

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Progress & backwardness
- Environmental decision-making
- What Oxford taught
- The biography writer
- Recalling a world record

Vol. XIII No.18

FREE ISSUE

January 1-15, 2004



We shouldn't have sent him to that rejuvenation camp...  
...See, now he's demanding a manicure, pedicure and a full body massage!

## Big problems

Restlessness is rife amongst a gentle species generously endowed in both body and heart — the domesticated elephants. They are a disturbed lot today, prone to sudden mood changes and a general ennui. Lower lips are in pout-mode, and the sound of occasional rumbling grumbling has been reported.

This is only natural. Anyone who has been away on a holiday will tell you that the post holiday getting-back-to-routine phase is both painful and traumatic. (Example: Monday mornings.)

Things have been pretty hectic for these jumbos in the recent past, when around 55 of them were sent away for a spot of R&R in the Nilgiris. First, the pachyderms had to cope with the surprise of having humans behaving like, well, human beings. Nothing in their previous experience had given them any reason to believe that this particular species was capable of thinking of anyone else but themselves.

And suddenly, there they were, feted, fussed over, in a distinctly clubby atmosphere, complete with multi-cuisine buffets, and herbal tonics. Then, just as they were getting used to the good life, the holiday was over, and they were hauled back to everyday reality.

No wonder they are upset and disinclined for work.

Anyone who has fed on honeydew and drunk the milk of paradise needs time to re-adjust.

A holiday to recover from the holiday, in other words.

Ranjitha Ashok

# A beginning for second phase

## But then, Senate House can only hope...

(By The Editor)

Vice Chancellor S.P. Thyagarajan's appeals for funds to restore Senate House have not quite fallen on deaf ears. His appeal to the corporate sector has led to the Willingdon Trust contributing Rs.25 lakh and promising more depending on progress. The Vice-Chancellor's recent Tea, chaired by the Governor of Tamil Nadu, the Chancellor of the University, had the Indian Bank coming forth to contribute Rs.5 lakh and several colleges affiliated to the University contributing anything from Rs.50,000 to Rs.3 lakh. But that much-applauded contribution from the floor totalled only around Rs.12 lakh or so.

Thus, there's around Rs.45 lakh in the Bank — and, of course, there's promise of more. But the second phase of the restoration of Senate House, the conservation of the brick masonry, calls for around Rs.75 lakh. And even that is some way to go, forget the Rs.500 lakh needed to complete the total restoration and put away money in a maintenance fund.

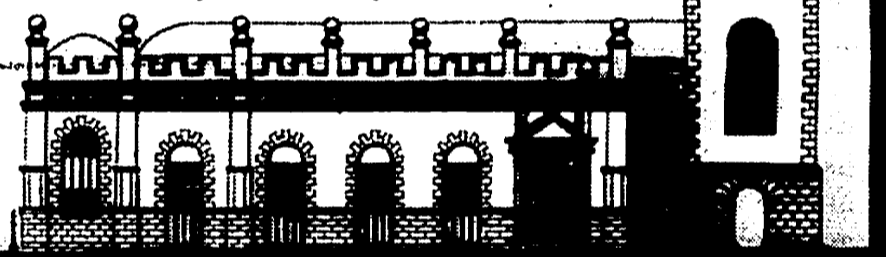
While the numbers look gloomy, the good thing about it all is the positive feeling that pervaded a cleaned up Senate Hall where the Tea and an Exhibition — of both the city's landmark buildings and of Senate House when it was in regular use, even hosting Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Madras in the 1950s — were held. Not only was there the feeling that if any Vice-Chancellor can pull off the restoration of Senate House, it is Prof. Thyagarajan, but there was also a much more positive attitude shown by the University's staff indicating that everything they could do to

help ensure the restoration would be done. It was also confidently felt that the 200 or so colleges affiliated to the University would follow the lead of the dozen or so who promptly responded on the floor and that would lead to a contribution of at least Rs.100 lakh.

But as Madras Musings sees it, the real thrust must come from a restoration and maintenance fund for not only Senate House, but also other heritage buildings in the University campus for which contributions would need to come from alumni and students present and future. In this connection, one of the offers made at the Tea meeting by an IT business house was significant. The offer

(Continued on page 2)

• A greeting card after Madras Musings' heart is this home-made one from Tom and Lynnette Inglis in Scotland. Tom Inglis, a retired architect who has been collecting information on the historic churches of South India, has been making detailed drawings of them and taking notes for a documentation that he hopes to have published one of these days. Meanwhile, his card this year features one of his detailed drawings of St. Mary's in the Fort, the oldest church BUILT by the British outside Britain. Tom Inglis' interest in St. Mary's this year is for another reason as well. He is on the committee of BACSA (British Association of Cemeteries of South Asia) and has been trying to get some action going on the cemetery of St. Mary's on The Island. Sadly, BACSA's efforts to get some action in rescuing this cemetery from the jungle it has become have not been matched with similar enthusiasm locally — and the historic cemetery remains an eyesore.



St Mary's Church Fort St. George Madras

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

## Charity is big business

Charity is a big business from the look of things. According to the latest figures from the Ministry of Home Affairs, voluntary organisations in India received Rs. 4,535.2 crore by way of contributions from abroad

during 2000-01, the latest time period for which this data is available. This is a 15.6% increase from 1999-2000, when NGOs received Rs.3,924.6 crore through foreign contributions.

The top recipient in India of foreign funds was the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, based in Andhra Pradesh, which received Rs. 88.2 crore for 2000-01. Second was the World Vision of India, Tamil Nadu, with Rs. 85.4 crore, followed by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Maharashtra, which received nearly Rs. 75 crore.

The donations show an increasing trend over the last decade, growing by over 220% since 1991, when the total inflow of contributions to organisations stood at Rs. 1,412 crore. Nearly 50 organisations receive over Rs. 10 crore each in foreign donations every year and over 600 organisations

(Continued on page 3)

## There are rich & poor NGOs too

There are a number of voluntary organisations (NGOs) in the country who adopt a rich lifestyle. Many institutions look like five-star hotels. The promoters of such institutions are often high-flyers who talk in lofty terms about the plight of the deprived persons, get considerable space in the press and collect huge amounts of money in the name of the deprived. At the same time, there are a number of NGOs, started and run by dedicated persons from the lower and middle income groups who do not know how to collect funds or manage them. They always live in great economic hardships and run from pillar to post to collect a minimum amount for existence.

Just as steep differences exist in society between the rich and the poor, there also seem to be steep differences amongst rich NGOs and poor NGOs.

## Progress & backwardness

It's been a while since *The Man From Madras Musings* has travelled so much by road and rail. And the experience has revealed once again that no matter how much India progresses, remaining rooted in some of the less attractive practices of the past remains very much part of everyday life. And MMM is not talking about religion and superstition, about both of which MMM tends to say 'to each his own'. No, it's in more progressive areas that the continuance of past practices persists, to make MMM wonder how much we have really progressed.

It was a five-hour train journey on the Vaigai that MMM recently undertook. 'T' was very pleasant too. The train was clean, the toilets too, and the seats were not only comfortable, but no one had even tried to vandalise them. The train was smooth and fast — and as stations sped by, MMM couldn't help but notice how well kept some, like Villupuram and Vriddachalam, were. And right through the journey, there was vendor service offering a variety of food, most of it looking quite appetising. But there lay the rub.

### SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

The railway vendors' uniforms were the most off-putting for food service, making them look more like railwaymen on menial duty. Worse, as they marched up and down the carriages, the food in the trays was exposed to the elements. Serving these items with ungloved hands made it all even more unappetising. Here was a train that may not have been of the 21st Century, but certainly was one of the latter part of the 20th Century; food service, however, was straight out of the 19th Century when hygiene was little cared for. This is one small area where much needs to be done, because more and more travellers today have an international middle class approach to hygiene — and if those standards are not met, the railways are not going to figure in their thinking as a service that has progressed.

### On the roads

They're busy making NH 45 a comfortable 4-lane highway upto somewhere near Villupuram, with six lanes as you exit the city, but must they take so long about it? *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders when it will ever reach Madurai and then head for Kanniyakumari. But that it will get over the next few years, even if a quite a bit behind schedule, MMM has no doubts. For that is par for the course.

What is worrying though is what is happening — or, rather, NOT happening — away from the trunk routes. On one trip, MMM was forced by an acci-

dent on the highway to take a long detour. On a couple of other occasions, MMM's destination was rural India with its network of rural roads of varying quality. But whatever the quality of the original rural roads, many of them are in a sad shape today. They all reflect total neglect and an unwillingness to carry out regular repairs.

Many of these rural roads — could they be given the designation 'State Highway'? — are being widened. But for months on end, the sides of the tarmacked stretches have been dug up and await strengthening. Meanwhile, the apology for a two-lane highway is now even narrower and its edges virtually deep trenches that are death traps. That this work is essential and that the way they've gone about it is the right way is not something MMM wants to cast doubts on. MMM's concern is the inordinate length of time taken to even fill a trench and leave not only some road width but, more importantly, some safety. Getting infrastructure completed in a hurry is still not our way, it seems quite clear from the way road development is going on in the southern reaches of the State. And until that attitude changes, we certainly can't consider ourselves as out of the Third World. Which is a pity, because the country — and this State in particular — has had so much going for it in the last couple of years.

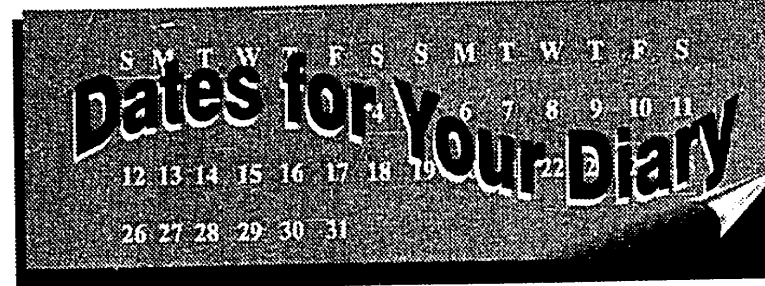
### What's the limit?

He was quite a polite policeman — a happy challe — who flagged us down with one of those red torches not long after it had become dark. The speed gun — radar, he said — had clocked us at 80 kmph. And didn't we know that 60 kmph was the speed limit? Quite frankly, *The Man From Madras Musings* and those with MMM did not know that the speed limit on the highway was a sedate 40 miles per hour!

That announcement by the policeman made MMM wonder whether that was a reasonable limit in this day and age. Particularly for all the super highways being built and the improvements going on on the State Highways, be they at bullock cart pace. It also made MMM wonder, if 40 mph was the speed limit on Indian highways, what was the point of manufacturing even middle level cars indicating on their speedometers 200 kmph or 120 mph. Even if those markers are not ever reached, surely half those speeds are expected to be reached on highways. But not to allow a modern car to come close to even 60 miles an hour seems rather tragic.

MMM feels it's time speed limits were raised on the country's highways — perhaps to 80 kmph on State highways and 100 kmph on National highways — but more importantly

(Continued on page 8)



Till January 12: The Village Festival at DakshinaChitra will feature the folk dances of South India, the martial arts inspired folk dance, Velakkali of Kerala; the colourful and esoteric Gugla Kunithal and Nandhi Kollu of Karnataka; and the vibrant Garaglu and Veeranayam of Andhra; and the peacock-splendoured Mayilattam of Tamilnadu.

Till January 16th: Raghava from Bangalore, who was a cartoonist for *The Times of India*, exhibits his watercolours on canvas. (At Ashvita.)

Till January 26th: Chennai Fest on the 'Funtastic' East Coast Road, with 26 destinations participating with special shows and special prices.

Till January 26th: An exhibition of paintings, sculptures and drawings by Cholamandal artists as part of the Chennai Fest. (At Cholamandal Artists' Village.)

Till January 30: Ayurvedic Exhibition. A variety of herbs used traditionally in *ayurveda* will be on display. (At the Kerala section of DakshinaChitra.)

### Mylapore Festival

January 8-11: *The Mylapore Festival*, 2004, in the open spaces, halls and Mada Streets around Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple.

### The big shows

Outside the eastern gopuram of the Sri Kapali Temple (Rasi show-room, quadrangle)

January 8: 6.00 p.m.: Pinjugalini Panjaratnam (Carnatic classical children's troupe) 7.15 p.m.: Therukkoothu (Cheyyar)

January 9: 6.00 p.m.: *Magic House* — Kattai Koothu play in Tamil by childrens troupe, Kancheepuram 7.30 p.m.: *Jurassic Baby* — Tamil comedy show by Crazy Mohan

January 10: 5.45 p.m.: Tholpappai Puppet Show 7.30 p.m.: Vintage Hindi film songs — by Rooplyni's troupe

## Beginning the second phase

(Continued from Page 1)

was to set up a web site and maintain it free of cost, focussing on such a fund and targetting the alumni. And if such a site is to be successful, it should try to list every alumnus of the University since Independence and try to reach out to as many as possible who are still with us. Simultaneously, the University would need to introduce a nominal fee that every student getting his or her degree from the University from now on would pay every year they are in College. If this amounts to just Rs.100-200 IN TOTO during the entire period the student spends in an affiliated college or the

University itself, it will amount to quite a sum, an amount enough to keep not only *Senate House* but the other buildings on the campus as well in good health.

If such a dedicated effort by the University to reach out to its students, staff and alumni is seen to be made, *Madras Musings* is quite certain that the corporate sector will be as forthcoming, even if the Government fights shy of such small projects. At the same time, all concerned would need to be sure that their contributions, no matter how small, were spent only on *Senate House* in the first place, then on other heritage buildings on the campus, not only on restora-

tion, but also in maintenance. They would also need to be convinced that a well-maintained *Senate House* would be put to good use and generate a part of its own revenue to keep it going. For all this, the University would need to create a joint sector Trust Fund that, in its transparency, would annually report its working to the public. And the sooner such a Trust to launch and administer such a fund is set up, the quicker the funds for *Senate House* will pour in.

Just as *Senate House* can only hope, so does this journal and *Chennai Heritage*, both committed to creating heritage awareness on an ongoing basis and to playing a catalytic role in this instance.

Tamil books sale. Fiction and non-fiction and meet-the-author programmes every evening at 6.30 p.m., at Narayananswami's bungalow (opp. Sivaswamy Kalalaya School).

Carnatic concerts by young artistes for 45 minutes. *Kutcheris* in Nageswara Rao Park, starting at 6.45 a.m., every morning.

### January at DakshinaChitra

January 8: *Collage Workshop* by W. Ramani for students and an exhibition of his work. Ramani a Chennai-based artist is in textile designing, stage décor, cork murals and costume designing. The workshop will help participating students create their own canvases.

January 9 and 10: *Mural Painting Workshop*, where K.K. Warrior of Kerala will help you create your very own murals.

January 9-10: Pongal Celebrations featuring a variety of folk dances of Tamil Nadu and a sumptuous spread of Pongal delicacies at the restaurant in the Heritage Centre.

January 10-31: Photo Exhibition by the Chennai International Camera Club. The members have captured DakshinaChitra through their lenses in many angles, shades and perspectives. There is even a puzzle corner where visitors have to guess the object/place featured — What is it and where is it found inside the Heritage Centre.

January 11: Vintage Car Rally along the East Coast Road and then the old beauties will rest a few hours at DakshinaChitra, and preen for the cameras.

January 23-24: Puppetry Workshop for Primary School Teachers.

January 24-27: Workshop for Architecture students and young Architects. The workshop on the spirit of Vernacular Architecture of South India is based on the relevance of vernacular architecture in contemporary architectural practice.

February 2-March 1: Children's Mela. The mela is the ultimate in entertainment with children exposed to hands-on-crafts, interesting tid-bits of architecture and fun sessions.

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Calling all graduates

Regarding restoration of *Senate House* (MM, December 1st), may I suggest one more way of raising the Rs. 500 lakhs required?

Thousands have passed out of the portals of the Madras University and very many of them received their degrees during the convocations that used to be held annually in *Senate House*. Why not appeal to these thousands, mostly in the old Madras Presidency, and others scattered throughout India?

Would not an appeal made to them strike a soft corner of their hearts? No large sum need be expected. Ask for only Rs. 100/- and no more from each one. It should be a mass effort. Surely there will be 5 lakh responses and the sum can be collected.

The question is how to make this clarification call heard and seen? How is the money to be received and deposited? Should there be a central committee plus district committees? Can the Students' Unions — College Unions be roped in to spread the message and mobilise funds? Many such steps would have to be taken.

I am saying all this because I am not sure if the sum required can be expected from corporates. Although many may make welcome contributions, should not those who passed out of the University feel they should also contribute their mite to a deserving cause?

P. Sabanayagam, I.A.S. (RETD.) 'Sumangala' 45, Chammers Road Chennai 600 028

### Raising funds

Propos the report of MMM, read together with the letter from reader R. Rajagopalan, offering suggestions to raise funds for the laudable object of renovating and restoring the past glory of *Senate House* by the time Madras University celebrates its 150th year in 2006-7 (MM, December 1st), may I make one more suggestion.

Could not *Madras Musings* agree to play the role of a convener or a co-ordinator of a fund created under its auspices to which readers of their own volition subscribe Rs. 50 or more according to individual means by, shall we say, 2004 when the accumulated fund could be handed over to the VC for utilisation towards the renovation work? Such funds could be

### 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.



conspicuously acknowledged by a plaque in *Senate House*.

M. Ratnasabapathi 29, Maruthupandiyar Street K.K. Nagar Madurai 625 020

Editor's Note: *Madras Musings* has problems enough raising funds for its own survival without attempting to raise funds for others, no matter how laudable the cause. But the University *Senate House* fund — which has a separate account — will gladly accept whatever contribution anyone wishes to make, we are sure.

### The pig menace

Despite public complaints about the problems created by stray pigs, which cause brain fever, and the cruel way these pigs are slaughtered and their flesh sold in unhygienic conditions, no action is being taken to curb the menace by local bodies.

It is essential that Government curbs this unhygienic practice of rearing pigs in this manner by making such practices punishable.

V. Rajasekaran Convener Social Service Centre 12/11, Manali New Town Chennai 600 103

### Hierarchically speaking

It has been stated in *Madras Musings*, November 16th, and elsewhere that C.V. Narasimhan was the Indian who occupied the 'senior-most' position in the UN. In fact, B.R. Sen, I.C.S., former Director-General of the FAO, ranked higher in the UN hierarchy and protocol because he was the Head of an Organisation. Of course, *Chef de Cabinet* is a vital and powerful position, comparable in India to the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

G. Sundaram, I.A.S. (RETD.) 'Burma House', New No. 33, Old No. 18 9th Street Dr. Radhakrishnan Road Chennai 600 004

### Neglected North Chennai

Recently, at a citizens' forum, some kind souls drew the Government's attention to the fact that North Chennai is the most neglected. Neglected? It is condemned like some poor relation's house which is never visited unless some death occurs. No Minister ever thinks of living anywhere north of Central Station. In British days, this was Black Town. Sadly, even now, it is the place for less fortunate people.

While many blanch at the prospect of the Secretariat moving to QMC or Anna University/ Kotturpuram area, citizens of North Chennai will be overjoyed if the Secretariat is established here, but the Government will have none of it. Even those who grew up in these filthy streets and made it big

in politics, avoid it like the plague. Can't blame them though.

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

### A break needed

In his article "... Mad Mad Season" (MM, December 1st), K. Sivaraman has bemoaned the fact that *rasikas* leave the concert hall during *thani* to relax. This is a predicament brought on by the concert performers themselves.

During the concert, the *vidwan* trots out piece after piece of music with very little time in between. Listeners seek respite by walking out at this time to relax their limbs. They would stick to their seats and do justice to the percussionists also if a short interval of, say, 15 minutes is given in the middle of the concert.

Many years ago, Dr. Balamurali Krishna used to declare a short interval in his concerts. During this period, he would himself come out of the hall to relax and breathe the fresh air outside.

M. Sethuraman Chennai 600 088

### A musing heard afar

When MM muses, it is heard far and wide! And when it muses, it gathers the attention of the renowned and the illustrious.

An anecdote in the life of the remarkable Govind Swaminadhan mentioned by me was published in *Madras Musings* (MM, November 1st). It elicited the following letter which is worthy of reproduction as it comes from Ahmadabad and from a person of name and fame:

I am deeply touched by your letter in MM about my eldest brother Govind Swaminadhan.

We are still fighting the same battle for Truth and Justice! You may have read of Mallika's seeking justice for women and children and how she is being attacked.

With best regards, Mrinalini Vikram Sarabhai

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan Carnatic Classics 3, 24th Cross Street Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020

### Music at Kapali

Propos an item in MM some time ago, Kapaleeswarar temple could always boast of very good *oduvans* like the late Lalugudi Sri Swaminathan, Sri Naganathan today, and a very young and much involved Sri Sadgurunathan. Both the present *oduvans* seem to take delight in singing *Thevaram* songs in their mellifluous voices set to melodious music with pleasing manners. It is no exaggeration to say that some devotees visit the temple not only for their usual prayers but also to hear them sing at the time of evening *arathi* to the deities. Similarly the *nadaswaram vidwan* of this temple is a most gifted one and it is a pleasure to hear his *nadaswaram*.

T.M.Sundaramman 19, Nallappan Street Mylapore Chennai 600 004

### Moving slaughter house

In his letter early this year, I.Dr.M.S. Jayaraman, retired Professor, Madras Veterinary College, had given a heart-rending account of the cruel treatment of cattle, pigs and poultry before and during slaughter. Dr. Jayaraman had exhorted animal lovers and health activists to seek implementation of the decade-old proposal to shift the slaughter house from its present location in Otteri.

I am not aware if there has been any progress in the matter and, if not, I would again plead for attention to this important issue. Why not form a group to meet and chalk out a programme for this purpose?

B.S. Doraiswamy 12A, Jeevika Apartments 46, Pulla Avenue Shenoy Nagar Chennai 600 030

### The hospital too

The letter from Reader M.R. Pillai (MM, November 1st)

## Shrines compound traffic problems

In recent months there has been a proliferation of small temples in Chennai. The majority of them have been built on private initiative, but have come up on public land, mostly on pavements and road corners. Most of them are structures of around 150-200 sq. feet and reduce the available road space. Unless the authorities act promptly, the numbers of such temples will only increase further and create more traffic problems.

While every one of us respects the religious sentiments of the public, a line has to be drawn when religion becomes business, as seems to be the case with many of these small religious structures sprouting across the city.

These recently built temples and other religious structures, both legal and illegal, aggravate both road and pavement space problems. Most of them also attract petty shopkeepers who ply their trades around the temples, occupying at least 6-8 feet more of the road/pavement. Then there is a lane of beggars reducing the road space further. In many instances, vehicle parking (mostly two-wheelers) leads to further loss of road space. In some cases, the temple managements brazenly put up barricades enclosing the pavement and part of the roads, protecting the space for the use of the shopkeepers.

While it may be too much to expect the authorities to act against these encroachments by religious establishments already existing, can't they at least ensure that no new illegal religious structures, big or small, come up? It is heartening to note that one such illegal structure under construction in the Lily Pond area has been demolished by the Corporation officials. Such prompt action is needed in the future also.

T. Prem Kumar 25, First Avenue, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600020

## CHARITY IS BIG BUSINESS

(Continued from Page 1)

annually get foreign donations of over Rs. 1 crore each.

The largest chunk of the money received was earmarked for rural development, which accounted for Rs. 537 crore of donations end-2001. Second came health and family welfare, which received Rs. 433 crore. Around 10% of the total inflow is used for religious activities — primarily by Christian and Hindu organisations.

Over the last decade, the organisation which has received the largest donations overall is the Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidya Peetham, with total incoming funds of close to Rs. 400 crore. It is followed by World Vision India, with Rs. 375 crore and Foster Parents Plan International, with net foreign donations of Rs. 370 crore.

Where is all the money coming from? The USA heads the list of donor countries in 2000-01, with Rs. 1,492.6 crore, followed by UK and Germany, contributing Rs. 677.6 crore and Rs. 665.4 crore respectively.

The largest single donor agency, World Vision International, also from the US, poured Rs. 80.4 crore into India-based NGOs in 2000-01. Poster Plan of USA came second, donating Rs. 76.4 crore. — (Courtesy: *Nandini Voice for the Deprived.*)

gives us glimpses of old Triplicane. I was also a resident of Triplicane for nearly 55 years, from 1946 to 2001. I have also enjoyed, like Reader Pillai, places like Indra Bhavan, Coimbatore Krishna Iyer's Hotel, the temple of Big Street, the MCC ground, Marina Beach, political meetings at Thilak Ghat and the Corporation Band music.

I was really overjoyed reading the letter bringing back memories, though I am at present residing in Coimbatore, away from Chennai. I cannot forget my old connections with the great city of Madras. I may add here one more thing, about Gosha Hospital, now called Kasturba Gandhi Hospital, where all my seven children were born. All are OK. Old is Gold. God is Great.

S.V.S. Mani 2, Thiyagi Bagath Singh 1st Street Venkatapuram Velandipalayam P.O. Coimbatore 641 025

### Moving slaughter house

In his letter early this year, I.Dr.M.S. Jayaraman, retired Professor, Madras Veterinary College, had given a heart-rending account of the cruel treatment of cattle, pigs and poultry before and during slaughter. Dr. Jayaraman had exhorted animal lovers and health activists to seek implementation of the decade-old proposal to shift the slaughter house from its present location in Otteri.

I am not aware if there has been any progress in the matter and, if not, I would again plead for attention to this important issue. Why not form a group to meet and chalk out a programme for this purpose?

B.S. Doraiswamy 12A, Jeevika Apartments 46, Pulla Avenue Shenoy Nagar Chennai 600 030

# No excuse for hasty decisions

No aspect of environment is unimportant. Is 'water pollution' more important than 'air pollution'? Or does 'hazardous waste management' demand greater attention than others? What about pollution of coastal waters, or disappearance of biodiversity and green cover? Where does one start with environmental management?

This is important since no one has loads of money to throw away; every investment, therefore, should give maximum returns. While today there is enough technical and analytical capability, the critical question is how these scientific inputs can be integrated into sound decision-making that will deliver a product which will be sustainable and confer benefits on vulnerable sections of society who always seem to bear the brunt. There is need therefore

• Excerpts from the keynote address by P.M. BELLIPPA, I.A.S. (Retd.), former Chairman, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, and UN Expert on Environment, delivered at the 3rd International Conference on Environment and Health held recently at the University of Madras.

to take a holistic view of Environment and prioritise actions.

The fastest growing population in the poorest countries is the urban population. There are almost two billion people living in urbanised regions of the developing world, three-quarters of whom face acute poverty, inadequate or no housing and sanitation facilities, severe lack of drinking water, infant mortality, poor maternal and child health, and suffer the crowning misery of high rates of HIV/AIDS infection. By 2030, the two billion is expected to grow to four billion, in a global population close to 8 billion. The number of cities with more than five million people (megacities) will increase from 41, at present, to 59 by 2015. Only one of the expected new megacities will be located in a developed country. By 2020, India will have the largest urban population in the world!

The enormity of the problem demands focussed attention on connections between the built environment and people who

live there. The built environment is that part of the physical environment made by people for people. Urban planners, who are public authorities, should be buttressed by strong political will that should exercise necessary restraint on the private market and thus protect the public from the worst excesses of the private sector. What this means is that there should be only that much of building stock consistent with an infrastructure that can support the development. The urban complexes should be sustainable and yield an enhanced quality of life.

I refer to two individuals, who were involved in creating urban complexes. A Scotsman, Patrick Geddes, was recognised in Britain as a pioneer of ecological town planning. He arrived in Madras in 1914. While in India, he wrote nearly fifty town plans, from Dhaka in the east to Ahmadabad in the west and from Lahore in the north to Thanjavur in the south. In these plans, his 'practical-ecological' approach can be seen through recommendations for setting aside open spaces for recreation, tree planting, and protecting and provision of sustainable and safe water supply. He strongly recommended preservation and maintenance of tanks and reservoirs, both as a protection against flooding and as a measure of recharging the aquifer. Acutely aware of the resource-extractive characteristics of modern cities, Geddes sought to harmonise urban living with the countryside.

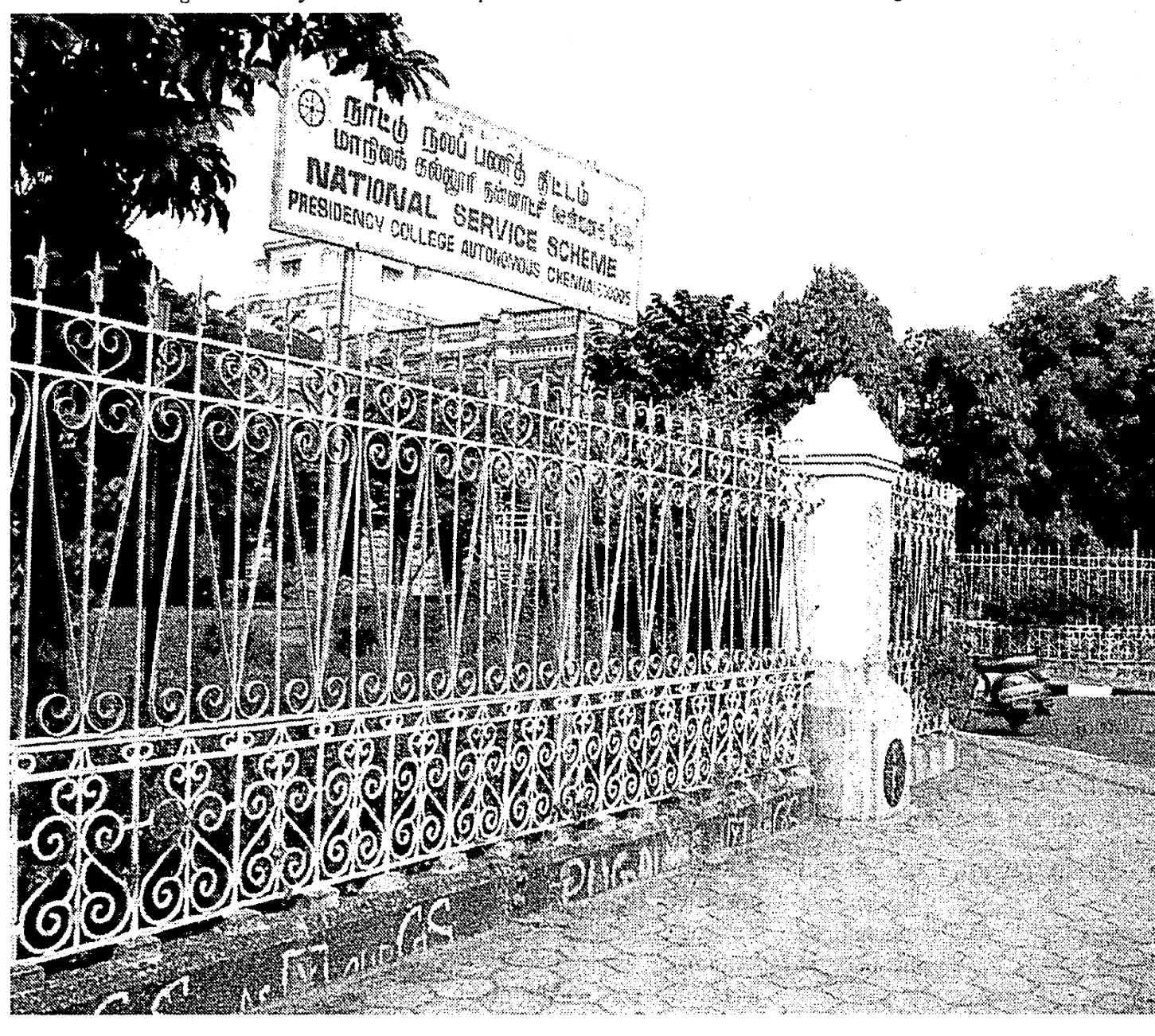
The other person is from much earlier period, Mohammed-bin-Tuglak, who in his zeal to immortalise himself shifted his capital from Delhi to a place which, as it transpired, had no water. The project turned out to be a fiasco. The waste of resources was, of course, incidental and the minor loss written off!! There was no skin off the ruler's back and as usual the poor had to pay for his folly.

These are studies in contrast, but there are lessons to be learnt. While Geddes was intuitively perceptive, cautious, and made development plans that sought to integrate nature, Mohammed-bin-Tuglak, however well intentioned, was over-ambitious, reckless and committed himself without proper application of mind. Neither



Our OLD is of the ornate metal railings that topped the low wall behind which is Presidency College on the Marina. That low wall and the low railings have been there all along the Marina as long as I can remember.

**THE OLD... & THE NEW**  
Now there's a change at Presidency College. Our NEW, captured by REFLECTIONS, shows how the old railings have grown. The metal and the paint might be similar, but the growth is far from kin to the old railings. Surely whoever worked on the NEW could have got a professional designer who might have better integrated the NEW with the OLD. Be that as it may, another question that arises is what was the necessity to raise the old to new heights that only make the State's premier educational institution look as though it is behind bars.



had the benefit and assistance of modern scientific technologies, knowledge, and approaches available today for decision-makers.

If proliferation of megacities is to take place in the developing world, an onerous responsibility rests on urban planners and their masters to ensure that lives of people who inhabit these cities, particularly those living on the margins, are not worse off as a result of the development.

The overarching goal of any joint exercise of urban planning and public health assessment should be based on two fundamental, though understated, concepts of 'equality' and 'democracy'. Equality in the sense that all those living within the built environment, irrespective of their economic condition, have human rights and justifiable expectations that they will receive equal benefits from the State's politics and programmes that are designed to protect health, and conversely protection from vulnerability to ill-health.

By 'democracy' is meant

more participation of the governed in the designing and implementation of schemes executed for their benefit. It is not an empty ritual of participation or mere 'tokenism'. The process should reflect a genuine attempt to involve citizens through partnership and delegated power, more so since most of these projects are implemented through public funds which ultimately are raised or paid for by the community. Honest involvement of the community can light up the dark corners of fear and misinformation that usually are the bane of sound projects, and make for easier implementation.

Huge developments require massive funds which are usually accessed and controlled by governments. It is required and expected of decision-makers in the higher echelons of power that these funds are deployed after due consideration of all consequences and implications, in the long term, of their decisions; after comprehensive consultation with major stakeholders and not on the basis of a

whim. It should not become a case of acting in haste and repenting at leisure.

There can be no excuse for today's leaders to take hasty or ill-considered decisions as they have the advantage of sophisticated analytical techniques, and an accurate knowledge base which can be accessed without difficulty to help them in arriving at the best possible decision. Decision-makers should not become prisoners of ego or trapped in illusions of their own infallibility. As Nehru once said, nation-building is a life time's business. It is a race where one team hands over the baton to another to reach the distant goal; in this case a never-ending goal.

A poor, developing country, with societies at low levels of literacy and awareness, led by strong and ambitious decision-makers having access to resources, is a heady cocktail. Enlightened decision-making, which alone can put the jigsaw of sophisticated technical analytical tools into a composite whole that can yield beneficial results, is essential.

## NOSTALGIA

# To think, is what Oxford taught

Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1947, was the Chairman of the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee that had the task of selecting two from India. The heavy crop of hair he had was silvery white, although his eyebrows retained their black hue; and to judge from the fresh-coloured features and the dark eyes that were boldly twinkling upon me, Sir Maurice must, in his more youthful days, have had his ample share of good looks. He was upward of six-feet-six and his large frame was clad in a gray herringbone suit. A massive watch-seal dangled from under his waistcoat. His presence struck me with a sort of awe and confusion.

At this third and final interview in New Delhi, he spoke more than I did: "The climax of the British Empire has not profoundly affected Oxford, though half the Viceroy's of India were Oxford men. Sons of Oxford have been among our

greatest Empire builders and Empire rulers." I remained silent. He said that he had a general prejudice against all persons who do not succeed in the world. I was expected to say something during the pause that followed. "Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India and then Chancellor of Oxford University. My father, a civil servant, was a great admirer of this great aristocrat and made us read all about him. I enjoyed it. It inculcated in me a reverence for the

Maurice appreciated that. And so I went to Christ Church.

It seemed to me that Oxford's methods were antiquated: no attendance, no rote learning. Yet it appeared to give something to its students, a mode of thought which clarified their mind, made their vision larger, and to give, above all, that caressing suavity of manner which came of a conviction that nothing matters, except ideas. I understood that the key to this mystery is found in the opera-

• by Eric Prabhakar

principles of honour and truth." He was pleased to hear me. He gave me the scholarship.

"As you don't know the colleges, and there are 33 of them in Oxford, you probably have no preference." I responded gladly and immediately: "I don't know the colleges. But I prefer to go to your college." Sir

tions of a person called 'the tutor'. I had two tutors: a moral tutor, Sir Roy Harrod, who lived in Christ Church, and an academic tutor, Sir Hubert Henderson. Sir Roy was a Keynesian economist who specialised in economic growth and Sir Hubert was a Classical economist and was Chairman of

# When we were 40 years younger

"You must have found things very difficult when you first came to India." How often I hear that comment! Well, 41 years ago, life was certainly different but granted that we look back, generally, through proverbially rose-coloured glasses, I do believe times were better.

The city was smaller, quieter, cleaner. Wonderful old trees made shady avenues of Edward Elliot's Road, Mowbray's Road, most of the roads in T. Nagar and even many parts of Mount Road. Policemen patrolled on bicycles and were kind and courteous — and mostly unnecessary. Our two children grew up in a very safe environment. During week-ends and school holidays, they would, after breakfast, disappear into the neighbourhood and return only for lunch... with friends in tow... unless the meal in the friend's house was more appealing! Unni would go where he found the best *sambar-sadam*, Gita, the best fish. Then out again... who knows where? The biggest danger was too much sun. How different today... kids are either escorted by mothers or en-

trusted to drivers who have worked for no less than 10 years with the family... rightfully so.

For almost 17 years we lived in Mylapore, the heart of conservative Madras, and I am grateful for the help and affection given to me by neighbours, for many of whom I might have been their first 'foreign' contact. They made me feel welcome in their homes, they taught me about Indian customs, mores, cooking. One took the trouble to teach me how to choose green coffee seeds, roast and grind at home, make the 'decocction'... for me, the idea of Nescafe was ludicrous. The illustrious Professor Ramaswamy would stop me in the street and discuss, in a most non-patronising manner, the latest book I was reading. Malathi Ramachandran introduced me to the American Library and let me know which were the latest good reads or magazines, a friendship that has lasted almost 40 years.

The Zoological Survey of India's office was located opposite our home, before it moved to larger premises in San Thomé, and the Director gave

a patient hearing to our daughter's questions whenever she walked into the building... rather frequently, during holidays. They had a small museum and Gita was curious about the stuffed birds and small mammals. Her love of the scientific world was inspired by the officers she talked with. Today, in this busy competitive world, would anyone have the time, let alone the kind spirit, to indulge a little girl.

Another Mylapore friend, a colleague of my husband, gave us a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* for our marriage. He and I have a 40-year-old debate still continuing... as a pacifist, and for the past eight years, officially Buddhist, I am unable to come to terms with Lord Krishna's advice to Arjuna. Our friend Ramakrishnan tells me it is one of his life's goals to make me understand... Not a chance, dear friend!

Of course there were problems for a foreign woman, but most of those problems were overcome by a sense of humour. Without that I would not have survived but, in my opinion, the same holds true even today, for



The Christ Church, Oxford, Nondescripts Club with the author smack in the centre of the picture.

the Royal Commission on Population. I soon found that these two dons were antagonists and didn't talk to each other.

I was told to meet my moral tutor first, for he was to guide me on my behaviour, what company to keep, what clubs to join and, in general, induct me into Oxford's privileged life. I was warned that Sir Roy was gifted with a great command of words and had a restless intelligence and overflowing knowledge. But he was quick to see that I was no ordinary freshman. I was 23 and already a graduate. He adjudged that though I was not insolent in principle, I would refuse to be patronised by anyone. Slim and unmistakably Indian in appearance, I talked with a strong lilt and resonance and in a peculiar vocabulary

that was derived equally from Bangalore schools and Indian sportsfields. "Nobody will interfere with your freedom of thought and expression. Oxford society is classless, because birds of a feather, if uncaged, will always flock together. Also class, with us, is a matter of affinity, and has nothing to do with who our fathers are or how much money they have. Surplus money, indeed, for the few that possess it, is used for entertaining friends, but can never buy social success. While social failure, nine times out of ten, is your own fault. We have no colonels, party chiefs, or bosses, towards whom our natural feelings have to be subdued by duty. As for power, we never even think about it: a mark of Utopia." I left him, as I was to leave him always, moved and charmed.

My thesis for a B. Litt. Degree was the 'Population Problem of India, with special reference to its effects on the standard of living'. Sir Hubert Henderson who had just laid down his incumbency as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Population in Great Britain, was rightly appointed my academic tutor. A slight, tall figure, elderly, very quiet and very grave. I shall always remember the first essay that I ever took to Sir Hubert and the devastating criticism that it evoked. He wanted to see the quality of my writing before going on to the thesis, so he told me to write an estimate of Mahatma Gandhi. He waved me into an armchair and asked me to read it to him. "Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi," I began, "was born at Porbandar, India, on 2 October 1869." "No, never," cried Sir Hubert, "Under any circumstances, begin an essay like that." And he started me off on half a dozen different tracks. "What did Gandhi stand for? Was he a genuine politician? Was he a religious leader? Begin with an epigram, begin with a paradox, or begin with a demonstrably false premise and demolish it. But never, never, start off with such a dry statement as Marcus Tullius Cicero

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued on page 8)

## Quizzin' with Raminan

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

1. What was 'Operation Red Dawn'?
2. Who is this year's 'FIFA World Player of the Year'?
3. Where in India is Google, the popular search engine company, planning to set up its first engineering R&D outside the U.S.?
4. Which Rolling Stone was awarded a knighthood on December 12th?
5. Name the Prime Minister of Canada who bowed out after being in power for ten years?
6. In which European country has a Presidential panel recommended a ban on Islamic headscarves and other perceived religious symbols, leading to opposition across religions?
7. On December 11th, there was a big function in the Rajya Sabha to celebrate which democratic event?
8. Why was Chandigarh's Sergeant Uday Singh in the international news?
9. Who has been selected for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2002?
10. Who has become the first Indian golfer to make it to the prestigious and tough US PGA Tour?

\* \* \*

11. Name the pioneering neurosurgeon with a 'legendary' reputation who passed away recently.
12. Name the dedicated environment-newspaper launched by Exnora International.
13. Name the temple at Darasuram, near Kumbakonam, that is one of the six tourism spots in the State to be selected for landscaping this year by the Union Government.
14. Name the latest Faculty to be constituted in Anna University.
15. Name the double international from Tamil Nadu who represented India in tennis and cricket.
16. Which area near Adyar had, once, names like Vedapuri, Amudhapuri and Oushadapuri?
17. Whose cenotaph has given rise to Cenotaph Road in Chennai being named after it?
18. How has the new Kamal Haasan film, once titled *Sandiyar*, been renamed?
19. R. Krishnamurthy is the Editor of which Tamil newspaper?
20. Who is known for such famous literary works as *Sivagamiyin Sabatham* and *Solaimalai Ilavarasi*?

(Answers on Page 8)

• The fourth in an occasional series on Tamil Writers

## Biography & history were his forte

It was a bright morning in Madras in the 1920s. A young man, who had come to the city seeking his future in journalism, sat in a small, dusty and disarrayed room. Across from him was a dignified-looking person under whom he was to receive training. He was surprised when the older man pulled out of his pocket a fistful of *Karuvelam* twigs, normally used as a 'toothbrush' in rural areas. The man smiled at the trainee, picked out a twig, fished out a nib and tied them together with a piece of string. The tooth brush had 'morphed' into a pen! When the young man demonstrated surprise at this makeshift pen, the wise man replied, "Anything that writes is a pen, right?" and dipping it into a bottle of ink on the table began to write.

The young man was Kalki, the office was that of the renowned Tamil scholar and pioneer journalist, Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar (Thiru Vi Ka). And the twig-pen user was Ve. Swaminatha Sarma (1895-1978), the sadly neglected but brilliant writer of modern Tamil literature. He showed his brilliance in many genres of writing, like biography, political philosophy, fiction, travel and drama. He was also a talented translator. In all, he wrote 78 books but achieved immortality with his play *Baanapurathu Veeran*, which was treated as part of the

literature of the Indian Freedom Movement.

An earlier time, another place. A day in 1912. A Tamil daily announced a talk on the Tamil language by Ve. Swaminatha Iyer. The venue was a school, but it attracted a large gathering including many Tamil scholars like Karpankadu Gopalachariar and Ka.Ra. Govindaraja Mudaliar. They were all surprised when a teenager walked on to the dais and began to speak. Almost everyone had thought that the

• by Randor Guy

speaker was to be that icon of Tamil literature, 'Thamizh Thaatha' U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer! However everyone remained to listen and praise the speaker for his erudition and eloquence. Soon afterwards, the young speaker changed his name to Ve.Swaminatha Sarma, dropping the misleading suffix!

One of the most significant contributions of Sarma not only to Tamil literature but also to knowledge in Tamil Nadu was his writing of biographies, political philosophy and international history. He wrote books on Mussolini, Hitler, Kemal Pasha, Rousseau, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Sir Isaac Newton, Mazzini and Sun Yat Sen as well as histories of Russia, China, Greece, Palestine,

Czechoslovakia etc. and on historic revolutions. He was the first and — most certainly — the only Tamil writer who wrote on such subjects at a time when the average Tamilian had not even heard of many of the people or countries.

As a playwright, his most famous play was *Baanapurathu Veeran*. It was written as a serial in 1921-24 in the popular weekly *Navasakthi* published by Thiru Vi. Ka. and won much acclaim. Published as a book in 1924, it attracted wider atten-

tion. In 1931, TKS Brothers staged it under a new title, *Desa Bhakthi*.

Sarma wrote this play inspired by the legend of Robert Bruce. Sarma 'Tamilised' the Scottish names, and gave the play a real ambience. Thus, 'Bannockburn' became 'Baana-puram', Bruce 'Puresan' and Wallace 'Walesan'!

S.V. Sahasranamam, the well-known stage and screen star, played the lead role. During the play's run, the revolutionary patriots, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, were hanged and the event was adapted into the play by Sarma who wrote fresh scenes. Patriotic songs of the revolutionary poet Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar were also added, ignoring the fact that his work



Ve. Swaminatha Sarma.

was banned by the government. When the hero was brought to the gallows, he would shout fervently "Bharat Matha Ki Jai!" And the entire audience would rise to a man and repeat the patriotic slogan resoundingly.

Not only was the play eventually banned, but to stop such persuasive influences, the Madras provincial government introduced a new rule, insisting that a fresh licence had to be obtained in every town where the play was to be staged — and in many cases the play was refused permission without assigning reasons.

Swaminatha Sarma was born in Vengalathur, then in North Arcot District. His father, Muthuswami Iyer, was interested in the arts and was a scholar in many languages, including Sanskrit. Thus, writing was in Sarma's genes. In later years, Sarma was to declare, "I live to write, and not write to live!"

Sarma began his writing career when, in 1904-1905, Japan, then considered an insignificant Asian nation, defeated mighty Czarist Russia. Indians, thirsting for freedom at the time, hailed the victory as a symbol of Asian strength. Sarma, a schoolboy at the time, spoke about the Japanese victory and its significance for India and began to write on the theme. He also chose to become a writer! Even in the best of times, writing is an insecure and hazardous profession, especially in India. So, to keep the home fires burning, Sarma learnt stenography and worked in many places on incredibly low salaries, like a rupee and half per mensem!

At first he wrote in English. It was a novel, the typescript of which was lost by the prospective publisher. He took this as a 'divine' hint that he should stick to Tamil and not English! Indeed, he considered it a turning point in his life.

Like many writers eager to see their first work in print, Sarma funded the publication of his first book, a novel, *Gourimani*. In 1919, he joined Thiru Vi.Ka's *Desa Bhakthi* as associate editor. Here, he honed his writing skills. When Thiru Vi.Ka promoted the patriotic weekly *Navasakthi*, Sarma was again its associate editor. When Tanguturi Prakasam promoted *Swarajya*, a daily, also in Tamil, he chose Sarma as its associate editor.

Sarma moved to Burma in (Continued on page 8)

## A world record that stood for 48 years

It remains one of Indian cricket's proudest statistical achievements. Oh sure, Sunil Gavaskar's tally of 10,122 runs in Tests, his still unbroken tally of 34 hundreds, Kapil Dev's world record mark of 434 wickets and Dravid and Laxman's two 300-run stands are all achievements any Indian is proud of. But when a world record stands for 48 years, involving some 1300 Test matches, it has an aura of its own. And what Vinoo Mankad and Pankaj Roy achieved at the Corporation Stadium in Madras on January 6 and 7, 1956 was indeed something very special. Even if nothing else, its durability is testimony to this.

Their names do not roll off the tongue together in the same manner as Hobbs and Sutcliffe, Hutton and Washbrook, Lawry and Simpson and Greenidge and Haynes. But Mankad and Roy achieved something that eluded even these legendary opening pairs. On the 48th anniversary of their achievement, it is occasion to recall, by way of tribute, the background to that feat and how it came about.

Roy was a natural opening batsman and had served Indian cricket in that capacity from his opening Test against England in New Delhi in November 1951. Mankad, on the other hand, had alternated between opening the innings and going in the middle and even late order. The two opened for the first time during that third Test against England played in Calcutta. With opening stands of 72 and 103 (unbroken) their impact was immediate and they seemed to have solved India's quest for a successful opening pair.

Mankad and Roy opened in the next Test and were less successful, with partnerships of 39

and 7. The next time they opened together was against England in 1952. But after a partnership of 106 at Lord's, they fell away with successive stands of 7, 4, 7 and 0. They opened again in the first Test against Pakistan in New Delhi in 1952-53 but put on only 19.

Madhav Apte briefly replaced Mankad as Roy's opening partner in the West Indies

6th, with the pitch ideal for batting, the two walked out to open the innings after Polly Umrigar had won the toss.

The New Zealand bowling had held no terrors for the Indians who had, in successive Tests, knocked up scores of 498 for four declared, 421 for eight declared, 531 for seven declared and 438 for seven declared. John Hayes and Tony MacGibbon opened the bowling but Mankad and Roy, sizing up the bowling and the pitch, made runs comfortably. In support, New Zealand had the medium pace of skipper Harry Cave, the off-spin of John Reid and Matt Poore, and the leg spin of A.M. Moire.

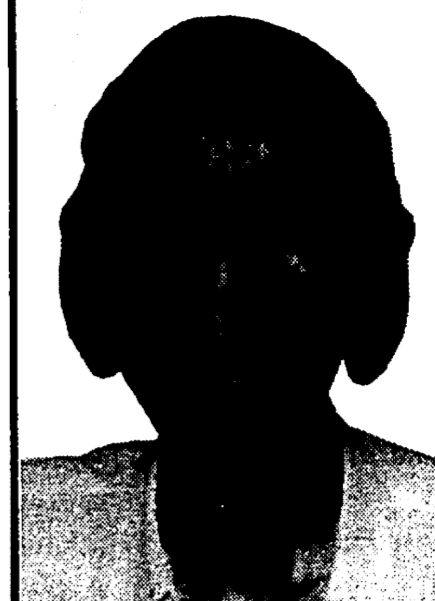
With conditions heavily loaded in their favour, Mankad and Roy brought up their 100 and then the 200. But as S.K. Curunathan reported in Indian Cricket almanac, "It was by no means the best knock played either by Mankad or by Roy. Both were hesitant in making their strokes, but there was no lack of concentration and determination to stay at the wicket as long as possible. Mankad now and again played his rousing pull-shot and the drive to the off, but he rarely brought off his dazzling cuts."

Roy won the race to the hundred. He had batted 262 minutes and had hit only six fours. Shortly afterwards, the Indian record for the first wicket — the famous 203-run stand between Vijay Merchant and Mushtaq Ali at Manchester in 1936 — was passed. Shortly before close, Mankad reached his hundred in 287 minutes with nine fours. At close, India were 234 for no loss with Roy on 114 and Mankad on 109. The two were the third pair of batsmen — and the first for India — to bat throughout a complete day's play in a Test match. However, they were the first pair of batsmen in the history of Test cricket to bat throughout the opening day's play.

The next day, the two continued from where they had left off. Mankad overtook Roy and stayed ahead. They were still together at lunch with the score past 300 and now the sights were on 359 — the record for all Test cricket by Hutton and Washbrook against South Africa at Johannesburg in 1948-49. This too was passed and then came up the 400 which was followed by Mankad's double hundred — his second of the series.

(Continued on page 8)

## IN MEMORIAM



and the purse was presented to another cricketer. But Gopalan refused to make an issue of this rank injustice or take on the role of a martyr. He took even this philosophically, though coming from a middle class background, he could certainly have done with the money.

As the years rolled by, Gopalan's gait became slower and slower, the stoop became more and more pronounced and finally, the walking stick became

## The GOM of Indian Cricket

Too young to watch M.J. Gopalan play, I count my blessings that I at least had the opportunity to be associated with him in my capacity as a sports journalist. In fact, by the time I started taking a keen interest in cricket in the late 1950s, Gopalan was on the national selection committee and that was how I came to hear about him for the first time.

As luck would have it, about a decade later I joined the cricket writers' fraternity and met him for the first time during the Gopalan Trophy Match at Madras in 1969. Having in the meantime heard and read so much about him, I was plainly glad to be introduced to him.

At 60, he still cut a trim and fit figure with his height, silver hair, firm handshake and easy, dignified manner. A few months later, I won the first prize in a cricket quiz contest conducted by Burmah Shell on the eve of the India-Australia Test match at Chepauk and it was my good fortune to receive the award from Gopalan who had been invited to preside over the function as an ex-Burmah Shell stalwart.

For the next three decades, we were in fairly constant touch. I found him to be refreshingly honest and sincere in his approach. When he was Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, he was not afraid to speak his mind on various issues concerning the game and the players. As an administrator, only two things mattered to Gopalan — making sure decisions taken by the officials benefited cricket, and the cricketers themselves.

Soft-spoken, modest and unassuming by nature, Gopalan took disappointments in his stride. Certainly he deserved many more chances to play for the country, but shrugged off the lack of opportunities philosophically. He had to endure a major disappointment even when he was almost 80. The CBFS in Sharjah announced that Gopalan would be one of the beneficiaries and would receive a purse. At the last moment, he was removed from the list of cricketer-beneficiaries

a regular trademark. But he never missed an important match. Be it cricket or hockey, he graced the occasion with his presence. Being an elder statesman, he was received with the utmost respect, but he took all this reverence lightly, had a kind word or two for everyone around him and could never utter anything harsh. In the 1990s, the smile became more toothy and body weaker, but he continued to be hale and hearty in spirit and his handshake remained firm. Whenever I spent some time with him, the forty-year age difference between us was something only for the birth registers.

In the last decade Gopalan continued with his spartan living habits, shunning all publicity. When he was reluctantly obliged to attend public functions, his speeches were short and to the point. Unlike so many elderly people, he did not ramble on about the standard of cricket being better in his day or how cricketers at his time played for the fun of it and for the love of the game. He loved watching one-day cricket, took a special interest in watching the young players and raved about Sachin Tendulkar's uncommon talent and ability. "My word, how that boy plays," he remarked once to me, unable to conceal his excitement and enthusiasm even when he was 90.

A few months before his death, I wrote a piece for this journal entitled 'The GOM of Indian Cricket'. A couple of days after the issue was released, I received a phone call from Gopalan expressing his gratefulness for what I had written. I could scarcely believe my ears. A living legend, not exactly in the pink of health and in his mid-90s, picking up the phone just to say thank you for something I had written? Who else but Gopalan, would think of such a wonderful gesture? Humble and selfless and always thinking of others, Gopalan was a great sportsman and a greater human being. He will be unforgettable to many of us.

Partab Ramchand

# What Oxford taught...

(Continued from Page 5)

was born at Aspinium on 3rd January, BC 106!"

The whole of Oxford education was in that condemnation: ideas not facts, judgments not an index, life not death. Some of us, when we went down from the University, into the civil services, the bar, industry, commerce or professions, would find that nothing that we learnt in the course of our studies would be of the slightest possible use to us in our line of work, save only this – that if we had studied well and intelligently, we would be able to detect when a man was talking rot. And that was the main purpose of education in Oxford.

Sir Roy Harrod saw that I often sat in the gallery and attended the debates at the Oxford Union. I related with considerable admiration how one young gentleman would call another young gentleman his honourable friend and appeal to

the sense of the House, and how they would all juggle the same tricks of rhetoric as their fathers were doing in certain other Debates in Parliament. Sir Roy said I was not quite ready and that he would tell me when I could join the Oxford Union. Meanwhile, he got me into the Christ Church Nondescripts Club, an exclusive dining society of 15 of the best. It determined the friends I kept; I was even invited for Michaelmas to the country house of one of them, an aristocrat of the old school, in whom were represented old manners, old traditions, and a good deal of personality. Sir Roy was waiting for my Bangalore jargon to change to Oxford English. My moral tutor watched over me with a jealous and watchful eye.

Nick Stacey and I were both Olympians, representing Great Britain and India in the sprints. The competition at Oxford was intense and we came out equally: I won the 100m and

Nick the 200m. There was great joy at Christ Church when I returned with the 100m trophy, the biggest of the cups, full three feet king size. The Nondescripts threw a sumptuous dinner in my honour: fish, flesh and fowl, beautiful salmon, haunches of lamb, fine strong beer, served up in old pewter plates and misshapen earthenware jugs. Gooseberry, raspberry and apricot pies. There was such a profusion that scarcely two of the 15 ate of the same.

I had passed my life in Oxford without wanting any other gain – that of having been in the place was enough. I imbibed the air of good breeding; I stood in the presence of learning and took faith in the tutelar genius of the university; with resolute athletics, tennis, cricket matches and five ounces of less eating, I arrived at constitutionally hygienic habits. How impossible it is to generalise these various elements that comprise this great university. So this.

## A 48-YEAR-OLD HISTORY

(Continued from Page 7)

Hereabouts, so the story goes, Mankad and Roy received instructions from the pavilion to get on with it. Taking this as a hint that Umrigar wanted to make an early declaration, Roy tried to force the pace and was bowled by Poore for 173. The partnership that had realised 413 runs in 472 minutes was finally over. For the record, Mankad went on to get an In-

dian Test record score of 231 and India went on to make a record total of 537 for three declared on their way to victory by an innings and 109 runs.

Since then, there have been several 300-plus partnerships. But only two pairs of opening batsmen have come tantalizingly close to surpassing the figure of 413. At Bridgetown in 1965, Simpson and Lawry shared a partnership of 382 runs for Australia against West Indies. Six years later, at Georgetown, New Zealanders

Glenn Turner and Terry Jarvis put together a partnership of 387 runs against West Indies. But after 48 years, 413 still remains the mark to beat for opening batsmen in Test cricket.

Partab Ramchand

**Editor's Note:** Only Dravid and Laxman's two 300-run stands are, perhaps, more significant – because one was made abroad and both were made against a team considered the world's No.1.

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

(Continued from Page 2)

these limits be clearly shown on all highways every 50 km or so. In all the hundreds of miles MMM has travelled over the last few weeks, nowhere did he see a sign on any highway or mofussil road indicating any speed limits. Without such signs, is a speed gun a valid indicator of speed breaking, MMM is inclined to wonder.

### Opening doors

When the Chancellor of the University of Madras, Governor Ramamohan Rao, presided over a recent Tea at Senate House, few thought he would spend as much time as he did on the occasion. *The Man From Madras Musings* saw him spend time at the two exhibitions, on heritage buildings and on Senate House, heard him ask leading questions on what the pictures showed, and watched him pay close attention to how

the restoration work was being carried out at Senate House.

The Governor, MMM was happy to find, was intent on seeing for himself not only the state Senate House was in but also what space it offered. And so he visited the Vice Chancellor's erstwhile office and the Senate and Syndicate meeting rooms. They could be made seminar rooms, he suggested, and then went down into the huge cellar, which he thought would be ideal for the University's archives. These records, he felt, should hereafter be maintained carefully. All this attention augured well for Senate House, indicating that His Excellency would lead the fund-raising. MMM hopes the Governor's interest and the Vice Chancellor's commitment will show others how serious the intent now is to restore Senate House and persuade them to lend the helping hand so badly needed.

— MMM

## WRITER OF BIOGRAPHIES

(Continued from Page 6)

1932, and there he wrote for the Tamil population. A Chettiar-owned journal, *Jyothi*, which survived till the Japanese overran Burma in 1942, was Sarma's medium.

He returned to India with his wife, walking to the Indian borders, when Japan marched into Burma. *Enathu Burma Vazhi Nadai Payanam* was a book he wrote on this experience.

In India, his wife died and Sarma made writing his entire life. He worked for A.K. Chettiar's *Kumari Malar* and other publications. In his later years he lived in a cottage in Kalakshetra, where he passed away. During his 83 years, he wrote for 64 of them. Many of his books are still being read by Tamil medium students of history and such subjects as well as by lovers of Tamil literature.

### Answers to Quiz

1. The operation that led to the capture of Saddam Hussein; 2. Zinedine Zidane; 3. Bangalore; 4. Mick Jagger; 5. Jean Chretien; 6. France; 7. 200th session of the Rajya Sabha; 8. He was the first soldier of Indian origin (serving in the U.S. forces) to be killed after

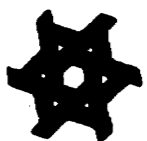
the war in Iraq started in 2003; 9. Dev Anand; 10. Arjun Atwal.

\* \* \*

11. Dr. B.Ramamurthy; 12. Environment Ambassador; 13. Iravatheswarar Temple; 14. Faculty of Management Studies; 15. C. Ramaswamy; 16. Tiruvanniyur; 17. Lord Cornwallis; 18. Virumandi; 19. *Dinamalar*; 20. 'Kalki' Krishnamurthy.

**Sport on Page 7**

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



Amalgamations Group



Ashok Leyland



Brakes India Limited



Go Placidly

KASTURI &  
SONS  
LTD.



CONSTRUCTION DIVISION  
LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED

LOKAVANI  
HALLMARK PRESS  
PVT. LTD.



MURUGAPPA  
GROUP

NIPO  
BATTERIES TORCHES

Rane  
Rane Group

SAINT-GOBAIN  
The future of glass. Since 1665.

SANMAR

Sundaram Finance  
Limited



Sundram Fasteners  
Limited



TATA  
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES



TVS MOTOR COMPANY



UCAL AUTO PRIVATE  
LIMITED

Since 1856,  
patently leaders  
— A WELLWISHER