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MUSINGS

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Saar, you wanted 50% off, and I've given you 50% off!!

What a bargain

Winter in Chennai

Life is significantly less damp, and Old Sol isn't throwing his weight about quite as much. Ergo – it's visitors-from-across-the-seas time again in Chennai.

It is easier to appreciate exotica in balmy weather, after all. The locals are happy too – for obvious reasons.

A recent news item, however, proves that some travellers, welcome as they are, come to our shores slightly under- or mis-informed. Apparently there was a small fracas in a railway compartment over the fact that two enthusiastic (and delightfully adventurous) foreign nationals attempted to bargain with an attendant over biriyani lunch packets. The attendant, understandably, was stunned. The travellers, equally confused, announced in defence that they had been told that bargaining was major communication channel in India. Sympathetic fellow travellers then explained to the bemused tourists that while the 'Great Indian Bazaar' did indeed exist in all its reputed colour, glory and smooth attempts to make a quick, extra rupee, there are limits to its reach. Meal packets distributed by relevant authorities do not come under its purview, for instance.

There have even been instances of visitors getting into the 'Not-a-paisa-more-than...' spirit in certain departmental stores of repute, until gently but firmly set right by sales people, much to the amusement of local clientele. Isn't it about time the nation's tourism department did something about 'foreign' perceptions of shopping in India?

Ranjitha Ashok

The tsunami – and the day after

(by Sashi Nair)

The tsunami waves that crashed on the coast of Tamil Nadu on Boxing Day took an unprecedented toll in lives and property. No natural disaster has affected Chennai and the southern coast of the State to this tragic extent ever. As the New Year begins, our hearts and hopes go out to all those affected. What has been lost can never be regained, but may the future be kinder to them even as they remember the past.

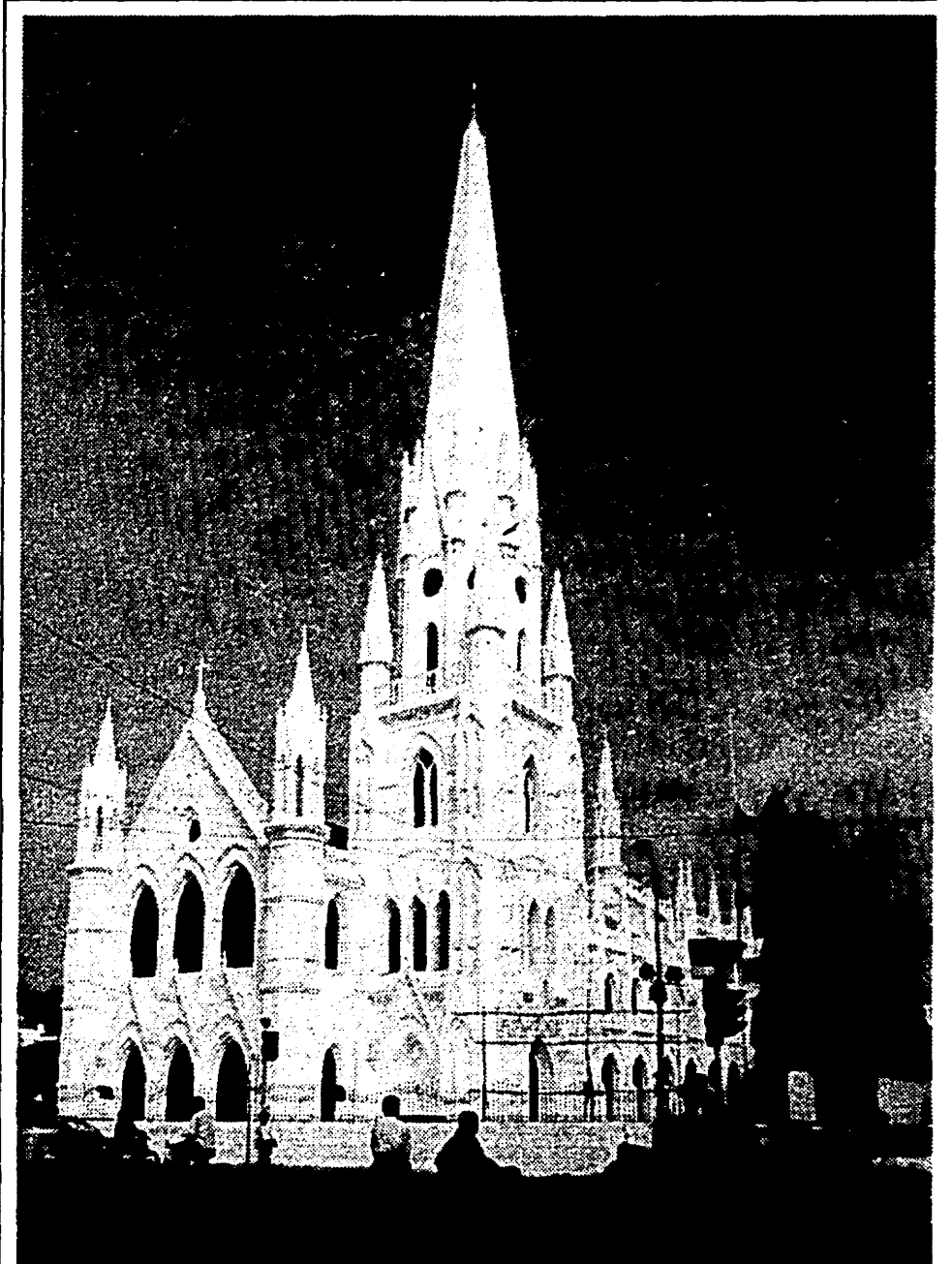
The day after the sea's wrath, I visited several of the areas affected in and around Madras. This is his report:

There will be no New Year's Eve celebrations in the resorts and restaurants on the East Coast Road, said Vinod Kumar, as we drove in a hired car towards one of the resorts near Mamallapuram, the day after the massive waves had smashed the shores of Chennai and the rest of the State. Vinod and his friends, after a late night at the resort, were having breakfast on its lawns when the first wave gushed into the resort. As the water reached their tables, they picked up their plates and began light-heartedly jogging away. A minute later, another wave hit the resort. This time it was a towering mass of water. Tossing aside their plates, they ran for their lives towards the road. The cars parked at the entrance, including Vinod's, were lifted by the water, tossed around for a while and then hurled yards away against tree trunks, undergrowth and sand. Vinod and I, along with a mechanic carrying all possible

tools, were on our way to retrieve his car.

On the way, we dropped in at a friend's place in Triplicane. Abita, volunteering for the Srinivasan Young Men's Association, was busy collecting clothes for distribution to the homeless who had taken shelter in Corporation schools. Food was being cooked in a *chatram* nearby and sent in packets to the Nochikuppam area where scores of fishermen's huts had been washed away. From the free dispensary the Association runs, Scouts were distributing medicines. The entire area was alive with activity and it was heartwarming to see the voluntary participation by people of all strata from the locality.

(Continued on Page 2)



The renovated San Thomé basilica. (Photograph: S. ANVAR)

Aesthetically pleasing, but is it classical?

(by A Special Correspondent)

When restoration commenced at the San Thomé Basilica in June 2003, several questions were raised about the methods and discipline that would be followed. A number of visitors to the cathedral had expressed concerns to *Madras Musings* about a large area in the Church premises being dug up. Baskets of debris being carted away could well have included ancient relics, artifacts, construction material used in earlier churches, tombs, etc. – valuable heritage indicators that should have been recorded, they pointed out. Was

such excavation in consonance with heritage conservation practices, wondered conservationists. Others wondered what effect the digging operations, covering a fairly large area close to the crypt, would have had on the building?

We still have no answers, but restoration work was completed in the first week of December by Ravi Gundu Rao and Associates (RGRA) of Mysore. According to two local conservation architects, what has been done "is not a bad job at all". They also found it encouraging

to see such restoration after RGRA had, on examining the building, found the timber roof, stained glass windows and plaster "in undesirable condition caused by severe distress and prolonged leakage."

The RGRA report added, "It was learnt from (telltale signs) that major interventions had taken place perhaps in the mid-20th Century to the building (when) the entire external lime mortar render was replaced with composite mortar plaster and a cement punning

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Madras Musings wishes all its readers a Very Happy 2005

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When we reached the Marina, there were hundreds of onlookers lined up along both sides of Kamarajar Salai, from the MGR and Anna Memorials to the lighthouse and beyond. Except for vehicular traffic, silence reigned and the very air seemed to be permeated with a sense of despondency and despair. There was not a soul on the Marina sands; it was clear nobody wanted to venture on them. From our vehicle, we could see overturned catamarans and mechanised boats, plastic sheets, ruined fishing nets, wooden planks, debris, bits and pieces of masonry and wreckage, all creating a sad new beach landscape.

The entrance to the fishing hamlets of Srinivasapuram, Mullikuppam, Domnikuppam, Pudukuppam and Nadukuppam in the Foreshore Estate area was barricaded. Several groups of fishermen were huddled together in discussion, perhaps wondering how to retrieve their boats or where they'd get new boats and gear from. There were groups of women too, some wailing, while others tried to console them. It was as if a dark cloud had settled on the lives of those in all the *kuppams*.

We met a Doordarshan cameraman, Vasudevan, and engineer Periyaswami who, from atop the University Annexe building, had filmed those dramatic pictures of the Ambassador car and another vehicle being tossed around by the waves. Those images had formed part of the initial footage that was beamed to viewers at noon the previous day.

At the San Thomé Cathedral, beneath a shamiana, there were large numbers of men, women and children. Several small children were running about with empty plates in hand. Soon, a van arrived with food packets. The entire crowd surged towards it, raising hands and crying for help.

Several voluntary agencies and individuals were in different parts of Foreshore Estate and the *kuppam*, wanting to help, but many of them returned without distributing anything, not knowing how to tackle the throngs of people who had gathered everywhere. In areas such as Srinivasapuram, for example, it was difficult to discern who the victims were and who were not. People were huddled wherever there was space. However, volunteers from the Banyan and SMILE were trying to do what best they could, supplementing the food packets provided by the Corporation.

At Srinivasapuram, I met Ranganayaki, a volunteer from SMILE. She and her team of young boys and girls had come

The tsunami – and the day after

to carry out a census of the families that had been affected. But the chaotic scene prevented them from doing anything. "The police, fire brigade and ambulance personnel are doing a fine job, but there seems to be a lack of coordination and communication. We will return tomorrow," she said. Indeed, the police had evacuated residents of Foreshore Estate before the waves, 30-40 ft high, had entered the buildings there. Most of the residents had been moved to Corporation schools and playgrounds nearby.

Along the East Coast Road, there were crowds, but in far less numbers than on the previous day. "Yesterday, it had resembled a scene during Partition. People could be seen for miles, walking or running, howling like babies, not knowing what to do and where they were headed," Vinod said. We noticed groups of people coming from the villages near Neelankarai, with bundles in hand containing probably all that they could salvage. Many

were busy erecting tents several metres beyond the road. Otherwise, life seemed to be absolutely normal. Until we reached the resort.

The sight of a refrigerator that lay on the road drew our attention – the tsunami had tossed it 300 metres away. Chairs and tables lay strewn about the place. The resort staff were in a state of semi-shock. It seemed the end of the road for them. An optimistic manager hoped that they would be able to restart business in six-eight months' time. Vinod's car, window panes smashed and doors dented, rested against a tree trunk. The staff helped and it did not take long to get the engine to whirr.

If there was one person who saw the tsunami and its staggering intensity as it came inland, it was Anita Sachdev. Wanting to spend a quiet weekend with her husband and two daughters, Anita had booked "a nice little cottage" at Temple Bay Resort. There was the first floor room in the first cottage by the

sea, 15 ft or so from the shore. After spending a memorable Christmas evening, the family retired for the night, after the girls had decided they wanted to go fishing in a catamaran the following morning.

As luck would have it, the second daughter overslept and, as a result, the time to put out to sea for fishing had passed. The catamaran ride, however, was still on. The family waited for her to get ready. Anita and her elder daughter were meanwhile enjoying the early morning view of the sea from the first floor balcony when suddenly a huge wave came rushing towards their cottage, hit the fence and ripped it apart.

The second wave was a killer. Anita and daughter were blinded – the wall of water shook the cottage as it crashed into it. There were screams from the ground-floor as doors were brutally flung open and chairs, tables, artifacts, hammocks etc. were sucked into the sea. As Anita's husband rushed backwards towards the

entrance (which was at the rear), he heard screams for help. There was seawater all around and they had less than 30 seconds to decide what to do.

They jumped into the water, treading over lamp-posts and wires. They were helpless against the sheer force of the current which, fortunately for them, was headed towards the reception area. Anita and her family were extremely fortunate to survive. The ground-floor holidaymakers were not. Among other casualties were a neighbour and her sons. They had woken up early in the morning to collect seashells. Their bodies were washed away and found later in Kalkkham.

Many thousands of others in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere around the Bay of Bengal suffered the same fate. It has been a tragedy like no other, in all the affected areas. Now is the time for all those not affected to give unstintingly to relieve the misery of thousands made parentless, husbandless, wifeless, childless or homeless. It is also time political leaders tried to stop scoring points off others and using the media to do so. It is time for everyone of all political hues to team together with the Government and offer a better future to those who have suffered like never before.

AESTHETICALLY PLEASING, BUT IS IT CLASSICAL?

(Continued from Page 1)

covered with a cement-based paint. The interior was left as it was with minor patches at places. The original choir timber floor was replaced with RCC, and Gothic columns were terminated eight feet from the floor. Steel grilles were added to the louvred windows during this stage." These interventions were with "incompatible modern materials", the report pointed out.

RGRA state that they recommended, and eventually implemented, the following:

- documenting the entire building carefully, especially in the before, during and after stages;
- opening up and restoring the great roof to enable replacement of decayed timber members on the roof and ceiling with matching wood (using well-seasoned timber from dismantled old bungalows to ensure quality);
- providing a reversible, weather-resistant, light

and compatible membrane to ensure a water-tight roof;

- replacing clay tiles according to the original system by recycling maximum number of old tiles after cleaning the same;
- restoring all stained glass, coloured glass, wooden-louvred windows, doors and ventilators exactly like the original;
- conducting authentic structural repairs to the masonry and other elements as necessary;
- restoring the internal lime plaster, including the mouldings, cornices and ornamental art work to match the original work using matching lime mortar and traditional additives and techniques before providing the traditional lime wash finish;
- conducting spot repairs to the external areas (with existing cement punning and plastering) in matched composite mortar and providing a ce-

ment-compatible modern paint finish;

- restoring the Gothic ribs in the ceiling to its original glory using well-seasoned timber; and
- restoring the holy murals in the nave.

After visiting the restored building, the two local conservationists, while generally happy with the work, commented, "Some of the heritage feel of the building has been lost with the flooring being changed in places and the design implementation using new marble rather haphazardly done." One of them added, "The rainwater drain from the terrace sticks out like a sore thumb".

"It is always better not to alter an old building that has gained stability over a period of time," pointed out the other conservation architect, who added, "Although the overall appearance is aesthetically pleasing, especially the wood-varnished ceiling, the stone cladding at the bottom of the walls is not desirable; it is something to be avoided in old build-

ings. The cracks on the walls must be allowed to breathe, otherwise it becomes difficult to get rid of the water that is likely to seep in once the ground retains water."

This conservationist did not also find favour with the use of Italian marble for the floor and railings and stated, "The restoration should have followed the old pattern. Somehow, when the eye starts travelling downward, the heritage feel is missing."

Adjacent to the hall (or tomb chapel) constructed below the Church to allow a larger number of devotees and visitors to see the tomb of the saint, there is a new museum that displays relics, artifacts and tombstones. There is no indication whatsoever as to what exactly these displays relate to. Are they material unearthed during the digging operations? Construction of this museum and prayer hall with the liberal use of Italian marble appears extravagant and lends the place a flashy look. And the unnecessary statues here give it a cinematic ambience.

OUR READERS WRITE



In remembrance – I

Now that the Nightingale has achieved immortality, the mortals, to remember her glorious past, should think of perpetuating her memory in a fitting manner. Sometime ago, there was a proposal to name a street or the area itself (Kotturpuram) after her. I think the most suitable manner to honour her would be to name after her the street in which she lived in Madras when she first arrived from Madurai in 1932 – Tana Street, Purasawalkam. Now that it has developed into a big commercial-cum-residential area, it can be named 'M.S. Subbulakshmi Road'.

Many of the old residents' families are still there and they knew her well. Kotturpuram, though a posh area, is only a recent development. There won't be any difficulty in the name change, as Tana was a common name denoting a police post. M.S. was a regular visitor to Gangatheeswarar Temple when she stayed in Tana Street. Her house was near the big church and National Provision Stores. She later lived in Landon's Road, Kilpauk (Newtone Studios). I think for a short period she also resided in Triplicane or Mylapore. It was after her marriage to Sadasivam that she moved to Kilpauk Gardens, Kilpauk.

Another Purasawalkam resident was R.K. Narayan whose ancestral house was No.1, Vellala Street, Purasawalkam, now occupied by the Saravana Bhavan Hotel. I feel it would be very proper if the street's name is changed to R.K. Narayan Road to perpetuate the memory of the famous writer. Similarly, M.K. Thiagaraja Bhagavathar lived in Ormes Road and he should be remembered there.

V. Theetharappan
32, V.O.C. Street, Kasi Arcade
Flat H-SVM 1st Block, 1st Floor
Valasarawalkam, Kaikankuppam
Chennai 600 087.

* * *

In remembrance – II

The Nightingale's melodious voice is no more. Nor is the helping hand she offered to many. M.S. Subbulakshmi's name and fame make her only the second-most widely known Tamil woman after Avvaiyar.

It will be in the fitness of things if her statue is installed in music sabhas and a Carnatic music college is named after her.

M.R. Pillai
H-64/5, Central Avenue
Korattur
Chennai 600 080.

Invaluable reading

I recently parked my bike in Motilal Street to dine in Hotel Saravana Bhavan. Unfortunately, my bike's box was tampered with and two issues of *Madras Musings*, which I had kept in an envelope containing *Business Today's* current issue, were stolen.

As no valuables were lost, except these journals and some invoices, I could not lodge a complaint with the police. I, however, reported this to the beat-constable, who was standing a few yards away. He told me such incidents were quite common in the area and advised me to feel happy that my bike had not been stolen.

Later, I thought I should have lodged a complaint for the loss of the two invaluable issues of *Madras Musings*, but I still wonder whether our police would entertain such a case as mine!

Against this backdrop, could you please send me the past two copies.

V. Rajagopalan
Flat-F, Bagmar Flat
20, 8th Street Extn.
New Colony, Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

Another landmark falls

Recently, I saw what could be considered a heritage building levelled to the ground. I refer to the so-called *Gemini House* on Radhakrishnan Salai.

Actually it was C. Rajam, the famous steel magnate of yesteryear and founder of M.I.T., who built it in the 1930s, and named it *India House*. He took great pains and pride in building a house that was in its day of outstanding design and construction. The marble for the floors was specially imported from Italy and the light fittings from Germany. I do not know when exactly it was built, but I do know that in 1936 he celebrated his eldest son's wedding with great pomp in the house and my sister was the happy bride!

He sold the property to the Raja of Sivaganga during the 1940s. He had also constructed another house on the eastern side (it used to be called the 'chinna India House') which also changed hands over the years and has since metamorphosed into the present Hotel Saveria.

Cdr. R. Ganapathi
(RETD)
116, Defence Officers' Colony
Chennai 600 032.

Learn to live with nature

Ecological degradation in villages, main cause for city's woes' (MM, December 1st) is indeed true. Before the advent of the so-called Green Revolution, villagers had their own manure pits, consigning in them all biodegradable waste using green manure, such as 'kaavalai', 'kozhuji', etc.

They would leave their cattle in the fields overnight, the excreta doubling up as natural manure. Thus, the ecology, including the fertility of the soil and health of the produce, was maintained so as not to cause harm either to the earth or to the people. As a result of the excessive use of fertilisers, the ecological balance has been irretrievably affected.

Unless we learn to live with nature and nurture it, we are bound to be affected by the ecological degra-

ation and the sooner we realise this the better.

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

It's got to do with the food

I read with profound interest the piece 'Ecological degradation...' (MM, December 1st) by Sashi Nair and the quoted comments of Nanditha Krishnan (I wish our writers do not refer to South Indian women by their surnames; it sounds odd and causes gender confusion).

Nanditha's reference to north Chennai as "hell on earth" seems charitable; north Chennai is worse than hell. However, it is not the environment that gives the people "scales on the skin and jaundiced eyes". It has to do with the food habits. The staple diet here consists of *masalavadais* and *bondas* deep fried in oil. Many consume dried fish, the main market for which is on Wall Tax Road.

Regarding birdlife, all the exotic birds left North Madras more than 150 years ago. Only the crow thrives here as a scavenger. There are many dogs and scare-away cats, as unhealthy looking as the human residents. The area is home to thousands of rats that have established colonies in disused houses and sheds. An outbreak of plague or leptospirosis will not be surprising.

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

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Madras Musings* style as far as names are concerned is as follows: Once the full name of a person appears, only the surname is used thereafter. And the style does not discriminate between men and women and certainly not between North and South Indian women. It also does not use honorifics like Mr., Ms., or Dr. (if it is honorary). And honours like Padma Shri are not titles – so are not used in that form.

Nature's freebies

Reference Shoba Menon's front page poster (MM, December 1st), a logical and pre-emptive proposition would be to tap and treat river water before it reaches that huge saline sink we call the 'sea'.

Another freebie of Nature, solar energy, should be more effectively and economically utilised for localised desalination areas or sector-wise, instead of as a massive unit. Also, we should be thinking about the districts. Chennai has the sea, but what about the water problem of districts not so favourably placed?

N. Dharmeshwaran
21, 11A Cross, SP Extension
Malleswaram, Bangalore 560 003.

Cinema's influence

It is time we took a hard look at the films which are being produced today. Violence and vulgarity have become the order of the day both on the big and small screens.

May I suggest the following to improve the scene?

Fight sequence should not last on the screen more than 60-120 seconds.

System of U or A only should prevail. UA is an escapist route which only favours film-makers at the cost of young and vulnerable minds.

The certification of a local film,

The pressure on urban space

One of the important indices of population concentration is density of population.

In 1991 the area of Chennai was 174 sq km and the city had a population of 38.41 lakh, a density of 22,077 per sq km. According to the Census of 2001, the population has gone up to 42.16 lakh, i.e. a density of 24,231 per sq km. As of now (December 2004), the population of Chennai is about 66 lakhs (see Shobha Menon's article (MM, November 16th). This gives a horrific 37931 inhabitants per sq km. This will work out to 153.5 inhabitants per acre or just 283.7 sq. ft. per inhabitant. An average flat owner has between 450 and 750 sq. ft. of undivided space. Chennai has over 1230 slums covering 296,012 households, with a population of 18.03 lakhs in 2001. This makes available only 283.7 sq.ft. per inhabitant.

While the population density for Tamil Nadu is given as 478, planners have to consider the following situation.

	Area sq.km.	Population	Density sq.km.
Tamil Nadu – Chennai	129,884	57,894,591	445.7
Chennai	174	4,216,268	24,231.0
Tamil Nadu + Chennai	130,058	62,110,859	478.0

The Census of India has released the district average figures including its headquarters. So, the real district average, excluding its headquarters, is not available. Even so, the poorest districts are Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram, Pudukottai etc and the highest densities are in Kannyakumari 992, Thiruvallur 800, Madurai 733, Thanjavur 649, etc. When this is compared with Kerala, barring Palakkad, Wayanad, Idukki and Pathanamthitta – which are plantation districts – all, if not most, are in the range of 800/1450 density range. Even Thiruvananthapuram district has 1476, showing an even distribution of population.

The developmental programmes of the districts in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are poor and resemble the districts of Maharashtra. The state capitals are developed at the expense of the districts. The Kerala model is easily the best in India. No wonder, with a density of 819 inhabitants, it stands second to Punjab in India Today's survey.

Though Chennai's population density today is likely to be over 35,000, as already mentioned, some parts of the city could have a density of 5000/10000, 10,000/15,000, 45,000/50,000 or over 50,000 range. The city planners should restrict growth in such high density zones. Further, no flats should be constructed in high density zones. The approval by Government of Tamil Nadu, to allow flats at 1+4 levels, should be re-considered. In fact, it should be reversed to 1+3 or even 1+2 in some areas. This would then reduce density of population and the price of land.

K.V.S. Krishna
2A, Parkland Apartments, Kamala Bai Street
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017.

for example, a Tamil movie, should be only in Tamil Nadu or Pondicherry, and not in any other state where the language might not be understood. A case in point is the film *Boys*, which was censored in Hyderabad.

The censor board has a great role to play in determining what influences the future of young minds. If utmost care, without any prejudice, is not taken by the Board, generations to come will face the music for someone's tune.

C.S. Baskar
23, NMK Street
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

When Maharashtra and Gujarat can field three teams and Andhra Pradesh two, Tamil Nadu, which has some young and talented cricketers, ought to be allowed to field two teams in the Ranji Trophy. The past two decades have witnessed a number of Tamil Nadu players, for want of opportunities in their home State, choosing to play for other States, such as Goa (V.B. Chandrasekar and Gokulakrishnan), Assam (Satish and V. Saravanan) and Railways (Murali Kaartik). Such a drain of talent is very regrettable. It is time that the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association took the matter up with the BCCI and got permission to field two teams. Similarly, Pondicherry must be allowed to field a separate team.

Protect the deer

On November 2nd, a female deer strayed into the compound of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Taramani and met with tragic death after hitting its head against the high metal fencing of a tennis court. I heard about the tragedy at 4 pm but did not have the courage to see the carcass.

Incidents of deer straying from the IIT Madras campus and the Guindy Park-Raj Bhavan area are not uncommon. It means that certain portions in the campuses are not adequately fenced. Will the city's wildlife warden and the authorities concerned please install

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The challenge for Tirupur in 2005

With the old quota system that hampered garment export growth during the last 30 years ceasing to exist after December 31, 2004, there is a buzz in the textile industry and things are suddenly looking up, particularly in Tirupur in south-western Tamil Nadu. Tirupur is India's biggest textile cluster, accounting for a fifth of the garment exports of the country. But garment-making here, even after decades, continues to be, to a great extent, a cottage industry, with most of the units operating with just a few machines in sheds and garages. Now, spurred on by the knowledge that once quotas go, the town could emerge a favoured sourcing destination, Tirupur's small units that have been operating in a laidback fashion all these years have now woken up

the small units to upscale business, quite a few businessmen do not wish to expand. One of them, who believes that the real issue is labour-productivity, is, however, confident of increasing turnover by adding new machinery. His visits to Chinese factories in the Guanzhou Province convinced him that the reason China had the upper hand in exports (China exports \$ 50 billion worth of garments and has an export growth rate of 20 per cent) was productivity. He found that the Chinese worker had a 200-250 per cent higher productivity level than his Indian counterpart, using the same machinery. He noticed that Chinese workers hardly looked up when a visitor came into the factory — they were so engrossed.

The labour in Tirupur is very

• by A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

and are investing in new machinery, hiring consultants to improve quality standards, trying to implement enterprise resource planning systems, training their employees and inculcating in them a desire to increase productivity.

The Tirupur textile industry, nevertheless, cannot hope to reach where it wants to without confronting head-on and solving two major problems — lack of productivity and lack of scale, according to a report in *Business World*. Today, the city can boast of only a dozen or so companies with a turnover exceeding Rs. 100 crore. The largest exporter's turnover is Rs. 250 crore, mainly from low-value knitted garments.

Although there seems to be a new-found energy goading

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

— THE EDITOR

different. The workers here are not interested in their wages being linked to productivity. *Business World* cites a shocking instance of how a possible foreign collaborator (owners of a leading lingerie brand) interested in sourcing from a Tirupur factory had to return disappointed when the factory workers were disinclined to increase productivity to meet his demand.

Tirupur's lack of professionalism may well prove costly for its manufacturers in the short-term. Many exporters here are aware that, post-2005, if the unprofessional approach continues, while they compete for a larger share of the \$ 200 billion garments trade, they may have to helplessly watch garment factories in Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Thailand pull away and take over the American and the European Union markets.

Another issue that the Tirupur Exporters' Association must address is the pollution factor. Cotton fabric is dyed using disperse dyes, which leave solid particles on the fabric that cannot be dissolved by ordinary effluent treatment plants. According to *Business World*, it takes a costly reverse osmosis process to rid the fabric completely of the dye. Moreover, the Tirupur units do not recycle the dye and simply dump the effluents into the Noyyal River nearby. If the Chennai High Court order directing the units to pay Rs 400 crore as fine is implemented, many of the units may have to close down.

On the brighter side though, Tirupur's exports are set to

double to Rs 10,000 crore in the coming three years. Two of the city's largest exporters have doubled their capacity and are likely to maintain their impressive growth rates in the two years thereafter. Thirty per cent of India's textile machinery orders in 2003 came from Tirupur.

After the Union Government two years ago allowed state subsidies for establishing apparel parks (if at least 20 producers came together), an apparel park is coming up 25 km from Tirupur. More than 50 manufacturers have invested a total of Rs. 300 crore in the venture, with government contributing to the cost of infrastructure such as roads and water. Hopefully, once completed, the apparel park too will herald a new dawn on Tirupur.

India is now on the radar of a new breed of global textile firms looking to invest in garment factories in low-cast destinations, according to *Business World*. Manufacturers from Italy, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Taiwan plan to establish factories in India. Companies such as Raymond, Sri Lanka and Varadhan are now looking at garment exports in a big way. Although the top companies are investing meaningfully, others have miles to go as far as technology, productivity and scale are concerned.

It does seem that the Indian textile industry has not understood the potential of the post-2005 opportunity. Today, with exports worth \$ 4.8 billion, India is fighting against Bangladesh and Thailand for the eighth position (Thailand's workforce is a third of India's) worldwide. India is one of the biggest producers of cotton and has access to cheap raw material and labour. But, if Bangalore, Ludhiana or Tirupur are to make a mark internationally, the Indian textile industry must get its act together.

If Tirupur is to graduate to becoming Treviso, for example (Treviso is Italy's famous textile cluster that makes garments for the best-known names in fashion), its units will first have to learn to share information before using their collective strength to market products. Small companies must work collectively to solve their problems, pool their manufacturing capability and solicit orders together. Adopting international practices, the units must realise, is the best way to raise efficiency. At the same time, there must be a high degree of social compliance because that is one important aspect the foreign buyers look into.

Sacred groves...

About 16 km from Pudukkottai, Sittannaval is the oldest and most famous Jain centre in the region. It possesses an early Jain cave shelter, an ancient abode of Jains dating back to the 2nd Century B.C. The beds carved into the rock, known as Eladipattam, and a cave in which the Jain monks sought refuge in those days, are the main attractions. The largest stone berth has a distinct Bramhi inscription assignable to the 2nd Century B.C. and a later rock-cut cave temple with excellent fresco paintings in natural colours, as in Ajanta. Some inscriptions belonging to the 8th Century A.D. are found in other caves.

There are a few sculptures of Jain Theerthankaras in the Ardhamandapa and inner shrine of the cave temple. They are said to be Adinatha, Neminatha and Mahavira, even though their identifying symbols are conspicuously absent. The ceiling of the Ardhamandapa contains fresco paintings of the 7th Century A.D. Inscriptions of 9-10th Century A.D. are also found in the cave. In the area around Sittannaval there are many pre-historic burial sites consisting of kurangupattarai, cairns, burial urns and cists.

The rulers of Pudukkottai built several beautiful places and constructed tanks, canals and palaces, and protected the groves dedicated to the village deities. One such grove is situated near the cave. Adjoining the grove is a site of prehistoric dolmens, suggesting a very ancient origin.

In Sittannaval, there are three deities in the grove: Aiyarar, Adakalamkathar and Pidari. Aiyarar is worshipped daily in the morning and evening. The other deities are worshipped once a year. During

(Continued on Page 8)

... & sacred mountains

All forms of nature in India are respected and worshipped. Within the sphere of ecological tradition, trees and groves are protected with religious fervour. In fact, all kinds of landscapes are worshipped and this has economic and cultural connotations. Many mountains in various parts of the country are treated sacred. Most of the mountains have some kind of temple structure along with a deity. Groves and trees are also protected and worshipped.

Mountains in India served as natural fortresses and gave people a sense of security, both physical and spiritual. Many ethnic groups view mountains and hills as temples and places of worship, starting with the great Himalayas themselves. Edwin Andrew says, "Sacred mountains also provide bridges of mutual understanding between cultures that can help to promote biodiversity." A mountain is generally viewed as a source of water, life, healing and well-being, and a lifeline to all life forms.

In South India, the Nilgiri Mountains were well preserved until the 1800s. Their inaccessibility helped to preserve indigenous culture. Even now, a few parts of the Nilgiris are worshipped and viewed as sacred by the Toda tribe. Since the Todas are basically a pastoral community, they preserve the grasslands and sholas on the upper plateau of the Nilgiris.

Like the other indigenous communities (Irulas and Kurumbas) in the Nilgiris, Todas view mountains as temples and places of worship. Each and every hillock in the Nilgiris is associated with Toda worship. Todas believe that there is a very definite association between gods and the hills of the Nilgiri plateau. Each god has his separate hillock, where he dwells and the deities meet on a special hill where the Todas have their councils. Todas gather on one hill to perform rituals and on another for daily ceremonies.

For example, every year, to respect their buffalos, Todas gather on one hillock and pour salt water. The mountain, named Porhsthatt (near Thalaphtheri Mundh) and located on the western part of the Nilgiris upper plateau, is worshipped by the Todas even today. Kolkin, the adjoining river (a tributary of the Pykara), is also worshipped. Toda men gather here once a year and take decisions about ritual events.

The hill Kotran Dekarsh (Malleswaran hill) is in the southern part of the Nilgiris in the Attappady valley. This steep hill is associated with the Hindu deity Siva and is worshipped by the Todas. The river Bhavani flows at the foot of Malleswaran hill, and is regarded as sacred by the Todas.

Even after the advent of the British and other settlers, the Todas continued to give importance to the hillocks. There are two important reasons for worshipping the mountains. Firstly, the grassy hills are important for the buffalo; secondly, the Todas strongly believe that the hills are the dwelling places of the gods.

Unplanned developmental activities and monoculture in the Nilgiris are the major threats to these mountain ecosystems. This is the time to take necessary action to protect the hillocks. (Courtesy: CPRCEE journal)

M. Kumaravelu

PALEACATA — great Dutch entrepot

Paleacata was the Dutch name for Pulicat. It was their chief Coromandel port for their lucrative inter-Asian trade, during 1610-1690, trading with countries from Persia to Formosa and Japan from Maldives and Sri Lanka to Indonesia and the Philippines.

The Dutch formed the United (Dutch) East India Company in 1602, with its headquarters in Batavia (Java). From there, in 1603, the Dutch ship *Delft* sailed to Masulipatnam and set up a trading centre, then another one in Petapuli (Nizampatnam), both in the Golconda kingdom on the north Coromandel Coast, also called the Orissa Coast or the Gingelly Coast. Then they sailed south to Tierpopelier (Cuddalore) on the southern Coromandel to set up a third trading post. In 1606, they first visited Pulicat, but could not strike an agreement for trade with the nayak, due to Portuguese interference. In 1610, the Dutch visited Pulicat again and were able to convince the nayak, Venkata II, in Vellore not only to permit them to establish a trading centre in Pulicat, but also to let them build a fort. Castle Geldria was completed in Pulicat by 1613.

Fortunately for the Dutch at the time, Pulicat Lake and the mouth of the River Arni that flows through it into the sea were more than four metres deep, just opposite the town, so that Dutch ships could come right upto Fort Geldria. Pulicat the Dutch soon made their headquarters; it was more centrally located on the Coromandel Coast and it was easier to work with the Hindu nayaks than with the Golconda Nawabs. Above all, the Coromandel textiles, the chief and the most profitable items of the Dutch exports, were more easily and cheaply procurable in Pulicat than elsewhere on the Coromandel Coast.

Tapan Raychaudhuri, in his valuable but rare book, *Jan Company in Coromandel* (1962), based on the voluminous Dutch archives in the Hague, narrates the fascinating story of the Dutch in Pulicat, a forgotten contribution to Indian commerce dating to the 17th Century.

Textiles, nearly 21 varieties of them, collected from Coromandel as well as from Bengal, were the chief Dutch export to the East Indies as well as to Holland. Natural dyes like indigo (blue) from Masulipatnam and

chaya-roots (red dye) from Petapuli were in great demand in Holland. More than the plain cloth from the north, the famous check-pattern 'Pulicat Cloth', made into large handkerchiefs and lungies, were most popular all over Asia.

An unsavoury aspect of the Dutch presence on the Coromandel, however, was that children and young men, aged between 8 and 20, were captured forcibly in the thousands by middlemen in Bengal, Orissa and, during famine, from Tanjore and Negapatnam and sold in Java and Ceylon. Sometimes, over fifty per cent of them died in transit, due to starvation and epidemics.

Saltpetre (rock-salt) from Tierpopelier for making gun powder, diamonds from the

Small quantities of gold from Java and China and silver from Japan were imported to mint Dutch currency. Even cowries (shells) from Maldives were used as currency in Bengal. Copper and lacquerwork from Japan, spelter (zinc) from Malacca, lead from Holland, horses and rosewater from Persia, camphor, alum, porcelain, vermilion, quick-silver (mercury) and tortoise-shell were other items of import from the East.

As early as 1614, as a measure of prudence, Dutch soldiers were allowed to marry Indian women, but on condition the prospective brides would first accept Christianity. Married Dutch soldiers were permitted to live within Fort Geldria. The offspring of such marriages were called mestizos

• by P.J. SANJEEVA RAJ

Golconda and Gingee mines, iron nails, steel plates for Japan and Ceylon, miscellaneous items like cotton yarn, gunny-cloth, coir rope, Bengal sugar, opium, buffalo-horns, goats, spotted deer, donkeys, ray-skins from San Thome and Sadraspatnam, were all sent to the spice islands, in exchange for spices. Elephants from Ceylon, Malacca and Batavia were also sold to Bengal.

As the people on the Coromandel Coast were poor, Dutch imports were not so much for commerce with them, but for their own use.

and *castizos*. There was a church within the Fort and a Protestant clergyman used to preach every morning, in Portuguese as well as in Dutch.

The Dutch at Pulicat lived in great style, keeping 'open-houses' for all Christians in the town. One quarter of Pulicat town was taken up by Dutch-style houses, the roads between them lined with avenue trees. There was a summer pleasure-house in the midst of a garden. Their major meal was between 3 and 4 in the afternoon, after which they chewed betel leaves like Indians, and took a siesta

A holiday among the peacocks

Most of us haven't seen even one peacock dance. Can you imagine what it would be like to watch more than 100 of them spread out their colourful feathers and sway to the sound of music?

Just 25 km northwest of Tuticorin is a small village called Ottapidaram, the birthplace of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, regarded as the father of the Indian shipping industry. Today, Ottapidaram has another claim to fame: a large peacock garden that is yet to be a part of any tourist itinerary.

Welcome to Tharakan's Mayura Thottam, the garden of peacocks, where over 200 birds greet you every morning. "It is terrific to hear hundreds of peacocks scream every morning," said P.V. Joseph Tharakan, the owner of the garden. "For a layman, the sound would be unbearable. But we have got used to it, hav-

ing heard it for the last 25 years."

The peacocks have made the 55 acres of Tharakan's farm, with its guava and coconut groves, their natural habitat. They remain within the farm and feed on the fruits and vegetables grown inside.

The small stretch from National Highway 45B to Mayura Thottam is a bumpy ride. But once inside, it's an altogether different world. The birds are everywhere — on the trees, walking past you, some even dancing.

Tharakan came to Ottapidaram from Kerala 25 years ago to develop a coconut farm. Then, there were only a couple of peacocks. However, in the last two decades the bird population on the farm has grown to over 200.

The peacocks can be found here all through the year. During October and November,

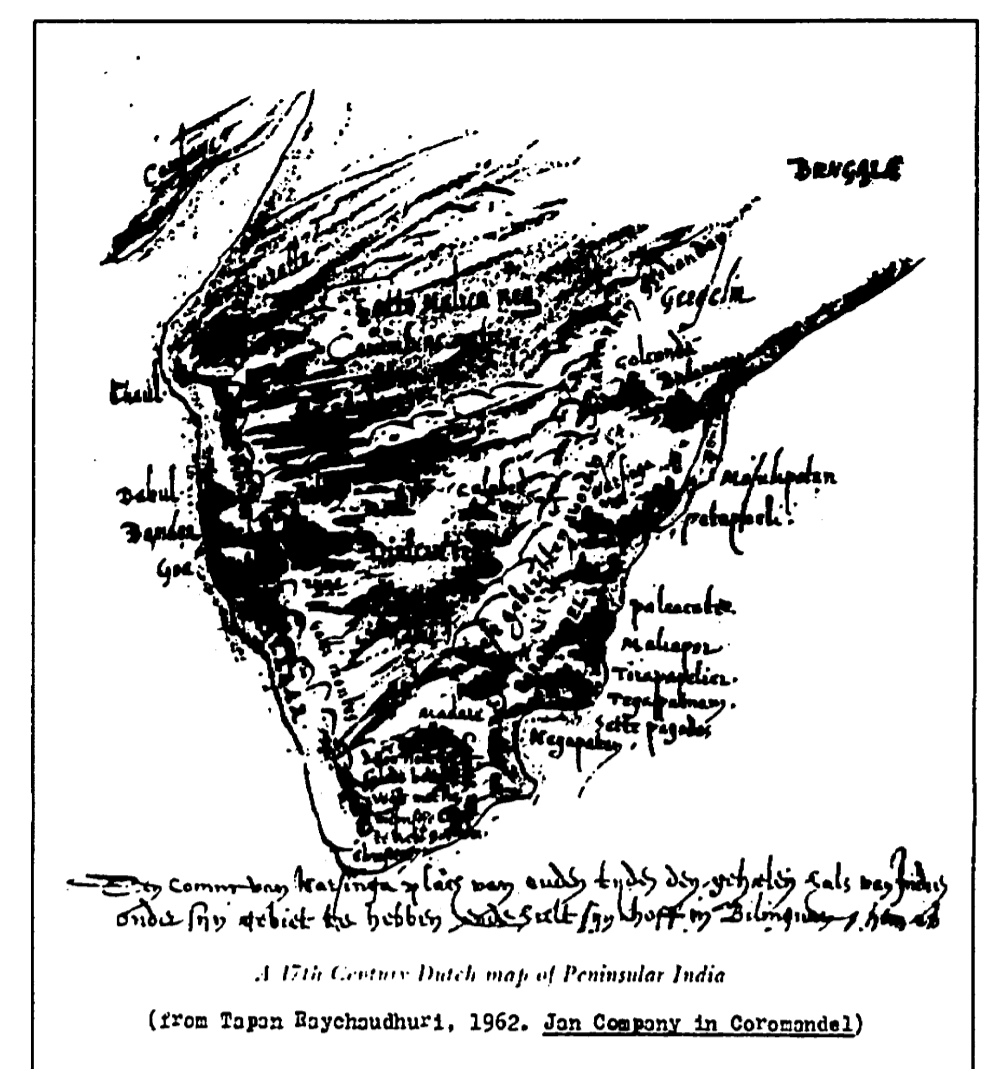
you can see them dancing everywhere.

According to Tharakan, peacocks are friendly birds. For instance, Baba (the name of one peacock) comes flying when called by any of Tharakan's family. The big bird has been in the farm for more than 20 years.

Tharakan, who is assisted on the farm by one of his sons, Rajesh, a graduate, wants to make Mayura Thottam a major tourist destination in the region. The idea is to generate continuous revenue to conserve the peacocks.

The bird population has been under threat from poaching; quite often eggs have been stolen. The solution lies in this funds are required, he said. "We have sacrificed our yield from the farm for peacocks. Now we want to protect the birds," he says.

According to Tharakan, the



too. Indian *arak* was popular with the Dutch at Pulicat. Dutch women were particularly fond of drinking Chinese tea. One Dutch governor remarked that "Pulicat was more a prey to Bacchus (god of wine) and to Venus (goddess of love and beauty) than any other place in India". Some of the Dutch chieftains moved about the town in palanquins, escorted by standard bearers and trumpeters. To entertain Indian rulers visiting Pulicat, the Dutch organised pleasure-trips in their ships, taking them out to sea and entertaining them with music and songs. They even staged mock sea-battles.

At no time in the history of Coromandel commerce was textile production and export at such a high peak as during the Dutch days. They were shrewd international traders, who saw an opportunity in cotton textiles when what they really had

come for was spices. Their skills in business management, which helped them establish good relations with the grassroots level weavers, dyers and painters, their innovatively constituted 'companies' of Indian middlemen, their introduction of a barter-trade in textiles for spices, gold and silver, were models. Experts from Holland trained not only Coromandel farmers in growing better indigo but also blacksmiths in manufacturing better iron nails.

However, the intense rivalry with the Portuguese during the early Dutch days and with the English during their later days, their own unwise decision to shift their headquarters to Negapatnam from Pulicat in 1690 and, above all, the declining navigability of the Pulicat Lake, due to excessive siltation, all resulted in the premature termination of the short but glorious Dutch era in Pulicat.

farm is now registered with the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation under the Bed-and-Breakfast scheme.

For bird-watchers, Mayura Thottam is an ideal place. Boarding and lodging can be provided for about 50 people. There are also many places of tourist interest in the region; one such place of historical interest is Panchalankurichi, with the small fort of Kattabomman, who defied the British rulers.

Other tourist attractions in the region include Tiruchen-dur, famous for its seashore temple of Lord Muruga; Ettayapuram, the birthplace of Tamil poet Subramaniya Bharath and Carnatic music legend Muthuswamy Dikshitar; Krishnapuram, which boasts of a temple with exquisite sculptures; and Kalugumalai with its rock-cut temple and rock-face carvings. (Courtesy: *Business-Line*)

Raja Simhan, T.E.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

1. The 20th anniversary of the world's worst industrial disaster, which took place in India, was observed on December 2-3. What was the tragedy?
2. Which country's beauty is the new Miss World?
3. Which European country recently regained the Davis Cup?
4. Name the Dempo star who collapsed and died on the field after netting two goals for his team in the Federation Cup football tournament.
5. Which Indian cyber-giant has won a three-year contract from Formula One team, Scuderia Ferrari?
6. Name the Chinese computer maker who has bought over IBM's PC business, in a deal worth \$ 1.75 billion, to become the world's third largest PC maker.
7. Name the Bill passed to replace POT.
8. Which film won the coveted 'Golden Peacock' at the 35th International Film Festival of India in Panaji recently?
9. How did Bangladesh's Mohd. Rafique become part of Indian cricket history on December 10th?
10. Who was the 'legend in her lifetime' who passed into history on December 11th in Chennai.

11. If it's TTK Road for Moubay's Road, what is it for Wall Tax Road?
12. Where, about 56 km north of Chennai, did the Dutch build a fort in the 17th Century after their arrival in 1609?
13. Which metro is connected to Chennai by NH5?
14. Which Chennai sporting legend's obituary in *Wisden* reads 'presumed dead' after he disappeared from his Adyar home in 1985?
15. The legend also represented India in an Olympic sport. Which sport?
16. Where is the Indian railway planning to set up its first budget hotel in the State, the third one in the country?
17. Name the daily edited by Subramania Bharati, 20 complete issues of which were recently discovered in the National Library, Paris.
18. Name the popular *sabha*, started by cine artiste and musician, Chittoor V. Nagiah in T. Nagar, that is celebrating its diamond jubilee this year.
19. Name the Chennai-based wildlife film-maker who has won the prestigious 'Rolex Award for Enterprise' for 2004.
20. Name the Chennai players who won both the men's and women's crowns at the national squash championship in Chennai recently.

(Answers on page 8)

Carnatic Summer in Winter

The audience in the Connamara's Binny Hall stood for a minute in heartfelt silence as the strains of *Maihrim Jajajtha* filled the room, to honour M.S. Subbulakshmi. She was one of the personalities written about by Sriram V. in his biography of a select group of great Carnatic music artistes, *Carnatic Summer*, that was to be released that morning. It was but befitting that the day of MS's death was spent reminiscing about her seniors and peers in the world of classical music.

Justice Prabha Sridevan, who launched the book, stated, "The style of the book is as if Sriram is talking to a live audience". Sanjay Subrahmanyam, the Carnatic music star vocalist, receiving the first copy, added, "Sriram is a great storyteller and has the ability to dig out stories with a great deal of research and tell them well."

Sriram himself, talking about the book, said, "If at all Carnatic music has continued to survive, it has been due to the charisma and the crowd-pulling capability of its top ranking performers who held sway during this period, 1920-1960. Much has been written about their art and the way they presented it. But very little has been written about their lives and lifestyles which must have had a significant bearing on their art". And that is what he does in the book.

Sriram quickly sketches in the background of the times, then tells his readers that it was Ariyakkudi who, having studied the concert pattern which

was based on 'heavy technicality', initiated the concert plan that has become a standard today.

About Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Sriram says, "He is today remembered more for his sense of humour than his music." On the other hand, Musiri's enduring legacy is his music. "A recording of his can still move audiences to tears."

Semmangudi R. Srinivasa Iyer who, in 2002, when the

● by PADMINI NATARAJAN

Music Academy celebrated its Platinum Jubilee, "was the sole survivor from the list of those who sang for its inauguration", was the first to be appointed the Chief Producer for Carnatic Music in All India Radio. At the end of the tenure, his arch rival GNB succeeded him only to have the position downgraded to that of Producer. Sriram describes the rivalry between the two great singers. By a strange coincidence, it was again GNB who succeeded Semmangudi as the Principal of the Music College in Trivandrum.

GNB, a star in two worlds, celluloid and the music stage, at a very young age "developed the uncanny habit of listening to any snatch of music and effortlessly visualising the notes on which it was based. Most of his knowledge was acquired by listening assiduously to what was sung by the great musicians during their concerts and later

internalising all that he had heard." He was perhaps the first to demand fees in four figures. "This was unprecedented for even the top ranker of that period, Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar, who was then singing for Rs. 300 per performance!"

The honesty of Madurai Mani Iyer is beautifully brought out by Sriram who says that he "never sang songs whose content he did not agree with, like Tyagaraja's *Nidhi Chala Suka-*

hama that questions the virtues of wealth. Mani Iyer felt that a musician singing for a fee was not qualified to sing on such noble virtues and, therefore, never sang the song. A strong believer in the influence of planets, he similarly never sang *Grahabalameni* which questioned the powers of the planet in controlling the human life."

The Alathur Brothers were in reality not brothers. One came from the Telugu-speaking Mulakanadu community, while the other was a Tamil Brahmin. The two were very close to each other and the early death of Subbiar the younger was a terrible blow to Srinivasa Iyer.

The book was written when M.S. Subbulakshmi was alive. Sriram says, "She was - and continues to be - the only superstar of Carnatic music." "Never was there a greater star and never a greater star manager who planned and charted her entire orbit," he says about her husband Sadasivam. He goes on to add, "Getting her to perform at weddings was a direct indication of the status of the bride's family. She moved not only in the highest social and political circles but also in religious ones. The pontiff of the Kancheepuram Math Chandrasekharendra Saraswati had initially not agreed to meet her as he considered her marriage to Sadasivam to be one that broke caste barriers". That restriction too was removed because of the incredible quality of her music, generosity and faith. Sriram concludes, "All this attracted some negative comment and Sadasivam was generally seen as the opposite to M.S.'s beauty, though it was accepted that without him she would have never achieved the kind of greatness she did". Incidentally, MS was the first woman to receive the Madras Music

Academy's prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi award.

Sriram describes the domination of Brinda, who got all the awards, and the meek Muktha, who was "belatedly recognised" by the Music Academy awarding her the Sangita Kala Acharya title. "Muktha, the gentle one - instead of resenting the earlier circumstances - even today cherishes the fact that Naina Pillai taught her a line of a song on Vijaya Dasami day one year and blessed her." She is the sole survivor of all the personalities in Sriram's book.

Writing about the women artistes, Sriram comments, "Ragam *tanam pallavis, kalpana svaras* and vocal rendition of *tanam* were considered beyond the reach (of them)." Then he adds, "It was left to D.K. Pattammal to change all that. She sang the most sprightly *tanams* and complicated *pallavis* with panache." In this she followed the tradition set by pioneering women such as Veena Dhanammal.

Of MLV, Sriram writes, "Hers was a life that saw several ups and downs on the personal side, but professionally she was never dislodged from the top slot till her death... Vasanthakumari loved life to the full. She had many friends and was a great conversationalist, a good cook and a talented piano artiste as well. Fluent in English, she loved travelling and, despite her huge physical form, covered large distances giving concerts all over the world. Cricket too was a passion."

Others featured in the book are the violinists - Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, Chowdiah or 'Soundiah', Kumbakonam Rajamanikkam Pillai and Papa K.S. Venkatramiah; the jambavans of percussion - Palghat Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai - and the two mavericks, Flute Mali and T.N. Rajarathinam.

The lives of the 22 stars of the book are not presented through rosy glasses, yet the dignity and honour of their lives and profession are maintained throughout by Sriram. Many others are part of the background of the book, who feature in little snippets. They include Kalki Krishnamurthy, Subbudu, Veena Dhanammal, the rajahs who were patrons, the Mutt leaders, the Tamizh aficionados and the orthodox social dignitaries.

In bringing to life these wonderful musicians, Sriram has fleshed out the personalities of those who have been mere names and voices or sounds to the music lover. The light brush strokes of the development of their character and musical skills, preferences, idiosyncrasies and achievements, together with their foibles and genius, make very good winter reading.

The Mylapore Festival

January 6-9: The Sundaram Finance Mylapore Festival to celebrate heritage and tradition, art and culture, features several events.

January 6:
6.30 a.m.: A flute duet by young artistes in the Nageswara Rao Park.

6.00 p.m.: Vintage Tamil movie, AVM's *Anda Naal*, at P.S. Hr. Sec. School (R.K. Mutt Road).

6.30 p.m.: Bharata Natyam-Kuchipudi programme by young dancers, inside the Kapali Temple.

7.30 p.m.: A concert of vintage film music by 'Comaganin Ragapriya' - An orchestra of the visually challenged. The show,

dedicated to the songs of well-known music director, M. S. Viswanathan, will be outside the temple.

January 7:
6.30 a.m.: A *kutcheri* by three young violinists in the Nageswara Rao Park.

6.00 p.m.: AVM's classic *Harischandra* at P.S. Hr. Sec. School (R.K. Mutt Road).

6.30 p.m.: A group of young Bharata Natyam dancers will perform inside the Kapali temple.

7.30 p.m.: A Tamil comedy play by Bombay Cnanam's Mahalakshmi Ladies' Drama Group, outside the temple.

January 8:
6.30 a.m.: Carnatic vocal *kutcheri* by a children's group at Nageswara Rao Park.
3.30 p.m.: Grand Kolam contest on North Mada Street.

(To register for kolam contests, etc. call 5207 6921. For details contact 2498 2244 or log on to www.mylaporefestival.com)

5.30 p.m.: The Kokkalikkattai dance troupe will perform outside the school.

6.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.: Two magic shows by L. Baba Prasad at the R.K. Swamy Hall (Sivaswamy Kalayala campus).

6.00 p.m.: AVM's *En Manaiivi* will be screened at P.S. Hr. Sec. School Assembly Hall.

7.30 p.m.: *Ayigiri Nandini*, a classical dance drama by Gayathri Balagurunathan and group, outside the temple.

January 9:
6.30 a.m.: Vocal concert by a group of young artistes at the Nageswara Rao Park.

From 7.00 a.m.: Heritage walk through Mylapore and San Thome, starting from Luz Church (Regn. fee: Rs. 175/-).

From 7.00 a.m.: Carnatic Music Heritage Walk thro' Mylapore Musiri Subramaniam Road, Alwarpet (Regn. fee: Rs. 150/-).

11.30 a.m.: Lecture by D. Krishnan on 'Old and New Madras through the Eyes of a Photographer', at R.K. Swamy Hall.

From 2.30 p.m.: Madras Quiz for school students.

3.30 p.m.: Kolam contest on North Mada Street. 200 participants expected.

5.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m.: Two magic shows by L. Baba Prasad at the R.K. Swamy Hall.

5.00 p.m.: Kokkalikkattai dance troupe on North Mada Street, outside Kapali temple.

5.45 p.m.: Kallattam, a folk performance by a troupe from Pondicherry, outside Kapali temple.

6.00 p.m.: Vintage Tamil movie, AVM's *Annai*, at P.S. Hr. Sec. School.

6.45 p.m.: Folk theatre show by Mylapore schoolchildren trained by Dr. Velu Saravanan of Pondicherry, outside Kapali temple.

8.00 p.m.: Street theatre by Chennai Kalai Kuzhu outside Kapali temple.

9.00 p.m.: A colourful sparklers show to light up the skies near Chittrakulam.

Daily Events: (from 6 pm to 10 pm every day)

- Two groups of Mylapore school-children will perform folk dances (Karagattam, Kolattam, Devarattam and Tappattam) on the main stage outside Sri Kapali temple. (6.00 p.m.)

- Handicrafts Bazaar in 12 shops on Sundareswar Street.

- A food festival on Sundareswarar Street.

- Pitchupillai Street (near Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) will become an artists' studio - painting, jewellery, block printing, crafts making and more will be going on here. Contests for children will also be held every evening.

Subscriptions and contributions

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

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

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

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

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

- The Editor

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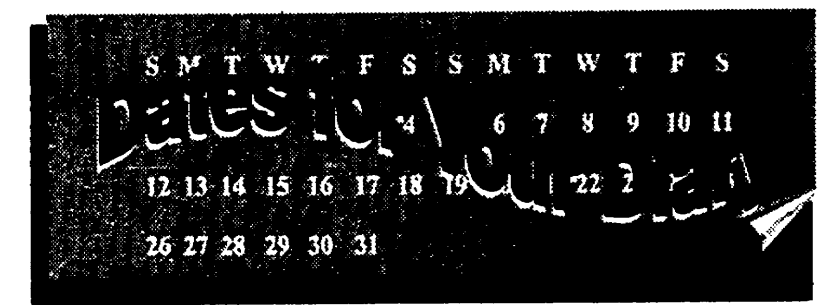
● As token of my support for the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that *Madras Musings* espouses, I send Chennai Heritage an additional Rs. (Rupees

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- Tamil Books Exhibition and Sale by leading publishers at Kapali East Tank Street.
- Vintage coins exhibition organised by the Madras Coins Society (Daily from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Lady Sivaswamy Girls' School, near R.R. Sabha).

Other dates

From January 6: Exhibition of pottery from Potter's Shed, Kodaikanal. (At Forum Art Gallery).

From January 7: A comprehensive fair on ayurveda, yoga and homeopathy. (At Chennai Trade Centre.)

Till January 9: *Margazhi Magic* at DakshinaChitra. To complement the dancers, a special array of master craftsmen with their intricate and colourful wares will be demonstrating and selling their wares at the Crafts Bazaar.

From January 11: The work of Eknath Giram from Mumbai. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery).

Till January 10: *The Village Festival* featuring different folk dances of South India. Dance groups from the four Southern States will perform throughout the day (at DakshinaChitra).

January 7 and 8: A workshop for teachers targeting secondary level Tamil teachers and focusing on improving proficiency in teaching Tamil. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

January 7: A romantic comedy by Boardwalkers. (At 7.30 a.m. at

Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium).

January 9: A vintage car rally. About 30 vintage cars will be on display at DakshinaChitra from 11 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

From January 14: Solo show by Farhan Mujib (at Apparao Gallery).

January 12-16: Pongal celebrations at DakshinaChitra. At 10.30 a.m. on January 14th, Pongal rice will be made with all the "Pongolo" fanfare. *Maatu Pongal* and *Kaanun Pongal* will also be celebrated ritualistically on January 15th and 16th.

January 16: Workshop on Gujarati *toranams*. Learn the art of creating vibrant Gujarati wall-hangings (at Dakshina-Chitra).

January 20-24: Workshop for illustrators conducted by Christian Cailleaux, a French illustrator. He has conducted workshops on illustration at the Alliance Francaise in about 15 countries in Africa (at Alliance Francaise).

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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:

T.N. basketball beginnings

Basketball in the then Madras State was introduced in the YMCA through the pioneering efforts of Harry Buck. The Physical Education teachers who passed out of the YMCA spread the game in the schools. At the national level, the game was introduced during the Indian Olympic games held in New Delhi in 1934.

The formation of the Basketball Federation of India in Bombay at the conclusion of the National Games in Bombay in 1950 gave a fillip to the game. The honour of being the first President of the Basketball Federation of India went to C.C. Abraham, then the Principal of the YMCA College of Physical Education, Madras. The founder-Secretary, Mehar Singh, also happened to be an alumnus of the YMCA College.

While the game in the city was gaining in popularity thanks to the YMCA College and the Bertram Tournaments conducted by Loyola College, there were three private clubs which drew their players from among those employed. The Panagal Club was later re-named into Thyagaraya Club, the Cross Wings and the Egmore Friends Union. The Panagal Club players were later enrolled as part-time students of the Polytechnic in Broadway. The appearance of the Polytechnic team in the basketball scene brought about a revolutionary change in basketball circles in Madras in the 1940s. The Polytechnic quintet, Madaswamy, Edwin,

Subramani, Alex and Narayanaswamy, dominated the scene in Madras.

The arrival of Ted Arnold at the YMCA College in 1951 changed the entire complexion of the game. He moulded the Polytechnic team into a winning combination and Madras won the national championships held during the National Games in 1952 in Madras. Ted felt the future of the game belonged to the young and even in the State team he had three

● by
M.S. VENKATARAMAN

collegians, Bhiman, Rangan and Guruswamy, in addition to the players from the Polytechnic. By 1954, Madras was fielding a team only of collegians and the veterans from the Polytechnic had faded from the scene.

The State has always been fortunate in having the services of foreign coaches who came here on short assignments. Besides Ted Arnold, Frank Kaufmann, an All-Star player from Notre Dame University, USA, conducted a three-week camp in 1957. His visit was followed by that of Sam Fox, a noted coach and referee, in 1959. The visit of Dr. Edward Steitz, an authority in basketball in the US and later President of the United States Bas-

ketball Association (1964 and 1971), gave an impetus to the game. In 1978, Omolov, another leading coach from the US, visited Tamil Nadu. The presence of these foreign coaches, even though for short spells, has made an impact on the players, coaches and officials in the State.

While Tamil Nadu has been fortunate enough to get the benefit of coaching from foreign experts, it has not been able to sponsor many visits of foreign teams to the State. The Springfield College squad, under the leadership of Dr. Steitz, visited Madras in 1965 and made an indelible impression on the minds of players and spectators alike. The Sports Ambassadors team, which visited Madras and a few other centres in 1978 and 1979, showed the vast superiority of the foreign teams.

Individual performances by Tamil Nadu players have always been noteworthy at the national level. When India sent a basketball team to the Olympics for the first time, Amarnath from Tamil Nadu was in it. Tamil Nadu won its first-ever National title in the men's section in 1952. For years it did not repeat the feat, but during the last few years it has been ensuring the title regularly. The game has certainly caught on, with teams like the Indian Overseas Bank, Indian Bank and other institution teams offering good employment opportunities or contracts for talented players.

Sacred groves...

(Continued from Page 4)

festivals, animals like goat, sheep and fowl are sacrificed for Adaikalamkathar and Pidari. The slaughtering of these is performed some distance from the deity. Pongal and rice flour mixed with jaggery are offered to the main deity Aiyandar. The festival is held in the months of Chithirai (March-April) and/or Adi (June-July).

The annual festival at Sittannavasal is the festival of the Ambalakarar of the district. It is also open to the public. Devotees from neighbouring villages and even from other districts attend it in large numbers. The local people perform the puja once a year near the temple.

Worship of these deities during the annual festival is accompanied by song, dance and drama. In Sittannavasal, during the festival, *therukoothus*, namely *Kuravanji*, *Valli Tirumanam*, *Harishchandra*, *Ponnar Sankar* and *Pasupavam*, are performed.

Another ceremony is *kudirai eduthal* (installation of sacred terracotta horse as an offering to the Aiyandar), popular in almost all the villages of Pudukkottai district. During summer, the villagers perform a function for *kudirai eduthal*. All the villagers donate money and rice. On an auspicious day (Wednesday), the village potter begins the process of making the horse, starting with some clay for the precious figure. The different parts of the horse, like the head, legs, and the body, are made separately and put together to form a whole. The facial features and decorations are added last. The day the eyes are 'opened' is a festive day for the village, celebrated with offerings of *pongol*. Once the statue is ready, the villagers take the horse in a procession to the Aiyandar temple and the installation is performed by the local pujari, who is also the potter. In many villages of this district, this festival is performed in order to get the blessings of the deity for a good harvest and prosperity.

There are over 35 plant species found in the grove and over a dozen fauna. A few tourists come here. Those who visit the site should be made aware of the importance of the site by proper signage. But those who come here scribble and deface the beautiful old paintings. Biotechnological investigation of the plants available at the site is essential to understand the knowledge of our forefathers. — (Courtesy: CPRCEE Journal)

M. Amirthalingam

Answers to Quiz

1. The Bhopal gas tragedy; 2. Miss Peru, Maria Julia Mantilla Garcia; 3. Spain; 4. Cristiano Junior; 5. TCS; 6. Lenovo; 7. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill; 8. Iran's 'Beautiful City'; 9. He became Anil Kumble's record-breaking 435th Test victim; 10. M.S. Subbulakshmi.

* * *

11. V.O. Chidambaranar Salai; 12. Pulicat; 13. Kolkata; 14. C. Ramaswami; 15. Tennis; 16. Madurai; 17. Vijaya; 18. Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha; 19. Shekar Dattatri; 20. Saurav Ghoshal (men) and Joshna Chinnappa (women).

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