

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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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)

Inundation of residential areas in 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 agrees with the view that the MRTS pillars come in the way of the natural flow of water through the Buckingham Canal into the Pallikarantai swamp.

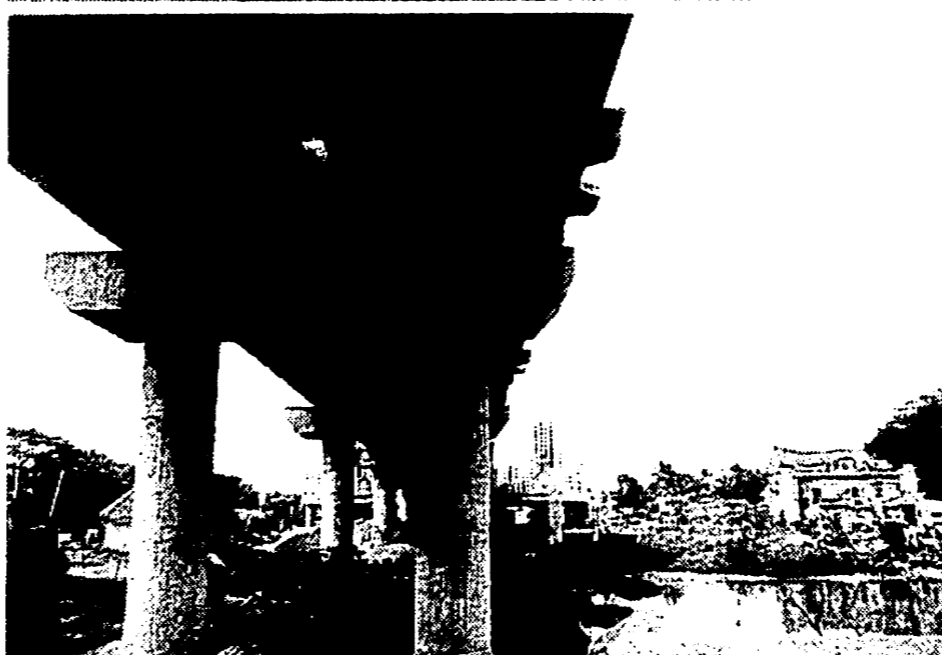
No one has a convincing answer as to how further construction of the MRTS pillars in the Buckingham Canal was permitted in extending the line south from Mylapore after the experience of unprecedented flooding in Mylapore itself a few years ago. Buck-passing between government departments is once more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



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 moot 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.

More cries of despair – Pages 4 & 5



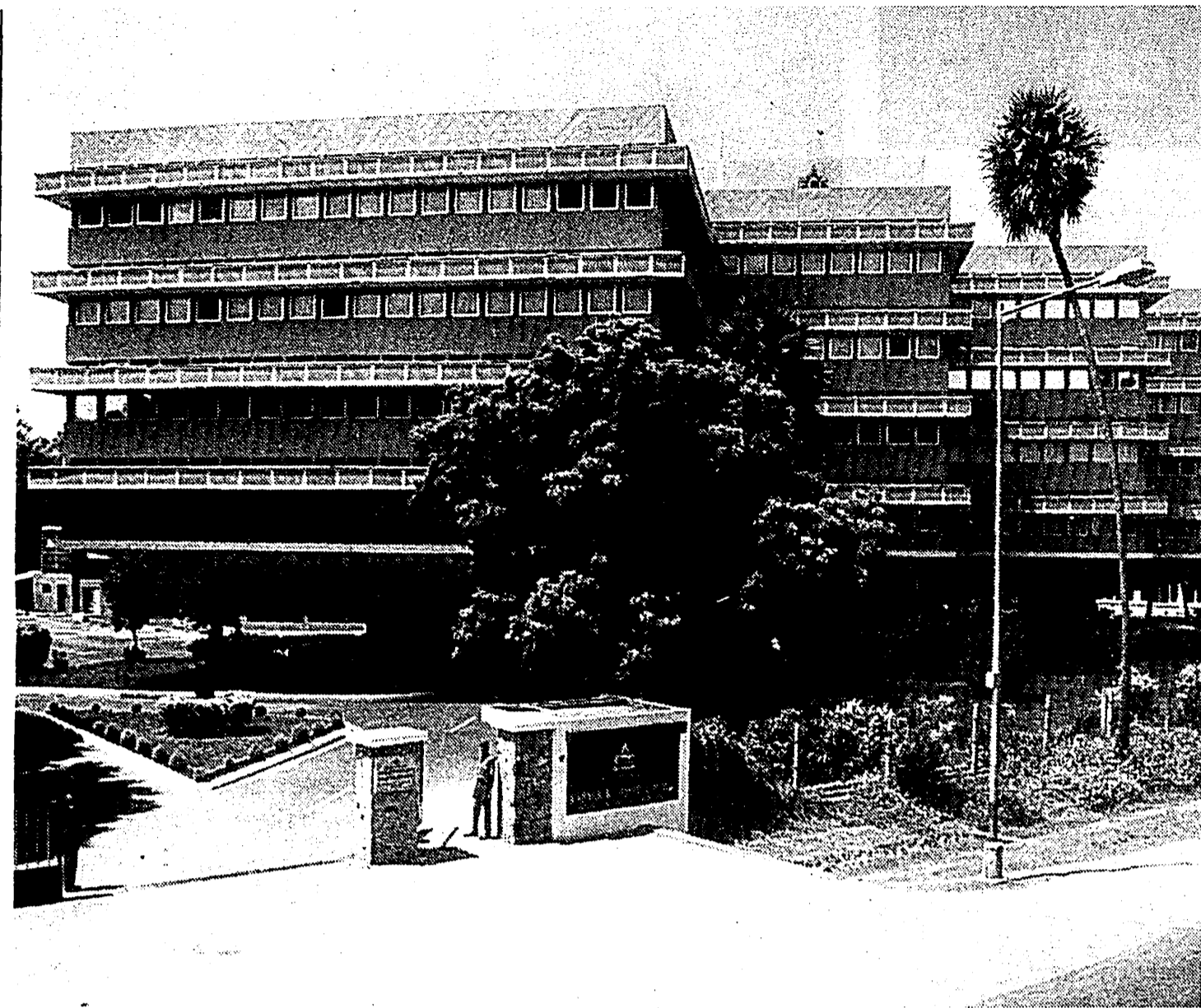


## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(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 begin with. 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 26th?
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 year?
11. Name the music director of critically acclaimed films like *Nammavar* and *Kimathi 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-family person 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 Kumarasinghi Bhavasinghi was in 1948 the first Indian to hold which public office in the State?

(Answers on page 7)



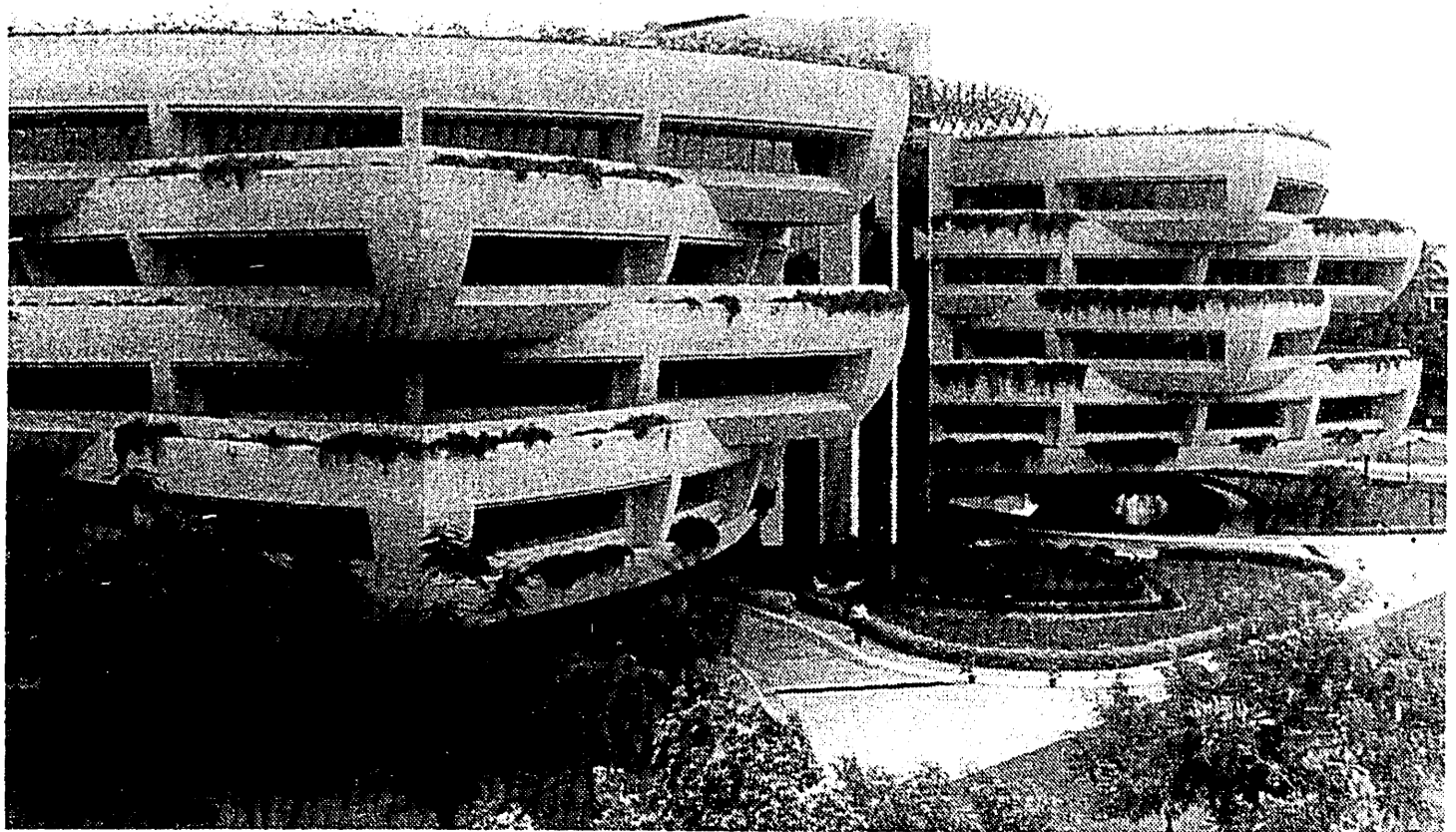
### THE OLD...

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 Ponur. 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 pyramid 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 Knowledge'.

In the same campus is our second NEW (on right), ECC's multi-shell-domed Convention Centre which, apart from lunch rooms, auditorium, and conference halls, houses an art gallery and walls embellished with the work of Mumbai artist Datar Gymda Kulkarni, 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 Nigamam 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.



### ...& THE NEW



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 Francaise, 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 Vinayasa.)

November 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 rile 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 lectures 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 Dakshina-Chitra.)

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: saangeetham@sangeetham.com)

# Will there be a third triumph?

As yet another Ranji Trophy season gets underway now 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.

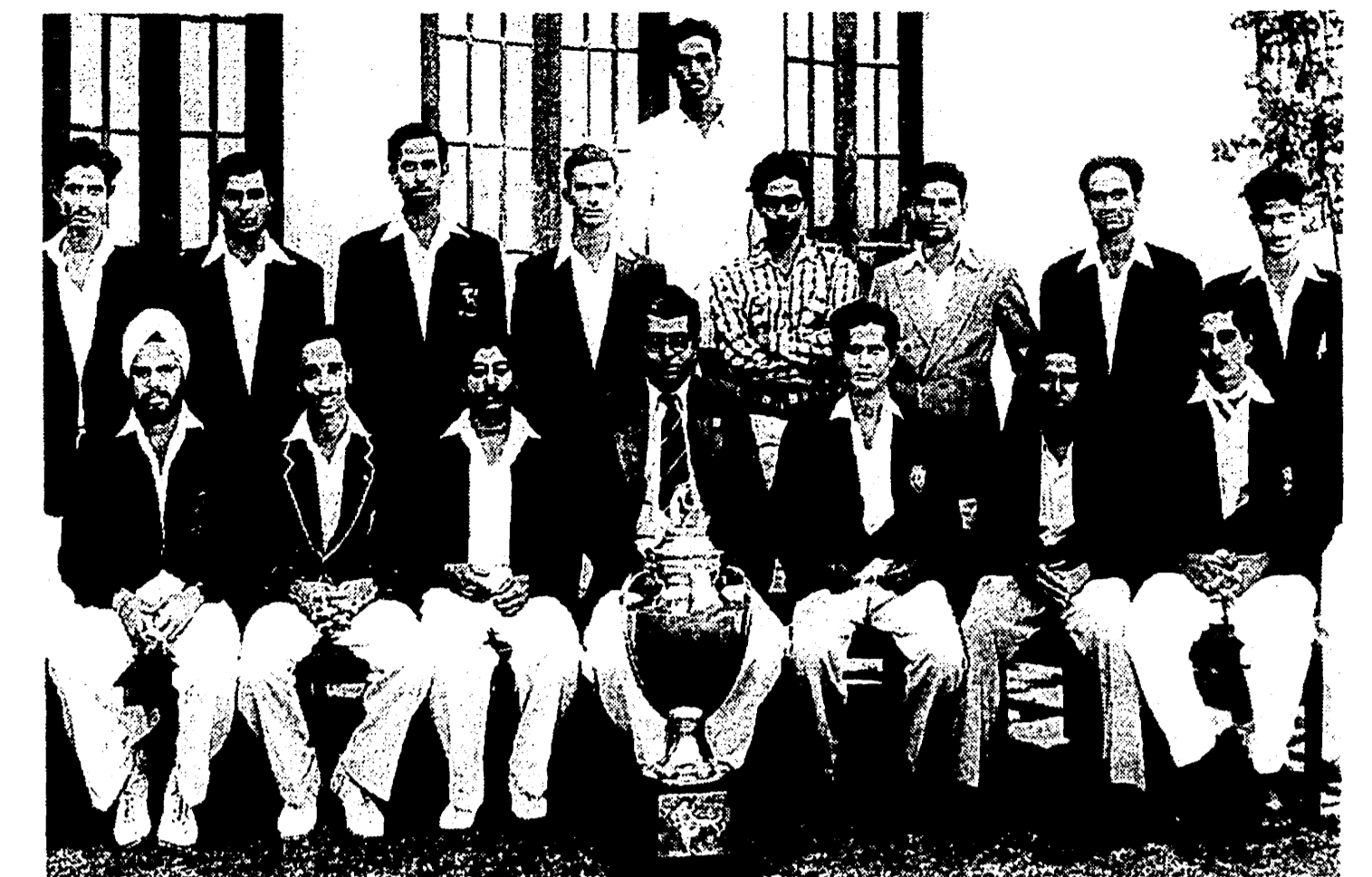
Madras had done reasonably well in the South Zone but had come a cropper time and again in the knock-out rounds. Their best record was in 1935-36 and 1940-41 when they entered the final only to lose to Bombay and Baroda respectively. By the early Fifties, the team had gone through a transition period. The old guard of Gopalan, Ram Singh and Rangachari had 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 transition was complete, but was the team good enough to win the trophy, which had eluded it time and again, its supporters wondered.

The campaign started on a right note with Madras getting the better of Travancore-Cochin, as Kerala was then known, on first innings. Kripal Singh gave signs of things to come when he gracefully hit 208, to remain his highest first class score. Balu Alaganan, captain that year, added 106. Then came another first innings vic-

proving to be difficult and Alva (4 for 59) and Murugesh (5 for 53) bowled out the visitors for 155.

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 nod.

Batting first, Madras posted a healthy 478, Gopinath getting his second century of the season (133). In the middle order, Kripal Singh (75) and Balakrishnan (78) contributed their mite, while tail ender Sarangapani (74 not out) boosted the total. This should have been a satisfactory score, but Holkar had the incomparable Mushtaq Ali, who was captaining the team, B.B. Nimbalkar (whose record 443 not out in the Ranji Trophy is still to be broken after more than 50 years) and C.T.



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

Sarwate. They got 417, with Sarangapani, Kripal Singh and Murugesh each taking three wickets. In Madras' second innings, Kripal Singh capped a great season by top scoring with 91, giving him a tally of 636 runs at an average of 106.00. With 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

vailed over Delhi on run quotient in a rain-affected semifinal and this made Tamil Nadu's task easier.

Tamil Nadu, by this time, was a well-balanced team. In V.B. Chandrasekhar, they had unearthed a fine attacking opening batsman. Laxman Sivaramakrishnan was a tower of strength in the middle order with his strokefelled 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 all-

rounder – 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. Srikanth, the appointed captain, was available for just two of the eight matches and Raman for only four, being busy on national duty.

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

these scores seem paltry by amassing 709. A dispirited Railways side were all out for 248 in their second errand on the final day morning while Venkatramana was the wrecker-in-chief 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 Srikanth 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 Srikanth'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 2002-3 team repeat the feat?

## • by Partab Ramchand

## Answers to Quiz

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 municipality; 16. Vazhapadi K.Ramamurthy; 17. Air Sahara; 18. Tiruvalluvar University; 19. Pillaiperumalallur and Samalpatti; 20. The office of Governor of the State.

# The Other Festival at new venue

Co-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, air-conditioned 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 Bangalore. 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 dancers from Nritarutya Bangalore, rooted in the traditional but constantly exploring new avenues, present "And ..." on December 4th. They will be followed by celebrated Kathak exponent Aditi Mangaldas from New Delhi and members of her Dhrishtikon Dance Foundation, presenting *Rhythm & Sound*, an extract from a larger production, *The Hidden Stream*.

December 5th will feature Canada's renowned husband-wife 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*, *Zimmel* and *1939* will also be screened.

The Festival's ongoing collaboration with Alliance Francaise 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 Rhythm*, by Tribhangi Dance Theatre, South Africa. The Artistic Director of the company Jayespri Moopen has earned a reputation for synthesising Indian dance with African dance and music. The 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 <i>Antar Yatra</i> , solo theatre in Hindi
Monday, December 2, 2002, 7 p.m.	STEM Bangalore presents <i>Moh</i> — <i>In the realm of Love</i> : Contemporary group dance	Amit Heri Group Bangalore Music
Tuesday, December 3, 2002, 7 p.m.	Dance Alloy USA and Arangham Dance Theatre Chennai present <i>Dust</i> : Contemporary group dance	
Wednesday, December 4, 2002, 7 p.m.	Nritarutya Bangalore: Contemporary group dance	Aditi Mangaldas, New Delhi, presents <i>Rhythm &amp; Sound</i> : Contemporary group dance
Thursday, December 5, 2002, 7 p.m.	Kaeja d' Dance, Canada, presents <i>Life duets</i> : Contemporary duet and group dance	Screening of films by Kaeja d' Dance
Friday, December 6, 2002, 7 p.m.	Richard Galliano, France: Accordion solo	Jaimini Pathak & Working Title, Mumbai, present <i>Combat</i> , English theatre
Saturday, December 7, 2002, 7 p.m.	Tribhangi Dance Theatre, South Africa, presents <i>Essence of Rhythm</i> : Contemporary group dance	Rina Schenfeld Israel in <i>Swans</i> Contemporary solo dance
December 1-7, daily at the Park lobby	Viraj Singh and Govind Kumar present <i>Cine Verite</i> (Video Art)	

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

**Sport  
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