R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

THAT RATE MUSINGS

INSIDE

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- Biodegradeable roads!
- Will there be a third win?

Vol. XII No.15 FREE ISSUE November 16-30, 2002





How many times have I told you not to take the weather forecasts in the newspaper seriously?

Patch of blue

Okay, we admit it – we did need water, and we did ask for rain. But what we meant was the gentle variety that droppeth upon the place beneath, not this aggressive, in-your-face deluge that Noah would have recognised.

Methinks the cosmos has its share of comedians who sometimes get carried away.

Of course our city did what it does best in an emergency – namely, come apart quite spectacularly, particularly as roads turned into waterways, leading to pale jokes about needing boats instead of motor vehicles.

On November 11th sorely-tired Chennai-ites were further harassed by the cosmic comic crew. The day dawned to newspapers

declaring: "The cyclone is coming", leading to alarm, despondency – and rejoicing among the school-going citizens. Except that the sky was suspiciously clear, getting brighter and bluer by the minute. TV news channels were appealed to. "The cyclone will strike," they announced. Citizens glanced at the papers, looked at the screens, and ran out to gaze at the sky, perplexed and confused.

Telephones began to jangle. "Is there school?"

"Yes,"; "No"; "Can't say".

"Maybe it will rain in the afternoon," said some young hopefuls, watching the clearing sky with dismay.

But it didn't.

And while that was a relief for one and all, you couldn't help wondering...

Was that a chuckle, wafting on the now-suddenly balmy breeze?

Ranjitha Ashok

Blocking the canal

How do we agree to such things?

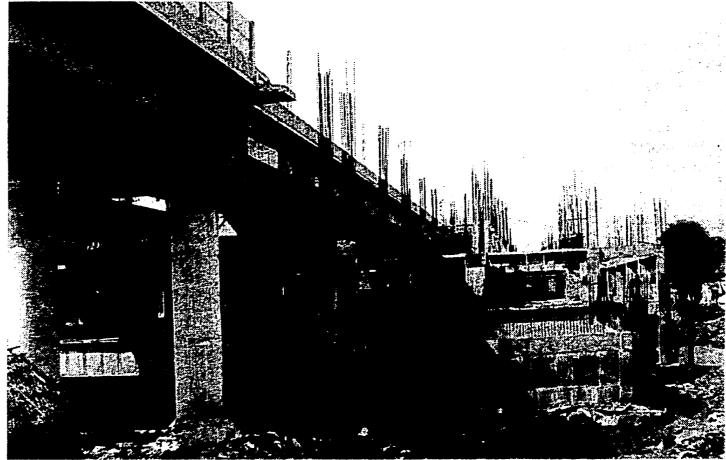
(By A Special Correspondent)

I nundation of residential areas Lin southern Chennai, like Velachery, Madipakkam, Pazhavanthangal and Taramani, has been entirely due to the MRTS pillars blocking the Buckingham Canal, according to several who have suffered. Residents in Velachery point out that water stagnation of the recent magnitude was unheard of in the area until work started on the MRTS project. Not enough thought had gone into ensuring that the pillars did not come in the way of flow of water in the Canal, engineers in the area contend.

A former Professor of Urban Engineering at Anna University, T. Anantharajan, has stated that the city has no proper 'drainage plan'. Despite watercourses like the Adyar, the Cooum, the Buckingham and Mambalam Canals and the Otteri Nullah, ensuring that stormwater collects in them and drains into the Bay of Bengal has not been considered a priority in planning. Prof. Anantharajan also agreeds with the view that the MRTS pillars come in the way of the natural flow of water through the Buckingham Canal into the Pallikaranai swamp.

No one has a convincing answer as to how further construction of the MRTS pillars in the Buckingham Canal was permitted in extending the line south from Mylapore after the experience of unprecedented flooding in Mylapore itself a few years ago. Buck-passing between government departments is once more the name of the game.

More cries of despair -Pages 4 & 5

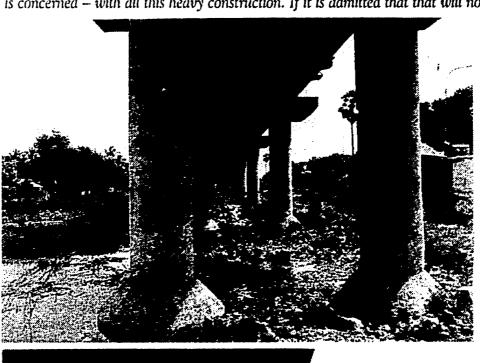


After the first phase of the City's Metro was completed, and after Mylapore had got waterlogged following a particularly heavy spell of rain a few years ago, the channel the Buckingham Canal had provided its overflow having been blocked by Metro construction, it was announced that further construction of the Metro would keep clear of the Buckingham Canal and not in any way impede any water seeking it as an outlet.

Our picture above is of the Tidel Park station coming up, seen from the bridge leading into Tiruvanmiyur. The station, if you look carefully you will see, is built right across the full width of the Buckingham Canal, its pillars embedded in the Canal. The other two pictures were taken from the footbridge leading into Indira Nagar, photographer S. KAMINI 'shooting' both northwards and southwards. And in both directions, the pillars (below) appear to be occupying at least half the width of a canal that appears to have forgotten its purpose to judge by the condition it is in.

With all this talk of hundreds of crores being earmarked to clean up the City's waterways and give them new life, it might be most to ask how that would be possible — at least as far as the Buckingham Canal in the southern part of the city is concerned — with all this heavy construction. If it is admitted that that will not be possible and this southern stretch of

canal can no longer be considered a part of the City's drainage system, is perpetual waterlogging of South Chennai to be expected whenever there's heavy rain in the city? Does anyone have an answer?





New Mantra: Herbal Tourism

The Ministry of Health is examining the possibility of setting up herbal parks at heritage sites, taking a cue from China which has a vast base of herbal exports. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H) and some oil producing public sector undertakings have been requested to consider a collaborative project.

"Besides the proposed herbal gardens, therapy centres would also be established if we find ample space for the purpose," said an official of the Ministry, adding that funds would be made available for the purpose. Herbal parks, it was felt, would attract a niche tourism market.

There cannot be any second

opinion on Dr. C.V. Subra-

manian's suggestion (MM, Oc-

tober 16th) of eliminating stray

dogs through humane methods

of putting them to sleep to con-

trol Rabies. But the Animal

Welfare Board has recom-

mended the concept of

immunisation and sterilisation

to avoid "indiscriminate killing

of dogs", evidently on the sug-

gestion of Maneka Gandhi when

she was in charge of the Board.

Through letters addressed to

them and through print media, I

had drawn to their notice seri-

ous deficiencies in that method

Every stray dog that is

caught, sterilised and vaccinated

must be nursed for at least three

weeks for satisfactory immunity

to develop. If the dog that is

caught is suffering from any in-

Sanctuary and the waterbodies in

the areas is to stop all further con-

50, Sullivan Garden Road

Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

These lines are written as L the sun peeps out halfheartedly after a week of sorry experience the city has had following what should have been most welcome rain. Construction enjoying the freedom of the wild ass, encroachments to which scant attention is paid, maintenance of waterways and storm drains which only receive lip service, tanks allowed to become playgrounds and public toilets, road-laying that follows no quality norms and numerous public utility trench-diggers with absolutely no sense of responsibility - particularly those in the private sector in chase only of a fast buck - teamed together to make the city an almost unlivable one. Yet, while the city virtually ground to a halt, in the first days, it taking The Man From Madras Musings 31/2 hours to reach Pondy Bazaar from Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai near the Marina and six hours for a friend to reach the same venue from Tambaram, our City Fathers were busy squabbling with each other on political lines, NOT about the city and its infrastructure, but about landgrabs, misdemeanours in the tendering process and other alleged wrongdoings when they should have been out in their constituencies rendering help and trying to solve problems or, at least, if bent on staying put in the Corporation, trying to team together and find solutions to the city's immediate distress.

In fact, the City Fathers and the Corporation appeared incapable of action until the Chief Minister called for urgent remedial measures and granted funds for repair work to get underway. And when that happened, MMM noted the usual happening once again; patchwork on roads being promised and beginning desultorily, promises made for relaying the roads in the future but no mention of the standards called for in the relaying process, and not a word about ensuring stormwater drains and waterways being kept not only clear but with provision for the run-off to be stored and not let into the sea.

The business of road laying is, in fact, one of the reasons for waterlogging and the sorry state of our roads. MMM has long noted that damaged roads in the city are NOT repaired but get just a new coat of 'surface' laid on the old. Neither is the coat strong enough to withstand our monsoon rains, but coat laid on coat only increases the height of the roads and lets water run off into uncared for roads, houses and gardens and other spaces which all remain at the original level of the roads being relayered. If the city is not to see a recurrence of badly laid roads, the whole business of relaying the damaged roads must be looked at by a competent committee of engineers, and new standards and procedures laid down to prevent this state of affairs happening over and over again. And this must be done simultaneously for stormwater drains and waterways.

Change needed

The Corporation, however, has its own woes - and The Man From Madras Musings understands many of them. Politics rather than the city being a priority is one of them, as already indicated above. Shortage of money - even if the best use is not made of what is available - is another, particularly with the Government holding the purse strings on the one hand and the citizenry not prepared to pay out on the other. Lack of efficiency and recalcitrant labour which feels it has no obligation to create a better city, is still another. But the most important factor impeding the Corporation is, MMM feels, is its rights.

In most parts of the world, the Mayor and his Council are in total charge of the town or city in question. Water, sewerage, public transport, even the police, come under the City Council's jurisdiction. That is not the case here, all the departments listed and many others coming under the jurisdiction of the State Government and some even under the Central Government, like telecommunications. The result is the municipal authority can only request cooperation from

if they wish, can act as a law unto

themselves. But whether they

behave like that or not, the team-

work needed in running a city is

bound to suffer if the city is con-

stantly a supplicant instead of

being able to control its own des-

tiny. This, MMM feels, is a major

issue that needs to be addressed

and reform brought about if city

governance and performance are

holds up performance is this con-

stant squabbling on party lines

and trying to score points over

the other parties often on issues

that have nothing to do with a

better city or even State. MMM

says 'State' too, because at the

State level the politicians are no

different. MMM knows there can

be no legislative solution to stop

this, but can it be idealistically

hoped that when each party

comes into power it will vow not

to spend its time witch-hunting

and showering abuse on the op-

position and, ignoring it, focus on

contributing to city and State?

MMM knows that's well nigh

impossible, but we can live in

Hope for Tranquebar!

ambadi left The Man From

recent visit to Taran-

hope, can't we?

The other major issue that

to improve.

Madras Musings with a feeling of both hope and despair.

On the HOPEFUL side were:

- The Archaeological Survey of India has recently restored its sole 'possession', the gateway to what was once Denmark's chief town in Asia.
- The Archaeological Survey of Tamil Nadu has with some Danish NGO help restored the southernmost section of the three-part Dansborg Castle.
- The Danish NGO, Foreningen Trankebar, and Church authorities have to some extent restored the Zion and Jerusalem Churches and the
- Most of the buildings on King's Street and Queen's Street are in use, their facades for the most part unchanged and all of them in a moderate condition, making restoration a distinct possibility. The Governor's House is in a shocking state and the neighbouring Circuit Bungalow is just a little better,
- but both are restorable. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation has built not far from the heritage area a 12-room 'hotel'.
- There is a wide stretch of beach in front of the Castle that appears to have distinct possibilities, local opinion being that getting the fishermen to move further south

SHORT'N' SNAPPY

the government department who, wouldn't be too difficult, ero- the litigants. Unless this issue

But cause for DESPAIR is:

to this stretch.

civilisation.

sion already having moved

them from their earlier beach

The renovated gateway is not

looked after - and by its sides,

where there should have been

built walls, there's wild growth

and the more unseemly sides of

The restoration of one part of

Dansborg Castle was com-

pleted in a sandstone colour

making MMM wonder about

this choice; the traditional fin-

ish on this coast is white

mirror finish (Chettinad lime).

More serious is the fact that

there is rising damp and ways

and means to prevent this -

and MMM hears there are

ways - were not considered.

But most serious of all, what is

going to happen to the other

two parts of the Castle, its

walls and ramparts, parts of

which are crumbling, its cellars

and its gates (at present of

bamboo lashed together!), now

that Dr. Kannan, Com-

missioner of the TN Archaeo-

logical Department and the

Museum, who had taken

considerable interest in this

restoration, has been trans-

ferred? MMM hopes the new

incumbent is as interested in

Restoration of all the buildings on the two main streets and constant maintenance thereafter are necessary if this heritage trove is still to maintain its 18th Century look and attract visitors to it.

• The Governor's House, the

- pride of Tranquebar and once occupied by the Tourism Corporation, must be restored on a priority basis, before it collapses. Shortly after his return from Tranquebar, MMM was delighted to hear that the Danish Government offer of a year ago to help with the restoration may partly be utilised in restoring Governor's House for use as a heritage hotel to be run by a group from the North which has been successful in Raiasthan and established its first foothold in South in Pondicherry. MMM has for so many years heard of so many
- Those misgivings are based on what happened to the neighbouring Circuit Bungalow, once the Governor's Guest House. Bought by one of India's leading hotel groups, it is now disputed property and in court, with Government, who keeps saying it is interested in promoting tourism and which has now put Tranquebar on the priority list for such development, is one of

is solved fast, this building too

will soon resemble the decrepit

The TTDC's Tamil Nadu Ho-

tel was built four years ago and

has been kept idle since then,

no one really knows why. As

MMM took that turn into

Tranquebar, there was a huge

TTDC hoarding appealing to

people like MMM to preserve

the ambience of the heritage

had not read its own message -

or thought about it, if the

hoarding had not come up

then - when it built its Hotel.

When it could have been so

simple to build in the clean-cut

classical style of Tranquebar,

did the style and consonance

with it have to be ignored and

PWD architecture at its worst

substituted? MMM now un-

derstands that the TTDC has

called for bids to have the pri-

vate sector run the place.

MMM hopes the successful

bidder will first re-create the

façade of the characterless pre-

mises before deciding to do

The beach could be a lovely

attraction for the two main

bungalows adjoining it and for

visitors to the Castle. Negoti-

ating with the fishermen to get

them to move and seeking

something with it.

Governor's House.

projects that his delight is tem-

pered with misgivings.

their help to maintain the beach in all its splendour would help develop Tranquebar as a heritage resort faster.

November 16-30, 2002

 The ancient temple nearby needs to be saved from the waves, restored and protected.

If all this is done and the town roperly promoted, here is a destination MMM can see the Scandinavians coming to in their numbers. But is Government prepared to look at such a project n all earnestness?

Forts of Coromandel

If properly promoted, it is not Lonly the Scandinavians who would want to holiday on the Coast of Coromandel, The Man From Madras Musings feels certain. Particularly if we promote a 'Forts of Coromandel' tour.

Just consider what we have to offer, from north to south:

- PULICAT, the capital of all the eastern possessions of the Dutch.
- FORT ST. GEORGE, from where modern India grew.
- SAN THOMÉ, the chief town of the Portuguese in the Bay and the Trail of Thomas with which it is linked.
- COVELONG & SADRAS, the forts of the Dutch.
- PONDICHERRY, the capital of France's eastern empire.
- CUDDALORE, whose Fort St. David ensured the British retained a Coromandel foothold after Madras fell.
- PORTO NOVO (Parangipettai), where the Portuguese established their second
- POOMPUHAR of the ancient Cholas from where the cultur of India went to the lands of the east.
- TRANQUEBAR, the pride of Denmark, and
- NAGAPATTINAM, Dutch springboard to Ceylon and points east.

IF whatever vestiges of the past that remain are restored in these old fort towns and museums created of their history,

IF the beaches are cleaned up town. Obviously the TTDC

IF all the other places on this coast that offers so much, like the backwaters of Pulicat and Pichavaram, the shrines of all faiths in Karaikal, Nagore and Velanganni, and the bird sanctu ary at Point Calimere, are made more international tourist friendly, besides the host of temples not far from any of these towns and the wealth of handicrafts on this stretch,

IF international class accom modation - and not necessarily rated in stars - and infrastructure (like roads) are developed,

IF all this is created and the Coromandel promoted as a heritage-cum-beach-cum-ecotourist destination, we could well have a winner on our hands. MMM has been talking about this for nearly 30 years now. Will it ever hap-

MMM

OUR

READERS

WRITE

Can the trio meet?

In his article (MM, October 16th), former Tamil Nadu IGP Arul has made a strong plea for the Police, the Press and the Public to work in union. An ideal suggestion but, as of now, whether the trio can work together and achieve desired results is a moot question for the following reasons:

Too many politicians are cor-

tionalising crime news.

The public prefers to shun the police for obvious reason, even if they have information about crimi-

The article by F.V. Arul (MM, 1 October 16th), who played an effective role as Commissioner of Police, Madras, and then the IG of Police, Tamil Nadu, is timely, coming as it does at a time when the police force is the subject of bulk criticism and debate. There should be complete harmony and understanding among the Police, the Press and the People. The Police should think that they are the friends of the public. The Public should think that the Police are their guardians and well-wishers. The Press should serve as an effecrive link between both.

To get the public to respect our Police and receive courtesy in turn. as in case of the British Police, unwarranted interference in the dayto-day affairs of the police administration by the rich and influential, especially the politicians, should be put an end to. Equality before the laws of the land should be maintained in all respects. People belonging to all walks of life should feel confident and secure that justice would be rendered to them in all police stations. Now we find in many trial courts even hard-core criminals are let off because of manipulations and irregularities committed by the investigation officials at the time of framing of FIRs. The courts should also punish the real culprits without applying their minds to "the benefit of doubt". In evolving such a situation, the Press can certainly play a vital role.

ronment and that its developmen-V.R. Chandran tal activities would be eco-friendly, the Madras Port Trust Chairman 155, Konnur High Road says all cargoes polluting the Ma-Ayanavaram, Chennai 600 023. dras harbour will be diverted to the

of the environmental impact on

rupt and have a nexus with criminals and law-offenders. In these circumstances, the police do not enjoy the freedom to act on their own. A sizeable percentage of police force is corrupt. Even the honest ones find it impossible to work with such colleagues.

The Press is only keen on sensa-

Investigative journals with their own reporters investigating crimes are considered rivals by the police and there is mutual mistrust between them.

M.R. Pillai H 64/5, Central Avenue Korattur, Chennai 600 080.

The Press's role the public involved in this marathon task as, in our country, noth-

To save Kattupalli

It is gratifying to note that the LEnnore Port Limited is conscious

Ennore-Pulicat island (MM, Octo-I have been visiting Kattupalli island ever since His Holiness the late Kanchi Paramacharya camped there for about six months in 1965. Until recent times, the only transport to Kattupalli was boat and I used to enjoy the slow boat ride midst the silent surroundings of the Buckingham Canal. The island, just 20 km north of Fort St. George, lost its virginity when the North Madras Thermal Station came up in the early 1990s. That was when the island was linked by road and

the Ennore Port area. Ennore Port Ltd.'s Chairman Raman promises to preserve the ecology of the island. The place once had casuarina and cashewnut thopes upto the beach. These were destroyed when the port was built. Now they want to create new plantations. Has Government acquired

Tt is a welcome sign that an aware

the land in Kattupalli for the

Ennore Port to develop mangrove

plantation in the Ennore-Pulicat

region, as stated by Chairman

Raman? Surely not, it is only to

setup industries to pollute the is-

land, as Manali, Tiruvottriur and

Ennore are already doing. Chair-

man Raman states that, as socio-

economic development, Ennore

Port will lay a pucca road to

Kattupalli. The people of Kattupalli

do not require such a road, but the

the port have already affected the

fishermen's lives. It is a joke to now

talk of improving the socio-eco-

nomic conditions of the fishermen.

that Ennore Port is totally commit-

ted to the protection of the envi-

Ennore Port! Who is correct?

The only way to save what is left

of Kattupalli-Pulicat's unique sand

dune, waterways, rare species of

While Chairman Raman states

Both the thermal station and

industry does.

Make it compulsory

this road was later extended upto

struction of any kind in the island. J. Chandrasekaran

as follows:

ing is achieved unless it is made

compulsory. Mere publicity will not Iness about Rainwater Harvesting suffice to achieve the goal. (RWH) is gaining ground. The Government and the Corporation Even in my building (which consists of eight flats), though I of Chennai must make RWH manhave been pleading for installation datory for all the existing buildings, of RWH and a few other steps to including flats, and make the ownconserve water, there are only a few ers of the flats / buildings respontakers. Unless everyone contributes sible for carrying out RWH comand a collective decision taken, pulsorily. They should be asked to submit a certificate from authorised very little can be done in such comagencies (to be appointed by the plexes, as there are the "hardcores" who think that it is for the govern-Government/Corporation) to the effect that RWH system is in place, ment to somehow provide water while remitting the water/sewerage and services. It is difficult to remove such a mindset unless we tax or property tax. A time limit of maximum six months can be given force people to act in the interest of to comply with the above, failing common good. which severe penalties should be imposed on such building / flat owners. This is the only way to get

43/4 (Old 19/4) Postal Colony First Street West Mambalam Chennai 600 033.

Mirroring spectacles

🔵 eader Seshadri wonders how The street name 'Kannady' was derived (MM, October 16th). When a new township is formed. people of a community bunch together and settle on one street and the street is usually named after the community or caste. Thus we have Vannier St., Chetty St., Brahmin St., etc. When Kannada-speaking people settled in a street, it became Kannada Street. That, in course of time, was distorted into Kannady

In an earlier era, herdsmen from Karnataka migrated to Chennai and plied their trade of selling milk and curd. The men covered their body with a coarse woollen cloth and wandered through the streets before sunrise, calling out their ware. Their cry used to be piercing in the silent, dark, predawn hours, as though someone was choking them slowly. In course of time, they merged with their environment and their individuality was lost. But the distorted street name persists. The name 'Kannady' has nothing to do

Vaccination not the way fection (microbial or parasitic)

it has to be treated and brought

to normal health before sterilisation and vaccination are done. Another problem that will crop up after their release into the outside world is that no vaccine (whether human or veterinary) can give cent percent protection in immunised animals or human beings. As men, a few animals may still remain susceptible to rabies infection in the free world they roam in. In other animals an intercurrent infection (microbial or parasitic) may result in the breakdown of immunity, reverting the vaccinated animal to a susceptible state for rabies infection from other rabid animals.

Further, in the normal course, the immunity conferred on rabies-protected dogs lasts one year only, needing annual

with glassware! Nor in its variation. flora and fauna, the Pulicat Bird with any 'Kennedy'!

Incidentally, there is a village near Vaniambadi which goes by the name of Kannadikuppam. Kannadiga people who settled there many years ago thrive in it to this

M. Sethuraman Chennai 600 088.

Guy de Pleasant (Prose) etc. Come responses to letters in MM.

October 16th:

I do not agree with Reader Sethuraman's advice to eschew Randor Guy's recount of crimes of long ago. Randor Guy's affable language and subtle humour make for enjoyable reading, more so on account of the fine nuances of case laws involved. I would be grateful if the other real life crime-stories penned by R.G. are published in * * *

Dr. C.V. Subramanian's letter is sadly very true. Two injections of anti-rabies serum set a person back G. Sekar Rs. 4400. In any civilised society, this cost should be borne by the state which allows rabid dogs to roam freely. At this rate, Chennai may revert to its old name with special accent on the first three letters.

> Re. Reader Rajagopal's lament that 'GETIT' is discriminatory in distributing its yellow pages, I belong to the group of subscribers who have been denied both copies of 'Getit'. A friend gave me 'Getit's' telephone number and I called them many moons ago to request for a copy. A bored woman promised to send a copy by courier, but nothing materialised. Another friend said that I had to go to the 'Getit' office and collect the copies. If that is the case, perhaps the company should rename itself 'Come And Getit' which would dispel expectations

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

Good old Rainy Hospital

LJow happy I was to see the **I**picture of Rainy Hospital in MM, September 16th.

As a young schoolgirl studying in St. Kevin's Presentation Convent, Royapuram, I had to pass this

revaccination. It will be a herculean task to trace them through the identification tags they may carry.

In the face of all the problems concerning control of rabies in street dogs, the Animal Welfare Board, unfortunately, still sticks to its concept of control of rabies in stray dogs, turning a blind eye to successful methods adopted in Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka where stray dogs are eliminated. The result is we are yet to see the light at the end of the tunnel in the matter of control of rabies among street

> M.S. Jayaraman (Retired Prof. of Virology, Madras Veterinary College) 10, Shrinivas Apartments Turn Bulls Road 1st Cross Street, Nandanam Chennai 600 035.

landmark, every day when taking the 4D route from Tondiarpet. At that time I little dreamed that my would-be husband would be born in Rainy Hospital (in 1948), delivered by an Irish doctor, Sister Alexandra.

After I got married and settled down in south Chennai, I used to have the urge to go to Royapuram and Tondiarpet and visit my Alma Mater and see good old Rainy.

My husband had a special place in his heart for Rainy Hospital. He enjoyed visiting the doctors at Rainy Hospital while he was working as a Medical Representative.

> Rajani Unni A-1/11/1, G.O.C.H. 23rd Cross Street Besant Nagar Chennai 600 090.

Of street names

Inscrutable are the ways of street Inamers!

As a school boy in the mid-40s. had friends in 'Bheemanna Mudali Street' in Abhiramapuram, rough-laid, dark and with buffaloes tied at almost every household Ridding caste suffix is o.k. But how it became 'Bhimasena Garden Street' passes my understanding! How an epic connection and horticultural undertones!

Speaking of 'de-casteing', so to speak, respected C.Rajagopalachari was fortunately more popular as Rajaji. Otherwise we would have had Rajagopala Road instead of Rajaji Road near Beach. Under the mistaken notion of caste, Dr. Rangachari became Ranga in the Road that 'honours' his memory.

> N.Dharmeshwaran 21, Kumaran Nagar Guduvanchery 603 202.

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.

A cry of despair for a battered city

its life in a critical condition over ing the children to school, alone. the past few months, the remains of Chennai now lie battered, beaten and decomposed, buried in slush, filth, slime and smoke.

The gutters are out where roads once used to be. Different bodies that had taken their turn to dig — Metrowater, TNEB, Chennai Corporation, Telecom giants — have all finally laid the city to rest. Resting, but certainly not in peace.

How alive is a city that has LAND that it cannot use for transport, WATER that it cannot control and AIR it cannot breathe, thanks to the state of affairs? How alive is a city where fear looms large, where danger lurks at every corner and where dirt is a synonym for public spaces? How alive is a city that cannot provide safe public transport, that cannot control autorickshaw diktats or cannot even provide lanes for cyclists or footpaths for pedestrians?

Over the last few months, we the residents have seen it all. Right from waking up to no electricity to going to bed early with no choice at all because the police are not sure if they can protect the public after 11 p.m. The biggest source of space in the bustling city, the Marina, shuts shop at 11!

No basic amenities, no freedom of movement, indifferent rulers and mere hot air flowing out of our Corporation buildings and government institutions. The Madras University Senate House is under threat from the elements. The Museum has water seeping in and wore a deserted look flooded by water. The Government General Hospital struggles to control malaria, cholera and typhoid and diarrhoeal disorders. Conjunctivitis is already out, the others waiting to happen post-monsoon.

Road traffic accidents are on the rise. Speed guns and traffic rules have never applied to anything that is State run. School

The City is dead. Long live children are not safe and parents 1 the City. After battling for shudder at the thought of send-Let's not even think about what could happen when drains around schools are open and unattended electric cables lie dangerously naked in the rains.

> At 100 feet wide, the place that was once a road to

With most of our readers also readers of The Hindu, we do not as a rule reproduce material of the city's most widely circulated English newspaper. We make an exception this fortnight because this "cry of despair" needs to be heard over and over again till this city is made a better place to live in. - The Editor

Mogappair, is probably among the country's biggest sewers. No. the Cooum is the country's biggest sewer, a friend corrects. Yes, but it wasn't used for transport, at least in the recent past. Yesterday's roads are today's open gutters and unfortunately two-wheelers haven't yet been built to handle such terrain. The flyovers, in spite of all that association and allegations about possible scams, are the only indication of civilisation.

How many times have we seen the people who rule us get out of their air-conditioned cars and VIP routes and set foot on

roads? In fact, every time a VIP passes, it is we the people who need to wait and clear the way. So what if it is raining and the child on the pillion of the scooter is dripping wet?

The city houses about 60 lakh people. At least about one-third of them are educated. And over two-thirds are literate.

What remains of the morbid city are its people, who are losing their faith in the system. Many stayed indoors during the two days of heavy rain, unable to cope with the decaying life outdoors. Some are actually contemplating migrating!

As the residents gear for a gloomy Diwali, the only thing to bring a cheer to the heart is the effort of a group of Corporation workers deciding to desilt a gutter in pouring rain. Maybe there's still hope. And that's what has probably kept the city going.

Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks in Castaway) after facing the biggest disillusionment in his life, said: "I know what I have to do now. I have to keep breathing. Because tomorrow, the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide would bring!"

Remember the adage "It's darkest before dawn"? And we the people know, that it just cannot get any darker here in this city! — (Courtesy: The Hindu)

A two-page look at our sad, sad city

A citizenry resigned to its fate

The intense rain Chennai recently had exposed several aspects of **L** public life in the city.

The most revealing aspect was the level of patience, tolerance and, perhaps, disinterestedness of the citizens of Chennai, who suffered the horrid state of the city's roads as if it was a matter of inevitability. In several places, cars and lorries were seen stranded in knee-deep water. Two-wheelers were seen skidding on the road and men and women were seen wading through the water in many places, their clothes drenched. All without any visible protest.

Ministers, members of the Corporation and officials were seen inspecting roads and slums as a matter of routine, without demonstrating any feeling of shame or guilt. They inspected the areas as if Chennai's roads were somebody else's job.

The city administration virtually collapsed during those days.

I have been driving on the old Mahabalipuram Road upto Perungudi almost every day for the past several years. The deplorable road conditions in front to Tidel Park, supposed to be the prestige centre of Chennai, had to be seen to be believed.

The one common observation of almost every citizen was that the state of roads and public administration in Chennai had come to such a miserable level, not due to paucity of funds or lack of planning but only due to quality of implementation of road projects, as a result of the high level of corrupt practices at all levels of the government machinery concerned with these projects.

It is strongly suspected that roads are not laid according to specifications by contractors. The poor quality of workmanship is certified by officials who are 'looked after' by the contractors. Several contractors have said that they cannot adhere to specifications since substantial portions of their payments have to be spent on officials.

In a more progressive and democratic society, those political representatives and officials dealing with these public facilities would have resigned their jobs in such circumstances. But, this will not happen in Chennai, as public opinion is impotent and the people are very tolerant and resigned to the conditions here. These conditions will no doubt remain the same during the next monsoon too.

> N.S. Venkataraman M 60/1, 4th Cross Street Besant Nagar Chennai 600 090.

Biodegradeable roads - A Chennai invention!

patent application was ****recently filed from Madras that is Chennai, for an invention that is bound to affect the life of every single person who lives here. Mrs. Siriyapushpam Periya Arputham, an engineer with several decades of design experience and an avowed ambition of out-Edisoning Edison's 1800-odd parents, has set the ball rolling, with her first application for, you guessed it, Bio-degradeable

If you would like to be put on Madras Musings' mailing list, iust fill in the form below (use block letters/type) and post it to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd, 62/63 Greames Road, CHENNAI-600 006.

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bility stop with automobile bodies?" asks Mrs. Siriyapushpam. "Why shouldn't it apply to roads as well?" Her logic has met with approval in official circles --- after all, we are half the way there already, many would say. "My concept envisages roads that could be washed away by a mild drizzle, mild sunshine or even a light sea breeze," continues the doughty inventor. "No one will

"But isn't this bad?" I ask her. 'After all, people expect roads to last, don't they?"

"Absolutely not", she responds. "Have you ever seen a anywhere? The telecom companies, electricity boards, water and the roads up the minute they are laid. My invention will take the guesswork out of when a road is

going to be dug up. It would also make life easier for drivers and

"Come on, Madam", I ask her,

She replies matter-of-factly, "Our present roads wear off in parts leaving small mounds of hard bitumen amidst cavernous potholes that resemble miniature wells during the monsoons. This is what makes driving, or even walking, difficult. It's like negotiating an obstacle course at the moment. My biodegradeable roads will solve the problem by wearing out very evenly and take all the guesswork out of travelling on our roads".

It was, indeed, difficult to ar-

cial repercussions", she explains. "The current roads provide employment to suspension and puncture mechanics. They also increase pollution and cause bronchial ailments, which means livelihoods for doctors, pharmacists, medical representatives, workers in pharma units etc. I was definitely worried that when my roads were built, all these people would lose their livelihoods. But then, I realised, all that they would need would be a re-orientation of their careers. They could become road-layers, supervisors etc. The pharma companies could sell more pain killers and balms to treat tired limbs instead of bronchial treatments — no, I am not at all worried about any possible shortcoming in my concept. My invention is a novel one, indeed, and if you think anything is wrong with it, you only have to some faults or flaws in this con- let me know and I shall rectify it."

An expressway continues to disappear

(By A Staff Reporter)

1 major link between the city and the Ennore-Manali industrial belt north of Chennai, has been further eroded by the heavy seas following the recent rains that battered the city. The already narrow road has in some stretches been reduced to less than a lane, disrupting the heavy lorry traffic for hours at a time almost every day.

Industries in the Ennore-Manali belt have, it is understood, indicated their willingness to financially participate in any and the Tiruvottiyur-Ponneriproject to improve the road.

The Ennore Expressway, the They have, it is reported, indicated their willingness to pay tolls if it is made a toll road.

The National Highways Authority of India have, meanwhile, been requested to improve the road and permanently prevent further sea erosion. A Rs.135 crore project, including the cost of resettling and rehabilitating over 1500 families living along the road, the cost of erecting groynes that will protect the road from further sea erosion, and improving the Ennore Expressway Panjetry Road, has been mooted. Chennai Port has also agreed to

below the road, the drainage sys-

tem, and urban run off that may

be tainted by sewage. Currently,

all runoff from the flyovers is be-

ing led into recharge pits. The

high point of the campaign by

the Corporation has been the

tremendous awareness created.

But the governmental measures,

in spite of the proactive measures

of committed high-level officials,

are hindered by staff at the lower

levels who find it difficult to un-

learn all they bad learnt in the

past. And, of course, no RWH

structure is geared to handle a

rare downpour like the last one

with about 20 cms in about 24

hours! Existing structures are de-

signed to handle about 6 cms of

(General), Chennai Corpora-

tion, "This whole ongoing pro-

the Chennai Corporation was

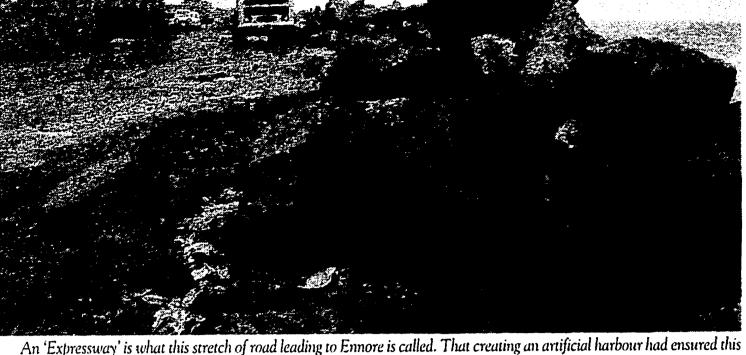
activated about 10 months ago

by Shanta Sheela Nair, Secre-

tary, Municipal Administration

and Water Supply Department,

rain at a time."



stretch of coast would get heavily eroded is a given, yet it was built. And, today, it is not only half its original width in stretches, but virtually its entire surface is so gonged by the elements and the traffic that a roller-coaster ride would seem smoother. (Picture: D. KRISHNAN.)

The NHAL it is understood. would like to team with the Tamil Nadu Road Development Company, a 50:50 joint venture between the IL & FS and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation, a State Government agency, if it decides to implement the project. The

project, according to official sources.

expected to be invited shortly. This work, estimated to cost Rs.25 crore, is targeted to make a start in January and be completed in six months.

The cost of sea erosion pre- expressway description.

contribute Rs.30 crore to the vention measures was originally estimated at Rs.200 crore. This was scaled down to Rs.80 crore Bids for sea erosion works are and now to Rs.25 crore. Groynes -low walls built into the sea from the shore at strategic points – are stated to be the best way to prevent sea erosion on this road, which at present totally belies its

Water – it's everybody's business

water-collecting paraphernalia in long queues, pots and drums that defied description and creating traffics jams, the frantic calls for water-supplying tankers, or the street brawls over water that became common enough, even in the 'posh' localities – are now alareas. How best to tackle flooding and inundation was the top priority during the spell that threw the city out of gear. But how much of that rainfall was used for recharging the city's groundwater levels? Have the ongoing operations of the Chennai Corporation focussed on teaching people water management by introducing the rainwater harvesting (RWH) concept made any difference? And has water become everybody's business in the way it is meant to be? These continue to remain

questions in the city. Chennai generally receives an average rainfall of around 130 cm over a two-month period. Rainfall also occurs in heavy short spells of a few days, or even a few hours for, on the average, 300hours a year which reinforces the need to conserve a large quantity of water during these few days, but also to store wherever and whenever it rains, as groundwater. Otherwise flooding of low-lying areas or wastage through run off into the sea results.

Sekhar Raghavan, currently Director of the Rain Centre in

ast summer's water scarcity Chennai (the first in the coun- Government of Tamil Nadu. Land its harrowing images -- try), who has been trying to Each of our engineers personally spread awareness about the checked out RWH methods in RWH concept for the last seven his own house before going pubyears, feels, "The concept has lic with the message. Next, we has to become an intrinsic part picked up in the city only at the targeted all Government offices micro level – and only in resiand institutions, and thereafter dences. Official figures cite the Corporation schools. RWH in 50,000 plots this year as compared to around 10,000 most distant memories in last year - of the total 4 lakh encourage the idea of a incentive Chennai, thanks to the recent households within CMDA limits. for implementing the concept, But RWH at the macro level, in public places, has not taken off vet because its implementation is fraught with complicated logistics - the many different cables

outset itself that we would not the idea has been to impress upon the public that they are the beneficiaries. And the emphasis has persistently been on saving water with simple, low cost methods. Interestingly, once the idea is accepted, people have come up with indigenous, more innovative, methods to save

by Shobha Menon

But a teacher in a Corporation school in Mylapore wonders. "Where is the question of optimum management of water if the designed RWH structures meant to utilise runoff from the terraces are connected by the Corporation to the existing small-sized sumps? We've always faced major water problems in this area. At present, teachers in our primary section have to take turns Says Bhoopal, Chief Engineer to fill two pots from a pump across the street for the needs of the 200 children who come cess of RWH on a war footing in here.'

> Says Shanta Sheela Nair, "Why should there by any hype about a concept as natural as RWH? The last ten years has seen a lot of work in this area by

Government, we are merely sug-"Since we'd decided at the need to sustain them by continued participation. It's funny how we persist in NOT doing things, that HAVE to be done.'

Public response has been rather poor, she feels. "Because most people respond only when a crisis happens. And as soon as pipes, any iota of the saving instinct just disappears. Do it because it is good for YOU, is the constant message. We are doing everything possible to help. RWH information cells at strategic locations can be contacted for advice, besides the official website. It is time each individual finds out what to do about things, instead of pointing fingers at the Government". Bhoopal adds, "Our aim is to

make people accept the idea first, before we make it mandatory by law. But tentative steps have already been taken in that we have made it obligatory for all building constructions to show the location and planning of RWH measures. Also re-assessment of Property Tax is not done if RWH structures are absent." He continues, "The response

has been excellent. The enthusiasm generated among school children and teachers has given meeting with college students at the Anna University led to their fort."

various NGOs, but the response functioning as consultants in the is just not enough. Through con-surrounding localities, with certed awareness programmes marked success. A number of and, if necessary, by law, RWH NGOs are also spreading the good word. Besides, we've idenof people's lives. On behalf of the tified private companies willing to sponsor structures like the surgesting a few ideas. The public charge pits (for areas in the city where even a little rain causes much stagnation). We also wish to involve corporate houses in this project. When the public effect of simple methods on groundwater levels, that's the time we plan to capitalise even water starts flowing from the further on the interest gener-

Sekhar Raghavan concludes, "At the micro level. Chennai's quantity of annual rainfall is capable of yielding more than 700 litres per day, throughout the year. If harvested on a oneground plot (2400 sq.ft), this would not only take care of the daily needs of a five-member family but also reduce their dependence on Metrowater. Empowering people to become selfsufficient is definitely the only answer. The earlier concept of stormwater drains was a big mistake, when localised flooding was 'tackled' by removing the water from the scene and letting it out into the sea (by the most circuitous route possible). In fact, the Besant Nagar Residents Forum is at present engaged in a public interest litigation against stormwater drains. Corrections in the existing drains are to be implemented soon. The Chennai a fillip to our message. A recent Corporation has taken the lead; now it is for us to sustain the ef-

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"Why should bio degradea-

"How can you say that?" have to worry about rainwater harvesting any more. Rainwater will go straight into the soil after washing away the road surface."

> gue with her logic, but something still didn't seem right to me. So, I tried one final time. "Do you have any doubts or misgivings about this concept at all, Madam? Might there not be

"I was worried about the so-

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

- 1. A simple one to beginwith. Who recently became the first batsman to log 20,000 runs in international cricket?
- 2. A new version of a library in Africa, which was world-renowned for over 2000 years, was inaugurated recently. What and where?
- 3. The Royal Society of Chemistry, U.K., has bestowed an honorary fellowship on a legendary fictional character for the first time. Who?
- 4. Who is the Castrol 'Cricketer of the Year'?
- 5. Who successfully defended their World Cup chess titles in Hyderabad recently?
- 6. Which film is India's official entry for next year's Oscars?
- 7. In which national capital was a bloody commando raid used to free hostages from a theatre on October
- 8. Name the veteran British actor, now famous for his portrayal of Prof. Dumbledore in the Harry Potter films, who passed away on October 25th.
- 9. Vinod Shridhar and Isha Lakhani are the new National champions in which sport?
- 10. Who won the Booker Prize this vear?
- 11. Name the music director of critically acclaimed films like Nammavar and Kuruthi Punal who passed away recently.
- 12. Where in the State was the Religious Family of Missionaries of Mary, whose founder was declared 'Blessed' by the Pope recently, founded in 1877?
- 13. Where in Chennai was a memorial to celebrate 50 years of the release of Sivaji Ganesan's first film Parasakthi, unveiled on October 17th?
- 14. P.S. Pai is the first non-familperson to be the Executive Chairman of which major business house in the State?
- 15. Which Chennai city-suburb municipality is claiming to be the first urban local body to bring its operations under e-governance?
- 16. Name the former TNCC president and former Union Petroleum Minister who passed away on October 27th?
- 17. Name the airline that on October 28th became the third carrier to operate domestic services out of Kamaraj Terminal.
- 18. Name the new university set up in Vellore, with Annavi Susheela Thirumaran as its first VC.
- 19. Two of the four private plants supplying power to TNEB are at Basin Bridge and Madurai. Where are the other two?
- 20. Maharaja Sri Krishna Kumarsinghi Bhavsinghi was in 1948 the first Indian to hold which public office in the State?

(Answers on page 7)



...& THE NEW THE OLD...

Our OLD (above) has appeared in these columns before. It is the headquarters of Larsen & Toubro's construction division, E.C.C., in Manapakkam, on the Bangalore Road, just before Porur. In 1994, it won an award for the 'Most Outstanding Concrete Structure' at the Quadrennial Congress of the International Federation for Structural Concrete. Long before that, its striking appearance – four, square, interconnected four-storied blocks, each standing on an upturned byramid held by a single pillar – used to hold the attention of passersby.

Our NEW (below) was added to the E.C.C. campus in 1999 and won a 'Special Mention' at the 2002 Congress of the Federation. The winner, ECC's Engineering Design and Research Centre, popularly known as the 'Knowledge Centre', has been recognised for its design and construction. Built to a design by K.S. Ranganath of Bangalore, the Centre has four leaf-like floors branching out from either side of the first floor of a central trunk, reflecting the concept of the 'Tree of

In the same campus is our second NEW (on right), ECC's multi shelldomed Convention Centre which, abart from lunch rooms, auditorium, and conference halls, houses an art gallery and walls embellished with the work of Mumbai artist Datary Gunda Kulkami, better known as Dizi. The Dizi Collection here, comprising paintings, drawings and sculpture, 187 pieces in all, is unique because no other artist in India has such a big collection housed in one private gallery.

The newest building on campus opened in August, is L & T Infotech Park, which joins the Construction Skills Training Institute, where Plus-Class 10s are trained in construction skills. ECC, which won special mention in 1994 also for the Sri Sathya Sai Nigamgamam in Hyderabad, and in 1998 for the Sri Kanteerva Indoor Stadium in Bangalore - the only Indian firm with four awards from the Federation – will be hoping the Infotech Centre will bring in a fifth award in 2006.







November 16-30, 2002

Till November 15: An exhibition of paintings by Dwijen Gupta. (At the Apparao Galleries.)

November 19: Discussion on Victor Hugo by Jean-Marc Hovacse, author of the biography of Victor Hugo. (At Alliance Française, 6 p.m.)

November 21: Contemporary paintings by Rajesh Bhowmik from Tripura. (At Lalit Kala Akademi.)

Exhibition of floral and landscape paintings by M. Rama Suresh. (At Vinavasa.)

lovember 23: Potter About presents a two-session workshop on mosaic work (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and ceramic painting (3 p.m. to 5 p.m.) (Call Anjana Sunil, 660 0262 at Forum.)

November 26: Watercolours, oil paintings and acrylic paintings by artists from across the country. (At Artworld.)

November 26: Travel writer William Dalrymple speaks and signs copies of his book, White Mughals. (At Landmark, 7 p.m.)

November 30: A two-session workshop on tile embossing (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and ceramic painting (3 p.m. to 5 p.m.) (Call Anjana Sunil, 660 0262, at Forum.)

December: A tribal art exhibition as a prelude to an international tribal conference, Sites of Recurrence, scheduled for January 2003. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

December 8 and 9: Chali, a group of 15 dancers, who perform as they travel, giving lecdems and workshops. Their workshop will be useful to organisations (those working for people with disabilities) and for dancers who are looking at new approaches in choreography, dance therapy, composition and appreciation. (At DakshinaChitra.)

December 15: Gift Wrapping Workshop. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

December 14, 15 to 25: Heritage tours of Mylapore, George Town and Triplicane, on December 14, 15 and 25 respectively, conducted by V. Sriram, who writes on music and dance heritage in Madras Musings.

The houses of prominent musicians of the past and also a few concert locales, which were famous, will be covered. The entire tour is by bus, from which participants alight at various places to receive a brief overview about each place and persons associated with it. In case some of the house owners are willing, entry to houses to see the rooms which the famous musicians used will be arranged.

(For details and bookings, Tel: 2540392/0519/0520; 98400 24200; e-mail at: sangeetham@sangeetham.com)

Will there be a third triumph?

in a new format, I wonder whether this will be Tamil Nadu's year. Every year, Tamil Nadu appears to have a team that looks a winner - but stumbles somewhere along the way. Will this year repeat the triumphs recalled below:

By 1954, the Ranji Trophy Championship had been played for 20 years. The West had been the dominant zone, Bombay alone winning the trophy seven times. Then in the second decade of the competition, Holkar had emerged as the team to beat and, in ten years, they won the trophy four times and were runners-up on five occasions.

Madras had done reasonably well in the South Zone but had come a cropper time and again in the knock-out rounds. Their best record was in 1935-36 and 1940-41 when they entered the final only to lose to Bombay and Baroda respectively. By the early Fifties, the team had gone through a transition period. The old guard of Gopalan, Ram given way to youth, symbolised by the emergence of talent such as C.D. Gopinath, B.C. Alva, M. Balakrishnan, M. Suryanarayan, A.G. Kripal Singh and M.K. Murugesh. Of these, Gopinath was an established Test player while Suryanarayan and Alva had played in unofficial Tests against Commonwealth sides. By 1954-55, the nod. transition was complete, but was the team good enough to win the trophy, which had eluded it time and again, its supporters wondered.

right note with Madras getting the better of Travancore- gapani (74 not out) boosted the Cochin, as Kerala was then known, on first innings. Kripal Singh gave signs of things to come when he gracefully hit Ali, who was captaining the 208, to remain his highest first team, B.B. Nimbalkar (whose class score. Balu Alaganan, captain that year, added 106. Then Trophy is still to be broken after

↑ s yet another Ranji Trophy tory, over Hyderabad, with Aseason gets underway now Kripal Singh top scoring with 67 and taking Madras into the semi-finals.

> Meeting Bengal in Madras, the home-team registered a 157-run victory. Gopinath stroked his way to an elegant 121 and Kripal Singh (98) gave him good support as Madras reached 347. Indian opening batsman, Pankaj Roy scored 74 for Bengal, but the rest of the team contributed little and Bengal were restricted to 174, with medium pacer Ramakrishnan taking five for 66. Madras' second innings revolved around Kripal Singh. The gifted 21-year-old, who was to play for India before the year was out, batted brilliantly to score 97 out of a total of 139. But, by now, the wicket was

Sarwate. They got 417, with vailed over Delhi on run quo-Sarangapani, Kripal Singh and tient in a rain-affected semifinal Murugesh each taking three and this made Tamil Nadu's wickets. In Madras' second in- task easier. nings, Kripal Singh capped a Tamil Nadu, by this time, was a well-balanced team. In

Alva, D.L. Chakravarthi, M. Suryanarayan.

great season by top scoring with V.B. Chandrasekhar, they had 91, giving him a tally of 636 runs at an average of 106.00. With Alva (56) and Alaganan (56 not out) chipping in with useful scores and No. 11 Murugesh making a second valuable con-

tribution in the 30s, Madras

get of 373. Mushtaq Ali (51).

(54) all raised Holkar's hopes,

but Kripal Singh (4 for 113) and

Murugesh (5 for 114) spun

them out in a tense finish for

326. Madras had won its first

Ranji Trophy and a civic recep-

tion by the Mayor, none other

than the president of the Ma-

dras Cricket Association, M.A.

Chidambaram, crowned the

achievement.

by Partab Ramchand

proving to be difficult and Alva posted 311, setting Holkar a tar-(4 for 59) and Murugesh (5 for Singh and Rangachari had 53) bowled out the visitors for Sarwate (56) and NP Singh

So Madras made the title round for the third time and for the first time since 1940-41. Their opponents were formidable Holkar, making their tenth appearance in the final in 11 years. There was an unseemly controversy over the venue, but Indore finally got the

Batting first, Madras posted a healthy 478, Gopinath getting his second century of the season (133). In the middle order, Kripal Singh (75) and Bala-The campaign started on a krishnan (78) contributed their mite, while tail ender Sarantotal. This should have been a satisfactory score, but Holkar had the incomparable Mushtag record 443 not out in the Ranji came another first innings vic- more than 50 years) and C.T.

Madras, by then Tamil Nadu, had to wait till 1987-88 for its next Ranji Trophy. As the season got underway, there was nothing to indicate that it was going to be Tamil Nadu's year. True, they topped the South Zone. This had happened time and again only for there to be disappointments at the knockout stage. Moreover they had lost to Karnataka, who exposed some chinks in the Madras armour. But triumphs are achieved through a mixture of skill and luck and good fortune

Bombay eliminated Karnataka in the pre-quarterfinal only to be beaten by Delhi in the next round. Tamil Nadu comfortably got the better of Uttar Pradesh in quarterfinal and Punjab in the semifinal and a Delhi-Tamil Nadu final seemed on the cards. But, surprisingly, Railways pre-

was to smile on Tamil Nadu in

the knock-out stage.

unearthed a fine attacking opening batsman. Laxman Sivaramakrishnan was a tower of strength in the middle order with his strokefilled batsmanship. Only three years before, he had won a Test match for India with his mesmerising leg spinners but now his bowling was a bonus! In Robin Singh, the State had an allrounder - an aggressive middle order batsman, a capable right arm medium pace bowler and a superb fielder. The selectors wisely recalled V.Sivaramakrishnan for the knockout stage and the veteran left hander proved his worth by getting 334 runs in three games and topping the averages. Woorkheri Raman was a tower of strength in the middle order with his languid grace. To balance the batting, there was the obdurate. technically sound PC Prakash. In the seasoned S. Vasudevan, they had a left arm spinner at his peak. And newcomer M. Venkatramana was the kingpin of the attack with his probing off spin. India player Bharath Arun provided brisk medium pace bowling and attacking batsmanship late in the order. So well had the team been welded into a fighting unit that Tamil Nadu could make light of the fact that K. Srikkanth, the appointed captain, was available for just two of the eight matches and Raman for only four, being busy on national

Railways were no match for the confident Tamil Nadu team, even if the five-day final lasted almost the whole course. Railways were restricted to 317 and Tamil Nadu, who in the previous three matches had registered successive totals of 578, 493-8 declared and 601, made 2002-3 team repeat the feat?

The Madras team that won the Ranji Trophy in 1954-55. Standing left to right: B.S. Alva, J. Ramakrishna, M.K. Balakrishnan, M.K. Murugesh, A.K. Sarangapani, S. Balakrishnan, M.G. Bhavanarayanan, N. Balasubramaniam. Sitting left to right: A.G. Kripal Singh, C.D. Gopinath, R.B. Alaganan (Captain), V. Pattabhiraman (Manager), B.C. these scores seem paltry by amassing 709. A dispirited Rail-

ways side were all out for 248 in their second errand on the final day morning While Venkatramana was the wrecker-inchief in the first innings, taking 7 for 94, Vasudevan hastened the end by taking 7 for 59 in the second innings. The Tamil Nadu batsmen, for their part, did pretty much what they liked with the bowling. Chandrasekhar led off with 89, Prakash got 50, V. Sivaramakrishnan 94 while Robin Singh and L. Sivaramakrishnan scored centuries. Reflecting the championship

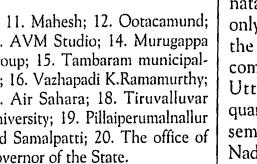
class of the team was the fact that Chandrasekhar, Robin Singh and Sivaramakrishnan each aggregated over 500-runs for the season, Robin getting four hundreds and Sivaramakrishnan three, with Venkatramana taking 35 wickets, Vasudevan 27, Arun 18 and Robin Singh 17. Not unexpectedly, within about a year of the triumph, Chandrasekhar, Robin Singh and Venkatramana had all joined Srikkanth and Raman as India players. The only jarring note in a

truly unforgettable triumph was the fact that there were only around 300 spectators at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on the morning of March 30, 1988 the day Tamil Nadu finally, after 33 years, brought the trophy back home. Those who stayed away missed a touching gesture by Vasudevan, leading the team in Srikkanth's absence; moments after being presented the trophy, he handed it to S. Venkatraghavan, who had unsuccessfully toiled for 22 years, as player and captain, to bring the prize to Madras. It was his way of saying 'thank you' to Venkat for his tireless effort. Venkat was the TNCA secretary at the time. Vasudevan then had the final word, "Even if we had met Bombay or Delhi we would have won". Will the



1. Sachin Tendulkar; 2 Bibliotheca Alexandria in Egypt; 3. Sherlock Holmes: 4. Rahul Dravid; 5. India's V. Anand (men) and China's Xu Yuhua (women); 6. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Devdas; 7. Moscow; 8. Richard Harris; 9. Tennis; 10. Yann Martel for Life of Pi.

11. Mahesh; 12. Ootacamund 13. AVM Studio; 14. Murugappa Group; 15. Tambaram municipal ity; 16. Vazhapadi K.Ramamurthy 17. Air Sahara; 18. Tiruvalluvai University; 19. Pillaiperumalnallui and Samalpatti; 20. The office of Governor of the State.



The Other Festival at new venue

o-founded by dancer-**∠**choreographer Anita Ratnam of the Arangham Trust and cultural activist Ranvir Shah of the Prakriti Foundation, The Other Festival returns to Chennai, for the fifth year in succession, from December 1st to 7th. Enjoying the support of a Brand Sponsor, it will this year be called The Park's The Other Festival.

With the famous heritage site, The Museum Theatre, closed for major renovation, The Other Festival shifts to The Chinmaya Heritage Centre, 2, 13th Avenue, Harrington Road, (Opp. Lady Andal School), Chennai, which last year inaugurated a posh, airconditioned auditorium with a seating for 700.

As part of the Festival, there will be screened in The Park Hotel's lobby throughout its duration video art by Viraj Singh and Govind Kumar titled Cine Verite. The film explores the space that cinema occupies in Indian society and its effect on the psyche.

The Festival begins with Sangeet Akademi awardee Usha Ganguli's (Kolkata) solo production Antar Yatra, a play in Hindi offering a whole history of Indian womanhood ranging from urban middle class homes to the rural woman.

December 2nd offers two shows. The Stem Dance Theatre Bangalore opens with excerpts from their latest contemporary dance production Moh - In the realm of love, to music accompanied by the Amit Heri Group Banglore. He then goes on to perform original compositions that draw from Latin, Indian, Contemporary Jazz, Funk, Blues and European music.

On December 3rd, Anita Ratnam's Arangham Dance Theatre Chennai and Pittsburgh dance company Dance Alloy USA present a contemporary dance production Dance featuring two dancers from each company, a seamless blending of the Japanese Butoh dance, Bharata Natyam and Modern styles against a background of Tibetan landscape and culture.



Young Nritarutya Bangalore, rooted in the traditional but constantly exploring new avenues, present "And ..." on December 4th. They will be followed by celmembers of her Dhrishtikon Dance Foundation, presenting Rhythm & Sound, an extract from a larger production, The Hidden Stream.

December 5th will feature Canada's renowned husbandwife team, Allen and Karen Kaeja from Kaeja d' Dance, performing solo and duet works as well as a collaboration with Chennai-based dancers. Three short films directed by Allen Kaeja and Mark Adam, Sarah, Zummel and 1939 will also be screened.

The Festival's ongoing collaboration with Alliance Française de Madras will be the focus on December 6th, with a solo musical performance by accordionist Richard Galliano from France. His Italian origins have bequeathed him a passion for singing melodies, while his experience with jazz has helped him master the demands of rhythm. He will be followed by Mumbai-based theatre group Working Title, who present Combat – A Comedy of Terror, directed by Jaimini Pathak, a comedy satire on War and Peace.

The Park's The Other Festival closes on December 7th with a contemporary dance performance, Essence of dancers from Rhythm, by Tribhangi Dance Theatre, South Africa. The Artistic Director of the company Jayespri Moopen has earned a reputation for synthesising Indian dance with ebrated Kathak exponent Aditi African dance and music. The Mangaldas from New Delhi and doyen of modern dance from Israel, Rina Schenfeld, ends the Festival with Swans, her latest work, which captures her vitality and the joy of dance.

Date and day

Short Performance

Long Performance

Sunday,

December 1, 2002, 7 p.m.

Usha Ganguli, Kolkata, in Antar Yatra, solo theatre in Hindi

Monday,

December 2, 2002, 7 p.m.

STEM Bangalore presents Moh — In the realm of Love:

Amit Heri Group Bangalore Music

Contemporary group dance

Tuesday, December 3, 2002, 7 p.m.

Dance Alloy USA and Arangham Dance Theatre Chennai present Dust: Contemporary group dance

Wednesday,

December 4, 2002, 7 p.m.

Nritarutya Bangalore: Contemporary group dance

Aditi Mangaldas, New Delhi, presents Rhythm & Sound: Contemporary group dance

Thursday, December 5, 2002, 7 p.m.

Kaeja d' Dance, Canada, presents Life duets: Contemporary duet and

Screening of films by Kaeja d' Dance

Friday, December 6, 2002, 7 p.m.

Richard Galliano, France: Accordion

group dance

solo

Jaimini Pathak & Working Title, Mumbai, present Combat, English

theatre

Saturday, December 7, 2002, 7 p.m.

Tribhangi Dance Theatre, South Africa, presents

Essence of Rhythm: Contemporary group dance

Rina Schenfeld Israel in Swans Contemporary solo dance

December 1-7, daily at the Park lobby

Viraj Singh and Govind Kumar present Cine Verite (Video Art)

For details contact: Arangham Trust 852 4917 / 852 2066 / 98410 45235, Email: theotherfestival@arangham.com. Venue: At the Chinmaya Heritage Centre, Harrington Road.

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