

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

September 1-15, 2003



Our architects have come up with this creative design for your house... you will now have no problem with Rain-water Harvesting!

### Listen to the falling rain

All mothers have had the experience of taking that one look too many at their offspring, and wondering whether it would be possible to exchange the youngsters for a better and cleverer species if they took them back now.

Mother Nature must have felt this way many times, especially when she watched us, for years, let rainwater into the sea because we just didn't know what to do with it or where to stash it.

Hopefully, she's feeling a little better now. Her children have finally woken up, slapped their foreheads and said: "Of course! That is what we should have done in the first place."

House and building owners are diligently scrambling around, with many dwellings now resorting to hanging announcements on their gates and other areas of prominent visibility that they have organised RWH. So that's the new status symbol.

About time.

The fact that the authorities wielded a whip and set a deadline has helped galvanise a citizenry inclined to be laid back even about the most impending of disasters.

Those who do not pitch in stand in danger of becoming a hissing and a byword in socially-aware circles.

All we have to do now is look at the sky and await the deluge.

Ranjitha Ashok

## Deteriorating water quality in city

(by N. Muthukrishnan)

The crisis in both water availability and pollution worsens in Chennai every day. On the one hand, the level of the water table is going down rapidly and, on the other, the quality of water is getting worse, according to the results of a survey made by the C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre.

The Centre carried out a survey of groundwater in Chennai during 2002-03. Water samples from 24 different locations were collected from wells and borewells and analysed for their potability at the Centre's laboratory. The Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) exceeded 500 mg/l (the desired limit of TDS in drinking water) in 83% of the samples, and 72% of the samples contained more than 1000 mg/l of TDS. About 38% of the samples contained more than 2000 mg/l of TDS, the maximum permissible limit as per IS 10500:1991, and 22% of the samples contained high level of iron content. This was a clear indication of the unsatisfactory status of groundwater in the city.

Proper water resource management and rainwater harvesting may reduce this problem.

Water samples were collected from 24 residential areas in Chennai and were analysed, according to standard procedures, for colour, odour, turbidity, pH, electrical conductivity, total dissolved solids (TDS), alkalinity, chloride, total hardness, calcium, magnesium, sulphate, phosphate, nitrate, flouride, iron and manganese.

Analysing its findings, the C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre reports:

### TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS (TDS)

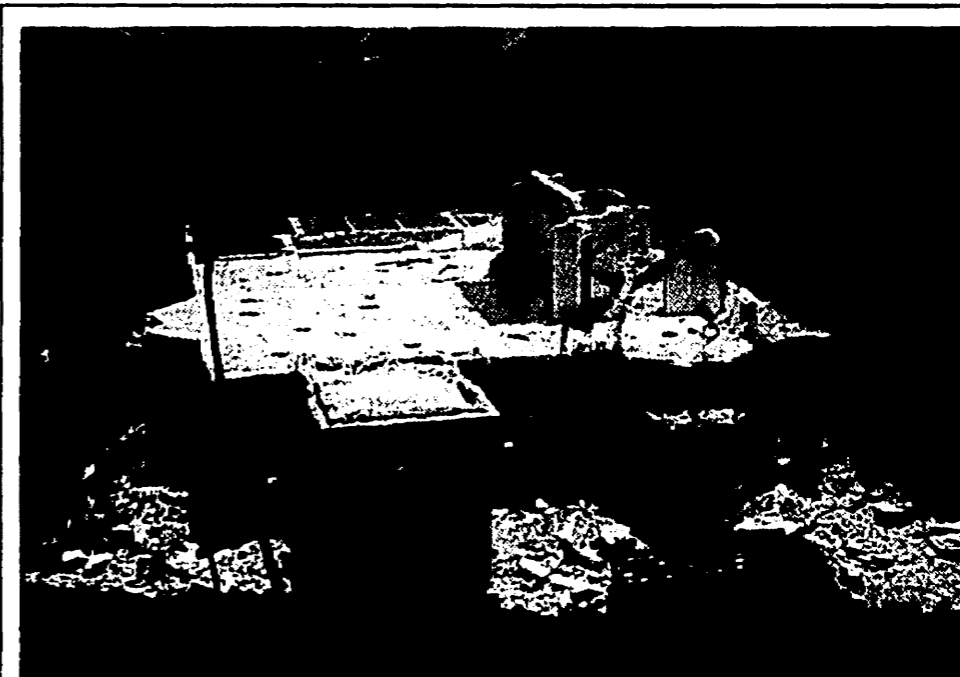
Salinity or Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in water virtually means the amount of all soluble salts. For examples, if a water sample has 100mg/l of TDS, it means one litre of water con-

tains 100 mg of salt or ions in a dissolved condition and they cannot be separated by filtration.

As per classification of natural water with respect to its TDS, 500mg/l is the desirable limit in drinking water. Upto 800 mg/l is considered freshwater.

Generally, groundwater has more TDS than surface water, due to the strong physical contact with the soils. Further, the upper layer of groundwater has less TDS than a lower one. Over the years, due to urbanisation and growing population groundwater is being pumped out excessively in Chennai to meet the daily requirements.

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The buildings are going down one by one in the city... and some of them deserve a better fate. Before we could get a picture of the Agri-Horticultural Society building – a heritage building if ever there was one – being pulled down, it had all but become rubble. Photographer R. ESWARRAJ was a bit 'luckier' with the 'Elgi' building on TTK Road, capturing it before it had completely vanished. This typical 'Madras bungalow' of the 1920s/30s had been in recent years sought after by many who wanted to rent it, restore it and use it as a restaurant or office. But the owners kept saying 'no', insisting they had similar plans for its 'restoration'. Those plans are now transparent... highrise will come up here in an already crowded area where a flyover makes access on the ground a nightmare. Meanwhile, several rather intrusive buildings and other structures on the Marina have been bulldozed. Perhaps their wrecking augurs well for a clean Marina sans buildings. It is also to be hoped that the city will at last get an aquarium worthy of the 'First City of the Bay of Bengal'.

## The sorry plight of Corporation Schools

(by Shobha Menon)

Of 32 Corporation Primary Schools and 15 Middle Schools surveyed last year by TANPIC, it was a shocking revelation to find that 22 had no water facilities, 12 had no toilets, 9 had no electricity and had a few of the basic amenities! Even more shocking is the fact that while the children in these Corporation schools are being denied such basic privileges, the Budget Estimate for 2003-2004 in the Elementary Education Budget projected by the Corporation of Chennai exceeds Rs. 53 crore, and that too with a surplus.

Says A.K. Venkat Subramanian, a former Civilian and currently Trustee, Catalyst Trust, "A recent news item in a Tamil daily that called for funds to build extra classes in the Corporation Primary Schools had

me stumped. Because I'm aware of the estimated expenditure figures on elementary education this year and the projected surplus. And you'll find that the most part – Rs.29 crore – goes on terminal and retirement benefits for teachers, while the children who need to benefit from the school are denied the most basic of necessities. Even if the Rs. 53.15 crore collected by way of Elementary Education Tax from citizens – as a portion of the Property Tax – is spent wholly on the maintenance and provision of basics for the Chennai Corporation's 150 Primary Schools and 110 Middle Schools, each school should be able to spend about Rs. 20 lakh this year on itself. But will that ever happen?"

Provision for the Elementary School Budget was actually laid

down by the 1920 Elementary Education Act that enabled Government to spend on Elementary Education, by way of taxes levied by the Corporation, from general funds of the Corporation or the State Government. Later legislation in 1994 incorporated all the original clauses of the 1920 Act with a difference – the State Government who thereafter look after salaries and retirement benefits of teachers, would not contribute to the Elementary Education Funds.

The TANPIC survey also revealed that most of the school premises were being used by nearby slumdwellers as playgrounds, venues for recreation, and even for drug-and-drink parties at night. The condition

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### The third in an occasional series on Tamil writers

An afternoon during the early 1930s at the famous canteen of the Young Men's Indian Association (YMIA) in Armenian Street, Madras. Three men sat at a table sipping coffee served by a thin, intense, young man. While they sipped, the 'server' told them that a story that had appeared in the Tamil magazine run by them could have been written better and explained how to do it. One of the surprised trio challenged him to try his hand at a story!

The humble 'server' did and sent it into the Short Story Competition — the first-ever in Tamil — conducted by the magazine in 1933 and it won the consolation prize! The three men at the YMIA canteen were S.S. Vasana, the editor and publisher of the successful Tamil weekly *Ananda Vikatan*, and the man who threw out the challenge was its de facto editor, Kalki. The third was the noted Tamil writer 'Thumilan', then working for Vasana. The 'server' was that multifaceted person, celebrated short-story writer, playwright and, later, film director, B.S. Ramaiah.

Batlagundu Subramania

Ramaiah was born on March 24, 1905 into a poor Brahmin family of many children. He went to Madurai to study but dropped out of school after the IV Class. Poverty drove him to leave home when he was 12 and he headed for Madras. Finding no way of learning a living in an unfriendly city, he went back. Inspired by the Indian Freedom Movement and the call of Mahatma Gandhi, he took part in the Vedaranyam Salt March led by Rajaji and underwent year-long imprisonment. During his sojourn in jail, he met such well-known writers and journalists as A.N. Sivaraman and 'Va. Ra.' and others who inspired him to become a writer. Back in Madras, the only work he found was as a 'server' in the YMIA canteen. And that's where we began this story today.

Ramaiah's prize-winning short story, his first, *Malarum Manamum* (Flower and Fragrance), dealt with the then burning issue of widow remarriage. One of the judges, the renowned litterateur, Prof. K. Swaminathan, expressly stated that it should have been given the first prize and equated the

## From short stories to film stories

writer with Thomas Hardy. Vasana explained that he chose not to give it the first prize because of the controversial nature of the subject, which might shock his conservative readers. Later, Ramaiah would regularly write short stories for Vasana, winning prizes and adulation. In

• by  
**Randor Guy**

1941, he also worked for him as screenwriter for Gemini Studio's maiden venture *Madanakamarajan*.

Ramaiah was involved with that famous 1930s' magazine *Manikodi*. Besides contributing many much-appreciated and trend-setting stories of social relevance and significance to the magazine, he took over its running and succeeded in making it a weekly on less than shoe-string budgets. It was during this pe-

riod that he began writing novels highlighting problems plaguing society in those days and also emerged as a playwright with plays like *President Panchacharam* (inspired by Gogol's famous Russian play, *The Inspector General*) and *Malliam Managlam*, which were first staged by that veteran stage and screen star S. V. Sahasranaman for his 'Seva Stage'. Later they were filmed — in Tamil as well as in Telugu and Hindi versions. But all these film exercises did not benefit Ramaiah to any great degree!

When cinema began to talk Tamil in 1931, many writers including Ramaiah, were drawn to it. He entered movies in 1940, writing the story for *Bhooloka Rambha*. It was one of the early films bankrolled by Vasana who was just getting into cinema, and he soon engaged Ramaiah to write the first Gemini film, *Madanakamarajan*. For some time thereafter he worked in Gemini Studio's story depart-

ment before moving to Coimbatore to work for Jupiter Pictures. Few today are aware that Ramaiah in 1943 wrote an unusual book in Tamil entitled *Cinema...?* on the craft of making movies — from script to screen. It was the first such book in Tamil and one of the earliest in any Indian language. It has invaluable lessons for film students of even today. It also contains some never-before-seen still photos — rare working stills — of Tamil and Telugu films of 1943.

Ramaiah earned a footnote in Tamil film history when he was taken to London by the Hindi film producer Mehboob to write the Tamil dialogue for the dubbing of his mega Hindi technicolor film *Aan* (1952). Ramaiah worked on the project while in London.

After a life of struggle and stress and not getting the recognition he really deserved for his talents and skills, Ramaiah passed away on May 18, 1983.

## The sorry plight of Corporation Schools

(Continued from page 1)

of the school toilets, that are regularly being used by outsiders, is pathetic. In this context, many Heads of Corporation Schools blamed the Chennai Corporation for not looking into the imperative need of security for the premises. "When we come to school on Monday morning, we're always wondering what property in the school premises — from motors to pipes to classroom infrastructure — we'll find vandalised or stolen," says one head.

Confirming that this sad state is restricted not only to the elementary schools, a Headmaster of a Corporation High School confesses, "Apart from provision of basic amenities, maintenance of the school infrastructure has always been a problem. When I asked the J.E. of the local Corporation office about the Rs.39,000 that was due to our school last year, he said that the funds 'have been directed elsewhere'. Taking it up with higher officials also does not work, because the actual maintenance work has to be carried out at the lower levels."

A teacher in a private school who undertook a survey of Corporation schools in his locality for an NGO says, "Leaking roofs, poorly maintained or non-available classroom infra-

structure, and horrendous sanitation facilities are recurring issues everywhere. Also, most teachers seem either indifferent or oblivious of the prevailing conditions." And the spokesperson of an NGO working with Corporation schools adds, "Maybe, it is easier for the Corporation with its multitudinous responsibilities to cut down expenditure in areas where there is the least resistance. After all, once the teachers are looked after, they are not going to protest, because their own children are being educated elsewhere. And what could be a better area to minimise expenses than by providing basics for underprivileged children, when they or their parents don't have a voice?"

Dharmendra Prasad Yadav, Deputy Commissioner, Education, of the Chennai Corporation, says, "The anomaly of funds meant for elementary education not being used fully for this purpose does exist. And it needs to be rectified. We are waiting for certain resolutions to be passed in this regard. Many of the infrastructure issues are in the process of being sorted out. But regarding maintenance in schools, the heads of institutions and the teachers definitely need to take greater initiatives. For instance, the problem of security can be solved in a positive way by involving the local community in a proactive manner. Once it becomes 'their' school, vandalism will die down. And toilets can be maintained with funds from

the PTA, with a partial contribution from the Corporation. Why can't we look at issues in a more positive fashion?"

So who's to blame for a situation that ultimately boils down to 'Who cares about it anyway?' Venkat Subramanian feels, "First, I'd blame the average tax-payer who contributes to the funds but remains distant from this issue because it doesn't affect him. The igno-

## DETERIORATING WATER QUALITY

(Continued from page 1)

But the infiltration rate of rainwater is very low due to concrete pavements, construction of buildings and metal roads.

The survey found the content of TDS range from 35 mg/l to 6470 mg/l with a mean value of 1762 mg/l.

### IRON

After TDS, iron content is the major problem with groundwater in Chennai. The survey found that about 22% of the samples contained a high level of iron content. Iron is naturally present in the earth crust in huge quantities (5% by weight, it is the fourth most abundant element in the earth's crust). Iron in water can cause staining of laundry and porcelain. A bitersweet astringent taste is detectable at levels above 1 mg/l (which is the maximum permissible limit for drinking water).

Iron in water more than 1 mg/l can produce a yellow coloured precipitate that makes

the water unfit for drinking. Further, it can cause staining of walls of the water tank, pipelines, clothes, scale formation in pipelines, water heaters, etc. Long-time consumption of drinking water with a high concentration of iron can lead to liver diseases like hemosiderosis.

### TREATMENT

a. *Total dissolved solids*  
TDS cannot be removed from water easily. It needs sophisticated, state-of-the-art equipment and regular monitoring. A few methods to remove or reduce TDS are:

- Reverse Osmosis
- Electrodialysis
- Distillation
- Ion exchange
- Solar still

Among these techniques, only the solar still is low in cost, but it produces very little water and only on sunny days.

b. *Iron*  
Iron is practically insoluble in well-aerated water. This is the

principle behind the iron removal plant. Water is first aerated by proper means and the precipitated iron is filtered through a sandbed. It is simple to implement at domestic level.

### SOLUTION

It is easy to dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a cup of water but very difficult to remove the same salt from the water. You can reduce the salty taste by diluting the water with a huge quantity of freshwater. In the same way, you can solve the salinity problem by implementing rainwater harvesting. Rainwater is free from any salt and is just like distilled water. If you recharge the groundwater with rainwater continuously, it will dilute the salinity and, after some years, you can get freshwater. Iron content will also be reduced considerably by implementing rainwater harvesting. (Courtesy: CPREEC-Eco News.)

## OUR READERS WRITE



### The Court & noise

I refer to reader Mr. Navaz Nazimali's letter (MM, August 16th).

It was observed by the Madras High Court in the Writ Petitions No. 12165 and 12629 of 1985 and No. 20444 of 1992 that "...the authorities concerned are turning or made to turn by the higher power a Nelson's eye to the violations of rules and regulations in these matters. The petitioners have placed before us sufficient literature as to how noise pollution is a grave danger to society..." (emphasis supplied).

It was also observed by the High Court: "Under Article 47 of the Constitution of India, the raising of the standard of living of the people and the improvement of public health are among the primary duties of the State. It is unfortunate that the State Government is oblivious to the directive principles enlisted in the Constitution... In fact, this court has often been the victim of noise pollution, if we can put it mildly, to such an extent that it would be practically impossible to hear the arguments of counsel. For example, on the 30th ultimo, which is supposed to be a 'Sarvodaya Day' or 'Martyrs' Day', when the whole nation is supposed to pay homage to its Father, the authorities concerned had permitted a public agitation by bank employees on the public road abutting the High Court compound, who were using loudspeakers and sound amplifiers without any restriction for over five hours continuously during the Court working hours..." (emphasis supplied).

The High Court, after making various observations and citing the leading judgements in India, UK and USA on the subject, granted the prayers of the petitioners and gave five directions to the authorities. According to the fifth direction, a separate cell has to be set up in the office of the Commissioner of Police in the City of Madras ...to receive complaints against violation of the conditions. "Such cells shall have telephone connections and the telephone numbers shall be notified with due publicity so that any citizen who comes across violation of the conditions may contact the concerned cell and lodge a complaint..." Detailed directions have been given by the High Court as to how this cell has to function and deal with complaints from the public.

None of the directions of the

High Court has been implemented by the police or the State. If those who are expected to implement the law do not do so, who else can?

The Supreme Court in another judgement held that mosques have no right to use loudspeakers from their turrets, pointing out that at the time the Koran was given out there were no loudspeakers. So the use of loudspeakers from the mosque turrets has no religious sanction in Islam, according to the Supreme Court.

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Action, not words

The water supply situation in Tamil Nadu (as in many other States) is grave and the future portends a graver situation. You can hold meetings, constitute committees, raise statues, produce cement and mortar, erect buildings and do many other things, but you cannot requisition rain and produce water to meet the needs of a burgeoning population. A Muthuswami Dikshitar of the Classical Carnatic Trinity is born, perhaps, once in a millennium to compose and sing "Anandaamrtakarshini" and bring rain.

But a few things could be done immediately to ease the situation — using whatever rain we get.

• The Adyar Kusastaliar and other city rivers must be harnessed. Floods in them are occasional, but when they do occur, the waste of floodwaters is immense. Bed-dams and check-dams at convenient places with convenient heights (progressively taller as they near the Bay) must be constructed to arrest and retain floodwaters to a significant extent.

• Lakes and tanks not only provide water for daily needs but help to raise substantially water-levels in adjacent areas. Government should initiate immediate measures to revitalise them.

• Massive tree planting should be taken up and the trees protected.

• Rainwater Harvesting is all well and good, but the bulk of rainwater flows out to the sea. The quantum lost is enormous compared to what is received in and around buildings. Stopping this outflow demands greater priority.

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Revive the tank

The TN Government has sanctioned Rs. 800 crore for the Veeranam project but, as you rightly point out, rainwater simply drains from the roads into the sea (MM, August 1st).

MM has pointed out recently that about 240 temple tanks exist in Chennai. Can the government sanction Rs. 100-200 crore to make these tanks water reservoirs?

## More threats to black buck

Further to the article 'Poised to lose more living heritage' (MM, August 1st), I would like to point out other imminent threats faced by the ungulates in the IIT Campus. Of late, student naturalists in the campus have observed quite a few deer suffering with some kind of wound in their legs. While attempting to treat one such injured spotted deer, they were shocked to find a piece of plastic ring (which actually was a piece of plastic pipe) stuck in the leg, slightly above the hoof. The piece had gone somewhat deep into the animal's flesh and had injured it. Quite a number of such wounded animals are found in the campus, either with plastic rings (pieces of pipe) or with rubber washers stuck in their legs.

It may be assumed that these rings/washers are probably littered by the construction workers or thrown away by residents of the campus. As these pieces get mixed with the vegetation, leaf litter and other wastes of forest cover, they get jammed in the ungulates' legs when they step on them inadvertently.

Another problem the ungulates face is stray dogs. The dog

population in the campus has been increasing due to easy accessibility to food in open dustbins. The dogs prey on the deer — and their fawn, in particular. The periodical clearing of the undergrowth, which gives protection to the deer, and the introduction of the chainlink fences in various places, which prevent the deer's movement, particularly when they are chased by dogs, compound the ungulates from the stray dogs.

We cannot categorically state that the decrease in the black buck population is due to the introduction of spotted deer, because their essential habitats are different. While black buck primarily prefer "open grass land with thorny and dry deciduous plants (they prefer ectonival region between the forest and grass land)", spotted deer favour "light forest and plains country, requiring some open land for grazing". If the black buck were competing with spotted deer for food, they would have died of starvation instead of being killed on the roads or by stray dogs.

The decrease in the black buck population is probably due to increased human intervention. For instance, the NCC

ground, which was one of the buck's habitual grazing grounds, has now been converted into a cricket ground. This large area, surrounded by a buffer forest area, had been providing access to Appalam Kulam in the Guindy National Park. As it is now fenced, like so many other open areas and grounds in the campus, the buck are deprived of grazing spaces.

Another danger faced by the black buck here is the construction activities going on in the campus. For instance, the area adjoining the Student Facilities Centre Campus, which happens to be the last of the largely undisturbed areas, acting as shelter and feeding ground to the buck, seems to be under threat as the IIT authorities have plans to construct a mega mess (100m x 100m area) and also a hostel. This is also one area that has served as a shelter for the black buck during the rains, since the surrounding areas submerge in water.

Little wonder that the black buck population is steadily on the decline.

T. Murugavel  
Chennai

This will not only help raise the groundwater level in Chennai, it will also add to the beauty of our temples and rejuvenate social life in them.

S. Sharma  
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### A welcome 'peep'

It is considered improper to read 'another's' diary. But the diary of 'The Emden Vakil' (MM, August 16th) is different. It is with its varied sumptuous fare, a kaleidoscope of 'those' days, affording us a peep into the past.

It is quite incredible that a person with so busy a professional schedule could spare time for music performances, dance, performances, cinemas, clubs and the University Senate!

Thanks once again to the doyen's children and MM for affording us an opportunity to have a peep into the rich past.

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### That's encouragement

V. Ramnarayan has taken a lead role in giving importance to local cricket. With his column in *Madras Musings*, upcoming youngsters are getting a much-needed boost. During my playing days, *The Hindu* gave me the headlines, 'C.K. Subramanian dead!', the *Indian Express*, said 'Give him a break' and *The Mail* 'Peter and Subramanian excel'. Such encouragement helped me to improve my cricketing career — and my involvement with sport which continues to this day.

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Raw deal  
Veteran cricketer and columnist V. Ramnarayan cannot be faulted for pointing an accusing finger against the selectors for not considering the in-form S. Ramesh for inclusion in the Bangalore camp (MM, August 16th). The neglect of a Tamil Nadu player with high credentials is not a new phenomenon — a case in point is that of W.V. Raman, a specialised spinner, who was not given enough chances, while makeshift openers like Manoj Prabhakar and Nayan Mongia were promoted to open the innings.

At a time when there was no settled opening pair, Ramesh filled the breach effectively, first with Devang Gandhi and then with S.S. Das as partners. He also scored centuries against Pakistan and Sri Lanka. At present he is making consistent scores in the league. The pity is that players, fans and the State associations are docile and never fight for players' rights.

Years ago, when Bishen Bedi was omitted for a Delhi Test, the fans were up in arms agitating and

shouting 'no Bedi, no test'. The result! Bedi played in the Test. Delhi is Delhi; Madras is Chennai!

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Pondy ponderings

AM's quote from *Aurobindo's Action* on Pondicherry (MM August 1st) is very true. Pondicherry has gone to seed. Just ten years ago, the promenade, *Le Cafe* and a major part of the White Town were lovely with old world charm.

Not any more. Now Pondy is distinctly unkempt and a civic horror. Visiting Pondy now, you get the impression that it is Madras's kid brother in all respects, only a few decades behind it. Pondicherry like Chennai is a mess, only smaller. The Battle of Wandiwash hasn't made a difference.

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## CHENNAI HERITAGE

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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. Please put me on your mailing list.

Name : .....  
Address : .....



# Alternative crops, the need

For over a decade now, I have been advocating that Tamil Nadu choose crops that are much less water-intensive. The mindless extension of areas under paddy and sugarcane, by both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, dependent on the Kaveri water, has been landing both the States into frequent confrontation over sharing of the water.

I am, therefore, happy that Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha has realistically advised farmers in the delta areas, without filter point irrigation, to go for alternative crops. The State has advised such farmers to select blackgram, greengram, cowpea, groundnut and gingili. The assurance that the Agriculture Department has procured enough stock of these seeds to be distributed to the farmers is also welcome. These are short-term crops demanding much less water and they fetch handsome prices.

Efforts of the State to ensure proper marketing assistance would further help farmers to take to horticulture in a big way over vast tracts of un-irrigated land. A well-coordinated approach between the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) and the State Agriculture Department would help reassure farmers over the rationale and profitability of such an approach.

Remember C. Subramaniam, as Union Minister of Agriculture, involving the Indian Council of Agriculture Re-

search (ICAR), agriculture universities and departments of agriculture of the Centre and States in setting up 1000 demonstration plots to propagate the benefits of the Mexican dwarf varieties of wheat during 1965-67? The Government's total involvement and assurance helped the successful experiment spreading like a wild fire. The green revolution owes much to this imaginative approach.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha can trigger a similar revolution that would ensure a massive and rapid switch from paddy and sugarcane to a variety of cash crops that would fit in well with the agro-climatic conditions of the State. For this to succeed, she should galvanise the TNAU to the level of effectiveness of such agriculture universities as in Ludhiana (Punjab), Hissar (Haryana) and Pantnagar (Western UP).

Four such universities in Maharashtra have, likewise, been extremely effective in helping Maharashtra to go for a massive extension of land under horticulture. In less than a decade, the State had emerged as a very large producer of a variety of fruits, including alphonso mangoes, mandarin oranges, cavendish banana, grapes, strawberries, sitapal, sapota... This, apart from the pre-eminence achieved by the State as a cost-effective producer of sugar. And remember Maharashtra is irrigated only to an extent of around 14 per cent



Our OLD is a typical example of the city's rather horrible street signage... faded, defaced and, most important of all, hidden from the main road. This is a signage that is not visible at all at night.

Our NEW is of MRF-sponsored street signage on a stretch of Harrington Road in Chetput. Clear and easy to read, these road signs are positioned so that they can be clearly seen from the main road. And at night they glow fluorescently, making sign-spotting and -reading a reader-friendly exercise. The road signs on this stretch are also supported by other easy-to-read signs at points where driving care is needed (Photographs by R. ESWARRAJ.)



against around 44 per cent of Tamil Nadu!

The Chief Minister has taken up structural reforms over vast areas. Agriculture continues to be the provider of sustenance to very large sections of the population and still accounts for only around 20 per cent of the domestic product of Tamil Nadu. She would do well to go for such reforms in this vital sector. After all, the liberal

support provided by the government through the last three decades and more, through hefty prices for procuring paddy and supply of free-power for agriculture, has not helped in the State retaining its position as a large producer of foodgrains. (Food subsidy rose to a whopping Rs. 1600 crore and power subsidy exceeded Rs. 4000 crore.) The State would do well to focus on the switchover outlined by the

Chief Minister. In this, it would also do well to take to tissue culture and irradiation of seeds, as has been done to so much profit by Maharashtra. The help of ICAR, BARC, CSIR and CFTRI could be sought liberally to take to a holistic approach to rejuvenate agriculture.

Today, technology on low water-intensity agriculture is widely available. Countries like Israel have achieved quantum jumps in production — adopting such technologies. The State, would do well to take to these.

mango are grown in these five districts besides about 4.2 lakh tonnes of other fruits, such as banana, lime, jackfruit, pineapple and guava. Vegetables such as potato, tomato, onion and chillies are also grown in these districts.

The project cost includes a Central subsidy of Rs. 3.5 crore, a term loan of Rs. 10.55 crore, equity of Rs. 10.55 crore of which the TIDCO will bring in Rs. 1.16 crore as 11 per cent of its share, the private sector partner Rs. 8.23 crore (78 per cent) and financial institutions Rs. 1.16 crore (11 per cent). A few private sector companies including Trans Global Technologies Inc of Dallas, Texas, are said to be interested in the project.

The AEZ envisages 20 collection centres, six storage halls and two cold storage facilities.

India produces about 15,650,000 tonnes of mango of which it exports just 48,000 tonnes or 0.3 per cent of the total production, whereas countries like Brazil, with a total mango production of 500,000 tonnes, export about 53,750 tonnes or nearly 11 per cent of the production.

Factors that hamper mango exports from India include limited choice of varieties suitable for export, low productivity resulting in high cost of production, inadequate pest control measures, and poor post-harvest management.

The Universities and the private sector tie-ups are expected to take care of all these factors and help in boosting mango exports from the belt. — (Courtesy: *The Hindu Business Line*.)

N. Ramakrishnan

## TIDCO in talks with two U.S. universities

The Tamil Nadu Government plans to set up an agri-export zone mainly for mango in the districts of Theni, Dindigul, Madurai, Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli at a cost of Rs. 24.6 crore.

A private sector partner will be roped in for the venture, with the TIDCO taking up to 11 per cent equity stake in the venture. But with the mango varieties grown in the belt considered by experts not suitable for processing concentrates or canned fruits or even to be served at the table in the export markets, new varieties of fruits will have to be developed if the venture is to be successful.

Discussions are, therefore, on with Cornell University and the University of California, Davis, to help develop new varieties of mangoes which will find ready acceptance in export markets, particularly in the US.

The proposed AEZ will develop a nursery and model farm on 100 acres of land to grow new varieties and establish their technical and commercial feasibility before they are offered to the farmers on contract basis.

Inter-cropping of different fruits and vegetables will have to be taken up in the mango orchards till such time as the orchards start yielding income.

As part of the project, an integrated centre that will process different kinds of fruits and vegetables will be set up. This centre is expected to come up in the Nilakottai Agro Park that has been established by the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu.

According to Government estimates, about 1.2 lakh tonnes of

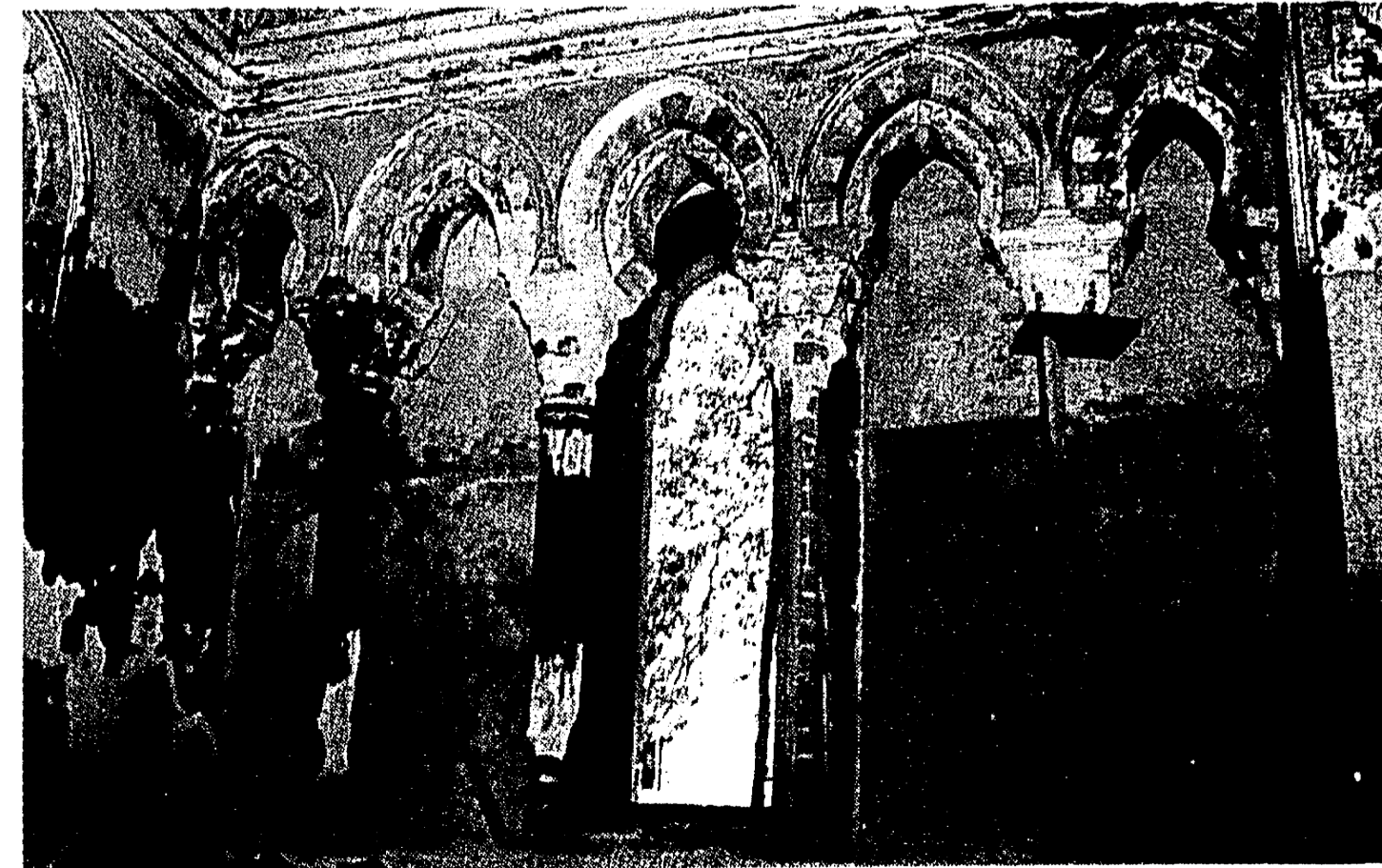
# Senate House restoration First phase almost over

It has been a few months since scaffolding went up and helmeted construction workers began examining the roof of *Senate House*, a Chisholm masterpiece of unquestionable heritage value. The good news is that roofing and waterproofing work will be completed by the end of September. Then, the second phase, brick and stone conservation, will begin, followed by work on restoring the wooden joinery, stainless and coloured glass, frescoes and canvas paintings.

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Tamil Nadu Chapter, which has been playing the catalyst's role in the restoration exercise, had made the first conservation report on *Senate House* 15 years ago and urged the University to take up restoration. However, for years there was no progress — the project was not looked at in totality and conservation engineering was not properly understood by the people who mattered, as it has been in the past two years.

by Sashi Nair

Six years ago, the Senate House Conservation Committee was formed. A technical committee, headed by a former chief engineer of the P.W.D., was then set up to look at possible ways of conservation. But after Vice-Chancellors changed a couple of times, the technical committee was dissolved and conservation was put on the backburner. It was felt that estimates were not in keeping with the administrative procedures of the P.W.D. It was Fr. Ignacimuthu's (the previous Vice-Chancellor) interest in restoration of the *Senate House* that led to the formation of the second technical committee, which prioritised the work and decided to make the P.W.D. the



The third phase of the *Senate House* restoration will focus on the interior of the Great Hall, where intricate embellishment has been revealed after the scraping of several layers of paint — the legacy of successive cleaning-up operations without a thought to conservation. The special committee in charge of the restoration is determined to restore the interior to what Chisholm had created — and not just refresh it with a uniform paint.



Thanks to the scaffolding Larsen & Toubro's building division, ECC, has provided (1), it has at last been able to assess the state of the towers and domes of *Senate House* before work begins on the second phase of restoration. The scaffolding has made possible a close-up view of the beautifully decorated (2) but damaged domes (3 & 4). It has also been able to assess the state of the unique construction of the domes from the inside (5). With work on the roof and waterproofing over, the towers, domes and brickwork are next on the schedule — provided funds are forthcoming.

interest groups, who might provide support.

To ensure that the *Senate House* conservation is carried out properly and will stand as a model, the various teams involved in the exercise have been working with utmost care. For instance, to keep the historical material intact, all original roof tiles that were recoverable were washed thoroughly and brought to almost new condition, and replaced over new galvanised iron sheets bent to a particular shape and curvature to match the original. Although loose bricks are being removed and replaced, wherever old bricks can be reused, they are being put to use. Bricks painted in red (sometime earlier) have been washed and the paint removed carefully. Lime plaster has not been replaced with cement plaster. "This time, we made sure that we did not repeat some of the mistakes of the past," says Krishnan.

Examining the interiors, serrations were found on the walls and, exploring further, terracotta and black designs were found beneath the whitewash. Wherever these patterns were found, the whitewash was removed, and wherever these patterns had deteriorated, new patterns, corresponding to the old, are being made (using carbon oxide and iron oxide stains) based on stencils of the old.

The *Senate House* restoration team discovered that the stainless glass windows which could be opened, were the most damaged. In fact, many panels were replaced with plain glass 40-50 years ago. A close examination of the crown and roof showed that metal clamps used to hold the bricks had rusted; however, the roof structure was found to be sound.

A variety of craftsmen will be needed for the restoration of *Senate House*. They include craftsmen to restore timber floors, wall frescoes, canvas paintings, brickwork, stainless, coloured and coloured-leaded glass, as well as craftsmen for lime plastering, mouldings, cast iron and wrought iron work.

NTACH-TN is in the process of locating technically qualified artisans who can restore these elements in the traditional manner. Dr. Subbaraman, a conservation expert from INTACH Chitrakala Parishad Art Conservation Centre, Bangalore, has given his recommendations after inspection of the site. Dr. Narasimhaiah, a retired Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, one of the experts responsible for the restoration of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, has also provided valuable inputs.

The *Senate House* is a model of Indo-Saracenic architectural magnificence. For restoration to be meaningful and long-lasting, a lot will depend on what effective and compatible use the University puts it to. "There are beautiful meeting rooms and a hall that can serve as a convention centre. Once they are used extensively, the building will take care of itself," Krishnan feels.





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

1. What aviation history did the LCA 'Tejas' achieve on August 1st?
2. What national 'cyber' distinction has Chamravattom village in Malappuram District, of Kerala, achieved?
3. Name the NGO that recently rattled the soft drinks industry by reporting finds of toxic pesticide in some drinks.
4. If Dolly was the first cloned sheep, then Prometea is the first cloned...?
5. Seven asteroids that were discovered in July 2001, have been recently named after which 'heroes'?
6. Who won the prestigious Federation Cup football tourney in Kolkata recently?
7. What 'social' first did Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malechenko achieve on August 10th?
8. What 'dubious' distinction does the new World No. 1, Kim Clijsters, have as regards her ranking?
9. Details about India's very own dinosaur, which roamed the Narmada banks about 6.5 million years ago, were recently revealed. What has it been christened as?
10. Why was paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri of 9 Para (Special Forces) in the news?

11. Name the Union Minister of State for Communications and IT who is from Tamil Nadu.
12. What is the name used nowadays for the imposing building in Chennai that was originally called *Kardyl Building*?
13. What five new subjects is the State's Education Department introducing in the +2 syllabus from next year?
14. According to Tamil Nadu's first ever Human Development Report, which districts are ranked at the top and bottom in the State?
15. On the above theme, what is the State's per capita income, the highest for the southern States, to the nearest 1000?
16. A demographic trivia question. How many districts does Tamil Nadu have at present?
17. The landmark Tilakar Thidal or Tilakar Kattam, named after Bal Gangadhar Tilak, was renamed a few decades ago when a more permanent structure came up on the site. What was the new name?
18. The country's oldest surviving name in bookselling started operations in Chennai in 1844. Name it.
19. Who is the Home Secretary of Tamil Nadu?
20. Who is the first recipient of the Kalpana Chawla award instituted by the State Government and which was given away by the Chief Minister on August 15th?

(Answers on Page 8)

## • From the pages of a 1939-1945 diary Of editors, dancers and film stars

(Continued from last fortnight)

1941

Friday January 3

Whether it is the young Zamindars of the club or the old liberals or the active politicians and 'statesmen', the universal tendency in this country is a lack of seriousness and mostly for small talk.

Thursday January 9

Goenka (Indian Express) telephones that 1) Pothan Joseph gave notice that unless he is given 1500 p.m. and 10-year contract he would quit, 2) since the terms are impossible, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, I and other friends should help to carry on the paper. I ask S.S. over the phone and he readily agrees.

Saturday January 11

A silly allegation that Indian candidates are not upto the mark in selections for commissioned ranks - their orthodoxy and other communal characteristics being trotted out. It is clear that no business is really intended by the Britishers.

Monday January 20

In the evening to S.V. Ganapati's where Sir Shanmukham and entourage were present for tea and some dance - a tiny girl of 10 called Saroja did very well and has a great future ahead of her - Muthukumarasami of the Pandamnallur dance tradition, is her tutor and himself at his 65th year, did abhinayam for 'Varugalamo' which was very interesting.

Thursday January 23

To the Star Talkies to see 'Bandhan' - Leela Chitnis and Ashok Kumar picture which is C3 - and yet thousands are flocking to see it!

Friday January 31

Pothan Joseph sees S.S. Iyengar for a final effort to get back into the Indian Express, but Goenka demonstrates how it is not possible now.

Tuesday February 18

M.N. Roy the Communist arrives in Madras. How the champion of proletarian revolution can stomach Govt House Dinners is a mystery.

Sunday February 23

To Prabhat Talkies to see a Tamil picture 'Sakunthala' starring M.S. Subbalaxmi and G.N. Balasubramaniam - the Tamil screen will never improve un-

less we have there a different set of actors - or is it that the Tamil genius abhors the histrionic art?

Friday February 28

Pothan Joseph's return (to Indian Express) as Editor - all's well that ends well.

Wednesday March 5

Wrote some reviews. These Indian poets who exercise their skill in English are the limit. It is silly stuff in frightful verse, if verse it could be called, and as for the phrasing, how contemptible! I reviewed three such poets today.

• by N.D. Varadachariar  
'The Emden Vakil'

Monday March 24

S.S. Vasan came. (With him met some Municipal Councillors.) Vasan wants a plan of an outer gate of his studio on the Mount Road to be approved and the Town Planning Committee is giving trouble. I found him a very agreeable fellow. The successful proprietor of a journal, race-horse owner and punter and now cinema magnate.

Monday May 5

In the evening with Sita (wife) and the kids to New Eliphinstone Talks. The Great Dictator. This morning we heard a recording of Hitler's Reichstag speech. Yesterday and towards evening, seeing Charlie Chaplin's ravings and shoutings as Heinkel, it was a study in verisimilitude.

Tuesday June 3

M.S. Krishnaswami the auditor comes for a consultation - to draft a contract for 'Kalki' a newspaper to be started by R. Krishnamurthy, late of Ananda Vikatan.

Sunday July 6

The beauty about Gandhism is that despite an enormous output of literature, its chief tenets are still vague and hazy.

Friday July 18

A.R.P. exercises midnight - Now some fun. Later perhaps grim reality!

Saturday August 30  
(Chettinad)

Chettinad 6 a.m. (Kanadukathan, with Sita to attend the wedding of Meyyammaiachi, daughter of S.A. Annamalai Chettiar). In the afternoon, visited the 'exhibition' - a huge

array of wedding gifts from a broom-stick to an iron safe, furniture, vessels, beds, crockery and cutlery, gold and silver, provisions and pickles - a display which cost S.A.A. over 40,000 he said of the 1,25,000 which the wedding will cost him.

Sunday August 31  
(Chettinad)

(At the wedding) A great display of diamond jewelry around bosoms (I am now reading Little Dorrit!), wealth, calculation, insistent formality of the totem - these are the obtru-

sive features - and feasting in a wild scale.

Wednesday September 10

T.S. Ramanujam (labour leader) calls. He expounds his doctrine of physical immortality and of the amazing things promised by Bhujandra Nadi Sastra - he talks with profound faith which is almost infectious. But what he says is unbelievable. He says in 1943-48, man will discover the principle of everlasting physical existence on the earth and thereafter there will be no death and much fewer births.

Thursday September 18

T.S. Ramanujam gives further information regarding his 'Yoga' system - I do not know whether he is the victim of a delusion, a confidence trickster or the bearer of a supremely important message and mission.

Tuesday October 7

Release of Ex-Madras Premier Rajagopalachariar who arrived in the city has roused the hope in many - I think they are much too optimistic - that there will be an early revision of Congress program.

Saturday November 1

Evening with Khasa Subba Rao (Indian Express) to the V.P. Hall. He opened and I presided over the 2nd Annual Students' Conference held under the auspices of the Madras Students' Organization. I spoke for over 40 minutes discussing student problems such as rustication, detention without trial, ban on uniforms, literacy campaigns etc. (I said) destruction of Hitlerism was of paramount

• We publish more excerpts from that fascinating diary of the late N.D. Varadachariar. A man as much interested in music and dance and films as he was in Indian politics and the international scene, he made notes every day in his diary of the life that swirled around him.

— The Editor

importance on a balance of considerations and we should aid war effort. My views were probably not very palatable to the students, but they did give me a good hearing and several of them preferred to be inclined also.

Sunday November 9

(At T.T.K.'s) Dr Subbaroyan tells us of the actual relations between Gandhi and Rajagopalachariar - utter lack of understanding. The latter however has promised Gandhi not to 'revolt' or even to lead a party of dissidents.

Sunday December 14

The Japs are pressing on in Hong Kong and have penetrated into Burma and Malaya where intense fighting is in progress.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's convocation address at the Lucknow University in which he elucidates his difference with Mr Gandhi's theory of Ahimsa and declares a 'parting of the ways'. This is the first major breach in the Gandhian citadel.

Monday December 15

Considerable activity in view of the early possibility of air attacks on the city. There is a collapse of the markets. There is distress and dismay all around. The question now is whether all this panic is going to be temporary.

Thursday December 25

To Eliphinstone Theatre - 'Lady Hamilton' - a brilliantly acted picture - Vivien Leigh was just splendid.

What are the British chances in Malaya? Nil, one should think, with the supply route from America and the west equally cut off. I am afraid the British have this time lost the round and the puny and puerile descendants of Nelson and Wellington have already perhaps lost their heritage beyond recovery.

Friday December 29

Hong Kong British forces under Sir M. Young have surrendered. I fear our Indian politics is of little further interest. It is a question of time when Japs will take over India. Very probably, India as a single unit will cease to be and will be zoned out.

(To be continued)

## Nurturing Rugby in Chennai



The Police at rugby practice on the beach... going up for the ball in a line-out.

The Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union's Rugby Development Programme, aimed at promoting the sport, especially in schools, is targeting 100 educational institutions in the next five years. A beginning has been made in nine schools in Chennai and a tenth is to be added to that list shortly.

The schools are the Anjuman-E-Himayath-E-Islam, St. Patrick's, Olcott Memorial, Patrician's College, Crescent International, Child Welfare Council (an orphanage), American International School, St. Paul's and Tambaram Boxing School. St. Bede's will be the tenth. In each school, two teams, one under-16 and one under-19, are being trained.

"If all goes well, we plan to train, like they do internation-

ally, two more categories - the under-13s and under-21s. For the present, however, we wish to manage only two categories and manage them well," says Patrick Davenport, Secretary, TNRFU, who has over the past few years played the major role in setting up the TNRFU and encouraging and developing rugby in Chennai and Pondicherry.

For the first time, girls are being trained as well - at Olcott Memorial School and

the American International School. "Both boys and girls have seen and understood the game well, and taken to it instantly. We find that the game is good for the children. Rugby is a team game, a character-building sport for which you have to be mentally and physically strong. You fight it out on the field, but off it, you are calm, composed and there is camaraderie all around," says Davenport, elated by the excellent response from the schoolchildren as well as from the small-built but hardy kabaddi players and boxers willing to give the sport a try. He adds, "We believe that sport should be for everyone, not just the wealthy. The common man must be given a chance to play and, in rugby, everybody on the field is an equal."

It was a proud moment for the TNRFU when R. Vinayagamoorthy represented India at the Asian Quadrangular Tournament in Singapore in June this year. "His participation proved our theory that we need to create opportunities for the common man to represent the country and there is no greater honour than that in sport," Davenport emphasises.

One of the things TNRFU has done is to try and bring professionalism into administration of the sport. Emil Vartazarian, former Indian centre three-quarter, has been appointed Technical Director with a specific brief to develop the game in schools and raise the technical standards of the coaches in Tamil Nadu. Six full-time coaches have been employed - Fayaz Ahmed, Vinayagamoorthy, P. Vijayan, B. Satish Kumar, Ganesh and B. Gopinath. "We tried to work with volunteers, but then you can't make them accountable. When you deal with schoolchildren, you cannot afford to be sloppy and therefore we decided to hire a professional who could train the coaches. Now, we have people who can be expected to deliver results and, if they don't, we can hold them responsible," says Davenport, who is all for removing politics and bureaucracy in sport.

(Continued on page 8)

## Sledging mars big match

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association has set a new record of sorts. With seven matches in the First Division and two rounds of the Buchi Babu tournament already concluded, more cricket has been played on Chennai's company-maintained grounds in the first two months of the season than in many a previous season. Most of the matches went according to form, and the top four teams of the State continued to dominate, with the exception of Jolly Rovers who surrendered first innings points unexpectedly to SICAL. The Chemplast-sponsored team made an instant comeback as it were when it took the lead against MRF's Globe Trotters in the very next match on an unprepared wicket at IIT-Chemplast, despite losing the toss and batting second. Expectedly, the spin bowlers came to the fore; unexpectedly, it was occasional off spinner Badrinath

- aided by leftarm spinner Ramkumar - who starred for Jolly Rovers, while his counterpart Aashish Kapoor turned in a brilliant performance for their opponents. For Jolly Rovers, Dinesh Mongia was outstanding with the bat, ably supported by Badrinath, who, with sound technique and admirable temperament, is fast emerging as one of the most reliable middle order batsmen in the State. Lefthand batsman S. Sriram made useful contributions in both innings for Globe Trotters, while Vidyut Sivaramakrishnan, one of the many other lefthanders in the line-up, made a fighting hundred in the second innings. In a match that belonged to the slower bowlers, L. Balaji worked up impressive pace and bounce, an obviously improved bowler after the recent India 'A' tour of England.

I have dwelt at length on this particular match for two reasons. The first is that the match began on a Sunday, and I was able to watch some of it. The second is that MRF, Chemplast and India Cements not only spend substantial sums of money on promoting cricket, but they field extremely strong combinations, stronger than some Ranji Trophy teams, and it is probably just as difficult to score runs or take wickets in matches involving these teams as in the national championship, at least in the Plate competition. There would have been a third reason if I had been able to watch the proceedings of the second day of the match, which fell on a Monday. According to a newspaper report, the umpires of the match reported to TNCA that some of the Globe Trotters players behaved in an unacceptably aggressive manner, targeting the Jolly Rovers batsman Dinesh Mongia, the situation almost getting out of hand and a player being actually sent off the field. Not only does the cricket in the TNCA league occasionally reach heights of excellence, it is also capable of mirroring or even exceeding international standards of on-field misbehaviour! Remember the infamous Miandad-Lille and Lamba-Patel encounters which hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons?

Fortunately - or unfortunately - the incident went unreported in the newspapers and, had the contents of the umpires' letter to TNCA not found their way to the Press, it would have gone unnoticed by the public. This would have been impossible in the 1970s and earlier (right from the days of S. K. Gurunathan, N. S. Ramaswami and P. N. Sundaresan to those of S. Thyagarajan, Rajan Bala, Parthab Ramchand and R. Mohan), when every senior division match was covered by reporters who watched the game. Some of these dispatches were eagerly awaited by the legion of avid enthusiasts that local cricket then enjoyed. Among them, Ramaswami, writing in the 1960s under the nom de plume of 'The Cardusian', actually concentrated on cricket in the lower divisions of the league, yet had a keen fan following among readers who still treasure his word pictures.

With newspapers constantly facing space pressure, given the profusion of national and international sport they reel under, it is perhaps not possible for them to extend detailed coverage to all the league matches any more, but assigning roving reporters to capture the highlights of key encounters should be a feasible proposition. Each of the company-sponsored college cricket grounds in Chennai has its own character and ambience, but newspaper readers have no way of knowing anything about them unless they are written about.

Of the two Tamil Nadu teams participating in this year's Buchi Babu tournament, sponsored by the Sahara Group, the SPIC-TNCA XI has reached the final as we go to press, having defeated ONGC XI by an innings. There have been some useful performances, especially from Badrinath who, in the company of Sadagopan Ramesh, scripted a superb recovery in the semifinal after Hyderabad had gained the first innings lead. M. R. Shrinivas and R. Ramkumar have bowled well in the runup to the final.

Old timers will remember the many stirring contests in this tournament instituted to commemorate 'the father of Tamil Nadu Cricket'. Star-studded teams like Nilton, All-India State Bank and Mafatal lent glamour and excitement to the proceedings, and huge crowds watched the competition, come rain or shine, sometimes more rain than shine. This edition has been relatively devoid of glamour, with 36 Indian 'probables' attending a conditioning camp at Bangalore. The earlier held KSCA Trophy at Bangalore enjoyed greater participation by stars - or at least some of the promising satellites!



# Nurturing Rugby in Chennai

(Continued from Page 7)

Davenport is also for the TNRFU developing rugby without anybody's assistance, for only then, he believes, will the body have control of the development of the sport. He welcomes sponsorship, though, and is heartened by the fact that a few companies have come forward to help. These include Cairn Energy, Onyx, Park Hotel, Nitanny Decision Services and Brilliant Tutorials. "Yes, there is indeed the need for a ground of our own, a clubhouse as well, but we hope to develop it all in good time," says Mohan Krishna, President, TNRFU, echoing Davenport's views.

The TNRFU, found in December 2000, is affiliated to the Indian Rugby Football Union based in Mumbai, which in turn is a member of the International Rugby Board. The TNRFU is recognised by the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association and works closely with the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu. Starting off with just one team, Chennai Cheetahs, the TNRFU now has five more - Chennai Sharks, Tambaram Dragons, Pondicherry Rugby Football Club, Tamil Nadu Police, and Chennai Irish that has some of the best players, including a couple of coaches and students from Patrician's College, Gandhi Nagar (Davenport and Trevor Townsend, with their Irish backgrounds, decided to call the club Chennai Irish after Townsend raised the money to set it up).

**Sport on page 7**

Davenport narrates the story of how TNRFU had approached the TN Police a year ago to invite them to participate in the sport. Police Commissioner Vijay Kumar took a keen interest in rugby and his enthusiasm became the motivating force for quite a few in the police force to join and form the TN Police team. In the Chennai team that played Bangalore recently were three policemen, and seven have represented the State so far, indicating that the TN Police team could emerge as a formidable force in the days to come.

Exciting times are ahead for Tamil Nadu rugby players. Starting September 27th, Chennai Cheetahs and TN Police will take part in the All India Rugby Tournament in Mumbai which will feature two top Sri Lankan teams, a team from Iran, another from Pakistan and teams from the country's major rugby centres, Calcutta and Mumbai.

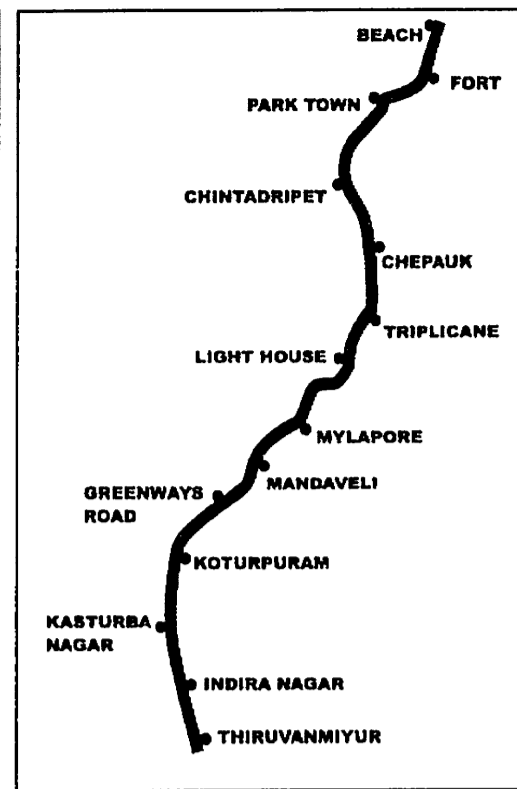
This will be followed by the Chennai League competition, the first time it is being held, and games will be played during weekends from October to February. Each team in the competition will play the other teams twice and accumulate points. The teams will thus progress towards the semi-finals and finals. In addition to the adult league, a smaller schools league will also take place during the same period.

The TNRFU will host the national selection trials and training camp for the under-19s for the Asian Rugby Championship, organised by the Asian

Rugby Football Union, to be held in Manila during December 13-19. The Indian team will play against China, the Arabian Gulf, Kazakhstan and Philippines. And in February next year, the TNRFU will host, for the third time, the increasingly popular National Beach Rugby Tournament.

"Our intention is to make rugby a popular sport. Do you know that today it is the No. 2 sport in Sri Lanka and the No. 1 Spectator sport? They even have internationals from countries like Fiji and Samoa playing there," points out Davenport.

Speaking of the TNRFU's long-term plans, he says, "We have to spot potential talent in the under-13s and provide the children an opportunity to play, like they do in Australia. Indeed, one of our objectives is to establish a rugby school in Chennai. Why not benchmark ourselves against the best in the world and pursue international standards?"



place and the stations, at least as basic structures, are ready.

However, the Commissioner for Railway Safety has to clear the service. Once that is done, one ballastless track (offering greater track comfort) will be used initially, so there will be limited services to start with.

A lot more work needs to be done at each of the stations. In particular, pathways to them need to be cleared and space has to be allocated for parking of cycles and two-wheelers.

## Beach to Tiruvanmiyur trains by year-end

(By A Special Correspondent)

Train service on the elevated section between Mylapore and Tiruvanmiyur is scheduled to run on a regular basis from late September.

The track has been completed on the six kilometre stretch. The power supply is in

Many residents of Taramani, Velachery, Perungudi, and from the sprawling colonies on either side of East Coast Road, will be served by stations at Mandaveli, Greenways Road, Kotturpuram, Kasturba Nagar, Indira Nagar and Tiruvanmiyur (opposite TIDEL Park).

The line will eventually reach Velachery, but work on the Tiruvanmiyur-Velachery section is still on, and the Beach-Velachery 11.16 km stretch, with seven elevated stations and two surface stations, will open only next year.

Success of the line will however only come with an inter-nodal transport plan, which would entail MTC buses stopping at bays inside or close to the stations so that commuters could hop off from trains to buses and commute faster with a combo bus-train pass. But nothing has come of these discussions.

## Answers to Quiz

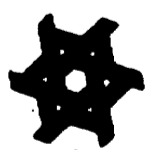
1. It became the first Indian designed aircraft to accelerate to supersonic speed and hold at that speed; 2. It is India's first fully computer-literate village; 3. Centre for Science and Environment; 4. Horse; 5. The crew of the ill-fated 'Columbia' that burnt up in February; 6. Mahindra United; 7. Yuri, now in the International Space Station, exchanged vows with Ekaterina Dmitriev for the first-ever wedding from Space; 8. She is the first in the history of WTA Tour to hold the top ranking without winning a Grand Slam title; 9. Rajasuarus

Narmadensis; 10. He was posthumously decorated with the Ashok Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award.

\* \* \*

11. S. Thirunavukkarasar; 12. Bharat Insurance Building; 13. Biochemistry, Microbiology, Nutrition & Dietetics, Nursing, and English for Communication; 14. Chennai and Dharmapuri respectively; 15. Rs. 19,889; 16. 29; 17. Seerani Arangam; 18. Higginbotham's; 19. S.M. Hoda; 20. Karate exponent Reshma Sharma.

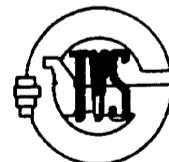
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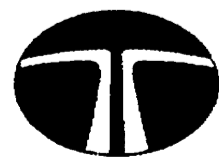
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