

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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We're just finishing the third revision... I wish the school allows us instead of our son to write the Chemistry exam.

### Parenting in March

Scene: A dimly-lit stage. Two worn-out souls, all bowed shoulders and unkempt hair, shuffle forward and face each other.

Worn-Out-Soul 1 (pointing to herself): 10th. And you?

W.O-S 2: 12th.

WOS 1 (shuddering): How's it going?

WOS 2 (in despair): Badly. Memory's short. Forgot how many s's are there in 'dispossession'.

WOS 1: What about all this New Age Maths and Science? I was lousy in Maths way back and now I am expected to walk that thorn-filled road again. Talk about looking foolish in front of those we are supposed to guide and teach!

WOS 2 (with a shiver): Tell me about it. For me, Chemistry and Physics are the bogeys.

WOS 1: Empty-Nest's dinner's on tomorrow. Are you going?

WOS 2 (laughing bitterly): How can I? I still haven't finished my first re-vision in any subject. I also missed Kids-Are-In-College's tea last week.

WOS 1: How come?

WOS 2 (terse and brief): Language. Two. I've forgotten what adult company's like.

WOS 1 (nods in understanding): You think we'll last till the 2nd week of April?

WOS 2 (shrugs): Where's the choice? Be thankful we don't have 10th and 12th together. Let's go. The books are calling.

WOS 1: Geometry?

WOS 2: No, Algebra. You?

WOS 1: Trigonometry.

Sighing, they link arms in a futile attempt to garner support, and shuffle away while a lone bell tolls sombrely.

Ranjitha Ashok

# Another side to the tsunami

*More of the past revealed in Mamallapuram*

(by Shobha Menon)

The recent tsunami caused anguish and misery to millions along the coast. However, it has brought much excitement to the staff of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which has unearthed on the southern side of the Shore Temple in Mamallapuram what was earlier only seen in its office's glass negative records of the 1920s and '30s—exhibits D 877, D 878 and D 879, to be specific.

Says T. Satyamurthi, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, "These structures, which have been recorded during the British period, got silted up probably more than 50 years ago. Interestingly, people along the coast saw the structures even as the waters began receding before the tsunami struck. Tsunamis are not always only destructive. In fact, Vypin Island emerged in 1342 on the Kerala coastline after a similar tsunami effect."

Speaking of the work that has been going on at Mamallapuram in this connection, Satyamurthi added, "Only last year, the ASI added a marine wing to explore Arikamedu and Mamallapuram. Because of the boat jetty, most of the ancient structures at Arikamedu are now hidden beneath the silt. In 1996, the marine wing of the Geological Survey of India recorded oblique structures such as offshore walls running up to 500 m from the present structures unearthed in Mamallapuram. Aerial pictures taken last year indicated the possibility of structures 200 m from the Shore Temple. Satellite images have confirmed this alignment." Satyamurthi goes on to say, "By mid-March the wind direction should change. The waters will then recede and the remnants

of the wall should be accessible."

Undersea explorations conducted by the ASI started on February 17th and went on till March 15th with six surveyors from the Navy and 15 from the

(Continued on Page 2)



Some of the finds in Mamallapuram. (Pictures courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India.)



## NATIONAL HERITAGE ACT NECESSARY

• There is a crying need to have a national heritage policy and a Central Heritage Act (heritage as a subject is not in the concurrent list). Even as you read this, heritage sites are being desecrated or demolished out of sheer indifference or ignorance. We are what we are because of our heritage. When we destroy it, we become rootless.

One of the most important economic assets of any country is its archaeological sites and ancient townscapes, which provide opportunities for the development of tourism and infrastructure.

Old, historic buildings must be re-adapted for use. When you give new life to a building, you make maintenance easier. For example, old palaces, after restoration and being turned into hotels, have got a new lease of life. Children must be involved in heritage conservation; in fact, schools can do excellent service by adopting monuments in their vicinity. Indeed, there is a lot that can be done for heritage conservation, and some progress is being made.

But much more is necessary than what is reported below from *Virasat*, the journal of INTACH.

— THE EDITOR

The Delhi Assembly has passed a New Delhi Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 2004. It provides for protection of any structure, erection or monument, or tumulus or place of in-

terment or any cave, rock sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or of artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years. It also empowers the Delhi Government to take steps to prevent the destruction of a monument that has been protected under the Act, in public interest. The Government will also have the right to fence or cover the portion of land adjoining the site of an ancient monument. No construction or mining activities will be allowed within 50 metres' area around the monument while a further 100 metres beyond that is designated as regulated area where any building/mining would require prior permission of the authorities.

The promulgation of the Act will thus help in saving build-  
(Continued on Page 2)

# The past revealed in Mamallapuram

(Continued from page 1)

ASI, along with six divers, taking part in the exercise. This year, the ASI is likely to confine itself to discovering how far the structures extend, documenting them with photographs etc. The available study will help it decide whether the structures can be retrieved or 'transplanted' onshore. Extending the shoreline by an intervention beyond a point could adversely affect the reactor station at Kalpakkam, he feels.

"Interestingly, we've been getting two kinds of responses — one group of people is eager to see the structures, and another group, including some property dealers, is more eager to know when the next tsunami will arrive! It is intriguing that the calculation of Patterson, a famous geologist of the last century and an expert on the Indian subcontinent, particularly South India, points to a particular date for the change of shoreline in these parts and that date approximates roughly to this year," adds Satyamurthi.

The previous major archaeological find at Mamallapuram was in 1990-91, when elliptical structures, including a small tank, a mini shrine, *balipita*, a *maha varaha* and a one-line inscription naming two superstructures of the Shore Temple to the north (of the Temple) were exposed by the ASI team under Superintending Archaeologist K.T. Narasimhan's direction. Says Narasimhan, "During the early Christian era, Mamallapuram was one of the ancient ports. This has been proved by the archaeological excavations conducted in 1997-2001. The artificial canal that shows megalithic influence has a structure only on its western side (land side) and ends with an L-shaped screen wall. Close by, a brick structure unearthed indicates the jetty point. The structures unearthed recently in the aftermath of the tsunami are just about 10 m from the *maha varaha*." Other experts feel that though there is reason to believe that the structures covered by sand and the undersea structures could be related, more evidence is necessary to confirm the connection.

Over centuries, the sea had encroached so much that a groyne wall had to be constructed in the 1950s to the east of the Shore Temple by the ASI, based on UNESCO advice. Reacting to reports of a British excavation a few years ago that had supposedly 'discovered' ancient structures, Narasimhan is of the view that any archaeological excavation

has to be scientifically proved. "The British excavators did not consult or interact with local archaeologists. When BBC contacted me, I had to refute the information," he says.

On one of the structures revealed recently, on one small bedrock, there is exceptional evidence of Narasimha Varman I indicating his mighty army divisions with depictions of the *gaja*, *ratha*, *thuraga* and *padhadhi* (elephant, chariot, horse and soldier). The socket above, visible even before the tsunami, is symbolic of the worship that might have taken place, archaeological experts feel.

The ASI and Navy divers have also spotted "huge cut-

blocks of perfect-shaped stone in alignment" during the recent undersea excavation. The rocky wall has step-like structures, blocks of the same size and thickness, blocks with carved-out holes, and some with distance ridges on the tow ends. The severe incrustation — about six inches of marine growth — needs to be cleaned before analysis, point out the experts.

The ASI is also simultaneously conducting onshore excavation, which might answer questions relating to details of human settlements, when they began, who were the people who settled where the port was, the seven pagodas, and archaeological references.

## National Heritage Act necessary

(Continued from page 1)

ings that are currently not protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), even little known ones to be found in all corners of the capital. The Bill stipulates that an Advisory Council for monuments and archaeological sites will be constituted to advise the Government on policy issues.

### Court saves school

The Delhi High Court has intervened to save the 312-year-old Anglo-Arabic School following a PIL filed by education activist Firoz Bakht Ahmed. The school was started by one of Aurangzeb's courtiers and has changed names many a time, the last one being Zakir Hussain College. A large enclosure, arched apartments, a gate, a three-domed mosque, octago-

nal towers, beautiful *gharokas*, floral carvings and engravings make this elegant building a majestic complex. It provided a picturesque backdrop to many films from Attenborough's *Gandhi* to Mani Ratnam's *Dil se*, in spite of its multiple problems. Its illustrious alumni include founder of the Aligarh Muslim University, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, and father of Urdu prose, Maulana Mohammed Azad, among others.

### Lists and plans

INTACH has prepared a list of 1200-odd buildings in Delhi that fall into the heritage category on account of their historic architectural relevance, which has triggered action by the authorities. Of these, nearly

## A big 'Thank You' to 65 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.2.05 and 15.03.05, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses. — Chennai Heritage

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## Some facts about tsunamis

- Tsunamis that strike coastal locations in the Pacific Ocean basin are mostly caused by earthquakes. These earthquakes might occur far away or near where you live.
- Some tsunamis can be very large. In coastal areas, their height can be as great as 30 feet or more (100 feet in extreme cases), and they can move inland several hundred feet.
- All low-lying coastal areas can be struck by tsunamis.
- A tsunami consists of a series of waves. Often, the first wave may not be the largest. The danger from tsunami can last several hours after the arrival of the first wave.
- Tsunamis can move faster than a person can run.
- Sometimes a tsunami causes the water near the shore to recede, exposing the ocean floor.
- The force of some tsunamis is enormous. Large rocks weighing several tons along with boats and other debris can be moved inland hundreds of feet by tsunami wave activity. Homes and other buildings are destroyed. All the material and water move with great force and can kill or injure people.
- Tsunamis can occur at any time, day or night.
- Tsunamis can travel up rivers and streams that lead to the ocean.

— (Courtesy: MCDS News)

The findings will be presented at an international seminar on maritime archaeology in New Delhi in April.

And the analysis of these priceless treasures could perhaps open up a whole new world, literally.

250-300 are owned by private persons while the majority are with either private trusts or government, apart from those under ASI protection. Finally, there is good news! The newly constituted Heritage Society of the Delhi Municipal Corporation has been entrusted with drawing up of economically viable plans for private owners to use their inheritance for commercial purpose — for instance,

guesthouse-cum-museums. The Society has decided to empanel conservation architects for a period of three years to facilitate matters.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This report from *Virasat*, the journal of INTACH, shows progress in Delhi on the heritage front. But similar developments, at the very least, are necessary elsewhere in the country. Will Tamil Nadu show the way?

## Heritage sites in danger?

• While there are some positive developments on the heritage front in Delhi, there are also some serious concerns, as the following report shows.

The Prime Minister's Office has issued instructions to all authorities concerned that Lutyens' Bungalow Zone (LBZ) in New Delhi must be preserved intact in accordance with the guidelines issued in 1988; and that any deviations that have since taken place be removed. Yet there is disquieting news: the Urban Development Ministry had prepared a blueprint to replace the bungalows — which it states have outlived their lifespan — with modern duplex structures to meet the housing requirements of Ministers, MPs and other VIPs. Central airconditioning, modern jacuzzis, swimming pools, sunny atriums, and security scanners are considered some of the basic requirements to be installed in the new buildings. The CPWD is raring to execute this Rs. 40 crore project; thankfully the Urban Arts Commission is sitting on the proposal.

Is the Ministry aware that the LBZ is listed by the World Monument Fund as one of the 100 most endangered World Heritage Sites? Such changes would forever mutilate the character of one of the most gracious capitals of the world. The news had many conservationists and INTACH deeply perturbed. Patwant Singh, an eminent protagonist of the cause, warned: "If this is allowed to go through, it will be the thin edge of the wedge with which the entire 1000 acres or so of Lutyens Delhi will be prized loose from all conservation efforts". INTACH held a meeting at which eminent architects, conservationists and media persons were present and were unanimous that LBZ "must be preserved as a mark of civilisation... and no one should be allowed to edit the history of the country", as urban planner and architect AGK Menon strongly emphasised.

INTACH Chairman S.K. Misra declared: "We propose to energetically bring about awareness of the INTACH Charter on Lutyens Delhi 2002... a comprehensive legislation should be introduced to preserve the area so that in future half-baked ideas about any changes are silenced once and for all". Ironically, to date, it is the legislators and political party headquarters which have been making additions and subtractions to the LBZ, violating the very guidelines of the Government they periodically represent!

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Document accessibility

All the documents and books in the Tamil Nadu Archives should be made available on a website to research scholars throughout the world. Will the Commissioner take appropriate steps to ensure that this is done?

C.A. Reddi  
74/57, Rundalls Road  
Vepery, Chennai 600 007

EDITOR'S NOTE: And to be accessible to those interested in history as well. Of late, only research scholars have access to the Archives' collection.

### Need parks, not slums

With referent to "Making a city of gardens" (MM, February 16th), an old heritage structure on Popham's Broadway, which resembled the mother of all 'bhooth banglas', was recently demolished, leaving an open space of about 20,000 sq.ft. with a cluster of a few on one side. Some huts have already sprung up on the vacant space, with all the makings of a 'kuppam'. Hopefully, the Chennai Corporation will take action to clear the slums before a temple comes up on the site. The place, adjacent to the C.S.I. Tucker Church and opposite the Arcot Lutheran Church, is an ideal location for a park.

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

### Estuary & eco-park plans

With regard to the Adyar eco-park plans (MM, February 16th), the maintenance of the water source from the Adyar Estuary needs to be part of this plan. The water line of the Adyar Estuary meanders from the Foreshore Estate beach right upto the Mandaveli swamp/Greenways Road. It is essential that the water line is cleaned and made part of Adyar eco-park for three reasons:

1. As was observed during the recent tsunami, the estuary will act as a buffer against any flash floods;

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

— THE EDITOR

2. Existence of a water line right into the Mandaveli swamp will help maintain/re-charge the groundwater level in the neighbourhood; and
3. The water line can be aesthetically developed so as to be a source of attraction within the proposed eco-park.

T. Anantha Narayanan  
"Sri Niketan"  
New No. 1 (23) Raja Street  
Mandaveli, Chennai 600 028

### Carnatic memories

Padmini Natarajan's review of V. Sriram's book *Carnatic Summer*\* (MM, January 1st) revived memories of boyhood days in Gangadheeswarar Koil Street where we lived from 1935 to 1952. I didn't know that MS had lived in Thana Street from 1932.

I knew MKT lived in the neighbourhood. He was a regular participant in the Brahmotsavam festival at Gangadheeswarar temple every year and the crowds on those occasions were very big. On the last day of the *Utsavam*, my friends and I used to go round the streets along with the deities on *oorvalam*, enjoying the wonderful *nadasawara* music till almost dawn. Five of us brothers studied at Sir M.Ct. Muthiah Chettiar High School and my beloved classmate V.L. Janakiram on the *vena* and his elder brother V.L. Vedagiri on the violin were regular performers at the *Utsavam*. They were just 11 and 14 respectively when they first performed and were very popular. Vedagiri became an A-Grade artiste with AIR, Madras, and Janakiram retired as Professor of Music from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

D.K. Pattammal was our neighbour 'across the wall' for some years and when she started her *sadakam* in the late evenings accompanied by her younger brothers, Nagarajan on the *miridangam* and Jayaraman vocal, my brothers and I would jump over the wall and invite ourselves to some excellent music. Both Nagarajan and Jayaraman studied at M.Ct. for a couple of years. Nagarajan faded out, while DKJ not only accompanied his illustrious sister for many years but also grew up to be a much respected vocalist in his own right.

M.Ct. hosted the Purasawalkam Sangeetha Sabha performances regularly and some of the unforgettable performances at the *Sabha* every year were those of Madurai Mani Iyer and the dancing of Anandi, daughter of Kalki Krishnamurthi, and Radha, daughter of MS. One other musician who used to sing every year was more of an amateur, T.A. Venkatarama Iyer, a Tamil teacher in M.Ct. and also son-in-law of our revered headmaster, V.S. Gopalakrishna Iyer. His rendering of *Ninnuvina Naama-dhendu* was very popular with us.

R. Krishnan  
104, Jyothi Meadows  
Shivalingah Colony  
P.O. Vimanapura  
Bangalore 560 017

EDITOR'S NOTE: \*Published by East West Books, Chennai (they are in Bangalore too), and available in all bookshops.

Carnatic Summer in Winter stirred old memories (though there is a small mistake: It is 'Maitreem Bhajatha' and 'Grahabalamevi' and not as stated). Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer was famous for his

# If the Adyar eco-park is becoming a reality...

I heartily appreciate the thrust of two stories that appeared recently — "Adyar eco-park plans under discussion" together with "Protected Area status sought since 1985" by Sashi Nair and "Making Chennai a city of gardens" by Shobha Menon (MM, February 16th). I am very glad to learn about the interest evinced by *Madras Musings*, the citizens' group comprising representatives of NGOs such as the Consumer Action Group (CAG) and other public spirited individuals to chalk out plans to restore the sensitive Adyar Creek and wetland area and also to create an Adyar eco-park for which a detailed memorandum has been submitted to the Chennai Corporation.

MM had earlier published articles by Shobha Menon, apart from expressing its views in its editorial columns, about the Adyar Creek, Adyar Estuary and Adyar River, the reasons for the water tables in Chennai going down drastically and the sufferings of the residents who are unable to get good drinking water. The suggestions expressed therein for saving the Adyar area are pertinent while planning the creation of an 'Adyar eco-park'.

I welcome the view of the spokesperson of the citizens' group that it is important to protect the Adyar River area with steps taken to "generate civic consciousness" and to restore the ecology. It was rightly pointed out in the article by Sashi Nair that the Adyar River serves as the only storm river drainage for the whole of South Chennai and the river, originating from the run-off waters from the paddy fields irrigated by the large Chembarampakkam Tank in the Sriperumbudur Taluk and after meandering about 40 km, opens into the Bay of Bengal just north of the Theosophical Society in Adyar.

However, what is the actual state of flow and why are government officials permitting this river to be used by polluting, hazardous industries? In the report released by the Centre for Water Resources, Anna University, and the MM Murugappa Chettiar Research Foundation, Taramani, as part of a UNICEF-commissioned project for the evolution of a national water quality management policy, it was revealed that

anomalous chromium concentration occurred along the Adyar River and the coastline with a large quantity of effluents being discharged by nearly 90 tanneries, mainly from Pallavaram, Chromepet and Pammal, resulting in the increased chromium content in the groundwater. The study also warned that chromium was highly toxic in nature and its intrusion should be stopped at the earliest, as otherwise there would be total deterioration in the quality of underground as well as surface water.

It is a matter of great concern that the Madras High Court has been pronouncing judgments in favour of the tanneries and other polluting industries. In fact, recently, the Green Division Bench of the Madras High Court, while dealing with the grant of consent refused by the TNPCB for the functioning of the highly polluting electroplating unit, called upon the TNPCB to be "positive in its approach" and not "reject such applications on hyper-technical or minor grounds". It had further stated that "the rapid industrialisation of the country alone will enable us to eradicate poverty and unemployment and other social evils and win us respect in the comity of nations".

In contrast to this, ignoring of environmental protection assured under Articles 21, 47, 48-A and 51-A(g), of the Constitution, the recent Supreme Court judgment on the writ petition filed by Goa Foundation comes as great relief to environmentalists and public-spirited people. The Supreme Court directed the closure of 218 industrial and mine polluting units, including tanneries and electroplating units across the country, observing, "industrialisation cannot be allowed at the cost of environment".

The Small Industries Service Institute (SISI) announced that it had plans to create a cluster of leather units and 700 tanneries. If this is permitted, there will be a permanent flow of tannery effluents and there will be no possibility of creating an eco-park in Adyar.

P.S. Subrahmanian  
F-4, "Muruganadi"  
C-46, 47, Varadhachari Street  
Srirangam, Trichy 620 006

### Bacterial or viral disease?

I refer to Dr. Shiva Kumar's letter 'A doctor's view' (MM, February 1st). In the last paragraph, he observes that 'awareness about the disease is inadequate among doctors and the public'. How true!

In the second paragraph, he states that 'the virus resides in the kidneys of animals and is excreted through urine'. It, therefore, implies that he considers leptospirosis a viral disease. But, it is not. It is a bacterial disease caused by *spirochaete bacterium* of the genus *Leptospira*. Leptospirosis is readily treated with antibiotics mentioned by Dr. Shiva Kumar, but none of them is known to control a virus.

Today, medical practitioners recommend a course of antibiotics while treating virus diseases, not with a view to controlling the viral pathogen but to prevent secondary infection by bacteria; that is my understanding.

If recent medical research has shown that leptospirosis is caused by a virus, I stand corrected. Will someone kindly enlighten me on this subject?

K.S. Venkataramani  
38 B-1, 4th Seaward Road  
Valkinagar  
Chennai 600 041

## 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 consider 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 fill 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

## The 70 most beautiful words in English

Mother is the most beautiful word in the English language, according to a survey of over 40,000 overseas voters and learners of English at British Council teaching centres. The survey was conducted by the British Council to coincide with its 70th anniversary celebrations.

The British Council asked over 7,000 learners in 46 countries what they considered to be the most beautiful words in the English language. In addition, an on-line poll was run through British Council websites in all non-English-speaking countries. Over 35,000 people voted.

The results of the survey are:

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. mother         | 38. cosmopolitan  |
| 2. passion        | 39. bubble        |
| 3. smile          | 40. pumpkin       |
| 4. love           | 41. banana        |
| 5. eternity       | 42. if            |
| 6. fantastic      | 43. lollipop      |
| 7. destiny        | 44. bumblebee     |
| 8. freedom        | 45. giggle        |
| 9. liberty        | 46. paradox       |
| 10. tranquillity  | 47. delicacy      |
| 11. peace         | 48. peek-a-boo    |
| 12. blossom       | 49. umbrella      |
| 13. sunshine      | 50. kangaroo      |
| 14. sweetheart    | 51. flabbergasted |
| 15. gorgeous      | 52. hippopotamus  |
| 16. cherish       | 53. gothic        |
| 17. enthusiasm    | 54. coconut       |
| 18. hope          | 55. smashing      |
| 19. grace         | 56. whoops        |
| 20. rainbow       | 57. tickle        |
| 21. blue          | 58. loquacious    |
| 22. sunflower     | 59. flip-flop     |
| 23. sparkle       | 60. smithereens   |
| 24. serendipity   | 61. oi            |
| 25. bliss         | 62. gazebo        |
| 26. lullaby       | 63. hiccup        |
| 27. sophisticated | 64. hodgepodge    |
| 28. renaissance   | 65. shipshape     |
| 29. cute          | 66. explosion     |
| 30. cosy          | 67. fuselage      |
| 31. butterfly     | 68. zing          |
| 32. galaxy        | 69. gum           |
| 33. hilarious     | 70. hen-night     |
| 34. moment        |                   |
| 35. extravaganza  |                   |
| 36. aqua          |                   |
| 37. sentiment     |                   |

(Courtesy: Connecting, journal of the British Council.)

## 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 to do so.

All subscriptions acknowledged by us from January 1, 2005 and subscriptions that we receive between now and April 16<sup>th</sup> 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 subscriptions 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 reminders.

When sending in your subscription, please send it to Chennai 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.

— THE EDITOR

## Nothing's changed in 65 years

Nearly a third of Chennai's population lives in the slums. In the November 16, 2004 issue of *Madras Musings*, while viewing the "terrible life in the slums of Chennai", *MM* had pointed out that the most important issues that needed to be resolved in the slums were poor governance, lack of public awareness, ill-conceived regulatory and economic policies, and inadequate knowledge and inappropriate application of whatever knowledge there is. Most of the slums have no access to services such as sanitation and solid waste management. Water supply and environmental sanitation are poor. The reality is all about hardship, squalor and poverty.

The situation, it would appear, was not very different, quite possibly much worse, in Madras seven years before Independence, when the city's population was 7 lakh but about the same percentage lived in the slums.

We recently received from a wellwisher, S.L. CHITALE, a few copies of a 65-year-old publication not many had heard of — *The Municipal Gazette* — with which his father, L.M. Chitale was associated. In them were several articles about the city that are relevant even today. We intend to publish them from time to time. Today, we publish two accounts of life in Madras and its slums as seen in 1939 and 1940.

## The problem of our slums

January and February 1940

One of the most pressing problems with which Madras is confronted is the clearance of its slums. The population of the city is over 7 lakhs and about one-quarter of its inhabitants live in very small houses comprising one-roomed huts, often constructed back to back, having no ventilation, drainage, sanitation and water-supply. If you were to visit George Town, Choolai, Chintadripet or Triplicane, the conditions under which people live there would fill you with horror. I have visited the slum quarters of London, including those of Shoreditch and Hoxton, but I found the life of the slum dwellers there bearing no comparison with the life which the poor of India lead, many of whose hovels would not be considered a fit habitation even for animals in the West. In addition, there are in Madras about 10,000 people who have no shelter at all and pass their days and nights in the streets.

Between 1921-31, the population of Madras increased with phenomenal rapidity, namely by a lakh and a quarter, but the number of houses built was under 10,000. In an age when many problems affecting the well-being of the nation are engaging the attention of the authorities, the problem of housing is one that deserves due consideration.

Much is being said about the need for promoting national health, and Lloyd George's dictum uttered at the conclusion of the Great War that it is impossible to build an A 1 nation with a C 3 population is being repeated with increasing realisation these days. In this connection, it would be well to recall that housing and health are closely related. It is the most congested parts of the city that show the highest incidence of tuberculosis and, despite improved facilities for medical aid and the activities of the child welfare organisations, we find that there is an appreciable increase in the death-rate in the overcrowded areas. Bad living conditions make unhealthy citizens, and unhealthy citizens are a drag on the community. Hence, it is a must that some tangible effort should be made to improve conditions in the slums and relieve overcrowding.

The City Corporation, it must be said, is not unaware of the urgency of the problem. Some years ago it appointed a special committee to recommend a comprehensive housing policy. This committee advised that the slums of the city should be reconstructed at a capital cost of a crore of rupees. It was also estimated that a sum of Rs. 2.75 crore would be required to re-

lieve congestion among people employed in mills, the Port Trust and other commercial and industrial concerns. The recommendations, however, have not been carried out and much headway has not been made in improving the existing state of affairs mainly for lack of finance. One of the methods by which the question of finance can be tackled is by giving effect to the suggestion of the Royal Commission on Labour that the big commercial and industrial concerns be required to provide proper housing facilities for their employees. Some of the big industrial concerns are already discharging their duty in this regard. Hence, it should not be difficult to extend this principle. When doing so, it must at the same time be borne in mind that the Corporation needs to afford the industrial concerns every help and facility. It should provide them building sites at its cost and should moreover make clear to the employees that when their employers provide houses for them, they will be under an obligation to live there.

Another method by which

workers that must of necessity reside near their places of employment.

During the past thirty years, the Corporation of Madras has been spending some money for the clearance of the slums, but what has been done hitherto is infinitesimal as compared with the requirements. A ten-year plan needs to be formulated in this regard and a point that has to be realised is that the provision of water, light, air and sanitation for the suffering

## by Begum Mir Amiruddin

to effect improvements since that would reduce the return on the capital invested and the Councillors, being the nominees of the middle-classes, are hesitant to take such steps as would give offence to the electors.

It would be well if the Corporation acquired all the slums gradually. Then, after improving the sites, they could release a portion of them for sale and the profits from the reclamation activities could go towards forming the nucleus of a housing fund. In the West, houses for the poor are being erected outside the city. The same procedure may be adopted in Madras and buildings provided in the city only for such

thousands of the population is a more pressing necessity than the provision of ornamental lights, re-fencing of parks and even concreting of roads.

Side by side with steps for the provision of better housing, an urgent task ahead of the Corporation and social workers is the elimination of the slum mentality. In the new tenements constructed by the Corporation, slum conditions have re-appeared as the tenements are not properly used by the inmates and there has been subletting. It is necessary to prevent subletting and, as in the West, to educate the slum dwellers in the matter of healthy living. In some West-

ern countries, e.g. Holland, the authorities have formed special colonies where people who are not yet fit to live in decent houses are lodged. Here, efforts are made to train them before they are allowed to occupy the newly-constructed buildings. The problem in India is that the slum-dweller is blissfully ignorant of the appalling insanitary conditions under which he lives; otherwise he would not contribute to worsen them. Improvements made by an outside agency have no permanency because the mind does not accept them as necessary or essential. Therefore, for any housing scheme to be successful among the poor, the most urgent desideratum is to awaken the minds of the people to the need for improvement in their existing conditions. If the energies of educated young men and women inspired with necessary enthusiasm can be harnessed for the uplift of the masses, there is hope of a tremendous step forward in regard to this matter.

The problem of housing in Madras, despite its complexities, is not beyond solution. With the co-ordinated efforts of the Corporation, the Government, the public and the commercial and industrial concerns and with the establishment of an efficient Improvement Trust, there is every reason to expect the problem to be solved within the next few years.

## Let's all be guardians of our city

March 1939

Municipal Government was given to all the big cities in India with the idea that this would help to raise the civic consciousness of the people, and thereby train the nation in habits of self-government. How far this has been successful may be gauged by a visit to our slums: Municipal officers with their red-turbaned peons may be seen perambulating the places on rounds of inspection, but state of existing conditions — for which they are officially responsible — ought to fill them with consternation.

Dustbins are provided at street corners and near every house, into which people are requested to throw the refuse. The system might be a very good one, if the people did not persist in throwing rubbish all over the streets, and over the heads of pedestrians from upper flats lining the streets. Dustbins remain unemptied for hours together, overflowing with refuse, becoming centres of corruption, and what was meant to be a cure, becomes more malignant than the disease.

That human beings can be content to live in such surroundings is incomprehensible.

In the over-crowded bazaar areas are small side-streets lined with ugly drains, black and evil and suspicious-looking. In these drains every sort of abomination has accumulated for ages! Every now and then a feeble show is made of clearing them, and a good deal of black water is drained on to the road. People empty into these drains refuse from the houses, and they do not seem to see any drawback in having a stagnant drain under their very noses!

In the hot weather, when it is impossible to live inside these slums, people are seen sleeping out of doors, calmly reposing on their mats or sheets of newspaper, and inhaling this offensive atmosphere all night.

During the rains, the contents of these drains are partially set in motion, and the evil odours which are then let loose must be inhaled to be believed.

It is surprising that Madras, in spite of being the oldest

municipality and the vigilance of its numerous members, still continues to be a veritable hot-bed of filth, disease and beggars. The nightmare tragedy of it all is to see the sewage collected in carts drawn by bullocks. These trail gingerly along our streets at all hours of the day, adding their quota to an atmosphere already sufficiently polluted.

The human beings whose unfortunate lot it is to collect the debris of the town may be seen dumping their contents into tanks, in parts near the heart of the City.

How could flesh and blood endure the agony of such a squalid profession?

A total destruction of the existing order of things is the only possible cure.

## by SAKUNTHALA THAMPI

The outstanding sign of municipal vigilance is the daily sweeping of streets, which is done briskly and energetically. But the sweepers stir up the dust in dense clouds which choke the passerby, and drift into open windows and sweetmeat shops, and food which is sold on the roadside.

Though some of our roads are the best in India, the conditions of most of our side-streets cannot find expression in words. You must drive through these streets and then you will know as you have never known before what is meant by the Madras slum area!

Houses are all packed close together like rabbit-warrens, apparently for the sake of mutual protection in times more turbulent than the present. The scene near some of the little street houses is animated, the motley crowd surging up and down, with people in every conceivable variety of dress and undress. Bullockcarts and hand-drawn vehicles bring in

supplies from the villages, and if you are in a hurry you will be in despair when you find these streets filled with long lines of carts laden with bricks, chaffies, wood, vegetables and hay, projecting very much on either side.

Milkmen carry out a brisk trade with their dusty open milk-cans and underfed cows; if the supply does not meet the demand, the stagnant pools, or the water-taps, come mercifully to their rescue.

In the big streets and promenades, lepers, beggars and so-called ascetics wander about at their own sweet will in immense numbers.

The scum of India, these add to the squalor of the scene, and brush shoulders with the passer-by.

The evil faces of some of them are a sufficient evidence of their dissolute and self-indulgent lives of complete idleness.

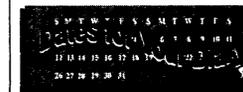
Why, may I ask, do people think that nothing matters in these streets?

There is practical, educative and philanthropic work waiting for our women. It is the prevention, by personal care, by example or precept, of the general spoiling of the city that is everywhere apparent — a destruction which threatens to mar the face of this great metropolitan city, turning it into a gigantic litter-dump.

I urge every man, woman and child to make it their special business to check this menace, by making themselves responsible for the tidiness and general cleanliness of their houses, gardens and streets by constant supervision, advice and warning.

Let us make today this resolution for 1939, that we will exercise all care, either by admonishing, supervising, writing, or by speaking, to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of our dwelling places and streets, thus making life a cultivated and gracious exercise.

Let us all be the guardians of our city's cleanliness.



March 16: Art show by students of Stella Maris College. (At Amethyst.)

March 16 to 25: The Kapaleeswarar Temple festival.

From March 18: Exhibition *New Faces of India*, Part 2. (At Art-world.)

March 19: A voyage to the world of science. All through the day, games and competitions will be organised in the library: writing a small text using ten scientific words that have been chosen by ten French celebrities of the science field, acoustic competition, and a cartoon competition using an illustration by Christian Cailleaux, the French illustrator and comic book writer who visited the Alliance in January.

3 pm: Presentation of Radio France International that you can, henceforth, listen to at the library.

4 pm: Film *Kinkou et la sorciere* by Michel Ocelot.

6 pm: Presentation by students who participated in the various competitions.

On March 23 at 5pm: Contest "Plum d'Or". (all at Alliance Francaise.)

March 20 : Kalarippayattu past... present... future. Kalarippayattu,



the centuries-old martial art form that originated in Kerala is an integral part of history and culture of the region. This ancient form of physical training incorporates a sophisticated system of medical knowledge consisting of diagnosis, treatment and *marma* therapy based on Ayurveda.

Shaji John, trained in traditional Kalarippayattu and one of the leading exponents of this martial art, has been conducting regular classes in Chennai and codifying the ancient training techniques into a systematic pattern of learning to suit our current lifestyles.

This lecture-demonstration aims at exploring the past, experiencing the present and envisaging the future. (At Alliance Francaise at 7 p.m.)

From March 21: Exhibition of paintings by Nitin Utge and Pravin Utge. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

March 21 to April 2: *Penumbra of life lines*, an exhibition by Ameen Khaleel. A blend of images and abstraction is the most characteristic trait in Ameen's works. He is a self-taught artist from Kerala. (At Alliance Francaise.)

March 22: From the accounts of Anandarangappillai to the chronicles of Viranaicker II : *Dawn of Tamil historiography in 18th Century* — a talk by Gobalakichenane.

It is not every day that you come across a person who visits libraries all over the world to collect information on the lives of people from the past. Gobalakichenane will talk about his researches and will highlight the evolution in the writing of two historical characters. He will also

show how these diaries and chronicles can be viewed as the dawn of Tamil historiography in the second half of the 18th Century. (At Alliance Francaise, 6.30 p.m.)

March 22: Piano recital by Antony Peebles, who has played in — astonishingly — 127 different countries and is now adding Chennai to his long list of conquests. He has performed as concerto soloist with the London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, Halle, City of Birmingham Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Welsh Symphony, City of London Sinfonia, etc. He broadcasts on BBC Radio 3. In 1971, he won the BBC Piano Competition with a unanimous vote from the jury. The next year, he won the Debussy Competition in France. The piano recital in Chennai will include works by Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Ravel and Debussy. (At the Museum Theatre, 7 p.m.)



Antony Peebles.

Till March 23: This year, the 10th Francophone Day Festival will commemorate the 100th death anniversary of Jules Verne with 'Science' as the theme. Discover how scientific French can be through the various activities that will be organised at the Alliance Francaise of Madras during this period. (At Alliance Francaise.)

### Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current affairs questions are from the period February 16th to 28th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. What global environmental pact, named after an Asian city, came into effect on February 16th?
2. Name the two writers elected as Fellows of the Sahitya Akademi recently.
3. Who is the new chairman of SEBI?
4. Which famous institution, born at Unity Building, Chicago, celebrated its centenary on February 23rd?
5. Which Australian recently achieved the feat of taking the first five catches in an ODI?
6. Name the MPV launched by Toyota on February 25th.
7. Who won the Best Actor and Best Actress Oscars on February 28th?
8. One more on the Oscars. Which film on the children of sexworkers of Kolkata won the award for the Best Documentary Feature?
9. According to the Union Budget, income upto what amount will not attract tax?
10. Name the former Prime Minister of Holland and the UNHCR chief who was forced to resign because of sexual abuse charges.

\* \* \*

11. Where in the State has a piece of writing in Tamil-Brahmi script, circa 500 B.C., been unearthed recently?
12. Which Asian automobile maker is to build its second plant near Chennai soon?
13. How has the Greater Chennai Police Commissionerate been expanded?
14. Where is the PWD planning to construct two check dams on the Adyar near Chennai to facilitate groundwater recharge in surrounding areas?
15. Which 'river' that flows through Chennai has its origin at Kesavaram Anicut in Tiruvallur?
16. Which company won the first ever 'CII Brand of the Year' award at the Brand Summit held in Chennai recently?
17. Who created the People's Park in Chennai in 1859?
18. What was the former name of Raja Muthiah Salai in Chennai?
19. What titles did S.K. Mavi and Madhuri Gurnule take in Chennai on February 20th?
20. Name the upcoming film, starring Satyaraj, for which M. Karunanidhi has penned the script and also written some lyrics?

(Answers on page 8)

## A heritage landmark in music

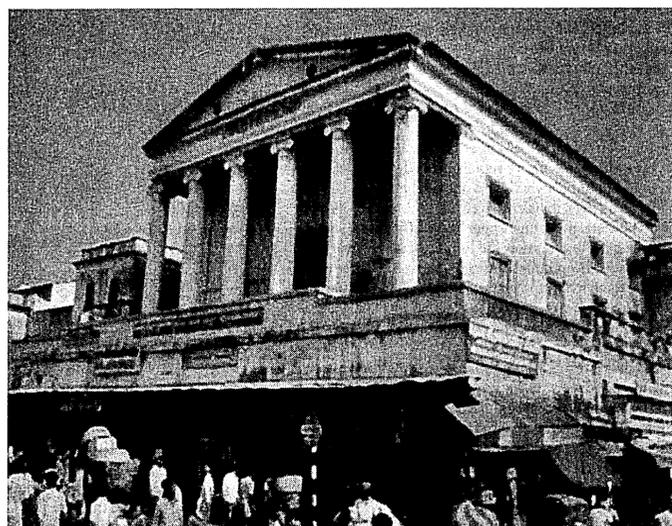
Those who walk down N.S.C. Bose Road and still manage to look up at the buildings, at considerable personal peril, would have no doubt been impressed by Pachaiyappa's Hall, modelled as it is on the Athenian Temple of Theseus with a frontage comprising Doric columns. Today, the building is almost entirely hidden by shops, but in its time it must have been a striking landmark.

Construction of the Hall began in 1846 and it was completed in 1850. The entire cost was borne by the estate of Pachaiyappa Mudaliar, one of the earliest Indians to leave a Will and who left as much as Rs. 7 lakhs for charity, on his death in 1794. The building became the home of the Pachaiyappa's High School and, later, of the College. Today it houses the Govinda Naicker School, founded in 1865.

The Hall appears to have been put to use as a venue for music performances from its inception. The Madras Jubilee Gayana Samaj in particular used it as a venue for their own performances. The Madras Gayana Samaj, begun in 1883 as a branch of the celebrated Gayan Samaj of Poona, was inaugurated at the Pachaiyappa's Hall on 18th August, 1883 (by a strange coincidence, the Music Academy too was inaugurated on 18th August, but in 1928), with Sir Charles Turner, the then Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, taking the chair. Among the other noteworthy attendees were Justice Muthuswami Iyer, Sir T. Madhav Rao and V. Bhashyam Iyengar.

One of the principal aims of the Samaj was to get Europeans to appreciate Carnatic music and so it planned a series of performances at the Hall with prominent Englishmen being invited to attend. The *Madras Mail* took considerable interest in the proceedings of the Samaj and regularly published detailed reports. Even then it would appear that Mylapore was emerging as a venue for fine arts, for some of the programmes were held at the residences of V. Bhashyam Iyengar (present-day Kamadhenu Theatre) and Sir T. Madhav Rao (present-day Luz Corner). The first anniversary of the Samaj was celebrated on 17th November 1884 at Pachaiyappa's Hall, with Sir Charles Turner once again presiding. A veritable galaxy of luminaries of Madras attended. The main programme was that of a Mr. Natekar performing on many instruments of north Indian origin. The programme concluded with the Tachur Singaracharlu brothers singing the national anthem in Sanskrit (was it *Santatam paahi maam?*).

On 22nd December 1885, the Samaj provided musical en-



Pachaiyappa's Hall.

tertainment at the Hall to Lord and Lady Reay, then Governor and First Lady of Bombay Presidency who were visiting. Mr. (later Sir and still later Lord) Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, Governor of Madras, was

held at the Hall till the year 1887 when, at the behest of the Maharaja of Vizianagaram, the Samaj was rechristened Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj, the word "Jubilee" being added to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of

Sastry. They also learnt music from Annaswami Sastry. Among their noteworthy disciples were Tiger Varadachariar and K. Ponniah Pillai.

The brothers were also pioneers in printing books related to music. Between the year 1882 and 1916, they were to bring out a series of books such as the *Gayaka Parijatam* (1882), *Sangeeta Kalanidhi* (1889), *Gayaka Siddhanjanam* (1890 and 1905) and the *Ganendu Sekharam*. The *Siddhanjanam* has an extremely informative foreword in English that has information on several composers and musicians of the post-Trinity period.

Queen Victoria's accession. On that occasion, Tennyson's *Jubilee Ode* was translated into Sanskrit and rendered as a song, the music being set by the Tachur brothers.

The brothers, who were residents of nearby Tambu Naicken Lane (today a plastics market), were closely associated with the Pachaiyappa's Hall, with the elder brother working at the College as a Pandit. Pioneers in adopting the system of raga nomenclature as given out in the *Sangraha Choodamani*, they were composers of merit, with the *Ninnu kori* varnam in Vasanta being their creation. The brothers learnt the violin from Fiddle Rangacharlu, who had been trained by Subbaraya

● by V. SRIRAM

### 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

## Activities for the community

(Continued from last fortnight)

The promotion of sport in the community to develop fitness and potential champions will depend on leaders organising programmes such as these:

### Walkathons to places of interest

Groups of people tour an area to visit places of interest and cover a couple of hours walking. For example, the *Mylapore Times* organises a tour of temples, churches and places of religious and historical interest for senior citizens around Mylapore.

### Dribblethons

Teams dribble a basketball, football or hockey balls to and fro with a competitive interest introduced through relaying, over comfortable distances.

### Indian file jogs

Groups of 10 to 15 persons are stationed about 2 metres apart. The file proceeds on a sedate, easy pace run or trot. The last one overtakes at a fast pace, to reach the leading position. He subsides to the pack's pace. The next rearmost member starts to get to the top. The cycle carries on for a determined time (20 minutes) or distance (5 km).

### Small area games

The conduct of Chain Relays is a good example. Teams of five or above in odd number composition are formed. The teams are split with an odd number of members at start (A) and an even number at the opposite end (B) at a selected distance - 100m or 200m. Starting members run from start A to B and hand batons over. They then take the position of the last runner at that end. Each runner repeats run and position. The chain continues so that each runner covers the distance 4, 5 or 6 times. Recovery will be the time intervals till the next turn comes up.

### Crosscountry hikes

Groups of persons do easy jogs in open spaces — grasslands, beach/river sands, and up/down small hills. Some will lead and target a landmark — a tree, boulder or building — and lead the way. After reaching the spot, another group will set the target for the next station.

### Tricycle races

Engage a fair number of cycle rickshaws. The stronger family members will ride the rickshaw with 3 or 4 family members along a fixed course. The return will involve exchange of partners — father to eldest son or daughter. Grandparents should be welcome as passengers.

### Family pick-a-backs

Adults carry children pick-a-back — men and boys, women and girls — in a competitive shuttle relay.

### Speed walking

Competitive walking, with penalties for infringements, will introduce the fun element into constitutional walks.

Fitness circuits can be installed on straight or circular routes with stations hosting exercise charts depicting simple stretching, bending and jumping drills.

### Barrel loading/unloading

Games like unloading barrels of water by families using small buckets, searching for personal wear in a jumble, or locating a code letter from a bin are some examples of this activity.

### Jumping and throwing relays

Form teams of equal numbers and divide into two groups. One group assembles at the starting line and the other half of an opposing team at a determined distance, directly opposite. The first person takes 5 or

● The second of two articles by A.J. DE SOUZA on how we can make a fitter India.

6 squat jumps, bouncing steps, or throws a medicine ball/weighted sack, double handed. The opposite number starts the jump or throw from the landing of his rival. The to and fro exchange carries on till the last member performs.

If he lands over the starting line, then his team wins. Otherwise the starting team wins.

### Picker relays

Seemingly a children's game, picker relays help speed, mobility, agility and co-ordination of the participants. Assemble teams by couples behind a starting line in single file. Place five markers about 10 metres apart in front of the starting line. Pick-up materials like balls or pebbles are set, one each on either side of each marker. At the "Go" signal starting runners race up the furthest marker 'A', to pick up the object and run back to place it on the start line. He repeats the pick-up process one by one. When the runner completes the gathering, his team-mate starts replacing them in the same sequence. The team that completes retrieving and replacing earliest wins.

### Fitness circuits

Exercises are arranged around a circuit at stations 20 to 30 metres apart. The circuit may be circular, oval, rectangular or zig-zag. The circuit is designed to improve the different motor qualities and exercises

prescribed for the average fitness levels of the community. The chart below is an example of a cast of drills and this should be varied according to the needs of participating persons.

Jog or run between stations:

- Station 1 - Stretches
- Station 2 - Push Ups
- Station 3 - Spot Run
- Station 4 - Free Squats
- Station 5 - Jumping Jack
- Station 6 - Sit Ups
- Station 7 - Skipping
- Station 8 - Trunk Rotation

Run 150 metres. The number of repetitions at each station can be determined according to the participants' abilities. Repeat circuit 3 to 5 times.

In cities and towns, Corporation playgrounds (seldom used for health and recreation) should be transformed into community fitness centres to host these activities. They should be maintained by corporates with local suppliers and department stores providing prizes for games and contests.

Countryside fitness can be promoted through agri-oriented competitions relating to the season — cattle penning, volume harvesting, loading cane trailers, bullockcart races and supplemented by free style wrestling, weightlifting, stamina runs and muzzle-loading shooting contests at *shandies*.

(Concluded)

## 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: .....

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

Date: ..... Signature: .....

# Taking T.N. rugby to the top

For the first time in nine years, a team from India has become rugby national champions in two versions (15s and 7s) of the game; the Armenians had done it in 1996. War cries of *Achham Illai* ('No fear') had punctuated the games the Chennai Cheetahs won to take the All India & South Asia Rugby 15s title last September. A few weeks ago, the cries were heard again when the Cheetahs won the Hutch All India 7s tournament, defeating the Tamil Nadu Police 21-14.

En route to the final, the TN Police out-ran Bombay Gymkhana (19-7), the reigning champions in this version of the game. The TN Police B team, however, lost in the finals of the Bowl Competition to Orissa. And the Plate was won by Bangalore, beating Army B.

The success of teams from the South in the tournament, according to Patrick Davenport, Secretary, Tamil Nadu Rugby Football Union (TNRFU), who in many ways has been responsible for resurrecting the sport in Tamil Nadu and the southern states and providing it direction, has proved that what the TNRFU

is doing in terms of development of the sport is on the right track. The man who has moulded these teams literally from scratch is Emil Vartazarian, technical director, TNRFU, who coaches both the Cheetahs and the TN Police, and who, in Davenport's view, is the best player in India.

Backed by support from the TNRFU, the Karnataka Rugby Football Union, formed in July 2003, with Charu Sharma as its president, has appointed two full-time coaches in Bangalore. The Andhra Pradesh Rugby Football Union will be appointing a coach in Hyderabad once it is formed this month. The TNRFU has already hired a coach in Pondicherry. Although Davenport insists that the TNRFU's focus would be on consolidating the gains made so far, there are plans to start coaching camps in Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem, Tiruchi and Kerala in a year's time. "You have to have a registered body and an office with a telephone. Only then can you focus on coaching. For example, we had started a club in Kerala, but the initial enthusiasm fizzled out because there was no office or

official there," says Davenport.

Meanwhile, Sye, a 45-minute Telugu film based on rugby, is about to cross its 200th day in Andhra Pradesh. A quarter of the film's cast now plays rugby. "The film provides us an excellent opportunity to develop rugby in schools in AP. When the film was released, we received hundreds of calls from those wanting to learn to play the game," says Davenport.

Another pointer to the sport

● by SASHI NAIR

in the South, backed by TNRFU efforts, getting to a higher level is the strong showings by the Army and the TN Police teams in recent tournaments. Nearly 200 army men are training full-time in Ahmednagar under Willy Heteraka, a former selector for the New Zealand All Blacks, and 48 TN policemen are being trained by Vartazarian. Davenport is convinced that once they get the hang of the game, the Army and Police teams will become two of the top teams in the country.

"We run one of the most successful rugby programmes in Asia and, mind you, we are self-funded. The International Rugby Board is now getting interested in what we are doing. Earlier, development of rugby was confined among the elite;



The Chennai Cheetahs' Sevens' squad, National Champions 2004. In white, from left to right, the creators of the champions from Chennai: Patrick Davenport, Emil Vartazarian and Mohan Krishna.

we follow the New Zealand approach – sport can be egalitarian – which encourages even farmers to take to the game. We'll even train a *paanwallah* if he is keen," says Davenport.

The fruits of the efforts of Mohan Krishna, president, TNRFU, Davenport and Vartazarian in popularising rugby are to be seen not only in tournament victories but in taking the game to the schools. Today, 28 schools in Chennai are playing the game. The best 50 players from them will be given special instruction to enable them to play at higher levels. "Unfortunately, the under-11 age category does not get the encouragement it deserves. In Australia, for example, there is an academy for the under-11s that provides excellent facilities, imparts specialised training and the best possible education. Here, we are still struggling to have a ground of our own," Davenport frets. The TNRFU trains players at the American International School grounds in the mornings and uses the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDATN) ground for matches. Davenport hopes that the programme launched by PWC Davidar, the member-secretary of the Au-

thority, and his team to build a database that will help pick promising schoolchildren for a sport they are best suited for, will help increase the rugby pool in the State.

At the end of this month, a major schools tournament will be held in the Nehru Stadium in Chennai. The TNRFU is hopeful of getting a member from the International Rugby Football Union to attend. The Inter-City 7s Tournament will follow (April first week) in Dildarnagar, near Varanasi. All these efforts, Davenport hopes, will help India climb from Group 4 of the Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU). In the ARFU tournament in October last year, the Indian team, which included six Tamil Nadu players, beat Pakistan and Hong Kong and fared well against Kazakhstan for a good part of the game. "Some of the toughest people in India come from the South. We improve on that by providing them good food and a clean environment. All this will enable Tamil Nadu players help improve Indian Rugby," Davenport is confident.

More sport on p. 7

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Kyoto Protocol; 2. Nirmal Verma and Kovilan; 3. N. Damodaran; 4. Rotary Movement; 5. Adam Gilchrist; 6. Innova; 7. Jamie Foxx and Hilary Swank; 8. 'Born into Brothels'; 9. Rs. 1 lakh; 10. Ruud Lubber.

\* \* \*

11. Adichanallur; 12. Hyundai

Motor Company; 13. All 41 stations under the jurisdiction of Chengalpattu-East police district will be under the GCPC; 14. At Nandambakkam and Manapakam; 15. Cooum; 16. Nokia; 17. Charles Trevelyan; 18. Sydenhams Road; 19. The winners of the Chennai Marathon; 20. 'Mannin Mainthan'.

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