

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Vol. XII No. 4

FREE ISSUE

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 you.

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)

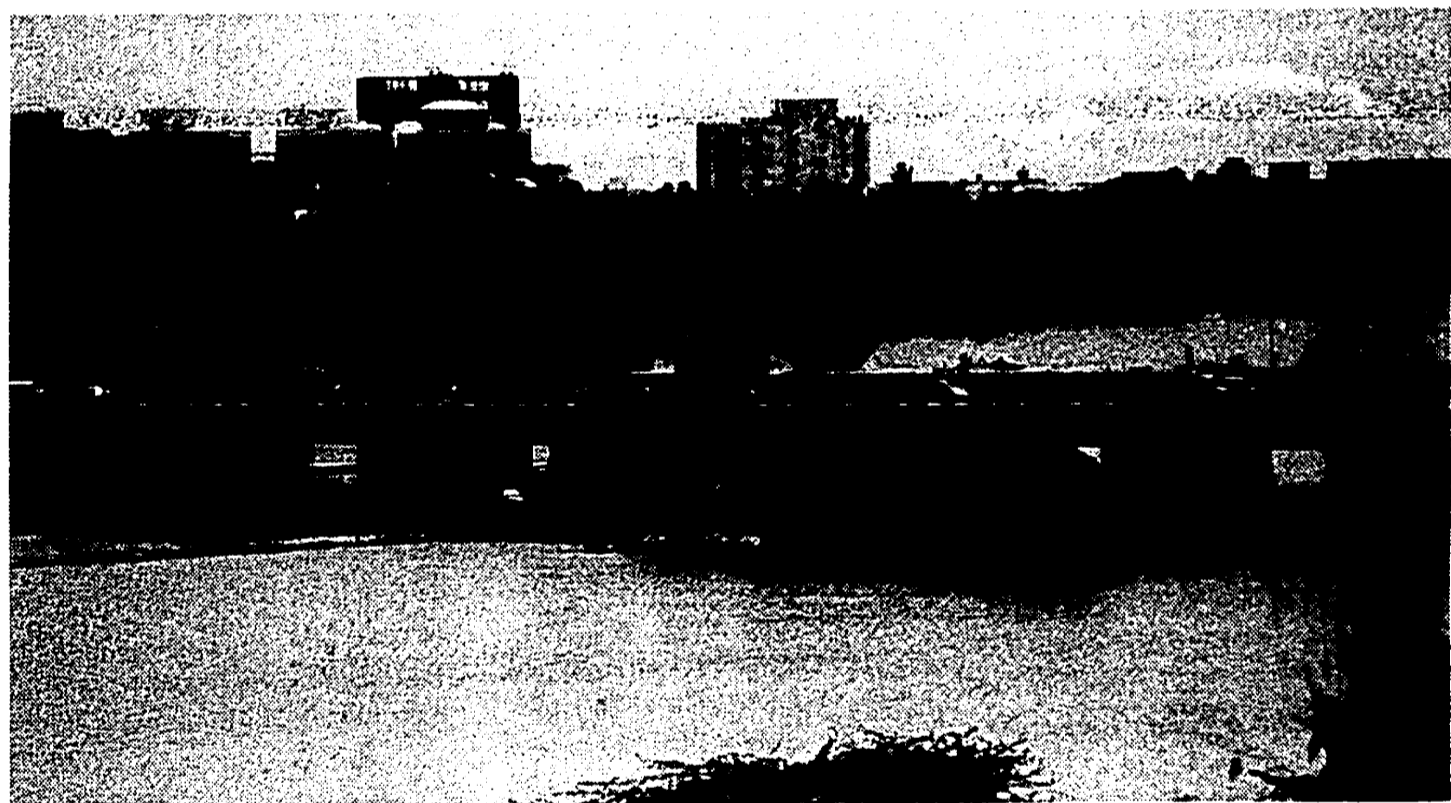
Madras Musings recently featured pictures of buildings being built on the Adyar riverbed. My pictures today show a road that's been built on the riverbed and mounds of excavated earth as well as a road built on the Gandhi Nagar bank of the river. Enquiries on the spot brought no answers, but on further 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 river.

(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 fora 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 fora and commissions

have been converted into lawyers' 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?

For several years now this journal has been writing on the goings-on in the Adyar 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 Quibble 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 mangroves?

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 everything is by the rulebook?

Maps & Humanities

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

city by officials of the Department 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 knowledge.

As things stand in the country, every map published showing Indian territory, be it by a private publisher or any Government department, has to be scrutinised and approved by the Survey of India, which removes much information stating that it is following Defence Department guidelines. More detailed maps have to be sent ALSO to the Defence Department who very often remove further information. Over the years, MMM has seen such information as the 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. This computerised information would be available to any mapmaker, MMM was told, at very nominal royalties. Hooray, MMM feels like saying, but let's wait till we see what is available; our security-conscious habus, who don't seem aware of the satellite age and the availability abroad of more detailed maps of India than available to the public here, could still find enough things to restrict so as to make an A to Z map of any city useless.

While the organisers were forthcoming on the map question, even though it is not part of the Lambton commemoration, they were less forthcoming on another suggestion pertaining to the need to take another look at education in this country, particularly in high school. The commemoration organisers are planning a whole heap of activities that will involve children in the year-long celebration. These include exhibitions, treasure hunts, quizzes, cartographic exercises and treks. But what use are these one-off activities for those who get little exposure to the Humanities, particularly History, Geography, the Environment and Governance? What use are history, geography and heritage-oriented themes to those who only the sciences or commerce know?

MMM has for long suggested in revision of high school syllabuses, taking them back to the

days when History, Geography, Civics and Nature Study (the Environment) were taught as separate subjects right through high school, and not as in the majority of schools now where it is one subject — Social Studies — taught for no more than three years in the most perfunctory manner. MMM has also felt that these subjects, looked at from the point of view of heritage, need to be taught in school — one year spent on the students' district, a second year on the students' State and the third year on the country. Combining both, this could be worked out to offer the four listed subjects as separate ones in Classes 3-7 and only the heritage focus (both manmade as well as natural) in Classes 8, 9 and 10, supplementing an Arts/Science specialisation.

The Department of Science and Technology may be interested in promoting map consciousness during the Lambton Year, but it could take the opportunity to interact with the Education Ministry on the broader issue of a broader-based education that will cover several of the particular issues it is concerned

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

with, like Geography and Environment. As far as MMM is concerned, he'd be delighted if the Tamil Nadu Education Department would consider what has been suggested above. Certainly it could be the subject of some in-depth discussion, with a look at what is happening elsewhere in the world.

The Sethu again

And so we are once again talking about the Sethu-samudram 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 Sethu scheme have constantly cited the possibility it holds to endanger the environment. Making an Environmental Impact Assessment first is, therefore, the wise thing to do. But ELAs also need to look at the greatest good for the greatest number. This one will have to look at dumping of the dredged material, the impact on fishing, and conservation of the biosphere reserve, weighing the cost of them to the immediate area against the economic and strategic benefits the canal might bring the country.

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.

In brief

★ 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 UNESCO 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 status-giver 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 NMR.

★ 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 present.

★ 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 Mannar (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-

— MMM

Save, NOT close, this 'costly error'

As 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?

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 (river-mouth) and lagoon bars, have all been the cause for the disuse and failure of the Buckingham Canal, whose very concept, the laborious digging by famine-fleeing 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 Pradesh 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, yet another calamity, the closure of the Pulicat Bar (lake-mouth) occurred, so that water level in the Canal went down drastically, handicapping navigation. 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 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



Polluting the Canal with thermal power station effluents (above) and garbage (below). (All pictures by SAMUEL SUKUMAR.)



Untended green growth narrowing the Canal.

and is silted up so much that 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 refuge for brackish water biodiversity.

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 Coromandel Coast are constantly dredged and kept open so that the Buckingham Canal is flushed automatically by the tidal impacts through

them, and is allowed to flow 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 North-east Monsoon. The canal-bunds 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 inter-state, inter-river canal in India, precariously running north-south, is a pioneering model foreseeing the much-delayed 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 destroyed 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 therefore fail to understand why the State Coastal Zone Management Authority has allowed this activity to take place under their very noses.

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

to the Director of Environment. 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 by 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 river..."

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 mud road" will be destroyed after the laudable purpose for which it was built is served. Will this road to remain *in situ* like much of the sandfill in the Adyar Creek near the Ambedkar Memorial, wonders a CAG member.

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 Mahal?
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 *Nenjil 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 Errabalu Chetty Street in January 1932?
15. Name the Englishman credited 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 Railway is the only one in the World using what system of operation?
18. Which is the only 'women 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

Regarding 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. Venkataraman, 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. Tho-

mas' 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 treasures.

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Walkabout in Mylapore

About a year ago, one of our Afriends 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 walking tour.

We started from our ancestral home near Luz Corner. We warmed up for the long walk at Nageswara Rao Park, a green 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 now.

We turned right from the 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. I 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 disappeared, only to be replaced by modern houses, with basement car parking and villa type facades!

We walked past the dhoti-ghat 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 in the area. Most of the time, though, trucks and minivans block the road. Walking along this road, we got the opportunity to appreciate the architectural simplicity of Vivekananda 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 and the busy Ramar / Anjaneyar 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 Mundakaniyaman Koil Street. The *agraharam* houses along Madhava Perumal Koil Street have managed to retain their ambience of yore, and

I could even identify the house where my school teacher used to live.

Next we took Arundel Street, past houses of Mylapore lawyers and traders, and came out on Kutchery Road, by the mosque, past where Rayar's 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.

Of all the Mada Streets 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-

tant grocery store in Mylapore until the advent of FoodWorld and the like. We lingered a while around North Mada Street, breathing in the ambience of the pavement shops and the series of jewellery stores, before taking Sengazhaneer Pillayar 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 Shanmukhanda School of Dance.

Finally, turning left on Kutchery Road, we were confronted with the rapid modernisation of shops — this stretch has become a major market for sanitaryware and ceramic tiles. I was saddened by the disappearance of Balaji 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

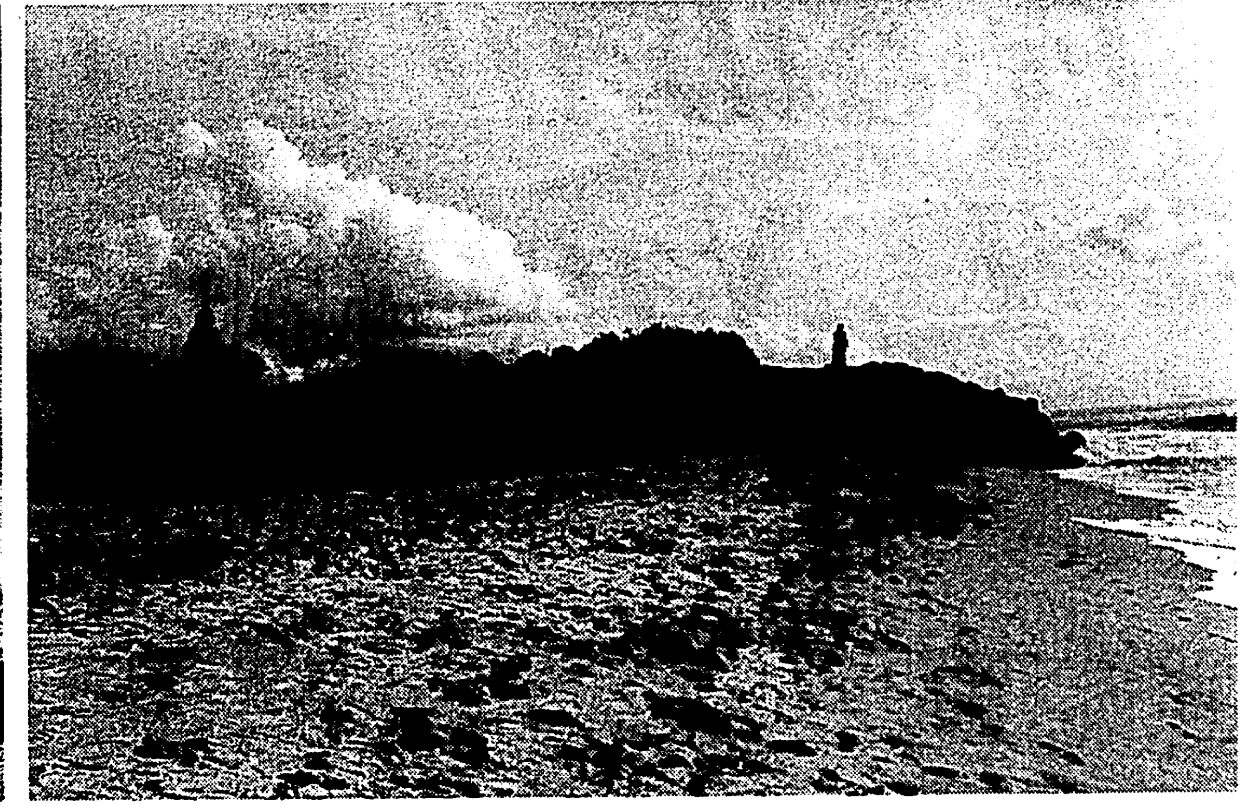
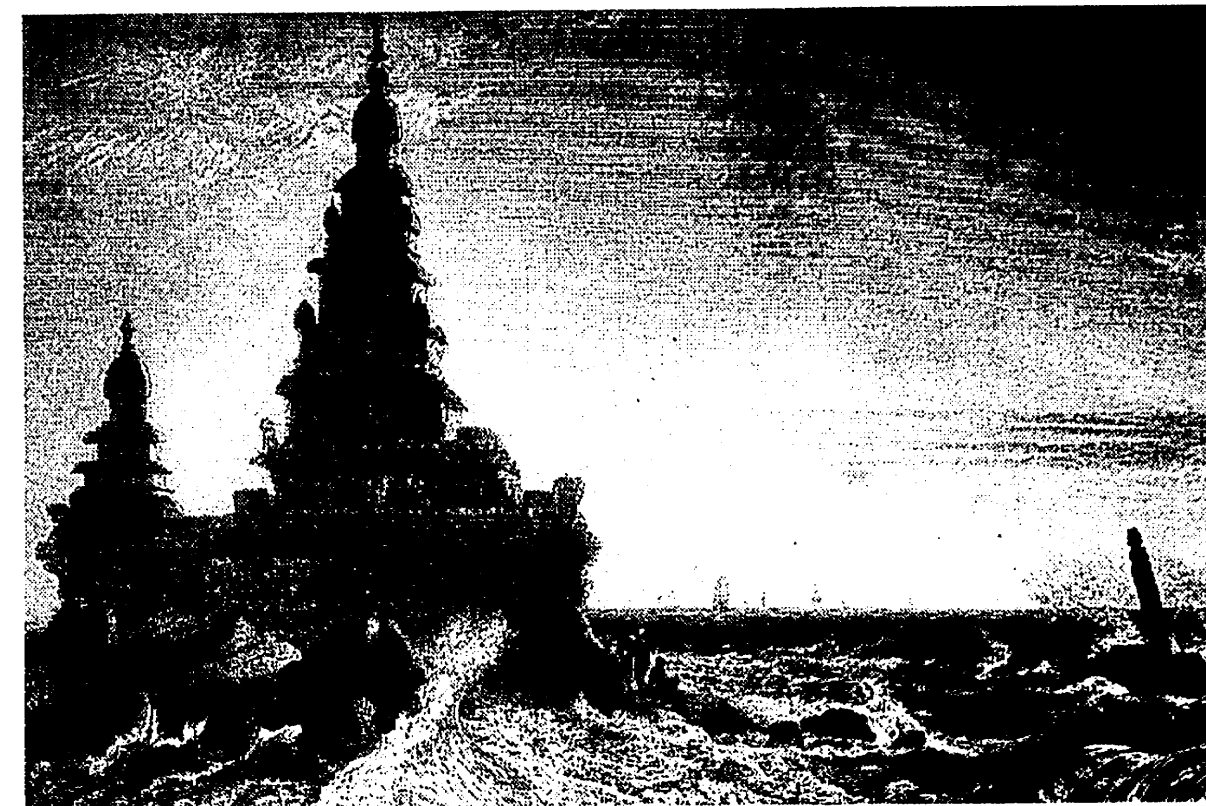
(Continued from page 1)
unbecoming of a person in such a position.
Summing up:

- 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 proceedings.
- Consumers have to spend a

large amount of money, while the law provides free facilities. In most fora the 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.



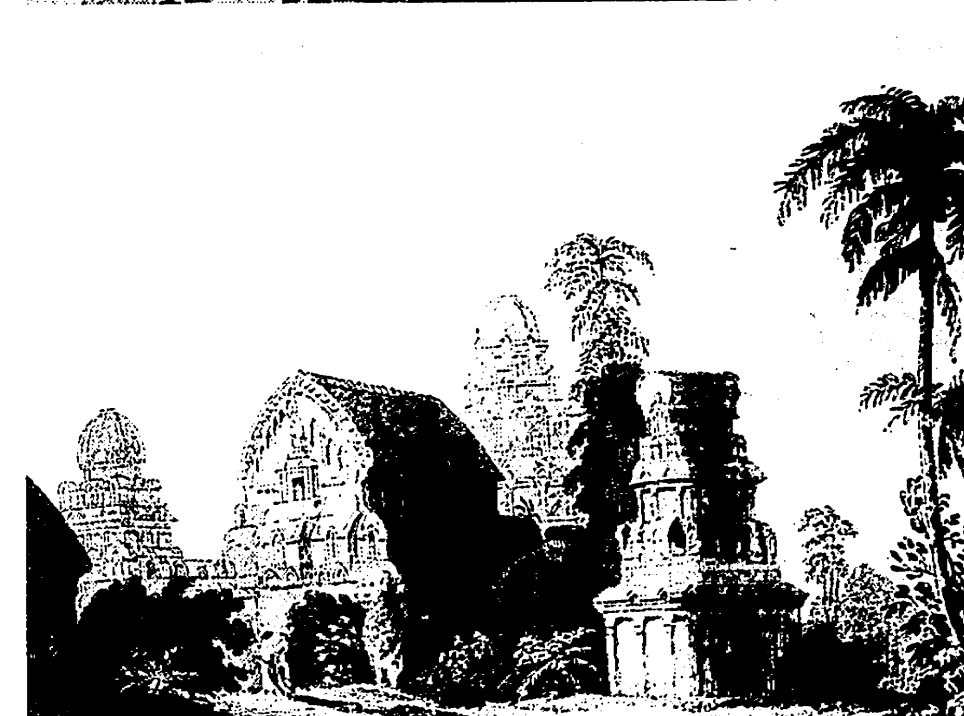
Special thrust for tourism

The Tamil Nadu Government, 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, and landscaped. Shops would be relocated and a separate

parking slot would be built. Roads are to be relaid and lighting installed.

But despite all the efforts to bolster the image of the State as a preferred tourist destination, success is likely to be a distant dream unless attention is paid to basics — such as cleaning up of the city, relaying roads, turn-

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

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 non-recyclable plastics; 17. Rack and Pinion System; 18. Mother Teresa University; 19. He is the new VC of Anna University; 20. S. Vijayalakshmi.



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

Football in the T' Nagar sun

It was when Madras was a '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. Jagannathan 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.

K. Padmanabhan
15 (27), Seventh Avenue
Ashok Nagar, Chennai 600 083.

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 Division Championship included Ganesan, Manickam, Pattabiraman, K.N. Balasubramanian, S. Venkateswaran, N. Balasubramanian, K. Balasubramanian, Jagannathan, S. Padmanabhan and T.R. Rajagopalan.

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 re-entry, the contributors mainly being Rajasekaran, Swaminathan, Prakash Rao, Padmanabhan, Narayanaswamy, Prabhakar, Ponnuswamy, Perumal, Balaguru, Samsonraj, Arokya-doss, 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 four-back system and a roving withdrawn forward long before the 4-2-4 system earned its name.

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.

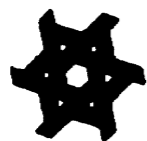
The team was managed by the Secretary and the Captain for the first 25 years and functioned in an informal way. In its Silver Jubilee year, a draft constitution was passed and P.N. Ramachandran elected its first President. He was the then Vice President of the MFA and the Secretary of All India Referees 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. Krishnamurthy, M. Narayanaswami, C.S. Rajasekaran, T. Prabhakar Rao and Mohan Philipose. — (From *TFC Souvenir*.)

Founding an association

An association to promote 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. Kannappa 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. Kannappa 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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