#### WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MUSINGS

#### INSIDE

- The Marina at stake
- A century of animal care
- Better environment for children
- The Mad, Mad Madras Season
- Coach to promote rugby

**April 1-15, 2003 FREE ISSUE** 

Vol. XII No.24

It's one week now since the exams - but don't you think our parents are rather overdoing it?!

#### The March blues

Those faces were back all over the city.

Drawn, haggard, staring distantly into a future which, judging from the bitten-into-something-sour expressions, didn't look too good.

Well, it was that annual feature, at this time of year, for March is always Exam Time.

Poor kids, did you say? Oh no, you've got it all wrong.

I am talking about the parents.

All over the city, mothers and fathers were bent feverishly over books, struggling over maths, science, computer science, social studies... and wishing they had paid more attention in school.

It's funny how what used to be almost solely the student's headache has somehow transformed over the years into Chief Ulcer Creator for parents.

Newspapers and magazines were filled with hushed-voiced articles in new age jargon, counselling parents on how to 'Get Past and Go Beyond This Difficult Time'.

The kids were, however, doing fine, and couldn't see what all the fuss was about.

Those parents who had the forethought to burn their own report cards before their kids began to read were wise. They could now launch into the "Life is real, Life is earnest" speech with no fear of being booed out of the room.

Don't worry - Ammas and Appas, all your troubles are now over.

And the long, long summer holidays are here.

Yeah, I know — it never ends, does it?

Ranjitha Ashok

# Chennai a Shanghai?! NO, please!

(By the Editor)

Make Chennai, a Shang-hai, urged Benoit d'Iribarne, President, Asia-Pacific and the Americas, Saint-Gobain Glass, Paris, at the recent CII-Tamil Nadu Chapterorganised conference on 'The Winning Tamil Nadu - An Investment Meet'. God forbid, is all that we can say.

d'Iribarne made the suggestion in the context of summarising what he felt any investment destination needed and how much of those requirements Tamil Nadu had got right. Competitiveness, credibility and committedness were the broad requirements and Tamil Nadu had them all, even if some of the subsections of these, like infrastructure, logistics, transparency, consistency and speed could all do with improvement. But most of all what the State needed, he felt, was a visible symbol that would indicate investor-friendliness, efficiency and a warmer welcome. Make Chennai your symbol, he urged, your gateway, your magnet for investment and growth. And we were willing to cheer with him, till he added, "Make it your Shanghai".

We are quite sure he would not want Paris to be made the

Shanghai of France, just as this journal certainly would not want this city of culture and heritage to be made the Shanghai of Tamil Nadu. He might not have meant it in the way it sounded, but we are only too familiar with how the minds that matter here will take such encouragement. Already, they are pulling down heritage buildings alongside invaluable lung space like the Marina to build architectural memorials to undiminished bureaucracy. Any encouraging reference to Shanghai will have us building more such memorials all along the two beach roads!

What we need is a city that works. And a city that works, a city and suburbs where there are good roads, a better transportation system, ample water, first rate communications, efficient service, is what, d'Iribarne everso-tactfully indicated, would be a magnet for investment. And we would go along with him all the way. Shanghai, in all probability, works in that way. But that is not the visible symbol of Shanghai; what is visible is its immense physical growth dwarfing its rich past. And that, Madras Musings certainly does

(Continued on Page 6)

## Rajaji's advice on building in the city

n numerous occasions, when he was Premier of Madras and Chief Minister of the State, C. Rajagopalachari expressed how strongly he felt about the tendency to raise more and more buildings in the city, especially taking over open spaces essential for the better health of the people of Madras. During the course of some research on a project, your Editor found another report on Rajaji's

views on this matter. Unveiling the portrait of an eminent citizen. of the city in the premises of an insurance company he had been associated with, Rajaji speaking about the investments insur-

ance companies were making in buildings, had said, it was reported:

anew would get good returns for their investment. The intervening area between the Fort and the High Court was once a very beautiful open space, but now the space had been used up to erect buildings. No doubt, the buildings were very beautiful. He only hoped the Island Ground would not be seized by investors in course of time and built upon; at any rate, he hoped it would not happen in his lifetime. It was very dangerous to allow congestion in cities. Insurance companies, interested as ... — The Editor

they were in the health of citizens, should see to it that such spaces were not taken up for construction of buildings. 'We must resist such tendencies, he said and added that people might devise some scheme to insure against such open spaces being built on, and payments being made to municipalities in order to preserve open spaces. It was not impossible, he thought, to work out such a scheme if

they thought over it carefully. Rajaji's views about congesting the

city with more and more buildings are certainly pertinent to our times, when we are seeing a concrete jungle being created both by pri-

vate investors and the Government, stories of which are the Even those who had built special focus of this issue of Madras Musings. Improving the city's services for its citizens, ensuring their greater comfort, making life easier and less deprived for them, all appear to be secondary to raising new castles in the air. Could we all get together to think about how to make Chennai a more liveable city, a city where everything works for those living and working in it, instead of only thinking of raising new buildings for the benefit of a few?

#### urgent attention Cathedral needs

The San Thomé Cathedral is **I** in a sorry shape and needs attention. At once. During the monsoon last year, there was rainwater dripping on the altar and, now, the lime and brick plaster is cracking and falling every day.

Archbishop Dr. Aruldas lames, who presides over the Diocese of Madras-Mylapore from Bishop's House in San Thomé, is aware of the urgency and importance of restoration, but the managers of the diocese are staring at their empty coffers

and hoping God will come to their help.

A conservation study of the basilica (a church which has some of the remains of a saint) was done in 2002 by Ravi Gundu Rao and Associates, a Mumbai-based firm, which specialises in architectural and structural conservation of heritage buildings. It submitted its proposals in August 2002. But nothing concrete has followed.

Fr. P.J. Lawrence Raj, the parish priest, says that lack of funds is the major hurdle. "We need a large amount of money in our hands before we can award the work to someone. and raising that seems to be the most difficult task," he states. It is estimated that the basic restoration work alone would cost about Rs. 57 lakh (a cost mentioned in the 2002 report).

Father Lawrence says he would like to start the restoration work now, so that it will be completed before the northeast Monsoon sets in. But he does not have the funds to even

make a beginning. However, some money was spent not so long ago on modernising the exclusive meditation wing of the church. But it is doubtful if this work was carried out after consulting experts. As in many cases, such hotch-potch jobs only mar the historicity and life of a landmark.

Efforts have been made by the church to approach agencies in The Vatican, but they have not borne fruit.

(Continued on Page 7)

MGR's idea of locating a new capital somewhere in the centre of Tamil Nadu (MM, March 1st) is a good one. But from my ex-

perience of Gandhi Nagar in Gujarat (I was on the Gujarat cadre), it

would never take off. If at all it does, it may take at least half a cen-

tury. Several interests, like Government staff, trade unions, commer-

cial establishments, lawyers and so on, would oppose the move. Some

governments in Gujarat wanted to abandon the capital project for

this reason. It was saved only because of the intervention and interest

It was impossible to move the Governors out of the Raj Bhavan in

Ahmadabad which was housed in Shahiahan's Palace. So, when the

tenure of a Governor ended and he left, the Government of Gujarat

deliberately kept an interregnum of two days and moved the Raj

Bhavan to Gandhi Nagar in a war-like operation. The new lady Gov-

ernor was incensed when her dreams of living in a palace were shat-

tered (she had some earlier Ahmadabad connections) and to mollify

her they converted a small bungalow in Ahmadabad as a Raj Bhavan

annexe. Morarji Desai, as Prime Minister, told the Chief Secretary

also to shift to Gandhi Nagar. The Government corporations stayed

on in Ahmadabad till about a couple of years ago on the ground of

having to maintain contact with chambers, trade and industry. They

have liaison officers even now in Ahmadabad. The Sales Tax Com-

missioner is still in Ahmadabad because the Government depends

the secretariat somewhere in Kotturpuram, because Marina may not

be suitable. In this regard, I am sure that the Government of Tamil

Nadu has already explored with the Ministries of Defence and Cul-

ture (ASI) the possibility of demolishing the old, dilapidated building

(sometimes we should not overdo heritage, although I am all for heri-

tage) next to Namakkal building and constructing a new one blending

with the surroundings. (The parking lot has already been shifted to

the front of Fort St. George.) Incidentally, bureaucracy and cabinets

seem to be expanding, when downsizing of Governments is talked

Also, in the Indian context, we may give up something, half-way,

o economise, as central air-conditioning was given up in buildings

ike Udyog Bhavan and Krishi Bhavan in the capital. Our mainte-

nance is also generally poor, as in Chandigarh. Unlike in Singapore

and Malaysia, we are not able to get out of the third-world syndrome.

However, I am not sure whether Malaysia's new capital, Putrajaya, is

success, though it may be first-world class. Although first-world

class and beautiful, Canberra and Brasilia, like New Delhi, are con-

Since the same problems will be faced here, it is advisable to locate

upon him for nearly 70% of the revenue.

of Morarii Desai.

April 1-15, 2003

READERS

From as far back as December 1, 2001, Madras Musings has been pointing out that Capper 5. Where will the mass of people House, the first home of Queen Mary's College, was under threat and its other buildings were on 6. With all this talk by Governthe endangered list. No notice was taken of any of these pleas, including those by the Old Students' Association. Little notice was taken even when Capper House was razed to the ground, a heritage building that would have been on anyone's list for its role in the historical development of Madras, but now a landmark lost. It is only now, that retariat is an unnecessary luxury the College itself is threatened planned for location on an unthat there has started a grounds- suitable site that will affect badly well against Government's plans the Marina and the purpose this for this acreage. The Man From bit of natural heritage serves the Madras Musings is delighted to city. 'Save the Marina' should be hear the public speaking up on a louder cry than 'Save QMC' this issue – and hopes its voice now that Capper House has gone. will be heard by a Government that states it is committed to Winning Tamil Nadu heeding the people's voice. But that voice should get its The CII-Tamil Nadu's An-

consider the following points:

- 1. The only heritage building on the QMC site has been pulled can't put it up again.
- 2. If the QMC premises are taken over, as is expected, for a new Government Secretariat, no doubt, the College year will suffer dislocation and the students will be affected to an extent, but at the what's in it for me than the nicemany students and staff.
- opment on the Marina, will more highly of the latter. lead to a considerable part of purpose it was meant for.
- the few roads in the city that back the investor. As Ford

works as congested and uncomfortable as any other.

who will gather here get their

water supply? ment cutting costs, reducing staff and making use of IT to do more, more efficiently and transparently, what is the necessity to spend a large sum for space that would not be needed if the staff is truly reduced and computerisation imple-

As MMM sees it, the new Sec-

arguments right to have the \_\_\_ nual Day was celebrated regreatest effect. MMM urges cently with a conference on 'The those banding together to try Winning Tamil Nadu' and The and stop the destruction of Man from Madras Musings was QMC, and the replacement of it delighted to hear so many speakby a Government monolith, to ers so positive about the State, particularly its manpower resources that Hindustan Thompson's suggests be promoted down - and all the king's among the investor world as the horses and all the king's men strength of a State with "a higher state of mind". That state of mind, unfortunately, often spends much more time on birds, as Ford does.

interrupted power supply by Government and it has had only one breakdown of supply in four years - and that was due to a blow-out. How nice; pity most of those in the audience, including that supply base, couldn't say the same thing! Nor could they say with Ford how nice the Government has been with tax concessions. But then some are always more equal than others, MMM

Despite being more equal, the investors were quite clear that the State still had some way to go to make them happy. And the improvements needed included the following:

- Qualitative improvement in
- Comprehensive labour law re-
- A more rational tax structure. • Predictable investor-friendly Government policies.
- R & D investment to be encouraged through incentives.
- Less bureaucracy and, as a consequence, self-certification.

No doubt, if all these are given, the investors will do still more for the few thousands they employ, spend a little more on the local communities near their factories, and green the environment, enabling their factory complexes to be visited by horticulture students and migratory

pointed out, it was promised un- on spreading its IT business into stitutions themselves share with different parts of the State. And others anything not stated in the Pune was the first destination studies? Secrecy is a way of life in earmarked for such growth. While citing the Chinese example of developing the south China township of Zhuhai into a city of tomorrow to meet the needs of investment in hitech and it certainly looked to MMM like the soul-less cities of the future where nothing will break down, not even the humans so happy with the facilities! – MMM was glad to hear that Pune's development would not reflect Zhuhai's (where Zensar has a foot) but would depend a lot on citizens' groups being established in each locality to improve their

> We don't need Shanghais and Zhuhais. A Chennai that works will do, MMM is convinced, and making it work, through citizens' groups, is what CII-TN should aim at, starting now, MMM feels. And what better way to do that than to get the leading NGOs together under one roof and try to work out a joint initiative for a better Chennai. CII-TN should also urge the spreading out of IT business in the State — as

> area and, thereby, improve the

whole. The Bangalore Task

Force has something like this go-

ing and MMM would be de-

lighted to hear if CII-Tamil Nadu

would study these two initiatives

and urge implementation of a

similar model in Chennai for a

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

end of it, Government will ties of life. The result is that give them a new campus and many, like MMM, got invitations it might well be much better for one day, when the Governor than the present one. The was to inaugurate the function, closing of QMC for good does only to be turned back on arrival not seem to be on the cards - that day with the message that and wherever it moves to in the inauguration was on the morthe city, its status as the old-row. And on the morrow they est women's college in Madras found this celebration and anwill remain unchallenged, but other CII meet being combined it could well inconvenience and inaugurated by the Chief Minister with no sign of the Gov-3. On the other hand, a new Sec- ernor. MMM quite understands retariat on this site will bring that with her busy schedule the thousands to work in it daily, Chief Minister would have found still more thousands to inter- it convenient only to attend on act with them and, as each one day and the combining of the person visiting the Secretariat two occasions, therefore, made will have several others with sense. What didn't make sense him – as is our wont – there'll was why initially invite the Govbe yet more thousands on ernor at all - or, more so, anthese premises every day. The nounce such an invitation campus will not only not be when you were not sure who you able to handle these thou- really wanted for your special sands, but most of them will day. Such a situation certainly perforce have to congregate seemed to focus more on priorion the Marina. And that, with ties than niceties - and MMM is the consequent services devel- old-fashioned enough to think

That said, and the sessions the city's open rest-and-recre- underway, MMM was delighted ation space being lost to the to find all the investors so happy with Tamil Nadu. Its strengths as 4. Apart from the human con- listed by investors were its edugestion that will make the cated and conscientious man-Marina an even more de- power, the infrastructure faciligraded space than it is today, ties offered to investors, the supthe vehicular congestion on plier base in the State, lower costs Kamaraj Salai and the roads of operations and a progressive leading off it will make one of Government's commitment to Winning initiatives

At other sessions, several Tiruchi. ing in place or as needed to make Tamil Nadu the winning destina-

The Government, Special Secretary (Finance) L. Krishnan said, was keen on public-private partnerships and was, in the near future, looking at such partnerships to help extend the East Coast Road further south, the IT Corridor along the Old Mahabalipuram Road, spreading computer literacy throughout the State, and the development of Special Economic Zones in Chennai, Tuticorin and one or two other areas. Citing the success of such partnerships in developing the Tirupur Water Supply Scheme and the Alandur drainage scheme, he said following these models Tamil Nadu would set the pace for the country as it already has in such fields as population control and nutrition. Making such partnerships possible were the several corporations that the State had set up for Urban Development, Infrastructure, Roads, Water, etc. And these, The Man From Madras Musings was glad to hear,

had a strongly professional focus. Speaking of the Maharashtra experience, Ganesh Nataraian of Zensar Technologies and Chairman, CII-Maharashtra Chapter, said that Maharashtra was intent

Meanwhile, CII have commissioned IIM-Ahmadabad to make a study of 25 world-class corporates who have been able to achieve that class while operating from Tamil Nadu. Presentations were made by Prof. Abraham Koshy on Saint-Gobain, Aravind Eye Hospitals, Hidesign and FoodWorld as samplers. When the completed study comes out, CII-TN hopes that it will offer a total learning experience to investors in Tamil Nadu, both those in place and those eveing it

Maharashtra has done — to, say, Coimbatore, Madurai and

But while studies will commu-

this part of the world - and this was stressed by Prakash Damodaran of Media Lab Asia when he pointed out that while IIT professors were friends of each other. they would not communicate with each other on their projects, unlike in the U.S. where there was considerable networking. Can we ever get rid of our individualism, MMM wonders. Selling ourselves Japanese Ambassador Akira

Hayeshi pointed out that if the Indian Elephant wanted to catch up with the East Asian tigers and dragons, it would have to make Japan aware of what different parts of the country had to offer. Despite the affinity between ancient Japanese and ancient Tamil that scholars in Japan have found, there's little known about Tamil Nadu there - not even that it is a major software player. Indeed, this was what Anita Gupta of Hindustan Thompson Associates said a few minutes later when she narrated, "A peacock danced in the forest, but nobody saw its beauty". It's time to tell the world, she urged, that Tamil Nadu is India's brain bank, that the tech yogis come from here, that productivity is high here, that its infrastructure is good and that it is a major software exporter. We should go out and sell Tamil Nadu hard, she urged; the State has so much to offer.

The Man From Madras Musings agrees with her totally But those going out to promote Tamil Nadu should be the best professionals, whether from the private or the public sector. They must be meritorious, not chosen because of position, pelf or personal ties. MMM is convinced that this State, for all its faults has more going for it than most other States of India. We are just, by paying attention to irrelevancies, by wanting to spend time on creating monuments, frittering away the tremendous advantage we have. Can CII-TN make change happen by getting the Government to give it the opportunity? MMM hopes it can.

— MMM

#### CHENNAI HERITAGE

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Musings and the causes of heritage, environment and a bet-
ter city that it espouses.
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# The problems of moving the capital

Secretariat at Marina Tor the following reasons, the Proposed construction of

be dropped. Coverage area is very much

Secretariat on the Marina, should

 Thickly populated by middle class people at Ice House and Triplicane areas will further deteriorate their condition.

- The Vivekananda Memoria Hall will lose its prominence. - The beautiful Marina beach
- will no longer be popular. — There won't be sand at Marina, only two-wheelers and four-wheelers using the sand for parking.
- The smooth flow of vehicles or the beach road will be spoiled
- Only policemen and women will dominate the area and ordinary citizens will not have the peace of mind for which they rush to the Marina beach.

S.S. Ramanathan R. 12, 65th Street 10th Sector K.K. Nagar West Chennai 600 078.

#### Derivation of names

Vears ago N.S. Ramaswami of I the Indian Express wrote that "Chintadripet" is a corruption of "Sinnatharipettai". But one of my friends told me that it was a corrupt form of 'St. Andrew'spet'.

Ramaswami also said the 'Ghoda Bagh' had become 'Kodambakkam'. There seems to have been a stable for horses in old Kodambakkam. But pakkam is a Tamil word denoting the proximity of the place to the sea.

I would like to be enlightened on the derivation of these names.

> T.R. Madangopal Kandamangalam Tirukattupalli 613 104

More on names

Dunder Street is really Banddaar DStreet meaning street of shops in Hindi. The way it is spelt and pronounced, it means Monkey street (Bandhar)!

Reader Rajagopalan's musings (MM, March 1st) made me nostalgic and I vividly remember when my elder sister took me to Kapali Talkies to view Naam Inwar (We Two), the first social picture in Tamil in 1947. Mandaiveli was more or less 'Mandaiveli' not frequented after dusk due to the pres-Tanjore District. ence of "spirited citizens".

sidered official ghettos.

N. Dharmeshwaran 21. Kumaran Nagar Guduvanchery 603 202.

Tamil phonetics

D eader C.G. Prasad's reference Nto 'Chennai-howlers' (MM,

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March 1st) is not without reason. Tamil is an ancient language. I with Sanskrit, "Give me a Sanskrit word and I'll give you a Tamil equivalent." But the phonetic problem of Tamil has to be rectified. While Tamil has only one sound

like K. P. T. etc., English has at

least two, like 'K,G', 'P,B', 'D,T' etc. The other Indian languages have four sounds. But this can easily be rectified by putting a 'above some letters: (1) & for K; for & G (let alone GH; introduce क्र to be pronounced as G or GH); (2) # for C: # for S. For instance, TV announcers wrongly pronounce 'Chennai' as 'Sennai' and 'Seythi for 'Cheythi'. This is for want of a proper word and hence  $\bar{x}$ , (3) L for T;  $\sqsubset$  for D e.g., டெல்லி (4) த for Th; த for Dh, e.g. , தில்லி (5) ப for P; ū for B or ūἰρūgio. If u and ū are differentiated, 'High Court

ஞ, ங, ன, ண, ந, ல, ள, மு, etc. G. Sundaram, IAS (RETD.) 'Burma House 9th Street New No. 33, Old No. 18 Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai, Mylapore Chennai 600 004.

Pillar, his idea

T was out of India for a few months Land, hence, missed the question - 'Whose idea was it to erect a Ashok Pillar in Ashok Nagar, Chennai?' (MM, January 1st).

compound, providing a contrast, as in the case of the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and the Governor's residence in Hong Kong. Of course, the blending of the old and the new should be done in an imaginative way in consultation with heritage experts. G. Sundaram, IAS (REID.) 'Burma House', 9th Street, New No. 33, Old No. 18 Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai

The newspapers in Chennai are never tired of highlighting the bad

civic conditions and issues. But the visual media - popular chan-

nels like Sun, Jaya, Raj and Vijay - should highlight regularly in

Tamil the need for cleanliness — no spitting, littering, the need to

clean fingers with soap, etc. Doordarshan has done it to a certain

extent in Hindi and English. The Commissioner of the Corpora-

tion and his staff, and the Commissioner of Police too, must be

facing a horrendous task in these areas. Perhaps they have given

up in disgust because public self-discipline and co-operation are

totally lacking. For instance, as a journal wrote, spitting is a 'fun-

damental right'. The less said about the traffic violations, the bet-

ter. Even rich people who construct houses spending crores have

no civic sense, nor do they train their servants to keep the envi-

ronment clean. Influential persons use the name of ministers to

The retired IAS Officers' Association has rightly taken a decision

urging every IAS officer to be helpful to the people in the area

where he or she lives. Many people approach me to solve civic

problems because they are wary of approaching the police or the

administration themselves. As a result, I find myself ringing up

some civic authority or the other every day - police for traffic

problems, corporation, metro-water, electricity, pollution control

board, telephones, postal department and cable operators. I lived

in Belgium for five years in two spells. There was not even a single

occasion for me to ring any of these authorities providing civic

services. That is the reason why, perhaps, Belgium occupies the

fourth place in the Human Development Index, next only to Nor-

Old police stations could be preserved as heritage buildings and

the walking tours, as in Mylapore, could start from them. Some

maps, photos of important landmarks under the jurisdiction of the

station or heritage sketches could be displayed in the buildings.

The Police and Tourism Departments could come together in this

task. The new building of the police station could be in the same

brow-beat the civic staff.

way. Sweden and Canada.

The name of Ashok Nagar itself is the idea of the first Chairman of Ghosh (West Bengal) and C. Naraproudly tell my North Indian the City Improvement Trust (later yanaswamy (State PWD engineer) friends that it has nothing to do it became the TNHB), Mr. Gnana- to report on the feasibility of the

> It was his idea to erect a Ashok Pillar at the four-road junction in Ashok Nagar. No doubt it is an impressive pillar and needs to be preserved carefully.

T.A. Sivasubramaniam "Kanchi" 161, P.S. Kumarasamy Raja Salai (Greenways Road)

Chennai 600 028. Statue relocated

The Travancore Maharajah's statue (MM, March 1st) has been relocated in the Ananthapadmanabha Swamy temple in Gandhi Nagar, Adyar - the most appropriate place for "Padmanabhan dasa" who played a major part in the building of this temple and was the Patron of its commitbending' would be correctly written. Tamil has unique sounds like tee.

> K. Narayanan 5/1, 7th Cross Karpagam Gardens Chennai 600 020.

#### Move to Neyveli

Coon after Dr. M.S. Krishnan Ocorrectly predicted the coal-like pieces found at Neyveli as Lignite (MM, March 1st), and the taking over of the project from the Government of India by the then Madras Government, the latter apan experts committee con-

sisting of Paul Eyrich (USA),

Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

That team reported favourably on the lignite project which was taken over by the Government of India and the Nevveli Lignite Corporation Ltd. was born in November 1956.

> N.R. Raghavan 18, 57th Street Ashok Nagar Chennai 600 083.

#### A correction

In the feature on the Kapali LOduvar in MM, March 16th, the verses were by Saint Sambandar and not by the Oduvar, as printed.

— The Editor

#### PLEASE NOTE

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

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

 Madras Musings does not accept letters by e-mail.

Best copy available.

Will rack railway become India's pride?

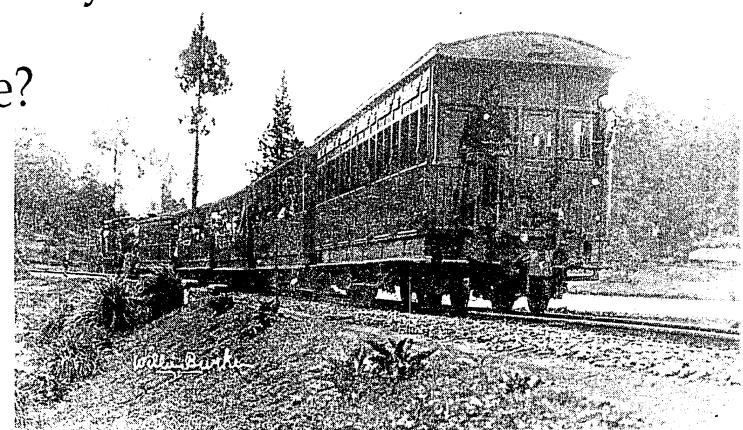
There is an exciting possibility of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) being awarded UNESCO's World Heritage Status site, to bring it on par with the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) which earned that coveted status in 1999. The chances of the Tamil Nadu rack railway - the only one of its kind in the Indian sub-continent - of receiving such recognition are bright. Two experts from UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris, spent seven days with officials of Indian Railways a few months ago. The mission comprised Ms. Junko Taniguchi (Programme Specialist) and Mr. Sebastien Dauge (French International Expert on Rehabilitation and Management of Railway Stations). They studied India's proposal for the NMR to be considered for the much sought award, and also to re-consider UNESCO's displacement of Mumbai's Victoria Terminus building from the last short-list of candidates on account of VT's renaming, which the world body claims to have substantially diluted the earlier selection. The meetings ended in a decision for a visit by Indian Railways officials to the Centre in Paris later this year.

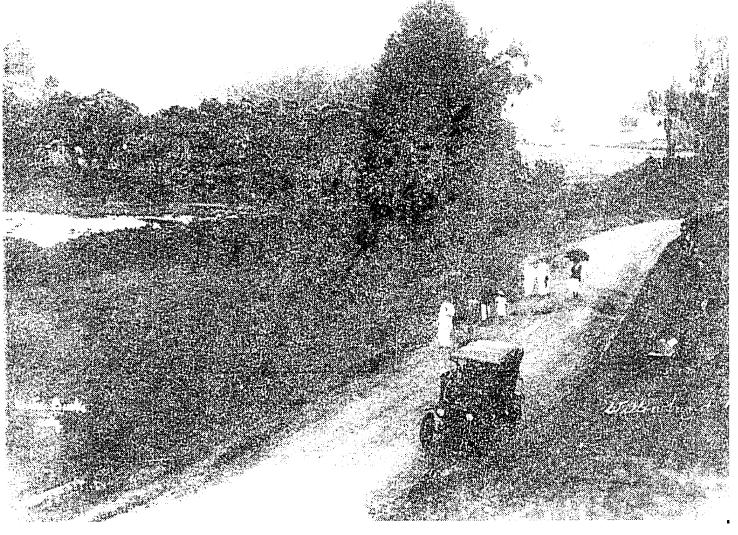
There isn't a huge difference in the vintage of the DHR and the NMR; they are 1886 and 1899 respectively. The routes of both railways traverse nature's best scenery. Yet, in my opinion, the NMR scores over DHR in many respects.

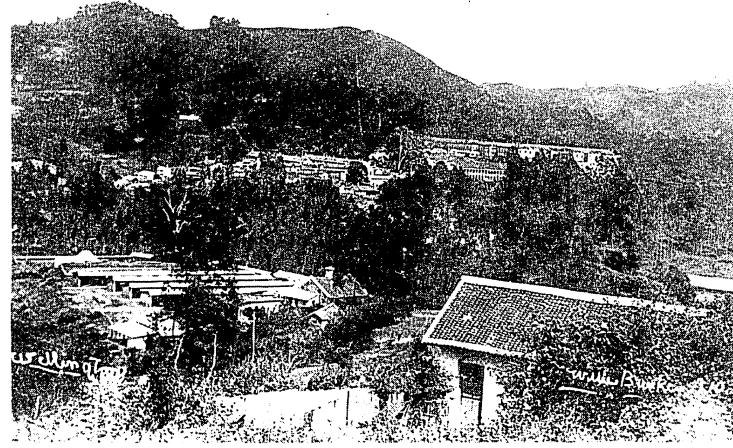
The English chanced upon Ootacamund in 1820s. Later, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India (1876-1880), while spending a holiday in Ooty, described the place thus: "It far surpasses all that its most enthusiastic admirers and devoted lovers have said to us about it. The afternoon was rainy, and the road muddy but such beautiful English rain, such delicious English mud. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire downs, Westmoreland lakes, Scotch trout streams, and Lusitanian views," (R.R. Bhandari). Lord Lytton had opened the first segment of the DHR. He returned to England in 1880, nine years before the first section of the NMR was inaugu-

Another wordpicture of Ooty, by Mollie Panter-Downs, in the book Rise of the Raj, reproduced by R.R. Bhandari, says the following about this ancient abode of the Todas: "The Victorians enchanted with this discovery, developed Ooty, built little gabled cottages called Apple Cottage, and Cheerful Cottage, turreted houses called Woodcote Hall and Grasmere Lodge. From the 1820s onwards Madras families built their summer houses, and by the 1870s the Governor of Madras and his whole secretariat moved up to Ooty for the hot weather."

Hopefully the re-naming of Ootacamund will not come in the way of elevation of the NMR to World Heritage Status site!







### The Season — with Willie Burke

• Almost in anticipation of the annual trek to the hills, Madras Musings received an unexpected treasure trove. Only this journal would consider three old photographs "a treasure trove", but that's by the way. Those three pictures Madras Musings received from Dharmalingam Venugopal, of the Nilgiris Documentation Centre, bear the signature of a photographer who first came to Madras in the early 1900s and who we caught up with in Madras Musings on January. 2003. At that time we had written – echoing Omar Khan – that few photographs of Willie Burke's or his father John's about whom Khan had written a book - existed in India. And in response to that came these three pictures by William (Willie) Henry Burke who had studios in Madras and Ootacamund. The pictures show, from top to bottom, the rack railway of the Nilgiris (see article alongside that additionally marks the 'Hill Season'), Ootacamund c.1915 and G.D. Patwardhan Wellington of the same period.

# A century of animal care education

Institutions of its kind in India and the first college to offer instruction leading to a degree in veterinary science, will celebrate Thailand, Indonesia, Malaya, a number of healthy horses, po-Iraq and the Philippines have nies and heads of cattle were retrained at the College.

The history of the Madras fact, to 1878 when the Agricultural College at Saidapet offered students a basic course in Veterinary Science, after successful provided hospital prac-

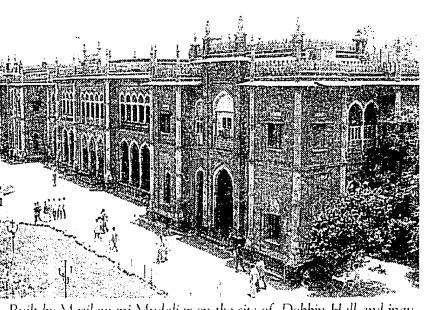
tice at the Saidapet Veterinary Hospital. A turning point came at a military personnel conference in Ambala in 1900 when steps were initiated to formulate a suitable curriculum of activities to be adopted 🚟 by the various veterinary educational institutions in India (military personnel were then in charge of vetference decided that all

conference, was specially drawn from the Government Cattle Farm in Hissar (Haryana) and sent to Madras to set up a veterinary institution.

Gunn had started the Bengal for the Madras Veterinary Colthought, was the vacant ground in Vepery, near the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) infirmary, situated in a busy part of Madras. However, Gunn's initial representation to the Revenue Board to establish the facility at Vepery met with a lutions, "The proposal to estab-

The Madras Veterinary lish a Veterinary College in Ma-L College, one of the premier dras (city) has already been fully discussed and negatived on grounds which still hold good."

Nevertheless, Gunn found support for his cause in the Suits 100th year this year on Octo- perintendent of the Civil Veteriber 1st. After modest beginnings, nary Department, the Inspectorthe College has made great General, the Principal of the Agstrides during the past ten de- ricultural College, and the Direccades. It became the first veteri- tor of Public Instruction. They all nary college in the country to be agreed that an insufficient numaffiliated to a university. Hun- ber of patients attended the dreds of students from India as Saidapet Hospital. On the other well as from Burma, Ceylon, hand, SPCA records showed that ceived at its hospital for treatment. Finally, after much debate, Veterinary College goes back, in the Revenue Board arrived at the conclusion that "the uncertainty of obtaining sufficient number of patients at Saidapet to allow of proper veterinary instruction becompletion of which they were - ing imparted is a fatal objection -



erinary education and gurated in 1904 as the Madras Veterinary College's main building, this cattle farms). The Con- Indo-Saracenic buildup still stands in good condition.

the Indian veterinary colleges – to placing the school there... in Lahore, Bombay, Calcutta and (and) would recommend that to Ajmer – would run three-year begin with the school should be programmes. Veterinary Major placed in Madras in the immedi-W.D. Gunn, a member of the ate neighbourhood of the building owned by the SPCA at

agreed to place at the Government's disposal, for use by the College, all its stables, stalls, dog-Veterinary College and his experakennels, shoeing forge and other rience there stood him in good buildings, except the Society's ofstead while choosing a location—fice building. There was one stipulation by the SPCA, howlege. Gunn felt that Saidapet was—ever; that the name of the originot a suitable place to establish a nal owner of 'Dog's Home' (run veterinary college with the nec-by the SPCA, next to which the essary hospital for practice. The new hospital would be located), pest place for the college, he Raja V. Kishun Bahadur, be perpetuated in the same way in the

new hospital. And so, with 20 students on the rolls, the Madras Veterinary School, subsequently named 'College', started functioning from 1.10.1903 in a building known as Dobbin Hall, situated firm 'No'. The Board, stating that 175 yards from the SPCA and it was unable to submit the pro- rented at Rs. 60 a month. Gunn, posals made by Gunn for the then Superintendent, Civil Vetconsideration of the Govern- erinary Department, Madras, ment, recorded in one of its reso- took over as part-time Principal.

During those years, veterinary

science was taught in English in the Bombay and Bengal Veterinary Colleges, while in Lahore and Ajmer, it was taught in Urdu. However, in the Madras Presidency, there were no qualified lecturers in Tamil, Telugu Kanarese or Malayalam. So, teaching was conducted in English, "as the large majority of the educated natives of Madras understood, read and spoke English

The curriculum of instruction, for the first year, included Anatomy, Elementary Chemis try, Elementary Botany, Materia Medica, Handling of Animals, and Pharmacy. In the second year, students learnt Anatomy including Comparative Anatomy, Physiology, Hygiene, Horseshoeing, Theoretical Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, and General Nursing. Third year stu-

> Veterinary | below. Medicine, Veterinary Surgery, Disease of Dogs, Operative Surgery, Therapeutics, Meat and Milk Inspec-Soundness c Horses and other Domesticated the Royal Commission on Agri-

 culture recommended revision of the curriculum and this was done in 1930-31. A special feature of the revised syllabus was that students were made to study the comparative anatomy of the hare, a reflection perhaps of the desire to train veterinarians to The SPCA, in turn, readily help in the farming sector rather than send some of them to the Army as had been the practice earlier (the Army used horses ponies and mules).

> Although the Madras Veteri nary College was the fourth veterinary institution established in India, it was the first to get affili ated to a university. The University of Madras recognised it as a constituent college in 1935 to impart instruction for the Degree of Bachelor of Veterinary Sci ence (B.V.Sc.). Admission to the College picked up thereafter and remained steady for years. In 1958, based on the recommendations of the first Indo-American team on Agricultural Research and Education, the institution was upgrated as the Southern Regional Centre of Post-graduate Education and Research. The

> > (Continued on page 6)



With the Government allotting funds to "upgrade the infrastructure in the two premier industrial estates in the city" that have, according to their Associations, "lost their lustre in the absence of maintenance of the infrastruc-

ture", our OLD and NEW this fortnight are the most telling images of the state of these estates, once not only pioneering ventures in India but also models copied else-**NEW...** where. Whether the funds allotted — or whether township status if ever given — will make a difference to these estates is a moot point, considering the sorry state they are

in. These pictures were taken recently by R. EASWARRAJ in the Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate in Guindy, established in 1958 over 450 acres. Most of its 400 units are closed, but an occasional NEW building has come up, Alcatel's and a software company's buildings (above) contrasting sharply with the OLD, little looked after shed below. But whatever the state of the buildings, there are no worse roads in Chennai than those found in the Guindy Estate, as may be seen in the other pictures



The 'festival season' this year

ducting festivals has increased.

number of organisations con-

1995, the number has been

With the entry of more and

more organisations, the dura-

tion of the season has also

gradually expanded from a two-

month period (December -

Ianuary) to cover a four-month

The total number of perfor-

mances (both music and dance)

has increased by leaps and

bounds. It peaked at 2052 in

1999-2000, only to dip to 1947

in the next season. But the

number again swelled to 2098 in

396 dance).

period (November – February).

in 1994-95 to 73 in 2002-03.

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

- 1. Who is the new President China?
- 2. Who won the season-opening Australian GP of the Formula One circuit?
- 3. C.D. Sahay is to be the new head of India's external intelligence agency. What is it called?
- 4. Of which European country was the assassinated Zoran Diindiic the Premier?
- 5. After which Telugu leader, who died for a separate Andhra State, has the Nellore District been renamed?
- 6. In which Asian country were about 270 Indian IR professionals roughed up leading to a strain in mutual diplomatic ties?
- 7. Against which former President of a South American nation has Interpol issued a world-wide arrest warrant?
- 8. Who became the second bowler to take a hat-trick in this year's World Cup?
- 9. Name the world's longest ruling head of government (44 vears) who was re-elected President recently.
- 10. Astronomers have discovered seven more new moons around which planet of the solar system?

11. As per the Chennai Corporation budget, who is to manage parking lots in the city?

12. The Vice-Chancellor of which varsity in the State has penned a book on the history of universities in the State?

13. Which Tamil Nadu district got its name from gifting of the immense wealth like Cauvery water in that region?

- 14. Which place, near Hosur, was described by Sir Thomas Munro as 'Little England'?
- 15. Which hgh-profile Public office is held by N.R. Chandran in the State?
- 16. Which two century old edifices were built on 'John Pereira's Gardens' on Poonamallee High
- 17. The legendary Chairman o which Chennai-based tyre giant passed away on March 2nd?
- 18. The oldest school in India following the British pattern of education is in Madras. Name it.
- 19. What total change is Madras University introducing for the UG and PG courses in all the 94 affiliated colleges from next academic year?
- 20. Who played the title role in the eponymous magnum opus Avvaiyar made by S.S. Vasan?

(Answers on page 8)

# Offer children a better environment this World Health Day

Yorld Health Day falls on W April 7th and the theme this year is 'Healthy Environments for Children'.

The Sahishnatha Educational and Charitable Trust, formed in 1998 by a team of doctors committed to providing total care through a holistic approach - physical, mental and spiritual - to all needy children and ensure a positive childhood development, suggests the following actions aimed at creating a healthy environment for chil-

In the community

- Make public places smoke-
- Organise waste management.
- Plant trees and clean streams. Advocate safer roads and
- organised traffic. • Eliminate use of polluting

- Take care of children in swimming pools, water points and dangerous areas.
- Maintain slides, swings in children's play area to avoid
- Plant trees to provide protection from sunlight.
- Excessive fertilisers and pesticides represent risk to children. Advocate optimum use.
- Stagnant water causes malaria and infectious diseases. Try means to reduce this.
- Children playing in unsafe, polluted areas may be prone to diseases. Advocate clean

In the school

- Ensure clean running water and separate toilets for girls and boys.
- Teach children about creating healthy environments.
- Build and relocate schools and

playgrounds away from traffic. noise, industrial pollution and waste sites.

- Maintain clean, well-ventilated and well-lit schools to promote health and learning.
- Encourage healthy, well-balanced diets and regular exercise for children.
- Dirt and polluted soil transmit bugs that spread diseases.
- Constant and high levels of noise distract children from learning
- High levels of air pollution in and around schools cause respiratory infections.

• Store water in covered containers in safe, clean and cool containers.

In the home

- Promote the use of improved stoves and cleaner household
- Wash your child's and your

hands before preparing food and eating and after defeca-

April 1-15, 2003

- Keep your child away from smoke during peak cooking times and do not smoke near children.
- Store household cleaning products, pesticides, fuels and other medicines away from children's reach.
- Use insecticide-treated bednets to prevent malaria.
- Open fires in the home can generate toxic fumes that are harmful. These fires also can cause burns to children.
- Indoor humidity, moulds, dust, pets can trigger asthma and allergies.
- Unsafe electrical wiring and poor construction and maintenance can cause injuries.
- Water from lead pipes, lead containing paint and dust may affect child's health and intel-

## **Recommended Trees - 4**

TREES GENERALLY AND SUITABLE FOR SMALL INSTITUTIONS

Azadirachta Indica (Neem) Bauhinia Purpurea (Purple Bauhinia) Bauhinia Variegata (Bauhinia) Cassia fistula (Indian Laburnum) Cowrapeta genesis Delonix elatta Dalbegia Sisso (Sisso) Erythrina Indica (Kalyana Murungai) Guzuma tomentosa (Caterpillar Tree) Hibiscus tiliaceus (Yellow Mallow Tree) Jacaranda mimosifolia (Jacaranda) Kigelia Pinnata (Sausage Tree) Lagerstromea flos reginae (Queens flower) Mimusops elengii (Indian Nedlar) Pongamia Pinnata (Indian Beech) Putrenjiva roxberghii (Child life Tree) Spathodia Campanulata (Indian Tulip)

Thespesia populnea (Portia Tree)

Tecoma Stans (Yellow Tecoma)

(Continued from page 1)

some new image.

As d'Iribarne pai

not want for Chennai. Let's

make Chennai work, let's im-

prove it, but let's not keep

building and building in quest of

Hindustan Thompson's presen-

tation on creating a new image

of Tamil Nadu to sell to the

world. An image we want, but

for all the A.R. Rahmans we

produce, a pop image-symbo-

lised by a jingle accompanying a

raucously 'mod' soundtrack —

is certainly not what Chennai

wants, nor what it represents.

That was our reaction too to

G. Dattatri, K. Hariharan and Prof. S. Dayanandan

those with names ending in 'n'

or 'm' he found the best manag-

ers in the world, people with

education, skills and the right

attitude. We doubt whether

even a fraction of them repre-

sents the 'rah, rah' of a jingle

This city, this State, does not

need the image of a Shanghai or

the symbolism of music reflect-

ing drive. What it does need is

the powers-that-be improving

ceaselessly all the facilities that

we have. And such improve-

ments is what CII-Tamil Nadu

should be talking to Govern-

ment about.

better suited for a disco.

CHENNAI A SHANGHAI?!

A CENTURY OF ANIMAL CARE EDUCATION

(Continued from page 4)

introduction of the M.V.Sc. programme in various disciplines was carried out in a phased manner and, by 1962, 15 departments offered post-graduate courses. In 1969, the College became a separate Directorate of Veterinary Education and Research, a first in India. In 1976, it became a constituent unit of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Indeed, the Veterinary College provided the core for the establishment in 1989 of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), the first such university in India.

P.T. Saunders and T.J. Hurley were responsible for the College's success in its early years. V. Krishnamurthi Ayyar, the first Indian principal of the College, who held four separate terms between 1929 and 1933,

M.R.V. Panikkar and Kailasam Ayyar, the second and third Indian principals, all played their parts in developing the College as a centre of excellence, as did M. Anant Narayan Rao, H.N. Chelva Ayyangar, K.S. Nair, R. Swaminathan, G.R. Viswanathan, S.V. Mudaliar and I.M. Azizuddin in later years.

At the College's golden jubilee celebrations in 1954, President Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Governor Sri Prakasa and Chief Minister K. Kamarai had all sent their greetings and best wishes. In its centenary year, while the staff and students plan celebrations, the Madras Veterinary College deserves greater encouragement from the highest offices in the land by their presence at any function organised to mark a remarkable century of service to animals.

Sashi Nair

## pates for Your Diard

April: A popular French ethnorock band, faubourg de Boignard, that blends traditional and rock music interacts with a local band Oikyotaan, a contemporary folk set-up with a bass, ful percussion, ensemble, guitar, vocals, and two guest performers with sarangi, additional percussion, violin and accordion. (At Alliance Française.)

From April 8: Exhibition of the work of Hector Berlioz. April 4-14: An exhibition of paintings by Prafulla Dahanukar. (At

Apparao Galleries.) April 10: A jazz concert by Manfred Leuchter: Arabesque. With Leuchter on the accordion and accompanied by saxophone, 7.00 p.m.)

rendezvous with a Chennai personality so you will share the iourney with music personality. nist. He has from 1983 participated in Jazz masterclasses in Calcutta, Dartmouth College, Boston, New York and has performed in India and the US as a soloist and in a number of well known Jazz ensembles, including his Trio and Quartet. (At Max Mueller Bhavan, 7.00 p.m.)

April 28: Lalitha & Nandini, popularly known as 'The Violin Duo', been widely acclaimed as outstanding South Indian classical Carnatic Violinists.

Gunn, Aitchison. F. Ware,

trumpet, bass guitar and percussion, in an interplay of the magical world of jazz and Arabic melodies. (At Music Academy,

April 18: Travelogue, the monthly April 25: Madhav Chari, jazz pia-

The Mad, Mad, Mad

Madras Season

aged by pushy parents, would

the students, the parents and

dance-dramas and present them

opportunity to young dancers,

by S. Janaki

**1** too was as maddening as like to dance on stage. Dance

ever. Over the past 16 years, the teachers have in turn found a

number of organisations con- way to satisfy all concerned —

Between 1987 and 1994 there the audience. They choreo-

was a steady increase in the graph group productions of

ducting festivals. But since from time to time. This gives an

swelling — increasing from 39 albeit in a group, to dance on

stage with an orchestra, lights and mike. It also helps circumvent the oft-repeated refrain that, more often than not, individuals have to pay to perform. It also ensures a sizeable audience turnout — bringing in at least two or three well wishers and some near and dear ones per performer! Clever indeed! The 'season', of course, has

2001-02, and has jumped to come to stay. It is part of the 2188 in 2002-03 (1792 music, cultural ethos of the Madras metropolis. It has also generated Dance-dramas and group interest in allied activities like productions were more popular the morning heritage walks to during the season than solo perplaces of cultural interest; formances, group performances photo exhibitions on maestros; increasing from 29 last season to instrument fairs; music and 48 in this season. The reasons dance audio-video special sales, for this are not far to seek. In the kolam competitions; showcasing past 15 years or so, there has 'Mylapore culture' in the streets been a proliferation in the numaround the Kapaleeswarar ber of dance schools in Chennai temple; presenting folk arts and and an explosion in the number regional cuisine, etc. But there of young dance students has been hardly any coordinachurned out. Not every dancer is cut out to be a solo performer, tion among all the players inbut a majority of them, encour- volved. The Department of Government could cash in on the 'season' by creating clever tourist package for visitors that will give them a taste of Carnatic culture. Organisations could do with

Tourism of the Tamil Nadu

imaginative rearrangement of programmes — why have so many of them from morning to night? Musicians could make it a point not to sing too many times in the same geographical 'area'. Would it be asking for too much to suggest that the audience must insist on quality rather than quantity and not cheer and clap every time the musician squeaks in the tara sthavi or the dancer ends a twominute long winding teerma-

Is it not time to rethink, revamp and make the festival season a memorable one rather than a routine affair? There is ample time to work on it before the next season comes around.

P.S: Apart from the annual music festival season in Chennai (November through February), the music and dance recitals are held in the city the vear round.

As many as 71 2-day festivals, featuring 738 programmes, were held in Chennai during the socalled off-season months of March to October 2002, 43 of them (515 programmes) sandwiching the main season, thus making it almost an 8-month one! (Courtesy: Sruti.)

#### CATHEDRAL NEEDS URGENT ATTENTION

(Continued from page 1)

The Gundu Rao report, written after an inspection of 15 days, notes damage to priceless stained glass. stained glass in the windows bedamage, spots of incorrect use of plaster for minor repairs, ageing wood on windows, bad finish to doors and windows, badly church and recurring dampness caused by leakage in the in places. Mangalore tiled roof over the timber trusses.

The inspection report says that the cathedral has withstood many repairs and its ageing is negligible, even though it is close to the sea. However, only a closer inspection would reveal if more serious problems have affected it.

The damage caused by seepage from the Mangalore tiled roof and the use of incompatible modern materials like cement in repairs has eroded the historical ambience of this church, the

"If the roof is not restored im-

mediately the degradation will be faster". And this in turn will seriously affect the walls, the paintings, metal linings and place," explains Rao.

As in several other buildings hind the altar, minor plaster in the city, a cement wash slurry was used to 'whitewash' the entire church some time ago. without consulting professionals. This has 'suffocated' the decaying plaster inside the original plaster which is now turning brittle and falling down

"This presents another problem for restoration," says Rao. "But first, we must restore the only one in India standing on a roof. It is critical."

paid to the degradation of the roof because most parts of it are inaccessible. The consultants say that the design was such that it created the curved arches above the altar. So, these parts on the roof cannot be reached easily now. This and casual maintenance have created the present problems.

So why does the restoration work cost so much? "The money Gundu Rao points out that goes to pay for the special skills required for the job and for

sourcing the materials that must be used, which have to be the same as were used in the original

Father Lawrence says that any work to save a place of God would bring a providential solution. His faith and that of many others may find the big donor.

Last year, the Diocese of Madras-Mylapore celebrated its golden jubilee at St. Bede's school grounds. It was a milestone celebrated quietly. But little attention seems to have been paid to this landmark, the site where an apostle of Jesus Little attention has been Christ, St. Thomas, was in-

More recently, the church management looked at plans to put up a temporary metal roof across the open space in front of the newly-built stage at the rear end of the church. Services can be held here when the restoration work commences inside the cathedral. Signs that some people are taking the issue seriously.

Vincent D'Souza

## Bullets from SarvaLaghu...

- If it was the appearance of a snake last year, this year the tripping and falling of Vyjayantimala Bali during a dance performance, caused a sensation during the festival organised by Kartik Fine Arts.
- Between 22 November 2002 and 6 January 2003, T.N. Seshagopalan, with 24 performances scheduled, was the Season Chakravarti, though critics thought otherwise. O.S. Thiagarajan followed closely behind with 22 (Source: Kannan's Comprehensive Programme Diary.)
- Sororities are the order of the day, with no less than 14 "sis ters" performing together, namely Bombay, Chinmaya, Hyderabad, Kasaravalli, Mambalam, Mandolin, Mayavaram, Padma Seshadri, Priya, Ragam, Sai, Saralaya, Sathoor and Sikkil. This does not include the other duos such as Ranjani Gavatri, Lalitha Nandini, etc. Brotherhoods are far behind. Sis ters stick closer than a brother, to misquote the Bible.
- There were cancellations galore by artistes this year, resulting in Sabha secretaries and accompanists running around in circles. The reasons varied from sore throats to personal bereavements. Fortunately the weather remained dry through
- The call of 'Chitti', 'Anni', 'Lootti', etc. proved as potent as ever with most halls witnessing empty seats as soon as prime time on television approached.
- A senior vidwan's performance at the Academy was so poor that a group of his (erstwhile) rasikas thronged round the mandarin at the gate demanding a refund.

#### ... & Bouquets from Manna Srinivasan

A phenomenon requiring appreciation in a proper perspective is related to the transition, during the 20th Century, in the pattern of patronage of the performing arts from the royaltyzamindar level to middle class community support, shift of the base from the mofussil to the metro, Madras becoming the hub of cultural activity for the whole of South India, particularly so for Carnatic music and Bharata Natyam. Significantly, this development was rendered possible by concern-based, conscious and creditably voluntary initiative. Sabhas sprang up to function as the institutional mechanism for, and to facilitate, the process. Empirical evidence is available to show that this strategy has proved practical and reasonably successful.

Then there is the significance in the timing — the month of Margazhi, so specially referred to by Lord Krishna himself. The devotional fervour pervades the whole atmosphere. The Tirumurai hymns and the Pasurams aired early in the morning set the mood. Nama sankeertana and Harikatha have always

been an important ingredient.

The sabhas that were started with specific objectives, have a proven track record of sustained service and significant contribution to the music scene and are well consolidated with committed membership, intrastructural facilities and resource base These may not be more than ten and can be easily identified The new outfits springing up in the relatively new areas and suburbs based on felt need and evident interest do have a role. It is the fly-by-night variety foraying for reasons of ego and misdirected sponsorships that distorts the scene.

It was literally a headstart for the two landmark institutions The Head of the State, the missile man much in tune with music to the extent of being a veena player, Bharat Ratna Abdul Kalam lent his exalted and meaningfully felt presence to inaugurate the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Tamil Isai Sangam one evening and the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Music Academy the next. At both places, he arranged for

his composition to be sung. Plenty of young talent was on view during the 'season' providing an encouraging picture on the whole. Carnatic music and Bharata Natyam can survive despite the 'sentences' pronounced on them. The adeptness is relatively more in instrumental music, yet in the traditional circles the draw was much in favour of the vocal with stars like Sudha Ragunathan, Nithyasree Mahadevan, Aruna Sayeeram and K.J. Yesudas holding their own along with mandolin and saxophone stars P. Unnikrishnan, T.M. Krishna, Sanjay Subrahmanyan have a committed fan circle.

The sponsorship support by businessmen and industrial houses is the main source for financing. With Nalli Kuppuswam Chetti continuing to lead the way, Obul Reddy is a major player - apart from sponsoring the Tyagaraja aradhana in many sabhas, he has donated a considerable sum for the renovation of the Vani Mahal premises in T'Nagar, a gesture which has been suitably recognised by naming the mini hall after him There were many other individuals and institutions lending financial help. The ubiquitous facilitator and felicitator was A. Natarajan, former Director of Doordarshan, who has gone one step further and set up a new sabha himself — Bhairavi Gana Sabha, to cater to the rasikas in and around Adyar.

The activity here may peak during the season; but it does not start or stop with it; it is round the year. Music is a habit. That is the strength. May the Sruti be proper and sustained!

# Chennai gets coach to promote rugby

Emil Vartazarian is an Armenian from Kolkata. He is a rugby player and coach and has been brought to Chennai by the Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union.

He will be their coach and technical director to promote the game of rugby in Chennai.

He spoke to S. Srivatsan about the sport.

Q: How were you introduced to the game of rugby?

A: I came to India from Iran when I was just ten years old. I then studied at the Armenian College at Kolkata. This school has a heritage of rugby going back 110 years. I have been playing since my school days.

Q: What is the state of rugby in India?

A: Rugby was brought to India by the British. The Calcutta Cricket and Football Club in Kolkata and the Bombay Gymkhana in Mumbai have been the traditional centres for rugby in India. Even Chennai had a long history of rugby. But the Madras Gymkhana, that was the main team, stopped playing in 1963. Rugby then died out in Chennai.

Q: When did you decide to take up playing rugby professionally?

A: Even in Kolkata, we have only amateur clubs and not professional ones.

It was only in 1998, when the Indian team was formed, that I started playing for it. So far I have represented India in seven tournaments abroad. We will be going to Sri Lanka this month for a tournament.

Q: How did you come to be associated with the Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union?

A: This Union was formed by a group of enthusiasts who wanted to popularaise the game. I have been in touch with them all along. But as they now require a person to train players and coaches, I was invited to come here.

Q: How do you plan to take this sport to the people?

A: We want to take this game to schools and colleges. Our target is to achieve six clubs and 12 school teams this year. We are already making good progress. Some neighbourhood institutions like the Patrician College and St. Patrick's School have rugby teams. We will also be training the Tamil Nadu Police. We conduct the annual national rugby sevens tournament at the Elliot's Beach.

Q: Many people think that rugby is a very rough game and only strong people play it.

A: That is a common misconception. This is a game for all sorts of people.

In fact, there are certain positions in the game where fat and slow people will be suitable and some positions where short people are required.

Q: This seems to be a male dominated sport. Are there any women teams?

A: Except for one school team in Kolkata, there are no women teams in India. But as I already said, this is a sport for all types of people and there is no problem with women playing

Countries like Britain, Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan have women's teams.

**O:** What are the constraints that you face now?

A: We don't have good grounds to play. Rugby requires a thick grassy surface so that the players don't get hurt when they fall. Most of the playgrounds here are hard and unsuitable.

The tournament at the beach is mainly because of the lack of proper grounds. But it also fetches us a lot of publicity.

Q: How can institutions reach you if they want to form a rugby team?

A: Our association is affiliated to the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association and provides coaching for players and coaches. We do not charge teams for this coaching. (Courtesy: Adyar Times.)

Vartazarian can be contacted at No. 9, Arunachalam Road, Kotturpuram. Ph: 24475845, 24475846, 2447-0976.

# Swimmers of promise

Eight young swimmers of promise have been selected for special support under the Champions Development Scheme of the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu. Three of them are featured here.



V. Arun came second in the 50m backstroke, his main swimming event, at the Hyderabad Na-

tional Games. He had a string of firsts to his credit last year, notable among which were the 50m backstroke at the National Junior Aquatic Championships in Chennai and the 100m backstroke at the University Meet in Kolkata.

"I had just wanted to learn swimming, but in the space of three months I won a district championship. My dad's encouragement and coach's efforts have helped me get this far," says Arun, who practises at the Hotel Savera pool, 11 sessions a week. However, he is miffed by the attitude of his college. Assistance provided by SDATN has helped him with his swimgear and food supplements. But he wishes his college is as considerate, at least to the extent of showing understanding when he has to miss classess/

exams when he participates in representative meets.

Saba Sait is a sprinter in the pool

At the National Games in Hyderabad, she set a record in the 50m breast-stroke event, timing 36.06 seconds, her personal best. The 16-year old also won a bronze in the 100m version of the event. Last year, at the Asian Age Group Swimming Championship in China, she was first in the 50m breaststroke. Sait hopes to win a medal at that championship this year too.

"The psychological workshops, which are very good, should be conducted regularly by SDATN. The nutrition workshops too. Basically, the children are on their own and coaches should also be made an active part of the CDS," points out Sait's mother.

Sait practises for a couple of hours every morning and evening at the Indu Aquatic Club. It's rock music she likes to

listen to in her spare



Harika Reddy has won more than 200 medals in different events in swim-

ming. She shone particularly in the second half of 2002 when she won one gold, two silver and one bronze at the Tamil Nadu Senior Open Swimming Meet, two gold and two silver at the South Zone CBSE Meet, and one gold and one silver at the National CBSE Meet. At this year's South Zone selection trials, she won four gold, one silver and one bronze.

"My focus will now be on the 50m and 100m butterfly and the 200m individual medley," says the 13-year-old student of SBOA Matriculation School. Her father, Nagarajan, a former Andhra Pradesh hockey player, provides her the inspiration.

Sashi Nair

#### **Answers to Quiz**

1. Hu Jintao; 2. David Coult- taking over from TEXCO; Wing; 4. Serbia; 5. Potti Sriramulu; 6. Malaysia; 7. Alberto Fujimori; 8. Brett Lee of Australia; 9. Fidel Castro; 10. Jupiter.

11. Women self help groups,

hard; 3. Research and Analysis 12. Alagappa University (Mr. A. Ramasamy); 13. Dharmapuri; 14. Thally; 15. Advocate General; 16. The Southern Railway HQ and Central Station; 17. K.M. Mammen Mappillai of MRF; 18. St. George's School; 19. Credit-based semester system; 20. K.B. Sundarambal.

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