

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Life in the slums of Chennai
- A mystery in St. Mary's
- Musical movements
- 'My Dream India 2020'
- Bring professionalism to sport

Vol. XIV No. 15

November 16-30, 2004

Rs. 5 per copy

(Annual Subscription: Rs. 100/-)



Laddus and Tirunelveli halwa as gifts from New Jersey Halwa House for family and friends... Why didn't we think of it before?!

Gift-horses

Winter's here and we're all set to receive planeloads of relatives who will wing their way home now to renew family ties. (Somehow, the whole procedure is so much easier in tolerable weather, isn't it?)

This process of re-connection has always, for some reason, carried with it an obligation to bring gifts.

And here's where today's non-resident, home-coming relative (or friend) has a problem. Thirty years ago, even those humble ball-pens you probably bought from the hawker at the corner of Lexington-and-East 46th (or whatever) were received with glad appreciative cries. Younger family members threw fearful scenes, insisting on taking them to school the next day, so that they could show off about their relatives who had just come "from foreign".

Unfortunately, in today's world, such gestures merely invoke ill-concealed yawns, or mildly polite smiles of acceptance.

There's very little 'They' can buy for 'The People Back Home' anymore, not even 'different' food-stuff. Firstly, they're mostly available here — for a price. Secondly, the country has suddenly gone all health and appearance conscious. Yes, even Old Uncle Stuff-His-Face who, in the old days, had to be kept off Deepavali *bakshanams* with a stick, is now disgustingly gym-fit.

Visits to malls that have sprung up where all those family houses once stood merely confirm this grim reality — ain't a whole lot new under the sun no more. Happy family-ing.

Ranjitha Ashok

Harvest run-off from public places

(by Shobha Menon)

Has rainwater harvesting been effective during recent rains? Well, the answer seems to be 'Yes' and 'No'. Residents who have correctly implemented RWH solutions have reported appreciable rise in the water level in their wells. However, there is a lot of stagnant water on the city's roads, streets and lanes, playgrounds and parks that is not harvested to replenish the groundwater table.

One heavy shower, and Chennai's arterial roads become almost navigable streams. Over the years, official response as to why this happens is usually directed at the construction of storm water drains (which diverts precious water into the sea) across the city. The question that begs an answer is, "Why has rainwater harvesting that has been enforced in all existing buildings in Chennai (by the Tamil Nadu Government's ordinance in June 2003) not been applied to water that falls in public spaces?"

Harvesting urban rainwater run-off essentially means ensuring that the rainwater that flows into the storm water drains is ingested into the soil. Today, the rainwater that falls in public places is collected in storm water drains — that also double up as convenient dustbins — and discharged into the Bay of Bengal through the city's waterways. In other words, rainwater is wasted every year without being used to replenish the groundwater table.

A senior official at the Corporation of Chennai asks, "How can we risk using water that could be mixed with sewage to recharge groundwater?"

Dr. Indukanth Ragde, an expert on water solutions, says, "The issue of sewage is the most convenient excuse that is being

made to evade the issue of harvesting urban run-off. Actually, as the water percolates downwards, insoluble material is held up and organic material is also tackled. Where there is no overload, the soil itself can easily handle the organic material that comes in. On G.N. Chetty Road, for instance, with the Gemini Flyover at one end and Panagal Park at the other, we have these large open areas of school playgrounds and parks into which road run-off can be efficiently diverted and used to recharge groundwater."

Ragde continues, "As far back as in May 1995, in front of our corporate office (Alacritty Foundations Pvt. Ltd. on Thirumalai Pillai Road), we used a reclined pit to divert stagnating rainwater into a well on our premises. In spite of

heavy rains that year, the enormous volumes of water that earlier used to create flooding on that road, disappeared within three-four hours, and it also recharged our well."

Sekhar Raghavan, Director, Rain Centre, says, "A storm water drain is an expensive and inefficient flood mitigation measure. Any bacteriological and chemical contaminants the water may contain get completely filtered within it and percolate down and move laterally in the soil. Harvesting the water can only lead to a 'win-win' situation.

A survey by the Rain Centre reveals that even those who had followed correct methods for RWH, had done only rooftop harvesting and had completely ignored rainwater falling all around the built-up area and

running off to the street. This, in fact, amounts to twice the rooftop collection, particularly in apartment complexes. Though unfit for direct collection and use, it is still good for ingesting into the soil for recharging and replenishing the groundwater. Sadly, it has been overlooked."

An engineer in the Corporation, although disapproving of the storm water drains currently under construction, feels the solutions put forth by experts are "neither viable nor practical" because in the prevailing environment, maintenance of recharge wells will be difficult and they will "not be able to handle large volumes of water". Dismissing such fears as groundless, Raghavan says, "Where there are no storm water drains, problems of stagnation and subsequent flooding can be prevented by leaving sufficient open space on both sides of the road or by suitably discharging the stagnant water into recharge structures constructed

(Continued on page 2)

Senate House restoration makes good progress

(by A Staff Writer)

Restoration of the *Senate House*, Chennai's finest example of Indo-Saracenic architecture, to its century-old glory is making satisfactory progress.

Replacement of coloured leaded glass as well as fan-light replacement in the Great Hall is complete. Restoration of arches and columns in the clear-storey (at the top level, near the roof) windows, too, is complete.

Recreation of frescoes at the top level on the western side has been done. So has the brick restoration on the eastern and west-

ern verandahs. Sample casting of the iron grills is complete; these will now be mass-produced to replace missing numbers.

"The priority is to finish work on the northern wing and Great Hall interiors and then move to the southern wing. You can now actually feel the difference as you enter the building," says P.T. Krishnan, convener, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Tamil Nadu Chapter.

Meanwhile, stain glass restoration is progressing in the northern wing. Timberwork

restoration of doors in the Great Hall is also in progress. Work on coloured plaster, floral cornices and mouldings on the first floor of the northern wing is 75 per cent over.

"We have collected less than 50 per cent of the amount required (Rs. 5 crore) to complete restoration of the *Senate Hall* and we require a lot more financial assistance," says Krishnan. Contributions may be sent to: The Registrar, Senate House Restoration A/c, Madras University, Chepauk Campus, Chennai 600 005.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster's current affair questions are from the period October 16th to 31st. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

- 1. Who has once again become the President of the BJP? 2. What record did Pope John Paul set on October 16th as regards the term of his papacy? 3. What was 'Operation Cocoon'? 4. Who is the winner of this year's Booker Prize? ... 20. If the Guindy Lodge (the precursor of the present Raj Bhavan) was the Governor's 'country residence', what was his 'town residence'?

(Answers on page 8)

Musical movements in Madras

The city of Madras was founded in 1639. At that time Thanjavur was the seat of music, art and culture as far as the southern region was concerned.

No art form can remain independent of the environment in which it exists and Carnatic music is no exception. Beginning with its arrival in the city (circa 1750), it was to be influenced by the political and socio-economic undercurrents and developed accordingly.

The era of the Dubashes

The Sarva Deva Vilasa is one of the earliest accounts of the city. An incomplete manuscript of this Sanskrit text survives in the Adyar library. Dr. V. Raghavan, the eminent Sanskrit scholar and musicologist, wrote extensively on the details given in this work for the Journal of the Music Academy of Madras in 1945.

Among the many mentioned are the famed Mudaliars of Manali, namely Muttukrishna and his son Venkatakrishna. Muttukrishna Mudaliar was the Chief Merchant of the East India Company and was Dubash to Pigot, the Governor of Madras (1755-63 and again from 1775-77).

krishna was famed far and wide as a patron of the arts and when Arunachala Kavi Raya, the composer of the Rama Nataka Kirtanas, went to Pondicherry to sing to them in the presence of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Duplex's Dubash, Pillai suggested that he approach Mudaliar first.

Muttukrishna Mudaliar died in 1792. Venkatakrishna, the son of Muttukrishna, was also referred to as Chinnayyan.

The arrival of professionals such as lawyers and native doctors, who in turn became very wealthy, changed the profile of the patrons. These men, educated as they were in English, began making serious efforts to educate the ruling British about the beauties of Indian music and several interesting collaborative efforts resulted, which we shall see in the next issue.

The work goes on to describe a Sadas (a scholarly symposium) held by Vedachala, yet another wealthy patron of Madras. Among his guests on the occasion were Kalinagaraya, Sriranga and Devanayaka.

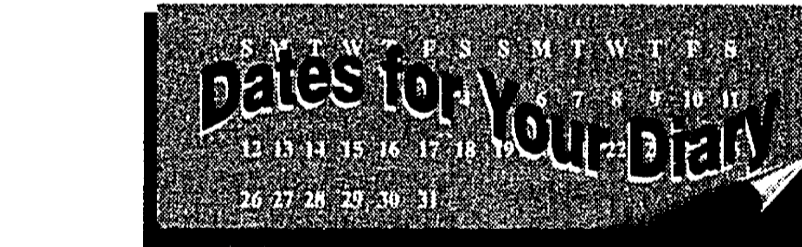
The work goes on to describe a Sadas (a scholarly symposium) held by Vedachala, yet another

wealthy patron of Madras. Among his guests on the occasion were Kalinagaraya, Sriranga and Devanayaka. Of these, Devanayaka was the trustee of the Agastyeswara Temple in Nungambakkam and had in his train a famed courtesan by name Meenakshi.

son of Ramasuri and the grandson of Sankarasuri. It would appear from the Vilasa that Madras had by 1800 become a hub for the arts.

By the mid 1830s, Kovur Sundaresa Mudaliar, yet another Dubash, had become the great patron of musicians. In his patronage lived Kuppaiyyar, a famed veena artiste.

SIPCOT, Cuddalore, present through art their experience of the struggle against pollution, of being poisoned in the name of development.



- Nov. 17: Environmental Education Centre holds an exhibition on Biosphere Reserves of India in the main gallery at C.P. Arts Centre. Nov. 21: Madras Players present 'Nostalgia', a musical based on the 60s and 70s at 1900 hrs. at Chinmaya Heritage Hall. ... Nov. 22-27: The children of Semankuppam, a village in

He came to the city in 1837 during the course of his travels and stayed at the Bunder Street residence of Mudaliar (for further details on Tyagaraja's visit see Madras Musings, January 1, 2002).

By 1850, thanks to the Dubashes, the city had several dancers and singers. Justice W.S. Krishnaswami Naidu, who hailed from a Dubash family himself, remembers in his memoirs an uncle, also a W.S. Krishnaswami Naidu who was the first Indian to become the Assistant Registrar of the Madras High Court.

by V. SRIRAM

The colour of things to come

A woman's face dominates the top half of the drawing sheet, while the lower half carries the faces of devils, connected by rays to the face above.

The artist is a little girl of 11-12 years of age. You notice that her 'wicked faces' are also female, and you wonder about this child's particular set of experiences.

She is one among the many participants from rural Government schools and Panchayat Union schools from eight southern districts, who took part in

the recent 'Talent Contest for Rural Children of South Tamil Nadu - 2004', conducted under the aegis of the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Two hundred children from each District participated in the first phase - 1600 children in all. Of them 800 were selected for the second phase.

The first phase included topics like 'HIV/AIDS by 2020' and 'Industrial development by 2020'; the second phase tackled issues like growth of the agro-in-

dustry in India by 2020; the third phase handled topics like 'Literacy in India by 2020, with special focus on girls', 'Female infanticide', and 'Child labour - Myth or Reality'.

I.M. Stella, Counsellor, Social Development, CII Southern Region, and Anita Freddy, Project Coordinator, AIDS project, CII Southern Region, pointed out the clarity and fear-free honesty with which children responded to the topics given.

Each painting represented a story - the tale of a child's life and its proximity to grim realities, with few opportunities for any illusions about the true face of humanity to even develop.

The paintings stood out as clear portrayals of truth. There were common threads that ran through them all - like that of 'Kalli Paal' - the poisonous sap from the local cactus plant used to kill babies, female babies, an image that recurs again and again.

One painting, the work of a young boy of 12, on female infanticide, described the process of how the mother kills the child. Paintings placed mothers who kill children behind bars, showing that the children are aware of the law, and in fact want the law to act.

But, for these children, the years ahead are not painted in dull shades of depression. Each painting is infused with hope and belief in a glorious future - in their Vision 2020 - a hope based, not on airy ephemeral dreams, but on strong practical ideas, where education, effort and hard work play a role.



A girl is immersed in presenting her portrayal of life at the 'Talent Contest for Rural Children of South India - 2004' conducted by the Confederation of Indian Industry.

By 2020, there will be no pollution, they state through their paintings. Their homes will be surrounded by clean air, clean roads, drinking water, and clean toilets for everyone.

Strikingly, many young boys drew paintings depicting the advance of female literacy in India. They have drawn girls wielding degree certificates, placed them in spacecrafts and racing cars; as dressed in the garbs of lawyers, doctors, journalists, engineers, and sportspeople.

A painting by a boy, in the 8th Standard, predicts a female Supreme Court Judge and a female President by 2020 for India. You see these paintings - and somewhere there is a small but clear flicker of hope for the gradual disintegration of gender-based biases.

The children visualise a time when even the tiniest villages will have computer centres. In 2020, they assert, there will be no child labour. Where does this intense paintings suggest several ways in which energy can be harnessed for agriculture.

Other factors were also thrown up by this contest and the resultant interaction with the children. Every child has talent and deserves, indeed has a right to, both opportunities and avenues to explore them. The organisers were also all praise for the school systems involved. All credit must be given to the teachers, they state.

(Continued on page 8)

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/-.

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.

Bring professionalism to managing sport



AJ de Souza

AJ DE SOUZA is one of the most respected coaches in athletics in the country. The International Track & Field Coaches Association recently conferred the Honorary Life Membership on de Souza for his over 25 years of service. Following is an extract of an interview with AJ de Souza, published in the July-September issue of Montfort Community Development Society News (MCDS).

MCDS: The failure of the largest Indian contingent (sent to the Olympics) dimmed the lustre of Maj. Rathore's silver medal.

AJ: After a few weeks the anguish has died. We have returned to casual mode and project medals in 2008. At Athens, the Sports Minister was livid when the dope disgrace surfaced. The Ministry sacked the weightlifting coach and the

Russian expert. It amounts to sacking employees after retirement — they ceased to be national officials after the Olympics. The foreign expert went home, his contract completed; the Indian continues as his federation's chief coach.

MCDS: How can other associations emulate cricket, tennis, golf and motor racing?

AJ: By a total change in management style. Most associations operate along union lines. Office bearers are elected as in politics — loyalties switch, muscle and money power is evident and there are floor-crossings.

MCDS: Can you identify areas of lacuna?

AJ: One, inability to attract an audience even with free entry; two, indifferent response from sponsors; three, casual promotion at the grassroots;

four, questionable system of awards, rewards and incentives; five, tilt towards control rather than promotion; and six, bureaucratic governance.

MCDS: Why is sponsorship in sport other than cricket, tennis, golf and motor sport events difficult to come by?

AJ: Sponsorship is not a donation — it demands value for money. Corporates will sanction fees (money) if there is visible commercial mileage.

MCDS: There are complaints that the current system of awards and incentives is deficient. Can you comment?

AJ: Elite awards such as the Dronacharya and Arjuna are causing more heartburn than elation because they reach low-priority candidates. For example, the national athletics coach, K.O. Bosen, was nomi-

nated twice for the Dronacharya Award three years after Bahadur Singh, whom he had coached at national camps as a shot putter and then tutored for a diploma in coaching. A Dronacharya is expected to teach and graduate a number of trainees. Latest awardee, Bobby George, is credited only in coaching his wife Anju. Maybe he does a good job of it but he does not boast a stable of trainees.

MCDS: Why do you object to bureaucracy monitoring sports when the Government is the main funding source?

AJ: Bureaucrats face two shortcomings: transfers are imminent after three years and job profiles change drastically. For example, a first class first in agriculture gets his first posting as a junior secretary in his field. Every three years, he moves to minerals, electricity, water re-

sources... and sports, when he has hardly played a serious game and has had no experience in sports administration, coaching or (understanding) player needs. After taking a couple of years to settle, he formulates plans and projects. The next incumbent has other ideas and sends his predecessor's work to the old files rack.

Secondly, while senior bureaucrats mature with time, new brooms tend to be bumptious. 'We are Government', they declare and sweep away advice and guidance from the knowledgeable, forgetting they are civil servants, paid from taxes levied on the community.

MCDS: How do you sum up the situation?

AJ: Press the delete button on the bureaucratic style of management and substitute it with corporate version. Market sport as entertainment and attract ticket sales for competitions at every level. Reward skillful and fit players with payments and bonuses and pay coaches according to the results they produce.

THE COLOUR OF THINGS TO COME

(Continued from Page 7)

confident and very well-informed. Their handwriting, in many cases, was near-perfect. Television has obviously made an impact in dispersing information. They know all about new products, on what's available as they recall all the advertisements. Their social consciousness is very high; they appear well up on news. But, strikingly, not one child referred to movies, to film songs, to actors or politicians — their hero was India's President Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Through the entire contest, one name kept

coming up, in essays, during the elocution contests, and in the paintings and drawings — President Abdul Kalam. Stella says that one child came up to her and gave her a letter, requesting her to give it to President Kalam. Coincidentally, that particular day happened to be his birthday. The letter wished him a very Happy Birthday and included, along with the little girl's name and the class she is studying in, a personal invitation to visit Madurai. These children deep in the heart of Tamil Nadu see him as a hero, mentor and role

model, adding credence to the media term for him: "The Children's President".

While some children were chosen as 'winners', everyone was given a prize, so that all have a sense of victory and participation. The reason for choosing prize-winners is that all effort is being made to secure scholarships for these children. The whole purpose, or the aim, of CII is to bring in corporate support to education in rural areas. Plans are also underway to take some of these children to meet the President in New Delhi.

Ranjitha Ashok

Answers to Quiz

1. L.K. Advani; 2. He has become the third longest-serving Pope after Pius IX and St. Peter; 3. The successful operation that led to Veerappan's death; 4. Allan Hollinghurst for *The Line of Beauty*; 5. Ames Research Center in California; 6. Brandon Routh; 7. Vilasrao Deshmukh; 8. Muhammed Ali and George Foreman; 9. S.S. Barnala and Sushil Kumar Shinde; 10. It was the last day *The Times* came out in a broadsheet format. It has now become tabloid-shaped.

* * *

11. Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Madras between 1837 and 1842; 12. The AIADMK; 13. It was the place where Veerappan was shot dead by the STF in an encounter; 14. The Marina swimming pool; 15. Periya and Chinna Marudhu; 16. MCC; 17. 'Film News' Anandan; 18. K. Kamaraj; 19. *Kalaigarin Kannamma*; 20. Governor's Garden (present Government Estate).

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