

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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... Heads, we use these pipes for low-cost housing. Tails, as kennels for street dogs!

### Pipe-dreams

Imagine this.

Someone goofs up in Cosmic Traffic Control, thus enabling a former inmate of the Indus Valley Civilisation to glance through the First Chapter in a contemporary history book. Is he impressed at our cleverness in figuring out their civilisation? Or does he rush back to his particular Era-sharers, laughing himself sick, saying, "You won't believe what they refer to as the Great Bath!"

Interesting concept?

Then consider this.

Two thousand years from now, someone digs up the ruins of an ancient civilisation, whose people were once known as the Chennai-ites.

Of the many things that puzzle them, the most mysterious are those large cylindrical pipe-like things that run for miles, buried along what were obviously once pathways.

Were they dwelling places, they wonder.

Can't be, because there is evidence of a fairly advanced form of architecture.

Hiding places? Or for commercial use?

No, neither makes sense. Besides, they seem so untouched, so empty and dry.

Transport?

Unlikely.

Slowly, sadly, the beaten team of archaeologists walks away, acknowledging that this particular civilisation was too smart for them, and would keep its secrets for ever.

Oh well... can't blame them.

How could they guess that the pipes were meant for good old water?

Water — that never came.

Maybe we should leave a note for the future.

Ranjitha Ashok

## The roofs come down

### What next?

(By A Special Correspondent)

When representatives of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority's Heritage Committee on August 19th visited the first buildings of the Madras Club, that are now part of *Express Estate*, they found that the wreckers had knocked down the roofs of the two wings of the main clubhouse. The team, comprising representatives of the CMDA, the Municipal Corporation and INTACH-Tamil Nadu Chapter, had been requested by the CMDA's Heritage Committee to inspect the state of these buildings after INTACH had informed the Committee that it had heard that demolition work had already started on the old campus of the Madras Club and hoped that this had stopped pursuant to a Court order issued in response to INTACH-TN's plea that this heritage building be saved.

The East Wing, a long two-storied block that was the residential quarters of members in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, was now open to the skies and had much of its interior woodwork removed. Holes had also been pounded in parts of the floor — to 'test' its strength, presumably. The more impressive two-storied West Wing was also found in similar state. The West Wing in the early days of clubbing in Madras had comprised the Strangers' Room, where guests waited or were entertained, and the Library. If ever an area had heritage significance — apart from its architectural heritage — it was the Strangers' Room, for it was in it that were held all the early meetings that led to the formation of the leading clubs in the city. The Adyar Club by the river, whose premises the Madras Club now occupies after taking over the less formal institution, the Madras Cricket Club, the Madras Boat Club, the Madras Gymkhana Club

and the Royal Madras Yacht Club were all founded at preliminary meetings held in this room. Every one of these clubs that survive in the city has a stake in the preservation of this building where the seeds for them were sown.

Fortunately for all, the knocking down of the roofs of these two wings and the removal of the tiles of the buildings at the rear — the Card Room, the Octagon that was the Secretary's room, and the Billiards Room — have all been done in a manner that makes restoration possible without too many hassles. And INTACH-TN, *Madras Musings* understands, would be only too glad to offer its advisory services if anyone wishes to preserve this building, restore it and put it to meaningful use. A convention or conference held in a heritage complex like this after restoration would prove more meaningful to international delegates than a steel, glass and concrete highrise no matter how luxurious it is.

If only the Heritage Regulations had been in place earlier, life would have been easier for everyone concerned. As things are, perhaps the CMDA's Heritage Committee can come up with some answers that will satisfy everyone concerned.

## Closer to Heritage Regulations?

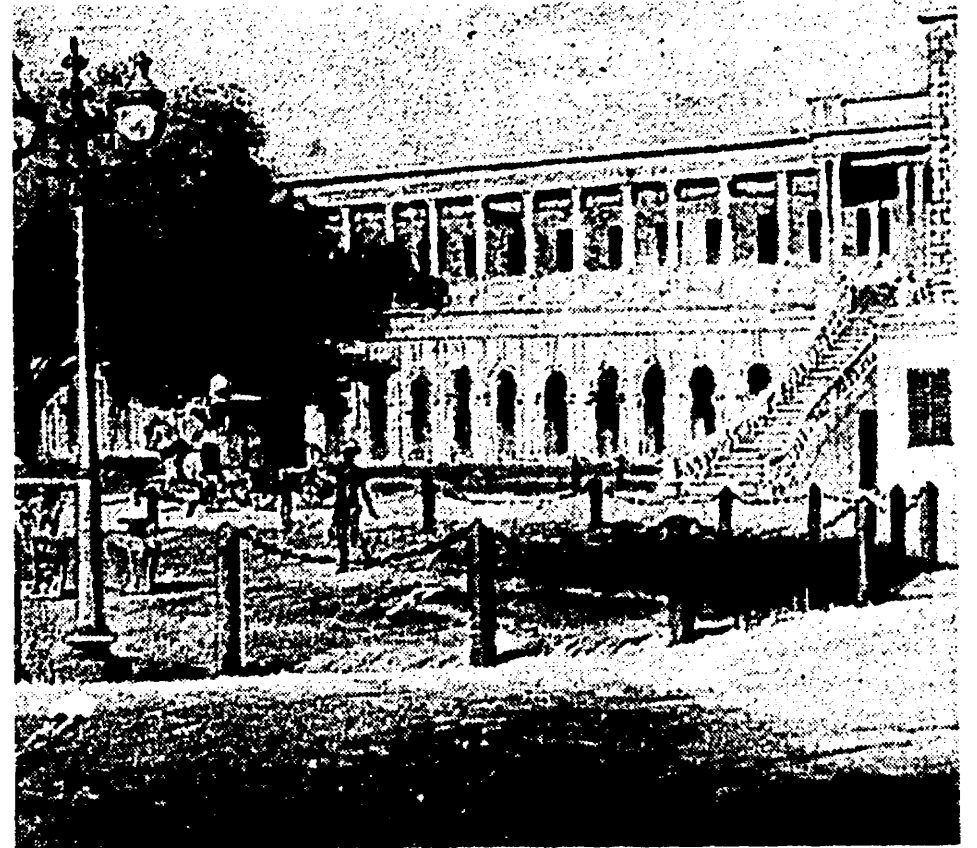
(By The Editor)

Heritage buildings like the first buildings of the Madras Club, on Clubhouse Road, the Royapuram Railway Station, the buildings of Queen Mary's College and the Ophthalmic Institute, amongst scores of others, are threatened.

The Indian National Trust for Architectural and Cultural Heritage, Tamil Nadu, has for over a decade been seeking laws to protect the State's built and

natural heritage. About five years ago, when the Central Government circulated a model Act to the States, INTACH-TN suggested that this Act and regulations in place, at the time only in Bombay, be adapted for Tamil Nadu as a whole. After a year of meetings, a draft Act for Tamil Nadu was circulated but, for not very clear reasons, it was felt that the Act could wait and that its provisions could be

(Continued on page 2)



These two wings of the threatened buildings of the Madras Club at its first location, in *Express Estate*, have recently had their roofs knocked down as a prelude to pulling them down completely. The East Wing of this heritage complex, seen above, used to be the quarters for resident members and their guests. The West Wing, below, used to house the Strangers' Room, where was born many a major Madras club, the Library and, for a time, the Memsahibs' Waiting Room in an era when women were not allowed into the Club. Both buildings date to the mid-19th Century.





## Only a few steps more...

It is gratifying to note that the Heritage Regulations have taken another step forward. The *Man From Madras Musings* is pleased to note that the CMDA's Heritage Committee has approved the draft Regulations in general, though some of the nitty-gritty has still to be fine-tuned. It is now up to the CMDA to see the Regulations through and do their best to ensure they are in place, amidst the Development Control Rules, before year-end.

MMM wonders whether it is really necessary for an Act or Regulations to take ten years for drafting, negotiating the Government labyrinth and see the light of day. INTACH-Tamil Nadu has been pressing for a Heritage Act for the State for the past ten years and numerous discussions about the form and content of the Act have been held. When the Central Government sent out a draft on Heritage rules that could be incorporated in building regulations, or as an Act, it recommended that this model be adopted by the States with any necessary modifications. Ever since, this draft and suggested changes have been doing the rounds with no one quite certain about what to do with the draft on which consensus had been reached. That draft has been with the CMDA's Heritage Committee these past two years. Mercifully at last, a couple of senior officials at the CMDA have seen the urgency for such Regulations and there's been some progress since. MMM hopes that progress will gather momentum in the days to come, for already the Regulations are too late for many a historic building.

If the Act had been in place within a year or two of it first being suggested by now in Tamil Nadu, the Adyar Estuary would not have been threatened by constructions on its banks and within the river itself, the Madre de Deus Church in San Thomé would not have been flattened overnight or the main block of the General Hospital would not have been pulled down, Chepak Palace would not have been hidden by buildings in various incongruous styles coming up all around it, Higginbotham's would not be overlooked by a crane's neck and the original buildings of the Madras Club — now in others' hands — would not be threatened. There are numerous other losses to the City's heritage that MMM could point to, but those mentioned above are indicative of what's been happening to major heritage sites in the absence of any Heritage Regulations or Act. Which is why MMM points out once again that speed is of the essence in getting the Heritage Regulations for the Chennai Metropolitan area in place and then pushing forward for an Act for the entire State. MMM, the eternal optimist, lives in hope.

### Implementation worry

Once the Heritage Regulations are in place, *The Man From Madras Musings* does not see his concern with the subject diminishing. MMM has long held the view that India has the best laws in the world and almost the worst implementation. And a commitment to implementation and action thereafter is what MMM hopes will be forthcoming from all concerned once the regulations are in place.

At an early meeting of the CMDA's Heritage Committee, when around 190 important heritage buildings and precincts and natural features were listed as protected, it was also agreed that, until such time as the Heritage Regulations were in place, both the Corporation and CMDA would inform the Heritage Committee of threats to any of the Listed Buildings and every effort thereafter would be made to persuade the owners not to pull them down or change their character or the area around them. A G.O. was issued consequent to this. However, in the mighty oceans that are the Corporation and the CMDA, such pithy G.O.s are but drops that get swallowed up; certainly they sel-

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'N'  
SNAPPY**

dom reach all those concerned with issuing demolition notices. That communication gap gave room for many a Listed Feature to be threatened.

MMM hopes once the Regulations are in place, everyone concerned with granting permissions will be aware of the Regulations and will act on them. Meanwhile, MMM hopes a little more attention is paid to the existing G.O. and the list that goes with it.

### Action & inaction

A few hours recently spent in Madras Medical College were revealing. Both action and inaction revealed much that does and does not work in Chennai.

Action revealed that the over 100-year-old Clinical Studies Hall was now called the Seminar Hall and its pale chrome façade of many a year was now white. Certainly the building looked much fresher than it had for years. But, then, as *The Man From Madras Musings* passed the unfluted Corinthian pillars, there was the inevitable loud plaque marring the starkness of the walls, a plaque announcing recent renovation and inauguration by who else but a Minister. But once in the hall, even that distraction paled before what had been done to it. 'Marbled' floors, 'fibred' walls painted a patchy cream, a 'dais' that could have been done with some dignity... MMM could go on and on, but, while being thankful for the small mercy of the historic building not having been pulled down, MMM must say that here was precipitate action that could have

done better with some advice. If a heritage building is to be restored, it needs to be done so as faithfully as possible to the original, and for such work, the restorers must consult conservation experts. And most of them are reasonable enough to also provide space for modern amenities, but they'd do so without marring the best of the past. Government builders with no experience of conservation can only mar a bit of heritage as badly as they have done this hall.

As for inaction, at the function MMM attended in the hall, speaker after speaker — including officials of the College — spoke of endowments that had not been utilised for years. An endowment at Stanley Medical had not been utilised for decades, till the speaker discovered it and put it to capital use. Even an endowment of Rs. 1 lakh by Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran had not been used for almost a decade, till the same speaker discovered it and put it to use in the renovation. In an intriguing twist, it was suggested that those creating the endowments should remind the College every year at the appropriate time to ensure the College is not remiss.

This business of paying little attention to endowments does little good for the institution but, worse, deprives students of what is legitimately theirs. And that is sad.

### Addresses or not?

The debate continues in the readers' letters column of *Madras Musings* on whether to give the writer's full address or not. One writer, who would like *The Man From Madras Musings* to comment on the issue, wonders why many of the appeals he has received are from Orissa. Indeed, the Editor tells MMM that several other readers have also mentioned the appeals from Orissa. And he, like MMM — and a few readers writing in — wonders why there are so many appeals from Orissa. Surely wanting to make a fast buck is a more universal trait? That said, MMM can see the Editor welcoming the idea of dropping long addresses; it gives him the opportunity to include a letter or two more. And letters, or at least their numbers, are a reflection of the popularity of a paper which seeks wide participation and involvement.

On the other hand, as many a reader has pointed out, addresses have led them to new sources of information and friendships. Junk mail and appeals, they say, can be consigned to the WPB without wasting time on them. Only hate mail is something to worry about — and there are no complaints about such mail being received.

So why not addresses again, wonders MMM leaving the letter-writers to state in each letter whether they want their addresses published or not?

— MMM

## From Madras Music to Chennai Carnival a possibility soon

(By A Special Correspondent)

With the mid-December to mid-January Music and Dance Season drawing hundreds from all over the world nowadays, the CII's Tourism, Heritage and Environment Panel has been discussing how it can increase these numbers to benefit the tourism industry as well as the State. Now being discussed is the idea of a Chennai Carnival to be launched in the middle of December this year and to run to January 20th. If the plans discussed are finalised in the next few weeks, the Panel hopes to launch a low-key festival that, they feel certain, will grow year after year once it is recognised as an annual event.

What the planners intend is to hold what might be described as 'road or area festivals' where, besides being drawn by the entertainment and participatory features to be arranged, the crowds from elsewhere in the City, the State, the neighbouring Southern States and even Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia, will be attracted by the very, very special prices and rates offered to them during the month by restaurants, hotels, shops and other service-providers who agree to participate in the Carnival.

The roads and areas for which plans are being worked out are:

- The Mylapore Mada Streets;
- The East Coast Road from Kalakshetra to Mamallapuram;
- Pantheon Road;
- Nungambakkam High Road-Cathedral Road;
- The Marina
- Panagal Park; and
- Anna Salai, from Anna Statue to Gemini.

If things work out right this year, other areas will be added to the list year by year till it truly becomes an all-Chennai Festival.

The success of the Festival, however, will depend on:

- The extent of the publicity that can be given to it;
- The quality of the programmes and attractions offered;
- The fares that airlines, railways and roadways will charge; and
- The extent of discounts offered on food, stay and shopping.

The CII Panel must make its target audience feel that they can have a ball at a bargain price at the Chennai Carnival. It's a great way to sell Chennai. *Madras Musings* hopes it works out.

## CLOSER TO HERITAGE REGULATIONS?

(Continued from page 1)

included as Heritage Regulations in the Development Control Rules of the CMDA and that other urban civic authorities in the State could be requested to follow suit. It is those Heritage Regulations, after being discussed for over 18 months by a Heritage Committee set up in the CMDA, that are now in some shape and await both the CMDA's and Government's approval. *Madras Musings* is delighted to see the first light at the end of what has been a very long tunnel and hopes it won't be long before heritage in Chennai — and, in time, elsewhere in Tamil Nadu — will get a place in the sun.

The Heritage Committee has included close on 200 heritage buildings, in three categories of importance, as needing immediate protection. INTACH-TN, strapped for funds to compile a comprehensive survey of heritage buildings in the city has, to date, listed close on 500 buildings and natural features in the City that need protection. When the rest of the city is covered, the list is likely to increase to around 1000. But after scrutiny by the Heritage Committee and due process, INTACH-TN estimates that the final list will be about 400 or 500 more than the present list.

The Heritage Regulations will prevent the development, redevelopment, additions or engineering works in these buildings and precincts without prior approval. Every plan in the case of Listed Buildings, constructions (like bridges and channels, for instance), artefacts and natural features coming under the Heritage Regulations would have to be examined by the Heritage Committee of the CMDA before a final decision is taken. The Heritage Committee will also examine in the same light proposals for development of any area adjacent to a listed building and ensure that these new constructions do not mar the view of the heritage building (as they now do around Chepak Palace).

If ever the Heritage Regulations come into the DCR, if they lead on to a Heritage Act and if they are implemented in the proper spirit, *Madras Musings'* pleas over the last 11 years would not have been in vain.

OUR  
READERS  
WRITE

### Dangerous turn

'Let sleeping dogs lie' appears to be the attitude of Chennai traffic managers — even if the dogs have become rabid!

Their action is limited to opening of automatic signals here and there — not caring whether they are functioning at all even from the next day!

The Mylapore area, especially the R.K. Mutt Road, cries for immediate attention. Not a day passes without a traffic jam in this area. May I suggest the following?

- a. Make R.K. Mutt Road — Luz to Mandaveli Bus Stand — a 'No Parking Zone', at least during peak hours (8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.). Violating vehicles must be towed away.
- b. No 'about turns' for city buses at Mylapore Tank stop. Buses from Adyar terminating at Mylapore can be run as buses starting from there and going towards Anna Salai by changing their route number plates (e.g. 5B as 38F and 21C as 5B etc.). This is not impossible if there is a will.

- c. Make the three Mada Streets (North, East and South) one-way streets (clockwise).

There is bound to be opposition to these from various quarters. They have to be convinced of the benefits flowing from these to all.

A. Sankaran  
Chennai 600 028.

### Water in the Adyar

In *Madras Musings* (August 1st), the writer has sadly recalled the status of the Adyar River in the 1970s. Ferrying was done across the Adyar near the YMCA as well as

## Shifting the capital

The population of Chennai has swelled to such an extent that the existing water resources and distribution systems are woefully inadequate to cope with the exponential growth of the metropolis. Efforts of the Government to improve the situation have not borne fruit. The only solution appears to be to shift a portion of the population and transplant it to a more suitable locale so that the existing aquifers feeding Chennai are not strained.

Another argument for shifting a section of the population is the ever-increasing traffic on the roads of Chennai. What with the constant digging operations of electrical, telephone and metro water departments, Chennai roads are never destined to get a smooth top. When once a big chunk of the population is shifted, these operations will drastically go down, making the roads more usable and reducing pollution to a great extent.

The idea of moving Government offices to near Mahabali-puram is not a sound one. We will only be compounding the problem. First, the headquarters

will be nowhere near the centre of the State. Second, as the new location is close to Chennai, most staff would prefer to stay put in the metropolis and commute daily to their workplace, adding further to the traffic bottlenecks.

Third, the existing water supply arrangements to the city will be further pressurised as the same water sources will have to cater to these establishments too.

The suggestion of MGR, the late chief minister of Tamil Nadu, to shift the state headquarters to the hinterland between Tiruchi and Thanjavur is a welcome one. This view was also expressed by Reader G. Kanakasabai (MM, July 16th). This location is in the centre of the State and will cut the time, effort and expenditure of travel by officials between headquarters and various parts of the State. As you travel from Thanjavur to Tiruchi, either by road or by rail, you see kilometre after kilometre of arable land from the outskirts of Thanjavur to Tiruverumbur. The portion between Tiruverumbur and Tiruchi has already been appropriated and successfully devel-

oped by BHEL. This tract, although flat, is well drained and all water drains quickly even after heavy showers. This is the best place for forming a self-contained settlement for Governmental offices. The climate is also good, except for hot May. Even then there will be no sweating, as the humidity will be low. The area is served by both SW and NE monsoons and is not endangered by the tantrums of cyclones. The adjacent towns of this tract, viz, Thanjavur and Tiruchi, are well endowed with educational institutions, entertainment and transport facilities. Once Government moves in, these facilities will automatically increase as a corollary.

Now let us see how water supply can be provided for this township. From the outskirts of Thanjavur to the village of Vallam close by, the soil is of red earth which has been quarried systematically for the better part of the last Century to lay roads in the adjoining districts. Since the science of roadmaking has now replaced such soil with better materials, the demand for this has been reduced almost to zero. Hence, the quarried area,

which is about 70 to 80 square kilometre, appears as a wide crater varying in depths from 15 to 30 metres. If the bottoms of these pits are levelled and the area suitably bunded, it will form a lake which will cover as much as if not more than the area of any of the lakes that supply water to Chennai. Rainwater falling in the plains adjacent to this depression can be guided to fill it. An irrigation canal runs parallel to the rail track to supply water to the tail-end area of the delta region. During surplus years, a part of this water which will merely flow into the sea unused can also be diverted into this reservoir.

Shifting of the capital of a State is not a novel idea. Many countries worldwide have done it. In our own country, when Burma (now Myanmar) was separated from the Indian Empire, the British shifted the capital from Calcutta to New Delhi. Canberra in Australia and Washington (DC) in the USA are other cities which have grown due to the shifting of administrative set-up.

M. Sethuraman  
Chennai 600 088.

level. This storage would be maintained till the next morning. This facilitated the maintenance of the underground water table.

Due to encroachments on the banks, mainly near the Marmalag Bridge in Saidapet, the locks were deliberately tampered with and broken so as to prevent rise and stagnation of water. This has resulted in the non-stagnation of water in the river during the night, which has re-

sulted in the degradation of the water table in the City. We still face a situation where the Government is not in a position to control the encroachers, who do not care for the beauty of the City or the discipline necessary to live in it.

S. Suresh Kumar  
Chennai 600 018.

### For a clean Cooum

Every city dweller agrees with Reader M. Subramaniam (MM, August 1st) that 'Singara Chennai' should not merely remain a political slogan but should be translated into reality before long. A master plan is required to be drawn up to see that at least within a decade a desirable facelift is given to the city. In any scheme of beautification of the city, cleansing of the River Cooum should have the top priority. I have the following suggestion to offer in this regard:

Along both the banks of the river from Anna Nagar to the estuary near the Napier Bridge, deep tunnels should be dug and large pipes laid therein to collect all wastes, like drainage and industrial effluents, so that the riverbed will receive only rainwater and the supplies from tributary rivulets.

The waste matters may be carried into the sea and pumped out from the pipes at a reasonable distance. The Veeranam pipes lying idle on the G.S.T. Road may be used for the purpose. And, yes, before starting the project the hurtment dwellers on the banks should be provided alternate accommodation.

M.R. Pillai  
Chennai 600 080.

### No example

Regarding *Learning from Mumbai* (MM, August 1st), the condi-

tions of the roads in Mumbai are, as in other metropolises, in bad shape. The monsoon poses several problems to the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Even though a number of roads are made of concrete, the potholes are really dangerous. The digging work done by telephone and sewage board is always creating danger zones.

*Delhi baahot dhoor hai*, Reader Rajeshwari Singh, for Chennai to follow Mumbai's example. Mumbai should get it right first.

C.K. Subramaniam  
Vashi 400 703.

### The Ketty Family

● In the Ketty family tree published in *Madras Musings* of August 16th, the link-lines leading from Ketty Venkataswami Naidu to his sons Ketty Thimmappah Bashyam Naidu and Ketty Narayanappah Naidu, were inadvertently omitted. We regret the error.

— The Editor

### PLEASE NOTE

● All letters for The Editor's attention should be addressed to The Editor, c/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

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

● Madras Musings does not accept letters by e-mail.

## Addresses, please

Regarding your announcement (MM, July 1st) on withholding the full addresses of readers who express their views through your columns, and responses already received by you, it would appear that opinion is divided. I feel you reached for the panic button all too soon.

It isn't difficult, in modern times, for self-seekers in the garb of do-gooders to obtain addresses of prospective 'donors'. Not only telephone directories but also websites, the internet and the like are excellent hunting grounds for predators. Junk mail has been there even before e-mail came into the picture. As suggested by Reader V.R. Chandran, 'importuning' correspondence should just be ignored.

On the other hand, by publishing these addresses *Madras Musings* has been helping its readers to directly get in touch with one another. On going through the letters of two read-

ers who had touched on their student days in a college in Madras, I was able to write to them seeking help in identifying some classmates of my late wife who were in the photographs preserved by her. Now and then you get to know about old acquaintances, their current interests and pontifications, muse on the transformation in thought and outlook and even write to them, teasing them gently. Why deny your readers these simple pleasures? All interests can be served and protected if you withhold the addresses only when a specific request to that effect is made by a reader, marking such letters with, say, AWOR (address withheld on request).

I would also like to touch on Reader M. Sethuraman's views on what may well be termed 'indecent proposals' from opportunists abroad who seek to honour people by including them in 'international' directories of one sort or the other. A fellow resident of Calicut re-

ceived a booklet — MM is in no way responsible for 'leaking' this address — which looked most impressive — being in colour and on artpaper. In asking this 'Great Asian' to provide the names and addresses of 14 others 'to assist the researchers and editors' of this worthy publication, the entrepreneur has unwittingly given the game away. Yet, there would undoubtedly be a few who would willingly cough up £750 for the honour of being included in the 'biographee' of '1000 Great Asians'. A buck here and a buck there, they all add up. Life goes on for the tycoon who, while inducting his son in his business empire, said, "My boy, remember what a great man once said — 'You can fool some people all the time, all the people some of the time...' — this, just this, is all you've gotta know to be in business".

Lancelot Thomas  
Calicut 673 001.



## Any way out of the waste impasse?

Chennai city and its methods of 'waste management' overall seem to have had one marked effect — more agile pedestrians, who regularly exhibit their ingenuity by manoeuvring themselves (with rather marked élan) on garbage-strewn roads. Nowadays, even raising an eyebrow at any filth on the roads is considered passé.

A closer look at the ongoing conservancy operations across the city proved revealing. With waste disposal a perennial bugbear, different tactics were initiated over two years ago by privatising operations, for the first time in India, in three of the ten zones within Chennai, with the Chennai Environment Services (C.E.S.) Onyx starting work as a subsidiary of Onyx Asia Holdings Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of the French multinational Vivendi Environment and one of the world's leading operators in municipal and industrial waste management.

• by  
**SHOBHA MENON**

With the daily quantity of waste to be removed per day, 1000 tonnes or more, for a period of seven years, from the three zones VI, VIII and X, Onyx claims to use modernised methods of waste management assuring removal of waste on a day-to-day basis, cost reduction in service delivery, optimum utilisation of manpower and machines, besides public awareness programmes. By and large, public responses to their operations have been positive, except for a few occasional hiccups. Which, of course, is only to be expected when tackling a force as formidable as the Chennai public.

At the main outlet of a popular bakery in Zone X, Manager S. Anand says, "In the last 18 years that I've been here, we had a lot of problems with the Corporation conservancy workers, with irregular removal of waste days apart, or workers who continually harass us for bribes. Many a time we'd take our garbage ourselves in large drums, in a van, to the Pallikarai dumping ground. Ever since Onyx took over, they've given us prompt and hassle-free service." Most residents of the zones covered by Onyx agree. Others feel they could be better.

A lower level Onyx staffer however confided, "A common feature we've noticed across the

localities we cover is that nobody wants a bin to be placed anywhere close to the vicinity of their house. Many times, bins are shunted across the street, broken or even set fire to. Though we've repeatedly requested people not to throw garden rubbish on the road, to just inform us the previous day so that we can ask for a separate vehicle, our pleas seem to always fall on deaf ears. Things are better now, at least people are beginning to throw the rubbish into the bins." Almost everywhere, that is!

However, feedback responses on current waste management operations across the city were largely depressing. A long-time resident and well-known public figure in the posh Kotturpuram neighbourhood wails, "Dealing with Corporation conservancy staff and officials is just impossible. Even those health-conscious walkers who dared to cross the bridge into the Boat Club area for a morning constitutional have given up, of late, because of the muck and filth on the bridge itself. Many streets here have resorted, in desperation, to private methods in coordination with NGOs like Exnora. I've noticed, while moving across the city, that privatisation of conservancy operations seems to have made a visible marked difference to certain areas."

A Kilpauk housewife in Zone V says, "We initiated an exercise with the Exnora group a couple of years ago. It didn't last more than a year mainly because of non-cooperation by some residents, who flatly refused to pay the Rs. 25 a month fee to the NGO. Now it's back to the Corporation, with smelly bins remaining uncleared for two or three days at a stretch!"

But Chief Engineer Bhoopal of the Chennai Corporation points out practical problems of a different kind. "As far as the conservancy operations of the Corporation go, the main hurdle is the maintenance of vehicles that has to be done on a day-to-day basis. We have 450 vehicles for seven zones, and each problem vehicle needs to be attended to within 24 hours. Which means we need minimum spares, substitute vehicles and manpower. Also, a minimum inventory for 15 days, with a simultaneous system of purchase. Unfortunately, while earlier the S.E. Mechanical could handle up to a Rs. 50,000 limit, the City Municipal Cor-



Our OLD is an 18th Century engraving — yet another picture from that collection that serendipitously came into Madras Musings' hands — of St. Thomas' Mount, its better seen shrine, the military lines and the maidan. Apart from being a military cantonment, St. Thomas' Mount was also once a 'samudran' for the sahibs of Madras and their mens, where they went for weekends or for short holidays to rest and recuperate, taking in what was once salubrious air. Our PRESENT is of what is still today a cantonment, but with numerous shade trees hiding the military quarters and, to some extent, the Church. But the most significant difference is the now empty maidan, which has been converted into one of the country's best polo grounds, the Mohite Stadium, its manicured turf a sight to see during the Season. During the rest of the year, it is generally empty — quite a change from the past when there was year-round activity on it.

**THE OLD...**

**...& THE PRESENT**



poration Act (CMCA) that was amended in 1997 has caused a lot of problems. Currently, the Commissioner cannot delegate monetary powers, and every bill above Rs. 5000 has to go through him. Which makes it very tedious, considering the innumerable number of bills that surface. Steps to bring back the powers of monetary delegation to the Commissioner are in the offing."

A senior Conservancy Inspector in a local office says, "The nature and methods used for garbage disposal by the public are area specific, and an upper class area need not necessarily mean better and hygienic methods of disposal. One set of people object to dustbins near their homes, and another set complain about dustbins too far! To top it all, any request for inventory materials is met by a constant reply, 'No funds'. We've had no supply of slaked lime for the last two years. The prevailing pathetic vehicle maintenance ensures that lorries meant to run on eight wheels actually manage with four, and a lorry that can take a five-ton load can therefore take

only two. We also need more staff on bus routes and in public thoroughfares. And when staff have to be deputised for VIP movement on main roads, local areas suffer!"

Suggested solutions offered by some Corporation staff include a combined meeting of representatives of housing associations and conservancy staff to work out a time scheme of garbage disposal, wherever a Corporation conservancy lorry is able to make only one trip a day. For big loads of garden rubbish from institutions and big gardens, charges need to be paid. Offenders who deposit building debris on roads — supposed to be removed privately — should be fined. "We've already received instructions to this effect, but there is no G.O. yet. With regular backlog debris of 15-20 tons in the 86 streets we cover, we need one lorry a day exclusively for this, for which we have exactly one the whole week. Our currently understaffed operations would be able to contribute better to local areas if the Slum Board took over garbage clearance in the slum tenements, and the PWD

looked after public thoroughfares. Health officers also need to take stringent action against owners of stray cattle on roads," feels another senior official.

But segregation of solid waste into degradable and non-degradable matter before management in sanitary landfills that constitutes waste management doesn't seem to have been very high on the list of any of the conservancy operations till date. Says Bhoopal, "It was only in 2000 that the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules came into the picture. Since the Onyx contract was signed earlier, it is not implemented in their three zones. In the other seven zones of the Corporation, solid waste management has been started in a very small way in areas like Villivakkam and Nungambakkam, reaching out to small groups with the help of NGOs. But what we need most is the wholehearted support of the public — and that can only be sustained through education and awareness. To teach someone who doesn't think twice about dumping waste on the

(Continued on page 7)

## A plea to save Adyar Estuary

Most citizens of Madras are unaware of the bounties of nature within their city. Few turn their heads in the direction of the Adyar Estuary, for they are unaware that the rich variety of bird life seen there, especially at the height of the season, is the right remedy for sore eyes. The citizens of Madras are indeed blessed to have an area so rich in bird life.

Our aim must be to preserve and safeguard the birds of the Adyar Estuary. This can only be done by making the public aware of their existence, kindle their interest in them and influence the Government to designate the Adyar Estuary as a Bird Reserve.

This, however, is no mean task, for there are a number of hurdles and obstacles which have to be overcome. Among the various problems facing the estuary the most important ones are:

1. Environmental degradation, i.e. water pollution
2. Extensive poaching
3. Indiscriminate constructions on the banks
4. Frequent incursions by fishermen.

### 1. Environmental degradation (water pollution)

This is, by far, the most dangerous, and hence demands immediate attention. Sewage water is being let in at various points along the river course and the estuary of the Adyar river. The sewerage system, designed in 1910, was for an ultimate population of only about 6.5 lakh — to be reached in 1961!

Areas like Adyar, Guindy and Saidapet have been added to the city and the rapid growth and industrialisation of various parts of the city have contributed to the overloading of the drainage system. To add insult

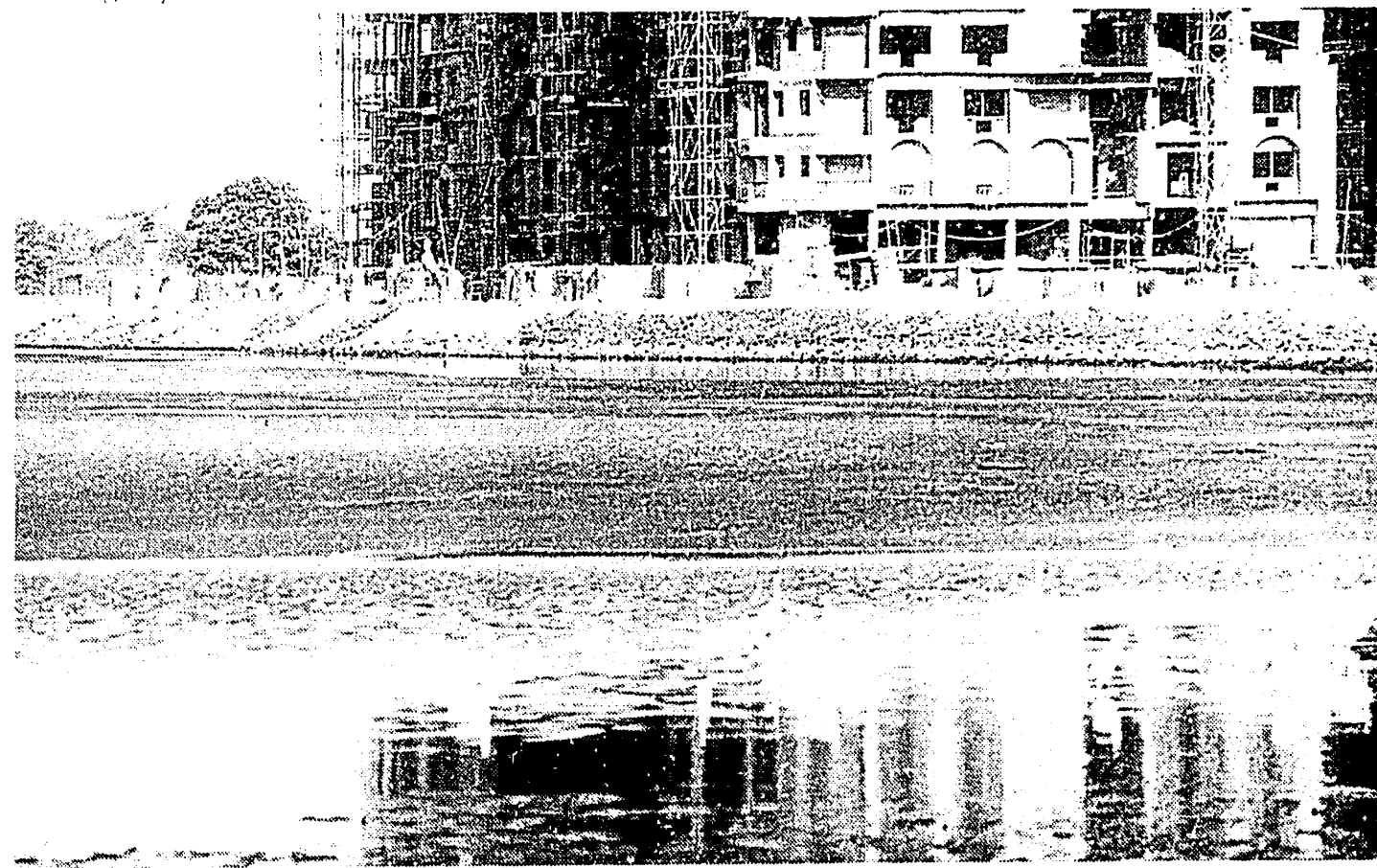
• In the late 1970s, when the conservation movement was sweeping the country, the Adyar Estuary was in focus among conservationists in Chennai. A pre-university student, S. Jagdish, did a study of the estuary for a National Science talent scholarship. Now he is a doctor with the RAF, in the U.K. He and B. Chidambaram sent a petition to save the estuary and brought it out as a pamphlet in 1978. With Adyar Estuary once again threatened, we draw attention once again to the need to save the Estuary, by publishing excerpts from that petition presented to the Chief Minister at the time. It is time we remembered that we destroy the physical identity of a city by blasting its hills and by dredging its estuaries. These are creations of millennia.

to injury, the sewage disposal vehicles themselves make periodic incursions into the Estuary. There has to be a sea-change in the deplorable state of the existing drainage system.

The sewage collection is as follows:

Sewage collected from an area by one pumping station is pumped to another station which receives sewage from another area. The two are combined and pumped to a third station and so on. This not only causes unnecessary stagnation but putrefaction too.

Adyar alone gets 5 mgd (million gallons daily) of untreated sewage in addition to what it gets from the link-ups with the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal. The shame of it all is that the sewage let into the Adyar is UNTREATED. The sewage inflow from Adyar and Saidapet is 5 mgd and 10 mgd respectively. The expected flow in 1991 will be almost double.



As buildings continue to rise on the banks of the Adyar Estuary, the birdlife (seen here in dwindling numbers) will soon vanish unless the Estuary and its banks are declared the sanctuary that had once been intended.

In summer, blue green algae develop in the polluted waters and this causes nuisance by the smell created. Continued discharge will lead not only to sludge deposition, but disaster as far as birdlife is concerned. The sewage off-load into the sea has also caused some damage. Furthermore the following deficiencies stand out:

- Incomplete and disproportionate coverage of the city by the sewerage network.
- Inadequate capacity of the sewers.
- Inadequate capacity of the pumping plants.
- Inadequate capacity of the pumping mains.
- Insanitary final disposal.

### 2. The poaching menace

Birds are being shot by poachers regularly, disturbing the nests and their feeding. Even the children in the area hunt the birds with catapults. Dismembered parts of birds have been noted floating about in the waters of the Estuary. It is high time this is brought to an end.

### 3. Indiscriminate construction

This is seen particularly along the northern banks of the estuary where housing development programmes extend right up to the mouth of the river. The Theosophical Society on the southern bank, however, does not permit any disturbance, and is thus a welcome haven for the birds.

### 4. Fishing in the Estuary

The estuarine waters are being used by a number of fishermen. They have been observed even beyond the bridges on the western side. But fishing does not appear to be a serious problem right now, though it can serve to deprive the birds of

## Life in the Estuary

• The Adyar derives its name from the river originally known as Adyar Aarti. The Estuary is, in fact, a backwater course. Though it begins as a small watercourse, it fans out over a wide area when it reaches the Bay of Bengal, thereby forming a wide marshland strewn with islets. The depth of the river at the Estuary depends on the tidal pattern and is seldom more than a metre. In the west it extends almost up to the South Grand Trunk Road. The Elphinstone Bridge has, since 1842, connected Adyar with the city. A new bridge — the Thiru V. Ka Bridge — was built in 1973.

The Estuary was left alone in the 18th and 19th Centuries, for life in those days was centred on Fort St. George. In 1865, the Theosophical Society took roots on the southern banks. Brodie Castle was built by the East India Company on the northern banks and development came up much later.

There is an inter-dependence of animal and plant life in the Estuary. Even the casual observer cannot help seeing the water hyacinth and casuarina. Near the shore, the sand-binder can be observed. Two more species of water plants have also been observed. Microscopic algae have also been noted in these waters. The estuarine waters house, in addition to the birds, a variety of reptiles and insects. The dog-faced water snake and the common water snake, both of which are non-poisonous and thrive on fish, can be seen in plenty. The common water frog and the paddy-field frog are very common sights. A variety of water-beetles, molluscs and fresh water eels also exist. It is a well-established fact that for an ecosystem to remain in equilibrium, the delicate balance between the flora and fauna must not be upset.

The various forms of plant and animal life not only invite the birds but also make their stay worthwhile. It is just a matter of survival for the birds. Should they be disturbed, the balance will be tilted in the favour of disaster. The nature-loving public of Madras must check this unwelcome trend and must strive to return the Estuary to its early glory.

— S.J. & B.C.

their diet, viz. fish. It should be our aim to curtail only indiscriminate and unrealistic fishing practices. NOT deprive the fisherfolk of their livelihood.

\* \* \*

### Recommendations

- The development of a bird reserve is a step in the right direction from the ecological standpoint. The bird reserve will not only contribute to the City's recreational and educational facilities, but is also bound to attract tourists and photographers.
- The killing of birds in the Estuary must be stopped rightaway and those who indulge in such unlawful activities must be severely dealt with.
- Any construction work on the northern bank must stop well away from the bank proper and the area adjacent to the bank must be fenced.
- Though the fishermen do not pose a problem right now, a careful watch must be maintained against over-exploitation of the Estuary.

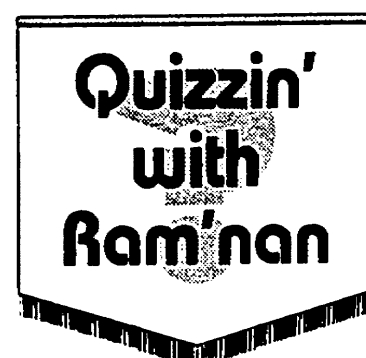
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From time immemorial, Man has been rather intimately associated with birds. He has worshipped them; used them as symbols. In modern times, right under his nose, 78 species have become extinct. Many are on the brink of extinction. Right now they are being threatened as never before, and it is high time Man starts learning to live with them.

The writing on the wall is clear. Reckless urbanisation is sure to exact a grievous toll on birdlife. We must answer this distress call and soon.

With a little concerted effort we can preserve a rich heritage and ensure hours of pleasure for the young and the old, with nothing to mar the delight of watching these gentle birds going about their lawful business.





(Current affairs questions are from the period August 1st to 15th, 2002. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Why was Subedar Surinder Singh of 3 Sikh Regiment in the news?
2. Which was the only event in which India won a gold in the Asian Track & Field Championships in Colombo recently?
3. According to a prestigious international poll conducted by the British Film Institute, which film was voted the 'Best Ever Film'?
4. Who won unprecedented six golds at the recently concluded Manchester Commonwealth Games?
5. For what 'honourable' social act did a 65-year old woman, Kuttu Bai of Tamali Patna village in M.P., make front-page news for all the wrong reasons?
6. Business. A Chennai-based company on the Bombay Stock Exchange concluded the first ever two-way fungibility deal in the country. Name the company.
7. For what longstanding mathematical conundrum have three mathematicians from IIT, Kanpur, devised an algorithm?
8. What unique facility for the visually impaired has been set up at the 'Every Child a Scientist Centre' at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai?
9. Name the Haryana police official in trouble in the Shivani Bhatnagar murder case.
10. Who became the third youngest cricketer to play for India recently?

11. Who is the new American Consul General in Chennai?
12. *Nammalal Mudiayam*, featuring S. Ve. Sekar, a short documentary film made specifically for the Chennai Corporation, deals with which necessary current community activity in the State?
13. What 'essential' non-edible items have been added to Ration Shops' stock-list from August 6th?
14. Which Chennai-based political party rejoined its parent party in Madurai on August 14th?
15. A heritage train run was organised in Chennai on August 4th to commemorate 150 years of Indian railways. From where to where?
16. With which global cyber-giant has Anna University collaborated to set up a Centre of Excellence?
17. Who is the new Home Secretary of Tamil Nadu?
18. Name the four companies involved in laying Optical Fibre Cables in Chennai.
19. Where is the Veeranam Lake, a place always in the news?
20. Name the terminal points of the new BG train flagged off on August 10th.

(Answers on page 8)

## Of crows and shade trees

The other day, we were debating at the Madras Naturalists' Society which trees would be appropriate in different places — gardens, avenues, seashore etc. We even finalised a booklet containing information on the suitability of different species for particular locations. But, now, living in Valmiki Nagar, I realise we didn't consider one important factor, i.e. the use of trees by birds for roosting and nesting and the consequences thereof — for us humans!

In our flat complex, we have several trees planted just inside the boundary wall. On two sides, they offer shade to cars parked there by those not lucky enough to get a 'covered' car park. These parking spaces are not 'reserved' and, not having covered parking myself, I end up putting my car wherever there is a little shade from the sun at that particular time of day. I soon found that if I park my vehicle below a tree called the African Tulip, I have much more cleaning to do the next day. The tree, scientifically named *Spathodea campanulata*, is almost evergreen, losing its leaves but for a short time of the year, and has showy saffron flowers, which squirt nectar when pressed (and hence also called the Squirt tree). It seems to grow well here. Its drawback, from my viewpoint, is that it has plenty of branches, most with trijunctions, and is found ideal by crows, to build nests right round the year for roosting, if not nesting. You leave your car below this tree and, within a short time, it will have generous droppings from the crows above. Once dried, the droppings are extremely tough to remove as any car cleaner will corroborate. A soaking with wet cotton for at least ten minutes is required before they can be wiped off.

When we came to the flat complex, a little over ten years ago, there were only about twenty crows to be seen around, as they roosted on our terrace water tanks in the evenings. Now there are more than two hundred, which is probably not as bad as the increase in human population around here during the same period. However, the trees we have planted for greening the place have provided these birds with ideal nesting and roosting locales. Usually, I find at least two crow nests on each African Tulip tree. We also found that this tree puts forth surface roots which push up the concrete slabs we have in the compound (to let rain-

water seep into aquifers below through their interspaces — see photograph) and make the ground uneven. In a rare case, a root of this tree penetrated a drainage pipe blocking wastewater flow from a ground floor flat. Considerable labour was involved in removing it. When the seeds dry and break up, the whole area is covered with hundreds of winged seeds dispersed by the sea breeze. The crows take to the Tulip tree for the cozy homes they provide. This is not to say that only Tulip trees are favoured by crows — they are so adaptable that other homes are also easily built on trees like *Cassia siamea* which puts forth yellow flowers.

Nearby, in Tiruvalluvar Nagar, an avenue leading to the beach is lovely — lined with shade-giving trees on either side. But you don't find many people taking a walk there during late evenings; they are afraid of the crows and hordes of mynahs which use the trees as their night roosts (as testified to by the large white blotches on the tarred road). If you are inclined to try the road, an umbrella will

• by  
A. RAJARAM

be handy, or at least a hat, to save much embarrassment later. Anytime I have to, I cover that road at a brisk walk or a light trot befitting my age and demeanour.

The population of crows, especially House Crows, or *Corvus splendens* to call them by their scientific name, has increased enormously in India and their closely related species or subspecies have been successful in different parts of the globe as well. We in Chennai also have the Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), which is of larger size and is completely black. Jungle crows are found in numbers in the better wooded localities, like the IIT, CLRI campus and Anna University. They are slowly making inroads into the realms of House Crows, as I found when a pair bred successfully in our compound this season. To give them their due, while spoiling my car top, they have proved to be, literally, in the tough shit category (if I may be allowed the expression!). They are better hunters, being able to catch and kill agile animals like the palm squirrel, whereas House Crows usually vie for dead ones, like the squashed rat on the road.



What the African Tulip, that bears those pretty flowers seen in the inset, does to paving. (Pictures by the Author.)

People often wonder why the colourful birds they have seen in their younger days in Chennai are not found now. Crows are partially to blame. They steal other birds' eggs, kill the young fledglings and harass the parents. Cats also do their bit, but their numbers are fortunately less. Crows are very successful foragers. Two of them can successfully prevent a palm squirrel from getting a share of the rice you have put out. If there is only one crow, the squirrel manages to get a little by sheer persistence. So, therein lies the success of the crow species. They have learnt the success of cooperative behaviour.

M. Krishnan relates the incident where three crows in effect rob a Shikra of a garden lizard it had captured after many unsuccessful attempts. Two crows engage the Shikra, while the third snatches away the lizard. Crows also 'learn' by imitation. Seeing house sparrows tasting the yellow flowers of the *Cassia siamea* tree, I have seen crows doing the same. They gorge on the large black ground ants and the termites flying forth during the season. During my car cleaning and wiping campaigns, I have come across clumps of partly digested leaves with their veins showing. These are food 'pellets' of the crows — partially digested remains of the leaves they have tried as food (possibly for eventual uncertainties). Crows also 'hoard' food, inserting fish scraps, bone, flesh etc. in the crevices of cement pipe exhausts. If you want to learn

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## A Madras corner of a foreign field

By the late Nineteenth Century Bombay had emerged as the first city of Indian cricket, a position which, with only the odd hiccup, it has comfortably maintained since. But the game was also taking root elsewhere... Moving south, we have the Madras Cricket Club, set up in 1846, with its lovely ground at Chepauk, on land acquired from the Nawab of the Carnatic. Indians could not play at Chepauk but they could watch. A precocious spectator was Buchi Babu, a Telugu-speaking boy who was taken in a pram by his English nanny to see the Madras Cricket Club play. Buchi Babu was the grandson and heir of M. Venkataswami Nayudu, who had made a handsome fortune as the *dubash*, or commission agent, of the firm of E. I. D. Parry's. In the garden of the family's spacious Mylapore bungalow Buchi Babu played cricket, at first with his grooms, later with other children of high-born families. These boys started the Madras United Cricket Club, which was to play against, and occasionally defeat, the English club across the way. For years to come Indian cricket in Madras was dominated by the Brahmin and Nayudu families of Mylapore...

Famous patrons of cricket included the rulers of the states of Bhopal, Baroda, Holkar, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Dungarpur, Cooch-Bihar and Natore. The last-named had one overwhelming ambition: to defeat the all-European Calcutta Cricket Club. One year he put together a side of top-class Hindus, including the wicket-keeper K. Seshachari from Madras, the fast bowler H.L. Sempere from Karachi, and Palwankar Baloo and his brother Shivram from Bombay. His side won, but the colonists, as ever, took their defeat without grace. After the match the captain of the Calcutta Cricket Club asked Natore how many 'gentlemen' there were in his side, insinuating there was no honour in Indian professionals defeating a side of English amateurs.

Almost half a century later, a boy who was present at this match recalled its two heroes: Baloo, who dismissed most of the English batsmen, and the wicket-keeper Seshachari, who helped him get them out. The one was born a lowly Chamaar; the other a Tamil Iyengar, into that most exclusive and arrogant of Brahmin subcastes. They made a deadly combina-

tion, with the bowler inducing the edges and misjudgements, the wicket-keeper effecting the catches and the stumpings. Recalling their appearance under Natore's colours, Romesh Ganguly wrote of a Baloo over that it contained 'six deliveries — each a different menace and yet looking as harmless as the morning dew on a grass blade'. More vivid still was the recollection of his accomplice:

"... the cricket colossus, Seshachari, dark and forbidding, in his stand in close vicinity behind the stumps. The fastest ball would not remove him from his place of operation so near to the batsman's citadel. He crouched low and I wondered if the bails would not be disturbed from their cradle on top of the stumps by the volume of air let out by his lungs which I thought had the capacity of bellows. He reminded me of the sinister hill that hangs over the edge of a plain. I noticed some of his fingertips were somewhat crooked. What made them so? The question intrigues me even today!"

... the Hindu-European encounter was to test afresh the theory of the Empire of Cricket. Would its outcome be congenial to the loyalist or to the anti-colonialist? The Hindus batted first and posted a decent score of 242, Baloo contributing 25 and his brother 24... The Europeans were all out for 191. In their second knock the Hindus made 160... The rulers needed 212 to win... The European challenge relied heavily on Greig. He began well, and had got to 27 when he was stumped by Seshachari off Erasha. The

(Continued from page 4)

road to segregate waste is definitely not easy."

Meanwhile, Onyx claims that any complaint received on their toll free number, 1600 334466, is stored in the system first, passed on to the particular sector supervisor and when the job is completed the feedback is also put into the system. No complaint is left pending for more than 24 hours, according to Onyx. And all sector supervisors and Zone Managers can be reached through radio transmitters through the complaint cell. An Onyx manager says,



For a book on cricket that's a bit of literature, what better cover picture than this one of R.K. Narayan, in dhoti, keeping wickets for his nephews and nieces in a garden game in the 1950s. (Picture by T.S. Satyan.)

stumping was described in terms of justifiable pride by a newspaper from the wicket-keeper's home town, Madras. The batsman lunged, it said, 'and with a movement, meteoric in its quickness', Seshachari had stumped him. It was 'a superb piece of stumping worth going miles to see'; with it 'to all intents and purposes the match was won'. In the end the Europeans crumbled to 102 all out, with Baloo and Erasha each taking five wickets. In fact, the two bowlers bowled in tandem from the start of the innings to its end.

In the Calcutta Test (1934) ... when India batted, Nobby Clark, allegedly on instructions from (skipper Douglas) Jardine, bowled bouncers. Dilawar Hussain was hit on the head and taken off the field. The umpire, Frank Tarrant, told the England captain that he would have to stop Clark from bowling. 'If you do that I will stop you from umpiring,' answered Jardine...

From Nagpur the tourists moved leisurely down the Deccan, playing in Hyderabad and Mysore before arriving in

Madras for the third Test. At Jardine's insistence, Frank Tarrant was replaced by another umpire at the last moment. Was this because of their spat over Clark's tactics in Calcutta? Or because Tarrant's favourite pupil, the Yuvraj of Patiala, had been chosen to play for India? Tarrant's nationality could scarcely have helped him either. The Australian told the Associated Press that Jardine was upset by some of his decisions in previous Tests. 'Where are the sportsmen of 1934', he asked, caustically, 'if the captain of the MCC cannot take l.b.w. decisions with good grace?' The Indian nationalists took up his case. Tarrant's dismissal, remarked one paper, 'is symptomatic of the spirit in which Mr. Jardine conducts his captaincy'. He 'seems to feel that he is an Imperial General on a conquering expedition'.

The Madras Test was the MCC's last scheduled match in India. Jardine's fastest bowler, Nobby Clark, again bowled bouncers, hitting an Indian batsman on the head. The England side was superior in all aspects of the game, and won easily. But

the home team conspicuously stayed away from a post-match dinner hosted by the all-white Madras Cricket Club. The sources, unfortunately, do not give us the reason. Was this out of solidarity with Tarrant — a great servant of Indian cricket and a mentor to many of its players — in protest against Jardine's admittedly brief resort to Bodyline, or a general disgust with the ways of the English in India?

The Quadrangular of 1937... would have both a new format and a new venue. At last, the organisers had agreed to the inclusion of a team named 'The Rest', to include Indian Christians, Buddhists and Jews. The newly named Pentangular would be played at a magnificent stadium built near Churchgate Station in south Bombay...

Two months before the Pentangular began, it was the target of a frontal attack by the Congress Chief Minister of Madras, C.Rajagopalachari. He

(Continued on page 8)

## ANY WAY OUT OF THE WASTE IMPASSE?

"We cater to a population of about 2.3 million people each day, and a road length of about 712 km is swept every day. Public cooperation, however, is deplorable. People are so indifferent, they don't even bother to complain."

But why the steady deterioration of civic consciousness in spite of higher education levels and higher incomes? Bhoopal feels, "A system where people continually look to the Government for help has come about. But we are now at a stage where the Government is unable to handle civic infrastructure management without the coop-

eration of the public. Even conservancy workers feel demoralised by this marked lack of civic consciousness. Paying for the services provided is another important aspect. The biggest problem of course is the doubt in the minds of the public, 'Even if I pay, am I going to be assured of prompt and adequate service?' We need to tackle that."

However, the positive note, according to Bhoopal, is "This year the focus is going to be on education. We plan to engage professionals who can design and convey the right messages through individuals and the media. This process should start

in about a couple of months. By next year, about 15 of the 155 divisions (about 10%) should be a realistic target for implementation of regularised waste management schemes. And so on. By 2005, hopefully, all divisions will be covered in a phased manner. How we can get the confidence of the public, is the next question. Once he or she understands that the biggest beneficiary in this cooperative process is the individual himself, then the battle is half won. The goal is the same, we only need to work together." An all-round education is probably the only solution.



# A MADRAS CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD

(Continued from page 7)

was speaking at the second anniversary of the Madras Cricket Association, a body whose President, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, was also a member of Rajagopalachari's Cabinet. Subbaroyan, who was soon to take over as President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, was a vigorous promoter of the Ranji Trophy and had an aversion to Bombay's prominence in the cricket world. His views resonated with those of his Chief Minister, in whose inclusive nationalism there was no place at all for communal groupings.

Rajagopalachari was one of Gandhi's closest associates and a towering figure in the Congress. Naturally, his statement was widely reported in the Bombay press. Just as naturally, the *Chronicle* supported him. As J. C. Maitra pointed out, had the Quadrangular been played on a non-communal basis, the claims of the Baloo brothers 'would have been recognised earlier and without any ado'.

Maitra also reported that Rajagopalachari's remarks had 'sent some people in Bombay into hysterics'. One 'V.S.P.' wrote to say that the cricket carnival was actually an exhibition of inter-communal amity, showing that 'our cricketers may yet be able to achieve what our politicians and leaders have signally failed to bring about'. A more weighty intervention came from L.R. Tairsee. Cricket, he claimed, had led 'to levelling of caste distinctions [among] the Hindus'. The Baloo brothers were 'treated as equals'; that was 'due to cricket and the problem of Untouchability was solved before those who talk about it now were born - I mean politically'. Tairsee went on to defend the format of the Quadrangular. 'To talk of non-communal cricket in Bombay is to talk about the man in the moon.' The P.J. Hindu Gymkhana President argued that 'communal cricket has in no case led to trouble - as politics has. Is it seriously proposed to say good-bye to politics? Let Rajagopalachari answer.'

\* \* \*

In the winter of 1944-5 C.K. Nayudu entered his fiftieth year. The Cricket Club of India decided on a celebration to honour him... The week before the Golden Jubilee match, Nayudu was in Madras with his Holkar side, to play in the semi-finals of the Ranji Trophy. C.K. had often batted before large crowds in this southern city. Moreover, Madras had a vast population of his fellow Andhras. These got together under the banner of the Andhra Vidyarthi Vignana Samithi to throw a lavish party for their hero, held at Woodlands Hotel in Royapettah. The local dignitary who welcomed him spoke of how 'the Andhras were proud of Colonel C.K. Nayudu, who had reached such eminence in cricket'. Nayudu, in his reply, thanked his compatriots for their affection but observed 'that cricket did not recognise any communal or racial distinctions but was international'.

Now Nayudu had playing under him, for Holkar, cricketers from all parts of India and of varied religious backgrounds. (At this time the Holkar XI even had an Englishman, Denis Compton.) From a cricketing point of view, he thus suggested, he was much more than an 'Andhra'.

\* \* \*

Abdul Hafeez Kardar (leading Pakistan in 1952 on its first tour of India) was perhaps the greatest cricketer-ideologue born outside the West. In his view Muslim rule had brought civilisation to backward India. In Hyderabad and Lucknow he sought out sources of Pakistan's

glorious past (no temples or churches were on his itinerary). In the battlefield of Aurangzeb or the artefacts of Jehangir he saw confirmation of his country's role as the contemporary carrier of Muslim civilisation in the sub-continent. Kardar took cricket far more seriously than did other cricketers. Good conduct and good performance were a means to an end, namely the dignity of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Pakistanis had lost in Bombay, and hoped to level the rubber in Madras. They were well placed in this fourth Test, but then the rain came. An expectant crowd waited, and clapped and cheered whenever the groundsmen and the umpires walked out for an inspection. Eventually the match was called off. The rains had come after a prolonged drought, and were much welcomed by farmers. At a reception for the cricketers the Chief Minister of Madras, C. Rajagopalachari, mischievously remarked that if such fixtures could bring rain, he would like to organise them every year. The Pakistani captain, understandably disappointed, replied that he was happy that the rains came, because this was required for a larger and much greater cause, but he regretted that the organisers of the match had been deprived of funds, which would have been used for the coaching of young cricketers. He was too polite to add that the rain had also deprived his team of the chance of a win.

\* \* \*

When Pakistan visited India in 1999 the first Test was played in Madras, a city where the Shiv Sena has no presence at all. It was one of the most thrilling Test matches ever played. India lost by 12 runs, despite a brave, battling hundred by Sachin Tendulkar. At the end the winning team did a lap of honour in

front of a cheering crowd. The Pakistani captain, Wasim Akram, was deeply touched, but the Madrasi's exemplary conduct should not have come as a complete surprise. For, as Richard Cashman wrote years ago, 'a cricket crowd was a microcosm of the society around it and the general discipline of the Madras crowd was a reflection of the greater social and political stability of the city and the homogeneity of its population as compared with other major cities'. This city in southern India had no ancient memories of Mughal rule or modern memories of Pakistan. It had no history of refugee settlements or communal violence. Cashman quotes the veteran cricket writer Dicky Rutnagur, for whom the crowd at Chepauk 'epitomises the character of the city in which it stands - clean, cultured and genteel'. — (From *A Corner of a Foreign Field - The Indian History of a British Sport* by Ramachandra Guha. Published by Picador India, 2002.)

We thank the author and the publisher for their permission to publish these excerpts.



Till September 8th: 'The Symphony Series', an exhibition by Thota Tharani in aid of the underprivileged suffering from renal failure (at The State Room, The Jidoka Store #1, 1st Lane, Nungambakkam High Road, Chennai 600 034).

Till September 20: 'Finding the Centre at the Margins', An exhibition of art by Muralidharan, Rm. Palaniappan, C. Douglas, Ravinder Reddy, Valsan Koller, Krishnamachari Bose, A. Balasubrahmaniam, Ravikumar Kashi, G.R. Iranna, Jitish Kallat, Natraj Sharma, Shibu Natesan, Babu Eshwar Prasad and Harshavardhana (at Apparao Galleries).

## Answers to Quiz

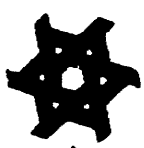
1. He was posthumously awarded the Ashok Chakra, the highest peacetime gallantry award; 2. Women's 4 x 400m relay; 3. Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*; 4. The Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe; 5. For committing *sati*; 6. India Cements; 7. For making a computer determine decisively and quickly whether a number is

prime; 8. A touch-and-smell garden; 9. R.K. Sharma, IPS; 10. Parthiv Patel.

\* \* \*

11. Richard D. Haynes; 12. Rainwater harvesting; 13. Low cost *dhotis* and sarees; 14. Tamil Maanila Congress merged with Congress; 15. Chennai to Tiruvallur; 16. Microsoft; 17. Syed Munir Hoda; 18. Reliance Infocom, Bharti Telenet, Dishnet DSL and BSNL; 19. Cuddalore District; 20. Egmore and Villupuram.

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