

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Don't you sell simple "Happy Birthday" cards any more?!

Just another Day in Paradise

365 days in a year, right?

No arguments there, not even from those who have uniquely individual attitudes with regard to perception of time.

Now some of these days have, over the years, acquired identities for themselves, evolved into 'Days' with a capital 'D', so to speak - festivals, holidays, historical landmarks, days symbolic of the ebb and flow of life, some good, some sad, some ethnic, some global... you get the picture.

But it seems of late there are just a bit too many days clamouring for attention, allotting themselves labels, insisting that they too be counted as 'Days' - and celebrated.

Bit suspicious that, with a distinct sense of "Hmmm-I-wonder-now" being directed towards those engaged in the gift-and-card trade - all respectable and wonderful citizens no doubt, but whose business conferences probably go like this: Big Boss: Well, any ideas? Come on, come on, speak up.

Obsequious underling: Yes Sir. We thought we'd designate the 15th two months from now as Chewing Gum Re-cycling Day. Here are the prototypes of the cards, posters, mugs, T-shirts, and wrist-bands. Here's the jingle we've composed. And, oh yes, the media has been alerted and is all set for the blitz.

Big Boss (wiping emotional tears): Carry on the good work, people. Carpe Diem and all that... literally.

Cynic: Probably. And yet: Why blame the think-tank guys when the world proves such an easy, willing victim?

Ranjitha Ashok

Trying to conserve our waterways

(By Shobha Menon)

The Chennai City River Conservation Project (CCRCP) is likely now to be completed by March 2005 instead of by the earlier announced deadline of October 2004. But the project - intended to undo the progressive destruction, by government bodies and the public alike, of the waterways of the city over the last three decades - is likely to cost less than originally projected, Rs.1200 crore instead of the earlier estimated Rs. 1700 crore.

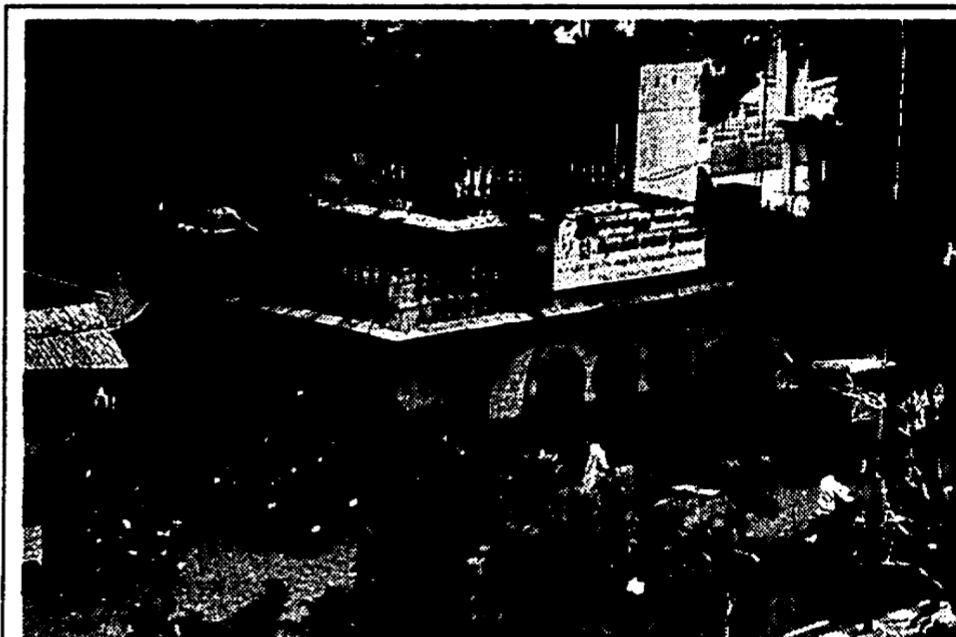
An Anna University expert on water resources says, "The CCRCP aims to bring back the natural course and condition of the waterways. Even in the late 1960s, the Adyar used to carry clean water, and the Otteri Nullah only rainfall drainage. The problems began the moment sewage began to be connected to the waterways. The construction boom from the early 1960s has resulted in debris being dumped in the waterways along with sewage. And we are today suffering the cumulative effect of this mismanagement."

With the Adyar, Cooum, Buckingham Canal, Mambalam Drains, Otteri Nullah and Captain Cotton Canal functioning as stormwater drains only for two months in a year and carrying untreated sewage the rest of the year, it is no surprise that these waterways are "in an absolute unholy mess", as one senior citizen put it. The problem of the sandbars near the estuaries also compounds the mess by preventing entry of sea water.

Desilting the waterways is one aspect of the CCRCP. The other is plugging the 422 sewage outfalls by intercepting the inflow and diverting it to the treatment plants. Available/ projected statistics on the sewerage levels generated in the city are: 1996 - 440 million litres/day of sewage, 2005-2011 - 731 mld and 2021 - 803 mld.

Since the existing sewer system has inadequate carrying capacity, the project, through 12 packages, envisages the diversion of sewage inflow into a line with a better carrying capacity. Of nearly 60 km of interceptor units, nearly 45 km have been completed. Of the 30 sewage-pumping stations planned, three have been commissioned, six are ready for commissioning, nine are awaiting pipe-laying work, and work is in progress on 12. The present sewage treatment capacity of 268 mld, at the existing treatment plants in

(Continued on Page 7)



Two of Chennai's old police stations - Kilpauk (above) and Choolai (below) - each around a hundred years old and now threatened by the wreckers' hammers when restoration is what is called for. (Pictures by REFLECTIONS.)



Who's to regulate hoardings?

(By Shobha Menon)

Not for nothing is Chennai often called 'Asia's hoarding capital'. Apart from the existing 2131 hoardings, the newly proposed hoardings number 1621. And the number of hoardings pending clearance till August is a whopping 3752! Who is to regulate this mushroom growth?

A senior advocate, tracing 'hoarding history', says, "Till the mid-1970s, permission for the erection of hoardings was given by different government departments on whose land they were sited. In the 1970s, the Corporation Commissioner was given the licensing power. Thereafter came a G.O. appointing a broad-based committee (including the Corporation Commissioner, Police Commis-

sioner, Highways Commissioner, etc.) to look into this matter. In 1985, the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Hoardings Act was passed to 'nationalise' hoardings and designating those who till then 'owned' them as the 'custodians'. The hoarding owners challenged the Act in Court, but the Court upheld the validity of the Act with respect to public spaces and struck it down with respect to private spaces. Ironically, the Government did not go on appeal but repealed the Act itself! (That was because the advertisers went to the Supreme Court says a hoarding owner.)

"An amendment to the Madras City Municipal Corporation Act 1998 gave the licensing powers back to the Commis-

sioner. The 326 J Bill passed in 2000 called for the scrutiny and removal of hoardings deemed 'hazardous to traffic' by the licensing authority, and to maintain a 'status quo' on the number of hoardings (this has been disregarded with over 300 illegal hoardings coming up). No new ones were licensed, but the deferring of consideration of applications (after the stipulated last date of filing) has only meant an even more frightening number of new applications both for new and existing hoardings. It is now more than two years since the last ruling - with the Supreme Court having upheld the amendments brought to the Municipal Act in 1998 and 2000 - and officials

(Continued on Page 8)

Farewell to KVK's memory

● With the historic KVK house being pulled down as this edition of *Madras Musings* goes to press, *The Man From Madras Musings* surrenders his space for this timely requiem.

— The Editor

How shall I put it? And now that the deed has been done, does it really matter? Is it not just one more minor fact of history that really needs no commemoration considering that so many bigger events, facts and monuments have vanished without trace? And, above all, do we not belong to a country that is famous for its philosophy that nothing is permanent?

Still, I belong to a minority that believes in preserving heritage and I am unable to view the demolition of a commemorative landmark building with equanimity or even indifference.

In North Mada Street, Mylapore, life goes on uninterrupted. *Navaratri* will soon be upon us and the doll-sellers have all begun making their appearance. The temple has had a facelift and the multiple colours of the *gopuram* are competing with the various shades of the painted dolls on the pavement. Vendors of flowers, fruits and vegetables carry on their routine business. Uninterrupted too was the demolition of *Swaminatha Vilas* that once used to stand tall and proud watching the commotion before it. I watched the tall turret that used to stand on one side being brought down amidst a cloud of dust. Elsewhere in the sprawling mansion, pillars and Madras rafters made of the finest Burma teak were ripped apart. An army of men with chisels, hammers and other implements demolished the roof. The old house did not give up without a struggle. But it was all in vain. The windows were gouged out and so was the front door. The ornamental grille-work that used to cover the verandah on the first floor soon vanished. Soon a screen of asbestos will cover the wounds. Shortly thereafter a notice board will announce the impending birth of a multiple level shopping mall. *Tabula rasa* for K.V. Kitta.

K.V. Kitta was none other than K.V. Krishnaswamy Iyer, once upon a time one of the foremost lawyers of Madras. Writing in his *My Memoirs*, Jus-

tice W.S. Krishnaswamy Naidu states, "In those days there were three Krishnaswamys who were considered to be leading lawyers and all the three of them were on the Appellate Side. One was Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, the other was K.V. Krishnaswamy Iyer and the third was T.M. Krishnaswamy Iyer. The three Krishnaswamys mentioned commanded the bulk of the practice on the Appellate Side of the High Court and especially the European Judges and, among them, civilians regarded them with great respect and were influenced by their arguments, as they were considered to be well versed in the law and authorities on any branch of law. So much so it was always a handicap for the members of the Bar to appear against any of the three Krishnaswamy Iyers before European Judges as they always accepted as correct the principles of law as expounded by any of them.

That was the legal side of KVK. It is, however, his musical side that is far more interesting. KVK became involved in the Music Academy of Madras right from its inception and in 1935 became its President. He was to remain its President till 1965. He thus controlled and directed its affairs during its formative years, starting off from its origins as yet another *sabha* of Madras and ending with its being the premier institution for the fine arts in the city. He spearheaded its move to acquire property of its own and it was a matter of great pride for him that, due to the efforts of T.T. Krishnamachari, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru came down in 1956 to lay the foundation stone of the new building. KVK was by then advancing in age but, notwithstanding physical infirmities, he was present both during the foundation stone laying ceremony and the opening of the new auditorium by Jayachamaraja Wodeyar in 1962.

It was to *Swaminatha Vilas* that artistes would come flocking in order to seek concert opportunities. The second performance of Madurai Mani Iyer in Madras city took place in 1929 on the front steps of this very house. A huge *shamiana* had been erected for KVK's son's sacred thread ceremony and Mani Iyer performed during the function. It was to this house that Madurai Shanmukhavadi came at the instance of mem-



THE OLD...

Our OLD this week is a picture taken by the author in happier days when groups he led on heritage walks in Mylapore would stop awhile here to hear him talk about KVK and the stories the house could tell. Our NEW, taken on September 10th by REFLECTIONS, tells the story of a bit of vanishing heritage music-lovers should have taken better care of.

...& THE NEW



bers of the Dhanammal family to seek a concert opportunity for her daughter. The house was the venue of several heated discussions during the Tamizh Isai crisis. It was also here that on December 1, 1935, a plan for a Federation of City Sabhas was first mooted, something that came into effect much later.

KVK was a terror during the Academy conferences and concerts. A stickler for punctuality he would ensure that all concerts began and ended on time. He also disapproved of audiences chattering away during performances and never thought twice of upbraiding talkative members no matter how important they were in society.

A bust of KVK stands in the VIP entrance lobby of the Music Academy and his portrait adorns the auditorium.

His family disposed of *Swaminatha Vilas* quite some years ago and the house became a *Kalyana Mantapam* and, later, the office of a garments factory. The heritage building (not only because of its occupant, but also

because of its architecture) was a beautiful one with its classic early 20th Century Madras style of construction. In a street that is increasingly becoming full of ugly buildings, this was an exception. Now it has also vanished.

The suddenness with which the whole demolition took place was a surprise and a shock. Many alternative plans could have been made. The Music Academy, for instance,

could have looked at acquiring the building for use as a library or an archival centre, thereby decongesting its own premises. It would have also been paying homage to a founding father. Even if the Academy lacked the funds, a plan for such an acquisition could have got sponsors. But the Academy is too busy with other things to pay attention to one of its founding fathers.

V. Sriram

A big 'Thank You' to 20 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.08.04 and 15.09.04, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

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OUR READERS WRITE



ISO certification

Judged by the lucid explanation about ISO certification (MM, August 1st), I wonder whether the writer is the same Balasubramanian who was actively associated during the piloting stage of ISO 9001, with the Cordite Factory in Aruvankadu in the late 1990s. None could forget his homely but technically valid explanations on ISO certification, that it is the same as the bride's people ascertaining *kulam* and *gohiram* of the prospective groom, adjudging if the family is respectable, so is the boy!

Likewise, if processes are carried out and records maintained, the resulting product ought to be good, was the rationale he elaborated for ISO certification.

Incidentally, the ISO Standards are issued by the International Organisation for Standardisation. But, then, why ISO and not IQS? The usage is the prefix ISO, signifying uniformity and easier on the tongue acronym.

N. Dharmeshwaran
21, 11A Cross, SP Extension
Malleswaram
Bangalore 560 009

A grateful moment

I taught for a spell at Siddharth College of Arts and Science, next to Cathedral School, Bombay. My husband was due to retire and we had to vacate our Railway accommodation in a month's time. I had taught for nine years but would have to give up my gratuity if I did not complete another year. Bombay is a city where one room as paying guest close to college in the Fort

area was well nigh impossible and commuting from the suburbs was too much for me. What was the way out?

A friend and teacher at Cathedral School suggested I meet Kurivila Jacob, the Principal of Cathedral, and explain my dilemma, ask if I could do some part-time work in the School, in return being allowed to stay in the middle school staff quarters which were quite close by.

I thought I would try my luck and fixed an appointment, not at all sure what the response would be! I was greeted with a smile and asked to take my seat. When I told him I had a problem and explained, he thought for a while and said, "Can you do some remedial teaching in English? We have children from Japan, Indonesia and other countries. Their parents are on assignments for short spells and I have to admit their children to the respective grades as they are excellent in Maths, Science and other subjects, even if they are not up to the mark in English. They have all, however, studied English as a second language. Can you spare three hours every day? If you can, I can give you a room in the middle school staff quarters."

I said I could. Frankly, I had no experience in this kind of work, but in a short time became adept at it and acquired the art of teaching English to foreign students. This has come in handy when I go on my trips to San Diego, where wives of those working in my son's lab and who, coming from different parts of the world, are not conversant with English, want to learn English. So,

thanks to Kurivila Jacob, whose birth centenary has just been celebrated, I look back gratefully at that moment when he came to my rescue.

Anna Varki
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Cost of dredging

Aside from the concerns MMM voices (MM, July 16th) no one seems to be talking about the simple (but terribly dynamic) forces of erosion and accretion. Just look at the problems faced in trying to keep the mouth of the Cooum clear at the north end of Marina Beach here in Chennai. Even without a knowledge of engineering, it is plain to see that with a 20 km canal, it will be impossible to keep it clear of sand and other current-borne debris. The cost of continual dredging will be far more than the fuel to travel an extra 400 nautical miles. Can an engineer please comment?

Rom Whitaker
"Pambukudivanam"
Thiruvadisulam
(Via) Sembakkam,
Chengalpattu 603 108

A Fort surprise

I am surprised by your Fort St. George story (MM, July 16th). I had always thought that the Fort had a high priority in India's varied heritage. Many TV programmes, both terrestrial and satellite, in this part of the world concentrate on European and North American military history of the last 500 years. May be some of us should lobby the TV historians regarding such sites east of Suez. And the tourist trade should wake up to such gems as the Fort. One can get one's fill of pagodas after you have visited a few hundred!

Michael Stamford
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Missed opportunity

Propos Rador Guy's feature on SAP and APVP of *Kumudam* (MM, August 1st), I would like to recall a friend and classmate of theirs, R. Narayanan, an advocate and their legal adviser, who was from a village next to mine in the erstwhile North Arcot District. He was also an occasional contributor of stories to *Kumudam*.

Narayanan used to visit us whenever he visited his village. At the time *Kumudam* started publication, Narayanan requested my father to sell some copies as a friendly gesture and help promote it. They used to send him 25 copies. The understanding was that the commission would be one anna out of the price of four annas. My father, being a landlord, was not much interested in the venture. He used to give the copies to one of the household staff who, in turn, took them to the shops in the village and hung them. He hardly collected any money or perhaps he pocketed it himself; whatever be the case, little money reached the publisher. This went on for about six months, when my father suggested a regular agent in the nearby town of Polur.

After some years, my father faced some financial problems. Had he clung on to *Kumudam*, without the proud feeling of a landlord, he could have had the agency for the entire district just for asking and could have made a lot of money with the ever-increasing circulation. That is how opportunity knocks or eludes one.

Almost at the same time, *Kalkandu* was started

by the same publisher with *Tamilvanan* as the editor. I kept every copy from the very first issue for years. *Tamilvanan* was a mystery figure to us with his cap or hat and dark goggles. His character, Sankaral, a detective, was more mysterious. When I was a student in the fifth or sixth form in Vellore, we came on an 'excursion' to Madras. We went all the way to the *Kumudam* office in Kellis to meet *Tamilvanan*. But the mystery-man did not meet us. He, however, published a short humorous piece of mine and sent me a reward of five rupees. He was also publishing translations of Tolstoy's stories and published one of mine.

Some years later, I went to a meeting in Vani Mahal addressed by Kannadasan. After the meeting, a friend of mine known as 'Leather' Sundaram from Salem (there were two other Sundarams from Salem, one of whom was 'Cinema' (TR) Sundaram) met me. There was a bald man by his side whom he introduced as *Tamilvanan*. I recalled how I had once tried to meet him, being an ardent fan. He joked that I might have by now got over that stage and might no longer even read *Kalkandu*. But I told him that I still liked his 'Question and Answer' column and read it whenever I could lay my hands on the magazine. I, however, regularly read *Kumudam*.

Dr. G. Sundaram, IAS (RTD)
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A call for Olympian improvement

Another Olympics has passed. "The 2004 Olympics will be remembered for the powerful performance of the Chinese, Japanese and their neighbours, marking the awakening of the Asian continent. This is a sign that Asia will be full of strength in four years' time," says the International Olympic Committee. With one-sixth of the world population, poor India does not qualify even for a casual mention for the 2008 Olympics, unless it seeks and takes uninvited shelter under the term 'neighbours'. This dismal condition is an insult to the nation.

Governance in India is of, for and by politicians. India has to look ahead to 2008. Governments in India, with their petty preoccupations cannot contribute to a positive performance by India in 2008. There should be no politics in games. Politicians of the day, of the past and of the future, should all be totally kept out of sports.

Top industrial houses, like the Tatas, Birlas, Reliance, Infosys, Wipro, etc. (just ten of them), should join together and act on the present sports crisis to shape a team on merit alone which could bring gold, silver and bronzes at the 2008 Olympics. They may take the active counsel of experts like Kapil Dev, Venkataraghavan, etc., get themselves locked up in a huge bungalow to be entirely away from the glare of media, the army of reporters and photographers, and chart out a plan of action to be set in motion under their supervision (without any political or governmental participation or interference) by the end of this year. The contribution of companies to it shall be made eligible for exemption from taxes. The ad hoc body shall function till the close of the 2008 Olympics.

India has a natural ambition and a crying need to be lauded too. The top companies too have a duty to meet that need and to the nation!

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan
Mayur Apartments
7, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020

(Also see pages 4 & 5)

Vanishing forests

In our country, many national parks and sanctuaries have been created to save endangered plants and animals as encroaching human population swallows more and more land. Urbanites like us are having to go farther and farther to even experience a natural forest which may now require an overnight train journey to a sanctuary or national park. Hardly half a century ago, a place like Tambaram had its 'wildness', having characteristic plants and, associated with it, other animal life (insects, reptiles, birds and a few mammals) that are characteristic of what is called dry evergreen forest. This habitat of thorny plants and animals had evolved through centuries. However, this is now vanishing fast and exists only in some hilly regions of the Coromandel Coast. You may find here many species of wild jasmine and medicinal plants, apart from birds and insects unique to the habitat. Cattle graze in the plains around and the rocky hills with tough thorny plants are all that remain of the original habitat (especially if a temple has been built on the hill).

Many such hills have been 'afforested' with exotic trees by the Forest Department. The patches where the original vegetation remains are 'islands' fragmented by a populace using the lands in between.

Dr. A. Rajaram
Madras Naturalists' Society
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Courting divine help

It is very good news that the Railway Minister has ordered removal of all temples, churches and mosques built unauthorisedly on

railway property. I wish the Madras High Court will take a page from this diktat and issue show cause notice to some enterprising folk who have built a "needhi Karumaari Amman" temple bang on the High Court wall facing Parry's. Obviously it is sound business sense to woo the litigants to pray for the success of their plaintiffs and fill the temple's hundi. As the Hon'ble judges never use the north gate, they are doubtless blissfully unaware of these annexes. In a few years' time they may well be invited as special guests for the *Kumbabhishakam*.

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No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

— THE EDITOR

Chennai's Cheetahs arrive in style

Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union's systematic development of the sport pays dividends as Chennai Cheetahs wins the prestigious All India & South Asia Tournament.

With heavy conditions on a wet and slippery surface at the Calcutta Cricket & Football Club (CCFC) grounds, the Chennai Cheetahs beat favourites and last year's runners-up Bombay Gymkhana 12-3 to win the final of the Hutch All India and South Asia Rugby Tournament. The Cheetahs went ahead in the sixth minute after right-winger Tai Benito cut in for a well made try. Scrum-half Neil Trueman scored midway in the second session and Emil Vartazarian, captain of the Cheetahs and man of the Tournament, converted.

While the heavy conditions underfoot surprisingly kept the Gymkhana players off balance, the Cheetahs adapted themselves much better on the soggy ground. It was a story of the

Davids taking on the Goliaths – the Gymkhana players were massive in size and, according to Patrick Davenport, secretary, Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union (TNRFU), "You had to see them to believe it." However, punctuated by war cries of "Achham Illai" (No fear), the Cheetahs played with unbelievable passion. "We played more like a team; we had greater heart. Our defence was simply awesome and spectators were surprised at our tackling skills," says Davenport.

● by
SASHI NAIR

"The Gym players underestimated us. The conditions, of course, favoured them, not the speed we relied on. But our discipline was the difference. It was a perfect example of 'united we stand, divided we fall,'" points out Vartazarian. "When the final whistle blew, we were in fact

shocked that the game was over. We still haven't got over the hangover," adds Davenport.

After learning that the Gymkhana team would include eight players from the UK, the Cheetahs decided to field seven players from New Zealand – Carl Grainger, Todd Dixon, David Paea, Trueman, Benito, Mike Pirrit and Erin Johnston. "They all came here to train the team and help raise its standards," explains Davenport.

The Cheetahs included, apart from Vartazarian and the New Zealanders, Vinayagamorthy, Satish Kumar, Gopinath, Nandagopal, Mark Galstaun and Henrik Terchnian, both from the Armenian Club, Kolkata, Nicole Blier, a Frenchman from Pondicherry, Mohan Krishnan (president, TNRFU), Pete Martin, Conrad Gomes, Ignatius, Ganesh, Giri Prasad and Davenport. Shyam Nagarajan was manager.

From next year, the All India Tournament is unlikely to see teams dominated by players from overseas. The TNRFU has finally been able to convince the Indian Rugby Football Union (IRFU) to put a cap on the number of foreign players playing for Indian teams. If the suggested new rules come into force, four foreign players will be able to register for a team, but only two will take the field at any given time. "We have been pushing for this rule for seven years now," says Davenport.

The Sri Lankan Police, last year's champions, did not play this year. (According to Davenport, there seem to be several legal problems in the local league there as a result of which some games have been stopped and officials of the Sri Lankan Rugby Board removed.) The Tamil Nadu Police lost in the semis of the Loser's Plate, which was eventually won by the Maharashtra Police, defeating the Army 27-5. Other teams that took part included the CCFC, Calcutta Police, Delhi Rugby Football Club, Orissa Rugby Football Union, Young Rugby Club, Future Hope and Greater Mumbai Police.

"Overall, things look very bright for Indian rugby. The All-India is a showcase event and once the cap on foreign players is implemented, teams will be on an even footing. Today, only those who have the money can bring in the players," says Davenport.

A month earlier, in the Tri-nation Tournament, the Indi-

TWO-PAGES OF SPORT



Some of the Indian players in the Chennai Cheetahs rugby team, all-India champions within three years of their founding by Patrick Davenport (standing, second from left). The team included seven New Zealanders for the tournament.

team, which included four Tamil Nadu players, lost to Sri Lanka (52-17) in Mumbai, and to Thailand (83-12) in Thailand. In the Under-19 Seven-a-Side Issipathana Tournament in Sri Lanka, the IRFU team and the Indian Barbarians made it to the Cup competition round. And in the William Leybourne 15-a-Side Tournament, a qualifier for the All-India held for the first time, the TN Police defeated the Bangalore Rugby Football Club 18-5 in Chennai.

"Every international game is a

learning experience. We need to get more players into the game. Without development of a strong youth programme, we will not do well internationally," Davenport and Vartazarian (also the technical director, TNRFU) are convinced. The TNRFU continues to seek corporate support. Plans are on to conduct a number of youth programmes in Chennai and Kolkata to drive the youth programme forward. "Our adult teams need to play against clubs in Sri Lanka, perhaps even Test matches. Early next year, we

hope to play preparatory matches in Sri Lanka – first division rugby there is of a very high standard," says Vartazarian.

The TNRFU's activities are progressing ahead of schedule. Twentyeight schools, including 18 Corporation schools and six girls' schools, have been covered under the development programme. A new Police team for men will be formed soon. There are already two women Police teams. Strong development programmes in Bangalore and Hyderabad are in place.

Time to recognise performing well

After nearly 15 years of not missing a Sunday comment on sport as *The Corner Flag*, the writer thought he'd done with sounding off on sport. But, from time to time, something crops up that brings *The Corner Flag* out of hibernation – and the present is one such occasion when *The Corner Flag* once again wishes to emphasise that the sport, the participants in it and the sincere efforts they have made to do their best matter more than all the medals in the world.

Reviewing all that has been written in the Press and said on TV about India's performance in the Olympics, *The Corner Flag* can't help but feel that much of this comment, couched in such terms as 'debacle', 'disaster', 'no-hopers', 'let the country down', etc. is not only unkind but shows a total lack of a sense of fairness, not to say a lack of information-based objectivity. Yes, doping discovered amongst the weightlifters and mysterious non-

performance by some of the bulkier athletes were a disgrace and *The Corner Flag* would welcome the harshest punitive action against the guilty – after fair inquiry. True, the hockey team disappointed. But two last-minute defeats – against Australia and New Zealand – alone probably kept us out of the top six. And that last-minute goal by New Zealand was surely a travesty of justice – not only because it was scored well after the hooter but, despite the rule book legitimising it, because only a couple of minutes earlier the New Zealand goalie was NOT penalised for lying on the ball whereas the Indian goalie WAS, and that too in corner completion time. If the Indian goalie, like the New Zealand goalie, had not been penalised, India would have salvaged a draw and a fifth or sixth place. That said, the Indian performance was unconvincing – but certainly it showed sufficient excellence in patches to be rated a worldclass team. What is not

worldclass about hockey is its administration – and no one in authority is doing anything about that. Without better administration of the sport, better planning by the administrators and more professional coaches, there is no use denigrating demoralised players.

If you remove these disappointments – and some entries which had no business to be there like the sailors, kayaker and judoka – surely the rest needed fairer treatment by the public and the media? In archery and shooting and athletics, there were worldclass performances by some and their best ever by others. They may not have won medals, but most of them were in the top dozen in the world. Isn't that something to be proud about? And shouldn't others who did their best ever – breaking national records in the process – be honoured rather than ignored? If their best was not good enough, then we should concentrate on producing better performers, not

Our performance in Athens reveals the poverty of our sports. Whilst others less endowed are progressing in sports, we allow ourselves to trail the field.

And to what do we owe this? One fallacy often repeated in connection with sports in our country is the lack of resources. Let us for a moment compare our resources with those of other countries. Conceive what Kenya was and what she is now in the world of sports: yet she won 1 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze in Athens. Then starving Ethiopia: one gold and one silver. And nearer home, Thailand won two gold and two bronzes and Indonesia one gold, one silver and two bronze.

Let us look a little closer at China whose human and material resources, state of the arts and culture are more obviously comparable with ours. With 31 gold, 17 silver and 14 bronze, they are second in the gold medals tally in Athens, only just below the USA. Our one silver placed us 66th.

I was in China twice on UNESCO work, first in 1978 when she had just joined the UN after ten years of the ruinous Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976. The condition of their sports programmes, facilities and infrastructure was in no way better than ours; if at all, they were in a worse plight. My second UNESCO mission to China was five years later. I found that in pursuit of their objective, which is

We must learn from China

common with ours, "to catch them young", they established a countrywide chain of Spare-Time Sports Schools. That is the official rendering of the Chinese terminology and is indeed a matter-of-fact description of what these institutions do. There were then more than 3000 Spare-Time Sports Schools, and they provided field and equipment facilities, specialised coaching, each serving a cluster of regular primary and secondary schools around them. The coaches went out periodically from these Spare-Time Sports Schools to the primary and secondary schools allotted to them to spot talent, to talk to the teachers and

secondary school dual meets, gradually rising to districts, counties, provinces and national level meets. This plethora of competitions, with their income-generating potential, begs the question of peaking. China understands that the number of peaks an athlete undertakes depends on the event. In athletics, for instance, an athlete is not permitted to run more than four marathons a year, while sprinters and jumpers compete as many as 15 to 20 times and middle distance runners race in about 10 hard races. Though money is a lubricant, there is also in competitive meets the intense feeling of accomplishment, pride and enjoyment. The Chinese

● With Tamil Nadu drawing up plans for sports improvement, ERIC PRABHAKAR suggests an alternative model.

parents, and encourage the children to take part in extracurricular sports activities of their choice. The specialised training was provided as far as possible at times which best suited the child, with little or no disturbance to the academic timetable. I was told in 1983 that over two million schoolchildren were attending these schools. About 300 of these schools were designated as Key Spare-Time Sports Schools to lift the level of technical competence in a whole range of Olympic sports and many world champions have come from them. The Spare-Time Sports Schools are not residential, there are no rigid membership rules and no formal selection procedures.

Competition is an important part of the Spare-Time Sports Schools' agenda. Their goal of training is to prepare the Chinese to compete successfully. So, participation in competition starts at the minor level, with primary and

the fields they faced, but a better draw might have made a few look much better. Surely, given the way they were chosen, their talent deserves better? Like offers of better training facilities and trainers and more international competition. We should not ever forget what that Indian gymnast who is now an American and that Indian boxer who is British demonstrated: namely, what better training and competition can achieve.

As for our athletes, national records in long jump for women, 400 metres for men and the women's 4 x 400m relay team all

(Continued on page 6)

The Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu, in imitation of the bureaucratic National Sports Talent contest, is now spending its resources and money on a scheme titled 'The World Beaters Talent Spotting Scheme (WBTSS)'. They have conjured up a battery of five tests – speed, endurance, strength, explosive strength and agility – to determine a youth's potential for a particular game or athletic event. They now have a budget of Rs. 25 crore. Out of 15,000 schools in Tamil Nadu only 7000 have responded and they admit that "some of the best schools are staying away." Once talent is spotted in this manner, training camps are organised.

The tests applied by some European countries and Australia were to assess fitness levels of schoolchildren. They were never used to spot talent for any particular sport. Australia did not select its Olympic swimmers from such tests and they never claimed that these tests could spot talent for swimming. New Delhi's National Sports Talent Contest employed tests to determine talent and has given it up as a costly failure. It is time we began to think differently.

I will end on a positive note: Let us not lose heart but learn from the great success China has achieved. Let us now closely examine the successful sports development programme of China and adapt it in India. We will then begin to see success by 2012 Olympics.

My two UNESCO missions to China were for educational projects and not for sports. It was only my personal interest in sports that made me get an overview of what China was doing. With my limited acquaintance with the Chinese sports development, I have drawn up a project proposal for sports development in India based on the Chinese model. I have submitted it to New Delhi with the hope that it will get to the Minister for Sports. But the project proposal is only indicative of what could be done and a final sports development programme should wait till a detailed study of the Chinese sports development programme is undertaken.

For this purpose, I have proposed a team of, say, three persons, consisting of one bureaucrat and two sportsmen who have an analytical mind, be sent to China to study more thoroughly their sports infrastructure, training and competition programmes with a view to adapting them in our country. It is important that the team should not be unwieldy nor take the form of a delegation with political pressures.

Heritage restoration Mumbai's new buzzwords

It's been raining heritage awards for Mumbai this season and the recent downpour has got corporates rethinking their social responsibility strategy. Conservation and restoration of cultural heritage sites could be the next buzzword, jostling for attention with pet issues like education and healthcare. What's more, experts believe that heritage conservation could go a long way in boosting cultural tourism.

One of the most important economic assets of any country is its archaeological sites and ancient townscapes, which provide opportunities for the development of tourism and infrastructure, says Jeff Morgan, executive director, Global Heritage Fund (GHF), a US-based NGO which funds and supports global heritage sites in developing countries. "Cultural tourism provides a tremendous opportunity for countries with a rich heritage. A case in point is the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia, which have now become the single largest generator of income for the government and people of Cambodia. Similarly, Tikal in Guatemala generates over \$200 million in visitor revenues for local communities of the Peten region and the economy as a whole," he states.

In China, the ancient town of Lijiang has become the most important tourist destination after the Great Wall and Forbidden City, with over two million visitors. While corporate interest is brewing, Sangita Jindal, trustee of the Hampi Foundation, believes that bureaucratic red tapism serves as a major deterrent for those willing to invest in heritage conservation.

"I believe there is a lot of goodwill in the corporate sector. People are more than willing to spend money on conservation. However, the job also requires patience and perseverance to obtain clearances from various governmental agencies. The long process can be quite frustrating at times," she says. The Jindal group, along with the GHF, has taken on the restoration and conservation of the Chandramaleshwara Temple in Hampi, Karnataka. Jindal believes that their initiative will set an example for other corporates.

Though funding is one of the major aspects of such an effort, Morgan feels that other factors like the tourism potential, availability of professionals, infrastructure and government approvals, play a major part in the sustainability of a project in the long term. "We will only fund a heritage site if it has tourism potential to begin with. This is important: a site must be accessible, it must be near a city or should have infrastructure which is conducive to attracting tourists. That is one way of insuring that the project is economically viable," he states. — (Courtesy: *Economic Times*, Mumbai.)

Gouri Shah

Time to recognise performing well

(Continued from page 4)

deserved headlines, but all they got was "Anju finishes sixth" in one case and no headlines in the other two cases. Even a tale of rare courage by a heptathlete Shobha to finish 11th warranted special attention in only one journal. Quite frankly, given world standards, what did we expect from any of them, including Anju George? Did we seriously expect George to jump 7 metres in a field where half a dozen had achieved that distance and she was nowhere near it? In fact, my biggest disappointment was George's post-performance comment.

Here was an athlete who should have been saying "I jumped my best ever and I'm delighted I could achieve it; the others were too good, jumping what I've still got a long way to go to achieve." But there she was making excuses... about giddiness etc. Surely she didn't think she could jump 7 metres? She might have jumped a millimetre or two more and fin-

Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN is out of town. His column will be resumed on his return.

ished in the top six, but 7 metres was something she could only dream about given her form over the last year. She should be talking about, "I did my best ever and I'll get to 7 metres next year", not making excuses for a brilliant performance — which was not recognised as such because of our obsession with medals.

To *The Corner Flag*, this was our best ever Olympics performance, given the qualifying norms that had to be met in international competition in several events, the finishes in the 'Top Ten' by our sportspersons and the 'best ever' performances. It would be nice if the several Rhodes Scholars and others analysed the data, recognised the facts and said, 'well done, but now let's build on your achievements'. What's needed is to put those 15-20 achievers in a special training and facilities category by the Sports Ministry, add to their numbers from the Commonwealth and Asian Games in the next couple of years and have them ready for 2008.

It's time we began to take this whole thing a step at a time and plan by arranging the best coaches, whatever their cost, to

Focus on heritage

Why is heritage so important?

We are what we are because of our heritage. When we destroy our heritage, we become rootless. The Gujarat earthquake destroyed 12,000 heritage buildings. A village minar where people routinely congregated, broke after the quake. The villagers were devastated. More than the fact that homes were destroyed — the Kutchis are a very resilient people — it was the destruction of cultural icons that really shook the residents.

So isn't it good that through tourism we're promoting heritage?

When you say "heritage tourism", it's an adjective; when you talk about one's heritage, it is a verb: "to live". When you start looking at heritage tourism, you are looking for a motive to promote that heritage — like adventure tourism. That's why I say, we first have to realise that you are what you are because of your heritage. Hence the need to preserve, conserve, appreciate it and imbibe what it has to offer us.

What is the best way to ensure its continuity?

We have been learning, through trial and error, what is the best way to protect our heritage. Take the Pyramids, for in-

A heart for heritage

• KARAN GROVER, architect, town planner and conservationist, who spearheaded the movement to get World Heritage Site status for the Champaner Pavagadh historical site near Vadodara, speaks to NARAYANI GANESH.

shouldn't be brought down to the lowest common denominator. Heritage is pivotal to our existence; it is a basic human right.

We need to have a national heritage policy — and a policy is just a preamble to an Act. Even as we talk, over a dozen heritage sites are being desecrated or demolished out of sheer indifference or ignorance.

Heritage as a subject is now in the concurrent list whereas it should be in the Central list. We should have a Central Act.

In 1903, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recorded 12,000 monuments in Delhi. By 1994, 400 of those have disappeared completely due entirely to human intervention.

We have to involve children in heritage conservation as they are our future. By inculcating in the youth a sense of pride in their heritage, they learn to value it and, as adults, would refrain from despoiling them by etching graffiti, for instance, on the face of buildings and walls. Children are sensitive and are easily impressed by what they hear and see. I've seen children pick up trash that their parents throw in monuments and chide them for dirtying the place.

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stance. Till recently, you could drive right up to the Pyramids. Then it was found that all that exhaust from the automobiles was spoiling their facade.

All heritage sites have to be accessible. But they shouldn't end up as picnic spots. Once a site gets promoted, a study should be undertaken to assess what the site can take and the average time one should spend there. The Lunuganga garden retreat in Sri Lanka was created by Geoffrey Bawa who transformed an ancient rubber estate into a beautiful site. No more than ten visitors are allowed there at a time. Heritage

will have to be an inter-state/institution tournament and not an inter-club tournament. A top tier of West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, the Police, the Services and the winner of a lower division tournament together with two teams from Sri Lanka could play for the all-India title in a tournament that would produce good rugby. The lower division would have teams from Karnataka, Delhi, Orissa, Manipur and other States taking to the game, while inter-police (Calcutta, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu play the game) and inter-service tournaments could determine the Police and Services teams. Greater media focus on such tournaments is the only way the game, perhaps the fastest growing in India, will grow in the country. Teams with several imports will not get that coverage, *The Corner Flag* is convinced. But till that happens, ignoring winning performances is to do a disservice to the game.

The Corner Flag

CONSERVING OUR WATERWAYS

(Continued from page 1)

Koyambedu, Nespakkam, Perungudi and Kodungaiyur, is being enhanced to handle anticipated higher volumes. The treated water will satisfy the norms for effluent so that 97% can be put back into the river and 3% used as manure, gas, etc.

Officials of the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, the implementing agency for the Union Government-supported project, state that more than 85% of the work is complete — involving creation of interception and diversion systems and setting up sewage treatment plants — and the rest will be completed this month. Treatment plants will be in place by December 2004 and be ready for the diverted sewage. "There are no hurdles in implementation, only issues that need to be carefully handled," they stated. For instance, taking care that there is

no disruption of public movement, essential services etc. "We've noticed that initial resistance soon gives way to co-operation (like change in bus routes). Work has to be carefully handled because we are dealing with heavily built-up and congested areas," officials told me. They, however, were emphatic about the need for greater public cooperation, stating, "We are now providing infrastructure to carry wastewater to treatment plants. It is now upto the people to ensure sewage goes into right channels. Not directly into river or into stormwater drains because it is convenient."

However, as Joint Director, Directorate of Environment, Ashish Kumar Srivastav, says, "The efficiency of the whole project can be seen only on its successful completion and implementation. The major factors contributing to the deterioration of the water quality in the waterways are the 422 sewage

outfalls identified. By the end of the project, all these will be plugged and sewage taken to water treatment plants where a part will be reused, the other part will be put back into the rivers for recharge. Most important is the operation and maintenance, once the project is completed. We need to learn from the Ganga Action Plan that local bodies need to be properly equipped to take charge of operation and maintenance."

The Department of Environment has from December 2003 taken up a study to monitor the water quality and get baseline data of water quality in the waterways of the city. A Citizen's Monitoring Committee convened by the Directorate of Environment two years ago has, however, yet to gain momentum. "If there is no proper representation of stakeholders in the committee which monitors, what's its use anyway?" wonders an official.

PWD officials, who are in charge of the desilting of the waterways and bund-forming on the banks, point to acquisition issues delaying progress.

"So do court cases (even if one person objects, the work cannot go on) and encroachments. You evacuate one slumdweller, another encroaches on the same spot. Most of them have 'political connections.'" To prevent encroachers, additional expense for fencing becomes necessary — when if only there was respect for public property it shouldn't.

Senior officials, providing examples of the encroachment problem, state, "Most of the slums in Saidapet, Kotturpuram, and St. Thomas' Mount are on the flood plain of the Cooum. On the road to Thiruverkadu, beyond Thirumangalan, the riverbed itself is occupied by settlers, who till a short while ago even used it for farming."

One suggestion to alleviate the problem is, according to a water resources expert, incorporating wastewater treatment plants within housing colonies to reduce the overall burden on the existing sewage system and using the output to green the campus, recharge groundwater, etc. To encourage people to

participate in being accountable for their own waste, incentives like reduction of property tax could be introduced. "Initial costs may be high, but long term this would be very beneficial," feels the expert.

But ultimately, as Dr. Martin Bunch of the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Canada, who has done extensive research on the environmental management of the Cooum says, "Encouraging a participatory approach to management of these valuable resources is essential. Mere physical engineering solutions to clean up the waterways — desilting, dredging etc. — can help only to an extent. And relocation of the dwellers on the river banks is definitely not the best possible solution; better if they were made to feel it is their property. You can continue to dump as much money as you can into the waterways, but until people in the city understand the value of these as a resource and participate in their management, NOTHING can happen." And he couldn't have been more emphatic.

Subscriptions and contributions

• As readers are already aware — and hundreds have responded positively — we have no other alternative but to price *Madras Musings*. From April 16th (Volume XIV, No.1), *Madras Musings* has been priced at Rs.5 a copy, ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/-. Please make out your cheque only to 'Chennai Heritage' and send it, together with the COUPON BELOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or C/O LOKAVANI-HALL MARK PRESS PVT. LTD., 122, GREANIES ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs.100 covers only a part of our costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essential for *Chennai Heritage* and *Madras Musings* to play a greater role in creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDITION TO your subscriptions.

If in the coming year *Chennai Heritage* receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep *Madras Musings* going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2004-5 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes *Chennai Heritage* espouses.

We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings*, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

— The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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Can schools play a role here?

Schools can do excellent service by adopting monuments in their vicinity. The director-general of the equivalent of the ASI in Sri Lanka identified 100 monuments and then 100 schools, each of which would look after one monument's upkeep — involving the children in cleaning, documentation, encouraging them to act as guides and to instil a sense of pride in them about their heritage.

What about the concept of "living monuments"?

When you talk of living monuments, the term in currency now is "recycling of buildings or reuse or re-adaptive use of old, historic buildings." When you give new life to a building, you make maintenance easier. The best example is that of the palaces-turned-hotels which have literally got a new lease of life. Any locked-up home would deteriorate in no time for sheer lack of ordinary day-to-day maintenance.

May be, we should encourage the use of heritage sites for film shootings?

About encouraging film shoots in heritage property, I would say it is good for creating public awareness. The problem is, will the unit during the shoot take care not to damage the structure? Recently a film was being shot at Fatehpur Sikri and the heavy equipment and cables were being dragged roughly all over the place.

HEART FOR HERITAGE

What can we apply to contemporary living that we find in heritage structures?

Champaner, for instance, was known as a water-intelligent city. At the manzil, water channels connected tanks with groundwater via natural slopes to habitats. Water used for bathing was recycled to water the garden. We can learn how stepwells provided water — in

the context of today's scarcity, children can be taught how the monument was designed to recharge groundwater. "If you can save water equivalent to the imprint of a camel hoof, you will go to heaven," says a 12th Century tablet inscription in Champaner. Very appropriate in today's context, isn't it? — (Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai.)

Senate House Conservation Fund

• The Senate House Restoration and Management Trust appeals to all alumni of the University of Madras and heritage lovers everywhere to contribute to the Senate House Conservation Fund which the Trust is managing for the purpose of restoring Senate House to its old glory by December 2005 and maintaining it thereafter in the same condition.

Cheques should be made out to the Senate House Conservation Account and sent to the Registrar, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005. Contributions are eligible for benefits under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Dear Registrar,

I am pleased, to enclose a cheque for Rs. as my contribution to the restoration and maintenance of Senate House. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Name:

Address:

I am an alumnus/alumna/heritage lover and wish the project all success. My college was

Date: Signature:

Who's to regulate hoardings?

(Continued from page 1)

in charge have come and gone, but have ignored the issue."

An order issued on June 26, 2003 amended the Tamil Nadu Municipal Laws Act and gave the power of licensing hoardings to the District Collector. New rates were fixed for display tax, 75% of which was to be remitted to State Government account and the balance to the Corporation. In July, owners whose structures were allegedly in violation of the new rules, were served notices to remove those hoardings that didn't satisfy specifications, failing which the Revenue Department was to take action with the help of the Corporation manpower. But according to representatives of the Tamil Nadu Outdoor Advertisers Association (TOAA), notices have been served almost on all owners, as most of hoardings are stated to be in direct violation of the rules that, according to one hoarding owner, "have been enacted in a way that hoardings either cannot be located in most places, or they will not be visible at all". Therefore the filing of a writ petition by the advertisers challenging this action, was followed by the direction for the 'status quo' to continue till the writ was disposed of. At which point the issue now rests (in every sense). "And to the all round benefit of many," comments one activist.

Specifications in the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Licensing Hoardings and Levy and Collection of Advertisement Tax Rules 2003 maintain that in the case of roads wider

than 100 ft, the hoarding width should be no more than 20' x 12'. For a road width 50-100 ft, the dimensions need to be 15' x 10' at the maximum. For a road less than 50 ft in width, the hoarding at most be 12' x 6'. The new rates of display tax even categorised hoardings on the basis of their being on arterial or bus route roads and whether with artificial or neon lighting.

"Hoardings are erected by engineers employed by the hoarding company, and checked by the engineers of the Corporation before a licence is issued. A spokesperson of the TOAA says, "After 1979, no order has actually been issued for erection of hoardings. Which means all those that came later are unauthorised (except the original 598 numbers on Government land). Our Association has, between 1982 and 1990, written around 1500 letters to the regulatory body to remove unauthorised hoardings (whenever we came across them), but there hasn't even been a single acknowledgement of these intimations, leave alone any action. While renewing licences, safety checks are either lax or irregular and enforcement even more so! In the last 30 years, I've not seen an objective assessment by the local body incharge. The authorities could have followed and enforced strictly the 1985 Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Hoardings, Act, with revisions of rents every three or five years. But by introducing the 1998 Act, the 1985 Act became null and void".

A hoarding owner says, "Existing regulations during the early 1990s were totally ignored and never enforced. The number of hoardings that began proliferating around the early 1990s along main roads, spread to those on private buildings – more than 2500 – soon after. Subsequently, however, the Government has failed to arrive at a practical solution."

Another hoarding owner says, "The current uncertainty is frustrating. Whether directions are from the Corporation or Collectorate, we're ready to follow the rules. Why have officials in the Collectorate not convened a meeting with members of the TOAA to explain what they intend to do?"

Meanwhile, Hassan Faizal, lawyer and environmentalist, who filed a PIL in April 2004 against hoardings which obstruct or are hazardous to pedestrians, sought the removal of those hoardings which violated specifications. "Soon after we sent a reminder pointing out our fears, what we feared actually happened. A hoarding on EVR Periyar Salai fell on a car at a traffic junction across the Rippon Building." And yet nothing has happened!

A spokesperson of the TOAA says, "An authorised group of advertisers was responsible for the first G.O. to regulate hoardings. Why is there the need for so many amendments and Acts thereafter, when a strict enforcement of the original itself would have sufficed?"

Meanwhile, a spokesperson of the Consumer Action Group



From September 21-October 1:

The Touch, an exhibition by Mohandas, who calls these images 'comp', meaning "Computer Painting", a combination of three inter-related media: photo-video-computer. "I choose the images from my stills and videos and feed them into a computer. Each image undergoes a variety of changes, giving them a new look and meaning. It is, basically, a play of imagination and research." (At Alliance Francaise.)

Till September 26: *Impossible possibilities*, an installation by Natesh. (At Alliance Francaise.)

Till September 26: *Moonshine and Skytoffee*, directed by Rajiv Krishnan.

An adaptation from two of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's well-known stories, *The Love Let-*



ter and *The Cardsharp's Daughter*. Being love stories, both lend themselves well to being integrated into one larger story. (At Alliance Francaise, 7.00 p.m. Matinee shows on 18th, 19th, 24th, 25th and 26th – 3.00 p.m.)

September 26: The art of engraving on palm leaves. Workshop for the Young Friends of DakshinaChitra. (At DakshinaChitra, contact 98414 23149.)

October 1-10: Dussera celebrations at DakshinaChitra. Folk artistes from Karnataka will perform vibrant folk dances during the nine days of the festival. The craft shop will sell beauty products and *Golu*, the tradition of arranging dolls during Navaratri, will be highlighted. Some of the dolls displayed will be more than a century old and can be seen in the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Houses. Kannada cuisine will be available in the restaurant on all nine days. (At DakshinaChitra.)

October 2 and 3: Workshop on Pattachitra, the tradition of engraving decorative and intricate pattern on palm leaves by using natural colours. (At DakshinaChitra, contact 98414 23149.)

October 3: *Khusrau Nizami*, a Sufi Qawwali presented by the well-known Nizami Brothers of Delhi in aid of the Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu. (At Music Academy. Donor cards available at the Academy or by calling 28257031 from September 29th.)

October 6-9: *Human Rights Welfare Film Festival* in collaboration with Human Rights Watch and Youth Initiative for Peace. (At Alliance Francaise, 7.00 p.m.)

October 10: Doll-making for Young Friends of DakshinaChitra. Navaratri workshop. (At DakshinaChitra, contact 98414 23149.)

says, "The whole issue hinges on the gross privatisation of public spaces by the hoarding industry itself. Questions raised are on safety concerns, the ridiculous density of the hoardings, the indiscriminate use of electricity itself (both with regard to traffic safety as well as energy conservation) and, more recently, the increased use of non-biodegradable vinyl 'plastic skins' that are considered more attractive today. Also of concern is the issue of revenue gained from these hoardings – can we ensure that it is being ploughed back into the city itself, into the community which it targets? The recent developments have only become a marvellous excuse for an indefinite official coma."

An official at the Collectorate comments, "It's definitely not a difficult issue to regulate and moves are already being made to resolve it." But how effective are the 'moves' to protect the city's skyline, and the safety of its people.

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