### WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAL

### INSIDE

- Pulicat a precarious paradise
- Indian dog breeds
- Five icons from the South
- When Dhanushkodi vanished
- Promoting community sport

Rs. 5 per copy

(Annual Subscription: Rs. 100/-)

Vol. XIV No. 22

March 1-15, 2005





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 "Thecurse-has-come-upon-me" and "Did-he-who-make-the-lambmake-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 thatwent 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)

hennai, 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, businessfriendly 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 sa. ft."

Over 35,000 new IT and ITrelated 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
Transportation within the city (1) 3.40 3.20 Cost of living 2.80 Cost of setting up a software 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

(Continued on Page 2)

READERS

Law not enforced

www.many more have to die be

I fore the Law is enforced?

in avoidable fatal accidents.

WRITE

# 'Silicon Chennai' in the making

(Continued from page 1)

The additional number of IT jobs in Chennai will exceed one lakh over the next three to four years. The demand for techies is expected to be met smoothly, as there are about 235 engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu, turning out over 75,000 engineering graduates every year!

Mega investment plans of top companies also indicate that the trend in Chennai will continue at least for the next four-five years. Infosys is to set up the world's largest software development centre in Chennai on 129 acres, going from an existing 450,000 sq ft area to 40 lakh sq ft. TCS has announced its plan to create 8,000 new jobs in the State, including 3,000 at the new facility on 77 acres in the Siruseri IT Park. Wipro, which is expanding its campus by acquiring 85 acres, plans to increase its staff strength in the city from 1,500 to 15,000 in next five years, and will go from an existing 340,000 sq ft to a 37 lakh sq ft area. Patni has announced a Rs 450-crore investment plan to create a 10,000 seat facility. Accenture is very close to finalising a build-to-suit deal for 5 lakh sq ft, while IBM is said to be scouting for land along the IT corridor.

Knowledge townships (KITs) have been planned along the IT corridor, which will run parallel to vet another stretch dotted with amusement parks, and recreation facilities and restaurants to create support services for IT professionals. This will ensure 'that the movement of IT professionals need not be unidirectional'. By 2020, with self-contained and self-sufficient units planned, professionals will be able to 'just walk or cycle to work'!

The first foreign direct investment in real estate is by Singapore Realty Private Limited. This will be the township

subscriptions to do so.

spread over 100 acres and will have about 6,000 apartments. The real estate market is also gearing to meet the increase in demand for office space with the launch of a number of new projects from top players like Arihant and Ceebros. Upcountry property developers like Runwal of Pune and RMZ of Bangalore have also begun looking at Chennai.

Chennai has the greatest potential to add value, with its many analytical minds, and geared to improve the 'employgraduate students. Says mental mess. Harinarain, "If we need to capture 20% of the all-India IT market, it means 10 billion of the expected US \$ 50-55 billion turnover in India. To move from the current US \$ 1.8 billion to \$ 10 billion in five years, will mean that we need vast resources of employable HR to meet this demand. 1.5 to 2 lakh people have to be added each year." Currently, the ratio of personnel selected on an average by the IT industries varies from 3 to 5 out of 100 interviewed and the industry is looking for a success rate of 20 to 25 out of 100. Processes that have been set in motion by ELCOT to handle this issue include:

- Sensitising the students, the professors and the parents through a series of seminars and career fairs organsied in conjunction with leading IT companies.
- Working out acceptable courses as part of the existing educational system through an ELCOT model ITES Certificate Course that is based on the specific industry requirements as specified by the companies and participating academia.
- 'Training the trainer' programmes involving professors from Arts, Science and other colleges in certain

— THE EDITOR

A reminder to our readers

• It's going to be a year since Madras Musings began being a priced

journal, offering readers a special annual subscription rate of Rs. 100.

With that year coming to an end, it is time to remind subscribers to

renew their subscriptions and readers who have not yet sent in their

subscriptions that we receive between now and April 16th will be

considered as annual subscriptions for the year April 16, 2005 to

April 15, 2006, Volume XV. As for those who have sent in their sub-

scriptions between April 16, 2004 and December 15, 2004, please

renew your subscriptions as and when they fall due. Madras

Musings, unfortunately, does not have any staff, but only a couple of

part-time volunteers to help and, hence, is in no position to send you

Heritage together with the coupon that appears on page 7, duly filled

in, IN FULL (including quoting your Mailing List number). We

look forward to an enthusiastic response from readers old and new.

When sending in your subscription, please send it to Chennai

All subscriptions acknowledged by us from January 1, 2005 and

key areas required by ITES

industries like soft skills, etc. Strangely, it is only the ominous issue of E-waste - generated by e-businesses and which has the potential to harm the environment — that does not seem to have figured much in all these projections. And how the city's available infrastructure and civic facilities will be able to meet this enormous challenge remains to be seen. It would certainly be sad if the development of 'Silicon Chennai' leads to a hi-tech city that will ability' of graduate and post- be even more of an environ-

## Choosing Chennai in the last three months

March 1-15, 2005

- Hewlett-Packard's Global e-Business Operations Private Limited (the wholly owned subsidiary of the Hewlett Packard Europe) has set up a large back office facility to carry out transaction processing for debit and credit record and order processing.
- Companies such as Philips, 24/7-customer care, a leading provider of outsourced contact centre and BPO services to global
- ECS Ltd., the 50-50 joint venture betwen Eicher Group and Strategic Decisions Group of the US, to offer banking and financial services, supply chain, HR and change management.
- The US-based Medscribe Communication Inc. will get into medical transcription and associated software development.
- DSL Software Centre will add about 400 professionals soon.
- Two UK-based firms, Supersight Ceequence and Cartel Group Holdings plc, together plan to invest about Rs. 42 crore over a period of time and recruit about 1500 employees in the next 18 months for BPO work.
- FL Smidth India, the wholly-owned Indian subsidiary of the \$1.4 billion Denmark-based F.L. Smidth Group, plans to put up a larger facility for a strong back end office.

# Landmark IT corridor to start shortly

(Continued from page 1)

aesthetics, the quality and the ambience that conveys a sense of world-class character. Which is what the proposed corridor will do," promises Modi.

He adds, "The critical element here is the land acquisition issue and the Government has been successful in this context. The process could not have been either faster or better! Almost 1000 structures will be affected. The National Highway Authority of India acquires, for four-lanes, 45m to 60m on major arterial roads, but in this corridor, to minimise resettlement, rehabilitation and impact on affected structures, the land acquisition has been minimised

Peak hour traffic is expected to be 6000 passenger car units (PCUs) on an average (according to this scale a scooter will be 1/2 PCU, and a bus 3 PCUs). The new road should be able to easily take care of the traffic generated in the next 20-30 years. Each lane is to handle this area, you will actually see

hour. Six lanes are to be used for pening. The entire work will be traffic movement, with an completed in around 12 additional two service-lanes, two cycle tracks and two walking tracks for pedestrians. The existing stretch, though meant to be four-lane, is effectively about two-and-a-half lanes. The project will make it four

"The flip side is that the already existing infrastructure This is where the challenge lies. Also the need for enormous resources of patience and tactful handling - in demolition of houses, businesses, places of worship etc. Once contractual obligations for an encroachment-free area are satisfied, work will start in the first phase - the 20 km stretch from the Madhya Kailash junction to Siruseri – in those areas where it can. The second phase will be from Siruseri to Mahabalipuram. Because everyone will want to work and reside close to

about 2000 PCUs a day per decongestion of Chennai hapmonths," states Modi.

The project has been de-

signed as a 'model IT Corridor for other States'. But will the delay in the take-off of the corridor frighten away possible investors? "No way!" says an emphatic Modi. "Because no other city within the country offers the advantages that needs to be expanded as com- Chennai has. For an intangible pared to a brand new setup. industry as software, the quality of trained skilled manpower is the highest in Tamil Nadu. Also, the exemplary work ethic. Job-hopping is much less, there is a greater sense of loyalty and contentment, and the people are very hardworking."

"Any delay in this process is a concern more for the government than for anyone else. Reviews are being conducted at high levels to speed up the process," says Harinarain. Work on the corridor is expected to start later this month, according to recent reports.

### **OUR ADDRESSES**

- 1) For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.
- 2) For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600
- 3) On editorial matters: The Editor. MADRAS MUSINGS. C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

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

## Missing copies

· A few readers write to us whenever they do not receive a copy of Madras Musings. We mail a copy to every person on our mailing list. If there is non-delivery by the Postal Department as is often the case with **Book Post deliveries** — there is not very much we can do about it, except to assure

readers the copies have

been posted. We do not have the staff to mail substitute copies, when copies are lost in transmission.

THE EDITOR

not blame rainwater harvesting for our mistakes.

Inadequate collecting area

I refer to the grievous accident on February 12th on GST Road when a van crashed into a stationary truck and killed three persons. February 1st) is that a rainfall of 1' Obviously, in the dark, the truck over a 100 sq.ft. area can collect at was not visible. As per the Hackthe most 220 litres; with a per ney Carriage Act of 1911, every capita requirement of 135 l, dwellvehicle must have two white reflecings do not have a matching coltors in front and two at the rear. lecting-area for the number of oc-Unfortunately, no one wants to cupants. Even if groundwater is reimplement the Act and this results charged, the possibility of overdrawal looms in a localised sce-In all advanced countries and in

most Southeast Asian countries, a triangular red reflector has to be carried by all vehicles and placed on the road behind the vehicle when stationary or hazard warning lights should be switched on.

Even our State Transport buses get vehicles passed for roadworthiness merely by painting a 3" red spot at the rear or using cheap Language handicap reflectors which are worse than use less. The Law requires that reflec-

If only the police penalise violators of the law, many valuable lives can be saved.

reflectivity of 200 metres.

tors should have a minimum

(Signature illegible) Director Upper India Trading Co. (M) P. Ltd. New No. 244 (Old No. 713) Anna Salai, Chennai 600 006

#### Our mistakes

It is incorrect to say that in places Lwhere the groundwater has become brackish or even saline, rainwater harvesting is useless since it will not improve the quality. Rainwater being good in quality, will, if injected into the soil, dilute the existing groundwater of its salts and make it better.

Several residents living close to the beach in Besant Nagar and Valmiki Nagar have said that their groundwater improved immediately after the monsoon. This phenomenon stays only for a short while since we extract more groundwater than what we inject into the soil during monsoons. I can assure reader Arunachalam (MM, February 1st) that the groundwater in Besant Nagar will improve on a permanent basis if we residents refrain from extracting groundwater for a few years. Is it possible? Let us

#### Readability, please Dear Readers.

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more handwritten letters. many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to conside your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i-s' and crossing the 't-s'. Many readers also try to fi

every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us

THE EDITOR

Sekhar Raghavan Director, Rain Centre 4, 3rd Trust Link Street Mandavelipakkam Chennai 600 028

The real snag with domestic rainwater harvesting (MM,

The mundane municipal function of water supply ought to be met by public reservoirs of adequate area vis-a-vis the population to be

> N. Dharmeshwaran "Aparanji", 14, 10th Cross Vyalikaval, Bangalore 560 003

The poor performance of various Engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu (MM, January 16th) is due to lack of English knowledge. So far as communication is concerned, inability to speak English fluently, especially by students who come from rural areas, is a big handicap.

A lack of knowledge of Hindi is also a handicap when considered for the Defence services or any other Government services at the Central level.

> P.A. Ranganathan 16, Vedachala Garden Mandaveli Street Chennai 600 028

### Offer of help

Deijing, I read, is taking on the Denormous task of training its citizens on etiquette in time for the 2008 Olympics.

Chennai has its share of public service providers many of whom are ill-mannered. I believe this is more due to ignorance, lack of training and a survival instinct.

My friends and I would like to financially support a programme to influence change in the behaviour and attitude of our service providers, such as taxi and auto drivers. Metropolitan transport drivers and others, who are the face of our city to the visitor. We should not wait for an Olympics to come to our city to initiate this move.

Any organisation interested in our help may write to me.

> R. Kailasnath L5, AASHIANA 21, Venus Colony II Street Chennai 600 018

### Killjoys of concerts

of late, it has become the prac-tice of certain people to discuss the raghas, thalams with the artistes at the dais unmindful of the disturbance they cause to the audience at large. It would be a good thing in future if organisers stop encouraging question and answer sessions and let others enjoy the music.

> P.A. Ranganathan Old No. 16, New No.24 Vedachala Garden Mandaveli Street Chennai 600 028

## Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit, Carnatic will survive

L the article on the Tamizh Isai movement (MM. February 1st).

Tamil. like Sanskrit, is an ancient, rich, living language, full of profound, eternal wisdom and moral and spiritual messages.

Secondly, classification of Tamil works has been made in the distant past into Eval (prose). Isai (music) and Natakam (drama), which indicates a truly scientific and commendable approach. Thirdly, Tamil music had enjoyed ragas, called

panns, the true faces of which had unfortunately been long lost. The Tamilzh Isai Sangam has been carrying on research in this for a long time.

Fourthly, it is to be noted that Indian music is primarily manodharmic and is not based on notation at all. Being manodharmic, and handed down orally from generation to generation, composers, musicologists and musicians frowned upon (particularly till the middle of the last century) any aspect of reducing songs to writing and more particularly to notation, which is a foreign concept. The Indian musician normally creates his music on the spot, for the particular occasion, and does not merely recite or copy what is given. The genius of the Indian tends to contribute and enhance the merit of rendition according to the singer's own genius, background, expertise and voice constraints. It is because of this virtue that stage artistes too flourished and the people loved to hear singers like S.G. Kittappa and S.V. Subbiah Bhagavatar, etc. It was joy to hear them and the audience was transported to ethereal regions.

Fifthly, the genius of the Tamils lay in verses, alapana, virutham, etc. These present the greatest freedom to singers as can be witnessed in dramas, kalakshepas and upanyasas of old. The kriti type of music was much more in Telugu than in Tamil owing to historical, social and political reasons. What were available as 'songs' in Tamil were insufficient for concerts. This aspect should not be lost sight of. Teachers necessarily had to lay hands on the kriti-type of songs rich in message and content and so lavishly presented by the Trinity and post-

This is just to clarify a few points mentioned in Trinity composers. The concert musician is not one who could take chances and had to rely on the comparatively safer, confirmed, legated music in which he had undergone training.

The Tamizh Isai Movement was well intended in its desire to bring back the glory of Tamil songs but it was absolutely wrong to attribute motives to those musicians who had to depend on the thousands of Telugu songs and who cared for the art When the true supporters referred to the lavisl availability of good songs in Telugu and expounded their case for the art, unfortunately, some had cried 'Wolf. Wolf. None can dispute the wondrous image of Tamil, its ancient, unsurpassed heritage and past, etc. Rajah Sir Anamalai Chettiar and his fam ily did help a lot in collecting and compiling the songs in Tamil and even to tune many, such as those of the Tamil Sirkazhi Trinity. Thank Heavens, the unfortunate twists that were seen during the days of the Movement have died out.

The time is now ripe to take Carnatic music to the masses. You need not take it all. Rural India is the natural home, venue, producer of all arts, including the man odh arm i c music. With the exodu of musicians to the metropolis, with fewer chances of concerts in rural areas which were the nurseries in days past, with the slow disappearance of nagaswara, dramas, kalakshe pas, etc., rumlaren are now denied of the resplendent music they had

But what is available, be it to urban or rura audiences, Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit, is now Carnatic or Hindustani, which are both well-nourished. They will survive the onslaught of adverse trends, introduced by films, television and radio because it is in the genius of the Indian, more so of the Tamils, to be musical. Birth to death, music pervades his life, home and occupation.

> N. Rajagopalan, LA.S. (RETD) Carnatic Classicals Mayur Apartments 7, 24th Cross, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020

## A happy change

A propos the Tamizh Isai controversy (MM, Rajaratnam Pillai, Veeruswami Pillai and Sheikh February 1st), music knows no language or boundaries. Whilst Thyagaraja and Syama Sastri composed in Telugu and Dikshitar in Sanskrit, down in the South. Maharajah Swati Tirunal composed many songs in Sanskrit, Malayalam and Hindustani, thus effecting national integration which our politicians are unable to do. Also, Purandradasa composed in Kannada.

Carnatic vocal music still mainly remains a forte of the Brahmins, but the majority of Nadaswara vidwans are non-Brahmins. Even before the advent of the Tamilzh Isai movement, Brahmin musicians like Poochi Iyengar, Ariayakudi Ramanuia Iyengar, Madurai Mani Iyer, Chembai and GNB used to sing Tamil songs like Thiruvadi Saranam, Kaanakankodi Vendum (Kambodhi), Kaarthikeya, Thaye Yasodha (Thodi) as the main item and Saravana Bhava (Shanmugapriya) and Thillai Isaney Kaneno (Kambodhi) in Ragam Thanam Pallavi, while Nadaswaram wizards like

Chinna Moulana used to excel in Thyagaraia kirtanas in Kalyani, Karaharapriya and Mohanam To say, as protagonists of Tamil Isai have said, that Brahmins did not sing Tamil songs is a fallacy. remember vividly Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyenger agreed to sing in the Tamilzh Isai Sangam concerts in the early days with the proviso that he would begin with a Telugu kirtanam, as this was his Guru's wish. This was not agreed to, but in the 1960s this objection was withdrawn and Ariyakudi's concerts were a popular feature in Tamilzh Isai concerts. The movement by some to stop singing classical songs in praise of the Lord, as in the compositions of the Trinity, Swathi Thirunal etc., died a natural death and it is a happy augury that musicians nowadays sing Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindustani songs in their concerts.

Dr. C.V. Subramaniam 1017/1023 Gitanjali Layout, Bangalore 560 075

## The Tamil composers

117 hatever the issues in the Tamilzh Isai emerged Tamil composers like Subramania VV controversy (MM, February 1st), we should remember that Kalki Krishnamurthy and T. Sadasivam, who spearheaded the movement, were Brahmins, while Chittoor Subramania Pillai who gave Tamilzh Isai concerts was a Telugu (the suffix in his name is in honour of his guru, Conjeevaram Naina Pillai).

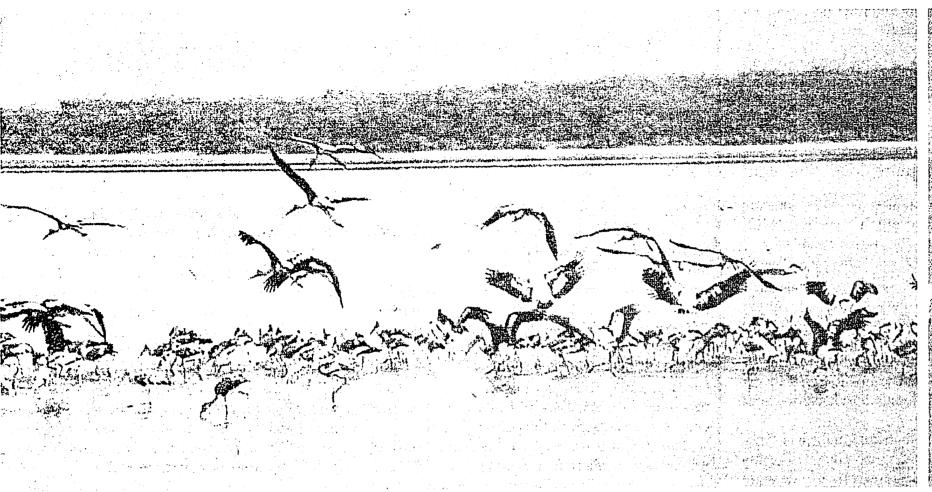
The musical Trinity who composed songs in Telugu and Sanskrit were under the patronage of the then Telugu and Maratha rulers of Thanjavur. Though there were some Tamil composers, the court concerts were mostly in Telugu for more than two centuries. But in the 20th century there

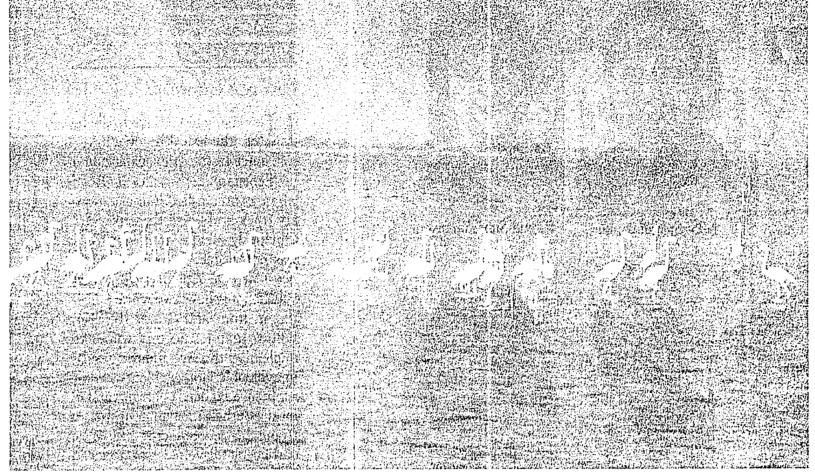
Bharathi, Yogi Shuddhanantha Bharathiar, Papanasam Sivan and Periasami Thooran, Sivan. while composing film songs, was the only Tamil Vaggivakara of the last century who wrote kirtanas set to ear - and heart - following tunes like Siva Chidambara in Kalyani, Kana Kankodi Vendum in Kambodhi. Kaappal in Mohanam.

The belief that only Telugu - or for that matter any other language - is fit for music is untenable.

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

March 1-15, 2005 March 1-15, 2005 MADRAS MUSINGS **MADRAS MUSINGS** 







Feeding Painted Stork

# Pulicat Lake a precarious paradise

ne in every 15 square—of wetland birds on the Indian—the tail. It is not particularly shy Wkilometres of the earth's subcontinent. During the mon- and can easily be approached surface is covered by wetland. Freshwater wetlands are home to more than 40% of the world's nutritious water, containing its beak submerged half-open. known species (including 12% of huge quantities of phytoplankall animals), and economists es- ton and zooplankton. These mi- Pulicat Lake is the huge numbers timate that wetlands account for - croscopic organisms constitute - of flamingos, one of the most biof services each year. As they also fulfil functions such as water storage, storm/flood protection, wetland birds are attracted to the ently disproportionately long legs erosion control, recharging underground water supplies, water purification and local climate - curs at the time when nearly 300 - mouth of the Baleen whale, a control, they are of vital social, different species of migratory person could be forgiven for 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-ex-

ploitation of their resources, and

the introduction of invasive spe-

cies. There are no exact figures,

but the best estimates suggest

that nearly 50% of the world's

wetlands have been lost or de-

graded since the start of the in-

dustrial revolution, and if popu-

lation growth and industriali-

sation 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 Garganey, Grey Pelican, Marsh chief nurseries of fish, prawns and crabs in the area, and local Godvit. The huge Painted Stork people have for centuries utilised is one of the more striking inhabthe resources here in a sustain- itants of the lakeshore with its able way. The high production of or- yellow curved beak. The plum-

soon period, from September to—while it walks in shallow water November, the lake is filled with essential nutritious food for in-

searching for prey with parts of

The most beautiful sight in zarre and spectacular birds to invertebrates and fish. Conse-habit the earth. Coming in variquently, tens of thousands of our shades of pink with appar- lake to feed and to seek shelter.
 and neck, and a downwardly The start of the monsoon oc- curved, beak more similar to the

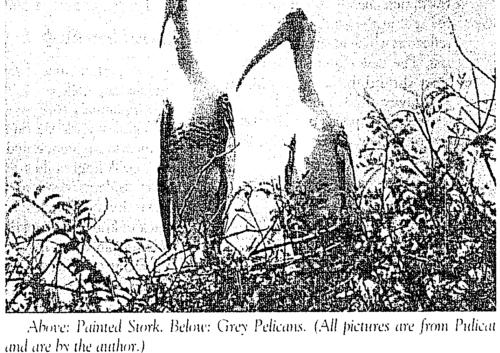
## • by ODD W. JACOBSEN

ern 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.

about 60 species of waterfowls 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, Sandpiper and Black-tailed bare pale red face and its long, most'spectacular concentrations pink feathers on its sides and on site for flamingos in Asia, and

birds undertake their long jour- believing that flamingos belong nevs from Central Asia and East- 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 During the winter months, 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, diaroms

and invertebrates. Pulicat Lake is undoubtedly ganic matter results in one of the age is black and white, with a few the most important wintering





terest in the conservation of flamingos, giving rise to studies of their distribution, migration and population levels, of which little

forgettable. It all sounds like a paradise, but predictably Pulicat Lake is not without its problems. over-harvesting of fish and journ. Furthermore, the road-

they are heavily dependent on bridge from Sullurpet town to the high numbers of different Sriharikota crossing Pulicat Lake prey items in the lake. They fre- has narrow conduits that may requently move from site to site in duce the amount of tidal water large numbers, and you can hear—reaching north of the bridge their noisy and characteristic—where most of the birds feed. gooselike gabbling. Throughout Other potential problems are asthe world, there is a growing in-sociated with the fertilisers, pesticides and fungicides that are used on the surrounding agricul-

The questions remain how we can maintain a healthy lake in A visit to Pulicat Lake is un- the future where we can still experience the unbelievable birdlife existing in harmony with nature and people. Of course, basic The major problems are the research on the ecosystem and its biodiversity is necessary. Furprawns in the adjacent Bay of thermore, ecotourism should be Bengal and the massive and the developed in order to bring inextensive siltation of the lake come to the local community where the majority of birds so- and to inform people about the

(Continued on Page 8)

# Honouring Indian dog breeds

he four-stamp series seen L 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 hound Theodore Baskaran, who has been photographing Indian breeds for the past 15 years both in dog shows and in situ.

"Traditionally, we look only upon buildings, performing arts and literature as our heritage. I pany. believe these breeds of dogs are also part of our precious heritage," Baskaran reminds us. Then adds, "Most Indian breeds have been unmanipulated genes. We have puram road. to celebrate this heritage."

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

The Himalayan Sheepdog lives in the higher reaches of the Western Himalaya and is used for herding sheep by graziers such as the Guijars. 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 banned, points out Baskaran. occasionally featured in Mughal miniature paintings.

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

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 Com-

The Kennel Club of India has launched a project to revive the Rajapalayam breed. It plans to breed this dog, on scientific lines, evolved independently over—and sell the pups. The kennel will thousands of years; it is a pool of be in a farm on the Mamalla-The other well-known breed

> from South India is the Kombai which, according Nelson in the white with flesh coloured skin 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 Tirunelveli.

The passing of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 marked and hare hunting; so, speed,

Wetland Birds

and bonds well to his own family, being loval and tractable. During the Carnatic wars these Rajapalayams were trained to create dogs, as hunting (with dogs) was havoc in the stables of the British by hamstringing their horses. LYNETTE and PETER The Mudhol Hound hails WATSON, both on the interna-

tional judging panel for the show,

writing about Indian breeds in

the Global Adjustments Journal,

"Apart from the Rajapalayam

the Rampur Hound, the Mudhol

Hound and the Himalayan

Sheepdog, also sometimes re-

ferred to as the Bhutan, there

were also a number of other very

fine Indian breeds that arrested

parai, the Caravan Hound, the

Combai and the Kanni. The

Kennel Club of India is ex-

tremely focussed on the promo-

tion of the national breeds and

body and has finely textured pen-

dant ears. One could liken him

to a refined version of the Great

Dane, not so tall – about 60-65

cm at the shoulder – and weigh-

ing around 25 kg. Characteristic

The Rajapalayam is generally

also on their preservation."

our notice, such as the Chippi-

At a Glance, said:

from north Karnataka and southern Maharashtra, clearly descendent from the elegant ancient hunting dogs. He is a clear-cut aristocratic sighthound, with the fine ears, flat skull and tapering hunters of the chase. He has a and great speed. His gait is pow- guards the flocks. erful and floating.

with strangers. He is very hardy. Also smooth coated as best suited to the climate of his origins, he comes in all colours. and nose, but a dark eye. He is Males are markedly larger than smooth coated, soft on the head and somewhat coarser on the

Rampur Hound, a large upstandwere used by Mughal rulers. triangular and pendant.

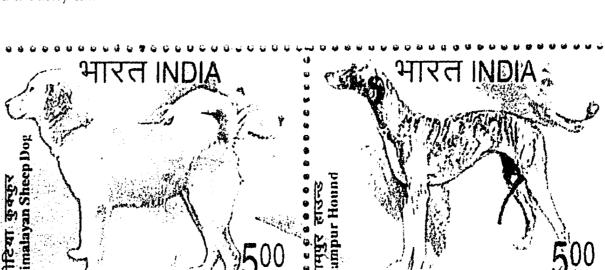
is his tail which tapers to a whip. Clearly a representative of the like point from the first third—classic greyhound family, he comes in the same range of His primary purpose was boar colours. He is used to hunt deer and jackal and vermin and is sufstrength and agility are built in, ficiently strong and courageous as but he makes a fine guard dog 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

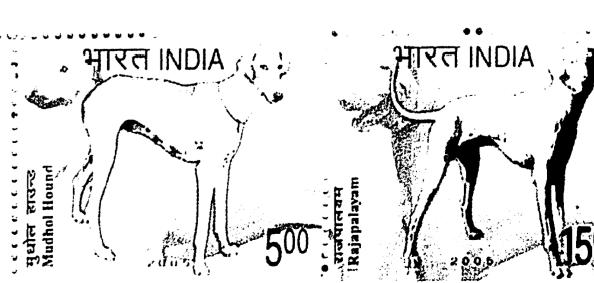
activity when required. The regal Himalayan Sheep-Arabian and Persian open range dog, originating where temperatures swing broadly and conse- quently requiring a seasonally characteristic long limbs, deep—shedding jacket, this fellow difcapacious body with arched loin, fers greatly from the other three long neck and head with small breeds mentioned above, all muzzle, broad muscular and flex- kindly expression, but spends ible spine, and low set tail, all of most of the day sleeping, for his which make for length of stride work is done by night as he

around, but can explode into

But he makes a fine compan The temperament of the ion for his family, and will also Mudhol is independent and aloof—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 females, measuring upto 70 cm at tan, and has a characteristic well plumed tail, carried curled up From Uttar Pradesh and the over his back. The outer coat is area around Delhi comes the hard and quite long, while the undercoat is very thick, dense and ing, hardy and powerfully built—fine, shedding for summer. Dark hunting dog whose ancestors—eyed and black nosed, his ears are







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

- 1. 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?
- 2. Which recently-deceased singing legend's final album won eight Grammys recently?
- 3. Who won the inaugural Premier Hockey League title in Hyderabad recently?
- 4. Which World Heritage Site, set up at the instance of Lord and Lady Curzon, is celebrating its 100th birthday at present?
- 5. 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.
- 6. Which two West Asian nations, in conflict for some decades now, declared a ceasefire as a formal end to violence between

chosen fields.

M.S. Subbulakshmi became

synonymous with Carnatic mu-

sic. 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 per-

former, but is a research scholar,

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 Nrithyo-

daya established by her father

Subrahmanyam in 1942, even

as she was learning herself, she

has become an author and

Indologist. She has done exten-

sive research on the karanas, the

basic units of dance, with ran-

dom instructions from the

Mahaswami of Kanchi, Sri

Chandrasekharendra Saras-

wati; he later asked her to de-

sign sculptures of the 108

karanas of Lord Shiva for a

temple being built at Satara in

Who does not know the phe-

nomenon that A.R. Rahman

beginning what heights has he

reached! Born Dileep to R.K.

Sekhar, music director of Mala-

yalam 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 accom-

panied Zakir Hussain and

Kunnadudi Vaidyanathan on

College of Music, London.

Eventually, he became a suc-

Maharashtra.

- 7. Which famous poet's tomb was vandalised in Delhi recently, leading to the loss of 800 years of history in minutes?
- 8. What feat of sporting endurance did Britain's Ellen Mc Arthur achieve recently?
- 9. What is the next James Bond movie (scheduled for release in
- 10. How has ICC relaxed its laws | a choreographer, a musician on 'chucking'?
- 11. Which translated book in Tamil has won the coveted Sahitya Akademi's 'Transalation Prize 2004'?
- 12. What is the common Tamil name for the 'Lambton Range' between Coimbatore and Mettupalayam?
- 13. 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.
- 14. Name the first Indian Bishop of the Diocese of Madras whose 100th birthday was commemorated recently.
- 15. Simple one. Which racer from Tamil Nadu is taking part in this year's F1 season and for which team?
- 16. How many stations are there | has been; from what humble on the Beach-Tambaram EMU rail route?
- 17. Which Test player scored 307, the highest ever individual effort in the TNCA First Division league, in July 2003?
- 18. Whose statue did Govindoss Chathoor Bhoojan Doss present to the city of Madras in 1914?
- 19. The parents of cine star Vijay are themselves well known names in the Tamil film industry. Name
- their foreign tours, finally win-**20.** For his role in which film did MGR get the National Best | ning a scholarship to Trinity Actor award?

(Answers on page 7)

# Five icons from the South

Leatured in Scholastic's Icons cessful composer of advertising I from the World of Art is a jingles. In 1980, when one of his Puffin Original from South Insisters became very ill, it was a dia for children by a regular Muslim Pir's prayers and blesscontributor to this journal, ings which saved her, leading Ranjitha Ashok, that narrates the family to convert to Islam in brief the story and achieveand Dileep to become Allah Rakha Rahman. Director Mani ments of ten Indians in the Ratnam spotted him at the fields of performing and visual arts. Five of them are M.S. award function when Rahman Subbulakshmi (Carnatic vocal). received the best jingle award and eventually invited him to Padma Subrahmanyam (Bhacompose music for his film Roja, rata Natyam), S. Nandagopal (sculpture), L. Subramaniam which gained him several (violin Carnatic and Western), awards, including the National and A.R. Rahman (film music award. He has not looked back since and his name has become direction), together with M.F. Husain (painting), Lata Manthe USP for many films and thegeshkar (playback), Pandit atre productions, not only in In-Biriu Maharai (Kathak), Ustad dia but in the Western world Amjad Ali Khan (Hindustani music Sarod) and Ustad Zakir Hussain (tabla). They exemplify inborn talent honed to perfection through hard work in their



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







S. Nandagopal A.R. Rahman L. Subramaniam (From Icons from the World of Art – Scholastics-Puffin.)

quite a few international jazz groups playing the percussion 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

been included could have been: playing Carnatic music on a Vikku Vinayakaram, known mandolin. At a very young age, not just in the field of Carnatic he mastered this foreign string music, but who has been part of instrument, adapting it to Carnatic music; he too is known well outside the country and has instrument, ghatam, which is presented concerts all over the uniquely Indian and an example world. Both these artistes, howof the innovative mind of our ever, get a brief mention in one of the articles.

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

### Statement about Ownership and other particulars about newspaper

(As required to be published under Section 19-D Sub-section (b) of the Press and Registration of Books Act with Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspaper (Central Rules), 1956.).

### Form IV Madras Musings (Fortnightly)

- Place of Publication
- 2. Periodicity of its publication
- 3. Printer's name Nationality
- Nationality
- Nationality
- Names and addresses of
- Chennai (Madras) : Fortnightly : Mr. T.J. George

Chennai 600 006

- : Indian : Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd. No. 62/63 Greames Road
- Publisher's Name
- Editor's Name

publication

- Mr. S. Muthiah for Cherinai Heritage : Indian : 260-A, T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018 : Mr. S. Muthiah : Indian
- individuals who own the
- : 1. Mr. N. Sankar Director S/o Mr. K.S. Narayanan 292, T.T.K. Road Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018.

: 260-A, T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018

- 2. Mr. M.V. Subbiah S/o (Late) A.M.M. Vellayan Chettiar 10, Boat Club Road, Chennai 600 028
- 3. Mr. S. Muthiah Director S/o (Late) V.Vr.N.M. Subbiah Chettiar 2-F, Vijay Gardens, I Cross Street Vijayaraghava Road
- T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017. 4. Mrs. Tara Murali W/o Mr. N. Murali, 260-A, T.T.K. Road Chennai 600 018
- 5. Mr. Suresh Rao Director S/o Mr. V.R. Rao 277, T.T.K. Road, Chennai 600 018

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

ing as Senior Research Scholar 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.

March 1-15, 2005

weather on December 23, 1964 and communications to the developed into a raging cyclone outside world were completely

CHENNAI 600 006.

such exercises.

tage espouses.

TION TO your subscriptions.

by a tidal wave at the end of De-rooting all the trees in our campus and blowing away the asbestos sheets of the office building for the Government of India at and the temporary staff quarthe Central Marine Fisheries ters. 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 night-What started as squally mare. Electricity, water supply

Subscriptions and

contributions

As readers are already aware — and hundreds have responded posi-

tively — 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 BE-

LOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or

C/O LOKAVANI-HALL MARK PRESS PVT. LTD., 122, GREAMES ROAD,

An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs. 100 covers only a part of our

costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essen-

tial 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 ADDI-

If in the coming year Chennal 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

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 Chennal Heri-

We look forward to all readers of Madras Musings, and those

newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions.

CHENNAI HERITAGE

260-A T.T.K. ROAD, ALWARPET, CHENNAI 600 018.

I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No.....) / I have

• I/We enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs. 100 (Rupees One

hundred) payable to CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS, as subscription to

• 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

Note: Overseas postage Rs. 550/year extra. Cheques for overseas postage

alone payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd.. All other cheques to

just seen Madras Musings and would like to receive it hereafter.

*Madras Musings* for the year 2004-05.

Please keep/put me on your mailing list.

'Chennai Heritage'.

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

hanushkodi and the sur- the next morning. Along with cut off. Road and rail transport Prounding places were hit rains, high gales prevailed, up- 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,



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

— The Editor

1. Harvard and Oxford; 2. Ray Charles' Genius Loves Company; 3. Hyderabad Sultans; 4. Kaziranga National Park; 5. Arthur Miller; 6. Palestine and Israel; 7. Amir Khusro; 8. She became the fastest person to sail solo around the world (71 days and 14 hours); 9. Casino Royale; 10. Adopting a recommendation that relaxes by up to 15 degrees the straightening of the arm.

\* \* \*

11. Pavanan's transalton of the Kannada book Parva into Tamil as Paruvam; 12. Koradu or Kuridi Malai range; 13. Anko Dutta of Reuters; 14. Rev. David Chellappa; 15. Narain Karthikeyan for Jordan; 16. Eighteen; 17. Sadagopan Ramesh; 18. George V; 19. S.A. Chandrasekhar and Shoba Chandrasekhar; 20. Rickshaakaran.

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, signal to enter the station, could beings.

they supplied some broken rice 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 which was waiting at the outer brought out the best in human

## **Senate House Conservation Fund**

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

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

Dear Registrar,

Name:	contribution to the re (indly acknowledge	d maintenes	oo ol Sans	D Men
	AUG 685;			
	***************************************	 		
	•	 <ul><li>60.00.000 (200.000)</li></ul>	a second contract of	

# Community sport to promote fitness

ivilisation, 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 Developement 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 44inch 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 program-

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 undertstand 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 re-

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.

## Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



**Amalgamations Group** 



Ashok Leyland



**Brakes India Limited** 



Go Placidly



**KASTURI & SONS** LTD.



**Engineering Construction & Contracts Division** 

**LOKAVANI** HALLMARK PRESS PVT. LTD. LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED









UCAL



Enduring values. New age thinking.





Sundram Fasteners Hotels, Resorts Limited and Palaces



**TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES** 



TVS MOTOR COMPANY PRIVATE LIMITED

Since 1856, patently leaders **A WELLWISHER**