

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

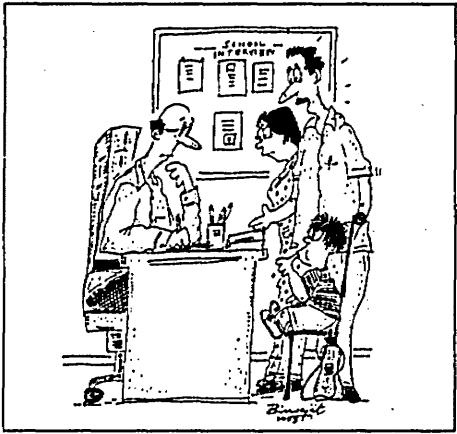
MUSINGS

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You want him to just recite a nursery rhyme of his choice? That's all! But, sir, he is prepared to answer any question in Calculus, Mongolian History, Molecular Science...!!

'A' for Abysmal; 'B' for Bizarre

Their faces sport an unique expression, a blend of "The-curse-has-come-upon-me" and "Did-he-who-make-the-lamb-make-thee?" with just a touch of "What-were-we-thinking?"

They are the parents of toddlers. Given that this particular variety of little people tends to make its presence felt, their parents' sense of sinking slowly but surely into the warm and nutritious is understandable.

For a while now, these faces are becoming additionally haggard during certain times of the year – when school admissions begin. Apparently, this process involves stringent tests, interviews, assessment panels, accompanied by headache, heartache and fear of rejection. (I don't think the generations that went before spent this much thought on their children's entire lives!)

What is this trend of holding 'interviews' for folks who've only recently figured out their own names; for small creatures who've just realised that you cannot catch sunlight with little dimpled paws; and whose lower lips tremble if they lose sight of a parent for a second? What levels of knowledge is a wide-eyed little being who has barely begun to live expected to possess?

Newspapers report 'trauma' over admissions, while parents are apparently 'counselled' to prevent them from transferring their worries to their kids.

You know what we're doing? We are teaching children, even 2½ to three-year-olds, all about 'succeeding' and 'losing' and the circumstances sometimes force even parental love to become conditional.

Wake up, people.

Ranjitha Ashok

'Silicon Chennai' in the making

(by Shobha Menon)

Chennai, according to Gartner, the world renowned IT consultancy company, is predicted to be a top IT destination by 2010! And IT companies whose operations are located in Chennai will benefit from an overall cost saving of 30% - 40% vis-a-vis other international cities, confirms a recent study by the National Association of Software Systems Companies (NASSCOM).

With software firms in Tamil Nadu growing in number from 34 to over 1000 during the last five years, the software sector in Tamil Nadu has recorded a phenomenal growth over the last decade. Exports have grown from Rs. 2 crore in 1993-94 to over Rs. 8,000 crore in 2003-04. The reasons? The cost of power per unit of work done is about 30-40% cheaper than other major States in India, the State generates the largest pool of India's highly talented IT/technical workforce, business-friendly government policies and socio-cultural environment.

Says Vivek Harinarain, Secretary, IT, Government of Tamil Nadu, "The highest growth rate of expansion by Indian MNCs has been in Chennai. We're actually looking at two kinds of investors here – the new ones, and the existing expansions. New investments will be influenced by those existing already and going in for expansion. What a foreign investor looks at is connectivity – physical and virtual, availability of power, human resources, and availability of built up space, law and order, road connectivity, water, etc. within the city. Chennai is among the best in the country for all these. Also available is world class, A-grade space upwards of 8-10 million sq. ft."

Over 35,000 new IT and IT-related jobs are expected to be

created in Chennai over the next year or so, not including the potential employment generation from mega investment plans announced by IT majors like TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and multinational firms like Accenture. Chennai is likely to become the second largest job creator in the IT field, along with Mumbai this year, a survey by *The Times of India* suggests.

(Continued on Page 2)

Why Chennai has emerged the preferred IT location

NASSCOM'S study of various cities in India reveals the following weightage of several factors considered while locating IT companies in Chennai.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Availability of software manpower | 3.50 |
| Data communication availability | 3.00 |
| Education facilities | 3.20 |
| International and Domestic Airport | 3.40 |
| Transportation within the city | 3.20 |
| Cost of living | 2.80 |
| Cost of setting up a software unit | 2.95 |
| Quality of life | 3.00 |
| Climate | 2.50 |
| Market proximity | 3.30 |
| Overall | 3.20 |

Chennai scores the highest, with its 3.20 on a 0-4 scale.



An artist's concept of the IT corridor in Chennai.

Work to start soon on landmark IT corridor

(by Shobha Menon)

The Old Mahabalipuram Road, starting from the 1-million sq.ft. Tidel Park and going up to Siruseri initially and later to Kelambakam, is currently a dusty paved road lined by small businesses, eateries and a few old cinema houses, interspersed along the way with the huge glass and concrete structures of TCS, Infosys, Satyam and Cognizant Technologies. There will be many more such structures soon, all lining Chennai's proposed 'IT Corridor', a road that is expected to "singlehandedly alter the fulcrum of development within Chennai city, and within Tamil Nadu. Possibly even the whole of South India!" according to Rohit Modi, CEO, Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation (TNRDC) that has been

entrusted with the first phase of the Rs. 100 crore project.

Vivek Harinarain, Secretary, IT, Government of Tamil Nadu, describing the genesis of the IT Corridor, says, "The idea essentially arose out of two factors – transportation, which is a major factor for IT-enabled services (essentially a 24 x 7 industry), and the fact that the provision of roads is essentially a government responsibility (even though the contract might be given to a private body). The current IT capital, Bangalore, is faced with a crumbling transport infrastructure, mainly because all the IT firms came up near residential areas. In Chennai we took a conscious decision to have arterially directed growth along a road from TIDEL Park to Siruseri."

A 1,000-acre industrial park is being set up by the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) along the IT Corridor. Wipro was allotted an additional 85 acres to expand its 15-acre campus in Sholinganallur. TCS has already taken up 70 acres in Siruseri, with others such as Polaris, Patni Computer Systems and Cognizant Technology Solutions laying foundations for huge campuses.

"Earlier, roads have been looked at as only engineering solutions. But here, it is conceptualised differently. If you want to attract investors in an intangible field like IT, you have to focus on providing the

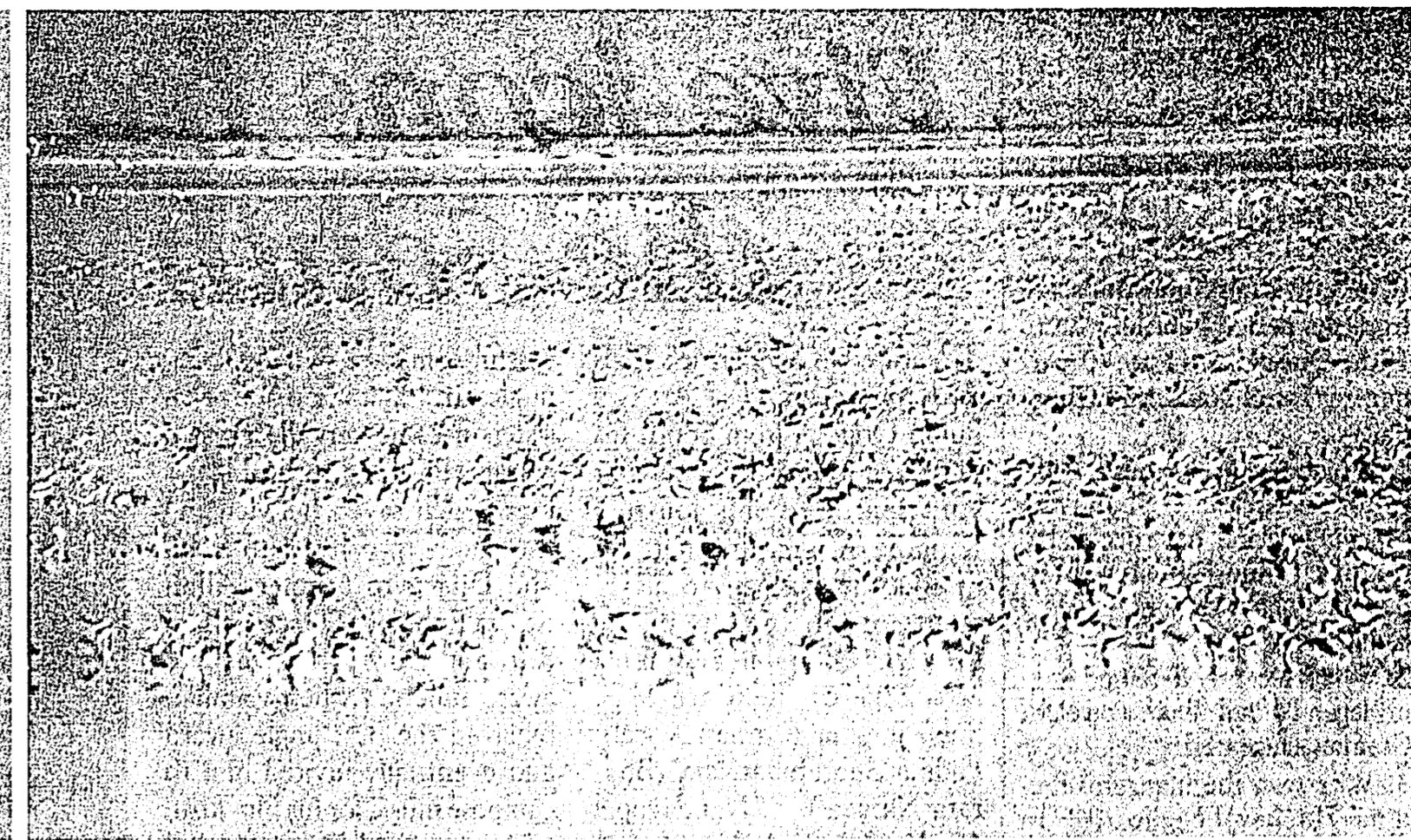
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Feeding Painted Stork



Flamingos



Wetland Birds

Pulicat Lake – a precarious paradise

One in every 15 square kilometres of the earth's surface is covered by wetland. Freshwater wetlands are home to more than 40% of the world's known species (including 12% of all animals), and economists estimate that wetlands account for nearly five trillion dollars worth of services each year. As they also fulfil functions such as water storage, storm flood protection, erosion control, recharging underground water supplies, water purification and local climate control, they are of vital social, economic and agricultural importance. However, wetlands are one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, largely due to human activities such as drainage, pollution and over-exploitation of their resources, and the introduction of invasive species. There are no exact figures, but the best estimates suggest that nearly 50% of the world's wetlands have been lost or degraded since the start of the industrial revolution, and if population growth and industrialisation continue, wetlands will be put under even more pressure.

Pulicat Lake is India's second largest coastal lagoon, having a total area of 461 sq. km. It is generally a shallow lake with an average depth of only one metre. The lake opens into the adjacent Bay of Bengal through a narrow mouth located in the southern part. The northern parts of Pulicat Lake are known to be the chief nurseries of fish, prawns and crabs in the area, and local people have for centuries utilised the resources here in a sustainable way.

The high production of organic matter results in one of the most spectacular concentrations

of wetland birds on the Indian subcontinent. During the monsoon period, from September to November, the lake is filled with nutritious water, containing huge quantities of phytoplankton and zooplankton. These microscopic organisms constitute essential nutritious food for invertebrates and fish. Consequently, tens of thousands of wetland birds are attracted to the lake to feed and to seek shelter.

The start of the monsoon occurs at the time when nearly 300 different species of migratory

birds undertake their long journeys from Central Asia and Eastern Europe to India and nearby countries. In the subcontinent, the birds may rest at selected places such as swamps, woodlands and cultivated areas before pressing on to the final destinations, such as Pulicat Lake.

During the winter months, about 60 species of waterfowl can be found in the lake where they congregate in dense numbers. Ducks and geese, storks and ibises, pelicans and cormorants, herons and egrets, gallinules and wading birds, including many migrants from Europe, are seen. Some of the commonest species include Gadwall, Shoveler, Garganey, Grey Pelican, Marsh Sandpiper and Black-tailed Godwit. The huge Painted Stork is one of the more striking inhabitants of the lakeshore with its bare pale red face and its long, yellow curved beak. The plumage is black and white, with a few pink feathers on its sides and on

the tail. It is not particularly shy and can easily be approached while it walks in shallow water searching for prey with parts of its beak submerged half-open. The most beautiful sight in Pulicat Lake is the huge numbers of flamingos, one of the most bizarre and spectacular birds to inhabit the earth. Coming in various shades of pink with apparently disproportionately long legs and neck, and a downwardly curved, beak more similar to the mouth of the Baleen whale, a person could be forgiven for believing that flamingos belong to the world of ancient fairy tales rather than being a product of natural selection. Two species of flamingos inhabit Pulicat Lake during the winter season, the Greater Flamingo and the Lesser Flamingo. The Greater Flamingo is salmon pink with black primary feathers and crimson coverts, whereas the Lesser Flamingo is somewhat smaller and more reddish on its sides. The various bright shades of pink, red and crimson in flamingo plumage are due to the high levels of the pigment canthaxanthin in the feathers. Flamingos are dependent on shallow lakes for feed, and it is amazing to see them moving slowly in large flocks with the head and neck downward and the beak held upside down in order to trap fine food particles such as algae, diatoms and invertebrates.

Pulicat Lake is undoubtedly the most important wintering site for flamingos in Asia, and



Above: Painted Stork. Below: Grey Pelicans. (All pictures are from Pulicat and are by the author.)



they are heavily dependent on the high numbers of different prey items in the lake. They frequently move from site to site in large numbers, and you can hear their noisy and characteristic gooselike gabbling. Throughout the world, there is a growing interest in the conservation of flamingos, giving rise to studies of their distribution, migration and population levels, of which little is still known.

A visit to Pulicat Lake is unforgettable. It all sounds like a paradise, but predictably Pulicat Lake is not without its problems. The major problems are the over-harvesting of fish and prawns in the adjacent Bay of Bengal and the massive and the extensive siltation of the lake where the majority of birds sojourn. Furthermore, the road-

bridge from Sullurpet town to Sriharikota crossing Pulicat Lake has narrow conduits that may reduce the amount of tidal water reaching north of the bridge where most of the birds feed. Other potential problems are associated with the fertilisers, pesticides and fungicides that are used on the surrounding agricultural land.

The questions remain how we can maintain a healthy lake in the future where we can still experience the unbelievable bird-life existing in harmony with nature and people. Of course, basic research on the ecosystem and its biodiversity is necessary. Furthermore, ecotourism should be developed in order to bring income to the local community and to inform people about the

(Continued on Page 8)

Honouring Indian dog breeds

The four-stamp series seen below, featuring Indian breeds of dogs, was recently released at the Kennel Club of India national championships held in Chennai.

All the four stamps are based on photographs taken by Theodore Baskaran, who has been photographing Indian breeds for the past 15 years both in dog shows and *in situ*.

"Traditionally, we look upon buildings, performing arts and literature as our heritage. I believe these breeds of dogs are also part of our precious heritage," Baskaran reminds us. Then adds, "Most Indian breeds have been evolved independently over thousands of years; it is a pool of unmanipulated genes. We have to celebrate this heritage."

The four dogs featured in the stamps are: 1. Himalayan Sheepdog, 2. Rampur Hound, 3. Mudhol Hound and 4. Rajapalayam.

The Himalayan Sheepdog lives in the higher reaches of the Western Himalaya and is used for herding sheep by graziers such as the Gujjars. It has a thick coat and a bushy tail.

The Rampur Hound is from Rohilkand in Uttar Pradesh and is a hunting hound. This dog is occasionally featured in Mughal miniature paintings.

The Mudhol Hound is from Karnataka. It is also a hunting hound.

The Rajapalayam Hound of Tamil Nadu was used for boar hunting and even for military operations. During the poligar wars, it was used against the cavalry of the East India Company.

The Kennel Club of India has launched a project to revive the Rajapalayam breed. It plans to breed this dog, on scientific lines, and sell the pups. The kennel will be in a farm on the Mamallapuram road.

The other well-known breed from South India is the Kombai which, according to Nelson in the *Madura Manual*, "was often exchanged for a horse". It is a tough dog and it is rare to see it now. It may well be gone for ever. Chippiparai is another Tamil Nadu breed, also a hound, found near Tirumelveli.

The passing of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 marked

the decline of interest in these dogs, as hunting (with dogs) was banned, points out Baskaran.

LYNETTE and PETER WATSON, both on the international judging panel for the show, writing about Indian breeds in the *Global Adjustments Journal*, *At a Glance*, said:

"Apart from the Rajapalayam, the Rampur Hound, the Mudhol Hound and the Himalayan Sheepdog, also sometimes referred to as the Bhuran, there were also a number of other very fine Indian breeds that arrested our notice, such as the Chippiparai, the Caravan Hound, the Kombai and the Kanni. The Kennel Club of India is extremely focussed on the promotion of the national breeds and also on their preservation."

The Rajapalayam is generally white with flesh coloured skin and nose, but a dark eye. He is smooth coated, soft on the head and somewhat coarser on the body and has finely textured pendant ears. One could liken him to a refined version of the Great Dane, not so tall – about 60-65 cm at the shoulder – and weighing around 25 kg. Characteristic

is his tail which tapers to a whip-like point from the first third downwards.

His primary purpose was boar and hare hunting; so, speed, strength and agility are built in, but he makes a fine guard dog and bonds well to his own family, being loyal and tractable. During the Carnatic wars these Rajapalayams were trained to create havoc in the stables of the British by hamstringing their horses.

The Mudhol Hound hails from north Karnataka and southern Maharashtra, clearly descended from the elegant ancient Arabian and Persian open range hunting dogs. He is a clear-cut aristocratic sighthound, with the characteristic long limbs, deep capacious body with arched loin, long neck and head with small fine ears, flat skull and tapering muzzle, broad muscular and flexible spine, and low set tail, all of which make for length of stride and great speed. His gait is powerful and floating.

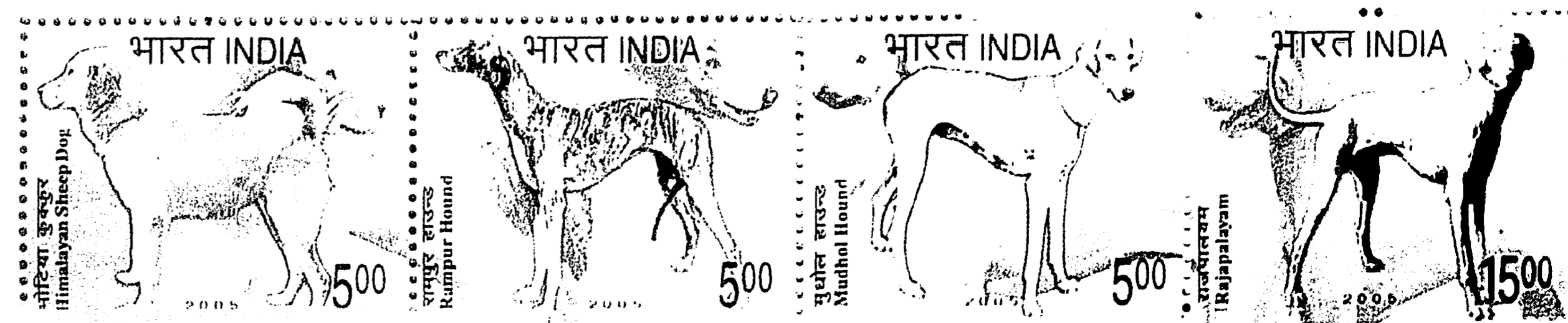
The temperament of the Mudhol is independent and aloof with strangers. He is very hardy. Also smooth coated as best suited to the climate of his origins, he comes in all colours. Males are markedly larger than females, measuring upto 70 cm at shoulder.

From Uttar Pradesh and the area around Delhi comes the Rampur Hound, a large upstanding, hardy and powerfully built hunting dog whose ancestors were used by Mughal rulers.

Clearly a representative of the classic greyhound family, he comes in the same range of colours. He is used to hunt deer and jackal and vermin and is sufficiently strong and courageous as to be able to bring down a bull. At a top weight of 30 kg and approximately 75 cm in height, this is an imposing sleek coated canine but nevertheless is easy going with both humans and other dogs. Clean of habits, he spends much time conserving energy, just lying around, but can explode into activity when required.

The regal Himalayan Sheepdog, originating where temperatures swing broadly and consequently requiring a seasonally shedding jacket, this fellow differs greatly from the other three breeds mentioned above, all hunters of the chase. He has a kindly expression, but spends most of the day sleeping, for his work is done by night as he guards the flocks.

But he makes a fine companion for his family, and will also guard them well. Strongly framed, and compactly built, yet not massive, he reaches a height at shoulder of around 60 cm, and weight ranges between 30 - 40 kg. He comes in black, besides black and tan, and has a characteristic well plumed tail, carried curled up over his back. The outer coat is hard and quite long, while the undercoat is very thick, dense and fine, shedding for summer. Dark eyed and black nosed, his ears are triangular and pendant.



Quizzin' with Ramjan

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

- Which two prestigious universities, one in the U.S. and the other in England, have decided to honour Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with honorary doctorates?
- Which recently-deceased singing legend's final album won eight Grammys recently?
- Who won the inaugural Premier Hockey League title in Hyderabad recently?
- Which World Heritage Site, set up at the instance of Lord and Lady Curzon, is celebrating its 100th birthday at present?
- Name the Pulitzer Award-winning American playwright, best known for his play *Death of a Salesman* and more famous as Marilyn Monroe's husband, who passed away recently.
- Which two West Asian nations, in conflict for some decades now, declared a ceasefire as a formal end to violence between them?
- Which famous poet's tomb was vandalised in Delhi recently, leading to the loss of 800 years of history in minutes?
- What feat of sporting endurance did Britain's Ellen McArthur achieve recently?
- What is the next James Bond movie (scheduled for release in 2006)?
- How has ICC relaxed its laws on 'chucking'?
- Which translated book in Tamil has won the coveted Sahitya Akademi's 'Translation Prize 2004'?
- What is the common Tamil name for the 'Lambton Range' between Coimbatore and Mettupalayam?
- Name the photographer who has won the renowned 'World Press Photo Award' for his picture of a woman mourning on December 28th in Cuddalore in the aftermath of the tsunami.
- Name the first Indian Bishop of the Diocese of Madras whose 100th birthday was commemorated recently.
- Simple one. Which racer from Tamil Nadu is taking part in this year's F1 season and for which team?
- How many stations are there on the Beach-Tambaram EMU rail route?
- Which Test player scored 307, the highest ever individual effort in the TNCA First Division league, in July 2003?
- Whose statue did Govindoss Chathoor Bhoojan Doss present to the city of Madras in 1914?
- The parents of cine star Vijay are themselves well known names in the Tamil film industry. Name them.
- For his role in which film did MGR get the National Best Actor award?

(Answers on page 7)

Five icons from the South

Featured in Scholastic's *Icons from the World of Art* is a Puffin Original from South India for children by a regular contributor to this journal, Ranjitha Ashok, that narrates in brief the story and achievements of ten Indians in the fields of performing and visual arts. Five of them are M.S. Subbulakshmi (Carnatic vocal), Padma Subrahmanyam (Bharata Natyam), S. Nandagopal (sculpture), L. Subramaniam (violin Carnatic and Western), and A.R. Rahman (film music direction), together with M.F. Husain (painting), Lata Mangeshkar (playback), Pandit Birju Maharaj (Kathak), Ustad Amjad Ali Khan (Hindustani music Sarod) and Ustad Zakir Hussain (tabla). They exemplify inborn talent honed to perfection through hard work in their chosen fields.

M.S. Subbulakshmi became synonymous with Carnatic music. Nandagopal has remained faithful to his style of frontal sculpture, adorning them with enamel, a craft which he was exposed to while in the College of Arts. Padma Subrahmanyam has not remained satisfied with being a Bharata Natyam performer, but is a research scholar, a choreographer, a musician and composer too, often taking charge of the music for her dance-dramas. A teacher of Bharata Natyam at the age of 14 at the dance school Nrithyodaya established by her father Subrahmanyam in 1942, even as she was learning herself, she has become an author and Indologist. She has done extensive research on the *karanas*, the basic units of dance, with random instructions from the Mahaswami of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati; he later asked her to design sculptures of the 108 *karanas* of Lord Shiva for a temple being built at Satara in Maharashtra.

Who does not know the phenomenon that A.R. Rahman has been; from what humble beginning what heights has he reached! Born Dileep to R.K. Sekhar, music director of Malayalam films, he began learning to play the piano at the age of four. At eleven he became a keyboard artiste in Ilayaraja's troupe; he played in M.S. Viswanathan's and Ramesh Naidu's orchestra, and accompanied Zakir Hussain and Kunnadudi Vaidyanathan on their foreign tours, finally winning a scholarship to Trinity College of Music, London. Eventually, he became a suc-

cessful composer of advertising jingles. In 1980, when one of his sisters became very ill, it was a Muslim Pir's prayers and blessings which saved her, leading the family to convert to Islam and Dileep to become Allah Rakha Rahman. Director Mani Ratnam spotted him at the award function when Rahman received the best jingle award and eventually invited him to compose music for his film *Roja*, which gained him several awards, including the National award. He has not looked back since and his name has become the USP for many films and theatre productions, not only in India but in the Western world too.

• by Lakshmi Venkataraman

L. Subramaniam was born into a family of musicians. Both his parents were respected musicians; his two brothers L. Vaidyanathan and L. Shankar are also well-known violinists and composers. Subramaniam proved his talent and skill even at the age of eight at a public performance in Sri Lanka where his father was employed. Academically a good student, he joined the medical course as wished by his father, Lakshminarayana. But that did not disturb his musical progress and he became an acknowledged Carnatic music violinist. On the suggestion of an American visiting professor, he went to the USA for advanced study in Western music and there he mastered its various aspects. He became known for his 'neo-fusion' music. Meeting jazz musicians through his brother Shankar, he created many albums in that genre too. He has always wanted his music to transcend boundaries and has succeeded in winning acclaim internationally as a consummate Carnatic and Western musician. The loss to the medical profession has been the gain of music.

Ranjitha Ashok has in these brief profiles also traced the historical background of each field of art, the family background of the artiste and its contribution to his or her growth, and the years in which they grew up and trained in the respective fields.

If a decision had been taken not to restrict those featured to ten, others who might have



been included could have been: Vikku Vinayakaram, known not just in the field of Carnatic music, but who has been part of quite a few international jazz groups playing the percussion instrument, *ghatam*, which is uniquely Indian and an example of the innovative mind of our ancestors, who could transform a mere clay pot into an instrument of music, and U. Srinivas, who made us wonder who would have ever thought of

playing Carnatic music on a mandolin. At a very young age, he mastered this foreign string instrument, adapting it to Carnatic music; he too is known well outside the country and has presented concerts all over the world. Both these artistes, however, get a brief mention in one of the articles.

Though the book targets the young readers, adults too will find it informative.

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I hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Signature of the Publisher)

D.B. James recalls an earlier tragedy

The day when Dhanushkodi vanished

Dhanushkodi and the surrounding places were hit by a tidal wave at the end of December 1964 when I was working as Senior Research Scholar for the Government of India at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam Camp. A similar tidal wave had hit Machilipatnam at the end of December 1864 after a violent storm. In both cases no earthquakes preceded them.

What started as squally weather on December 23, 1964 developed into a raging cyclone

the next morning. Along with rains, high gales prevailed, uprooting all the trees in our campus and blowing away the asbestos sheets of the office building and the temporary staff quarters. The roof of my room was blown off and I narrowly escaped death when one of the asbestos sheets came crashing down on a steel chair leaving a dent which is still there.

By evening, it was a nightmare. Electricity, water supply and communications to the outside world were completely

cut off. Road and rail transport came to a standstill as the seawater covered the only road connecting Ramanathapuram and Mandapam and the railway track was damaged from Mandapam to Uchippuli, a village about 10 km from Mandapam. We literally lived in isolation for three days. The condition of bachelors like me was pathetic. There were no 'hotels' near the Institute (the condition remains the same even after 40 years). The small houses which supplied food for us were all badly damaged. However,

they supplied some broken rice gruel for three days which helped us to survive.

The gale which blew with full fury from the Palk Bay side, fortunately changed direction by noon and started blowing from the Gulf of Mannar side. Since the Institute is situated on a hillock, we were all saved. However, four persons from the Institute who were not in the campus died. A watchman who was staying at the fish farm very near the Palk Bay and his grandson who took food for him in the evening were washed away. The fish farm building which was very near the water front was completely damaged when the sea ran over the building. Later, it was demolished and a new building was constructed a little away from the high tide mark. A mechanic's father and brother who were staying in a house which was inaugurated the previous day near a temporary touring talkies were also killed. A large number of deaths took place in Manakad village near the fish farm. They used to supply milk to the staff members of the Institute.

Inside the campus we were blissfully ignorant of the situation outside. We were under the impression that a severe cyclone had hit the place. Later, someone came and told us that the seawater from the Palk Bay had reached the pump house, covering a distance of nearly 1 km. The seawater covered Rameswaram Island, but the Rameswaram Temple was unaffected and many people took shelter on the high platforms of the long corridors and survived.

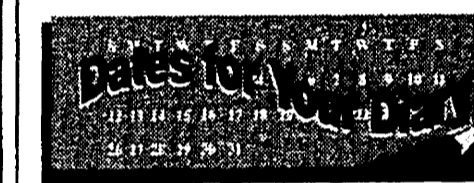
The whole of Dhanushkodi was washed away killing hundreds of people. The last train, which was waiting at the outer signal to enter the station, could

not proceed as the signal lines had been blown away. When the gale was at its height, the passengers, including a student party from North India, pulled down all the window shutters and closed the doors. The waves swamped the train and washed it away killing all its passengers. Only the engine was left on the track, partly buried in the sand.

The track itself was twisted out of shape from Thonithurai to Mandapam Camp and beyond. It looked like a hanging bridge near Mandapam where all the soil under it was washed away. Most of the steel girders of the famous Pamban Bridge were also washed away. However, except for one pillar, all the pillars withstood the wrath of waves.

We began to wade in water waist deep to search for the dead on Christmas Day! It was the third day before we could locate the bodies of the four persons associated with the Institute. Two were buried in mud and two were dangling from *Acacia* bushes.

Dr. S. Jones, the then Director of the C.M.F.R. Institute, took immediate steps to set things right. He got the campus cleared of fallen trees and got the Institute and staff quarters building quickly repaired by the CPWD. Buses began to ply gingerly on roads still under sea water. The rail service from Mandapam to Ramanathapuram was restored within one month, but trains moved cautiously. The train service restoration to Rameswaram took a little longer, since the girders had to be retrieved and replaced in the correct position and the damaged pillar reconstructed. By and large, the tragedy brought out the best in human beings.



March 1-6: *Made in Germany: Architecture and Ecology*, an exhibition produced by the Goethe-Institut, focussing on current German architecture. Along with the exhibition will be a Symposium (on the 5th) on environment-friendly architecture. The exhibition showcases a selection of contemporary German architectural projects exemplifying diverse points of departure to create buildings that preserve the environment to the greatest degree feasible. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

March 6 and 10: Madras Naturalists' Society's nature walks in the Guindy National Park. Interested members (for membership contact 2499 5833) can assemble at 6.30 a.m. (At the Madras Snake Park Gate.)

Answers to Quiz

- Harvard and Oxford;
- Ray Charles' *Genius Loves Company*;
- Hyderabad Sultans;
- Kaziranga National Park;
- Arthur Miller;
- Palestine and Israel;
- Amir Khusro;
- She became the fastest person to sail solo around the world (71 days and 14 hours);
- Casino Royale;
- Adopting a recommendation that relaxes by up to 15 degrees the straightening of the arm.

* * *

- Pavanan's translation of the Kannada book *Parva* into Tamil as *Paruvam*;
- Koradu or Kuridi Malai range;
- Anko Dutta of Reuters;
- Rev. David Chellappa;
- Narain Karthikeyan for Jordan;
- Eighteen;
- Sadagopan Ramesh;
- George V;
- S.A. Chandrasekhar and Shoba Chandrasekhar;
- Rickshaakaran*.

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: _____

Community sport to promote fitness

Civilisation, through automation, has severely reduced the need for the adult to motor on his own limbs. The result has been worried minds and nagging health problems. Man cannot stay healthy if he dispenses with limb movement which relates directly to mitigating stress and to clarity of mental functioning.

Young children exercise naturally by running, playing catch games, climbing and jumping. They graduate to organised games in school and college, but when careers start and many settle for desk jobs, their arms seldom stretch over their heads. Today, the situation is worse, with the electronic games of the computer age diluting activities that promote agility, mobility and flexibility among children.

Since automation has reduced the need to use limbs, General Fitness, which is the balancing point between good condition plus well-being and poor health, takes a back seat.

After the conclusion of each Olympic Games, we lament our sportspersons' failure to be finalists, let alone mount the podium. The reason is that general fitness among our one billion population is low compared with even underdeveloped and economically weak nations. Kenyans, Ethiopians and Sri Lankans are physically fitter than we are.

Physical Directors and Coaches stress the development

of essential motor qualities among their students and trainees. The important motor qualities, viz. endurance, mobility and agility, jumping strength, power and speed, are enveloped in the term 'General Fitness', which can be refined to 'Total Fitness'.

However, sustaining essential motor qualities does not pertain to sportspersons only. The common man has to preserve these traits in everyday life.

Though the common man

make the common man aware of the need to be fit is compelling. This awareness must be packaged and marketed to his sector.

Marketing fitness to the common man does not require glossy flyers, advertising treadmills, steppers, mini multi-gyms, rowers or saunas. Such accessories promote fitness but exceed a common man's budget. Instead, the community should be enticed to spend open air time in simple physical activity at least three times a week.

doctors to practise in rural places, an army of physical trainers should be involved in a massive Human Resources Development movement to instil fitness among Indian youth in non-urban locales. Fresh Physical Education graduates should mature in their profession through at least two years of working in rural regions, in government or panchayat schools. The emphasis should be on exercising in open air areas, non-apparatus drills and team fun-games. It is these I will focus on in the next instalment.

It will be from the common man sector that international champions will ultimately emerge. Our greatest male and female athletes, Milkha Singh and P.T. Usha, who both missed Olympic bronze medals by fractions of a second, hail from this category.

World champions and a tally of medals emerge from a base of the generally fit common people of a nation. It is therefore necessary to make the common man aware of the necessity to be fit. But more important than a few countrymen winning international sporting honours is the total uplift of health and wellness of the ordinary citizen. Fitness level, when raised, elevates the national health standards. I offer some suggestions next fortnight on how this can be done.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

• A two-part article by A.J. DE SOUZA suggesting how we can make a fitter India

may be aware that he has to be fit and healthy to complete everyday tasks, the level of physical activity has dipped so much that it is acceptable to have a pulse rate of 80 beats, wear 44-inch waistlines and rest 7 minutes after climbing 30 stairs.

Rapid advance of technology has made communication quick, increased home entertainment, reduced distance coverage and has mitigated the need to operate motor qualities so much that the coming decade may see robots at daily chores while humans laze about. Lest the common man is transformed into a zombie, he must be made aware that he should preserve minimum fitness levels. The urgency to

The term community embraces all members of all families located in an area and does not refer to any group defined by caste, creed or occupation.

China has installed rural sport centres so that the youth in village communities can be introduced to formal disciplines and graduate to structured fitness. These centres are not 'Academies' for specialising in sports, but are facilities that offer citizens, youth to seniors, opportunities to be trained in basics of different disciplines. If talented sportspersons are located from among the regular attendees, they are transferred to serious coaching programmes.

Like there is a call for young

PULICAT LAKE — A PRECARIOUS PARADISE

(Continued from Page 4)

values this wetland performs. Perhaps, above all, people must be educated about the importance of the lake environment and its diversity of organisms. In 2001, the Pulicat Lake Bird Lovers' Society (PLBLS) was established in Sullurpet town. This Society, founded by Professor P.I. Sanjeeva Raj and the author, plays an important role in, for example, helping people, particularly schoolchildren and students, to understand the biology and natural history of wild-fowl in the sanctuary. This will hopefully motivate the population as a whole to safeguard our wetland heritage worldwide. The aim of such

education is a social one: to bring about change in human behaviour, resulting in the sustainable use of the Earth's resources.

Pulicat Lake was established as a Bird Sanctuary in 1976, and has been considered a Ramsar site, i.e. an area of considerable importance for wetland conservation. Today, nearly 130 nations have signed Ramsar, which deals with all wetland types. With care, Pulicat Lake and its abundant birdlife should continue to flourish, but it seems likely that this will remain a rather precarious paradise unless more positive action is taken to protect the area and care for it.

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