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MADRAS

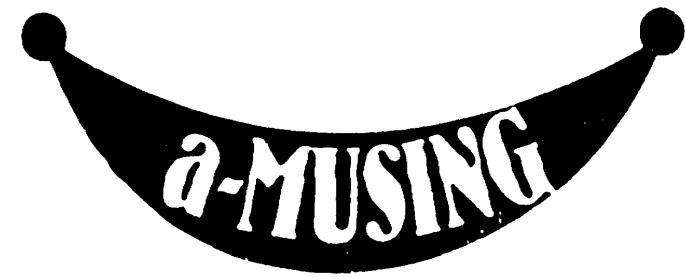
MUSINGS

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Not one of these will last even one flight. You better take my 'trunk box'!

Heave ho!

The stern forces of education, striking a deal with the young, have agreed to lie low for a few weeks and get off their backs ... literally, in the case of our school-going citizens.

Human hordes, displaying signs of restlessness, are all set to take off, along mostly well-worn flight paths.

Only one thing left to do now ... finding suitable depositories for all the material manifestations of holiday plans ... large enough, strong enough, yet light enough, luggage.

But the mighty cousins of the old back-pack are getting fancier by the day. Some are magical; they fold in, flip over, and can, in an instant, look like wafer thin sandwiches. Others are so high-tech, they create fresh inferiority complexes in souls already heavily burdened. You dare not place your worn-out, obviously dictated-by-comfort-rather-than-fashion, wardrobe within them. As for that dreadful plastic cover that contains your meagre, spare footwear, don't even think of bringing it anywhere close to this gleaming creature.

Complicated locks? Avoid them. The last thing you want is a flint-eyed Customs official watching you with growing suspicion as you struggle with combinations, telling yourself grimly that you should have chosen your own birth date instead of trying to be smart and innovative.

All this fuss to carry packets of *podis*, *vadams*, and "tender mango pickled in brine" ... or, rather, *vadu-manga* ...

Whatever happened to the old steel trunks?

Ranjitha Ashok

Engineers aplenty — but where are the jobs?

(By A Special Correspondent)

More than 200 engineering colleges function in Tamil Nadu. Their total intake capacity is reported to be around 72,000 every year. There are also around 1,50,000 seats for diploma level engineering education in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has the daunting task of finding employment for around two lakh engineering degree and diploma holders passing out every year. Are so many engineering seats necessary? Should students opt for engineering education in such large numbers? These are questions that arise because unemployment amongst fresh engineers has now become a serious issue in Tamil Nadu.

In the past, technicians and engineers from Tamil Nadu used to get jobs in other parts of the country. This has become difficult in recent times, since

almost every state in the country has created large numbers of engineering colleges. With the country producing more than one million engineering degree and diploma holders every year, what are the job prospects for them?

There are cases where engineering graduates in Tamil Nadu who passed out in 1999 remain unemployed till now. There are also cases where diploma holders are forced to take up jobs like selling sarees in textile shops. Women engineers are generally not preferred by the employers for jobs on the shopfloor or for travel-oriented functions.

In recent times, a number of engineers have been successful in getting positions in software companies with lucrative

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Projects in Tamil Nadu registered with Government of India during the last 16 months (since November, 2003)*

Month	Nov 03	Dec 03	Jan 04	Feb 04	Mar 04	Apr 04	May 04	Jun 04
Software	9	10	8	8	12	14	9	7
Automobile	9	6	6	2	10	1	3	1
Chemical	3	1	1	2	7	3	1	4
Leather	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trade	2	3	2	4	2	3	1	1
Consultancy	1	2	2	-	5	5	2	1
Paper	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Food items	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	2
Textile	1	3	2	1	2	-	-	5
Hotel/ Restaurant	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	3
Others	-	3	6	2	4	4	1	9
No. of Projects	30	31	29	20	44	30	17	33

Month	Jul 04	Aug 04	Sep 04	Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05
Software	9	8	2	4	9	5	-	5
Automobile	4	2	1	3	4	4	-	1
Chemical	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	1
Leather	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Trade	-	3	2	1	1	-	-	1
Consultancy	3	7	1	4	-	5	-	1
Paper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food items	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Textile	2	-	2	-	3	-	-	-
Hotel/ Restaurant	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Others	3	3	3	1	4	1	-	-
No. of Projects	23	24	12	16	24	15	-	10

(Combined total 358)
*Small scale industries not included.
Source: Indian Investment Centre, Government of India.

Let Mumbai be Mumbai, not Shanghai

Lessons for Chennai in Mumbai seminar

The Maharashtra government's vision to make Mumbai into another gleaming, skyscrapered Asian tiger took a knocking at the Asiatic Society's recent seminar on 'Re-visioning Mumbai', where planners, architects and activists ridiculed the Mumbai makeover, criticised the slum demolitions and evoked the spirit of an older city.

"Too many current programmes are driven by the notion that grand projects make a great city, it is a mistake to believe that grand architectural gestures are a substitute for a living city," said urban planner Shirish Patel. "As soon as I hear Shanghai and Singapore, my

hand reaches for the gun," quipped civic activist Gerson D'Cunha, adding that the character of the city, its extraordinary heritage "must be preserved at all costs."

While several seminars have recently obsessed about how to regain Mumbai's former glory, this one, part of the Asiatic Society's bicentennial celebrations, was charged by the backdrop of two burning issues, the slum demolitions and the redevelopment of the mill lands.

Former Chief Justice of India,

Y.V. Chandrachud, commented on the social effect of dis-housing. "If you lived somewhere for 10 years and your house was suddenly demolished, where would you go?" he asked, adding that crime would now increase. Chandrachud blamed the politicians who let slums flourish in their own interests, and said that allowing slums to stay on a piece of land for so many years was in the nature of a legal "promissory". Urban researcher Natej K.B. described the makeover as a "take over", noting that people

wanted to wish the slum dwellers away while "covertly using their labour because it is criminally cheap, or using their votes".

Patel, describing the demolitions as "cruel and futile", pointed out the paradox of urban economic growth. It is jobs that attract people to the city, who then live in slums because they have no access to housing. "I don't understand having a cut-off date for slums. Do you have a cut-off date for jobs?" he said, noting that, in the past, employers like the railways or the textile mills provided their workers with housing. "Now, we have 4,413 policemen and 81 inspectors

(Continued on Page 7)

Fisheries sector's needs, post-tsunami

Govt.-NGO co-operation necessary

The tsunami unleashed a wave of sympathy across the country. But, as aid still continues to pour in, it is important for those who are involved in relief and rehabilitation (R&R) measures to be 'well informed', says Babu Mathew, Country Director, Actionaid, India.

Broadly speaking, the fishing sector can be classified into:

— the traditional fishing sector that relies on artisanal skills is highly skilled and ecologically sustainable; and

— the modern fishing sector that, shortsightedly, aims at profit maximisation and is responsible for eroding fish stock at a global level.

Says Mathew, "The primary need is to understand what the fisherfolk have actually lost — mainly their boats and fishing nets, of various kinds. The kinds of boats most used are the catamarans; it is only the richer fishermen who use trawlers with fishing practices which are banned in the West because they destroy fishing wealth. Many a time, trawler owners are business people who have

bought into the fishing sector, but their voices carry tremendous weight.

Policy decisions regarding rehabilitation measures need to support sustainable forms of fishing. We support modernisation in the name of 'development'. "The Government of Tamil Nadu blindly applies the same sympathetic standards to the fishing sector as the other

● by **SHOBHA MENON**

sectors when a totally different approach is necessary," says Mathew. Unlike other commodities, where an increase in production gives you better dividends, in fishing an unlimited increase in productivity is dangerous and is a major reason not to modernise. "We must not do anything which destroys the traditional sector, not only because it affects the livelihood of lakhs of people, but because it affects ecological sustainability itself. There is also the need to address the issue of foreign fishing vessels — actually 'factories' where the fish are caught, pro-

cessed immediately and directly exported — defeating many regulatory laws in the country. Ironically, the government even provides them with subsidised fuel."

"Both the State and NGOs have been engaged in constructing temporary shelters of material that cannot withstand rains or storm, like *chattirams*, with no provision for family privacy, and sometimes an utter insensitivity to fellow human beings", points out another field worker. S. Jaideep, Programme Coordinator, Actionaid, urges strongly the "imperative" need for a comprehensive family need assessment to be carried out by both Government and NGOs. "Most of the shelters we've seen are not at all habitable. And what about ensuring that even the temporary shelters are near the coast, where the fisherfolk have always lived. R & R measures have been sporadic, with no clear statistics available on each district or *kuppam*, and the kind of household packages provided. Any comprehensive relief package should at least provide for a minimum period of six months."

The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) has been involved with small scale fishermen for the last two decades. A spokesperson says, "All available data on the fishing communities is mostly dependent on NGO networks or firsthand information from the fisherfolk. With no earlier information recorded on the assets of the fisherfolk, you are not even sure whom to trust. In a rush of sympathy, many who wish to help want to donate boats, nets etc. But often it doesn't reach everyone who needs it and, sadly, creates more social conflicts." Currently, in Nagapattinam alone, there are 460 NGOs working for fisherfolk!

"Remember, we are also dealing with an emotionally deeply affected community, whom we actually can't blame for their responses. In the long run, however, it is better to understand clearly the earlier situation, what they've actually lost and what is the need of the hour with the perspective of long-term sustainability in mind. If in five years, what is given is going to make the overall situation worse, why provide the 'aid' at all?" she wonders.

Says Ratin Roy, who was earlier with the FAO's Bay of Bengal Programme, "In our country, whenever such damage occurs, everyone looks to the govern-

Ways to help — in the view of the fisher societies

The South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFF) suggests the following measures be adapted to help the fisheries sector in the post-tsunami scenario:

Fishing capacity not to be increased beyond pre-tsunami levels

Adding more mechanised boats or motors can lead to over-capitalisation, decline in incomes per boat and perhaps even depletion of fish resources.

Reduce trawler fleet, increase opportunities for small fishermen

There is a need to provide incentives for at least some trawler owners to leave the fishery. Compensation can be provided for loss and they can be encouraged to invest in other businesses or smaller boats. Purchase of secondhand trawlers can be encouraged from major centres so that high concentration in these areas is reduced.

Policy of replacement to be followed scrupulously in artisanal sector

Donors and NGOs are planning distribution of fishing equipment based on 'wish lists' provided by local fishing communities. Alternatively, they are preparing their own 'dream projects' to improve fishing by distribution of motorboats that will cover all families in the village. Both are very harmful and can lead to overcapitalisation of the fishery. Priority must be to replace what was lost in the village, rather than make hasty interventions in the name of improvement of livelihood. Such improvements are better done in the second year, after the rehabilitation is completed and a clearer picture emerges.

Disruption of existing ownership patterns to be avoided in the artisanal sector

Interventions planned include group ownership of fishing assets. Such a concept does not exist in the Tamil Nadu fishery and all previous attempts at introducing group ownership through government and NGO programmes have been unsuccessful. Attempts to re-engineer the ownership patterns and bring about social changes in the fishery are ill-conceived and potentially disruptive.

Bank loans to be avoided

Most NGOs/donors feel that helping fishermen avail of bank loans is an ideal intervention. There is no satisfactory mechanism for recovery of bank loans and the record of the entire fisheries sector — mechanised or artisanal — has been dismal. Bank loans will be seen as a subsidy under another name.

Government/NGO partnership in implementing packages

NGOs/donors can add to the subsidy component with their funds so that fishermen don't have to take bank loans. As a feasible alternative with many advantages, the details need to be thought of. The role of the NGO must be one of active involvement — scrutinising beneficiary lists, organising supply of fishing equipment etc., in order to substantially reduce the administrative burden of government machinery.

Distribution of fishing gear and tackle within limits

As opposed to independent distribution of boats and motors outside the government package, distribution of fishing gear needs to be reconsidered. There are as many as nine different kinds of nets used in Tamil Nadu. There is scope for NGOs/donors to distribute fishing gear in addition to what is covered in the government package as well as accessories other than nets or hooks. The problem, however, is that loss of gear and tackle is almost impossible to correctly assess, in contrast to boats and motors.

S.M.

Good fisheries management system necessary

A recent workshop on post-tsunami rehabilitation of fishermen in Nagapattinam organised by the Department of Fisheries in collaboration with the NGO, Coordination Centre, threw up a few interesting suggestions:

Deep sea fishing: There is ample scope for deep sea fishing beyond the continental shelf, beyond the Nagapattinam Coast [pioneering fishermen are using the Philippines method of using a fish aggregating device (*payao*) to attract tuna and other fish at a distance 35-40 km from shore]. Coordination between the Department of Fisheries, Central scientific institutions and technically capable NGOs could develop a sound deep sea fishing sector that addresses endurance and storage capacity of boats, improvements to on-board handling of fish, processing and marketing arrangements.

This should be promoted on the basis of upgradation of the existing fleet of mechanised and motorised boats rather than through introduction of deep sea vessels from outside. It should also be seen as an opportunity for those involved in fishing as a traditional occupation to improve their lot rather than as an investment opportunity for outsiders.

Mariculture: A number of proven technologies for mariculture — like lobster fattening, mussel culture, pearl oyster culture, etc. — can be implemented with the help of Central scientific institutions. With promotion of suitable technologies, taking into account the economic viability and social feasibility, fisheries department can develop a detailed site-specific plan along with Central institutions.

There is need to improve post-harvest and processing aspects. Training and support for women to use low-cost and appropriate technologies may be taken up.

Research management: Post-tsunami changes are being documented by various scientific institutions which should be in the loop of the Department of Fisheries. The results should be collated and made available to NGOs and fishing communities.

The tsunami has exposed various limitations in fisheries management system in the State. A good fisheries management system based on sound principles and participation of fishing communities needs to be developed at the earliest.

S.M.

ment for support. In most other countries, the government will look at common infrastructure, but not into personal damage. For the fisherfolk, the current attitude is, 'God knows when the government will look at us next. So get the most out of it now!' How much more sense it makes to have insurance schemes for disaster-prone communities. In this case, instead of subsidising the houses, government can subsidise insurance schemes. We also need to look at alternate sustainable livelihoods in the fishing community. This terrible disaster is providing a great opportunity for everyone concerned with the issue — for a total comprehensive relook at the fishing sector and its challenges."

Cited as 'the first success (Continued on Page 7)

A big 'Thank You' to 18 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.3.05 and 15.4.05, 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.

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**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



Improvements in city

I recently visited Madras and felt good about two things in the city:

1. The quality of maintenance of both the international and domestic airports is good. In 2000, I found the airports in Madras in a miserable condition and I voiced my concern in *Madras Musings* soon after I returned to Orange (NSW). This time, I experienced a delightful contrast. Queues were orderly, immigration and customs authorities were friendly and polite, baggage carousels were working well, and the waiting lounges were clean and nice. Most importantly, the toilets were clean and well-maintained. However, I am unable to restrain myself from saying that my experience with a private airline company was miserable and frustrating. This particular airline company, which offers the cheapest airfares for domestic travel, has no sense of time, and every time I travelled I was subjected to considerable delays; most regrettably, the ground staff of the company expressed no regret or apology for these delays.
2. A glimpse of the public parks impressed me highly. I never went into a park, but got to see a few as I passed by, I was awestruck the way the Independence Day Park in Nungambakkam has been spruced up, the Anna Nagar Tower Park also looks neat. Whoever manages the Madras domestic and international airports and the parks in the city deserve congratulations.

Anantanarayanan Raman

Senior Lecturer
Ecological Agriculture &
Sustainable Land Management
Program Leader (Honours)
The University of Sydney
Faculty of Rural Management
PO Box 883
Orange NSW 2800 Australia

Oasis of beauty

Although the overall upkeep and maintenance of Chennai leaves a lot to be desired (forget making it Singara) there are instances of excellence which deserve appreciation.

The Sri Ramulu Park on Broadway (Loane Square) was a festering eyesore which *Madras Musings* has drawn attention to several times.

Not any more. Someone up there seems to have issued a command, and the park is now a thing of beauty – and hopefully a joy forever.

I hope some more 'quality circles' (pockets of excellence in management parlance) are created in North Chennai which will somewhat ameliorate the extant living conditions there.

C.G. Prasad

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

A citizens' park

I am a new resident of Ashok Nagar. During my morning walk, I located a beautiful tiny park on 53rd Street, west wing. It is a triangular piece of land lying in a corner with streets on all sides. The residents here have formed an Association which administers the park. There are a few slides, swings and seesaws for children to play. There are parallel bars for young men to exercise. There is also a cemented walkway going all round the inside of the park, where the young and old regulars walk without the hassles of traffic. A number of cement seats have also been provided for people to rest and relax. It is heartening to see mothers briskly walking, while their wards play in the park but well in view!

I am glad to see that the City Corporation, to whom the land belongs, is extending support to this venture. Earlier, it had plans to build a building or providing free meals in the space, but the Association had talked them out of these. Instead, a park has been set up. Recently, lorryloads of sand was brought and the entire play area covered so that children can play without any fear of getting hurt.

The Association committee members are a dedicated lot. Many are present at the park every day morning and evening, to regulate the activities there. The civic body will soon provide more lights for better illumination of the park, and a borewell source has already been identified to erect an overhead tank in the premises, I learn.

I hope the Corporation will promote such fresh parks in other residential areas in the city wherever possible and continue to support the existing facilities.

Cdr. R. Ganapathi (Retd)

3A, Blue Danube
7th Avenue, Ashok Nagar
Chennai 600 083

To be demolished

Despite all the efforts of the tenants and the reports of the PWD that the building is in sound condition and only requires maintenance and repairs, the LIC has evicted all tenants and is arranging to demolish the Bharat Insurance building.

B.I. Chandhok

New No.244 (Old No. 713)
Anna Salai
Chennai 600 006

Global warming

Sanjeeva Rao, the Senior Geography Master of Madras Christian College School in the 1940s when it was situated in George Town, used to impress on us as far back as 1947-48 about the global warming threat due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and other natural gases; the bad effects of such energy usage causing emissions of large quantities of carbon-dioxide and other obnoxious gases; large usage of chemicals in industry bringing out unwanted, unhealthy pollutants harmful to human beings and other lives on earth.

In those days itself he used to talk about the ozone layer, the bad effects of airconditioners, air-coolers, fridges and similar equipment for domestic use. He used to teach us that Mother Earth was being tortured by the so-called inventions of science and technological progress. He used to warn that such global warming would in due course melt the icebergs of the Arctic, Antarctica and Greenland regions! And that the land that is one-fourth of our Planet Earth would then vanish!

The Marina beach and extensive areas of the coastline would vanish by violent sea waves gulping the land in no time! He used to often remark, "Your Marina iron bridge, morning and evening walks will one day not be there!"

He also used to mention about the water problem. He warned that if water was not available (ground-water), people should go somewhere else to live! Don't meddle with Mother Earth by going on digging in all places.

I feel that all that he emphasised in those days is now coming true.

V. Theetharappan

Kasi Arcade, 32, VOC Street
First Block, First Floor, Flat H
SVM Illam, Kaikkankuppam
Valasarawalkam, Chennai 600 087

Tamil Thaththaa – I

It was excellent reading, the article 'Tamil Thaththaa' in MM, April 1st. Though I have read Dr. U.Ve.Sa's autobiography and many of his books lucidly written by him in simple but elegant Tamil, I was not aware of his contribution in the realm of Tamil music. It is, of course, a well-known fact that Dr. U.Ve.Sa. was also proficient in Carnatic music as could be gathered from his autobiography. His great-grand-uncle on his mother's side was the redoubtable Ghanam Krishna Iyer who was an outstanding musician in the early 1800s and Dr. U.Ve.Sa. has himself written his biography.

In the article 'The knight who saved classical Tamil literature', the author has covered the main incidents in Dr. U.Ve.Sa's life. However, in the last sentence, he has mentioned that Dr. U.Ve.Sa's autobiography was left unfinished and wanted someone to complete it. Probably, he is not aware of the fact that Dr. U.Ve. Sa's son Kalyanasundaram Iyer and his foremost disciple Ki.Va.Ja. completed the autobiography with the notes left behind by Dr U.Ve.Sa. The completed autobiography has been published by the Dr. U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer Library, Arundale Beach Road, Besant Nagar, Chennai, and is available for sale there. I am told that an English translation of the autobiography is also available.

Why haven't we honoured Venkat?

While Srinivas Venkatraghavan was honoured in the ICC at the end of the NatWest Match against Pakistan at Edgbaston for his services as an international umpire, the Indian Board and Indian Cricket have failed to honour this gentleman cricketer. How this offie performed in the field of play is now history. Venkatraghavan started his illustrious career as an off-spinner at the age of 18 and played for India against New Zealand in 1964. He was included in the team after star spinner B.S. Chandrasekher was indisposed. Venkat bowled with venom in his first test. He never looked back and performed well as a player, captain, off-spinner and manager with distinction.

He was included as a 11th hour replacement in the first test against Australia at Bombay in place of Subrata Guha, the medium-pace bowler, in 1970. Venkat grabbed the opportunity and performed well at home and abroad thereafter. In 1971, the Golden Year of Indian cricket, Venkat shouldered the additional responsibility admirably and accounted for 35 wickets in eight Test matches. This prompted Gary Sobers to say, 'Give me Venkat and I can beat any side in the world'. In the West Indies, Venkat was instrumental in helping his side to win the series with a bag of 22 wickets. In the Oval Test (1971), which India won to clinch the series, Venkat finished with 20.4-3-63-2 and 20.4-44-2. Apart from this, he claimed the catch of the top scorer (in the second innings score of 101) Brian Luckurst. A red carpet welcome was given to the Indian side and as vice-captain Venkat fully deserved the honour. This performance provided Venkat the opportunity to play English county cricket for Derbyshire. In the tour game against Hampshire, Venkat had the best figures by an Indian on tour in first class cricket (36.3-13-93-9) including the wicket of South African Barry Richards. By varying the trajectory of the ball, he would bowl six different balls in an over. He would be getting steep bounce from the wicket and was a dangerous bowler against openers.

In domestic cricket he did well for Tamil Nadu and accounted for over 700 wickets. He did well for Derbyshire too.

Thus, Venkatraghavan made the ball talk, led the Indian side as captain in two World Cups in England, officiated as team manager, made his presence felt as an ICC Panel Umpire, and retired with dignity and decorum in the gentleman's game of cricket. Despite all this, the BCCI has failed to honour this veteran cricketer in a fitting way. When we honour Bucknor, why should we not also honour veteran Venkatraghavan?

C.K. Subramaniam

A-101, Dhanashreya, Plot 28, Sector, 17, Vashi 703

I would also like to point out that the heading 'Remembering the birth centenary of ...' above the two articles is not factually correct as it is the 150th birth anniversary of Dr. U.Ve.Sa. that fell on 19.2.2005.

K.S. Krishnaswamy

B-1, Ashok Suparna
27, III Main Road
Kasturbanagar, Adyar
Chennai 600 020

Tamil Thaththaa – II

Madras Musings has done well to highlight the great services in the cause of Tamil by revered U.Ve.Sa. The trials and tribulations undergone by him in search of the ancient palm leaf manuscripts are vividly described in his autobiography *En Charithram* serialised in the *Ananda Vikatan*. He never fought shy of getting clarifications from any informed source and that is when he sought the help of Jain scholars at Kumbakonam in getting to know certain specific phrases and words in the *Jeevaka Chintamani* which were eluding his erudition.

Besides bringing to light several long-forgotten works, he had also written in lucid Tamil not only his experiences but also some good true-life stories which are really soul-stirring.

Being interested in Carnatic music, he seemed to have undergone training under the great musician-composer Gopalakrishna Bharati.

Since his Guru Maha Vidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai wanted him to concentrate on his Tamil

studies, he had given up his training in music; but, according to his old students, he used to be lyrical in his teachings at the college while dealing with Tamil poems, and hence the students would eagerly look forward to his classes.

It is said that the Principal of the Kumbakonam college used to attend his Tamil lectures in the classroom as they were packed with such encyclopedic knowledge and information.

Rightly, his statue prominently adorns the lawns of the Presidency College, Madras.

T.M. Sundararaman

No.19, Nallappan Street
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004

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

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THE EDITOR

Engineers aplenty — but where are the jobs?

(Continued from Page 1)

salaries. But the employment provided by software companies constitutes only a small percentage compared to the number of engineers passing out every year.

Nandini Consultancy Centre, Chennai 600 090, recently organised an elaborate survey to assess the demand-supply scenario for engineering graduates in Tamil Nadu and came up with the following findings:

Engineering projects announced in Tamil Nadu at various levels would require investment of around Rs. 5000 crore during the next 3 to 4 years. Such levels of investments would not be adequate to find jobs for the backlog of engineers already waiting for jobs for quite sometime and the new engineers who would be passing out shortly.

Under the circumstances, it is evident that massive job creation for engineers to the level of requirement in big engineering, chemical and other sectors is unlikely to take place in Tamil Nadu in the near future.

Replacement jobs

The retirement of engineers and deaths while in employment would ultimately result in job opportunities for fresh engineers. But several organisations in the present climate of 'voluntary retirement schemes' choose to rationalise and reorganise their staffing structure instead of recruiting engineers at various levels even when such situations arise.

Replacement jobs can, at best, represent not more than 5% of the existing number of engineers employed.

New jobs

New projects would open up job opportunities for various categories of job seekers including engineering graduates, science graduates and diploma holders. In today's state of automation, mechanisation and use of sophisticated technology, where reduction in manpower requirement is considered to be the hallmark of superior technology and management prac-

tices, it is seen that investment of around Rs. 1 crore would lead to job opportunities for hardly 3 to 5 fresh graduate engineers.

Considering an investment of around Rs. 5000 crore in the next three years in Tamil Nadu, the total job generation for fresh engineers would be around 10,000 posts per annum by conservative estimates.

Total likely jobs per annum for fresh graduate engineers in Tamil Nadu against this background would be 35,000. Over and above this, around 1000 fresh graduate engineers in Tamil Nadu are likely to take up higher studies in India or abroad.

Advertisements for engineers

A careful study of leading newspapers published with a focus on Tamil Nadu shows that around 40% of all advertisements is for engineers (both fresh and experienced). Of the advertisements for engineers, the percentage of advertisements for fresh engineers was around 15. In terms of number, this works out to hardly 500 advertisements for fresh graduate engineers in the last one year.

IT/Call centres

Much is said about the massive growth of IT industry, call centres and outsourcing jobs in Tamil Nadu, with considerable orders being received by them from developed countries. While it is true that positive developments are taking place in this area, the recent claim of the Tamil Nadu IT Secretary that one million jobs would be created in Tamil Nadu in the IT industry in the next five years is over-optimistic. If these targets were to be realised, as many as two lakh jobs would have to be created in the software sector alone in Tamil Nadu every year. Even a comparatively large software company like Infosys would find it difficult to recruit more than 5000 software personnel in a year and such organisations do such recruitment at the all-India level, with Tamil Nadu's share being a fraction of the recruitment.

Most engineers recruited by

the software companies/call centres do not carry out any function in their jobs related to the engineering knowledge gained during their studies. Perhaps, software/call centre organisations take engineers because they are available in plenty.

Of late, there has been realisation amongst fresh graduate engineers that by taking up jobs in such software companies/call centres, they burn their bridges with the engineering industry and lose career prospects in the long run.

Most organisations, whether software companies or engineering organisations, who recruit engineers in campus interviews or recruit fresh engineers by advertisements, insist that candidates should have had 70% marks consistently during all the years of academic education and also without any arrears during the entire course of study. This pre-condition has resulted in campus interview opportunities being available only for the brightest candidates. What happens to the rest?

Inadequate teaching staff

Employers now have the luxury of choosing the best engineers from the best of colleges for jobs, as plenty of them are available.

In the process, the students from many of the self-financing engineering colleges and particularly the recently started ones and those located in small towns and rural areas suffer enormously in job prospects, as they often lack the advantages of studying in well-established colleges.

A number of cases have been seen where fresh engineers are straightaway taken as lecturers on small pay packets by self-financing colleges.

Several senior engineers who have opted for voluntary retirement in jobs in industry have taken up teaching positions at senior levels in engineering colleges, even though they do not have any prior teaching experience.

Women engineers

Employers generally do not prefer women engineers for production and maintenance jobs or for functions that involve travel. The job prospects for women engineers are largely restricted to software companies or consultancy organisations.

Many women engineers who have passed in recent times have remained unemployed for quite some time and have settled as housewives.

Job reductions in Government

In the past, the Government of Tamil Nadu and Government of India have been important employers of fresh engineers. In recent times, however, recruitment of fresh engineers in government departments and undertakings such as PWD, Electricity Board, etc. has dried up for all practical purpose.

Further, several public sector undertakings and private companies have introduced voluntary retirement schemes with the objective of reducing the manpower strength.

In such circumstances, fresh recruitment in these organisations has considerably reduced and has contributed to the unemployment crisis amongst the fresh engineers to a considerable extent.

Self-employment avenues

Though there is loud talk about self-employment avenues for fresh engineers, very few have taken up this option due to inadequate confidence level or investment capability or lack of knowledge and training. The education that the students receive in the engineering colleges does not prepare them for self-employment professional functions.

Persons taking up self-employment are only a fraction of the total number of engineers passing out every year.

The severe unemployment problem among engineers is due to the unfortunate fact that there has been a large scale expansion of engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu as well as in the other states in the country without proportionate demands being created.

Slash the intake level

As large numbers of business houses have ventured into setting up engineering colleges with an eye on the business prospects of engineering education, the engineering colleges have sprung up everywhere. Now, as there is no immediate feasibility of massive employment prospects for fresh engineers in Tamil Nadu or nearby states, one option is to reduce the intake level for engineering seats and put a ban on creation of more number of engineering colleges for some time.

The AICTE and universities can also consider introducing new and appropriate courses.

And, boys and girls, particularly those belonging to the middle and lower income group, should exercise enormous caution before taking decision to join the engineering courses.



The Magic Lantern Summer Festival at Top Storey, 24 College Road:

April 17,18,19: *The Bible – The Complete Word of God (Abridged)*. (Theatre/English/Michael Muthu/Boardwalkers) – 17th 7.00 pm, 18th and 19th 7.30 pm.

April 20 and 21: *Padukalam* (Theatre/Tamil/Na. Muthuswamy/Koothu-p-pattarai) – 8.00 pm.

April 22: *Mazhai* (Theatre Solo/Tamil/Kalairaani/Kalai Foundation) – 7.30 pm.

Aravaan (Theatre Solo/Tamil/K.S. Karuna Prasad/Moonram Arangu) – 8.15 pm.

April 23: *Children's workshop presentation* – 5 pm.

Pavan Kunju (Street Theatre/Tamil/Chennai Kalai Kuzhu) – 8 pm.

Pathinettaam Por (Traditional Theatre Tamil/Purisai Doraisamy Kannappa Thambiran Theru-k-koothu Mandram, Purisai/All night) – 10 pm.

April 24: *The World is Your Studio!* (Music/Contemporary/Technology-Music Interface/Sudhin Prabhakar with Divakar Subramaniam) – 7 pm

April 25: *From Luxor Jr. to Nemo – An evolution (Part 1)* (Technology-Art Interface/Evolution of Animation and Computer Graphics/Dr. Shyam Rajan) – 7.30 pm

April 26: *From Luxor Jr. to Nemo – An evolution (Part 2)* – 7.30 pm.

April 27: *From Luxor Jr. to Nemo – An evolution (Part 3)* – 7.30 pm

April 28: *Stories, Lies and Exaggerations* (Latin American Storytelling/English/Edgar Ortiz) – 7.30 pm.

Till April 23: *Children's theatre workshop* conducted by Prof. S. Ramanujam – 10 am-1 pm.

April 25-29: *Children's painting workshop* conducted by M. Natesh – 10 am-1 pm.

* * *

April 9-24: *India through the eyes of Alain Danielou, 1935-1955.*

This exhibition, organised by Alliance Francaise of Madras and DakshinaChitra, features the work of Alain Danielou and Raymond Burnier who took many photographs during the 20 years of their stay in India. The selection of photographs at the exhibition will show not only the unchanging India with its temples and rituals, but also portraits, sceneries and cities. (At DakshinaChitra).

April 11-23: *Sum of infinity*, an exhibition of the work of V. Anamika. She will present a collection of recent abstract paintings which include a series of sceneries as seen from the sky (at Alliance Francaise).

April 14-May 8: A (Tamil) New Year and new beginnings! In inaugurating the new auditorium, Magic Lantern and Alliance Francaise of Madras invite you to several activities dedicated to Theatre, in all forms, to performing arts, dance, music. There will be new plays and fresh adaptations or interpretations, a showcasing of South Indian folk theatre forms, a series of films on the best known contemporary directors, and workshops on theatre and scriptwriting for adults and children (at Alliance Francaise).

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

Let Mumbai be Mumbai, not Shanghai

(Continued from Page 1)

living in the slums," he said. Making Mumbai a Shanghai will create more jobs and increase population. "Making Mumbai the financial capital could also mean making it the slum capital."

One solution would be to move new jobs like call centres to Navi Mumbai where populations could be absorbed more easily, he said. Another was to make housing more accessible by removing the rent act and promoting ownership loans for all income levels through the use of recovery agents. "Services must be provided to all income groups," he said.

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai drew out the larger picture, noting that Mumbai is part of a global urban crisis. Slum dwellers are victims in a larger war of construction, he

said, pointing out that something must be destroyed to make way for the new roads and buildings. "The question is who is being destroyed," he said, adding that the unplanned construction of malls and offices creates demand for a service class which has no access to housing in the new consumption cores, but has to withdraw to the hinterland.

He also called for a shift from "technocratic planning" to "democratic planning", which would be more participatory and political. The failure of current planning processes was also touched upon by former city planning authority chief V.K. Phatak, who described how the city development plans of 1973 and 1991 failed not only to foresee economic changes like the growth of the informal sector, but also could not respond

quickly enough to them. For this reason, more frequent reviews of the plan are necessary, he said. — (Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai.)

Govt.-NGO cooperation

(Continued from Page 2)

story in disaster management', the swift process by which the Tamil Nadu Government has moved post-tsunami, to ensure interim compensation, distribution of relief, reopening of schools, and other steps to reintroduce a measure of normalcy, is certainly commendable. However, many concerned with the issue feel that the greatest blindspot of all agencies, right from the Central Government to the State Government to the various NGOs, both national and international, and academic scholars, is the unwillingness to take on board the fundamental reality of Indian society, caste discrimination and how it plays out in relief and rehabilitation with Dalits and Adivasis completely marginalised in these processes.

A few months into relief operations, members of the Alternative Law Forum (ALF) report, "In every village we visited, every testimony we heard, the reality of an impending food crisis was clear. We believe that the campaigners of the Right to Food campaign have a very important role to play in this situation. To assess the situation in the affected villages, keeping in mind the caste-ridden nature of these societies is important. Food relief needs to be extended until livelihoods are restored. The State Government must initiate some dialogue with representatives of the marginalised sections of the affected people including Dalit groups, unorganised sector unions and federations, etc."

A social worker comments, "NGOs have not come under a common umbrella except on the issue of eviction of the fisherfolk. They are very active in disbursing R&R but, except in Nagapattinam, there is minimal NGO-Government coordination." Never has the need for openness of district administration to ideas and suggestions from NGOs, fishing communities and scientists, through consultations and workshops on relevant topics, and other sectors been felt more imperative than at this point. "Currently such coordination is lacking. Only when that happens and all aid can be distributed through a single window system will the affected fisherfolk communities get the best benefits," affirms a senior official in the Department of Fisheries.

One agency advisable

How can the city re-engineer its system for better governance? By collapsing many functions of different state agencies into the municipal corporation and creating a central metropolitan government, believes former chief secretary and civic chief V. Ranganathan. According to him, the proliferation of different agencies, like the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), the housing authority (Mhada), the transport commissioner, the public works department, had created a "diffusion of responsibility and absence of coherence among various development programmes". Agencies work at cross purposes, in their own self-interest, and miss the overall development of the city. "While many seek to derive benefits, none shoulders the burden of responsibility," he said.

Instead, the agencies should give up some of their functions — the MMRDA and MSRDC should only be funding agencies, the SRA which has become a "parallel civic administration" should be scrapped, Mhada should stick to building houses, not reconstruction, the transport commissioner should hand over vehicle licensing, the PWD the maintenance of highways and the state government the power to make and modify the development control rules. And if that's not enough, the BMC should get more powers, divest them to the ward level more, and set up a business development unit to track the city economy. Ambitious, but are the corporators up to it? "People fear that civic politics will affect governance," acknowledged Ranganathan, but noted that "entrusting powers to the body closest to the people would make it more responsive and responsible". — Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai.

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.

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

Date: Signature:

Subscriptions and contributions

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

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

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

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

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

— The Editor

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A reminder to our readers

• It's a year since *Madras Musings* began being a priced journal, offering readers a special annual subscription rate of Rs.100. It is now 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 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 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

The flying doctor, a medical legend

April 28th will be the 113th birth anniversary of Dr. S. Rangachari, one of Madras's greatest medical practitioners.

Sarukkai Krishnamachari Srinivasa Rangachari was born in an orthodox family in Sarukkai, near Kumbakonam, in 1882. His father Krishnamachari was a Government engineer, his Periappa a lawyer who later became a Dewan. Their father, in whose care Rangachari was put, shifted to Kumbakonam to educate his grandchildren.

Rangachari studied in Kumbakonam Town High School and matriculated in 1896. His school years were not remarkable except for his shortening his name to S. Rangachari. He joined Madras Christian College for the First in Arts. The family lived in Sarukkai Illam in nearby Thambu Chetty Street at the time.

On a trip to Government General Hospital with his father, who was in charge of repair works, Rangachari met surgeons Niblock and Gifford, who in time were to become principals of Madras Medical College. One of them, looking at Rangachari's hands, suggested he become a surgeon — and that helped him to make up his mind. After doing well in the F.A., he, contrary to tradition and the wishes of his family, decided to study Medicine instead of Law or Engineering.

He joined Madras Medical College in 1901, one of eight men and three women in the M.B & C.M. course, and his world became college, hospital and books. His first marriage

was a short one, his bride dying young around this time. He then married Kamamma in 1903.

On completion of his course, he had hoped to go to England for higher studies, but his mother got him to promise that he would never cross the seas, leaving her. So he joined Government Service in 1906 and was posted as assistant surgeon in the Women's and Children's Hospital, Egmore, headed by Col. Niblock. After two years in Egmore, he was posted to Hyderabad, then Mayavaram, Tanjore, Nagpattinam, Kumbakonam and Berhampore (Orissa). Wherever he went, his long hours of work, skillful han-

term pregnant woman who met with an accident and was brought to the hospital in Berhampore with the fingers of her baby sticking out of the wound in her lower abdomen. After admitting the patient, the assistant doctor was smoking a cigarette as he waited for Rangachari. On arrival, sizing up the situation, Rangachari grabbed the cigarette and placed its glowing end near the fingers of the baby, which retracted inside allowing him to suture the wound. After a few days, the mother had a normal delivery.

By July 1917, he was back at the Egmore Women's & Children's hospital as its first Indian

● During his lifetime, this true practitioner of the art of surgery and medicine charged the rich and treated the poor free, sometimes paying for their recuperation too. And both admired him equally for his even-handed ways.

dling of difficult labour cases, dexterity of hand in performing complex surgical procedures, his unstinted attention to the poor and rich alike and his accessibility at all hours, made him the talk of whichever town he was in. People of the town would write to their relatives with medical problems in other towns to visit with them and be treated by Rangachari.

His work is still remembered in the folklore of the towns. One instance was the tracheostomy he performed on a fisherman battling for life in the Mayavaram Government Hospital, unable to breathe with a fishbone stuck in his throat. He made a remarkable recovery. Another was the case of a full-

Deputy Superintendent, under Surgeon-General Gifford. In 1919 he became the II Surgeon in Government General Hospital. Patients thronged the hospital wanting to be admitted under his care. His ward was always overcrowded.

Around 1922, he quit Government service and set up full-time practice in the Kensington Nursing Home on Poonamallee High Road, and it became as busy as the General Hospital.

Being one of that rare breed of doctors who never said 'no' to a call from the rich or poor, from near or far, he was always busy travelling to different areas of the city as well as outside it. In the early days he used a cycle, then a motorcycle. In Tanjore,

he bought his first car, a black Standard costing Rs. 2600 and learnt driving in one night.

Later, in Madras, he bought a Rolls Royce Silver Phantom costing Rs.52,000 and was most probably the only doctor to own such a car. He would be seen driving it around the city and suburbs — to deliver babies in Lady Willingdon Nursing Home, which was for Europeans only, as well as in the narrow bylanes of the city where he would treat the poor free of cost. Later, he purchased a Puss Moth costing Rs. 60,000 to enable him to fly far and wide in the Presidency. He would be seen treating Royalty in Travancore and Karnataka and attending a poor mother in Kanadukathan's (Chettinad) Pentland Hospital with the same aplomb.

His fame reached a new high when the wife of a French officer in Pondicherry consulted him for her second delivery. Her first in Paris was by Caesarian section and there had been complications. He examined her and assured her a normal delivery. True to his words, she was delivered of a normal though premature baby in his nursing home.

The house he built at 86 Mount Road was the talk of the town, with eight doorways in the ground floor and eight in the first floor.

He was also known for his philanthropy. He helped many junior doctors by gifting them money to set up practice and many poor students to pursue further education.

In 1926 he took a long sojourn at Ooty, mainly to help him rid himself of suspected diabetes through long walks and diet (his father had died of diabetes complications in 1915).

His willingness to attend to patients at all hours contributed to the legend that he went to

The Bishop's episcopacy

(Continued from Page 5)

degree of authenticity that renders all formulae of savvy storytelling redundant.

This indeed is a bishop who sought guidance from his daily communion with God and kept his feet firmly planted on the ground.

Lead Us On virtually ends with his bishopric in 1989. But it was published only in 2004. The fifteen years since the early retirement (at the age of 61, when 65 was the norm) was spent with equal vigour in God's calling in Australia in St. Mark Church in Revesby and Anne's Anglican Church in Hammondville and then back in India in the Missionary Upholders Trust. So *Lead Us On* is not a complete autobiography and it is necessary for Bishop Sunder Clarke to cover the post-1990 period of his life with a sequel. I look forward to this publication.

Eric Prabhakar

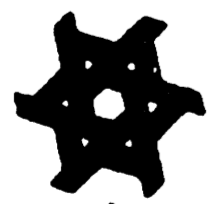
bed fully attired even with socks on, as he did not want to waste time dressing up to attend any emergency case.

All this took a toll of his health. He developed typhoid fever and he passed away on April, 24, 1934. His wife Kamamma, said that though she was married to him for 31 years, she hardly spent 31 days with him. His generous nature was evident in the instructions he left behind, jotted on a piece of paper, giving his nursing home materials to his assistants, money to his brother, his family, his wife and to charity.

A statue of Dr. Rangachari, made by sculptor Nagappa, stands in front of Government General Hospital in his memory.

Dr. P.S. Venkateswaran

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