WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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

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a-MUSING



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' foodstuff. 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 running off to the street. This in fact, amounts to twice the rooftop collection, particularly in apartment complexes Though unfit for direct collection.

(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 (Alacrity 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, convenor, 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

A terrible life in the slums of Chennai

The immediate and most critithat was constructed in the late no recharging of the undering faecal contamination, in 67 per cent of all dwellings. Lacal environmental problems 19th and early 20th Centuries ground aquifers. The availability of cities in developing countries became inadequate as population include the lack of safe drinking grew rapidly. From a city of 0.5 water, inadequate waste management, problems of congestion Century, the city has grown to 7 and crowding, occupation and degradation of sensitive lands and tan population is concentrated in the interrelationship between the city, which comprises only these problems. Nedina and Nebita Jarret, NGO activists, in ban areas, too, have grown rapa paper published in The Geogra- idly, particularly along the transphy Teachers brought out by the port corridors. The quality of Association of Geography Teachers, Chennai, critically look at the complex issues of rapid urbanisation, productivity, Within the city, it is even more poverty and environment in so in the slums. Chennai. The most important issues that need to be resolved in the slums of India, they write, are slums, reveals the paper. Most of poor governance, especially lack the slums have no access to serof community and private par- vices such as sanitation and solid ticipation, lack of public awareness, ill-conceived regulatory and economic policies and inad- for some people in the slums, equate knowledge and inappro-

Slums Survey Data of 1986 carried out by the Economist Group neighbourliness and a give-andfor the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority in 996 hardship, squalor and poverty. slums of the city. It indicates the Environmental sanitation is poor. nature of development, water supply and sanitation in the city. A schedule-based 900-household sample survey was conducted for the purpose of presenting humanistic perspectives in relation to the slums of Chennai.

knowledge there is.

The British selected Madras as a centre for trading. The small South India. The infrastructure The net effect was that there was

million at the turn of the 20th million. Most of the metropoli-172 square kilometres. Subururban services in the suburban areas, such as water supply and sanitation, is unsatisfactory.

Nearly a third of the population lives in Chennai's 2000-odd waste management. Livestock, which forms the mainstay of life adds to the problems of sanitapriate application of whatever tion and waste disposal. Water supply and environmental sanita-Their analysis relates to the tion form just a fraction of the problem. Although there is good take mentality, reality is all about

Some decades ago, Chennai

was full of tanks. They provided drinking water for people and livestock. They were used for fish culture and other uses. They recharged the local aquifers. With the rapid population growth of the city, during the 1950s and 1960s, housing colonies mushsettlement with a fort grew roomed around the tanks gradually into the largest city in sometimes even in dry tank beds.

of underground water diminished while population continued to

Chennai has the lowest per capita availability of water for a metropolis, at 78 litres per head per day. In times of scarcity, which is about 4-6 months almost every year, the supply could be half that level. In the slums. where people cannot afford the price for the water sold in 'pot counts' (Rs. 2 to 4 for a pot of 20 litres during the most critical months), it can be very low. Some families go without water for washing and bathing.

Water analysis has shown contamination in much of the water supplied to the city. In a majority of the cases, the con-

> **SASHI NAIR** pinch-hitting for MMM

tamination has occurred at the consumers' end, due to leaking, corroded pipes that have not been replaced for several years. The quality of water supplied by Metrowater and the water obtained from other sources is not really fit for consumption. The drinking water in the slums contains high chemical and organic impurities, rendering it unsafe for drinking purposes. A study by the Health Department of the Madras Corporation found dangerous levels of impurity, includ-

wards of the Corporation. The practice of open defecation is habitual, because of non-availability of public or private lavatories. Where there are public lavatotoilet!

non-availability of drainage facilities for wastewater. The slum people use open spaces as places for cleaning household utensils, bathing and washing, causing is, it's just our lot. I can't think pools of water near the residential areas. On the one hand, this increases the mosquito menace and, on the other, it causes serious health hazards.

Roughly 74 per cent of the city is covered by the sewerage system. The level of treatment is inadequate. The wastewater is discharged often into the three waterways. In some cases, raw sewage bypasses the treatment plant altogether, causing severe pollution. Cattle wastes, grit and chemical effluents enter the system causing blockage or affecting treatment efficiency at the treatment plants. About 1.5 million people living in slums, particularly those in low-lying areas or on the banks of the waterways. are not served by this system at So be it. I know I should do

From a study of the 996 slums surveyed by the Economist Group, Chennai (1987), for the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, the Jarrets' paper mentions that there are just get cleaned up at all. We'll several smaller slums than bigger slums. Most people live in thatched huts, which account for now. That's more important."

water supplied to 49 of the 155 Proper housing accounts for a mere 13 per cent. Nearly 75 per cent of all the slums covered in the study had water supply. whereas only 27 per cent of the slums had latrines and public toiries, nearly 100 persons share a lets. Thirty-nine per cent of the households surveyed lived in The second problem is the rented houses, paying an average monthly rent of Rs.75.

The paper quotes a slum dweller as saying: "I have to live in dirt and filth, my only answer of sanitation when I've to think of food and clothes and a little sleep. Some day there may be change for the better, I'll be the happiest. But, will it ever come? I don't know."

And another: "I have to make a living with the little I have got. You know, I want to bathe every day, dress and feel like a man; like a good father, a good husband. Only I don't get enough water. I am often sick of the situation. Can't we just have the decent life we deserve? Or don't we deserve it at all? I don't know." And yet another: "Where can

I go just because I don't get good water and clean surroundings? I like it here. This is where I was born. And this is where I will die. something. What can I do? I am a poor man. Ignorant. The day will come when we will get good water and live nicely, in a clean place. Poor women, they do so much to clean up here, it doesn't have to help. We will ... but let me think of food for the family

HARVEST RUN-OFF FROM PUBLIC PLACES

(Continued from page 1)

within private or public premises. This water does carry along with it large quantity of solid matter like leaves, besides fine silt, and will pose a major hurdle in harvesting and hence will have to be handled with care. The best RWH structures for such purposes are recharge wells and not recharge pits. While the former can be desilted easily and kept efficient for percolation, the latter cannot." On G.N. Chetty Road, T. Nagar, several recharge pits constructed a couple of years ago now lie abandoned.

Proposals made to the Corporation of Chennai for harvesting the urban rainwater runoff by the Rain Centre include: • Where a storm water drain exists, identify drains free of domestic sewage that are located close to large open spaces (such as on Sardar Patel Road, between the IIT gate and Raj Bhavan; on Beach Road, from All India Radio to Napier Bridge, roads adjoining Loyola College, Women's Christian College, Stella Maris College, Pachaiappa's College, New College, Holy Angels Convent and

bakkam, and St. Bede's in San Thomé). A dwarf wall of 2 ft. height constructed within these drains at a few points can be used to intercept the flow and take it at right angles to recharge wells of 5 ft. dia and 15 to 20 ft. depth (depending on the nature of the soil). • Drains close to temple tanks

can straightaway be discharged

into the tank through a desilting or drop chamber of suitable dimensions, as has been done in Mylapore, Purasawalkam Thiruvanmiyur and Triplicane. For all other drains, recharge wells of minimum 3 ft. dia and 10 ft. depth can be dug within these drains at intervals of 30 ft. These wells should be located right below the manhole covers to enable periodic cleaning and de-silting. Storm water drains running close to playgrounds and parks can also be utilised in the same way as mentioned above. It is to be noted that many parks already have largesized dug wells, which if desilted and connected to the storm water drains, can receive

huge quantities of rainwater.

Good Shepherd in Nungam- does not exist and where stagnation causes flooding, the best method lies in avoiding indiscriminate paving of roads and pedestrian platforms. Where it cannot be avoided, the one-foot strip between the road and the platform should be left unpaved, at least in areas where the soil is permeable. For example, the sandy soil in Besant Nagar and Valmiki Nagar allows no water stagnation. Recent beautification drives that involved indiscriminate paving resulted in water stagnation even on these roads.

Successful experiments conducted by the Rain Centre include those in Defence Colony, Nandambakkam, where the residents had earlier constructed storm water drains on almost all the roads, connecting them to a larger drain, which in turn discharged large quantities of rainwater into the Advar

River for several years. In 2001, recharge wells of 3 ft. dia and 15 ft. depth were introduced within the drain in five places besides diverting the water run-off in two places to large recharge wells, of 6 ft. dia

Vidhyodhaya in T. Nagar; • Where a storm water drain and 15 ft. depth, located in three years, in some instances. open spaces within the colony. It largely depends on both the In three places – in LIC Colony maintenance of storm water off Radhakrishnan Nagar in Thiruvanmiyur, on 6th Cross Street, Shastri Nagar, and on Greames Road (in front of the thousand Lights Police Station) — water on the road was led to a 15 ft. deep recharge well (3 ft. dia in the first two places and 4 ft. dia in the third place) located within an independent house, a flat complex and the police station, respectively, through a chamber located on the road and covered with a perforated

Stand-alone recharge wells, such as those on the sides of roads in a few places in Kalakshetra Colony, have been found to be effective in blind streets and alleys.

However, Raghavan cautions, "The recharge wells to harvest the urban run-off will have to be de-silted at least thrice a year - before the onset of the southwest and northeast monsoons and once during the

However, Dr. Ragde feels, "The problem of silting may happen as rarely as once in two-

drains and the nature of the matter in them."

In any case, immediate action to harvest urban run-off must be taken up in a few areas in Chennai and spread over the rest of the city in phases over a period, the experts feel.

A big 'Thank You' to 15 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.10.04 and 15.11.04, 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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— THE EDITOR

Decongest, to rid city of malaise

Selfless spirit Clowly and steadily, several aspects of Chennai City are crumbling The birth centenary of Tyagi and everyone appears to be throwing up their hands in despair. In ▲ Tirupur Kumaran is being celthe circumstances, it was no surprise that the Tamil Nadu ebrated this year. I have special rea-Government's proposal to construct a massive Secretariat complex in son to remember and pay homage

November 16-30, 2004

to him as he was our family friend

also. Kumaran, hailing from a

lower-middle class family of

Chennimalai, without much formal

education, shifted to Tirupur in the

1920s and worked in the Khadi

Vastralaya. He became a Congress

volunteer and dedicated his all for

the growth of the organisation and

like T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar

and K.S. Ramaswamy Gounder at

Tirupur, Kumaran virtually led the

organisation with his patriotism,

untiring work and fearlessness

against police attacks and many an

imprisonment. He was responsible

for hundreds of men joining the

early 1930s in Tirupur, I along with

other children used to hear his

speeches and go behind him in pro-

cessions. He would give us small

booklets in Tamil on the life histo-

ries of Mahatma Gandhi, the

Nehrus, Vallabhbhai Patel and

other leaders as well as Gandhi

caps. He taught us Bharathi's patri-

otic songs. The spirit of patriotism

No wonder, we all wept bitterly

on that fateful day when he was

brutally attacked by the police with

laties and died a martyr for the

nation's freedom. How can we for-

get our beloved Kumaranna? In this

name of another Tirupur Tyagi by

name B.S. Sundaram Iyer, an inde-

fatigable freedom fighter. He also

police attacks, but survived for

some years leading an invalid's life.

generations who have strayed far

away from the ideals and examples

of Gandhi and other freedom fight-

ers can realise the value of the sac-

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Korattur

rifices of these selfless tyagis.

I wonder how many in recent

generated by him was irresistible.

As a primary class student in the

freedom movement.

Although there were leaders

achievement of freedom.

READERS

WRITE

Kotturpuram evoked widespread and spontaneous protest. With city roads remaining as they are, with many of them being dug even during the rainy season by government departments, taking turn, and the number of two-wheelers, three-wheelers and fourwheelers increasing by leaps and bounds, crossing the street has become a nightmare, particularly for children and the aged. While the roads are inadequate in size, their extremely poor maintenance has resulted in traffic snarls, making you wonder whether traffic management in the city has indeed collapsed!

On an average, five to six people die in accidents in Chennai everyday. Most of them are two-wheeler riders knocked down by water lorries and those who drive on the extreme side of the road and fall into pits and loose soil. Even helmets cannot protect them.

At another level, massive multi-storey buildings are being constructed across the city and independent houses demolished. This will directly resulting in an even more alarming increase in the population, with basic amenities grossly lacking.

All this while hundreds of people virtually live on the streets in several areas in the city. Poverty forces them to live in extremely unhygienic conditions; stray dogs and rats keep them company. Unwittingly, they have become the source of bacteria and viruses.

What is particularly disturbing and saddening is that while the impending doom is clearly evident, no strategic or pragmatic decision has been taken by the Government and Corporation authorities to solve these problems.

Even under such stressful conditions, responsible citizens are try ing to find ways out of this mess, efforts that are not supported by the Government. For example, citizens of Besant Nagar came forward to reconstruct and maintain the existing crematorium, with no support from the Government. For reasons not known, the Corporation of Chennai turned down the reconstruction proposal.

With garbage increasing everywhere and the space for its disposal inadequate, the Government has not made much headway with plans for scientific garbage disposal systems, adopting fermentation tech niques or setting up small power plants based on city wastes.

There is an urgent necessity to decongest Chennal by stopping construction of massive structures, including new offices and soft ware complexes. Immediate steps must be taken to shift several government offices out of the city.

Above all, we need committed administrative machinery that has the capacity to realise the gravity of the situation and move forward

> N.S. Venkataramar M-60/1, IV Cross street, Besant Nagar Chennai 600 090.

Not quite for cricket

It saddens me a great deal that Madras has grown noisier by the vear and, what is worse, most Chennaiites seem to enjoy it. There was a time when cricket Test matches at the Corporation Stadium and Chepauk were watched mostly by spectators who knew the game. There used to be silence when the bowler ran in to bowl.

Nowadays, the crowds that throng cricket matches bring connection, I should mention the bugles, whistles, cymbals and drums and scream at the top of their voices. Many busy themselves writing inane nonsense on posters and received grievous injuries during displaying them for the benefit of television cameras. In this mindless babble, how can the umpire hear the faint sound of the ball snicking the bat? I wonder!

I remember it was in 1980 or so that I was taken by a friend to a small time 'thalaivar' to resolve a problem of mine. The 'thalaivar was a rustic in his mid 30s, wellbuilt and wearing many chains and rings. He told us to come after a week. I was told that 'thalaivar' had cancelled all his engagements in order to attend a cricket Test match. I was impressed and told my friend, I never thought 'thalaivar' was such an enthusiatic fan of the game. Whereupon my friend dryly replied that 'thalaivar' went to cricket matches not to watch the game but to "pick up any figure" who caught

his fancy! I did not go back to the wretch. C.G. Prasad 9, C.S. Mudali Street Kondithope

Chennai 600 079

Schooldays at PSHS then

fondly recollect the turbaned ▲ Moslem watchman who took charge of our bicycles and issued tokens; the tufted young Brahmin in khaki halfpants and shorts, who supplied hot water for drinking from a vessel. The water was taken out with a long handled tumbler and poured into our own tumblers. Any boy found sipping from the tumbler got spanked. One Sitaraman who scored centum in Maths but failed in all the other subjects, was detained from appearing in the SSLC exam. He got atop a tree on the playground and threatened to commit suicide by jumping down (at worst, it would have been a fracture!). Our cries brought the rattled headmaster Ramachandra Iver and after much persuasion the boy climbed down. The list is end-

> N. Dharmeshwaran Bangalore 560 003

Tackle leptospirosis, now

am a chemical engineer, aged 158. I became a victim of leptospirosis in May, necessitating ospitalisation.

On enquiry with friends and relatives later, I came to know that several people in Chennai have been affected by leptospirosis in

Leptospirosis, though not commonly known, is a serious ailment spread by rats. You come to know about the ailment only two to three weeks after being affected by the bacteria. The patient loses strength and becomes susceptible to attack by other bacteria and viruses, leading to malaria and typhoid.

This is what happened in my case. Several leptospirosis patients have been affected simultaneously by malaria, typhoid or jaundice. The only known treatment is the penicillin injection. While injections bring down the body temperature, the bacteria remain in the body for two to three months posing the risk of relapse.

The Government should take immediate steps to tackle the menace. The first requirement is to go for a massive rat eradication programme in the city. The Chennai Corporation can perhaps take some guidance from the Surat Municipality, which successfully carried out a rat eradication programme after the advent of plague in the city a few years ago.

Another matter of concern is that most of the doctors themselves seem to lack experience in treating leptospirosis and there appears to be no uniformity in diagnosing the disease and the kind of treatment extended. There is thus

an urgent need to carry out an awareness programme amongst the doctors themselves.

Without further loss of time, the Government of Tamil Nadu should sponsor and conduct research to tackle leptospirosis, in consultation with international experts.

> N.S. Venkataraman M, 60/1, 4th Cross Street, Besant Nagar Chennai 600 090

Get in touch

It was very pleasing to read the feature 'Not forgotten over the Lyears' and see the photo showing the happy faces of the old students of the R.K. Mission H.S. (North Branch). The story has inspired us, the 1955 alumni of the College of Engineering, Guindy, to trace our old classmates and organise in early 2005 the golden jubilee celebration of our passing.

Through your columns we appeal to the old students of the 1955 batch who are not in touch with us to contact the Secretary of the Alumni Association at the campus (phone 22351314) or the undersigned (23771613).

S.P. Sankaranarayanan F7, Prithvi Apartments 104, Kali Amman Koil Street Chennai 600 092

A success with soap

The soap industry may have L undergone a sea-change, but there was one man who played a key role in improving the quality of both toilet and washing soaps.

C.K. Krishnan, a chemistry graduate from the Madras Christian College, Tambaram, started his career in soaps as an apprentice Tata Oil Mill Company, Ernakulam. During that period, he got through the London Exam with a first grade. This proved a turning point in his career, as he got a big break to serve Kerala Soaps at Calicut. He did not receive satisfactory pay for his services and switched over to East Asiatic Company Limited, Tondiarpet, a Dutch firm manufacting OK soaps, and served the organisation for two de-

cades successfully with distinction. When TOMCO took over East Asiatic in 1970 and moved him to Ghaziabad, he took it as a challenge. After retirement in 1983, he moved further north to work for John Soaps, Srinagar (J&K), till 1987. He died, aged 80, in February this year. Krishnan was rightly called the father of soaps.

> C.K. Subramaniam 1595, J Block, 'Anukul' Anna Nagar (W) Chennai 600 040

More nostalgia

The danseuse and famous ■ actress Balamani (MM, June 16th) hailed from Kumbakonam where she owned a theatre which was called 'Balamani Kottaai'. Now it is the 'Diamond Talkies'. For her dramas, the Railways used to run 'Balamani Specials'. My elders used to narrate how grandly she helped conduct the wedding ceremony of the presiding deity of Kumbakonam, Sri Adhi Kumbeswaraswamy, when the entire business community of the town used to take their wares as Seer for the God and Goddess. She built a kalyana mantapam near the temple tank with polished black granites pillars and carved teakwood roof. The whole mantapam is a beauty even now, and is well maintained Her mansion is opposite the Town Higher Secondary School, near 'Yaanaiadi Kudiraiadi' where a temple for Lord Ayyappan exists.

As for the opinion of Rt. Hon. V.S.S. Sastry and others that Indians could not write English poetry, I recall the words of Dr.K.M Munshi as the Editor of the Bhavan's Journal long ago. He was the student of Aurobindo Ghosh and while as a student he wrote poetry in English and showed it to Aurobindo, who admonished him saying that though he had studied in England, he was not sure of his mastery over the language and how dare Munshi chose to write English

T.M. Sundararaman No.19, Nallappan street Mylapore Chennai 600 004

A mystery in St. Mary's

Now celebrating its 325th Anniversary

• St. Mary's Church in Fort St. George was completed in 1680. Today, the oldest Protestant church built in India looks much the same as it did over three centuries ago. This is the concluding part of a two-part article (the first part appeared in MM, November

nother feature incorporated into Dixon's part of the church takes us on a much longer journey back in time. We will return to the enigma later, but, at this moment, may it suffice to say that whoever designed it must have gone to the happy hunting ground of masons before Dixon was even born. St. Mary's is clearly a good example of how designers can move the clock backwards and forwards for the sake of puzzling later generations — and for effect, too.

Christian churches, wherever the shape of the site permits it, are orientated east-west, and have their sanctuaries at the east end. Dixon would have adopted this principle willingly because it lines of white roundels which enabled him to present one of divide and edge the surfaces. chancel or sanctuary. Ahead of the short walls towards the sea, This device helps to counteract us is one of the church's most so minimising it as a target for any oppressive sensation which valued possessions, a large feature of the building you come tive. This gave rise to very idiogunfire. Had he been aware that may be experienced through Gent would be pushing a spire knowledge of the weight of the skywards, in the direction of heaven, later, he would no doubt have been disturbed by its vulnerability as a target.

Broad footings are the foundations Dixon laid on Lady Day 1678 to carry the walls which are heavily constructed. Accounts usually give the aisle the aisels are relieved by simple walls a thickness of 120 cm at but pleasing mouldings, and the their maximum. The width of the church walls is not less than ing columns is visually lightened 210 cm. Sixty centimetres has by the application of plasters to been put forward as the thickness of the roof vaults, but this In their turn, these are decohas not been checked. The conrated by marble and slate monuventional plan of a central nave, flanked by aisles, was adopted and covering these three parallel spaces, brick semi-circular as Flaxman and Chantrey. A ated at once. Though the tower, Moreover, he would stick his barrel vaults of great strength great many of these were belfry, spire and curvaceous gave the necessary protection to erected to the memory of milithe church from aerial attack. Each vault terminates in a half Company, and they tell the building, spanning many vault at the seaward end, and this feature could be relied upon to deflect cannon balls safely George and the budding colony away to the side.

It may be believed, from the nates in a capital from which Dixon's concern with making from the two door openings, his church as indestructible as which face each other across possible would have resulted in the western end of the church, truth! Somehow, he contrived louvred wooden shutters. To 'first phase development' (as it keeping with the style of an

to disguise the massive walls permit daylight to enter, these and roof, and the reveals of the door and window openings, because they are generously splayed, seem to reflect more daylight into the body of the church than could be reasonably anticipated.

roundels, which are like medal-

lions, form part of the embel-

which separate the nave from

substantial bulk of the support-

each of the four main surfaces.

mental tablets, some of which

were commissioned from fash-

ionable London sculptors, such

story of more than two hundred

years of the history of Fort St.

around it. Every column termi-

Gunner Edward Fowke.

While we are still in the nave. The brickwork is finished in chunam, the traditional Indian a moment or two should be taken to look at the wonderful plaster which incorporates rich carving of the gallery balusfinely powdered eggshells, milk trade. It is understood that this and jaggery water. Once dry, this material, which has a warm feature may be contemporary with the gallery which itself apwhite natural colour, is capable of taking a high marble-like polpears to have been installed at the same time as the external ish. Over the years, many coats of paint were applied to the stairs. That was in 1760. On the other hand, there may have been walls and ceiling and it was only an internal stair to the gallery in 1985, during restoration which has since been demolwork which involved stripping ished; if this is so, the gallery these away, that the original could be earlier than the date chunam was brought to light. suggested. Two huge panoramic The affected surfaces were then photographs are displayed under repaired by traditionally-trained the gallery. These, dated 1881, artisans from Karaikudi who are worth an essay in themselves were brought in specially to because they reveal such a carry out this specialised work. Today, some additional colour, wealth of fascinating buildings, in the one, within the Fort itself and mainly of a soft greeny-blue and, in the other, lining the tone, has been given to the curved panels of the ceilings as north side of the Esplanade. a contrasting background to the

Let us now walk down the centre of St. Mary's into the brickwork overhead. These wall behind and above the altar. be pin-pointed with any precilishments which are believed to have been added by Master Master Raphael was involved The arches of the arcades — perhaps to paint the chalice.

are normally kept open during

the daytime. The openings are

round topped, and echo to a

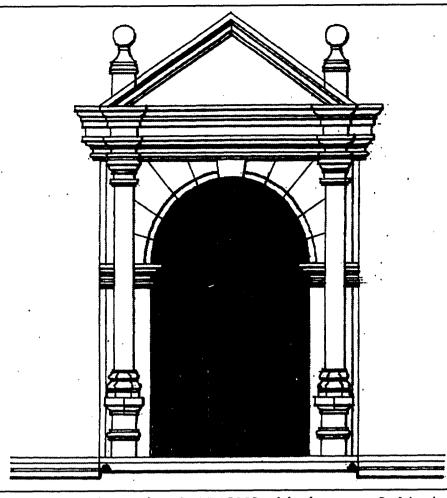
smaller scale the semi-circular

nave arches, so producing a very

harmonious and consistent vi-

sual composition.

and has been in use since the have carved it. The design of in the Batavia off the coast of church was new. whole church can be apprecisteps arrived as four separate tary men and servants of the episodes in the enlargement of pean, its language belongs to a years, the good architectural manners of their individual designers have ensured that harmony in the exterior was achieved almost effortlessly. foregoing description, that the arches directly spring. Apart The whole structure would, indeed, not look out of place in a City of London street. And yet, may we not toy for a moment a dark and ponderous interior. all the openings in the aisle with the thought that Dixon, Nothing is further from the outer walls are fitted with contemplating his substantial



An architect's drawing by TOM INGLIS, of the doorway at St. Mary's.

would be described today), with Elizabethan English county its boxy appearance relieved only by a row of round-topped openings, may have thought that it did not look English enough? This may be the reason why he settled for a line of mediaeval battlements at roof level instead of a classical cornice and parapet such as you would find on a Madras flat-top. Whatever the reason, these toothy and sometimes nonetoo-regular embellishments, together with wall piers carried above the line of the eaves, do provide the necessary visual diversion to successfully soften the military austerity of Dixon's

Now, finally, let me try and unravel the enigma alluded to earlier in these observations. The mystery surrounds the first Renaissance were often tentapainting of The Last Supper across when entering the syncratic detailing as a result of which is mounted on the east churchyard through the iron it being unfamiliar to the magate, the main entrance door. The identity of the artist cannot As we know, St. Mary's, under oped, it will be understood that the external rendering, is a our doorway could have found sion, but there is a possibility brick building. The doorway is its way equally well to Pulicat or that the hand of the Italian an exception. It is constructed of stone with each part dressed (or worked) to ensure a neat Returning once more to the and close fit to its neighbours. western end, spare a moment to Assembling the pieces would look at the font which is carved have been child's play for any out of black charnockite, also Indian mason who was trained known as Pallavaram marble, to work in stone. He could also the doorway is, however, not We can now step outside Indian. Not content with that into the leafy cool garden of the bald statement, and just to add Presbyter's House. Looking to the confusion, the present back from a shady corner, the writer must admit to doubts about it being even English. neck out further and suggest that though the design is Euromuch earlier age. Its Classical flavour is unambiguous enough, but it seems to belong to 1580 and not 1680. The triangular pediment over the opening is no doubt that St. Mary's doorstraightforward enough, but way fits the building very well, look at the bases and capitals of and can be appreciated as one the attached columns, and the of the most delightful examples way the chunky cornices jut out of fine stonework in the entire well beyond the capitals. It will City. That it has some unexbe seen that these details are plained features about it makes

house than a building designed during the reign of Charles II. Could this masonry have been found to be superfluous to the requirements of some large structure of that earlier era, and have been lying unused in a mason's yard? And then shipped ignominiously out to India as ballast? Stone was frequently employed to stabilise a ship whose holds were empty. Well, it has to be said against such loose suppositions that it would have been an unusual occurrence to waste good stonework for such a lowly purpose... which leads one to further speculation.

November 16-30, 2004

In the late 16th Century attempts to come to terms with the new syntax of the European son. If this thought is devel-Sadras as to Madras, indicating that we have an unused doorway at St. Mary's which may be of Dutch workmanship. A parallel case concerns a doorway, already in pieces for installation in an important building in the East Indies, which went down Western Australia. This is on display, with the remains of the ship's timbers, in the maritime museum at Fremantle. It is both large and impressive, but is far from being the sophisticated example of masonry which somehow found its way through the gates of Fort St. George. So, that may be another tempting avenue for investigation. Whatever its date of manufacture, and whatever its origi-

nal purpose was, we can be in quite primitive, much more in it just ten times more intriguing!

Tom Inglis

November 16-30, 2004

Community policing finds favour among residents

The compact red commu-I nity police booth or kaaval udhavi maiyam is a familiar feature in many localities in Chennai. Though some of the booths have made a positive difference to certain areas, generthe-clock manning by two or three constables in turn is visible, many others have remained just a presence.

However, Commissioner of Police, R. Nataraj, says, "Community policing as a concept has definitely caught on in Chennai, which now has 243 police booths attached to 81 police stations, working in three beats. Generally, they have been initiated on public request. However, clearance by the Corporation is necessary and the booth cost (about a lakh of rupees) is borne by sponsors." Positive changes have been recorded in localities such as Anna Nagar and Besant Nagar where there were more instances of petty crime earlier. The red police booth seems to be a deterrent and, with police patrol vehicles, Friends of Police, and Home Guards coordinating with the booths periodically, marked changes have been possible at a time when petty crime has been increasing due to the disparity of incomes caused by globalisation and consumerism.

About 2000 people patrol they, too, have helped reduce crime. Compared to the first three months of 2003, property crimes have shown a 30 per cent reduction this year. In another two years, with ongoing computerisation within the Department, more policemen are likely to be deployed in booths (one for every four-five streets). "Even police verification can be sorted out easily," says J.K. Tripathy, Joint Commissioner of Police, South, who has been mainly responsible for introducing the idea of community police booths in Tamil Nadu. He adds, "The police booth is merely a structure. It is the concept behind it that is important. The idea is to bring in a combination of best practices found in India and abroad, with police personnel becoming a familiar part of the community and fostering a continuing relationship with residents of the area. Usually positioned at junctions, the booth acts as a reference point for both | those from the bar opposite. The the police and public. The constable knows from experience where he needs to be at what point of time, and will periodically check the complaint box | bottles and plastic sachets. provided outside each booth. Community liaison group (CLG) meetings can also be held

The public has responded suits people who have reservations going to a police station more accessible. Bina Shivram. who lives near a police booth in a busy locality, admits to a "more

well to police booths. For one, it we're on rounds," says a constable. "The crime rate in the area I patrol has drastically reand, for another, the booth is duced. The local community is so supportive that we are approached for every issue, be it traffic issues or electricity breaksecure feeling" with police pres- down. Many approach us to sort ence close at hand. "Many local out domestic quarrels. However,

by SHOBHA MENON

residents approach the booth the community liaison groups constable for quick solutions to their disputes. The police patrol vehicle stops by regularly and police activity increases between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. when youngsters from the Police Boys' Clubs arrive for night patrol which extends till 7 a.m. Recently our electricity cable got cut, and the constable manning the booth immediately helped sort out the issue," she says.

formed with police representatives from the booth and senior members of the community have not been able to sustain themselves beyond the first few months because we are often called for VIP duty. CLGs must be revived. The booths will function better if the constables are allowed to provide proactive policing for the community, WITHOUT political interfer-

"If we are not in the booth, ence, presently a regular feature," says another constable.

Of a booth in Kottur, a

beaming pharmacist says, "Two years ago, we couldn't keep our shops open in this congested market area for fear of drunken brawls. We're happy now because the police booth presence has ushered in a sense of security and confidence." But, says an auto driver whose autostand adjoins another police booth in an upmarket residential colony. "The policemen are here for two hours in the morning and two hours at night. And that has not made much of a difference to the local community. The public-sponsored booth just ensures a comfortable resting place for policmen."

is a pukaarpetti (complaint box) outside the booth. We're able to act on complaints immediately by contacting police patrol vehicles or the Yellow Brigade.

The community also needs to support us, informing us about oustation trips or other relevant issues that need our intervention. Residents need not be turned off by our absence in the booth at any time!"

A senior Corporation official wonders, "Why can't community policing be conducted from police stations themselves, with more proactive policing on the

However, Tripathy had this to say, "With anonymity the major problem in an urban setup, the need for community policing is even more imperative in these times. The booths are not meant to be manned all the time. The policemen on duty are supposed to be on rounds in turn, while periodically checking on complaints at the booth, which actually should serve as a reference point. The fact that the number of booths has been steadily increasing has only proved its usefulness as a concept, because Says a police officer, "There requests come from the people themselves. The dynamics of each locality will determine the strategies that each police booth will adopt in functioning effectively."

A footpath for pedestrians

A account of how the foot- the old footpath causing clouds path in front of our house is the of dust to come in. I wo more venue for several stirring are laying the new stones. The happenings.

The busy thoroughfare in front of our house looks busier than usual. Buses and cars are honking away and voices are raised. On looking out of our Corportion has arrived and is graffiti. busy unloading some fancylooking stones from a lorry that is parked in the middle of the thoroughfare. This evokes a mixed reaction from the family. I am delighted that the footpath is being done up. Father, ever the pessimist, is of the opinion that this will encourage vendors to set up shop. The rest are completely indifferent.

Day 2 to Day 5

No activity. The piled-up stones remain where they are and are being used as seats for bar's customers reflect, ruminate and argue about life, far into the night. Our garden is naturally the repository for all empty

Day 6

Activity hots up once more. There is an army out there. Two he does not own the footpath. gone.

The following is a day by day of them are chipping away at Day 10 rest are standing around giving expert comments.

Footpath laid. It looks stunningly beautiful, contrasting with our compound wall, which verandah, we find that a team we have never painted as it is of workmen from the always covered with posters and

We complain to the Corporation. The local officer advises us to be sympathetic to the peddlers as they are poor and have no other place to go anyway. He Day 13 appears to be a devotee of Marx.

Day 11

Sudden silence has descended on the footpath. The vendors have gone. Like the Assyrians they have vanished in the silent watches of the night.

• by V. SRIRAM

The footpath is being put to good use. Children walk on it on their way to school. Pedestrians are keeping off the road. God is in his heaven and all is right with the world.

The vendors arrive. There is a female seller of tender coconuts who has a flood of invectives at her command. There is a seller of pirated CDs and also a peddler of plastic goods. They advertise their wares with loud raucous cries. The footpath has now been taken over by them. Father goes out to protest only to C?) C has done. Father is

The coconut seller has relocated to the opposite footpath from where she glowers at what has happened on our side. A huge pit has been dug in the middle of the footpath. Many of the stones have been broken and have been thrown about here and there on the sides. An enormous metal board announces that new drainage pipes are being laid by the M (or is it C?) WSSB. The fact that water supply and sewage are handled by the same body is an old joke, so I will not go into that. But the MWSSB has disposed off what the M (or is it

Day 12

No activity. The MWSSB board has been laid across the hole by someone and enterprising citizens are using it as a bridge. At night, it is used as a makeshift bed by the drunks from the bar opposite. Coconut seller is extremely uncomfortable in her new perch. The footpath there is too narrow for her to spread her wares. Father considers all this a benediction.

The MWSSB board tilts into the hole. It can no longer be used as a bridge, but its usage as a bed continues unabated.

The MWSSB board vanishes into the pit.

Day 15

Dickens of a scene at home. A man from the Corporation arrives and asks us as to what business we had to dig up the footpath outside. Father is enraged and takes him to see the MWSSB board which proves beyond doubt as to who was the culprit. The sight of two men peering into the pit attracts a huge crowd that silently stands behind them.

Rapid action day. Drain pipes are laid.

Footpath is covered with sand and the debris is carted off. It now looks exactly as it used to before the ornamental stone be told by the coconut seller that delighted. The vendors have paving was placed on it. Life has come full cycle.

November 16-30, 2004

raja. He came to the city in

1837 during the course of his travels and staved at the Bunder

Street residence of Mudaliar

(for further details on Tyagaraja's visit see Madras Musings,

By 1850, thanks to the

Dubashes, the city had several

dancers and singers. Justice

W.S. Krishnaswami Naidu, who

himself, remembers in his mem-

oirs an uncle, also a W.S.

Krishnaswami Naidu who was

the first Indian to become the

Assistant Registrar of the Ma-

nent. She lived till 1880 or so

and had in her possession a

veena richly decorated with

ivory and precious stones which

was displayed during the Con-

gress Exhibition of 1887. It was

later acquired by K. Sriramulu

Naidu, a former Mayor of Ma-

dras. Yet another businessman

was Rangoon Krishnaswami

Mudaliar who in the early 1800s

got Tanjore Kamakshi to settle

in Madras. Her granddaughter

was the famed Veena Dhanam.

Bangalore Nagarathnammal

continued with their patronage

and several, such as the V.

Perumal Chetty family, remain

involved with the promotion of

such as lawyers and native doc-

tors, who in turn became very

wealthy, changed the profile of

cated as they were in English.

began making serious efforts to

educate the ruling British about

the beauties of Indian music

and several interesting collabo-

rative efforts resulted, which we

shall see in the next issue.

The arrival of professionals

January 1, 2002).

(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?
- 5. Name the research organi sation in which Kalpana Chawla worked, where 'Project Columbia', the world's fastest supercomputer named in honour of the Columbia crew, was unveiled by NASA recently.
- 6. If it's Tobey Maguire for Spiderman, who is it going to be for 'Superman'?
- 7. Who is the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra?
- 8. The 30th anniversary of the famous 'Rumble in the Jungle' boxing fight was observed on October 30th. Who were the two pugilists in that fight?
- 9. Which two former Chief Ministers are the new Governors of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh?
- 10. What happened to the venerable, 216-year old The Times of London on October 30th? * * *
- 11. To which Governor of Madras goes the credit of developing the Raj Bhavan in Chennai as we see it today?
- 12. Which political party came into being on October 17, 1972? 13. Why was Padi near Papparapatti in Dharmapuri district in the news on the night of October 18th?
- 14. What feature on the Marina beach, now sporting a new look, was originally constructed in 1922 using funds of Rajah of Kirlampudi?
- 15. Name the Marudhu Pandiar brothers in whose honour a stamp was released recently.
- 16. Which reputed Chennai college was originally founded as a school in 1837 by Rev. John Anderson?
- 17. Which noted film historian has come up with a book Sadhanaigal Padaitha Thamizh Thiraipada Varalaru?
- 18. Commemorative coins on which Tamil Nadu leader were released by the Prime Minister recently?
- 19. Name the film for which M. Karunanidhi is making a comeback with dialogue-writing after eight years.
- 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

▲ founded in 1639. At that time Thaniavur was the seat of music, art and culture as far as the southern region was concerned. The defeat of the French, the weakening of the native kingdoms of Tanjore and Arcot and the development of Madras as a business centre with plenty of career opportunities resulted in a great migration to the city. Music and dance followed and soon the city began developing into a cultural capi-

dependent 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 socioeconomic undercurrents and developed accordingly. There are roughly three great phases in the development of Carnatic music in the city, namely the Era of the Dubashes (1750-1850), the influence of the British (1750-1900) and finally the Independence movement and the rise of caste and regional politics (1900-1947). This fourpart article looks at each of them in some detail.

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 ed Paidala Gurumurthy Sastry, the Adyar library. Dr. V. Raghavan, the eminent Sanskrit period. scholar and musicologist, wrote extensively on the details given in this work for the Journal of the Music Academy of Madras in 1945. The title itself seems to suggest that Madras was a city fit for the Gods. The whole account is structured around two poets visiting the city and conversing about what they saw. Featuring in the book are several prominent Dubashes of the 1817. He is described in the city. By 1750, the role of the Dubash or interpreter was vital for business. These men made enormous amounts of money and became noted patrons of musicians and dancers. Several of them became Dharmakarttars or Administrators of the city's temples and this further enhanced their importance.

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). He was instrumental in the rebuilding of the Patnam Temples (Chenna Kesava and Chenna Malleeswara) at their present locations. Muttu-

The city of Madras was krishna was famed far and wide wealthy patron of Madras. as a patron of the arts and when Among his guests on the occa-Arunachala Kavi Raya, the sionwere Kalinagaraya, Sriranga composer of the Rama Nataka Kirtanas, went to Pondicherry to sing to them in the presence of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Dup- Nungambakkam and had in his leix's Dubash, Pillai suggested that he approach Mudaliar first. Arunachala Kavi did so and was richly rewarded by Muttukrishna Mudaliar. Muttukrishna Mudaliar was also instrumental in bringing the family of Ramaswami Dikshitar to val. The manuscript ends Madras. This resulted in abruptly in the middle of a de-No art form can remain in- Dikshitar's sons Muttuswami and Baluswami becoming familiar with the violins used in house of Kalinagarava in Western music and adapting them to Carnatic music (for further details on this see Madras Musings, January 1, 2002). name, but states that he is the

and Devanayaka. Of these, Devanayaka was the trustee of hailed from a Dubash family the Agastyeshwara Temple in train a famed courtesan by name Meenakshi. In addition, Narayani of Kumbakonam, who was a singer in the retinue of dras High Court. This gentle-Kalingaraya and Manga of man patronised Pushpa. a Tanjore, under the patronage of Devadasi, who in her time was Sriranga also attended the festi- hailed as a great veena exposcription of a large gathering of musicians and dancers at the Triplicane. Strangely, there is no information on the author of the Vilasa. He does not even give his

• by V. SRIRAM

Muttukrishna Mudaliar died in son of Ramasuri and the grand-

Venkatakrishna, the son of Muttukrishna, was also referred to as Chinnayyan. He continued his patronage of the Dikshitar family till they left Madras circa 1800. In his honour, Ramaswami Dikshitar composed the longest Carnatic song in existence. The song, beginning with the words Natakadi Vidyala, is set to 108 ragas and talas. Chinnayyan also honouran eminent composer of that Sundaresa Mudaliar, yet an-

The Sarva Deva Vilasa talks of Venkatachala Mudaliar, the trustee of the Tirunirmalai Temple, who honoured Sonti better known today as the Guru of Tyagaraja. Sonti Venkataramanavva who is referred to in the Vilasa as Sunthi Venkataramana, the son of Subba, was in the city between 1803 and work as a master in the art of rendering tanam (a form of extempore music). Venkatachala, one learns from the manuscript, was also the trustee of the Krishnaswami Temple on Coral Merchant Street, George Town. Besides, he owned a coconut grove in the city and this was the venue for musical soirees on Sundays. The Sadas described in the manuscript mentions some of the prominent attendees as Venkatachala's friend Ranganayaka, his brother

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

Venkatakrishna, a secretary

Kothandarama, besides others.

Venkatachala, says the manu-

script, patronised Nachyar, a

devadasi who could sing and

son of Sankarasuri

It would appear from the Vilasa that Madras had by 1800 become a hub for the arts. As is evident, the Dubashes organised music performances and rewarded the artistes. The Armenian Street was generally identified as the dancing girl quarter and as for the accompanists for dance such as the nattuvanars. they made the area near presentday Walltax Road their home.

other Dubash, had become the great patron of musicians. In his patronage lived Kuppayyar, a famed *veena* artiste. Kuppayyar was a student of Tyagaraja and Venkataramanayya, who is through his good offices an

invitation was issued to Tyaga-

similarly moved to the city at the invitation of her patron C.S. Rajarathna Mudaliar. The Dubash families over the years

music till date.

By the mid 1830s, Kovur

Nov. 17: Environmental Educa-

tion Centre holds an exhibition

on Biosphere Reserves of India in

the main gallery at C.P. Arts

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

Nov. 21: Madras Players present 'Nostalgia', a musical based on the 60s and 70s at 1900 hrs. at Chinmaya Heritage Hall. Tickets available at Landmark. Nov. 21: Goodbooks Film Club screens children's films from

26 27 28 29 30 31

ates top Your bally

p.m at Alliance Française.) Nov. 22: The Japanese Consulate brings Percussion and Shomyo Chant by a Japanese troupe. (At 6.30 p.m. at Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium.)

around the world, followed by

discussion of age group - 5 yrs &

above. (Between 3 p.m. and 5

Nov. 22-27: The children of Semankuppam, a village in Française.)

Nov. 20-21 & 27-28: Les Lutins: The Best French Short Films of the Year. In collaboration with Sathyam Theatre will be presented a large variety of fiction and animation films. (At Alliance Française, 10 a.m.)

Dec. 17-19: A unique heritage tour of Tanjavur is being organised from 17th to 19th December 2004. Tour includes Saraboji's palace, the Saraswati Mahal, homes of Syama Sastry, Tyagaraja and the Tanjore Quartet and lots more. Contact Sriram.V at sangeetham@ sangeetham.com or 98400

The colour of things to come

The top half of the drawing sheet, while the lower half carries the faces of devils, connected by rays to the face above. Each face represents one evil: female infanticide, sexual harassment, dowry and conventional stereotypical expectations that bind women into suppression.

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

CHENNAI 600 006.

such exercises.

tage espouses.

TION TO your subscriptions.

Rural Children of South Tamil Nadu – 2004', conducted under the aegis of the Confederation of Indian Industry. The theme of the contest was 'My Dream

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 numbers were further whittled down in the final or third phase. The best 50 (25 girls and 25 boys) from each district were included in the third 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-

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contributions

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creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We

therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDI-

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- The Editor

We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO

woman's face dominates the recent 'Talent Contest for 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'. The contest also included elocution and essays, apart from the drawing and painting competition. The drawing contest was held for children in the 6th to 8th Standards – between 10 and 12 years

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

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 matter-of-fact manner in which these young children portrayed their observations served to emphasise the harshness, horrific at times, ingrained in the only environment they have ever known.

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

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. A heartrending one on child labour. drawn by a little girl, depicts her family thus: a mother, a rather drooping figure, sags to one side, a sister waits to be married; there does not appear to be a father in the picture. And so she too has to work. Other children drew their counterparts being forced to work in fire factories, or being used for begging, for selling vegetables, or in domestic employment. Child Labour is very much a reality - no question in their minds at all.

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 when even the tiniest villages paintings. Their homes will be will have computer centres. In surrounded by clean air, clean roads, drinking water, and clean toilets for everyone. Many paintings suggest several ways in which energy can be harnessed for agriculture. They even foresee a time when science will create trees that yield several varieties of fruits — all at the same time; while robots work and till effective.

Strikingly, many young boys drew paintings depicting the adgarbs of lawyers, doctors, journalists, engineers, and sports-

8th Standard, predicts a female male President by 2020 for Inand somewhere there is a small gradual disintegration of gender-based biases.

The children visualise a time 2020, they assert, there will be no child labour.

Where does this intense awareness come from? Both Stella and Freddy point out that this is proof that Government campaigns - the AIDS awareness and anti female-infanticide ones, to name a few - have been

Other factors were also thrown up by this contest and the resultant interaction with vance of female literacy in In- the children. Every child has dia. They have drawn girls talent and deserves, indeed has wielding degree certificates, a right to, both opportunities placed them in spacecrafts and and avenues to explore them. racing cars; as dressed in the The organisers were also all praise for the school systems involved. All credit must be given people. They see their female to the teachers, they state. counterparts in all these areas These are people, both adults and children, who often have to A painting by a boy, in the walk for several kilometres, or use cycles, through fields and Supreme Court Judge and a fe-small roads, to get to their schools. Often, only one school dia. You see these paintings — serves various little scattered villages. These children disbut clear flicker of hope for the played no stage fear; they were

(Continued on page 8)

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, Chennal 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:

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.

AI: 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

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 Dronacharaya and Arjuna are causing more heartburn than elation because they reach lowpriority candidates. For example, the national athletics coach, K.O. Bosen, was nomi-

nated twice for the Dronacharaya 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 Dronacharaya is expected to teach and graduate a number of trainees. Latest awardee, Bobby George, is credited only in coaching his wife Anju. May be 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 tabloidshaped.

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. Kalaignarin Kannamma; 20. Governor's Garden (present Government Estate).

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