

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Whither History for students?
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- The crows again!
- Making champions still better

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FREE ISSUE

February 1-15, 2003



This is the only way to outsmart the Chennai mosquitoes!

Evening snacks

Chennai is now officially a fitness-conscious city, with earnest citizens walking, gym-ing, and dieting.

But those Chennai walkers who use the slightly more wooded open areas for their evening perambulations face unexpected dangers, especially during this season.

While they can keep their eyes open, they must keep their mouths shut, because members of the insect community make a habit of flying in on suicide missions. And, while one respects all species, one draws the line at swallowing something with hair, wings and legs as a snack, especially when one is genuinely not looking for food of any kind.

It is quite funny to watch this happen – to someone else, of course.

There they are, either walking or jogging along happily, when they encounter an acquaintance. Instead of moving on with a casual wave or smile, they pause to speak. That's when it occurs.

You can always tell by the sudden pause, the gulp, the glazed-eye look, and the bout of choking and sputtering, followed by the rather embarrassed pretence all round that this just did not happen.

The victims, however, soon move on, gripped by a horrible fear that they have now swallowed something that might have the worst effect possible on some or all of their vital organs.

And you, trying not to laugh, reflect on the strange problems affecting the human condition.

Ranjitha Ashok

What price, after coastal survey?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The whole coast of Coromandel, beginning with the stretch that's the eastern boundary of the city, is to be surveyed anew by the country's naval hydrography department to verify what exactly is the high tide line, this correspondent recently learned. If, as it is unofficially predicted, that line is now much closer to the sea than was generally accepted in the past, the gates will be wide open for unrestrained coastal development, unless there is an appreciation that the coast should under no circumstances be endangered and that any development alongside it takes the threat-to-the-coast aspect into consideration.

If this survey gets underway, as is expected in the next few weeks, and if it gives, as again expected, the OK to building closer to the beach, a coastal development boom is likely to threaten the city's entire coast. Indicators of that boom could well be the Rs.1000 crore Marina-and-San Thomé-Beach development plan the Government appears to have set its heart on, together with a new administrative city on the Old Mahabalipuram Road near Covelong.

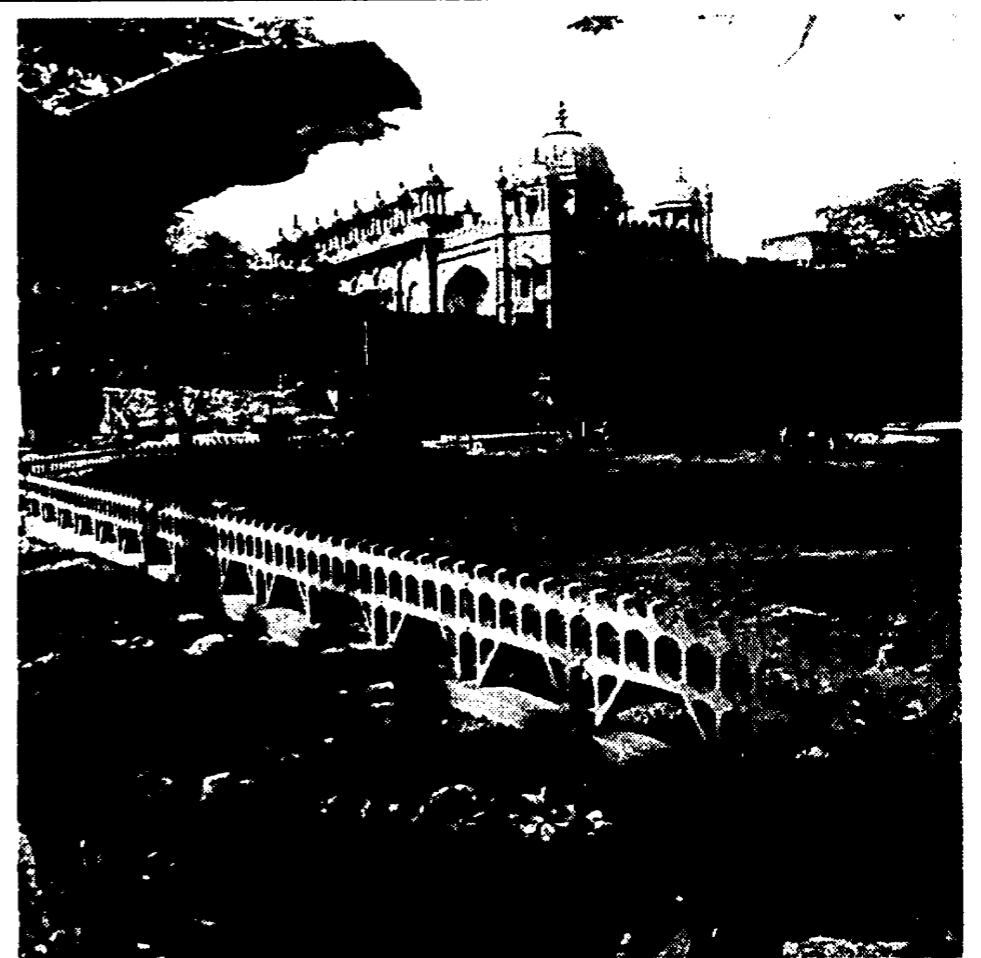
Looking at the Marina proposal first, this correspondent is amazed how a Marina Improvement Plan formulated by the CMDA just a few months ago has escalated from Rs.4 or 5 crore, with an annual expenditure thereafter of a couple of crores, into a combined development of San Thomé beach to the tune of Rs. 1000 crore.

These developments envisage major beautification plans for the Marina – when all is needed is clean sand and the discipline to ensure the misuse listed on this page last fortnight

is rigorously curbed. Any plans beyond those outlined in the CMDA study published in these columns last fortnight could only be a desecration of an invaluable bit of natural heritage that in the past we have minded with some sensitivity.

The plans for the San Thomé Beach right down to the Adyar Estuary are even more grandiose. They envisage, in place of the fishermen's tenements, highrise for the corporates, mansions for the minor diplomatic presence in the city, and luxury residential tower blocks and recreational and service amenities for all to

(Continued on Page 5)



Plant more trees is what everyone, including Government (see page 5), urges. But at the same time, others keep felling them as they please, often for no real reason at all. Fortunately, the tree seen in our picture has not been felled as part of the restoration process in the Museum campus — where new lawns and fencings for them are being created — but was there reason even to lop off branches of it, as seen in our picture? Hopefully, we will not see more of this from landscapers, conservationists or anyone else in the Museum campus. (Photograph by R. ESWARRA).

Words in Delhi, lessons for Chennai

(By A Special Correspondent)

When World Heritage Day was marked at the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage at its headquarters in New Delhi with a seminar on the *Preservation of Lutyens' Delhi*, speaker after speaker expressed concern about the deterioration of the city. **Much of what was said applies to Chennai too.**

The capital's problems are multiplying, and the urgency to address them all the more so. In the last 40 years, considerable changes have taken place in the urban matrix, periodically punctuated by threats to demolish heritage buildings. The pressures are mounting further; with the rise of dozens of flyovers and the carving of the Metro Rail, the garden look of Delhi is vanishing. Lutyens' Delhi is now listed among the "100 Most Endangered Sites for the year 2002" by the World Monuments Fund, which states

that careless redevelopment would "... sound the death knell to this magnificent district, turning it into another nightmare." Chennai faces the same nightmarish future. Should we be deaf and blind?

Writer and commentator Patwant Singh, who has stated about "the degradation of one of the most beautiful capitals of the world" over his lifetime, has said everyone from King George V to just about every Cabinet Secretary of State had been involved in the building of New Delhi, and that the attention given to the minutest detail was quite mind-boggling. This is the quality of leadership required, he said, a leadership which provides cultural direction, draws strength from one's heritage. Leadership is when people are remembered many centuries later for pointing the way. This is what the nation sadly lacks today.

Tradition and continuity are very important factors in nation-building. Apart from enhancing the ASI budget, corporate sector support, public clamour, media publicity and professional monitoring are vital antidotes to overcome this lethargy towards heritage pride and protection, provided we do not start saying this is British, this is Hindu, this is Muslim, this is Sikh, this is Christian and get "bogged down in that sort of slovenly approach to it." We owe it to ourselves to conserve our common cultural heritage because it not only gives a character and an identity to the nation, but also because it is the birthright of the generations that will follow us, added Patwant Singh.

Professor K.T. Ravindran of the Delhi School of Planning and Architecture drew attention to the kind of instruments (Continued on Page 4)

How do we get students to wake up to History?

It may have been the converted talking to the converted at the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, but during its recent seminar on 'Writing History' it was heartening to find near-unanimity on the need to wake up the authorities to the need for better-written History to help in making all concerned feel that it is an important part of the curriculum. *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to find at least one group of around 50 persons in agreement that the scant importance given to History, Geography, Civics and Environment taught as separate compulsory subjects right through from Class 3 to 10. And this would include one year on which the focus would be on the District and one year on the State, the former involving districtwise assessment and the latter Statewise assessment. This suggestion also involved greater attention being paid to India, then to her neighbours and lastly to the great powers influencing the affairs of the world. This speaker also suggested the greater need in higher technical education syllabuses to include more of the humanities, such as economic History, National Resources, Political Decision-making etc.

Keynote speaker Dr. N. Rajendran of Bharatidasan University got the proceedings off on the right note by candidly stating that History as a subject was at a low ebb in the country and that few good students took it out of choice. To improve this situation, it was necessary to examine History as a subject, study the parts dissected during that examination and come up with suggestions that would help in improving the writing of History to the extent greater interest is created in it.

Two-part books

It was generally agreed by those who addressed the various points made by Prof. Rajendran and others, including several very articulate school teachers – almost all of them women – that History textbooks needed to be in two parts. History being a factual statement of what happened, a bald recital of "it happened thus" (itihasa), this book of facts, briefly stated, should be the student's textbook. But the interpretations of the facts – and there would be several interpretations if the writer was being objective – would be the teacher's guide, the second part of the book. And it was the teacher's duty to liven the classes with discussions, based on the interpretations in the guide and other sources, of the facts the students learnt from their part of the book. With the teacher's guide a part of the same book, the student whose interest had been kindled in the subject by the discussions would not only be able to read and register the points made in the teacher's guide but would also benefit from the reading recommended to the teacher. Workbooks giving students the opportunity to react to the discussion of the facts would help them get more involved with the subject. So would visits to historical sites and discussions held against those backgrounds.

The lack of emphasis on modern History and current History – in the light of history being a continuum – was regretted and it was almost unanimously agreed that this had to be addressed if we were to produce a better and more aware citizen. *The Man From Madras Musings* was pleased to note that there was at least one speaker who wanted History, Geography, Civics and Environment taught as separate compulsory subjects right through from Class 3 to 10. And this would include one year on which the focus would be on the District and one year on the State, the former involving districtwise assessment and the latter Statewise assessment. This suggestion also involved greater attention being paid to India, then to her neighbours and lastly to the great powers influencing the affairs of the world. This speaker also suggested the greater need in higher technical education syllabuses to include more of the humanities, such as economic History, National Resources, Political Decision-making etc.

Errors & omissions

The Man From Madras Musings was happy to find newspaper dicums being bandied about freely as part of the discussion. It was agreed that the facts were sacred,

were killed by the Nazis on racial grounds important enough to be recorded in the chapter on German History?

Finally, the newspaper axioms were once again stressed for writing History which would be readable for students of all ages. The lesson would have to answer the questions 'Who', 'What', 'When' and 'How', with the 'Why' being part of the teacher's guide. These would have to be expressed with brevity – keeping in mind the student's attention span – in a language that was simple and clear. Books so written and teachers willing to make classes interesting through free discussion and outdoor visits could yet make History come alive, but undue importance was given to the subject – instead of passing an exam being all that mattered – History in Indian schools was going to become a subject of less and less importance, many at the seminar felt. And that would not only be tragic, but would result in the growth of an ill-informed citizenry.

Trust and trusts

Sampradaan is a Delhi-based Indian Centre for Philanthropy which *The Man From Madras Musings* referred to in this column several months ago. It is a unique organisation, dedi-

bad, Krishna in Bangalore. If they go, will the success continue? He doubted it.

Calling for corporates, even individually – and the Murugappa Group's Foundation is a prime example – to get involved in social uplift, he pointed out that such foundations could do much more if, as is the case abroad, the foundations could invest in the creator's companies; here, they can only invest in government securities and returns were getting less and less.

Pushpa Sundar, who founded Sampradaan, however, felt that at least the major corporate foundations in India could work together. Pointing out that the US Council of Foundations had a membership of 1600 major foundations, she felt that at least India's major foundations – 89 in number with corpus of over Rs.2 lakh each – could form a similar organisation to network together. Such a network could enable members to learn from each other, share experiences, help each other in specific areas and team together to speak on public policy when required. That is a suggestion which MMM hopes will materialise, particularly on such initiatives as population – which advertising veteran Bobby Sista, one of the speakers, described as the biggest bane of the country, and one that

Krishna hadn't insisted on that cooperation, when the corporates in Bangalore, who mainly constitute the BATF, pointed out to him that they could not attract business to the city unless the city improved itself, *The Man From Madras Musings* doubts very much whether what success there has been would have been possible. Those successes as listed by Kar include collecting Rs.32 crore from the BATF supporters in order to initiate studies, conduct research and implement pilot projects, the results of all of which would be given to the civic authorities or the respective departments to carry forward.

These recommendations to date have included: self-assessment of property tax and computerised records in the Corporation (implemented); a GIS system for the city (underway); road signage manual, signage at Sivaji Nagar bus terminus to help passengers, junction designs, pay 'n' park modalities, one-way traffic and Hosur Road improvement, all implemented; citizen volunteers to monitor garbage clearance (implemented); street furniture (pilot project completed and designs given to Corporation for designs); solid waste management (under study); and public sanitation facilities (under study).

Has all this made a difference to Bangalore? Many say it has. But what strikes MMM about all this is that it could have all been done by the respective departments if only they had the will to do so and were ordered to do it post-haste. High-flying corporates, even doing service pro bono, were really not necessary for what has been achieved. The more serious questions appear to MMM to be, how do you get those in Government service to do the work they are paid to do and how do you get the political leadership to pay more attention to ensuring that they and the Government servants serve the public than squabbling incessantly with their rivals. Can't political rivals be ignored during the years a party is in office and those in power get on with work that will make life easier for the citizenry?

MMM

has to be tackled on a war footing – education and healthcare.

The Bangalore way

Sharing the happy experience of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, whose aim is to make Bangalore the best city in India by 2004, Kalpana Kar of the task force was enthusiastic about all that had happened till date, reporting to the Partnership conference. With Chief Minister Krishna totally committed to the Agenda's agenda, the task force had found that it had the whole-hearted cooperation of the Corporation, the Police, the Bangalore Development Authority and the Public Transport sector. If

CHENNAI HERITAGE

260-A T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018.

I/We enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs.100/ Rs..... (Rupees) payable to CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS, as token of my support of *Madras Musings* and the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that it espouses.

Name :

Address:

Present Mailing List No.

OUR READERS WRITE

Supporting Musings – I

May I suggest the following as answer to the Editor's question, 'How do we sustain Musings?'

Many of us have received Musings for so many years totally free, I think it is time that all those who care for Chennai should want Musings to continue and should be prepared to pay for it. As you have indicated, donations of larger sums are scarce to come by, but I am sure most of the lucky ones who received the bi-monthly issues would like to continue to read them and would be more than happy to pay for them.

You indicate that the mailing list has been growing and that it is now well over 16,000. I do consider a contribution of Rs.500 a year would not be a hardship to anyone who is receiving this at present and no one would hesitate to pay that amount. Even if the mailing list thereby comes down to half, say, 8000, a contribution of Rs.500 a year should be able to raise a substantial amount, of around Rs.40,00,000 and that should be

more than enough to sustain *Madras Musings*.

C.D. Gopinath
"Harbour Gate House",
44-45, Rajaji Salai,
Chennai 600 001.

Supporting Musings – II

In *Madras Musings* (January 1st), the Editor says that though MM was anticipating a contribution of Rs.5 lakh from its readers, in reality, the response is not that good, though he still is confident that readers will support its causes. May I suggest as economic prudence, you stop publishing the coupon "Want to muse with Musings?" By doing so, you will 'limit' the circulation to the current levels of around 17,000. Otherwise, your circulation will go on increasing endlessly and Musings' sustenance will be difficult. Once your finances look up, you can think of roping in new readers.

V.S. Jayaraman
31, Motilal Street,
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017.

Editor's Note: We will certainly have to implement your suggestion from April 16th (Volume XIII-1), if our target is not reached by then. We still hope it will be.

The horrors of animal slaughter

The debate in *Madras Musings* (January 1st & 16th) on stray dogs should serve to draw attention to another animal issue. And that is the cruel treatment of cattle, pigs and poultry before and during slaughter.

Every day, hundreds of cattle are transported in lorries, huddled together in standing position, to slaughter-houses miles away. On the way these emaciated creatures sustain severe injuries before they reach the slaughter-houses and a few usually die of starvation.

The conditions in the slaughter-houses are abominable. In the most unhygienic environment, the most inhuman methods are adopted for animal slaughter. The blood vessels in the neck are slashed with a crude knife in full view of other sad-looking animals waiting for their turn. Then, held by their horns, they are cast down forcibly by tilting them to one side. The neck vertebrae break with a crackling sound in the process. The animals lose their balance and miserably fall to the ground with a thud. If milk is found in the udder of the cow slaughtered, every drop of it is taken out. Skinning of animals starts even as it is shivering due to the shock inflicted while cutting open the slaughtered animals, a foetus in an advanced stage of development can be seen in the uterus of some.

A similar fate is meted out to poultry. Broilers for meat are transported packed together in crates and sent for long distances by lorry. Many die due to shock or heat stroke on the way. On Sundays and holidays, you can see cyclists carrying broilers in bunches of ten and twenty, with the heads of the birds hanging down. This sort of handling poultry upside down is totally prohibited in developed countries and erring persons are severely punished with very heavy fines.

The manner in which pigs are chased and caught in open areas for slaughter is really shocking. The trade in pork is usually done by individuals near their residences. Slaughter and trade are invariably without any licence and veterinary inspection. The sale is often made on Sunday mornings and on other holidays in an open place close to the main road or highway (e.g. near Anna Salai, opposite the Poultry Research Station, and near the United India Insurance Co. building in Teynampet).

The crying need of the hour is regulation of proper transport of cattle and poultry for slaughter and modernisation of slaughter-houses with ethical methods of killing the animals. Proper veterinary inspection must also be legally enforced.

More than two decades ago there was a proposal to shift the present slaughter-house at Otteri to a place some way from north Madras. A special officer was appointed to draft a project. Due to the lethargy of government, lack of political will to support the scheme, and disinterestedness of animal health activists, it was put on the back burner.

It is high time animal health activists got together to demand implementation of this scheme and prevent cruelty to the animals.

Dr. M.S. Jayaraman
Retd. Professor
Madras Veterinary College
10, Shrinivas Apartments, Turn Bulls Road
I Cross Street, Nandanam, Chennai 600 035.



Supporting Musings – III

Reader Dattatri's response (MM, January 1st) to *Madras Musings'* appeal is likely to be a rare one; few live in Tamil Nadu who are determined to help a public cause. Politics of the State has got the people of Tamil Nadu used to permanently expecting anything and everything free.

This attitude cannot be changed in the years to come and hence the expectations of *Madras Musings* might not be fulfilled even to the extent of 50%. I have myself given you more than 50 addresses for free despatch of MM but, alas, I am yet to persuade even a single one of them to donate at least Rs.100. That is the reality. I am sure, your appeal would have more effect in other States than in today's Tamil Nadu. But I wish you the best.

V. Narayanan
113 (39/C)
Kamatchi Amman Sannithy Street
Kanchipuram 631 502.

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.

Missing fountain

The plans to bring life to Marina (MM, January 1st) are laudable. But the authorities working on the scheme must bear in mind the circular fountain that was in front of R.K. Road (near Marina) which resembled the fountain in Cubbon Park in Bangalore. It has been replaced with a traffic umbrella. Could the fountain be returned to its place?

P. Ranganathan
16, Vedachala Garden
Mandavelli Street
Chennai 600 028.

A Marina sea-pool?

Regarding the plans to improve the Marina (MM, January 1st), I have seen abroad swimming pools erected in the sea so that they get filled with tidal waves. Many a swimmer, including myself, thus, enjoys a sea bath without the danger of waves or the fear of sharks.

Work is on apace at the Museum campus to conserve and restore the Museum campus as part of its 150th Anniversary. But is raising a new wall – after pulling down the old wall that needed restoration – real commitment to conservation principles, even if the two-part new duplicates the old wall's jali in a newly created second level over a new first level? Even a former Director of Museums has been constrained to take note of this, in his letter published below. (Photograph by R. ESWARRAJ.)

Is this restoration?

• It is good that the Madras Museum campus is being given a facelift, but the statement that "having started the work late, the Building Wing of the PWD is working against time to complete it" shows the faulty approach of the PWD to the work. The Museum campus is a heritage site, and any work on it should be done with the utmost care and not in a tearing hurry. Already, the PWD have knocked down one of the old magnificent metal gates and walled up the space and raised the compound wall so high that it looks atrocious. (Editor's note: See R. Eshwarraj's picture above.)

The PWD should have consulted experts in the field of restoration, like INTACH, before starting work. Even now it is not too late. They can halt their major operations, put back the metal gate, lower the raised compound wall and then spruce up the campus just for the celebrations and carry on major restoration work later on. I hope this is done to avoid damage to an important heritage site of the City.

N. Harinarayana
120 Big Street
Triplicane, Chennai 600 005

Sea water is far more healthier than contaminated water in swimming pools and far cheaper (if a fee has to be paid).

Would the authorities look into this suggestion?

K. Rajeswari Krishna
2A, Parkland Apartments
Kamala Bai Street
T. Nagar
Chennai 600 017.

Marina dividers

One problem on the Marina (MM, January 1st) has been caused by the traffic police themselves. This is the placing of small road dividers to narrow the north-south stretch in the forenoons in order to broaden the south-north

part. In practice, these 'dividers' are not easily visible and commuters get unsighted and bang into them or veer abruptly and dash into some passing vehicle and receive a carful of choice Madras bhasha.

In any case, divider or no divider, the white Ambassador Government vehicles leave their lane without a qualm and rush headlong, carrying their silent VIP cargo, posing a grave hazard to non-VIP road-users, the reason being, to use a lovely Madras expression, there are no 'askers'. Whether has it fled, the old Madras decency?

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

Want to muse with MUSINGS?

If you would like to be put on *Madras Musings'* mailing list, just 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.

Name

Address

Note: Overseas postage Rs. 450/year extra. Cheques payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

Venu San can become the Indian guru

TVS Motor Co was recently awarded the coveted Deming Award. A couple of years ago, Sundaram Clayton Ltd., also headed by Venu Srinivasan and which had promoted the TVS Motor Co., received the Deming Award. Cousin K Mahesh, heading Sundaram Brake Linings Ltd., another TVS Group company and neighbour of Sundaram Clayton at the TVS Padi complex, won the Deming Award last year. Yet another neighbour of Sundaram Clayton, Lucas-TVS Ltd., headed by K Balaji, brother-in-law of Venu, won the JIT Grand Prix award, the first non-Japanese and non-Korean company to receive this award in 13 years.

• by
S. Viswanathan

Srinivasan acknowledges the interest kindled by CII almost a decade ago in moving towards total quality management. I remember the initiative taken by Srinivasan as the then Chairman of CII(SR) presenting a galaxy of top-rated Japanese, European and American experts, including Shinohara, Director - Production, of Maruti Suzuki, on aspects of manufacturing excellence. I rated that as the best of the programmes offered by CII until that time (CII also initiated the pattern to levy hefty fees from delegates, a practice that has come to stay since!).

Addressing a recent CII seminar on *Leadership in changing times*, Srinivasan made an evocative presentation on the turbulent times his company went through in the early Nineties and pointed out that leaders emerged in certain testing times. I remember collaborators Suzuki Motor Co were not quite impressed over the multifarious problems encountered by the company, including highly disturbed industrial relations. Srinivasan and his team boldly stepped up R&D efforts, went for new products, handled adroitly and with firmness IR problems, moved out quite a good number of recalcitrant staff, including senior general managers, ruthlessly cut costs and focused on aggressive marketing. The rest is history.

Srinivasan referred to his company inviting experts from Japan, Britain, USA, Austria and India and the benefits derived by their expertise. "They

were mentors and their inputs were invaluable," he said.

Indian industry now has experience of close to 50 years in managing businesses. In the early years, we looked for experts from Britain, thanks to historical connections, then to the Americans. In the Eighties, after the advent of Maruti and LCVs and motor cycles produced in collaboration with Japan, the focus shifted to Japan.

Srinivasan talked of the various viewpoints. I am intrigued at the lack of efforts at attempting such a synthesis of the different streams of gurus. At Padi, Sundaram Clayton has excelled by adopting the TQM practices. Sundram Fasteners swears by total productivity management and owes allegiance to another set of Japanese gurus. Lucas-TVS is passionate about small group activity and has achieved excellence following this, with guidance from yet another set of Japanese gurus.

At what point of time will Indian business attempt to synthesise these different streams? And help evolve the Indian model?

Or, perhaps, like the famous Indian schools of philosophy of *advaita*, *dvaita* and *visishtadvaita*, all drawing their inspiration from the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, will Indian business also

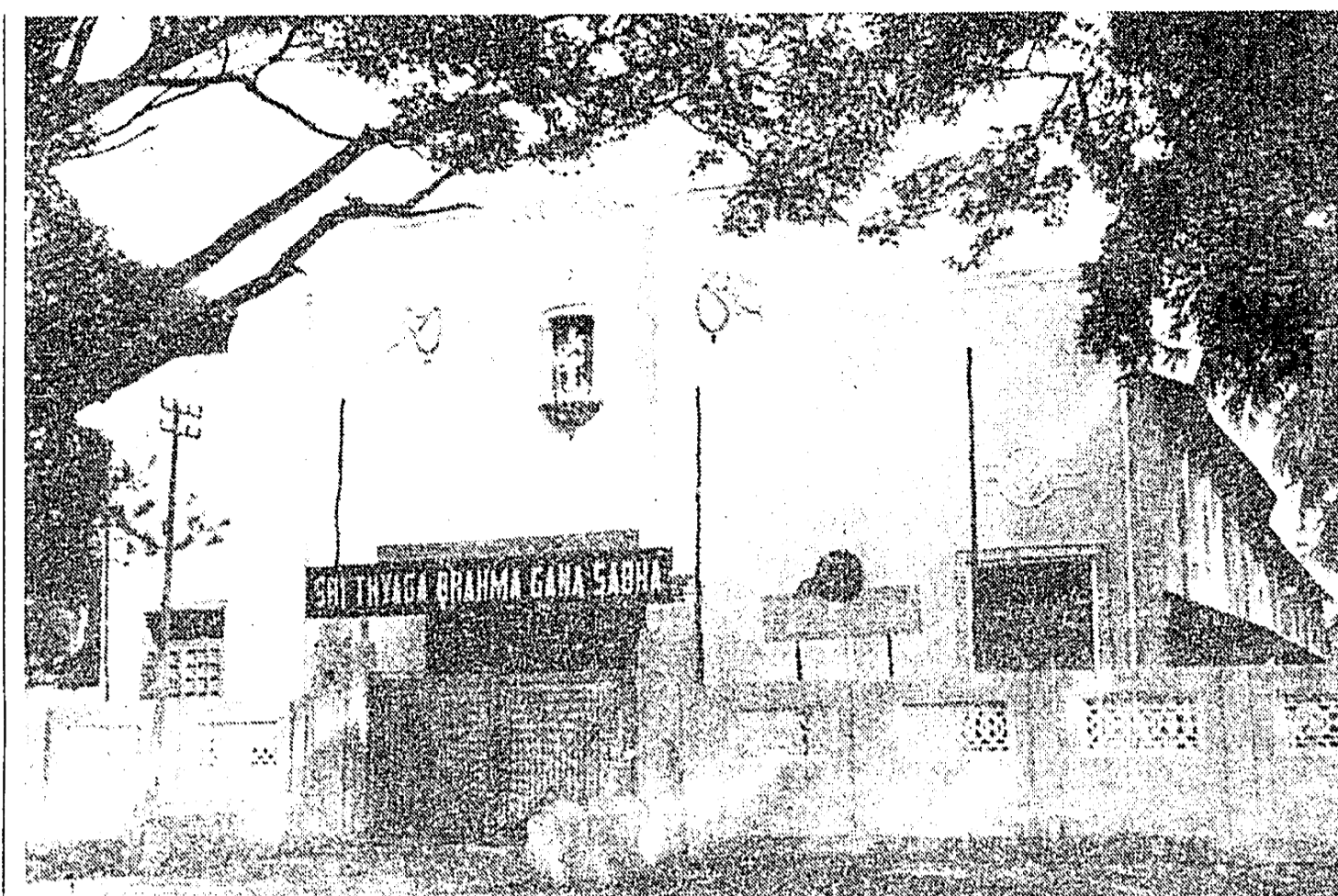
(Continued on Page 7)

Words in Delhi, lessons for Chennai

(Continued from Page 1)

that the Government or the Delhi Development Authority uses to manipulate the Lutyens' Delhi area. He saw no "muddled thinking" in any of this, rather it was a deliberate strategy to create a confusion of rules and regulations. It opened windows of opportunity — to exploit and advance commercial interests, with the connivance of people in charge of regulating development.

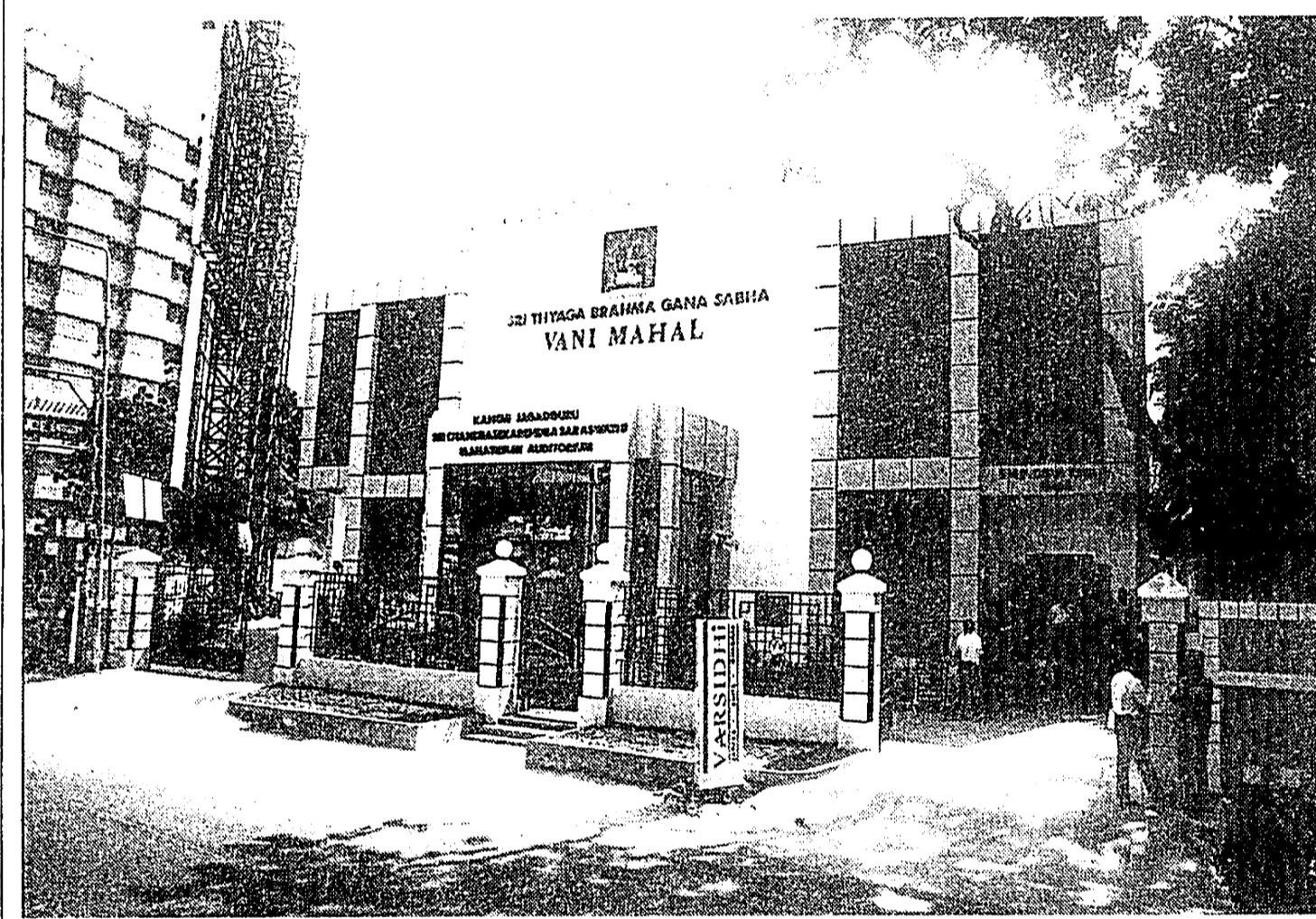
"Whoever is the landowner with the capacity to negotiate with the system, he basically determines the final urban form." Ravindran recalled that Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Jagmohan, had stated at a recent National Workshop for Heritage Conservation and Management that the problem lay in governance and lack of political will to administer laws. A government under continuous pressures from within simply goes ahead and issues a no-



THE OLD...

Our OLD is a copy of an old view of the Brahma Gana Sabha's Vani Mahal in TNagar and we are glad to note in our NEW that the front view has not changed too much in the process of creating a welcome new auditorium. The new auditorium is a great improvement on the old tin-roofed one, offering a great deal of comfort and better acoustics — but the overall look of the G N Chetty Road-Vani Mahal junction has, happily, not changed unrecognisably. (Photograph: R. ESWARRA)

...& THE NEW



tification that this particular change is being effected and gives one month time to file objections. It then takes cognisance of the objection but it is not obliged to take that objection into consideration. It is an exercise undertaken in the name of public participation, to legitimise the decisions taken by the government. So from time to time grandiose plans get floated... Even the global money market has shown interest in investing in Connaught Place.

"Whoever is the landowner with the capacity to negotiate with the system, he basically determines the final urban form." Ravindran recalled that Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Jagmohan, had stated at a recent National Workshop for Heritage Conservation and Management that the problem lay in governance and lack of political will to administer laws. A government under continuous pressures from within simply goes ahead and issues a no-

for example. They have become a nightmare, whether it is Shimla, Musoorie, Nainital or any of the other hill stations... We have not been able to build even one new hill station after Independence. And the ones we have inherited, we have not been able to take care of. The case of Delhi is very similar... We have the Urban Arts Commission and various commissions. What are these commissions doing? Are they just paper commissions, rubber stamp commissions? They are not at all effective. I think there is need for creating a greater sense of awareness."

Smita Makhija, Conservation Architect, said, "If we cannot equal the vision and breath of capital-building by Shah-jahan (Old Delhi) and Lutyens (New Delhi), must we obliterate what they built — even the little that is left?"

Shankar Menon wanted the constant renaming of streets to stop. "The only solace is that

some years down the road they will all be replaced by other names!"

O.P. Jain of INTACH thought, "The ninth city of Delhi, or DDA Delhi, instead of building around Delhi, has built over it!" Sunita Kohli said that "Good measures which one government initiates should be left intact, not overturned by the next."

S.S. Shafi thought, "Metro Rail system will have an adverse impact on heritage landmarks... the Jantar Mantar will be affected by vibrations..."

Shyam Chainani of INTACH Mumbai stated that "New Delhi should not be flattened on the pretext of VIP security."

Kamal Meattle of ASSO-CHAM concluded, "As in the case of CNG, citizens must stand up. Seek Supreme Court intervention in spite of Government. The only way to achieve hard objectives is to fight for what we believe." — (Courtesy: Virasat, Newsletter of INTACH.)

Cities must be greened...

In these days of rapid urbanisation, town planning should take into account environmental management and greening of the whole urban area as an integral part of urban development to benefit the entire population.

This assumes importance at present when serious constraints of space, ever-increasing pollution levels and rapid population growth have made it absolutely necessary to comprehensively manage the greening sector, particularly the greening of road margins and public places, which is the principal responsibility of city corporations or the municipal entities and large institutions. Some suggestions for greening, based on the different categories of urban spaces, are featured alongside.

In implementing urban planning, information on various urban constituents should be studied in relation to the struc-

The process of urbanisation in India has often meant widening of streets, and the consequent ruthless cutting down of trees, both on roadsides and adjoining compounds. This brings to a halt all the good efforts of earlier generations. If these trees can be safely removed and replanted, this damage can be eliminated. Today, thanks to the availability of suitable machinery and transport, and innovative procedures developed by horticulturists, transplantation can be carried out successfully. However, such transplantation calls for early knowledge and coordination with other agencies.

Growing trees from seeds and cuttings *in situ* has been the method till recently. While such trees could grow in a healthy way, there were several problems threatening survival — particularly from cattle and

be decided based on the extent of support available from the State Forestry and Horticulture Departments who are increasingly involving themselves in urban planning.

Without trees and their green cover, urban areas will become unlivable. Trees cannot just be planted and forgotten. They will not survive. Besides interest, a responsible local government department and committed cooperative and helpful community organisations are needed. Most important of all, this knowledge and awareness must be imparted to young children. What better gift can we give them than making an urban area green with diversified plants and trees and developing it into a Tree University? The role of educational and research institutions and universities in such activity is crucial to the emerging need to ensure sustainable development.

Editor's Note: In subsequent issues of *Madras Musings* we will publish lists of recommended trees for Town Centres, Residential Areas, Industrial Areas, Public Access & Recreation Areas, Transport Facilities like Railways and Airports, Less Cared, Degraded Lands & Sewage Farms, Parks & Institutions and also those suitable for Small Institutions.

• Based on a paper presented by G. Dattatri, urban planner, and K. Hariharan, horticulturist, at a national seminar on 'Ecofriendly Arboriculture: Orchards and Avenue Trees'. (Prof. S. Dayanandan, Head of the Department, Botany, Madras Christian College, reviewed it recently to provide expert advice and Chennai-specific modification.)

tural arrangement, environment and desired vegetation quality. Urban environment may be categorised into seven typical localities

— Town centre (main roads, plaza/parking, interior roads)

— Residential (streets in planned neighbourhoods, other streets, hutted areas)

— Industrial areas (industrial estates, green industry campus, polluting industry campus)

— Public access/recreation (beach/coastline, waterways, lakes)

— Utilities (sewage farms, burial grounds, degraded lands)

— Parks and institutions (parks, campuses, small institutions) and

— Transport facilities (highways, railways and airports).

The suggested trees for each situation are the ones that should be used.

Tub planting is recommended in specific instances, where almost all areas are paved, leaving hardly any opportunity for plants to grow or survive. It is therefore necessary to culture suitable trees and plants in tubs, which could then be transported to the required location to provide immediate and useful effect. This method is eminently suited for narrow streets, shopping plazas and parking areas.

Also, it took a much longer time for the trees to flower, provide shade etc. Today it is possible to grow trees in nurseries and transplant them when they are 3 m - 4 m high. These have a better survival rate, besides providing benefits much earlier.

In order to take advantage of this method, it is necessary to establish a large number of tree nurseries both by the municipal body and commercial and non-commercial organisations.

The maintenance of public parks, street planting, road divides and islands is one of the most important responsibilities of every municipal body. Greening on the scale required cannot be carried out in an *ad hoc* manner by the engineering department, which has more pressing work to be carried out. It is time for every municipal body to establish a Landscaping and Tree Development Department, which can not only mobilise sponsorship for tree planting but also involve NGOs, civic groups, street associations and interested individuals in this effort. This could be headed by a qualified horticulturist trained in such related activities as simple engineering, human management and public relations, supported by adequate staff. The size of the unit may

... and here's how

Tree transplanting

As far as tree transplanting is concerned, some individual effort has been successfully done with palms and Ficus trees due to their better regenerative capacity; they form adventitious roots quickly, even on injury. Other trees, like the Cannon ball tree, Gulmohar, Thuja and Christmas trees, have also been successfully transplanted.

The basic principles and techniques involved in tree transplanting are:

— Gradual, phased removal of old branches and leaves, retaining only a minimum foliage cover, coupled with digging to remove the root ball with root plate intact.

— The entire tree should be lifted with suitable mechanical lifters and covered with mulch materials throughout the root system and a portion of shoot.

— The new area selected should be cleared of debris, and pits of dimension 20' x 20' x 4' or less dug and filled with well-rotten and yard manure.

— Replanting should be done after judicious root pruning, covering with good soil and then copiously irrigated.

Propagation by seeds

Trees which are propagated by seeds need to be raised in long polythene sleeves in order to allow lengthy tap root development.

— Nursery medium should be incorporated with biofertilisers and biocontrol agents. This is important as the site of the tree's future growth is uncertain and the soil may not be rich enough to support its growth and development.

— Large nurseries should use HDPE bags filled with soil mixed with press mud composts, coir composts, coffee husk composts and cotton waste composts.

— Modern tree nurseries should be maintained more scientifically, with suitable rooting chambers and growth chambers (net houses) to hasten growth and bring out better propagules.

— The final planting site should always be better fumigated with fumigant pesticides at the time of planting.

Tub-grown trees

Tub-grown trees need tubs of RCC or fibreglass of dimension 1m³, with suitable pot mixture and drainage facilities.

Single trees or trees in groups may be trained to grow with a clear trunk of 2 m and a canopy not exceeding 3 m - 4 m. Regular pruning and manuring will establish the plants and, when fully grown, they flower and fruit freely.

Generally, a temporary protection to overcome reflected heat until they cast their own shade is very important.

Tub trees do not generally require re-potting. Therefore, they offer a very viable solution to street-level urban greening.

What price, after coastal survey?

(Continued from Page 1)

be provided. No wonder some would-be developers in this area have already published notices about their intentions to seek permission for development in the area. No wonder, too, the fisherfolk in the *kappams* here are up in arms against both projects, despite the San Thomé project promising 500 homes for the fisherfolk as part of the development envisaged.

And as if all the development in and around a city that can't take any more is not enough, there's talk of more 'beautification', this time the crores being earmarked for the Buckingham Canal already ruined by the Metro being raised in its bed and on its banks.

The questions that arise from all these plans for staggeringly costly development and beautification proposals are not a few. But to raise just one or two of them:

FIRST, there is no doubt that a new 'Administrative City' is a 'must'. The only question is whether the new 'city' with a projected population of over 5

lakh should be developed on 5000 acres belonging to the Alavandhar Trust and the Thiruvandanai Temple on the Old Mahabalipuram Road near Covelong or whether it should be in the far more central and less congested Tiruchi-Thanjavur area that late Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran had thought of. With all the industrial development on the Old Mahabalipuram Road — what with IT and Biotech corridors — do we need to overstress the area with an administrative city that would also be far from central or easy of access for the citizenry of the State?

An even more intriguing question is the signing of the agreements with Malaysia to first draw up plans for both projects and then, probably, help develop them. With the Indian technical pool considered one of the largest and most talented in the world, with millions of NRIs with the wherewithal to fund such projects if all is fair and square, what is the necessity to seek Malaysian expertise, particularly newly de-

veloped expertise, for the planning? Hyderabad and Bangalore seem to be doing very well with home-grown talent and NRI funding. Why do we in Chennai have to be so unpatriotically different?

Another question is, apart from the actual development of the Marina and the Administrative City, what is going to be the cost of the infrastructural development — the roads, powerlines, sewage works etc — needed for such large complexes and where is it all to come from?

And, last but not least, what is all this going to cause to the environment in Chennai? Modern coastal developments in other parts of the world have been eco-friendly. The scales being talked about here are anything but eco-friendly in a coastal city. Surely it's time for CMDA planners and those egging them on to think in terms of environment and heritage-friendly development, appreciating that small can be beautiful, rather than thinking that anything mega must by its nature be outstanding.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

- Why was a 60-year old American, Joseph Cooper, in the news in Kerala recently?
- Who won the Deodhar Trophy, India's premier domestic one-day cricket tourney, in Chennai on January 15th?
- Which of the Gibb brothers of the famous group Bee Gees died recently?
- Which IPS officer has become the first Indian to be appointed to the prestigious post of UN Civilian Police Advisor?
- Name the first-ever summit held in New Delhi to recognise the achievements of People of Indian Origin abroad.
- Who won the coveted Tata Open singles tennis title in Chennai on January 5th?
- Name the famous Indian painter, affectionately called 'Bhabeshda', who recently passed away at the age of 101.
- Who became the youngest cueist to win the senior National snooker title, after taking both the junior snooker and billiards crowns, in Jammu recently?
- Who is the third batsman to cross 10,000 Test runs?
- Name the popular models of cars introduced in India by Toyota and Opel?
- The new National table tennis singles champions are from Chennai. Name them.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu has invited a proposal from the Malaysian Government for building a mega-administrative hub at which place near Chennai?
- Till 1903, A.J. Yorke of Parry's was the only one to own what in Madras?
- Which 'must visit' bookshop in Lonely Planet's guide to Chennai won BAPASI's Best Bookseller award this year?
- Where was a much talked about statue of Kannagi unveiled in Chennai on January 12th?
- What scheme, to stave off farmer starvation, has been introduced in the State?
- How are the Damarla Nayaks related to the city of Madras?
- Who was re-appointed the DGP of Tamil Nadu on January 6th?
- The Metropolitan Transport Corporation now has only one circular service, C-13. What is the route?
- What specialised training establishment is headquartered at Marudham in Chennai?

(Answers on page 8)

Those crows — and me!

I am delighted that someone has expressed in print a response to a species that has for long traumatised me. Crows, both domestic and jungle, have destroyed the peace and sanctity of my morning walk on the terrace. They are more raucous than ever and their tribe has increased in more than plenty. Whenever they proved to be a burden more than I could bear, my toy gun would be adequate protection. But over the past four months or so, while my family hears the firing on roof, the neighbours watch with amusement the bizarre sight of a fifty-plus woman racing up the Tirupati steps with an agility unbecoming of her age. Clad in the strange garb of an old housecoat-turned-long-skirt and T-shirt, with a satchel on her left shoulder and a gun held high over her head, she keeps firing away while continuing to walk her eight rounds across and her ten around the terrace, never for one second letting go

there were none. I miss them, my warm companions, half an hour in whose company would put me in the right frame of mind for the rest of the day. I am now fractious, irritable, and often highly abrasive — it doesn't require much imagination to guess the source of such negative vibes.

We are chased every time we step out of the house into the garden and my husband and father need to protect their balding pates from these terrorist attacks from creatures flying feverishly overhead. These ugly specimens, my mother tells me in her constant effort to make me tolerant and accept all of God's creations, are useful in their scavengers' role. She also points out without fail that crows are very united — they will caw to share a piece of a chicken's inside, they will caw even more raucously to protect their young. This team spirit, however, does not appeal to me, management trainer and fanatic

A personal piece inspired by "Of crows and shade trees" by A. Rajaram.

of the gun. No one knows the degree to which she is trying hard to practise tolerance and restore the peace that has been broken in the deepest core of her being.

The crows have built nests in every single tree — the neighbour's almond, our own neem, mango and Ashoka. They are more than equal to the missiles of the Kargil war! Mean as they are, they stoop so low as to fly just over my head as if being thoroughly incapable of soaring high, their avowed purpose being the damnation of this quiet-seeking walker. However, when the mynahs just about settle on the top of the two Ashokas, one of which I had appropriately christened 'Bird-stop', these black fragments of the Devil himself can rear upwards to shoo them off. My heart aches and numbness sets into my fingers — the latter from holding the gun for half an hour and the ache from not having to take out of my satchel my Samsung binoculars and watch my soul-mates: tailor birds, red-vented bulbuls, the faithful spotted dove that appears at 6.50 a.m. with her kurroo-kurroo-(3) to speak soft comfort to my anguished heart, and the occasional kingfisher. The crows have ruined it all... the birds of God's love began to appear less frequently and then

Crowing about crows!

The crow family is quite impressive comprising the Crow, Raven, Jackdaw, Rook and right up to the gorgeous Bird of Paradise, so called because the Italian scientist Linnaeus was so impressed with its plumage that he deemed it a denizen of Paradise.

It is verily at the head of the winged hierarchy, very high in mental development (see stories in 'Our Readers Write'), capable of mimicry, revelling in mischief and excelling in sagacity.

It is as a simple scientific experiment and a display of uncanny commonsense that the story of 'The Crow and the Pitcher' figures in Aesop's Fables (c. 300 B.C.). Did Aesop choose it for nothing?!

The crows do not hang about or make a noise except when assembled at the appointed places where food is habitually offered or when one of their kin is wounded or dead.

Living in many expressive idioms, I am afraid only some uninformed and unkind person added the vile one, 'Stone the crow'. I would not, even as an exclamation!

N. Dharmeshwaran
Guduvanchery.

The biscuit crow

I write about a crow which frequents my flat. Whenever it is hungry, it caws until I come out and give it some-thing. Jocularly, I tell my younger son that this crow is my third child. If after five or six caws, there is no response from us, it pokes its nose through the grille, perhaps thinking of coming inside.

Right from 6 in the morning other crows turn up at regular intervals. They won't eat the ordinary rice. They must have idli, dosa, poori, chapathi, bread, and, of course, biscuit!

There's a baby crow which, unable to eat for itself, snatches the food from its mother's mouth. It's fascinating to watch, while all our neighbours are watching us daily offer biscuits to this crow.

S. Alamelu
Chennai.

ity. From my dabbling interest and awareness of matters psychological, I wondered if the answer lay in my childhood. I had made a startling discovery of another part of myself in a sudden revelation (the subject of another piece, *Those Magic Hours*) and thought this time I needed to engage myself in a quest. I didn't have far to seek for an answer.

My 78-year-old mother can still share this despite the Parkinsonian pain in articulating and as much pain in feeling the trauma her one and only goes through every time a black crow is uncomfortably close or strident. Going through the travails of labour, on the evening of August 8th, 51 years ago, she was stretched out in expectant pain on a bed in the RSRM Lying-in Hospital in Royapuram. At 55 minutes past midnight, the pain drew to a close and hope was realised when a nurse held up the just-born with the remark, "Here's little Sarah!" Sarah Senior, with joy in her heart (those were the days when a female child was still in the wanted category), spent the next few hours in a numbed state of exhaustion as she and the medical staff helped her cope with a rather heavy post-labour bleeding.

When she opened her eyes in the early hours of the morning, her first thoughts were of little Sarah who, obviously, could not be placed with her. She looked for her little one and could see some distance away, near an open, unbarred window in this general ward to where she had been moved, a cradle,

in which I lay, sucking my raw thumb (for the last time, I am told), not quite fully asleep, but stirring in mild disturbance. In the same glance she suddenly saw it — this crow, the wretched thing must have been black — sitting on the ledge of the window cawing away, looking intently at her baby. She hollered out for the nurse, who rushed in, just in time, says my mother, to thwart any attempt at clawing or prodding her tender baby. The nurse shooed off the dark intruder (mother gave the nurse a piece of her mind), the cradle was moved closer to the bed and my mother cast, from then until now, a loving and watchful eye over her creation.

A foiled attack, then! I know it continues unabated and I fear — I who do not know the meaning of this emotion in any other context — these dark-winged, rapacious creatures who are out to get me! Every morning they tear at my soul — on the terrace when I am walking, on the balcony when I am reading... everywhere, especially when I am alone or fairly still. I've held out this long, but their increasing number in the city scares me more than ever, even as I desperately look for reassurance that perhaps, perhaps... I am not the only victim!

Will they forever pursue me? Will I forever flee? Will they freeze only in ultimate conquest of me? I rest in hope that even after my mother has crossed over, her love will protect me forever!

Shantha Gabriel

(MM, September 1, 2002)

State plan to create champions

Often the question is asked why it is that a country of one billion people finds it so difficult to develop international champions in sport. The answers are not far to seek — sport is not part of the curriculum in schools, there is lack of training facilities and good coaches, there is politicking in sports bodies... In other words, there is lack of motivation for the young to excel. However, a unique programme initiated by the Tamil Nadu Government to identify young sportspersons who have done outstandingly at the State and National levels and who have the potential to become future international class competitors may yet be cause for hope.

Under the Champions Development Scheme (CDS), the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDATN) has identified a group of potential international champions in the State. These sportspersons have done exceptionally well in various disciplines in a State or National sub-junior or junior event, are below 20 years of age and have at least five years of active competitive life ahead of them.

Determined to effectively implement the scheme is P.W.C. Davidar, Member-Secretary, SDATN, who is in charge of the Scheme as well. Davidar, a sportsman himself (he was a boxer and is the President of the Tamil Nadu Boxing Association who has helped develop the sport in the State), had a brief stint with SDATN in 1994-95, before being posted to Pudukkottai, where he set up long-jump pits in several schools, and Madurai, where he established the Sprint Academy for athletes. Davidar, now back at the SDATN, says, "A planned approach is necessary if we are to mould champions who can successfully compete at international levels." And he adds, "Budding sportspersons require assistance in a whole lot of areas that are normally ignored by coaches and sports bodies — motivation and psychological support, for example."

The SDATN chose 20 champions under the Scheme for a two-day workshop conducted by a professional and at the end of it they came out realising what their strong and weak points were, and how to develop concentration as well as the killer instinct. They were

also sent by SDATN to an advanced sports institute in Bangalore for physical conditioning and for anthropometrical and psychological tests conducted by experts. Outlining the kind of services provided to the

Towards producing those champions

The Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDATN) building on EVR Periyar High Road is just like any other nondescript government building. However, once you are inside the office on the first floor, it is a different picture you get. Black-and-white, sepia-tinted and colour pictures mark the walls and pillars — pictures of Flying Sikh Milkha Singh, Jesse Owens, Harold Abrahams, Charley Paddock, Nadia Comaneci and Pulella Gopichand. Sports news is being broadcast over the radio for a staff that is busy in individual cubicles. Indeed, the spirit inside is amply reflected in the headline of one of SDATN's recently produced brochures, which reads, "Get, Set, Go..."

P.W.C. Davidar, Member-Secretary, SDATN, says he is in constant touch with corporate houses to garner financial support for sport in Tamil Nadu. "The support required in terms of financial help varies from sport to sport. Unfortunately, few companies have come forward to help," he regrets.

SDATN seeks individual and corporate sponsorship for the following sports — athletics, aquatics, boxing, basketball, beach volleyball, cycling, hockey, table tennis, tennis, football, squash, weightlifting, triathlon, badminton, volleyball, yacht and rowing. Joint ventures with SDATN have led to the setting up of the Dolphin Swimming Academy, the Badminton Academy and the Squash Academy. The Dindigul Volleyball Academy, Reebok Walkers Programme and the Virudhunagar Hockey Academy have also helped nurture talent. "There are plans to set up a velodrome and TI Cycles has shown interest in entering into an MOU with SDATN," remarks Davidar.

There is no doubt that corporate sponsorship can fuel success, what with the high cost of specialised coaching, sports equipment, infrastructure and travel expenses. Realising this, SDATN has designed sponsorship packages to benefit sport as well as the sponsors' image. Filled as the Tamil Nadu sport calendar is each year, companies can, based on their marketing strategy, sponsor an event to suit their budget and media plan. Events can be sponsored at district, state, national and international levels. What's more, the terms of each package can be customised to suit individual sponsors. Most contributions are exempt under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

SDATN's focus is to nurture sports talent through the development of sports academies on the one hand and to help sportspersons by finding sponsors for them, on the other. Corporate houses by providing a one-time or ongoing assistance for footwear, kit, nutrition and dietary supplements, special coaching, and travel and accommodation can help promising sportspersons blossom. Here is a chance for them to contribute to producing world-beaters.

S.N.

young sportspersons, Davidar said that the CDS covered routine assistance for scholarships, provision of suitable kits, healthy food and limited financial help for participation in international competitions where such help was not available from the respective sports associations or the Indian Government. The coaches were also given the benefit of advanced computer-aided video analysis for better evaluation of sportspersons.

"We do not want the progress of these talented youngsters to get stuck for whatever reason. And we try to



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalithaa flanked by some of those recently inducted into the State's Champions Development Scheme. From left to right are V. Arun (Swimming), Vaidehi Reddy (Squash), Deepan Chakravarthy (Chess), Susanth Krishna (Swimming) and Romith Rao (Sailing).

Rs. 10 lakh has been budgeted for a year under the CDS, but there are still financial constraints. Davidar explains, "We are unable to meet all the requirements. For instance, we have not offered internal flights simply because we do not have that kind of money to spare. But we do try our best. Some of the children are very poor; their parents are flower-sellers, casual workers and watchmen. For these deserving cases, we provide free accommodation for the children at the Nehru Stadium and even buy clothes and shoes to give them that important element of self-esteem."

Davidar also mentions that SDATN is considering tying up with sports bodies in Australia for exchange programmes. Australia has broad-based sports like India and sport there is not commercialised, two factors that have made SDATN consider that country, according to him.

Before admission to the SDATN's Champions Development Scheme, interviews with the children, their parents and coaches are conducted by expert coaches and a sports medicine professional. Data is collected on each individual — what they can afford, sponsorship etc — so that focussed and

personal attention is possible. The importance the Tamil Nadu Government has given to this Scheme is evident from the fact that, as a part of formal induction, the promising young sportspersons are taken to meet the Chief Minister. Fifteen more have been admitted to the scheme since the first twenty.

The 35 junior sportspersons chosen under the CDS are:

Athletics: Noosheen Rajendran; Pooja Merita Jose; K.N. Priya; M. Sangeetha; Bindu; Amudha (C/o Nagarajan); Sureka; Tharani; Revathy; Saraswathi; Lakshmi Narayanan; Prasanna; Rajesh Pran Mathias; Victor Jaba Sing; Avinash.

Boxing: Kirupa; Siva Kumar.

Chess: Deepan Chakravarthy.

Sailing: Niloufer Jammal; Rohini Rau; Romith Rao; Sandeep Srikanth.

Shooting: Dhareenee.

Swimming: Saba Saith; Amina Saith; Harika Reddy; Sruthi Arun Kumar; Vinod Kumar; Susanth Krishna; V. Arun; Josuva Joseph.

Squash: Joshna Chinappa; Vaidehi Reddy.

Tennis: Jeewan Nedunchezhan; Samrita.

Sashi Nair

Venu San can become the Indian guru

(Continued from Page 4)

continue to owe allegiance to different streams?

V. Krishnamurthy, as the head of BHEL, attempted with success such synthesis in a limited way. In the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies, we had a vast array of technologies brought into the country: with different aid packages and technology transfers, we had the British AEL and GE designs at Bhopal, the Czech design at Hyderabad, Russian technology at Hardwar and a later entrant was Siemens (KEW) from Germany. Then there were the large number of generating sets from GE (USA), Alstom (France), Hitachi (Japan)... There had been a lot of

difficulty in synthesising these and arriving at a standardised operating system. BHEL did succeed in bringing this about over time.

Whether it is automobile or power equipment or, simply, management practices, there is the imperative to synthesise the experiences and evolve India's own. For this to happen, business must embark on a massive programme of sharing knowledge and spreading these among vendors and the regions in which they operate. Srinivasan can take the role of a mentor in identifying a group of industries that could get the benefit of such sweat, toil and tears. — (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*).

NOSTALGIA

The radio and I

I was bitten by the Carnatic music bug at a very early age. In those days, that is, before World War II, Madras boasted of very few music *sabhas*. The cost and the distance from my residence were deterrents for my attending the performances in them. However, the temples near my house arranged music concerts during their yearly festivals which I attended. Some of the front-ranking *vidwans* performed in these temples. As recompense for their efforts they received half a coconut and a flower garland. Hence, such concerts were aptly called "Thengai moodi kutcheri". The musicians on these occasions limited their performances to devotional pieces and did not indulge in musical gymnastics and pyrotechnics, as in the *sabhas*, which the music correspondents of *The Hindu* and *Ananda Vikatan* extolled ecstatically. Hence I was not aesthetically satisfied. But, as luck would have it, AIR started their medium wave transmission service from 1937 in Chennai and regularly transmitted Carnatic music concerts every Friday between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm.

Many musicians sought this prime time slot, as it gave them good publicity. In those days, very few houses in Chennai were electrified and fewer still had a radio set. During the Friday concerts, indigent *rasikas* thronged before 'Radio Houses' to listen to these concerts. I joined this crowd. But you will agree that this is not a satisfactory arrangement to listen to divine music.

Sports on
Page 7

In course of time, I acquired the knowledge and materials to assemble a crystal radio set — a simple device which, when connected to a long aerial, could reproduce the transmitted message. In those days, Government levied a licence fee of Rs.10 for valve sets and Rs.3 for crystal sets. Since checking and

• by
M. Sethuraman

collection of this fee was slack, I hoodwinked the Government by not paying the tax when I started listening to the concerts on my crystal set.

When World War II started, radio owners came to the attention of the authorities, who did not want them to listen to German propaganda. Radio licences were vigorously checked. The set owners were also threatened with dire consequences if they tuned to the enemy transmissions.

Crystal set owners were also viewed with suspicion. If a fellow could rig up a crystal set, it was only a step further to assemble a valve set. By juxtaposing components, he could easily convert it into a tiny transmitter. Information could be passed on to or received from the 'enemy' who may be lurking in a spy ship somewhere in the Bay!

Wireless Inspectors who checked radio licences during these years were empowered to raid premises suspected of using radio receivers without licences. I therefore wanted to obtain a licence, but had second thoughts. The Inspector would surely ask from where I obtained the components. My tale that I

got them from various junk shops in Moore Market was not likely to cut ice. Not being a habitual liar, I might spill the beans on closer questioning and confess that I had been operating the set for a number of years. For this he might slap a hefty fine or even more. I might even be dubbed an enemy agent! So I decided to lie low and bide my time.

To allay suspicion I removed the tell-tale aerial which it was possible to spot on the open terrace from the road. I packed the crystal set and aerial in a small tin box and hid it in a stack of firewood that was on the terrace. During concert days, I would string the aerial after nightfall and listen to the music. There was a wartime blackout and, hence, there was no question of detection from the road. After listening, I would hide the set as before. This went on for a couple of years!

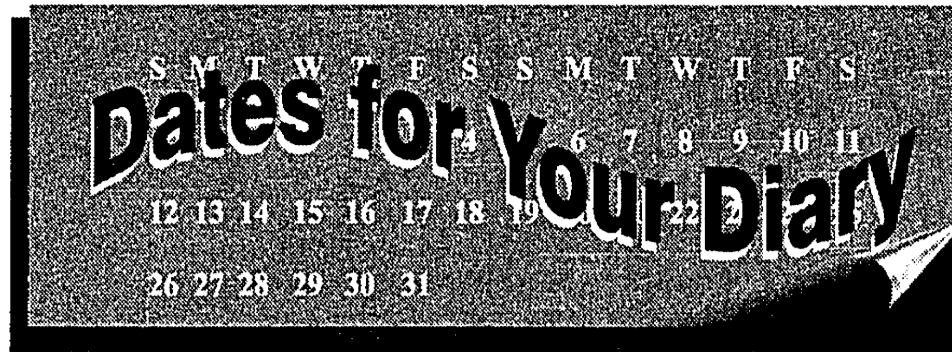
A few years later, I finished my studies and landed in a job. That ended my financial doldrums. I purchased a good valve set and was able to listen to my favourite programme in the comfort of my drawing room. There was now no cheating on the licence.

Answers to Quiz

1. He, a Protestant missionary, was grievously attacked by alleged RSS activists recently; 2. North Zone; 3. Maurice Gibb; 4. Kiran Bedi; 5. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas; 6. Paradom Srichapan of Thailand; 7. B.C. Sanyal; 8. Pankaj Advani; 9. The Australian captain, Steve Waugh; 10. Corolla and Vectra.

* * *

11. S. Raman and N.R. Indu; 12. Thiruvudanthai, along the East



February 9: 'Kulavai 2003' — a Women's Theatre Festival organised by Voicing Silence — is a unique effort at gendered theatre, with the objective of giving "voice to the voiceless". This fifth festival showcases solo women performers. Each solo performance will be of 30-45 minutes' duration, one after another, throughout the day, at the same venue, which audiences are free to attend as they wish. Side by side, between performances, opportunities will be provided for audiences to interact informally with the performers. Food, snacks and beverage stalls will be available at the venue to add to the carnival ambience, where artistic intensity, informal interaction and entertainment are combined.

Both traditional and contemporary performers, from different regions, languages and styles, will be featured. Those performing will be:

Indira Bala (Telugu), an exponent of the *harikatha* or *katha kalakshepam* style will be performing *Nartansala*.

Usha Rani (Tamil), actress in the *Isai Natakam* style, will retell the story of Amba of the

Mahabharata and her rebirth as Shikhandi, using *Koothu*, *Isai Natakam* and body language.

Usha Nangiar (Sanskrit), an exponent of *Nangiarkoothu*, which is a part of *Kodiyattam*, the ancient classical dance/drama form of Kerala. She will draw on her repertoire of tales of Krishna's life.

Sapna S. (Hindi/Chhatisgarhi), a student of the folk drama genre of Chhatisgarh known as *Pandvani*. She will combine contemporary and folk styles to interpret the Rajasthani legend of Luna.

Kalairani (Tamil), a leading contemporary Tamil actress, who was formerly with *Koothu-pattarai*. She will perform a new item specially developed for the occasion.

Aditi Desai (Gujarati), actress, director, activist and media person, will communicate through theatrical expression the tragedy that recently befell the women of Gujarat.

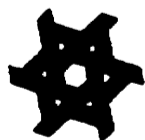
Lakshmi Chandrasekhar (Kannada/English), an actress, director, translator and activist. She weaves together portraits of Indian womanhood, in a piece entitled *Just a Woman*.

Bhagirathi (Kannada/Hindi/Assamese), a young theatre person from Karnataka, offers a performance based on the story of *Shakuntala*.

Maya Krishna Rao (English), trained in Kathakali from an early age, is also a leading actress. She has developed an original piece for 'Kulavai'. (At Alliance Francaise, 10.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.)

Till February 15: *Form*, an exhibition of sculpture in bronze by Dimpy Menon. (At Forum Art Gallery.)

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