sankaranarayanan F-7, Prithvi Apartments 104. Kali Amman Koil Street Chennai 600 092.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current affairs questions are from the period May 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

- 1. From May 1st, who has taken over the security of the Taj
- 2. David Smith was recently sent to prison for 20 months for unleashing one of the most dangerous computer viruses in recent times. Name the virus.
- 3. The 75th anniversary of a famous crossing was re-enacted by the pioneer's grandson in the New Spirit of St. Louis. What was the crossing?
- 4. This pioneering hotelier in the country was 103 years old when he passed away on May 4th. Name him.
- 5. Simple. Who is the new CM of Uttar Pradesh?
- 6. In which city did a MiG 21 crash on May 3rd, leading to the grounding of the entire fleet?
- 7. Who is the new Speaker of the Lok Sabha?
- 8. After which Freedom Fighter has the Port Blair airport been named?
- 9. Name the Asian Nobel Laureate freed, after 19 months of house arrest, on May 6th.
- 10. Who is the new Chief Justice of India?

* * *

- 11. Where is the State planning an 'Administrative City' to host the Secretariat and Government offices?
- 12. Name the veteran actress, heroine of such films as Nenin Oru Aalayam and Bale Pandia, who passed away recently.
- 13. What new security measure imported at a cost of Rs. 25 lakh and the first of its kind for the Railways, was inaugurated at Chennai Central on May 3rd?
- 14. What was opened for the first time in Chennai at 37 Errabalt Chetty Street in January 1932?
- 15. Name the Englishman cred ited with introducing oats, wheat strawberries, peaches etc. in the Nilgiris.
- 16. According to a Bill introduced on May 7th, what environmental 'hazard' is the Government all set to ban?
- 17. The Nilgiris Mountain Rail way is the only one in the World using what system of operation?
- 18. Which is the only 'womer only' University in the State?
- 19. Why was Dr. E. Bala Guruswamy in the news?
- 20. Name the Chennai-based player who won a record sixth National 'A' chess title recently.

(Answers on page 7)

Showing the young their heritage

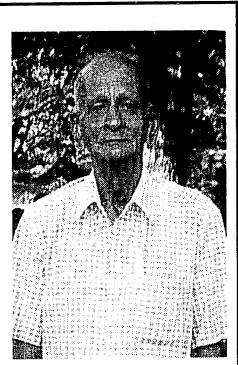
D egarding your article About involving the Scouts and Guides in heritage-preserving activities (MM, April 16th), these ideas are actually followed by the veteran Scoutmaster of the Bharath Scouts of India, Theosophical Society campus, Adyar, Chennai, S. Venkatraman, who is in his 80s.

He collects heritage news from various magazines and has created a paper-cuttings album to enable children to understand their ancient past. I have, at his invitation, taken children from different schools to many heritage sites to create an interest in heritage amongst them. I took students from the St. Dominic AIH Secondary School, St. Thomas' Mount, to visit the dwelling place of Early Man at Gudiyum near Poondi Reservoir. It is noteworthy that the vicinity of Chennai had once been home to pre-historic man.

Gudiyum is about 22 km from Poondi Reservoir and the natural cavern there can be reached by walking 3 km on a slope covered with pebbles, thorny bushes and shrub. The Gudiyum cave is called the Manachaman Cave and people from the nearby villages visit it on Chitrapurnima day and New Moon days and offer their prayers. The cave is about 110 feet high and 200 feet broad and about 200 people can stay in it at a time. The stone tools found here have been dated to 1,75,000 to 70,000 years.

The students of the Nature Club were also taken to the Poondi pre-historic site museum where they had an opportunity to see the prehistoric artefacts such as handaxe and cleavers discovered in Poondi and in nearby places like Attirambakkam and Nambakkam. A few megalithic burial sarcophagus (urn) brought from Mambakkam in Sriperumbudur are exhibited at this site museum which awed the students.

Tamil Nadu has many areas of archaeological and historical interest. It would be good for the student community to visit such places. Besides the knowledge



S. Venkataraman

they will gain through such trips, they will also find they have a responsibility to conserve and preserve these national trea-

> S. Vasanthi Archaeologist Department of Archaeology Govt. of Tamil Nadu Chennai 600 113.

Walkabout in Mylapore

A bout a year ago, one of our friends from Delhi commented that although he and his family had lived in Chennai for over two years, they had not been able to savour the local flavour. I immediately offered to escort him and his family through the sanctum of Mylapore and let them see the old quarters through the eyes of a Mylaporean. Thus began our in the area. Most of the time, walking tour.

tral home near Luz Corner. We this road, we got the opportuwarmed up for the long walk at nity to appreciate the architec-Nageswara Rao Park, a green tural simplicity of Vivekananda lung that is well utilised by the health-conscious, and by members of the Laughter Club. Many years ago, while I was still at school, I remember that this park was the home of tramps and small time ruffians, and was not safe for women or even for families. Things are different

We turned right from the and the busy Ramar / Anjaneyar park towards Luz Church, still known as the "Kaattu Koil" among old-timers. Walking past the well-maintained facade, my friends were quite impressed with the stone slabs on the floor indicating, in Latin and in Portuguese, details of people who lived and died in the area several centuries ago.

Leaving the church, I took one of my favourite streets in Mylapore-Kennedy Street. had no explanation for who this street was named after; was he an important person here, for there is Kennedy 1st Street and Kennedy 2nd Street. Both streets used to be lined with agraharam type homes, street houses with tiled roofs and a quaint look. I was always intrigued by the fact that although the homes were styled like agraharams, there was no temple in the vicinity. It is amazing how

quickly these older homes have I could even identify the house tant grocery store in Mylapore disappered, only to be replaced by modern houses, with basement car parking and villa type

We walked past the dhobighat area on Oliver Road; I used to be fascinated by the donkeys that used to be tethered here. Once in a while, you can still see one of these lovely creatures though, trucks and minivans We started from our ances- block the road. Walking along College. Juxtaposed against buildings with little character, these buildings have a grace reminiscent of another era.

Then it was up Sullivan Garden Street (now PS Sivasamy Salai), till we turned right to enter a little known temple, the Apparsamy Koil. Situated right across from the Valluvar statue Temple, the Apparsamy Koil stands out as an oasis, devoid of milling crowds and high decibel levels. Here we could sit and enjoy the mild evening breeze from the Bay.

We then traced a path past the hardware shops, across the infamous Buckingham Canal towards Mundakaniamman Koil Street. The agraharam houses along Madhava Perumal Koil Street have managed to retain their ambience of vore, and

where my school teacher used until the advent of FoodWorld

Next we took Arundel Street, past houses of Mylapore Street, breathing in the ambilawyers and traders, and came out on Kutcheri Road, by the mosque, past where Rayar's fore taking Sengazhaneer Pilla-Cafe used to be, and into Maddala Narayanan Street. At the end of this short stretch, I pointed out to my friends Mangollai, where the best of speeches of political leaders, such as M. Karunanidhi and the late Anandanayaki were heard in the Seventies.

around the Kapaleeswarar Temple, it is East Mada Street that has maintained its original flavour: old institutions like Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Rasi Silk House and Karpagam Mess still recognisable. The tour would not have been complete without a visit to the temple; I retain fond memories of evenings spent in the temple precincts with my grandmother. Those were the days when the elders gathered on the sands (it was not fully tiled or concreted) to discuss about their daughters-in-law, their servants, and exchange recipes!

We avoided the busy South Mada Street and, instead, ambled along the fragrant lane housing several flower and garland shops and ending in Ambika Stores, the most impor-

and the like. We lingered a while around North Mada ence of the pavement shops and the series of jewellery stores, beyar Koil Street. The sight of Santhi Tailors (for Bharata Natyam dresses) took me down memory lane to the days that I attended dance classes on this very road, at the Shanmukhananda School of Dance.

Finally, turning left on Kutcheri Road, we were confronted with the rapid moderni sation of shops — this stretch has become a major market for sanitaryware and ceramic tiles. I was saddened by the disappearance of Balaii Pinmen (laundry to those of you who have never heard of the word 'pinmen') and Ellvee Pens, which were trusted institutions in the days of cotton dresses and fountain pens.

Back at Luz Corner, I heaved a sigh of relief that some of the old institutions like Luz News Mart and Rangaswamy Studio have survived to lend more than an air of familiarity to Mylaporeans like me — who've come back after a while. It had been two hours down memory lane with others wanting to catch up on Chennai.

Malini V. Shankar

CONSUMERS LOSING OUT ON REDRESSAL

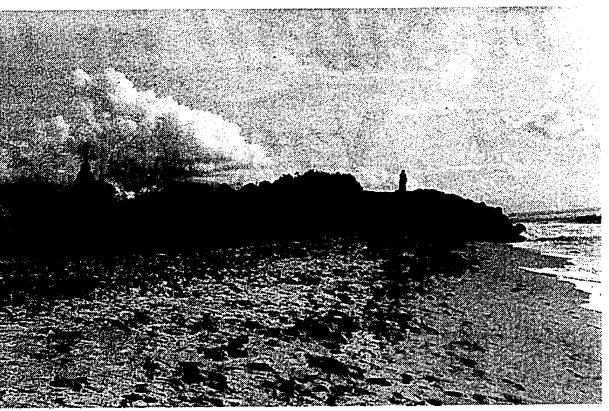
(Continued from page 1) unbecoming of a person in such a position.

- Summing up: Consumer courts do not have money to run.
- State governments are not interested in supporting the fora and commissions.
- While everyone loudly proclaims that the consumer is king, he is in reality treated worse than a beggar.
- The redressal system is consumer-unfriendly by introducing civil court proceed-
- Consumers have to spend a

large amount of money, while the law provides free facilities. In most for athe money for stamp is collected. The orders are not given immediately.

In short, it is time that we relooked at the Act, its redressal system and do something which will protect the consumers.





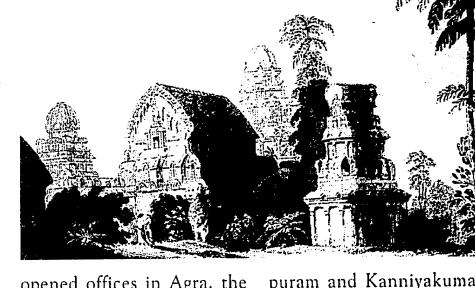
Special thrust for tourism

The Tamil Nadu Govern-I ment, determined to give tourism a much-needed thrust, has nearly doubled its budget from Rs. 17.5 crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 32 crore in 2002-03. Of this, Rs. 11 crore has been earmarked for infrastructure development - accommodation, public conveniences, roads, lighting and drinking water. And an unprecedented Rs. 12 crore has been allotted for publicity alone, in English and in the vernaculars - brochures, posters, documentary films, commercials, and fairs and festivals.

Eco-tourism is expected to receive special focus, especially in Pichavaram, the Gulf of Mannar and Udhagamandalam.

Heritage conservation is also likely to receive a lot of attention. It is understood that the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation has been having discussions with the owners of several Chettinad homes to get them to rent them out to tourists. The focus would also be on lesser known places, like Gangaikondacholapuram. The Javadhu Hills, Kollimalai, Yelagiri, Pachaimalai, Yercaud, Point Calimere, Valparai are also being opened up.

As part of its new marketing strategy, TTDC recently



opened offices in Agra, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Jaipur and Visakhapatnam. Road shows have also been conducted in Chandigarh, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi.

HUDCO has been given the responsibility (and a budget of Rs. 8-10 crore) of preparing a master plan for Mammalla-

puram and Kanniyakumari. Under the plan for Mammallapuram, which is in a very advanced stage and is likely to be ready shortly, the area around the Shore Temple, Five Rathas and Arjuna's Penance would be cleared of all encroachments,

ing installed.

bolster the image of the State as a preferred tourist destination, success is likely to be a distant dream unless attention is paid and landscaped. Shops would to basics - such as cleaning up be relocated and a separate of the city, relaying roads, turn-

ing out a junk-room. The pictures were of 18th Century drawings that had appeared in "some book or other" — and neither artist nor photographer is known. Our OLD show how the waves used to come right onto the base of the Shore Temple — before restoration created a wall around it — and a ratha complex rather overgrown with trees and shrub before it was cleaned up. Our NEW

show rocks piled around the seaface of the Shore Temple

making the whole complex rather unsightly and the ratha

The Old... ...& The New

the Tourism Department consultants, a look at this major

heritage site would seem appropriate. Particularly when the

mail not so long ago brought us from a well-wisher a whole

collection of old photographs that he had found while clear-

With plans to 'save' Mamallapuram being looked at by

complex much more viewer-friendly if less pictorially

At the bottom of the page are pictures of on-going excavations in the shadow of the Shore Temple — yet another indication that little is known of this ancient port of the Pallavas. What is curious about all this is the official silence shrouding these excavations and the even louder silence on what the Indo-British oceanographic team found during their recent dives off the Shore Temple.





parking slot would be built. Roads are to be relaid and light-

But despite all the efforts to

ing shops and service counters into friendlier places, providing regular electricity supply and safe drinking water, and offering professionalism in every

Sashi Nair

Answers to Quiz

1. The CISF; 2. Melissa; 3. Charles Lindbergh's 1927 solo flight across the Atlantic; 4. M.S. Oberoi; 5. Mayawati; 6. Jalandhar; 7. Manohar Joshi; 8. Veer Savarkar; 9. Aung San Sun Kyi; 10. Justice B.N. Kirpal.

* * *

11. On the road to Mamallapuram on about 2000 acres; 12. Devika; 13. A Bomb Disposal Squad; 14. The first telephone exchange in Madras; 15. John Sullivan: 16. Sale and use of nonrecyclable plastics; 17. Rack and Pinion System; 18. Mother Teresa University; 19. He is the new VC of Anna University; 20. S. Vijayalakshmi.



The Archaelogical Survey continues with its excavations in Mamallapuram and new 'finds' like these walls are regularly reported.

Football in the T' Nagar sun

t was when Madras was a 1'ghost city', deserted by a population panicked by the threat of Japanese invasion, that the T'Nagar Football Club was born at the Corporation Playground on Somasundaram Street, T. Nagar. The Club has survived many hurdles since that day in July 1942 when a bunch of football-crazy youngsters decided to team together.

Availability of the ground itself was one of the first hurdles. Air Raid Precaution and Civil Defence Units were digging trenches and building air raid shelters all over Madras. Jagannathan, the then playground instructor, invited the ARP to make the Somasundaram Grounds their recreation centre. That saved the ground.

Ragunathan was the first Secretary of the Club. The TFC entered the league in the III Division. K.N. Balasubramanian of Pachaiyappa's College was the Captain. The team fared well through the efforts of Mukundan (centre forward), Gangadharan (inside left) and Hussain Shah (pivot) and was promoted to the II Division. The next year the team slid back to III Division. S. lagannathan took over as Secretary and new blood was infused. S. Padmanabhan, who donned State colours, and T.R. Rajagopalan strengthened the team. In 1945-46, the team moved into the II Division again as unbeaten champion. K. Balasubramanian, popularly known as 'Mylapore Mani', joined the team for the 1945-46 season: he later donned State

Remembering his Club

 An article in Madras Musings a few months ago had mentioned the Mambalam Football Club. The Club was really the T'Nagar Football Club, now more than sixty years old. I was also glad to see the names of Gangadharan, Balan, who is still the secretary of the Club, Jagannathan and Padmanabhan who ran the club till 1963 when I went out of Madras.

When the team celebrated its 50th year in 1994, the second opportunity was used to raise funds for the club, which till then was running on funds from its members' pockets. We started a women's team which won the City league recently. Several of our women players have donned the State colours.

The team moved to the Trustpuram grounds for practice in the Eighties as playing football in T'Nagar dwindled in popularity and the ground maintenance became poor. A sad fall from the days when our practice sessions used to attract crowds, as several State players used to come for practice in our ground.

Cricket league matches were played regularly in the ground till the War broke out and the whole ground was dug up for air raid shelters. M J Gopalan, C R Rangachari and others played in these matches. I enclose a souvenir of the Club.

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colours. Two years later the team won the II Division Championship and in 1948-49 entered the I Division. The team that helped win the II Championship Division included Ganesan, Manickam, Pattabiraman, K.N. Balasubramaniam, S. Venkateswaran, N. Balasubramaniam, K. Balasubramaniam, Jagannathan, S. Padmanabhan and T.R. Rajago-

From 1948-49 to 1952-53, the team stayed in I Division. The next year was disastrous and the team slid to II Division and then even further. K. Padmanabhan, who became the Secretary of the team, helped it to retrieve the lost ground. The team won the II Division in 1960-61, and re-entered the Senior Division, ensuring the reentry, the contributors mainly being Rajasekaran, Swaminathan, Prakash Rao, Padmanabhan, Narayanaswamy, Prabhakar, Ponnuswamy, Perumal, Balaguru, Samsonraj, Arokyadoss, Allimuthu, Krishnamurthy and Mohan Philipose. Among them, Rajasekaran (goalie), Prakash Rao (centre back) and Allimuthu (outside left) played for the MFA Junior Team in 1960. Rajasekaran donned the Madras University colours during 1958-60. Team spirit was high and no one left for better pastures though there were opportunities aplenty.

Under Prakash Rao, the team was perhaps the first league team to accept the fourback system and a roving withdrawn forward long before the 4-2-4 system earned its

From 1961-62 to 1969-70 the team developed well. With the fine performance of Swaminathan as stopper back and Thangaraj, Janakiraman and Lingam, and Sebastian in the forward line, the team had a very good season in 1963-64 and finished fourth in the League, just below ICF, Railway and Wimco. In 1964-65 the team was further strengthened by Gajendran, Athmanathan, Meshak, Claudius, Jagannathan and Dhanakoti, who all played in the MFA XI in the Durand Football Tournament that year. But they were spotted by the then Accountant General, who formed a team to play in the league. The TFC lost nine players. The team was never quite the same thereafter. The continuous drain of good players to Government and Bank teams had their impact. It has been a constant struggle since, even in the lower divisions.

The team was managed by the Secretary and the Captain for the first 25 years and functioned in an informal way. In its Silver Jubilee year, a draft constitution was passed and P.N. Ramachandran elected its first President. He was the then Vice President of the MFA and the Secretary of All India Referees Board. The other office-bearers were K. Padmanabhan, Vice-President; K.N. Balasubramanian, Secretary; C.D. Swaminathan, Joint Secretary; and K. Venkateswaran, Treasurer. The members of the Executive Committee were V. Krishnamurthi, M. Naravanaswami, C.S. Rajasekaran, T. Prabhakar Rao and Mohan Philipose. — (From TFC Souvenir.)

Founding an association

n association to pro-Amote and control the game of football in Madras Province was formed in 1934 by the then football clubs of Madras City which were managed by individuals dedicated to the game. Many of the clubs, however, did not relish the formation of an association which they feared would curb their freedom and control their activities. Those were the days when any player could play for any club in any tournament. The Gymkhana and S.I.A.A., the two clubs conducting tournaments at the time, also did not welcome an agency controlling the conduct of their tournaments.

A.M. Kanniappa Mudaliar's first attempts to form association proved futile. But during a tour to Calcutta with his Pachaiyappas Football Club he had met IFA officials and studied the working of that pioneering football body. With their help and his soft-spoken and persuasive approach this academic (he was Headmaster of Pachaiyappa's High School, Kancheepuram) convinced the others of the necessity for such an organisation to promote and control the game in Madras province. And so, on January 5, 1934, Madras Football Association came into being, with A.M. Kanniappa Mudaliar as its Founder. What he started, N. Vittal, who first brought the National Football Championships to Madras, and J.E. Nelson Isaacs built on - and today the Tamil Nadu Football Association is on a firm footing.

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