# WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MUSINGS

#### NSIDI

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October 1-15, 2003

# Vol. XIII No.12

# Integrated approach to transport essential

(by Shobha Menon)



No, Sir, the power failure in your house is due to OUR transformer and has nothing to do with the blackouts in New York and London!

# Light of our lives

Do you believe that a dash of uncertainty adds spice to life, and prevents boredom?

Then, the rather whimsical, nowyou-see-it-now-you-don't antics of the city's electricity supply must seem exciting to you.

Each day begins with a sense of "Gee – I wonder what fun things the power supply has in store for us today."

Chennai's electricity has a way of vanishing - suddenly, devastatingly, and almost always at the worst possible time. Like crucial moments of disclosure on your favourite TV show. Or when you, having tenderly put together several magic ingredients in the mixie, are all set to create a culinary marvel. Or when the most difficult group of relatives drops in.

Nervous hostesses include short prayers requesting un-interrupted power supply on their "must-do" lists while planning social events.

How about those times when electricity deliberately takes on an alien life form, described rather dully as "voltage problems" by the givers and the givees? Lights grow so dim, all navigation is by instinct. Or they flicker so erratically that your eyes continue to perform a shimmying dance long after supply is restored. This, while headache inducing, adds interesting dimensions to everyday faces.

And those much-advertised, perfect wattage bulbs that you took so much trouble over, end up looking like asthmatic candles.

Who says essential services have no sense of humour?

am-packed, dangerously tilting buses that labour heavily across congested city roads are familiar sights in Chennai. So are the strained, harassed expressions of waiting passengers at bus stops, or that desperate heart-thudding dash for that not-to-be-missed bus. And even as the '45 lakh passengers' served each day by the Metropolitan Transport Corporation continue to use the facility, the ever-increasing levels of private modes of transport in the metro only serve to reiterate the collective failure of a public transport system that can have markedly positive effects if it is re-constituted as an integrated system!

Prof. G. Anantharajan, Researcher and Consultant on Urban Systems Development with a Chennai focus since 1974, says, "Bus transport needs to be viewed as part of a comprehensive whole. In a good traffic planning system, at least 70% of trips must be by public transport, all the more imperative in a developing country with small roads. We have so many companies manufacturing cars in India, but so few manufacturing buses. We lack bus strength and an organised system that ensures periodic replacement and maintenance. We also continue with buses whose designs are of the 1960s. Why not go in for modern buses with better comfort, and provide differential pricing? Accessibility to connecting systems is another imperative need. If the three important requisites — comfort, convenience and easy accessibility are met, people will want to switch over to public transport."

An expert in Urban Systems Development from an academic institution of repute in Chennai Ranjitha Ashok | says, "A comprehensive integrated approach is totally absent here. Ten years ago we submitted a comprehensive project proposal on the 'Design of the Madras City Bus Transit Network System', but while officials agreed with all suggestions proposed, nothing happened. In an organisation where most people involved are government stakeholders, everybody wants quick results without any effort or time spent on planning processes."

**FREE ISSUE** 

But a senior MTC spokesperson in charge of operations says, "While in Mumbai 70% of

(Continued on Page 6)



On page 3 today there's a letter that states, in effect, that beggars are forced to beg out of necessity, not out of choice. It stresses that children who beg are children first and beggars only afterwards. Do those convictions apply to the everyday scene RAJIND N. CHRISTY has captured in his picture? As a father drums away and his 7 or 8-year daughter walks the high rope on a roadside, with neither traffic nor people stopping for them, are they street entertainers making a living or a family seeking a hand-out more 'respectably' than by begging? Is a child in this situation a child, a child-labourer or a beggar? Does being 'dressed up' to earn a living through entertainment make such a performance less demeaning than begging?

# Cnennai's threatened Ecological Heritage Sites

E cological Heritage Sites (EHS) are areas of remnant indigenous vegetation representing different ranges of landform, soil, plant associations, habitat or ecosystem that occur in a particular region. They are the remnants of unique vegetation types that exist in such regions and have high ecological value. There are hundreds of EHS in India. In Chennai alone, over 20 sites have been identified as EHS and assessed and evaluated on various criteria such as the number of native species, degree of disturbance and the area covered by the site.

According to their vegetation and natural resources, the EHS in Chennai have been classified into five broad categories. They are:

Estuaries – Adyar, Cooum Scrub-jungle - IIT campus, MCC campus, Guindy Park, Theosophical Society campus and Kattupalli Island

(by M. Amirthalingam)

Water bodies - Temple tanks, Adambakkam Lake, Mohapper Lake, Red Hills Reservoir, Madhavaram Lake, Korattur Lake, Ambattur Lake and Pulicat Lake

Wetlands - Pallikaranai, Velachery and Chembarambakkam

Parks - Natesan Park, Nagheshwara Rao Park, Panangal Park, etc.

The EHS are noted for their richness of biological diversity, but, sadly, they face a number of threats.

The major threats are the increasing pressure of human activities, such as sand mining, increasing hutments, dumping of wastes and encroachments. They cause significant damage to plants, animals and birds. Developmental activities also cause irreversible changes because they badly displace the native vegetation.

Two major EHS that are particularly threatened are examined below.

# **Adyar Estuary**

Chennai is one of the few cities in the world having an estuarine ecosystem. The Adyar Creek is of a tidal type and is a part of the natural estuarine ecosystem located right in the heart of the city. The original creek area was about 100 acres. Of this, roughly about half remains as a creek, where a tidal effect is felt twice a day.

The Adyar River originates at Chembarambakkam tank in Tiruvallur District. It flows 40 km to join the Bay of Bengal in the southern part of Chennai. At its mouth (the estuary), it takes a bend forming the creek. The estuary extends from the sandbar at the edge of the sea to the Adyar Bridge, with small islands in between. The creek

(Continued on Page 4)

# Now why do we need two Secretariats in 20 years?

A ll this talk of Secretariats the expenditure earmarked for the views expressed at that Man From Madras Musings the old Secretariat and Legislathoroughly confused. And, no ture can be made like new by doubt, many others are also heritage architects and engiconfused by these stories of neers. And with the commitauthority who can explain it all if the planning for restoration clearly to the public. Or is is well done. If the Administrathe game?

Secretariats at different loca- with this column that this is the tions was going on that the way to go. But the expenditure Tuticorin Port Trust had and needs issues do need pubconvened a meeting in Tuti- lic debate. And MMM hopes corin "to ascertain the views that Government will initiate of the public on the environ- such a public discussion as the mental impact of the Sethusa- first step to developing better mudram project". Apart from Secretariat facilities. academics, government officials and elected representatives, gests that a new Secretariat NGOs and representatives of would be more meaningful than fishermen were also invited. restoration of the old, what is How it all turned out, MMM to happen to the old? Is if to be has still not heard, but certainly also kept for government use or the short notice given to dis- will it be left to the Archaeocuss such a huge project whose logical Survey - after moving history is well nigh a hundred out the military - to develop as years old was inconsiderate to a major tourist destination? As say the least. But it must be for the new Secretariat, there said that at least some attempt should then be debate on was made to gauge public re- whether the Kotturpuram site action at a round table. That is the best one or whether other that kind of attempt has NOT locations - like Film City, Govbeen made in the case of the ernment Estate, the Racecourse, Secretariat and the plans for Guindy Industrial Estate etc. -Greater Marina - extending should be looked at. And such into Foreshore Estate – is sad, discussions should centre on to say the least.

From the first issue of Madras Musings, both this journal and your columnist have urged the establishment of an administrative capital in central Tamil Nadu. MMM still thinks that if you can spend a few lam and between the Old and cades. New Mahabalipuram roads, new industry on the old Maha- within twenty years of building overburden the model infra- that can be easily avoided? Fursome contradiction in the con- are to be spent on an adminisceptual process.

More importantly, if the de- surely that would be money betcision is NOT to move the ter spent on what has long been capital to a more central, citi- recommended, a new adminiszen-friendly location, what is trative capital in the centre of the need for so many Secre- the State, providing easy access tariats in and around Chennai? to all its citizens? Surely such

# Three Secretariats?

Take a look with The Man is taking place, an area en route From Madras Musings at the to a major tourism destination, position - as indicated by vari- would only lead to further urous official statements and ban congestion besides being in notices issued by Government. no way citizen-friendly, remain-

said about the future of the State? existing Secretariat. Many be- If ever there was development lieve - and MMM is one of in this State that needed public them - that with a fraction of discussion and attention paid to

Ain different places has The the Kotturpuram Secretariat, Secretariats here, there and ment to ensure a leaner, more everywhere. MMM wonders technical savvy administration, whether there is anyone in this space will more than suffice transparency not the name of tive Capital is not being moved

to a more central location, most It was while all this talk of people, MMM feels, will agree

TWO: If a public debate sugwhat the impact the Secretariat

debate, this Secretariat issue is it. Or, wonders MMM, is the State so flush with funds that it can afford to have one, two, three and even more Secretariats without considering the cost-effectiveness of such projects? Not to mention public convenience.

# Tightening the belt

From all reports that The Man From Madras Musings has heard, the A.M. Swaminathan panel report on austerity measures needed in Government Department is an excellent document. MMM hears the report urges doing away with temporary appointments, reducing existing posts, privatising numerous low grade services and bringing down the number of holidays. It also suggests ways and means of decreasing overheads and increasing efficiency.

The report comes in the wake of Government's own austerity measures already implemented - and commended by MMM in the past for enabling it to make ends meet - and the tough stand Government took in the recent government servants' strike, emphasising that it was committed to austerity.

It is in the context of this commitment to austerity - and a welcome display of it - that MMM wonders how this jells

Now, MMM learns, the Gov- in the case of plans past, we'll ernment has once again sought British help in cleaning up the waterways. And this cleaning up, it has been stated, should be "along the lines of the Thames River in London". Now considering that at least one of the earlier plans was by a British organisation responsible for cleaning up the Thames, that Britain had soon afterwards offered a substantial amount of financial assistance and that a few hundred crore Central funds

help but wonder what the British are going to do now that they haven't done before. Similarly, there's the planning for Mamallapuram's improvement. Here too, MMM knows of a couple of earlier masterplans. And they were by people connected with tourism and heritage. Why they were abandoned, MMM does not know. But now there appears to be yet another masterplan. And this one is by HUDCO -

promised for just this purpose

are lying unused, MMM can't

But whatever those credentials, HUDCO's masterplan seems to be facing the now common opposition to any such plans: that by vested interests. Any heritage site like Mamallapuram to be given its proper due, deserves to have the core

whose credentials in tourism

and heritage preservation are

not exactly well known.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY thousand crores on establish- will have on the well established with not only building one new area clear of all new construcing a new administrative city life and institutions already in Secretariat but also another tion. But having allowed not only permanent construction of big buildings as well as turned a blind eye to every possible kind of encroachment, clearing the area of all this is going to be a major task. But without denuding the core area of all this, Mamallapuram cannot be considered worthy of top class rating as a heritage tourism destination. MMM hopes the recently demonstrated Government will to clear encroachments will prevail - but MMM also hopes that once that will prevails, the core area will be a

> Of more recent vintage are those as secret plans for the Marina. MMM is delighted to hear that at least one important part of that plan is daily mechanical cleaning of the sand. The new mechanical cleaner has got off

never know. It never ceases to amaze MMM that while we are proud to call ourselves a democracy we are equally prepared to let Government think it knows It also amazes me when officials from such organisations as the Chennai Metropolitan De-

velopment Authority make such statements as that it cannot afford an additional such mechanical cleaner (though a standby is essential, as any planner would tell vou) because of the high cost of the equipment and its operational costs. That cost is Rs.36 lakh for the equipment and an annual cost for 18 men, fuel etc. of about Rs. 14 lakh. A total of say half a crore for the first year. What did someone say was the cost of one Secretariat approved by the CMDA leave alone the second one also to be approved by it!

# Encroachments & pavements

The Man from Madras ▲ Musings has been glad to see the Corporation go into action against pavement and roadside encroachers, bulldozing them in many parts of the city But in several areas, what has been bulldozed lies as unseemly rubble, uncleared for weeks. In other areas, the encroachers have begun to return, because there has not been prompt enough action to utilise the space meaningfully.

Elsewhere, MMM has been glad to note some progress in giving the city pavements. But where they have been built, they are in many a case so narrow each comfortably, or there are trees and infrastructure occupying prime space. Pavements to be meaningful must grant passage all along its stretch for at least two persons to cross each comfortably and also, at the end of the pavement, not find a precipitous step into a road-crossing. And if all the encroachments being cleared are to ensure space for pavements, the work of bulldozing the encroachments, clearing the debris and creating pavements with adequate space must go on one day after another - with no gap

But while some effort is bet-

Or do we continue to live Ezhilmigu Chennai?

# Faltering again

READERS

WRITE

October 1-15, 2003

↑ Ithough heaving a sigh of relief over the fact that the State government has abandoned its move to construct the new Secretariat complex on the Marina, heritage lovers and right thinking persons are again disappointed to learn that the government now proposes to shift the Secretariat to the vacant areas belonging to Anna University.

The burgeoning population of Chennai, housing problems, everincreasing water scarcity and traffic bottlenecks do not lend themselves to facilitate construction of mammoth structures, occupied and visited by thousands of people daily without detriment to the existing living conditions and other amenities. The government will do well to drop this new proposal also.

It is a mystery why the government avoids consulting opposition parties, economists and environment specialists as also heritage associations in the matter. The media can also help in gathering public opinion. After all, this is not a subject for politicisation. Many would prefer the shifting of the Capital, Assembly and Secretariat to a central part of the State, especially near Tiruchy. Chennai can remain as the commercial, cultural and educational headquarters with advantage.

> M.R. Pillai H 64/65, Central Avenue Chennai 600 080

## Repair — or rent

fully agree with the views Lexpressed by the MMM (MM, September 1st), about the proposal to build a new Secretariat.

If the present location requires repairs, they can be carried out with assistance from the ASI. If the present location is inadequate, then some of the departments can be moved to new buildings owned by the Government or rented from private builders. This way, the huge expenditure can be avoided.

If at all there is a decision to build a new Secretariat, then why not pick the open space available inside the huge Raj Bhavan complex? Surely, the space is big enough to hold one or more such complexes. Further, commuting to and from the location will be very convenient.

Government has made it known that the new complex will be fully high-tech and air-conditioned. This will require a lot of electricity. The Government should install solar panels and tap the environment-friendly source for its needs. When this becomes successful, it can be slowly installed in other big buildings and complexes. This will reduce the dependence on the State-supplied electricity, and the costs involved.

> K.N. Krishna Moorthy D-102/A, Sowbhagya Colony Anna Main Road K.K. Nagar Chennai 600 078

# Privatise schools

The sorry plight of Corporation **▲** schools (MM, September 1st) can be brought to an end by drawing on the Andhra Pradesh experiment in which farmers pay the actual costs for reliable power

The upward aspirants of a resurgent India have created a pent-up demand for high quality education High quality primary education and primary health are twin drivers to

Resurgent India was best illustrated by Gurcharan Das in his book India Club Bound where he narrated the story of Raju working in a tea stall near Pondicherry till he could join a software company in Chennai being arranged by his cousin and become a 'Bill Gates'. Such are the goals and such is the

Maid servants are prepared to work an 'extra house' if their children can learn English or go to an English school. Translated, this means that our "poor" are willing to pay actual costs for good quality primary education.

Privatising the management o Corporation schools should not only give the Chennai Corporation a slice of the profits, but the children quality education and the country precious human resources!

3, Sixth Avenue

eradicate poverty in this country.

S. Sharma

C-1, Chennai 600 083

#### Fund for schools

t is really tragic that while A Corporation schools languish (MM, September 1st) for want of funds, huge Vinayaka images are made at enormous cost, only to be immersed and disintegrated, besides creating unnecessary tension when taken in procession. If only the huge amounts spent on this

Let's develop these heritage sites

three such heritage clusters not too far from each other. They would be a boon to both citizens and visitors, who wish to imbibe a bit of the city's history and culture without spending a lot of time fighting traffic.

The Mylapore festival and walks are a fine example of a private voluntary effort that seeks to showcase a vibrant business and residential area as a destination for visitors as well. This is a huge success story, and can be the seed for the tree. Perhaps the degree of imposed traffic discipline and standardised signage for shops (as in Paris) would enhance

Two Government areas can similarly be developed, in partnership with private efforts, to add bulk to the Mylapore project, particularly relating to the British connection. The criteria for selection could be a group of attractive buildings, central location, connectivity, and continued use of an important city facility.

The first might be the evergreen Fort St. George which I favour as so many people go there on Government-related work and — bureaucracy being what it is - will need to do so even after the new Secretariat is commissioned. If the proposed development of the Marina turns out to be as tasteful as the site merits, and the Metro improves to Mumbai

Pelhi has several clusters of heritage desti- local train standards, connectivity from the Fort to nations. Chennai might identify and develop. Mylapore would be truly hassle-free. The Mylapore Cathedral, for instance, will certainly be restored quite soon, and the Lighthouse station is quite close by.

The second Government site with potential i the DPI Compound. It is still quite green, has a number of old buildings, and a river frontage. I attracts a very large number of visitors from all over Tamil Nadu (for office-related work) and other States (Sankara Nethralaya). It is also close to the Museum, the Connemara Library, and the preferred residential and office space of expatriates and upmarket corporate citizens. It seemed to me that the compound could have two roles. DPI and Sankara Nethralaya during the day, and a heritage leisure area — with possible links to the Museum theatre — during non-working hours. Who knows the Lalit Kala building might get the badly needed facelift in the process!

And, finally, what an achievement it would be if our waterways do get cleaned up eventually. We could then catch a boat to Mylapore from the DPI landing, and take in the Fort on the way!

> Mohan Raman Madras Literary Society College Road Chennai 600 006

Danish rule in Tarangampadi (formerly Tranquebar) there is another heritage of historical and literary importance in the area and that is Poompuhar near Mayiladuthurai in Nagapattinam District.

Poompuhar, also popularly known as Kaveripoompattinam, is where the celebrated Kavery flows

# **Estuary**

It was by the law above I happen to be Flowing down as a river into the sea, Whatever came by I patiently bore But many seem not to care for me any more.

> Estuary was the name given to me That a few seldom happen to see, The beauty in which I was formed None can make with me a reform.

Once destroyed I never can be The beauty I once beheld within me. All my cries have subdued to a whisper, Please help - save me before I disappear.

> Do hear my desperate call And rescue me before I am not at all. Mariva. Sashi Nagar, Chennai.

mega show could be usefully spent in equipping the Corporation schools under the name of a 'Sri Vinavaka Chathurthi Educational Fund', it would be a fitting tribute to the deity. Will anyone listen?

I am one of the fans of B.S. Ramiah about whom Randor Guy has written. Ramiah's stories of the exploits of 'Kunkuma Pottu Kumarasami', the detective, were a class in themselves. Thanks for reviving his memories.

> T.M. Sundararaman 19, Nallappan Street Mylapore, Chennai 600 004

## Poompuhar heritage

A part from the archaeological And historical imprints of Dutch rule in Nagapattinam and

into the Bay of Bengal. Unfortunately, drought conditions caused by insufficient rains frequently cause disruptions to agricultural operations and also deprive those in Nagapattinam District of the month-long Thula Snanam (bath) in the holy river during October-November. This is indeed a freak

Kaveripoompattinam was a prominent East Cost port through which exports and imports mostly on barter basis passed between South India and West Asia till the sea completely eroded and submerged the port. However, excavations have brought to light some structural remains indicative of the existence of the flourishing port, which was particularly popular for the import of Arabian horses required by the Chola, Chera and Pandya rulers of the South.

Some articles found during excavations, besides the remains of some structures built on mortar and red bricks, were collected and exhibited in a small building near the shore which is nothing but an apology for a museum! It is, therefore, incumbent on both ASI and the Tamil Nadu Government to improve this museum and also extend the excavations to demonstrate the prosperity of Poompuhar

> M. Ratnasabapathi 29, Maruthapandiyar Street

# Fascinating reading

The diary of N.D. Varadachariar **L** being excerpted in the last couple of issues of Madras Musings really makes for fascinating reading. Not only that, Varadachariar's bold observations on Rajaji, Gandhiism, films etc. do startle the later generations.

We hope to enjoy reading more of this diary.

Ranga Flats

33, Gangai Amman Koil Street Valasaravakkam, Chennai 600 087

## Begging, no fun

Beggars do not beg for fun. They do so because they are hungry, ill, tired. Children are children first and beggars next. To round them up like criminals is wrong. Whoever drafted that circular should as a punishment be sent out to beg for a day. Then they'll know how humiliating it is — Hindu monks learnt humility by begging for their

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## Neelankarai's birds

The reports on birds in the L columns of Madras Musings have always been very interesting. I

am a resident of Neelankarai, and of late, I have been noticing newer varieties of birds in the neighbourhood. Through June and July, the neighbourhood was visited by a singing bird which started its singing (very sweet notes) as early as 4-30 a.m., even before the cuckoo started its loud cooing. It usually stopped singing before sunrise. I would dearly like to know which bird sings so early in the

As everywhere in the city, we too have a lot of crows in the neighbourhood and, surprisingly, they K.K. Nagar, Madurai 625 020 have not driven out the new entrants to the bird community. This is quite in contrast to the opinion of Lt. Gen. B.C. Nanda of Madikeri, Kodagu District, Karnataka (MM, August 16th).

> The crows in my neighbourhood have been quite friendly to the other species. I spotted a particular crow which helped a pair of mynahs resolutely building a nest atop an airconditioner despite the building watchman thwarting their attempts by pushing away their S. Raghavan mass of twigs. The crow actually helped find more twigs for the mynahs! Moreover, I have watched the crows sharing the meal of rice ball that I put out every day for them with the squirrels in the garden. Although not a pretty lot, crows really do their bit for the environment. I am all for saluting their efforts.

> > Chitra Sankaralingam 4/16, Sunrise Avenue Neelankarai Chennai 600 041

## 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.

ONE: Nothing has been ing as it will at one end of the

to be located just before Kova- place at these locations for deeven bigger one, with a city around it, not too long after-THREE: If it is decided to you could establish the same build a new Secretariat, with the city for very little extra in cen- possibility of a part of the old tral Tamil Nadu and provide Secretariat being retained, what the people of the State a capi- is the necessity for the proposed tal they will have easier access Rs. 2000 crore Administrative to. To talk in one breath of City with a Secretariat there

wards, the latter also involving substantial foreign exchange outflow, given the stated preference for Malaysian building skills. Is it only the local employee who has to tighten his belt and not Government as a whole? It's sad that reports like splendid infrastructure for IT too? Is it really necessary to the Swaminathan Report beand Biotechnology Parks and build a billion rupee Secretariat come meaningless when having to co-exist with such ideas of balipuram Road and in almost a Rs. 200 crore Secretariat, the same breath talk of a new which has sufficient back-up in administrative city in the same the State's first Secretariat? area which will certainly only Surely this is the kind of waste structure appears to indicate ther, if a couple of billion rupees

trative city and Secretariat,

expenditure in the suburb of a

crowded city, an area where

much commercial development

# Plans and plans

ver since The Man From LMadras Musings came to Madras that is Chennai some thirty-odd years ago, MMM has been hearing of plans for (1) Cleaning up the city's waterways, and (2) making Mamallapuram a tourism showpiece.

To MMM's knowledge, there are at least three plans for cleaning up the Adyar River, the Cooum River, the Buckingham Canal and a couple of other canals (nullahs). At least one or two of them were partially - or should it be 'minimally'? implemented. No reason was ever given for first steps being taken and then abandoned or for why different agencies in succession had to produce new

non-traffic area. Talk of the masterplan building new roads through the area are alarming unless they are meant only for cycle traffic and special nonpolluting transport made avail-

to a good start - and MMM only hopes that what happened to a mechanical road-layer a few years ago does not happen to it. But cleaning the sand is only the first step; what else does the plan hold for us not only along the Marina but for the San

Thomé beach as well? And as

ter than none, MMM also notes with regret that much of encroachment clearing is on sideroads. Where major roads are encroached on by fly-bynight shopping centres, little is done to remove these encroach ers. And if even the occasional drive takes place, the encroachers are back within a few days - and a pavement is taken over again by the bazaar. When this state of affairs is going to improve is anyone's guess.

with it as we have all these years - and forget about Singara or

MADRAS MUSINGS October 1-15, 2003 October 1-15, 2003 **MADRAS MUSINGS** 

# Goddess Mosquito

Dallergy there is an allergen. All that they do is sit conven-The allergen playing havoc in iently in trees and plants and the body of the poor patient also plays hide and seek with the helpless physician. Unless the physician is as good as Sherlock Holmes, the allergen goes undetected and, hence, scot-free.

Lucky is the physician who detects the allergen. Unlucky is

Only if there is a breeding ground for mosquitoes, well maintained by the illiterate public and whole-heartedly supported by sanitary assistants employed by the government, manufacturers of mosquito repellents can thrive. Hundreds of families employed in making coils and mats would have to beg for food if there is no mosquito menace.

You need not be surprised or shocked if you come across in the pooja room of such families a blow-up of a mosquito mounted and framed and kept amidst other gods and goddesses, all garlanded with strings of jasmine flowers. Who else can be their chief deity if not Goddess Mos-

# Goddess Mosquito!

Yes! Male mosquitoes are thoroughly useless guys. Poor fellows! They are vegetarians like Bernard Shaw and his clan of music. Blessed are the deaf. Posupporters. They never know the ets like me may be exceptions. taste of human blood, why, for Nearly two decades ago I com-

**D** ehind every successful that matter, animal blood too. silently enjoy their hard-earned siesta; then, when they awaken, they hover over our heads creating an unwanted aura. Occasionally they pester us for their attention, like neglected children.

Female mosquitoes are real vampires. None can escape their he who fails to arrest it and give wrath-filled tiny needle-like it corporal punishment. It is not sucker. Many of these winged that he is unaware of the traps to vampires get killed when we are be used in handcuffing it before awake. And when we are asleep doing away with it once and for they administer slow poison to all. But he has a family to support us. Without our knowledge we and has to see his bank balance barter a few c.c. of our precious

# by P. Raja

blood for the wide variety of diseases they hawk. And that happens almost every night. The only consolation the scientists offer (let us have faith in them) is that the mosquitoes do not have AIDS for sale. Praised be Allah, Jesus and the Hindu

People rarely make a fuss about parting with their blood. In violence-prone cities they shed a lot of blood; they do not grudge it when they meet with road accidents or even while sharpening their cheap pencils with a blade that had lost its teeth in their service. But what they really hate is the unpardonable music these winged creatures compose.

People have no ear for their

posed an ode To a Mosquito. Let me remember it for you here:

How well with your charming song You mesmerise mankind! Oh, Scrounger of man's fuel!

We toil and sweat. We pay and eat. Yet our bread is not a full loaf.

You stray and sing. You swindle and swill. And you swell well.

Apart from several poems addressed to mosquitoes, I have read also a full length novel and a few short stories in English as well as in my mothertongue, Tamil, all titled 'Mosquitoes'.

Yet mosquitoes are thankless creatures. They do not spare even the writers who have immortalised them. Cursed be the venomous girls whose kisses spell disease and slow death.

Electric fans whirling at break-neck speed and mosquito nets well-tailored are in no way a hurdle to these poison girls. Mos quito repellents too that fume out their chemicals that have a thunderous effect on asthmatics, work only for a few hours, in spite of the advertisements that glorify such products and guarantee an undisturbed sleep for eight hours. When our sleep reaches its acme, a few hours before dawn, the enemies in waiting, pounce on us with a vengeance, only to be watched helplessly by exhausted repellents. Slowly, mosquitoes are becoming immune to chemicals too. The Almighty has to give them their due too.

To sacrifice our precious blood at the altar of Goddess Mosquito, and that too every night, is as good as hara kiri.

Yet there is some hope left for the users of mosquito nets, provided they strictly follow the advice of the American wit, Mark

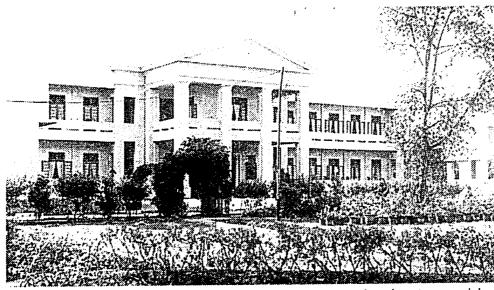
"First you tie it, get all the mosquitoes in, and then sleep undisturbed outside." (Courtesy:

# The John Davis contribution to Chennai • The architects' firm of Prynne, Abbott and Davis is a forgotten name

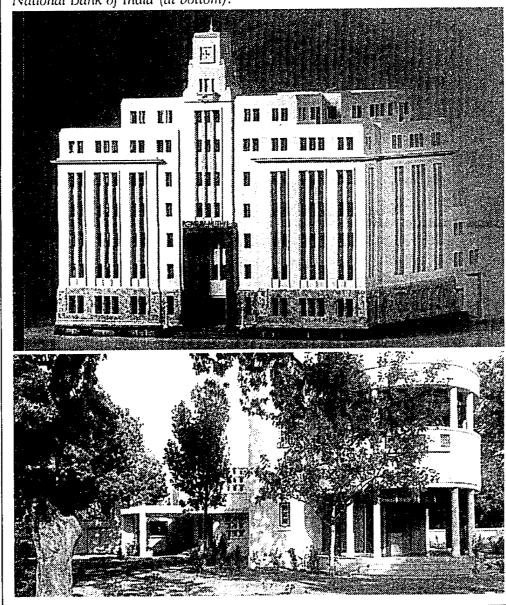
in Chennai today. But in the 1940s and 1950s it contributed quite significantly to the public and private architecture of Madras. NICHOLA DAVIS, the daughter of the Davis of the partnership, has been taking a sabbatical in Chennai, and remembers her father in this piece.

L'person who has amazing confidence in his own abilities. If life did not provide him with enough challenges, he created

Lather was that rare type of serving the last two years of World War II in Madras with the Royal Engineers, he believed that there would be a building boom in India. Not having any money the opportunities himself. After of his own, he found partners,



The second home of the Madras Club in Branson Bagh (above), a model of the Bombay Mutual building (below) and one of the senior executive homes of the Vational Bank of India (at bottom)



invested all Mother's savings and still had to borrow heavily from the market, to help found Prynne, Abbott and Davis in 1946. Mother was terrified of the disreputable looking people to whom he was in debt and was sure Father would pay with his life if he failed to make good the loan. Abbott (or was it another partner?) practised in the North and, sadly, died in a plane crash on one of his trips to Madras. The other partners were liable for all his debts. It was several years before Father could relax and be confident of the future.

The firm's greatest architectural achievement, of which Father was justly proud, was winning the open competition for the Centenary Building of Madras University. He was greatly honoured to meet Prime Minister Nehru in 1957 during the ceremony to lay the foundation stone. The firm also designed the Library of the Sri Venkateswara University and Father, the public face of the firm, was present when President Rajendra Prasad laid the foundation stone for it.

Other notable buildings designed or remodelled by the firm include the second Madras Club (Branson Bagh), Bombay Mutual, Bharat Insurance, the late M.A. Chidambaram's Adyar House and residences for Messrs. Binny and Co., Parry and Co. and the national Bank of India Ltd.

Father was the 'life and soul' of any gathering, particularly at parties at the Gymkhana and Adyar Clubs. He had all sorts of party tricks but one very nearly proved fatal. There was an antique axe with a twin blade hanging on a wall and he decided

battle. Much to his horror, the head flew off and made a six-inch gash in the wall just above where Mother was sitting. It was only natural for Father

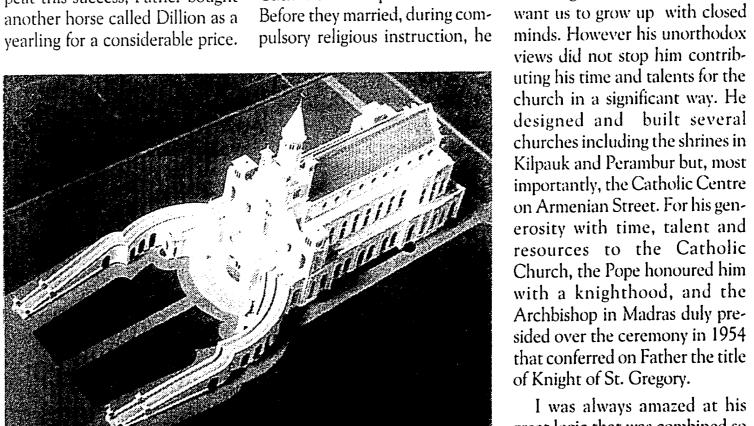
to demonstrate how to wield it in

to be a part of the amateur dramatic scene in Madras. He appeared in several Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. He laughingly told us how difficult it was for him to sing the song that had the words: "take a pair of sparkling eyes..." opposite a woman with a squint. In a dramatic production of Shop at Sly Corner, he had a small part that required him to be killed early in the first act. During the performance, Mother overheard a person behind saying, "John Davis has been asking for that for a long time!" Being quite charismatic and enjoying he centre of attention, Father aroused strong emotions, both positive and negative.

Horseracing was possibly Father's favourite pastime. He was a member of the Madras Race Club where he seldom missed a meeting. His involvement in the sport led to his becoming the owner of a horse called High Command, a very imposing horse at 17 hands and quite headstrong. Although well bred, his racing days were considered over because of leg injuries, so Father bought him for a bargain price and began nursing him back to strength. His faith was justified when High Command returned to the track as a sprinter and won five races and placed in many others. In December 1948, High Command won the Sivaganga Cup ridden by Shankar, Madras' champion jockey. This was the highlight of Father's racing career. He took great pride in leading the horse into the winner's enclosure where Mother would be waiting. Hoping to re-

However, Dillion did not win a questioned the literal interpreta- ativity, probably because I only race and eventually spent her days on the polo field. Father also enjoyed placing a bet whenever he was at the races and became renowned for 'getting out' in the last race by gambling and winning enough to cover his losses in the earlier races.

Father was born into a Protestant family and converted to peat this success, Father bought Catholicism to please Mother.



A model of the shrine in Perambur, the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes.



Our OLD is of John Davis (second from left) showing Prime Minister Nehru a model of the prize-winning Prynne, Abbott

tion of the Bible as held by most

close friend of the family, adop-

ted a lenient attitude and,

dimissing all doubts, welcomed

Father into the Catholic faith. At

a later date, these same questions

family dinner table, much to

Mother's displeasure. Father

loved a good debate, and did not

and Davis model of the University of Madras's Centenary Building. The occasion was when the Prime Minister visited the campus in 1957 to lay the foundation stone for the building. Davis, says his **OLD**... daughter Nichola — who provided this and other pictures on this

page from the family's collection — came out to Madras for the occasion and kept coming back to Madras over the next couple of years till the transfer of partnership to Kiffin-Petersen and



These visits enabled him to keep in touch with work that the firm had started before he left it. A NEW of the building is well nigh impossible today, given

Pithavadian was completed.

...& THE NOT-

**SO-NEW** 

the trees that have grown in its garden. And so we use a picture from a 1965 'Premier Postcard' showing not only the stateliness of the building but also how well t integrates with the much older Senate House. The picture was by SIMON FELTON, an expatriate living in Madras at the time, and shows a view worth re-creating again.

inherited his logical ability. Christians. Luckily, the priest, a Apart from his design and drawing skills, he was good at carpentry, and composed rhyming verses for all sorts of occasions. It was not until he retired that he resumed painting watercolours. were often expressed around the He loved music, especially jazz piano, but seldom found the time to listen to music.

> Three of John and Pearl Davis children – I, Paul and Peter – were born in Madras in the Lady Willingdon Nursing Home.

From 1946, we lived at 13 College Road in a large bungalow that sadly no longer exists. It was a large house that accommodated Father's offices as well. In 1956, Father decided to relocate back in England The architectural practice was sold to a junior partner, Kiffen-Petersen, and in 1972 was taken over by another partner and became known as Pithavadian and Partners, a name that still survives. As do Father's many buildings. John Richard Davis's I was always amazed at his twelve years in Madras may well great logic that was combined so have been the happiest of his effortlessly with his artistic cre- life.

# CHENNAI'S THREATENED ECOLOGICAL HERITAGE

(Continued from page 1)

Palace. The Adyar Creek, in spite of longer seen. Once there were the absence of mangroves, which about 170 species of birds in the are an essential part of an estua- estuary, but it is now dominated wide range of biodiversity. The Adyar estuary is a textbook case flora found in the Advar creek of a fragile natural heritage losare Prosopis juliflora (Velikathan) ing out to frantic urbanisation, along with Crotons sparciflorous according to Theodore and Ipomea biloba, Thespesia populnea, Cassia occidentalis. Cephalandra coccinia and Pongamia glabra, Abrus precatorius,

and springtails, polychaetes, dump. A number of cattle sheds, found in abundance are no Baskaran.

The Adyar Creek faces several threats, such as heavy accumulation of silt over a period of Lantana camera, Zizyphus jujuba, time. Slums have encroached Azadirachta indica, Morina spe- upon more than half the footcies, Antigonon species, Hyptis bridge. The remaining portion species and Acacia species. The and its debris impede the flow of fauna found here are gastropods water. It is used as a garbage practically ruined.

crabs, hermit crabs and oligocha- set up along the creek, not only begins near the Chettinad etes. Many species of fish earlier reduce the width of the creek but also pollute it. The other sources of pollution are the raw sewage let in at various points from the encroachments, stormwater drarine ecosystem, still exhibits a by the omnipresent crows. The ins and other upstream sources, such as industries, hospitals and sewage pumping stations.

Heavy encroachment along the creek has also resulted in gross pollution of the wetland, turning it into a health hazard.

The creek bed is heavily silted and the water is forced to take a meandering course. Both banks of the creek are devoid of any native vegetation. The Creek, once a paradise, has now been

The River Cooum

The River Cooum, once a freshwater source, is today a drainage course collecting surpluses of 75 small tanks of a minor basin. The length of the river is about 65 km, of which 18 km falls within city limits.

The River Cooum is a typical example of biodegradation of a natural watercourse. It enters city limits near Arumbakkam and winds its way through Choolaimedu, Chetpet, Egmore and Chindadripet. Because of its twisting course through the heart of the city, the river carries the major portion of the stormwater drainage of the city during the rainy season.

ing water to the city of Madras. Thereafter, the flow of water in

the river is totally reduced. gen content is reduced to a level species have reduced from 49 in 1949 to none in 2000.

The Kesavaram dam diverts jected to heavy stress due to orthe river into the Chembaram- ganic pollution, thus preventing bakkam Lake from which water it from regenerating itself. Sevis utilised for the supply of drink- eral places along the banks are used to rear and perpetuate buffaloes. There are unauthorised hutments situated on the banks The River Cooum carries large and these directly dump garbage, quantities of sullage, sewage and excreta and sullage into the cattle wash. The river is stagnant Cooum. Several hotels in the city and contains a lot of silt. The silt discharge sewage into the river at is believed to be two to three feet various points. Effluents from a deep at certain places. It is re- variety of industries heavily polported that the net amount of silt lute it. Therefore, far from being deposited in the river is 3200 an asset to the city, the river has tonnes/year. As a result, the oxy-turned into a black spot mainly due to human activity. The river below which fish cannot live. Fish is an eyesore to permanent residents and visitors alike and is not fit for any use. — (Courtesy: The waterbody has been sub- CPREEC Eco-News.)

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

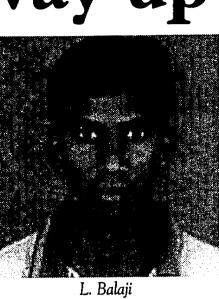
- 1. What event do the Rs. 100 and the Rs. 2 coins introduced on September 1st commemo-
- 2. Name the 'Father of the H-Bomb' who passed away recently.
- 3. Name the talented hockey player, hero of India's successes in recent times, who was badly injured in a road accident on September 2nd.
- 4. What brand of Advanced let Trainers is India going to purchase for the IAF?
- 5. According to a poll by Britain's ITN archive, which is the most popular film footage of all time?
- 6. Where was the World Trade Organisation conference held recently?
- 7. Name the album, which the two surviving members of 'The Beatles' are planning to rerelease.
- 8. Which Indian city has the distinction of getting the country's first satellite-based car navigation tool?
- 9. Name the new U.S. Open tennis champions.
- 10. Name the former Indian cricket captain who passed away recently.
- 11. What are the criteria for getting a 'H' ration card in the State?
- 12. The 125th birthday celebrations of which venerable institution of Chennai was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on September 13th?
- 13. Name the Pudukkottai MP who is a Union Minister of State in the Vajpayee Government.
- 14. Which varsity conferred an honorary doctorate on the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, her fifth such honour, on September 2nd?
- 15. Which hotel in Chennai was previously known as 'Imperial' and 'Albany'?
- 16. Where in Chennai would you find a 'Walk of Fame' similar to the famous a Hollywood 'Walk of Fame'?
- 17. In the latest State Cabinet reshuffle, who has got back the Labour portfolio?
- 18. Name the new Vice-Chancellor of Madras University.
- 19. Who was the first Nattukottai Chettiar to be knighted, back in 1922?
- 20. Name the lodge in Triplicane that is known for its 'whites only' policy.

(Answers on Page 8)

# T.N. paceman Two pages of sport on the way up

akshmipathi Balaji is an Lunusual young man. Barely two years ago, an uncut diamond, arriving on the TNCA league scene as a gawky young medium pacer, he has grown from strength to strength to become one of the most talked about Test prospects in India, following closely behind the left-armers Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra. His consistency has been rare, the number of five wickets haul by him at every level of cricket comparing well with the record of the spin bowlers who have traditionally dominated cricket in the South over the decades.

given up hope after the kind of thrashing Balaji received at the hands of the West Indies batsmen on a batsman-friendly Chemplast's triumph in the



wicket on his ODI debut last year. Balaji is obviously made of sterner stuff. He must have spent hours and days and months training and bowling in the nets. The Balaji you see Most young men would have nowadays is a new, improved version — quicker, more accu-

port to the pace, swing and seam of Zaheer Khan, in both innings and picking up a few vital wick-Balaji played a key role in

Moin-ud-Dowla Gold Cup at night watchman and frustrated Hyderabad, with skipper Sujit the Mumbai bowlers in the second innings in a fighting partner-Somasunder and Badrinath. ship with Rahul Dravid. Dravid both centurymakers and consisand Laxman then went on to tent scorers in the tournament, take the Rest close to an improband spinner Ramkumar. The

able victory which they did

achieve in an exciting finish. handsome crowd watched the Irani Cup, espe-Rovers in the Palayampatti cially on the fourth day, which Shield last season, must have was a Sunday. Most of them given their sponsors the satisfac- actually bought tickets, a refreshing change from the recent tendency to stay away from cricket other than international. A feather in the cap of the organisers.

The senior division league will resume soon and is expected to conclude by December this season. No team has a substantial lead in the race for points over its rivals, though Globe Trotters, Jolly Rovers and Vijay CC appear to be the stronets. He also did a great job as gest contenders by far.

# • THE CRICKET SCENE by V. RAMNARAYAN

# winners in a bare arena

TNCA XI emerged easy winners of the latest edition of the annual Buchi Babu Memorial invitation tournament. defeating Indian Airlines by 126 runs. The highlight of the final was an impressive spell of pace bowling by Munaf Patel of the losing team. Patel is already being talked of as India's future fast bowling sensation, capable of exceeding speeds of 150 kmph.

Disciplined batting by all the many alarms. frontliners led by S. Ramesh and skipper S. Suresh saw TNCA XI make a competitive 317 in the first innings despite intelligent bowling by young Patel. MRF Pace Foundation trainee C. Ganapathy then bowled incisively, and with the deceptive medium pace of the skipper Suresh doing the trick as has often happened in the recent past. TNCA gained a comfortable

lead, despite exhilarating batting by another former trainee of the pace academy, Rajat Bhatia, who seems to have settled for the long handle rather than the long run-up. Opener Noorul Riaz who scored a hundred in the semifinal match against ONGC continued his good form, making 40 and 70 in the match. Suresh took three wickets again to wrap up the match for the host team without too

As a spectator sport, the tournament was a lacklustre affair, with the crowds continuing to stay away, consistent with recent trends, even though some interesting fare was on offer at every stage of the tournament. Newspaper coverage was lukewarm in sharp contrast to the drama and excitement that used to be conjured up a couple of decades ago. Any sportsman of

quality will tell you that his competitive instincts are sharpened and the adrenalin flows when there is a sizeable audience and there is a palpable buzz around the ground. Today's cricketers must be considered unfortunate in this respect. You can't blame them if at times they appear to go through the motions with about as much inspiration as at a funeral gathering, especially when the first innings is completed, there is no chance of an outright decision and the match meanders to a draw.

Chemplast team were winners

for the second year in succession,

and this coming on top of the

success of their league twin Jolly

tion that their steadfast patron-

age of cricket over decades has

Nadu representative in the Rest

of India team that did battle

against Ranji Trophy champion

Mumbai at Chepauk last fort-

night. He once again rose to the

occasion, providing incisive sup-

Balaii was the lone Tamil

really been worthwhile.

This is a real pity, as Buchi Babu is the curtain raiser to the first class season, though it now shares that distinction with the KSCA tournament. These two competitions, followed close on their heels by the Moin-ud-Dowla Gold Cup of Hyderabad, provide a platform for several aspiring young cricketers to exhibit their talents for the selectors to note. In the new Ranji trophy format, with many matches taking place simultaneously without a regional flavour attached to them, and newspapers no longer deputing their correspondents to these games regularly, even the national championship is reported only in a listless manner. All attention is focussed on international cricket, and domestic performances get lost in the clutter. It makes it easy for selectors to stay within closed circle of players when it comes to picking the Indian team, and get away with claims of bare cupboards and lack of bench strength. In contrast, performances in the Challenger series of one-day matches among three teams gain exaggerated importance.

# INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TRANSPORT ESSENTIAL

(Continued from Page 1)

use trains and only 30% use buses, in Chennai it is the other way round. We need more buses, but there are financial constraints." And speaking of better route planning, he says, "We tried, in 1980, to operate a system within radial routes and feeder routes in the city — with even a percentage of the new ticket waived if a passenger proferred his old one — based had to wait at bus stops. Unfortunately a strong lobby against the idea put an end to such an

expect a 50-50 utilisation. Once the terminal upto Velachery is those who use public transport ready, we'll divert certain routes and buses. The overbridge to East Tambaram and the widening of the 200 ft road from

Perunkalathur to Koyambedu will also improve matters." Meanwhile, S. Bhoopal, former Chief Engineer of the Corporation of Chennai, says, "In the late 1970s, Prof. Ayyaswami of the Anna University presented a report on optimum utilisation of bus on an English model. The facilities by suggesting a netfrequency of the connecting work of short trips. But it was services ensured that no one never implemented. We lack an appropriate mode transfer system, due to paucity of co-ordinated efforts in adminiseffective system in a few tration and planning. Sadly, we also don't give time for new "With the MRTS fully set, we systems to settle in."

points out, "Adequate bus fleet maintenance should be a top priority. Phased increase of bus fares will also pave the way for optimum viability. And, passengers need to be aware, NOT merely complain. Not talk only of rights, but also responsibilities. Carry the right change, travel safely and avoid footboard travel. In case of a complaint, identify the bus correctly by noting down Bus Number, Registration Number and Fleet Number (seen on the side of the bus). Give a written complaint as soon as possible.

Exploring different alternatives

through regular interfaces to

solve problems is as much a

consumer responsibility as the

MTC's."

A spokesperson of the Con-

sumer and Civic Action Groups

Suggested improvements from experts on the existing bus transport system include: Forming a unified traffic and

- transport authority. Coordinating operations and
- fare systems with suburban railways, MRTS and buses.
- Reorganising bus routes. Introducing more short run
- Periodic interfaces with members of the public at local depots.
- Allowing private operators to come in route-wise, and encouraging cooperative efforts while controlling tick-
- Implementing good city planning measures with wellplanned bus bays and ter-

# The All-India Rugby Tournament

# Chennai teams set to make a mark

Two Tamil Nadu rugby 1 teams, the Chennai Cheetahs and the Tamil Nadu Police, figure in this year's All-India Rugby Tournament being held at the Bombay Gymkhana. As part of their final preparations, the Tamil Nadu Rubgy Football Union got S.W. Chang, who had coached the Sri Lankan naers of both teams.

October 1-15, 2003

tary. 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, told Madras Musings, before leaving for Mumbai, "These two teams will demonstrate results of all our hard efforts. Though most of our players have played the game for only two or three years, they have come a long way and are among the finest teams in the country."

All-India player Emil Vartazarian, Technical Director. TNRFU, struck a confident note. "We may be going there as underdogs, but will return with good results. In fact, we are nals this year, and perhaps the final next year."

A dozen other teams are participating in the tournament, Asia's oldest, this year. These include the Bombay Gymkhana (the reigning champions), Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CCFC), Calcutta Police, Bangalore Rugby Football Club, Delhi Rugby Football Club, Greater Bombay and Maha-

(Bombay), Young Rugby Club, Calcutta, Orissa, Manipur and the favourites the Sri Lankan Police, a first division side from the Island.

The Young Rugby Club and the Calcutta Police, after topping the second division tournament last year, find themselves in the main tournament this year. According to the tional team, to train the play- Indian Rugby Football Union regulation, the bottom two Patrick Davenport, Secre- teams in the All-India tournament join second rung teams in a tournament played the following year (a few months before the main tournament). The top

# SASHI NAIR

two teams in this event then get an entry into the All-India Championship. Some of the second rung teams include La Martinere Old Boys (LMOB, as they are more popularly known), a once-strong Calcutta team, now considerably weakened, Sergeant's Institute, Bombay Navy and Cockies, Bombay. In the second division tournament in 2004, the looking at reaching the semi-fi- Chennai Irish, Chennai Sharks, Pondicherry Rugby Football Union, Tambaram Dragons and a team from Kerala are likely to

take part. founded in December 2000, it brought professionalism into the administration of the sport. There are six teams in Tamil Nadu now who regularly play each other. Of these, the Chennai Cheetahs, the first team to rashtra Police teams, Magic Bus take to the game in the State

when it was revived, and the TN Police, the latest to join, are very strong. It was only a year ago that the TNRFU had approached the TN Police to invite them to take up the sport and Police Commissioner K. Vijay Kumar promptly responded with enthusiasm.

"The Police would not have been able to come as far as they have without the support of Vijay Kumar, Govind (DG of Police), Balachandran (IG) and Sailendra Babu (Jt. Commissioner)", Davenport points out. In fact, the TN Police are planning an inter-departmental rugby tournament to raise their standards. That the Police have the right kind of players who would ideally suit rugby, a contact sport, is perhaps one of the reasons for the interest shown by them.

The all-India seven-a-side tournament will be played on October 3, a day before the All-India final.

Rugby has never been a popular sport in India, for the simple reason that the grounds do not suit the game. Yet Jalandhar produces Summit, the best rugby balls in use internationally! The growing popularity of the game worldwide, however, has also had its effect in India, where the game is be-After the TNRFU was ing promoted seriously. As a consequence, the Indian national team, which made its maiden appearance in an International Rugby Board tourna ment (a quadrangular) last July, played exceptionally well against Chinese Taipei, one of the stronger teams in Asia (after Japan, Korea and Hong Kong), before eventually losing 10-61. Thanks to the TNRFU this progress has been reflected in South India, where there has been considerable growth in the number of players participating

> The TNRFU, regrettably, does not have a field of its own. Most of the training is imparted to players on the Marina beach. Nevertheless, the TNRFU initiative and the hard work put in by the players seem to be paying off. The state of rugby in Tami Nadu has never looked quite as promising as it does today.

in the sport.

**FLASH:** As this edition goes to press, the news from Mumba is that the Chennai Cheetahs have beaten the Young Rugby Club 15-0.

# Players to watch

The Chennai Cheetahs team includes a few players who have represented India. The team's star player is EMIL VARTAZARIAN, 27, Technical Director, Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union, who came to Calcutta from Iran in 1987 and then started playing for the Armenian Club in 1993. Vartazarian was voted the most valuable player in Indian rugby in 1996 and 1997. The country's most talented kicker, he represented India in the 1998 Asian Rugby Championship in Singapore, scoring the first international points for the country in a match against Thailand.

VINAGAMOORTHY, 26, is a versatile player who specialises in throwing the ball (into the lineout) and booking the ball (in the scrum). He is an excellent coach as well. Moorthy has attended three all-India training camps and taken part in a tournament in Singapore. He has now been selected as an Indian probable for a Triangular Rugby Tournament in Sri Lanka at end-October when India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will play each other.

SUPRATIK, 26, started playing rugby with the Armenian Club in Calcutta in 1997 and later joined Future Hope, then amongst the best rugby teams in the citadel of the sport in India. He is a fly-half but also plays full back and is a good kicker. He has four years of experience playing for the national team and has scored internationally for India.

SATISH, 20, was the first player from the South to represent India internationally - in the Under-19 Asian Rugby Football Union Tournament held in Colombo in 2001. Later, he played for the senior team in Bahrain. He is a good forward who leaps high in

IGNATIUS, 20, a Patrician College student who has attended the all-India training camp before, is a talented player. He is a useful prop forward.

MASOOD MATHANI, 19, is a natural, his tackling being of the highest quality.

GANESH, 19, used to come to watch rugby being played on the beach as a 14-year-old. The TNRFU kept encouraging him and he did not disappoint. Today, he is not only a promising scrum-half but a coach as well.

GOPINATH, 18, is a newcomer who has turned out to be a lineout specialist and is proving to be a good coach.

While the TN Police team does not quite match the Chennai Cheetahs in experience and skill, the team nevertheless has some very promising players. MADESH, 23, is the most promising player and has all the makings of a classy Indian player. Well built and fast, he is a natural and, in the words of Vartazarian, "one born to play rugby but who is not aware of his potential". He has attended an all-India training camp.

BASKAR, 27, the other player in the TN Police team to have attended an all-India camp, is an excellent prop forward.

GNANAPRAKASAM, 27, is a newcomer from Cuddalore. Making use of his build and enormous power, he has turned out to be a useful prop forward.

VIVEKANANTHAN, 25, is another natural player. A second new forward, he is developing as a line-out specialist.

# Chennai to host **Environment and Health meet**

The Third International Conference on Environment and Health is to be held in Chennai from December 15 to 17, 2003, and will be followed on the 18th by a one-day Post-Conference Workshop on 'GIS and IT Tools for Information Sharing in Planning and Environmental Management.' The theme will be 'Urban Planning and Environmental Management for Human Health'. Its sub-themes include:

- The local environment of slum areas and human health
- Water quality and water-borne diseases
- Public participation in management of environment and health
- Air pollution and respiratory illness
- Solid waste management
- Indicators of human and ecosystem health Ecosystem approaches to planning and management
- Transportation
- Noise pollution • Complexity in environment and health systems

The conference will run concurrent paper sessions, from the afternoon of December 15th to the morning of the 17th. One or two themes will be discussed in each session. There will be a panel discussion, for one hour, on December 16th and a roundtable on the last day.

Abstracts for oral paper presentations, no longer than 250 words and reflecting one of the themes of the conference, including upto 6 keywords, should be submitted in electronic form (MSWord or WordPerfect format) to bunchmi@yorku.ca (for international participants) or tv@vsnl.com or madhasuresh@yahoo.com (for Indian participants). Abstracts will be peer-reviewed and decisions communicated to authors. Oral presentations on the topic of abstracts submitted will be of 20 minutes' duration (including a short period for questions and discussion). For further details, contact: Dr. V. Madha Suresh. Tel: 091 44 2658 3044 (Res), Email: madhasuresh @yahoo.com; Dr. T. Vasantha Kumaran, Tel: 091 44 246 0305 (Res), Email: tv@vsnl.com; or Dr. Martin J. Bunch (Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario), Tel: 001-416-736-2100 Ext. 22630, Fax: 001-416-736-5679, Email: bunchmj@yorku.ca

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# No party for an undivided India

# • From the pages of N.D. Varadachariar's 1939-1945 diary

1944

(Continued from last fortnight)

1943

#### Friday January 1

A very pretty function took place at the Music Academy conference, Rasika Ranjini Sabha, when titles were conferred on leading music experts who have presided over the Conference 'Sangita Kalanidhi'. They called it a Convocation, but as far as possible, in its homeliness, informality, colour and warmth, it was a really oriental gathering – a Sadas. In the evening, a very beautiful performance by Brinda, Muktha and Abhirami, full of most pleasant musical expressions.

#### Thursday February 4

(General Hospital where Sita is receiving treatment for typhoid - strict rules for visitors) This hospital discipline is meaningless and absurd in its rigidity. The rules conceive of a patient as a machine gone wrong to be delivered at the repairer's end and to be taken delivery of when put right. They forget that there is a human element. At the same time, all this great care may possibly benefit the patient too.

# Saturday April 3

The goody-goody British Padre class have started deeply regretting the 'impasse' and asking the British Govt to relent! Our freedom comes as a piece of charity, if it does. The vital thing is not freedom but that moral, political and social development which makes its sustenance possible. Do we have that character for freedom?

#### Monday April 5

To see Prof K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar (Eminent Historian). A long, sparkling conversation. As a student of history, he says he can see the British Empire 'visibly and obviously disintegrating' and nothing can ever restore it.

## Sunday April 18

(At the Cosmopolitan Golf Club) Across the stream, a corpse was burning, and on this side, men were drinking and playing!

## Thursday April 22

(On train to Bombay with leading businessmen as fellowtravellers) Conversation was dull and mostly around business and businessmen, of which I understand very little, except that most of them are sharks, greedy and cruel and selfish with no idea for the promotion of industry or the general wealth of the nation. Personal successes are thus frequently national failures.

# Saturday April 24

Bombay, so full and busy, is still strangely disquieting and the feeling is as though she is heading for some disagreeable climax. Food rationing comes on from 2nd May next. Plenty of money is being made, but there is not plenty of happiness about, apparently.

 We today publish the last lot of 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

# Sunday August 8

To Sagar Talkies - Mangamma Sabatham - a Tamil film featuring Vasundhara who acts and sings better than any South Indian I have seen so far.

## Tuesday September 28

(Ruminating over the contemporary scene) Two noteworthy facts are the promise of a great increase in urban air traffic and the perfection of synthetic processes in the manufacture of rubber substitutes.

## Tuesday October 19

I really believe in this: who are the men of light and leading, of character and wisdom who may lift this world by their example and guidance? With all his faults, Gandhi seems to be the only real big character. In the world that I see there is not another man of genuine public spirit and character and selflessness of Gandhi and it is a pity I can't agree with a great deal of his philosophy and view of life.

# Wednesday January 26

C.N.Lakshmikanthan who for years got involved in several cases and went to jail for long terms has been released and is immediately making himself felt. His weekly called Cinema-Thoothu is replete with scandals which he lashes with brutal violence - of course every sentence is a libel according to law, but also, I am told, substantially true.

#### Monday April 17

The South East Asia Command has moved from New Delhi to Ceylon and the reason officially given is that Ceylon is more central. Rumour has it that Mountbatten has fled from Delhi because he found Auchinlek sullen and unhelpful. The cry for Mountbatten's recall is growing in intensity.

#### Monday July 10

In the evening comes startling news of C. Rajagopalachari-Jinnah correspondence by which the former offers Pakistan to latter with the approval of Gandhi.

#### Tuesday July 11

Gandhi approves of offer to

linnah of Pakistan – a commission to ascertain predominantly Muslim areas and plebiscites of all residents there to decide whether or not they would be within India, all this after the British agree to our complete Independence.

#### Friday July 14

With Gandhi going over to the moderate camp, there is no party which stands for complete Independence for an undivided India.

#### 1945

# Saturday May 26

I discovered that I had omitted (in my last testament) to refer to the charity of money of Rs. 800. I have promised S. Guruswami (Labour leader) to buy a bicycle for his son Rs 200 or thereabouts from this charity account. I 'phoned Mr. Sundaram of Royal Cycle who has promised to get this machine (in addition to one for Sampath at my expense). I justify this on the ground that G. is a poorly paid public worker of great ability and character, his boy a brilliant fellow who has earned his father's approval. This will be debited to charity.

(Concluded)

# **Answers to Quiz**

1.150 years of Indian Railways; 2. Edward Teller; 3. Jugraj Singh; 4. 'Hawks' from British Aerospace Systems; 5. Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon; 6. Cancun in Mexico; 7. Let It Be; 8. New Delhi, thanks to a navigation CD produced by a Belgian company, Tele Atlas; 9. Andy Roddick and Jutine Henin-Hardenne; 10. G.S.Ramchand.

11. The family should have one or more IT assessees and monthly income of Rs. 5000 and above; 12. The Hindu; 13. S. Thirunavukkarasar; Bharatidasan University; 15. Connemara; 16. Outside the Cinema Paradiso in Alwarpet; 17. Va. Thu. Natarajan; 18. S.P. Thyagarajan; 19. S. Rm. M.Ct. Muthiah Chettiar; Broadlands.

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