

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

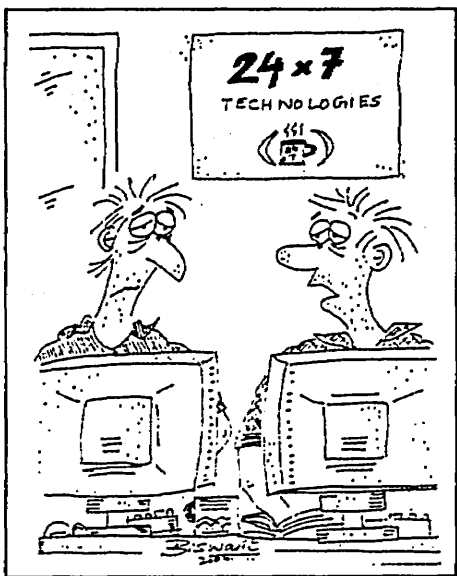
MUSINGS

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Now I understand why this company is named "24 x 7"

Toil and spin

There they sit, so young its almost painful.

You can always identify these young professionals by those formidably impressive looking name tags tossed nonchalantly around their necks.

You can't help thinking that most of them look like it couldn't have been too long ago since their mothers wrote out name tags and pinned them on, so they wouldn't get lost in the mad rush of humanity that's nursery school.

There they sit, so young, yet rich enough to make those who remember how the young Bachchan looked, who've now toiled through to their 50's and over, mumble:

"I had to work 30 years before I could see even a quarter of what those kids make."

Those tags carry such an aura of 'I've arrived', one almost misses noticing the exhaustion on these youthful faces, as they buzz around imposing buildings filled with many maze-like corridors, but not too many windows.

But the tags – ah! the tags have become so important to image-enhancement, everybody wants to wear them. Employers engaged in not-in-flavour businesses find themselves in a spot, gently trying to point out to their own rebellious employees that a staff of two, sometimes just one, isn't likely to run into identification problems. But this only leads to arguments, wounded feelings, and sulking over 'why-not-me?' factors.

For the tags we pin upon ourselves is what the outside world perceives, after all.

Ranjitha Ashok

Is desalination the best solution?

(by Shobha Menon)

Seawater desalination technology, being mooted as the best option for water-starved Chennai, broadly comes under two groups — reverse osmosis (RO) and multi-stage distillation (MSD). While in RO, about 35 per cent pure water is recovered and the balance discharged into the sea, in distillation, about 50 per cent is recovered by condensing the pre-heated seawater vapour.

Mohammad Shaffi, general manager-marketing, Doshi Ion Exchange and Chemical Industries, Chennai, whose RO seawater desalination plant for the TN Water Supply & Drainage Board has been supplying 38,00,000 litres a day (or 3.8 mld) to 297 habitats in Narippayur for the past five months, wonders, "When West Asian countries have effectively made use of this system for 25 years and no major environmental impact has been reported, why can't we adopt similar technology, when we're fast running out of water sources?" According to him, RO seawater desalination is the most cost-effective technique, due to savings in power. "Why can't state governments initiate such projects on a BOOT (buy-own-operate-transfer) basis, and ensure a proper channel of payment to private companies? Chennai has a major advantage because of its coastal location. Adequately-sized desalination plants can be set up at strategic locations along the coastline and water provided through a reliable distribution network to meet Chennai's water needs, say, a projected 100 mld at about Rs. 50 per 1000 lts."

However, there are others who hold a different view. They say that RO seawater desalination plants have limita-

tions that include the necessity of pre-treatment of water to protect membranes, need for higher pumping power proportional to feed pressure, bio-fouling of membranes, frequent change of expensive membranes and other maintenance requirements, as well as long-term adverse environmental impact.

Low temperature desalination (LTD) plants (a model recently set up at the National Institute of Ocean Technology) retrieve low volumes of freshwater (only about one per cent), but have several advantages. Chemicals are not needed to pre-treat seawater. There are fewer maintenance problems compared to other desalination processes. Also, the end product adheres to Bureau of Indian Standards/WHO standards and can be treated or blended

with brackish water to make it potable, or even fit for use in thermal and nuclear plants. "However, LTD is still at a very experimental stage," says an expert in the water treatment field, adding, "It is exciting technology, no doubt, making use of the natural temperature gradient of the ocean. But how viable it can be on a large scale is not certain."

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of a water treatment firm, after examining the cost of a desalination project for a population of 20,000, says, "Only a combination of water supply and sewage reclamation" will prove cheaper and environmentally safe. Seawater is certainly a good alternative source but, as a project, it is highly capital intensive — high operation and maintenance costs. In IT parks and privately developed

mega-housing complexes, for example, where the cost may not be an impediment, desalination can be made mandatory, provided the plant is located on the seashore. Treated water harvesting (recycling sewage) integrated with alternate water sourcing (desalination) is the need of the hour."

A. Shankar, a water and wastewater treatment consultant for more than 20 years, feels, "Given the present water scenario in Chennai, there is no better option than setting up a seawater desalination plant." He points to several reasons that work in favour of desalination. Firstly, according to him, seawater is a perennial source. Secondly, desalination technology, whether RO, MSFD (multi-stage flash distillation), or MED (multi-effect distillation), is a proven technology across the world. The choice of technology depends on both economy and the site. Ten years ago, RO was considered very expensive, but over the last decade,

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A success in Tiruvanmiyur

After restoration work on the centuries-old Thiru Marundeeswarar Temple tank and its neighbour, the smaller Chitrakulam tank, began in right earnest more than a year ago, the heartening news is that the joint effort by the community, temple authorities and HR&CE Department, the Chennai Corporation, Chennai Metrowater Supply and Sewage Board, Highways Department, Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Tamil Nadu Chapter, to get water back into the tanks by harvesting rainwater is working well.

"The sandy soil has helped percolation of water. Groundwater regeneration has taken

place; in fact, it has improved after the rains. The 5-6 ft increase in the groundwater table can be attributed to rainwater harvesting and absorption. Although water is entering the tanks, you need a lot more rain to see water in the tanks," says Tara Murali, member, INTACH, Tamil Nadu Chapter.

The Corporation has laid a pathway for walkers around the main temple tank. Pudukkottai, a local community group, has installed fencing-cum-seating around the tank, to provide community space. The temple authorities will be shortly installing an additional fence to protect the tank. However, work on re-doing the steps in both the tanks is not yet complete.

Twenty women from the Nivedita Women's Collective, a part of the Managalaeri self-help unit, are now engaged in the composting of vegetable waste and its conversion through vermiculture into vermi-compost at a shed behind the vegetable market on East Coast Road, the land having been given by the HR&CE Department.

"The vegetable market here generates between one and one-and-a-half tons of vegetable waste every day. Since the operation at the moment is small, we use about 300-400 kg waste everyday for composting.

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Ecological degradation in villages main cause for city's woes

Sixty-five per cent of the 2,000 students studying in classes 6-8 in 45 schools spread over central, north, south and west Chennai surveyed under a study conducted by the C.P. Ramaswamy Environmental Education Centre (a Centre of Excellence of the Ministry of Environment and Forests established jointly by the Ministry and the C.P. Ramaswamy Foundation) were not able to define 'environment'. While only 61 per cent of the students identified air pollution as a major polluting factor, 44 per cent of the students in central and south Chennai could not define 'water pollution', and 62 per cent of students overall were not able to identify any source of water pollution; Sixtyfour per cent felt that drinking water was not of good quality. About the same number (65 per cent) said the roads were dirty, strewn with garbage. Only 45 per cent suggested composting of waste as a means of treating garbage, but a large majority (75 per cent) did not know what biodegradable waste was or the difference between biodegradable and non-biode-

gradable waste. Surprisingly, only 24 per cent suggested the use of dustbins, a clear indication that cleanliness was not starting from the home front. Overall, 60 per cent of the students surveyed seemed to be convinced that there was no solution to solve Chennai's pollution problems. And that indeed formed part of the apathy. These facts came to light while Nanditha Krishna, honorary director, CPREF, and an environmental activist for more than three decades, recently addressed members of the Public Relations Society of India, Chennai Chapter.

Krishna pointed out that ecological degradation in the rural areas was forcing the rural-urban migration. Use of fertilisers and excess chemicals had led to decrease in the fertility of land; in fact, irrigated land had now turned to a huge swathe of wasteland and that was why people ("the unemployable") from rural areas in Tamil Nadu were coming to Chennai in search of jobs, she said, adding that 25 per cent

of the city's population constituted people living in the slums. Chennai's problems, as much as other cities', she was certain, stemmed from environmental degradation in rural areas—the vast majority of landless labour had now become slum dwellers.

One of the solutions, Krishna stressed, was to get farmers to revert to the traditional methods

SASHI NAIR

of sustainable farming. Chemical pesticides used in farming needed more water and the earth, thus, had become a thirsty woman. In the past 100 years, on an average, there had been no decrease in rainfall, certainly not in Chennai, according to Krishna. In spite of it, Chennai had been facing unprecedented water shortage. Moreover, most of the rainwater was "sweetly taken and dumped into the sea", she said.

Dwelling on other aspects of environmental decay, Krishna

spoke of Chennai generating 3500 tonnes of garbage everyday. A lot of that garbage filled up the city's lakes and water bodies. About 200 million litres of sewage were flushed into the Cooum each day. Most of it found its way into the groundwater, which was becoming increasingly saline. Thus, the water from borewells was not drinkable. There was no proper system for solid waste disposal. Malaria and dengue were health hazards citizens had to put up with. The Pallikaranai marsh had almost ceased to exist. "Those who complain today are the ones who built tall buildings near the marsh. Even the authorities at the General Hospital and the Cancer Institute are responsible. Thirty years ago, Adyar had mangroves as well as wonderful bird life. The flamingoes have gone and so have the rest of the birds," Krishna said, adding, "Our parks are non-existent. What are we really living for?"

Air pollution, Krishna emphasised was actually not a

major problem in Chennai. The SPM (suspended particular matter) levels in Ooty, a town in a valley, was far worse, according to her. In a coastal city such as Chennai, the pollution was dispersed. "Even so, when public vehicles — autorickshaws, buses and lorries — pollute, nobody cares. Private vehicles are better maintained but there seem to be relatively more checks on them. No stringent standard or system is followed to issue pollution control certificates. The police need to only catch a few polluters and levy heavy fines; you can be sure the polluters won't pollute again," she said.

Referring to North Chennai as "hell on earth", Krishna spoke of how because of the flyish dump there, several residents in the area had scales on their skin and jaundiced-looking eyes. "It's almost as if governments do not care for this part of Chennai," she said. Urging the media and PR executives to run sustained stories and campaigns, she said that that was the best way to sell the idea of conserving the environment.

IS DESALINATION THE BEST SOLUTION?

(Continued from page 1)

membrane costs have tumbled, with tremendous improvement in membrane technology itself. Thirdly, environmental impact assessment and oceanographic studies are mandatory for seawater desalination plants.

An official of the Chennai Water Supply and Sewage Board says, "In the context of what Chennai residents just went through — no storage in reservoirs, receding groundwater table, lack of support from the neighbouring states and long-delayed rains — integrating desalination plants into the water supply system seems to be the only solution. And we've been considering the possibility for about a year now."

Dr. S. Sundaramoorthy, former engineering director, CWSSB, says, "In 1987, Metrowater looked at desalination as an option. At the time, the cost per kilolitre of water was about Rs. 75 and considered too costly for Metrowater to purchase; the cost of the then existing water supply was only about Rs. 8 or so per kl. Another problem has to do with the salt drained from seawater. The salt can be processed and sold but its storage, on-site handling etc. are complicated issues. Thus, concentrated reject water may have to find a way back to the sea. A co-generation plant, which uses coal of

high heat value, and a power plant set up by the side to economise the cost of energy, has been discussed. However, this causes air pollution, from gas and dust from coal. Disposing of the ash is another problem. Alternatively, diesel can be used. But here again, setting up a power plant for this purpose alone may not be economical. Instead, we can use RO, with electrical energy drawn from the TNEB grid through a dedicated feeder so that the plant works for only 20 hours a day, allowing daily preventive maintenance of four hours. My assessment is that a cost of about Rs. 50 per kl of product water is possible if the plant is a BOOT project and Rs. 35 per kl if investment money is available upfront."

Dr. Sundaramoorthy adds, "There is no environmental degradation when you use RO or MSD technology. In the case of cogeneration plants using coal, however, there is definite degradation of inland environment due to coal usage and the burning and disposal of ash. In my assessment, pursuing any proposal for a desalination plant for Chennai with a capacity of more than 100 mld is wishful thinking. A plant producing 300 mld will mean a daily cost of at least Rs. 1.5 crore (to ensure a price of Rs. 50 per kl) for operation and maintenance. A 100 mld plant offers better

chances of charging only a reasonable tariff."

Is desalination the best choice? Dr. Sundaramoorthy is not quite sure. "After all, the entire Arabian Gulf area has been using it for decades. Costs projected are often very disparate. A major alternate source of water is the sewage the city generates. During the 1980s, UNDP studies in Chennai showed that adequate treatment followed by ground filtration of sewage could bring back useable-grade water. The USA has been doing this since the 1960s, in the California Desert region where the annual rain-

fall is a third of that in Chennai. The Buckingham Canal can be used to recharge the groundwater and prevent seawater intrusion inland."

The question many in Chennai often ask is, "Why can't desalination be adopted on a large-scale basis to rid the city of its water shortage once and for all?" There seems to be no clear answer to that one yet. Nevertheless, some progress has just been made. Chennai Metrowater has floated bids for a desalination plant to be set up at Minjur, on the northern outskirts of the city. The Board has

invited bids for installing desalination plants of 100 mld or 200 mld, to be set up on a design-build-own-operate-transfer (DBOOT) basis. The decision on the capacity of the plant would be made only after analysis of the cost-benefits from the project. A significant difference between this effort and earlier attempts that did not take off is the scaled-down capacity of the plant, and the subsequent reduction in project cost. This bid comes even as the Union Government is initiating steps for implementation of a desalination project for Chennai.

A success in Tiruvanmiyur

(Continued from page 1)

The exercise, which is being run on an experimental basis, not only provides gainful employment but also sets Tiruvanmiyur residents on the course toward zero garbage. Hopefully, the Corporation will pitch in and take the initiative," says V. Srinivasan, convener, Puduvelam.

"There is a lot of organic waste that clogs the storm water drains and, therefore, vermin-composting is the ideal solution. However, there is only one shed now and we need five times the present space to take the total organic waste and es-

tablish the whole operation as a production centre," adds Murali.

Involving the local community in the restoration process has been one of the priorities in the project. When people realised that RWH would help regenerate water and benefit the community, they began to provide active support. "Overall, it has been a good learning experience. We now have a better understanding of what we are trying to achieve. The project is not just about providing a good visual point. Water regeneration must address people's problems; otherwise heritage structures will not get

the attention they deserve. Provision of cleaner surroundings and amenities, too, is an important point of the project. Yes, perhaps, we could have moved faster but this project is a first for INTACH's TN Chapter," Murali points out.

Success in Tiruvanmiyur could well lead INTACH and the government agencies to look beyond the Marundeeswarar and Chittrakulam Temple tanks. However, a lot will depend on sustained government support and continued people's participation.

Sashi Nair

OUR
READERS
WRITE

Dry toilets?

This is with reference to the write-up 'Research needed on dry toilets' (MM, November 1st 2004). Generally, if any problem is posed, it is expected that a solution would also be offered. The concept of 'dry toilets' may be a good one, but no concrete solution or any method of installing such a toilet has been provided. The common understanding of 'dry toilet' is the one that earlier existed, in which manual clearing was needed. If it is to be revived, then we will be back to square one. This is no solution at all. It is not as though we are not aware of groundwater pollution due to septic tanks or the need for large quantity of water for the present-day toilets. So, what exactly are eco-friendly dry toilets?

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Ageing signs

Doctors usually advise geriatric patients to keep a look-out for breathlessness, sudden numbness in the limbs, persisting headache and abnormal fatigue, etc. and to come quickly for treatment.

Other indications that you are growing older are when the barber chuckles before working at the thinning crop of hair; when the waiter asks "soogar podalama" when you order coffee; and when middle-aged women start addressing you as 'uncle'. Then, it is perhaps time to look seriously at health foods.

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Beware of hucksters!

Capitalising on the craze among Indian students to study abroad, many a foreign university is on the 'prowl', luring students in all possible ways by painting a rosy picture about the institution and the facility provided. Representatives of various universities in the UK and USA have been organising meetings with students in Chennai with the objective of getting more numbers to study abroad.

It may be worth recalling a report detailing the problems encountered by three students who went to Russia to study medicine in a reputable academy. These students had embarked upon their mission of pursuing further studies in Russia based on the information given to them by an agency. However, the situation on the ground was nothing of the kind that was told to them; the shocked students had to return, abandoning their aim to become doctors.

It is, therefore, better for students and parents to thoroughly check the credentials of the people concerned, the agency and, indeed, of the university. The State Government, too, should keep a tab on the operations of agencies that care a damn about innocent students and make money from similar exercises as the Russian one.

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Deepen tanks, harvest rain, stop polluting waterways

The per capita availability of water to the residents of Chennai Metropolitan area (extending to about 1,170 sq.km, comprising Chennai Corporation and parts of Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts) has been slowly decreasing in the past two decades. Even during normal or bountiful rainfall years, there is no assured water supply in major parts of the area during summer months that extend from April to July. If the rainfall is less even during a single year, it has its effect not only on surface water storage but also on recharge to the groundwater body. In addition, there is greater pressure on exploiting the already depleted groundwater resources.

Failure of the monsoon during successive years (1999 and 2000) had its telling effect on the availability of water even for basic needs in the area. Shallow tubewells drilled in the top alluvial soil have mostly gone dry or supply only 20 per cent of what they had supplied before 1999. Despite normal rainfall during 2001, the availability of groundwater has not improved. The precipitation from the Northeast monsoon during 2002 was restricted only to the first fortnight of November. The rainfall during 2003 was negligible.

Over-exploitation of groundwater has resulted in even the deepest of dug wells drying up or retaining little water. Areas like K.K. Nagar and Valasaravakkam on the south-western side of Chennai Corporation limits, where the dug wells used to retain some column of water even in peak summer in earlier years, have gone dry or retain very little water. The water levels in the borewells have gone down considerably, especially in Choolaimedu, Alwarpet, Adyar and Gopalapuram. This has compelled people to go for even deeper borewells, leading to exploitation of water with total dissolved solids of more than 2000 mg/litre, far below permissible drinking water standards.

We realise the importance of water and the contribution from the groundwater sources only when the water supply system is under stress. Both for surface water supply and recharging the groundwater system, the main source is rainfall. The rainfall data for Chennai Metropolitan area shows that the major portion of the rainfall is received during the Northeast monsoon, in October, Novem-

ber and December. The rainfall from the Southwest monsoon is erratic and contributes only about 30 per cent of the total rainfall. Even during normal or above-normal rainfall years, the rainfall does not extend throughout the season. That is to say, the number of rainy days is less.

On the one hand, we have unreliable rainfall. And on the other, due to torrential flow and the presence of large paved areas, recharge to the ground water body is less, with the result that the major portion of rainfall finds its way to the sea. Also, surface reservoirs are not in a position to store rainfall water during normal or excess rainfall years, when the excess water is let out into the sea through the Kortalaiyar River. It is a paradox that despite satisfactory levels of precipitation in the excess rainfall years, during the post-monsoon period, there is acute shortage of water.

With the population of Chennai growing by leaps and bounds and with several industries coming up in the Metropolitan area, the demand for water has gone up many-fold. Besides planning to create new storage facilities to augment the surface water resources and the groundwater potential, which is a long-term process, it is more important to improve and manage prudently the available infrastructure and resources.

Here are some suggestions:

- The existing tanks and other waterbodies must be deepened and their bunds raised and strengthened. Also, smaller tanks like the Porur Tank, which is almost dry during summer months, can be deepened. Temple tanks can be desilted and the inlet channels be cleaned. This will help in not only increasing the availability of surface water when there is normal rainfall but also augment the groundwater potential in nearby areas.
- Rainwater harvesting methods can be adopted in all areas including farmhouses, factories, residential units and even near over-bridges. Already, sufficient literature is available on the RWH techniques. Some awareness of the beneficiary effects of RWH on groundwater has been created in the public mind. But more work is needed in this direction. What is now required is to implement appropriate RWH structures on scientific lines based on the local

soil and hydro-geological conditions. The vast scientific data bank created by the government agencies, organisations like the Rain Centre and by some of the technically competent groundwater consulting agencies should be profitably utilised.

c) Waterways such as rivers, rivulets and nallahs act as carriers of surface water during the monsoon and post-monsoon period. During peak summer, groundwater contributes to the flow of the river. Unfortunately, in the Chennai Metropolitan area and more so within the city limits, the Adyar and Cooum Rivers, Buckingham Canal and the other nallahs are mainly used as sewage disposal channels. These rivers have built up a fairly good thickness of alluvium along their courses, forming good aquifers for retaining water. If these rivers are not polluted, the alluvial area will form the potential aquifer zone during normal rainfall years, as there will be long-term recharge from these waterbodies. However, the level of pollution in these rivers is so high that even the deeper aquifers in the underlying hard rocks have brackish water. It is essential to stop polluting these water bodies further and repair the damage already done.

There is a misconception that in Gandhi Nagar and Indira Nagar, the salinity of groundwater is due to seawater intrusion. But actually it is not so. In fact we have found that borewells located on the eastern side, close to the sea, have

better quality water than those located on the western side. Salinity can be attributed to the pollution of groundwater from the nearby Buckingham Canal. Also, there are cases, as in the Boat Club area, where the pollution from the Adyar River is the cause for the extremely bad quality water even at shallow depths. In the case of Cooum River, we have instances where along Mount Road even shallow borewells closer to the river have bad quality water, while deeper borewells in the Gopalapuram area have comparatively better quality water. Over-exploitation of groundwater has to be avoided and seawater intrusion has to be prevented before permanent damage is done to the fresh ground waterbody. But, at the same time, the Government must not allow this sort of pollution of the rivers and canals.

It is essential to increase the storage capacity of existing tanks, augment the surface water resources by constructing check dams across the Adyar and Cooum Rivers and strengthen and expand the distribution systems. If we allow the system to deteriorate further, the magnitude of damage to the environment will be enormous. We hope that government agencies and the public at large put their act together with a sense of urgency.

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—THE EDITOR

Musical movements in Madras

This, the second of a four-part series, focusses on the influence of the British.

While the introduction of the violin and the creation of ragas such as *Kathanakutoohalam* and *Siposhini* can be directly traced to Western influence, there were several more subtle effects. Both the vernacular languages and English began to adapt words from each other. Thus Tyagaraja in his songs used a couple of words of English origin that had just then crept into his native Telugu. The word *landaru* (for lantern) appears in his *Emi Jesite Nemi* (raga *Todi*) and the word *shalu* (for shawl) in his *Jutamu Rare* (raga *Avabhi*). In later years, the English note of Muthiah Bhagavathar became famous. This was a merry medley that he created for use during his *Harikatha* discourses on Rama's wedding to Sita. Bhagavathar, a vastly imaginative man, would describe an English band that played at Rama's wedding and sing the English note! Later, this became the standard piece to demonstrate that Western music could be played on Carnatic instruments.

In the twilight years of the Tanjore court, the devadasis learnt to sing *If God Save the King* in order to impress British visitors. The *Manipravala* genre (where a song is composed using many languages) saw the usage of English as well, with *javalis* such as "O my lovely *lalana*" becoming famous. Songs were composed on British worthies as well. Ghanam Krishna Iyer created a song in praise of Sir Thomas Munroe. There were odes to Queen Victoria and later to Kings Edward VII and George V. As late as the 1930s, Papanasam Sivan created a song in praise of Annie Besant set rather aptly in the raga *Vasantha*, which is sung even now at the Besant School. Arranging concerts for the entertainment of visiting Sahibs became *de rigueur*, though it was quite difficult for the visitors to sit through the entire performance. In the 1870s, the facial contortions and physical gyrations of Sivagangai Periyai Vaithi are said to have driven an English mem into hysterics.

Nonetheless, some among the British made serious efforts to understand the art form. Some of the early works on Indian music were *Hindu Music* by Captain N.A. Willard, *Musical Modes of the Hindus* by Sir William Jones, *Sangeet* by



Francis Gladwin and *Oriental Music* by W.C. Stafford. The absence of any form of documentation and the native methods of notation proved to be a major deterrent. The educated Indians began to seriously work on reducing Indian music to the Western form of notation often referred to as Staff Notation. It was their view that getting their music written in the Western format would encourage the English to appreciate the art form. Among the earliest such attempts were made by the Poona Gayan Samaj and its Madras counterpart, the Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj. The Poona Gayan Samaj was opened in 1874 with the express intention of reviving the taste for Indian music. Its secretary, Bulwunt Trimbuck Sahasrabudhy, was its live wire and within a short while he had secured for it the patronage of G. Montieith, Under-Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Lt. Gen. Lord Mark Kerr, Sir Charles and Lady Stanley, Sir Richard Temple and Lord and Lady Reay.

The Madras Branch of the Gayan Samaj was inaugurated on 18th August 1883 at the Pachaiyappa's Hall (by a strange coincidence, the Madras Music Academy too was inaugurated on 18th August, in 1928). It had as its patrons, Sir Charles Turner, Sir T. Madava Row, Justice T. Muthuswami Iyer, Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Row, Gen. Chamier and Col. H. McLeod. The Maharajahs of Mysore, Travancore and Vizianagaram funded its creation and according to the desire of the Maharajah of Vizianagaram it was named in the year 1887 as the Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Soon, Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught and Sir Frederick Roberts (later Lord Roberts of Kandahar), the commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, signed up as patrons.

The initial meetings of the Samaj were held at Madhav Baug, the house of Sir T. Madava Row in Mylapore. With the joining of other worthies as Mr. (later Sir) Pity Tyagaraya Chetty and Arcot Dhanakoti Mudaliar, the Samaj's coffers swelled and soon it was running two schools dedicated to teaching music for young children.

Closely involved in the running of the school and the training of its students were two brothers, Pedda and Chinna Singaracharulus of Tachur. The brothers lived at 3, Tambu Naicken Lane, George Town (the building is located off Govindappa Naicken Street and is today a flourishing plastics market). Both of them were good violinists and the elder was employed as the Telugu Pandit at Pachaiyappa's College.

The brothers began organising performances of

• by
V. SRIRAM

young and promising students under the auspices of the Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj. Attendance by some of the leading Sahibs of Madras was a regular feature. The *Madras Mail* regularly published detailed accounts of the proceedings. On the 22nd of January 1884, a music concert was organised at Lakshmi Baug (present-day Kamadhenu Theatre), the residence of V. Bhashyam Iyengar. Sir Frederick Roberts attended it along with Justice and Mrs. Brandt, Dr. and Mrs. David Duncan, Mr. Oppert and Mr D.S. White. On 22nd December 1885, Lord and Lady Reay (Governor and First Lady of Bombay) attended a programme at the Pachaiyappa's Hall along with Mr. (later Sir) and still later Lord) Monstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff and his wife (Governor and First Lady of Madras). Justice T. Muthuswami Iyer read out a paper on Indian music and spoke at length on its features vis-a-vis that of Western music. The Samaj also reduced some of its songs to Staff Notation and had the Madras Philharmonic Orchestra render them for Europeans on yet another occasion. An active member of the Gayan

Fund-raising dance production for Senate House

The life of Bangalore Nagarathammal is one that is well known to readers of *Madras Musings* (The Devadasi and the Saint, *MM*, December 1, 2002). Born out of wedlock to Vakil Subba Rao and Puttulakshmi Ammal, a Devadasi of Mysore, Bangalore Nagarathammal overcame many odds and rose to be a top-ranking dancer and singer who later in life took to *Harikatha* discourses. She used her enormous wealth for many causes such as the propagation of little known works such as Muddu Palani's *Radhika Swantanamu*, the fight against the Anti-Nautch Bill and, finally, the restoration of the Tyagaraja Samadhi in Tiruvayyuru. On her death, it was found she had willed her entire life's earnings to the samadhi and a memorial was built for her adjacent to that of Tyagaraja.

Inspired by the life of this trail-blazer, eminent dancer, Lakshmi Viswanathan is choreographing a dance production. Lakshmi Viswanathan who released her biography of M.S. Subbulakshmi titled *Ode to a*

VS

Samaj was Lieut. (later Captain) C.R. Day who interested himself tremendously in Indian music and published a book on the subject, the printing of which was funded by the Government. By the second anniversary of the Samaj, its two schools for music had been attached to the Mylapore Native School and Chengalvaraya Naicker School in George Town.

In the later years, the Samaj faded away, with the divide between Natives and Europeans becoming wider. However, the search for a way to have notations written as per Western systems continued.

Thanks to the booming publishing and printing industry, a British introduction, several musicians began to work on books in which they could publish lyrics and also notation. Almost the first book to hit the stands was the *Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangrahamu* of Veena Ramanuja of Triplicane in 1859. This was funded by his patron Suri Chetty Govindaraja Chetty of George Town. The book was printed at the Jnanasuryodaya Press owned by Bhuvanagiri Rangaiah Garu which operated from No.91, Govindappa Naicken Street.

The book was published in 1885 by Ramakrishna Nayani at the Girvanabhasharatnakara Press of Barur Tyagaraja Sastri. Yet another edition came out in 1908. The Gopalakrishna Bharati opera, *Nandan Charitram*, was published by a French official of Karaikkal (whose name is given in Tamil as Seesiah) in 1861. The Tachur Brothers were pioneers in print and over a period they

Nightingale last year, was featured in the prestigious Jacob's Pillow Festival in the US. She is also receiving the *Natya Kala Shikhamani* title from the Indian Fine Arts Society this year during the December Music Season.

The *Senate House* was once the venue for the performing arts and the Music Academy which once ardently championed the rights of the devadasis held its conferences there (for further details, read 'Senate House and the Cultural Scene, *MM*, May 16th). It is, therefore, but appropriate that a dance production on Bangalore Nagarathammal should donate its proceeds to the restoration of this heritage building.

Lakshmi Viswanathan will premiere her new Dance Theatre production 'VIDYA SUNDARI - The Legend of Bangalore Nagarathammal' at the Music Academy, TTK Hall, on December 17, 2004, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tickets are priced from Rs 50 to Rs 150 and (for students) Rs 50. Tickets will be available from the 10th at the Music Academy.

released several books beginning with the *Gayaka Parijatam*, in 1882, which is perhaps one of the earliest works to give out notation for some of the popular songs in Carnatic music. Later works of the Brothers included the *Sangita Kalanidhi* (1889), *Gayaka Siddhanjanam* (1890 and 1905) and the *Gnanendu Shekharani* (1916).

In later years, several disciples of Tyagaraja and their schools began publishing his songs with notations. Among them was Tillaisthanam Narasimha Bhagavathar who published *Tyagarajaswami Kirtanalu* in 1908. This was published by the Dowden & Co at the Peerless Press, Madras. Tiruvottiyur Tyagier, son of Veena Kuppaiyyar, the famed disciple of Tyagaraja, published *Pallavi Swarakalpalavalli* in 1900, which had many of his father's works in them. Famous publishers of the period were Adi & Co and Vavilla Ramaswami & Sons.

While all these works were of high quality, the encomium of *magnum opus* was conferred on only one and that was Subbarama Dikshitar's *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini* that was published in 1904 and which hence turns a 100 this year. Ironically, it needed a Christian civil servant of the Madras Secretariat, A.M. Chinnaasami Mudaliar, to spur the work to its logical conclusion. We will see what went into the making of this *magnum opus* in the next issue.

(My thanks to Dr. N. Ramanathan for his inputs on the various early published works.)

Twelve steps to avoid a vacation horror

We've all heard "vacation horror stories" — a wallet stolen with all your money and identification; going back to a hotel room that has been 'cleaned out' by whoever it was who stole your keys and hotel information; being stranded at an airport with no money and no passport — the stories go on, and on.

Going to unfamiliar cities sometimes may be safer than home. But people may be more careless with their personal possessions when travelling than they would be in familiar territory. Often, especially in big cities almost anywhere, pickpockets and other thieves prey on tourists who they view as easy victims. Sometimes, travellers don't plan how best to handle their cash and credit needs while away from home, and may find themselves in uncomfortable situations.

To help you be prepared and keep your cash and credit safe when you're on vacation, here are some tips.

1. If you have a debit card — an ATM card — that allows you to withdraw cash from your checking account, check with your bank to find out if the card is part of a national or international system that operates in the areas where you'll be visiting. If the latter, then you will be able to obtain the cash you need when travelling. Remember

to subtract the amount you withdraw and the fees from your account balance. Memorise your personal identification number for the card. But don't record it on your card or on any paper in your wallet.

2. Don't carry more credit cards than you need. Sort your cards and remove local charge cards. Take only two credit cards that are accepted nationally or internationally. Be sure, however, that your cards' credit limits will allow you to charge what you'll need on the trip.

3. Keep your credit cards in a holder separate from your cash and traveller's checks. This reduces your chances of having them all lost or stolen. Also keep in a secure place a list of your credit cards with account numbers and phone numbers to report a lost or stolen card. If you're travelling to other countries, find out ahead of time the phone numbers to report card loss or theft.

4. Be sure your credit card is given back to you after a transaction and that you return it immediately to your card case. Also, destroy any carbons after you take your receipt. Keep copies of all receipts for the credit card charges you make and then verify those charges when

you receive your bills after you return home.

5. Consider using traveller's cheques instead of large amounts of cash. Keep the record of your traveller's cheque numbers separate from the cheques themselves and mark off the numbers as you use them. That way, if the remainder of the cheques are lost or stolen, you'll have a current record.
6. If you're travelling in an area where cash is mainly used, carry it in a money belt or pouch inside your clothing. Don't count your cash in a public place. Keep cash concealed until needed for a transaction. (Don't stand at a cashier counter with your wallet and/or purse wide open.)
7. If you need a large sum of cash while travelling and can cover that in your checking account at home, you can arrange with your bank to wire you the money.
8. For travel in a foreign country, obtain enough of that country's currency to cover your immediate cash needs when you arrive and until you can get to a local bank.
9. When abroad, shop for the best currency exchange rates and fees. Companies that specialise in exchanging currency vary widely in rates and fees.

The December Season is here

The December Season of classical music and dance in Chennai has begun. The season is unique because of the large number of privately-promoted concerts on classical music and dance, all part of the festivals hosted by sabhas (cultural organisations). What began as a cultural event to a political meeting has grown into the 'season', which has over 1,000 concerts presented by the world-famous artistes in music and dance.

KutcheriBuzz, has, over the past five years, promoted the season as a festival to the world, through its web site, www.kutcheribuzz.com. The web site, devoted to Carnatic music and classical dance in South India, has a special section devoted to 'December Season 2004'.

The section features all the major concerts at all leading sabhas, has news and information on concerts, recitals and workshops, offers tips on booking tickets, planning a schedule and lists accommodation available for those who travel to the city from other parts of India and the world.

It also contains details about the fringe events — music, heritage walks, chat sessions with artistes, vintage cinema shows and sales of albums.

Mid-December onwards, the web site will feature daily, reports, short videos and pictures on all the events, so that *rasikas* who cannot make it to Chennai, can still get a feel of the season and a ringside view of the action.

The *KutcheriBuzz Season's Guide* is a handy reference. It lists the best concerts, features pen-portraits of leading artistes and has information on all the fringe events. The guide will be available for free circulation December 6-7 onwards, at all sabhas and the *KutcheriBuzz* office at 77, C.P. Ramaswamy Road, Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018.

As the season picks up steam, the *KutcheriBuzz*-produced December season newspaper, published every evening, will be circulated at all leading sabhas. The newspaper is free and comes out on 20 days. Bound copies of this newspaper will be sold for Rs.60 at the *KutcheriBuzz* office from Jan.6, 2005 onwards.

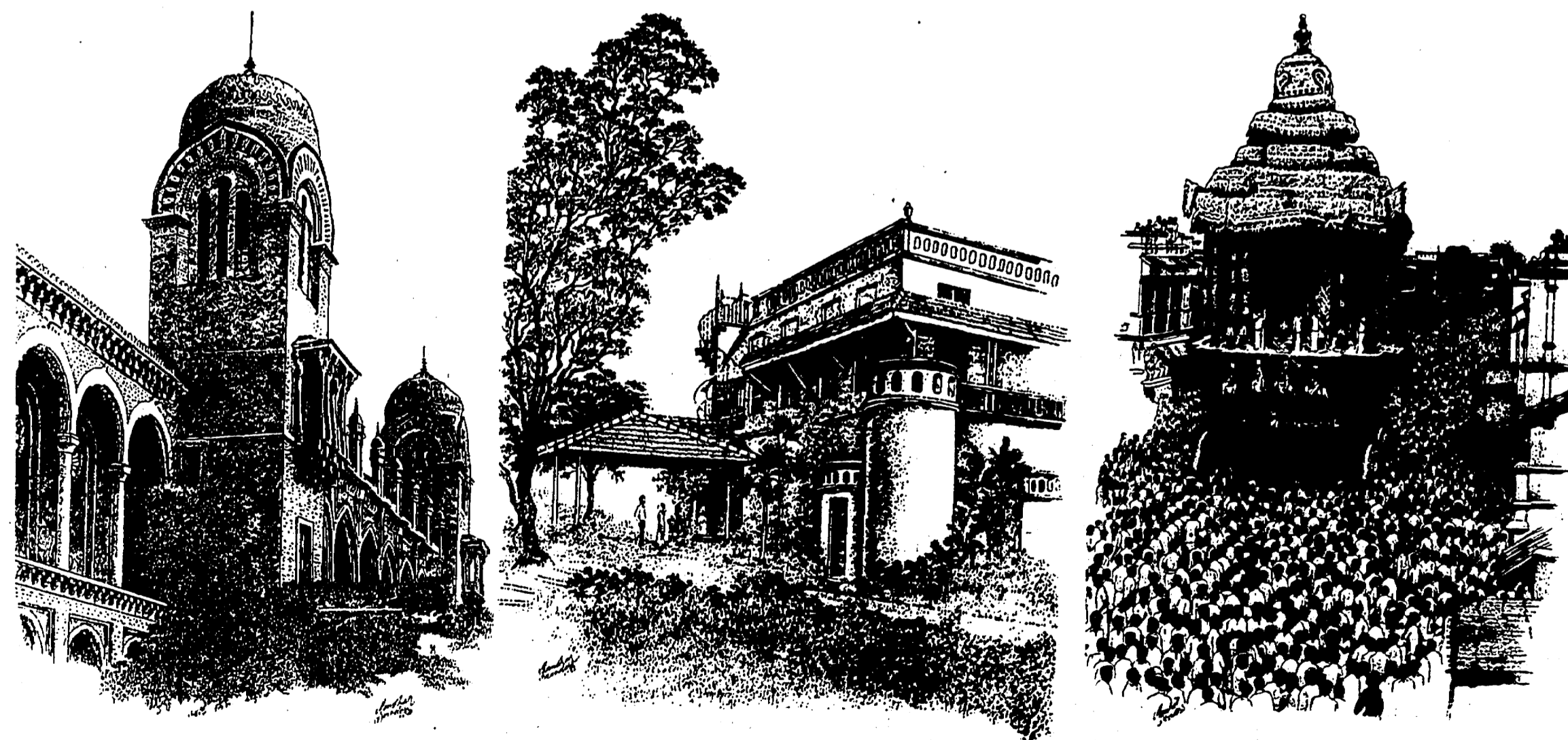
For more information you may e-mail: editor@kutcheribuzz.com or call 2499 4599.

10. Be careful with your handbag or wallet when you're in crowds — on busy sidewalks, in crowded shopping areas, elevators, public transportation. Make sure your handbag is securely fastened and firmly gripped. If you're carrying only a wallet, keep it in an inside jacket pocket or a pocket that buttons. Putting a thick rubber band around your wallet can keep it from sliding out.
11. Don't hang a handbag or a jacket with a wallet over the

back of your chair in public places, especially in crowded restaurants.

12. If you're using a telephone calling card, obscure the key pad when entering your PIN number as you would do when using an ATM.

Vacation time should be free of worry. Safeguarding yourself by taking a few precautions will help ensure your trip won't be spoiled by a thief. — (Courtesy: *Consumer Alert*.)



• This year's greeting cards by Manohar and Mahema Devadoss focus on some of Chennai's well-known heritage buildings — the Chempak Palace and the Senate House (left), both creations of master architect Robert Chisholm, who pioneered the Indo-Sarawenic style in India, as well as on some fascinating images of Madurai — a heritage house at Pasimalai (centre), the chariot at the Madurai Meenakshi Temple (right), and details of carvings in the temple car.

While Manohar Devadoss painstakingly creates detailed pen-and-ink drawings of historic monu-

ments, wife Mahema, using his drawings, designs greeting cards every year, each with a brief text that gives a historic perspective to the monument or scene. Over the years, their cards have become collector's items. Apart from the money the cards generate, they also help bring to the recipients a greater awareness of Chennai's heritage and the need to preserve the city's noble edifices.

The proceeds from the sale of these black and white cards, after costs, will be distributed to various charities. For more details, you can contact: 24982484.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

1. Why was Muhammad Abdul-Rahman ar-Rauf al-Qudwah al-Husayni the centre of world news on November 11th?
2. In connection with the above, who is Mahmoud Abbas?
3. From which place was the Kanchi Sankaracharya arrested on the night of November 11th?
4. What ambitious nation-wide socio-economic project did the Prime Minister launch from the tiny Andhra Pradesh village of Aloor on November 14th?
5. Why were the Patna DM, Gautam Goswami, and classical musician, Anoushka Shankar, in the news recently?
6. Name the Indian girl who won the world under-14 chess title in Greece recently.
7. Name the 1960 Hindi classic, which was re-released after complete colouration and digitisation, on Diwali day this year?
8. Name the second-ever Indian-American elected to House of Representatives at the recently-held U.S. elections.
9. One more on the U.S. elections. The results of which State helped George W. Bush edge out John Kerry?
10. Who won the 'Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award' this year?

* * *

11. In what way, and for whom, is the recently-announced *Mannin Maindhan* the 75th film?
12. What is common to Bodipulneys, The High Wayys, Shevaroyis in the context of Tamil Nadu commerce?
13. An easy one. Name the latest player from the State to don India colours in Test match cricket.
14. Where near Chennai is the State Police Academy set to come up soon?
15. One for Kamal Haasan fans. What is his next film (a bilingual one)?
16. What does GST stand for in GST Road?
17. Name A.R. Rahman's recording studio in Chennai, the fount for all his hits.
18. What public service facility was inaugurated at Palani Temple on November 3rd?
19. The oldest Protestant church in India is in Chennai. Which one?
20. What would one see at 67, Thulasinga Perumal Street, Triplicane?

(Answers on page 7)

Coins down the ages

Coins began appearing when the value of commodities was expressed in terms of bits of metal which had been stamped, or cast, with the device of an issuing authority that guaranteed the quality and weight of the metal used. Metal coins have some great advantages over earlier primitive monies in facilitating economic activity. Firstly, the metal in them is of relatively high value, so coins offer a very portable form of wealth. Secondly, metal is easily divisible, so coins of differing weights and values can be issued. Lastly, metal is extremely durable and so coins made from it are ideally suited to the long-term storage of wealth.

The first coins we know of were issued around 650 BC in what is today western Turkey, but was then part of the Greek world. Before 400 BC, coins appeared also in India and China.

Indian punch-marked coins

The earliest known Indian coins were made of silver, copper and electrum (a natural mixture of gold and silver). First, the metal was melted in crucibles and purified with alkalis. Next, it was cut into pieces with clippers and adjusted to the proper weight. Finally, it was hammer-stamped with dies, or as in the case of these coins, multiple-punched, bearing a design. Pretty much the same process is used today in mints throughout the world though, of course, it is now highly automated. Incidentally, the last 'hammered' coins, as they are known, were struck in Jaipur in 1946. So, it might just be possible that there are people still alive in India who can remember coins being struck in this age-old manner.

Indian punch-marked coins come in every conceivable shape — round, oval, elliptical, rectangular. Some are flat, others are saucer-shaped. And they bear anything from one punch-mark to up to five. The use of multiple punches for making coins is unique to the subcontinent.

Punch-marked coins are found all over the country in quite large numbers. The symbols used on them can be hard to discern. And for many years they presented an enigma. Fortunately, the job of classifying them into 1,288 different types, denominations and 83 series, and also of assigning them to 17 states (or Japanadas) has recently been done by Dilip

Rajgor, in his *Punch-marked Coins of Early Historic India*. This is one of many major contributions that has been made to the study of Indian coins, or numismatics, as it is known, in the last 25 years or so.

Coins of the foreign invaders

Alexander the Great built the greatest empire of the Greek world. After his death, the empire was divided between his generals. Around 200 BC, one of their successors, by the name Demetrius, expanded his empire out of Iran and established his rule in northwest India and the Punjab. The Indo-Greeks, as they are known, ruled there for a century-and-a-half.

The Indo-Greeks introduced several innovations in Indian numismatics, such as full die-striking, the use of legends (in Greek and Brahmī), portraits of rulers, monograms and the representation of deities — again of both Greek and Indian origin.

● by RODERICK HUDSON

Portraiture on ancient coins is generally idealised. The early portrait coins of the Indo-Greeks, by contrast, are extremely realistic and are amongst the finest coins of the ancient world.

The Kushanas

The Indo-Greeks were suppressed by successive waves of invaders from Central Asia.

Next came the Kushanas, nomads from China, who established a considerable empire in northwest India, Afghanistan and Gandhara during the first and second centuries of the common era.

The Kushanas were evidently fairly eclectic in religious matters. Their coins, for example, show Hindu gods and goddesses, as well as Iranian and Greek deities. So, coins also provide hard information about religious beliefs at various times and places; who were the popular deities, and their iconic forms.

The Romans

Some authorities argue that the Romans minted coins specially to finance trade with India. Roman gold, silver and copper flowed into India from Roman provinces in West Asia, and spices, semi-precious stones, flowed back to adorn the rulers of Rome.



(Left): British India - East India Company Madras Presidency Gold 'Three swami' Pagoda, 1740-1807 (obverse); struck in Madras, at Fort St. George, this type is in the style of the coins of the Vijayanagar Empire of two centuries earlier. (Right): North India - Gangeyadeva Post-Gupta, Srimadgangeyadeva, 1015-1050 CE, Gold 19mm (obverse); Gupta gold coins, which were both plentiful and artistically executed, continued to influence coin design for centuries afterwards. Here, Lakshmi is shown seated on a lotus.

The early dynasties

After the foreign invaders were defeated or had lost their identity, hundreds or thousands of coin-issuing authorities rose and fell in different parts of the country. Some were big enough to attain the expanse of empires. Some lasted hundreds of years. Others occupied small territories, an area of a few square kilometres. India, thus, possesses a vast treasure of many thousands of varieties of coins in various metals. The standard catalogue of English coins is the size of an average hardback novel. The standard catalogue of Indian coins is yet to be compiled, but if it were ever to appear in print, rather than, say, on the Internet, it would undoubtedly resemble a multi-volume encyclopaedia.

It was through the study of bilingual and trilingual coins that James Prince was able to decipher Brahmi and Karoshti and thereby open up many new vistas for the study of the ancient history of India. The evolution of the languages, scripts and dates shown on the coins enabled scholars to establish the sequence of the rise and fall of kingdoms and their rulers. The Golden Age of the Guptas encompassed most of northern and central India and lasted over 200 years, before it began to crumble. The coins of the Guptas are chiefly known in gold. Early Gupta coins show a figure of the king on the obverse, very much in the Kushana style, and the Iranian goddess Ardoksho on the reverse. On later Gupta coins, we can see the goddess is transformed into her Hindu counterpart, Lakshmi, shown seated upon a lotus.

Clearly, the Guptas had a lot of gold coins. The question arises, therefore, where did it all come from? The suggestion has been made that it came from Roman gold coins which were melted down, and this accounts for why Roman gold coins are rarely found in North India today, whereas they are

here in the South. It is possible to test this hypothesis by metrological studies.

The next high point begins in South India. Here, starting in the Mysore area, then spreading throughout the South, we see a revival of the punch-mark technique of coin-making an absence of about 1,000 years.

This is quickly followed by the rise of the Chola Empire, and, with it, the widespread coining of gold and copper and, to a lesser extent, silver. The commonest types of the Chola coin, and they are still common, are copper pieces depicting a standing king and a seated one on the reverse, together with a legend in Nagari. The figures on both sides are drawn in lines. This type spread with Chola power and was also issued in Lanka. Hence, it is known as the 'Ceylon-man' type.

Mughal coins

Around the time of the Cholas, the first Muslim coins were being struck in India by the Sultanate of Delhi. This introduced a whole new style of coinage into India which, with the Mughals and then various Muslim princely states, was to survive right up to Independence. Gone were iconic representations and heraldic devices.

From now on, coins carried inscriptions on both sides in Arabic or Persian. These carry important information, like the name of the issuing ruler, mint, date and other identifiable features like the Kalima and Ilahi (Persian month) and couplets. One couplet translated as: 'May the coins of Shahjahanabad be current in the world for ever in the name of the second Lord of the conjunctions'. Another as: 'May the face of money shine with the hue of the sun and the moon'. Islamic coins in India reached their high point in the early Mughal coins, some of which were masterpieces of calligraphy and ornamentation.

The highest-value coin ever issued was a gold, one thousand mohur piece, which weighed a staggering twelve-and-a-half kilograms.

Two series of coins of Jahangir deserve special mention. (Continued on Page 8)

Moore Market — then and now

A news item with a picture of the new Moore Market brought back many memories of old Moore Market, which was our shopper's stop of yester-years. The Market itself comprised a large single-storied building with a quadrangle and shops all around selling all manner of things — readymade clothes, hats, bags, raincoats, soft drinks, ice-cream, kulfi, nuts, fruits, pakodas and samosas; it was just the right place to buy second-hand books, specially text-books which never changed as fast as they do now!

You needed to buy a gift, you caught a tram or bus to go to Moore Market. A beautiful

gift would usually be *Le soir de Paris*, a small dark blue bottle of perfume called 'Evening in Paris', lovely embroidered handkerchiefs that are out of vogue today, replaced by paper napkins. Each store had a different name. Two names that come to mind are London Stores and Fazals. There was a nice little restaurant that had a board 'Hot mutton puffs ready'. One day, a spelling error had the board announcing, 'Hot mutton pups ready'.

During Xmas and New Year, it was a season of celebration. The rear portion of the Market had chicken, ducks, drakes, goose, gander, turkey and pigeons, too. You made

your choice and held the bird to get an idea of its weight. It was not dressed and ready, no cold storage those days. It had to be taken home and dressed and got ready for roasting with all the necessary masala ground

● by ANNA VARKI

and placed in a pot for slow cooking over wood fire and then in pans, bringing a rich aroma of its own.

Two options for relaxation and entertainment in Madras those days were spending time on the Marina or visiting the Zoo and strolling along My Lady's Garden, which also had a small lake where you could have a boat ride. This stretch was just behind old Moore Market, culminating in shopping and eating at Moore Market. There is not a trace of all that now.

I knew that that wonderful complex had been brought down to build the huge reservation complex for Southern Railway and saw the vestiges of the old market — a line of shops in a haphazard manner — while turning into the road leading to the reservation office. However, I never realised that a new market, Moore Market again, had come up till I saw the picture of it in *The Hindu* recently. I had a pile of old books to be disposed of. Thus, seeing this picture of the new Moore Market filled me with curiosity. I called one of my friends and asked whether she could spare the time to take me. I was recovering from surgery after a fall and moving with the aid of a walking stick. I had a carton of books but decided to take just two medium-sized bags, not knowing whether there would be bookstalls at all!

We drove beyond the Southern Railway reservation office gate and there it was! There is a gate leading to the complex with many hawkers selling all and sundry including hot *dosais* with a bulls eye or omlette spread. The surroundings were sadly strewn with garbage. Bypassing all that, we entered the complex. The groundfloor had several bookstalls selling second-hand books of a variety. The most prominent were computer books in good condition. There were mostly students bargaining and trying to pick up what they needed. We asked the owner of a bookstall whether he would buy second-hand books. He replied he would, and examined

what we had. He told us they were old, there wasn't much demand for what we had brought but offered us a price beyond our expectations. In spite of it we bargained a little and took whatever he offered us!

We wandered around but there was nothing else except a number of shops selling aquariums of all sizes and shapes with stands, some ornate, with a great variety of beautiful fish of different sizes and shapes, and also pebbles and plants to be put in the aquarium. In the days gone by, too, Moore Market sold aquariums but then the fish were just small goldfish, small black fish and angel fish. And the aquariums were mostly square and oblong.

A corner shop had old gramophones with the His Master's Voice horn attached! Old Records, too! All antiques now, fetching a good price. One welcome surprise was that we didn't have to climb up the stairs as there was a ramp going all the way up. Whoever designed the place had kept in mind the needs of disabled people, which many shops don't pay attention to. The two floors, shops with shutters rolled down, were yet to be occupied. What was appalling was that the walls along the ramp and elsewhere were strewn with pan spit!

As we came out, my friend was interested in buying a parrot. A birdstore used to be there in the good old days. On enquiry, we were told we could get a bird from any part of the world! We went around in vain.

At last, a small boy asked us what we were looking for. When we said "Kili", he promptly guided us saying, "Vango" and we followed him. He took us right up to the gate and there was a person sitting beside a few cages containing parrots, love birds and a couple of mynas. They didn't look too healthy. My friend wanted a parrot with a red ring round the neck. They are the ones that usually learn to talk. But there was none of that variety.

We wanted to see the old Lily Pond and the lake. When we asked the driver, he replied, "Amma, there is no lake and as for the Lily Pond, this building has been constructed on the pond after filling it."

We lack the zeal to preserve but love to destroy, don't we? Why must the surroundings be so ill kempt, I wonder. Shouldn't we have more civic sense and shouldn't the subject of keeping the environment clean be part of education from the primary stage itself!

Answers to Quiz

1. That's the actual name of Yasser Arafat, who passed away on that day; 2. He is the new leader of the PLQ; 3. Mahbubnagar in AP; 4. The National Food-For-Work Programme covering 150 of the most backward districts; 5. They are the latest Indians to be recognised and honoured as 'Asian Heroes' by *Time* magazine; 6. Dronavalli Harika; 7. K. Asif's *Mughal-e-Azam*; 8. Bobby Jindal from Louisiana; 9. Ohio; 10. Sunil Mittal of Bharti Enterprises.

* * *

11. It would be the former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's 75th film as script-writer; 12. Planting Districts; 13. Dinesh Kaarthick; 14. Oonamancheri near Vandalur; 15. *Mumbai Express*; 16. Grand Southern Trunk Road; 17. Panchathan Record Inn (P) Ltd.; 18. A cable car service; 19. St. Mary's Church in Fort St. George; 20. Bharatiar's house (now a memorial to him)

Senate House Conservation Fund

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

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

Dear Registrar,

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

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

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

Date: Signature:

Salute Sharath

When the current Ranji Trophy season opened, I was one of the critics of left hand batsman Sridharan Sharath's continued inclusion in the Tamil Nadu squad — not because he was not good enough, but because I thought he had no future in the game. He was Tamil Nadu's highest run getter with 20 hundreds under his belt at the start of the season, and he had done yeoman service in the team's cause for over a decade. Yet, I could not help feeling it was unfair the way the veteran was blocking the entry of a younger batsman knocking at the doors of first class cricket. Sharath had clearly missed the bus in terms of selection to the Indian team in international cricket, and what earthly use would be his presence in the State team, when there were so many talented players all around him? How wrong I was! Sharath has already silenced his critics, as he has done so often in the past. He has scored two valuable hundreds in the first two Ranji Trophy matches this year, one against Hyderabad, helping Tamil Nadu to an innings victory, and the second century coming under adverse circumstances against Uttar Pradesh at Lucknow, a week later. But for Sharath's fighting innings, well supported by Vidyut Sivaramakrishnan, Badrinath, Sriram and some of the later order batsmen, Tamil Nadu could not have reached a position from where they nearly won another innings victory.

Sharath stormed his way into the Tamil Nadu team in the 1980s with a string of outstanding performances at the junior level. Fate, however, handed him a cruel knockout

blow in the form of a road accident, which effectively robbed him of two whole seasons, even though he missed only one. He spent at least one whole season catching up with others, and trying to gain peak fitness. In fact, Sharath was never perhaps able to regain his earlier athleticism completely after the accident.

Sharath's batting is quite complete in all aspects. He has sound technique, a neat array of shots, good temperament and the ability to concentrate for long periods. He is also an expert at rotating the strike and

● by
V. RAMNARAYAN

frustrating rival bowlers. All these qualities made him one of Tamil Nadu's brightest prospects in his youth, but the accident really curtailed his progress to the highest level. When he did triumph over that unfortunate episode and amassed runs at every level of first class cricket, the selectors recognised him, even if later than should have been the case. He has played for India 'A' and other representative sides against international teams touring India, without ever hitting the headlines in these virtual selection matches.

This has been an unfortunate feature of Test selection in India, and perhaps other countries, too. A big score in matches watched by the national selection committee with an eye on picking the Indian team is regarded as a more desirable qualification than consistent performances over the years. Sridharan Sharath, with

more than 7,000 first class runs, has been a victim of this trend like some other well-known cricketers from Tamil Nadu.

This year, Sharath looks fitter and more relaxed than he has been for a while. He has started the season with a bang, taking his tally of hundreds in the national championship to 22. In the kind of ominous form he has shown so far, there is every indication that he will make every innings count as the year ahead unfolds. It will be a fitting finale to his glittering career if, in addition to reaching the 25-century mark, he does succeed in achieving his long-time goal of bringing the Ranji Trophy to his State after a lapse of 18 years. It will compensate for all the disappointments he has braved over the years.



December 2: *The fox's story* — a puppet show by Theatre du Petit Miroir, in collaboration with The Other festival. (At Chinmaya Heritage Centre, 7 p.m.)

December 2-9: An exhibition of paintings by Annu Naik. (At Apparao Galleries.)

December 3-6: *Paramapadham* — an ambitious theme conceived from the *Mahabaratha* by Moondraam Arangu. (At Alliance Francaise Auditorium, 7 p.m.)

December 5: Constanza Macras, in collaboration with The Other Festival, presents *Back to the Present*.

Modern dance and dance-theatre scene in Germany is coloured and lit by multi-cultural, multi-ethnic aesthetic and politique. If the North-Rhein region has some of the all-time

great names of dance history, the Berlin scene has a very distinct energy mix which never ceases to surprise a spectator. Macras in recent times has been making waves with her productions, both with the creation and the process. (At Chinmaya Heritage Centre, 6.00 p.m.)

December 6-18: A solo multimedia exhibition *Crossing the city: Unconscious Optics* by Shankar Natarajan. (At Alliance Francaise 6.30 p.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 24200.

Coins down the ages

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tion. One is a portrait issue. Some of them show the emperor holding a wine glass. These coins were melted down by the order of Jahangir's successors who were offended by their religious heterodoxy.

Equally rare and valuable are Jahangir's zodiacal gold coins. It occurred to Jahangir to replace the name of the month on his coins with a figure of the constellation for that month. Only three complete sets of these zodiacal mohurs exist, one in the British Museum in London, one in the Bibliotecheque Nationale de Paris and the last in the Berlin Museum. It is a great pity that there is not as yet a fourth set here in India itself.

They are unique to Indian numismatics.

Non-Islamic mediaeval coins

Indian coinage, even during the time of the Mughals, was not universally Islamic in character. At all times, there were also non-Islamic issuing authorities, especially in South India.

The Danes, Portuguese, French and English all issued coins from their various enclaves. The English issued coins in their Presidencies in Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Initially, these were very much in the style of the local coinages and denominations current in these areas. So, in Bengal and Bombay, the East India Company coins were struck with

Mughal-type designs and Mughal names. In Fort St. George, they struck coins in the style of the Vijayanagar coins of two centuries earlier. Imperial ambitions and successes led them to abandon this 'enclavist' approach to coin issuing. And, in 1835, they issued a uniform coinage in the name of King William IV.

Roderick Hudson's recent exhibition at the British Council, of photographs of Indian coins and coins found in India, revealed the beauty and skill demonstrated by minters for over two thousand years. Born in London, Hudson took up photography as an earnest amateur 25 years ago. He has been concentrating on his passion for creating images, especially in South India, where he now spends much of his time.

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