

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Putting up the 'diversion' sign was my job. Someone else will take care of the mess it's created!

Where do we go from here?

'Take Diversion' intone the signs, the latest in the long line of bogeys hell-bent on creating a stir in the lives of Chennai's road-users.

Well-worn pathways spring sudden surprises, turning in upon themselves, while you go around in circles, re-thinking drove-movements.

Disconsolate commuters, especially uninformed ones, spend hours driving up and down roads they thought they knew, trying to figure out how to get from Point A to Point B. Some residents traverse eight roads to get to their homes that unfortunately lie just that little bit out of reach, while others gaze astonished as crowded buses waltz past their once-quiet windows. They are not the only ones suffering.

Those given the unenviable task of ensuring the new rules are obeyed also appear to be in pain. The other day, a certain traffic policeman found himself plumb in the middle of a sea of heaving, roaring traffic, all thoroughly confused over the no right turns, no left turns, and the 'go-back-whence-you-came' directions. Besieged, he decided to eschew the whole mess, sought refuge in the only tiny patch of shade offered by the dry, thin branch of the only tree in the vicinity, and apparently embarked on an inner search for a higher peace.

Sort of throwing in the towel, with a touch of "let-them-eat-cake"?

Can't blame the poor soul, though.

The many-headed in full battle-cry can be overwhelming.

Ranjitha Ashok

Crashing hoardings...

Sudden squalls and accompanying thunderstorms recently wrought much havoc on city roads – with many old trees falling and comparatively younger hoardings crashing. With at least 12 such hoardings 'in very bad shape', the time has come again to look into the structural stability of hoardings in Chennai and this 'evergreen' issue.

A spokesperson of the Outdoor Advertisers' Association says, "What can we do in the face of nature's fury, when even boats each 50 times a hoarding's weight are damaged by a gale of 99 km/hr? A Tamil daily I saw screamed for 'removal of all hoardings in the city'. The figures given by earlier reports in the Press ('well over 5,000 hoardings with new ones mushrooming all the time', according to a recent one) are wrong. There are in all about 3500 hoardings across the city (of which around 3000 are authorised). Do they ban all journals because there are a few yellow journals? Or say there can be no fishing at all because of a tsunami?"

The Chennai Corporation was officially in charge of collecting applications and issuing licences for hoardings when the State Government began looking at the streamlining of the multicore hoardings industry in 2001. In 2003, the State Government, through a notification, transferred the licensing powers for hoardings from the Chennai Corporation to the Chennai Collectorate.

A source at the Collectorate says, "The natural calamity has come as a blessing in disguise. Those hoardings affected by the squalls cannot use the earlier stay application as a reason to re-erect without regularisation! We've found the same agencies that call for regularisation wilfully go about breaking the rules. After the prevailing rules were amended in 2003, the applications for existing hoardings were checked out by 60 teams at the Collectorate who worked

overtime to complete the procedure within one month. We found more than 90 per cent of hoardings (2331 then, both public property and private) were in violation of the rules. Five per cent of these violators casually stated 'they'd no order, but since they'd already given a proposed application form, they went ahead and erected the hoarding anyway'. When notices were issued to remove the hoardings violating regularisation, a stay was obtained by

● by
SHOBHA MENON

the Outdoor Advertisers' Association. The issue is still pending in Court. We'll have to wait and see what happens."

"Non-implementation of the amended rules causes tremendous loss to the government in the form of loss in revenue. And unless we regularise the existing hoardings, we can't go on to process proposed applications. The lack of a separate enforcement team (like the one that existed between 1985 and 2001 and was disbanded due to

The cost of heritage

Madras Musings wonders when the day will dawn when we in Chennai will see such action as has recently been reported from Beijing. A news report states:

“The residents of Beijing could face a fine of up to US\$24,000 (approximately Rs.12 lakh) for tearing down or damaging old buildings listed for protection.

The fine, which for many Beijingers is the equivalent of decades of income, is mandated in a new set of rules that took effect recently, aiming to protect the ancient city's cultural heritage, Xinhua news agency reported.

The regulations have been drafted specifically to protect old buildings under threat during the massive construction wave currently sweeping the city, according to the agency.

When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, Beijing was one of the oldest capitals in the world and had largely escaped widespread destruction since the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1644).

China's communist rulers have destroyed that legacy in the span of some 50 years, first by tearing down the city's walls in the 1950s and 1960s and then destroying thousands of old courtyard homes to build roads or make way for real estate projects over the last decade.”

the State's financial pressures) is certainly a big handicap," confirms another official.

All hoardings also need to get a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the DC Traffic (from the traffic safety point of view) and the AE concerned (as to whether the hoarding is structurally safe etc.). "Once

you remove unauthorised hoardings (10 per cent of these have 'political connections'), control and maintenance of the structures become easier. In Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, no unauthorised hoarding can be erected on any premises. In Chennai, we've

(Continued on Page 7)

... and trees that fall — and don't fall

(By Shobha Menon)

Well-known naturalist M. Krishnan was an ardent supporter of the British – in their view of planting Neem and Tamarind on both sides of roads in old Madras. But slowly and steadily, over the years, exotic species, like the Rain Tree and Peltophorum, have slipped into Chennai's tree population – even to the extent of overwhelming native species, at this point. The recent squall in the city that uprooted around 100 trees (mostly Rain Trees and Peltophorum) has effectively

managed to get some attention paid to what kind of trees should be used for urban greening. Whether exotic or indigenous varieties should be used, and what are 'bad' trees and 'good' trees are some of the issues that have begun to be considered.

Naturalist Theodore Basakaran feels strongly about the 'colonial mindset' that looks more at exotic than native species. He says, "When we have trees that are native and sturdy, have longer life spans and need

less care and which have been used as avenue trees for centuries – the Tamarind, Neem, Marudhu, Banyan and Peepul – why should we go in for exotics like the Rain Tree and the Peltophorum for avenues?"

But an official in the Parks Department, Chennai Corporation, responds, "On very wide avenues, Rain Trees are a good choice. Some avenues in the busy T.Nagar area are shady and pleasant only because of the

(Continued on Page 7)

5-S techniques help in creating a cleaner temple

The Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Temple in Triplicane was in the news recently – for its popular week-long annual float festival in the Kairaveni Pushkarani, its temple tank. It has also been in the news for another reason – the strategic management plans that are being implemented in its environs, the result of a partnership between the Shingo Institute of Japanese Management and the Rane Group of companies, in collaboration with INTACH, Chennai, and the temple authorities – and the temple and its surroundings are looking cleaner than ever.

The evening lamps twinkle brightly as I enter the precincts of this more than 1500-year-old temple, the oldest in Chennai history, where the much-loved Lord Krishna appears as Arjuna's charioteer, Parthasarathy. Its airy interiors are spotlessly clean – aluminium trays for *vilakkus* lit by devotees are placed at strategic positions, shiny brass *urulis* are placed at different points to receive the *vibuti*, *kumkum* or *tulasi* devotees wish to dispose of. The *Thuyimai Pakuthi* (Cleanliness Zones), named after the 12 Azhwar, reinforce the messages. Water purifying systems have been installed at strategic positions for drinking purpose. A water recycling mechanism to implement a process for washing the feet of devotees is in the implementation state. Inside the temple premises, a grease

trap for the *abhishekam* overflow is being incorporated. A far cry from the usual ambience of much frequented temple precincts.

A. Kuppusamy, Executive Officer of the temple, says, "There have been many positive changes from the time the strategic management group first met on August 1, 2004. We are still in the process of sorting out activities, in order to gradually implement new initiatives. Involving service organisations and the community is high on the agenda. More than 40 volunteers, senior citizens, youngsters, housewives, etc. have been organised into a Parthana

the last five years – says, "Initially, this project was to be completed in six months. But in a temple environment with so many inter-related factors, the time schedule has been affected in diverse and complex issues. Our idea is to help implement the 5-S technique inside the temple by coordinating with the volunteers and temple authorities – who will take the final decision since religious and public sentiments are involved – and then bring about a self-sustaining system. Training of volunteers and temple staff is being done, taking care to be in conformity with traditional culture. Wherever the existing system

● by **SHOBHA MENON**

Seva Thannaarva Kuzhu and coordinated in a shift system to help in supervising and personal involvement in dusting, cleaning cobwebs, brass polishing, cleaning gold, silver, imparting civic consciousness, regulating queue formation, etc. You can see the visible difference all around."

B. Sundararajan, GM, Corporate Quality, Rane (Engine Valves), and Coordinator of the project from Rane – that has implemented 5-S techniques, Seiri (Sorting Out), Seiton (Systematic Arrangement), Seiso (Spic and Span), Seiketsu (Serene Atmosphere), Shitsuke (Stick to Self Discipline), for

calls for an intervention, we offer monetary support."

Sujatha Shankar, an architect and member of INTACH, in a project report given to Rane on November 27, 2004, had suggested changes that include:

Immediate surroundings

To establish axial relationship between temple and tank through the mandapam, encroachments and insensitive additions in front of temple to be cleared and commercial activity reorganised. The activities in the immediate environs to be spatially organised, so that activity and structures do not hinder accessibility and the vi-



The Sri Parthasarathy Temple in Triplicane.

sual quality of the space. It is important to relocate/re-design parking areas and remove the toilets, EB transformers and police outpost.

The temple car shed could be redesigned to minimise visual impact of both material and colour. The gate to the temple tank from the road may be aligned with the central axis. Holes can be drilled in the base of the tank for water percolation and recharging subsoil. The compound wall could be made more transparent to create physical boundary, but visually establish connection.

The hawkers and temple shops also need to be accommodated. Of the two flanking sets of shops, the northern wing is well organised. The southern wing, if shops need to be present, can be redesigned more in tune with the western *mandapam*-like features and integrated into the store in front. Signage for commerce can be controlled and standardised.

Long-term plan

To preserve the aesthetic and visual quality of the temple and the tank in future, physical parameters need to be defined.

● Buildability and bulk: New structures or modifications not to dominate the temple

● Use: Compatible uses to synergise with the temple environment

● Aesthetic control: Guidelines/control for colours and types of materials to be used. (A glass and alucopanel structure can be devastating – as in Mylapore.)

Says Sundararajan, "Outside the temple, issues are even more complex and need to be addressed gradually. The overall response has been pretty good, other than delays due to either administrative changes at the temple or our own work pressures. But the continuity of the initiative needs a lot of participation from the public and NGOs." Says Kuppusamy, "In the temple environs, the situation is different with a large floating population that is difficult to control. Hurdles that exist need to be overcome with patience and commitment."

An official reiterates, "With the Chennai Corporation's help, the *maadaveedhis* can be reorganised. Public parking irregularities and discrepancies need to be sorted out with the help of the Police Department. And if such an exercise is to take off at a brisk pace, there is a felt need for better coordination among all concerned and a more socially conscious public, of course."

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

A big 'Thank You' to 88 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.4.05 and 15.05.05, 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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Pozhichalur queries

Our village Pozhichalur is situated on the banks of the River Adyar, next to Anakaputhur. The course of the river is stated in an article by Shobha Menon (MM, October, 16, 2004) as follows:

The Adyar River originates from Adanur Tank near Guduvancheri and meets the Bay of Bengal near the Pattinampakkam-Srinivasapuram area. Of its total length of 42.38 km, 12.20 km is within city limits. The river's course leads from Manapakkam, Manimangalam, Thiruneermalai, Anakaputhur, Kolappakkam, Nandambakkam, Jafarkhanpettai, Saidapettai, Kotturpuram and finally Adyar before entering the sea.

In an article by Sashi Nair (MM, February 16) the origin and course are stated as follows:

The river originates from the run-off waters from the paddy fields irrigated by the large Chembarambakkam tank in Sriperumbudur taluk. After meandering for about 40 km, it opens into the Bay of Bengal, just north of the Theosophical Society in Adyar.

Recently in a Tamil daily it was stated the river originates in Palanthandalam next to Thiruneermalai and takes its course through Anakaputhur. Pozhichalur, Ramapuram, Guindy Saidapet and reaches the sea.

Can someone tell us what is the exact course of the river?

In the late 1950s, the village was scarcely populated, with only some 80 huts and a few tiled houses. Because of proximity of the village to the city and also copious potable water, the village has developed and at present there are more than 5000 pucca houses.

After coming to live here in 1984, I had seen year after year the river flooded and water going to sea without being tapped anywhere. If that water is stored by constructing checkdams and the nearby tanks filled, considerable groundwater replacement will happen.

In our village there are three tanks: Nallan tank of 9 acres, Periamankoil tank of 5 acres, Thanagal tank of 21 acres, and also many very deep and wide stone quarry tanks. All these tanks about the river. All are also encroached on.

In 1996, the elders settled in the village, mostly retired from various government and non-government sectors, came together and formed the Pozhichalur Senior Citizens' Forum. We made many appeals to the Collector and Government to save the tanks. But till date no response has been received from them. We pointed to the Supreme Court judgment that encroach-

ments on water-bodies should be removed. But of no avail.

Another matter. Pozhichalur was famous in horticulture and forest circles for a nursery, Inderasan Nursery was considered the biggest nursery in the State. It had expertise in transplanting fully-grown trees. Its 33 acres was like a rain forest. After the death of Inderasan, the land was sold to a private individual. Our Senior Citizens' Forum had suggested that the land be taken over by the Government and entrusted to the Forest Department and developed. Nothing has happened.

B. Joseph William Pushparaj

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Wanted: bus shelters

Madras is undergoing scorching heat due to summer and the people travelling by bus, including women and senior citizens, are put to a lot of sufferings due to inadequate bus stops. Even in most of the bus stops, there are no arrangements for passengers to sit until buses arrive. Sometimes, people have to wait for long for buses to arrive.

In front of the newly constructed General Hospital, there are no bus stops at all, as there were earlier. It is pathetic to see hundreds of people waiting adjacent to the General Hospital for buses.

The Corporation of Madras should put up adequate bus stops with seating accommodation for the benefit of bus passengers, since travelling by auto in the city is a nightmare and uneconomical.

C. Lakshmi Narain

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Sharing MM

I am very happy to read T.Kaleeswaran's offer to share his copy of *Madras Musings* with others in his area who have not received a particular copy (MM, April 1st).

Though I have not been preserving old copies of MM, I shall do so from now on and offer to share hereafter my copies of MM with anyone in my local area who has not received his/her copy.

My apartment is between Jeevan Bima Nagar bus terminus and Kemp Fort, and my cell phone number is 934122 5968. Readers can also contact me by e-mail at shankrish_2000@yahoo.com

R. Krishnan

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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

Bio-fuel needs encouragement

Increasing global crude oil prices have created considerable anxiety amongst the industrial establishments in the country. As industries inevitably pass on the increased cost of petroleum inputs to the common man by raising the price of the finished products, the general public ultimately has to bear the burden. There are, in response to this, great expectations in the country from biofuel.

Of the several efforts, jatropha-based biofuel is considered the most promising, for reasons below:

- Jatropha is a very tolerant crop with regard to soil conditions and climatic/irrigation factors. It is ideally suited for today's Indian conditions where several regions do not have enough water for agricultural operations. It is an ideal wasteland crop.
- Massive creation of jatropha plantations would provide employment to lakhs of agriculture labourers at semi-skilled and unskilled level.
- Since the life of jatropha plant extends to many years, the long-term work involved in maintaining the crop is minimum.

The Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh Governments have introduced schemes to encourage investment in jatropha plantations. Enthused by the government support, several individuals and organisations have already started cultivating jatropha in a big way.

Nevertheless, there are technological and economic uncertainties about jatropha biofuel and these issues have not yet been addressed adequately at the State and national levels.

Though biofuel is actively supported by several developed countries in the world, most of these countries encourage production of biofuel from edible crops, whereas jatropha is a non-edible crop. In the USA it is 'soya', in Germany it is 'rapeseed', in France it is 'sunflower' - and all are actively encouraged for the biofuel potential.

In the case of such edible crops, the cake produced as a by-product is a value-added product since it can be used as animal/cattle feed. In the case of jatropha, the cake would be toxic as jatropha is a non-edible crop and such cake cannot be used as animal feed. It can, however, be used as soil inputs to some extent, though some quarters think that it should not be used as soil additive in view of its toxicity. In any case, the value that the cake

would get as soil additive would be very much less compared to the possible use as animal feed.

Though the vegetable oil produced from jatropha seeds can straightaway be used as fuel, it cannot be used in sophisticated automobiles, for which the vegetable oil has to be subjected to a process known as trans-esterification, which would improve the properties of vegetable oil to function as fuel. In the process of trans-esterification of vegetable oil, glycerine would be produced as a by-product at the rate of around one kilogram of glycerine for every four kilogram of trans-esterified vegetable oil produced. It would be extremely difficult to sell large quantity of glycerine that would be produced while making lakhs of tonnes of trans-esterified vegetable oil from jatropha. Indian demand for glycerine is only around 50,000 tonnes a year. Even internationally, glycerine is very much a surplus commodity today, as a huge capacity for biodiesel has already been created. Intense efforts are taking place around the world to develop new applications for glycerine and any worthwhile efforts in India in this direction are yet to be initiated.

The price realisation for the by-product glycerine would considerably come down when it becomes available in large quantity.

Considering the technology issues and overall economics of operations and to ensure reasonable returns to the farmers, it is absolutely essential for Government to provide massive subsidy support to the jatropha-based biofuel industry. As a matter of fact, all countries including the USA provide subsidy to the biofuel industry to encourage the national efforts.

It is necessary on the part of the government to decide urgently on a subsidy policy for jatropha-based biofuel, considering the overall benefits, so that the Indian initiatives can move at a faster pace. Considering the rising trend of global crude oil price and the massive and increasing outflow of foreign exchange due to the import of crude oil, it would be a far more pragmatic approach to support the Indian biofuel industry by extending subsidy and other forms of incentive. It should be a cost-benefit decision.

N.S. Venkataraman
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TNCA's role

S.R. Jagannathan, with his rich experience as a good cricketer and administrator, had rightly pointed out (MM, April 1st) the growing menace of high commercialisation in the conduct of coaching camps. I agree with him that the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) "should step in and prevent such ruthless commercialisation in the conduct of coaching camps exploiting gullible parents and children alike".

I remember, when I was the Honorary Secretary of the North Arcot District Cricket Association (now Vellore District Cricket Association), the TNCA had just then started sending experienced coaches to the districts at the request of the District Associations.

In 1986, the TNCA provided the services of an experienced coach, C.P.S. Mani, and he stayed nearly three months in Vellore and conducted a camp making good use of the arrangements made to his satisfaction by the Association. School and college students were greatly benefited. The cricket balls were sold by the TNCA at a concessional rate to the Association during the period of the coaching camp.

S.R. Jagannathan has pertinently observed that most participants at coaching clinics aspire to

become good batsmen, but the coach should ensure the availability of recognised quality bowlers and groom others.

P.S. Subrahmanian

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Practising it right

"Catch 'em young" is true for all sports in general and cricket in particular. Summer coaching camps are organised to spot and improve mushrooming talent. But many of these camps are not conducted properly. Faulty footwork, sloppy fielding in the hot sun, and the attitude to 'chucking' by bowlers all play spoilsport. Instead of just wasting time in these camps, a young player can hang the ball from a tree branch and play defensive shots for half an hour daily. Playing with a straight bat is the cream of coaching. Practice makes you perfect.

C.K. Subramaniam

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An inadvertence

In my letter to *Madras Musings* (May 1st), I had made a couple of mistakes.

The Editor of *Femina* is Sathya Saran and not Asha Saran, and the Reserve Bank Governor was S. Jagannathan, and not S.R. Jagannathan as I had mentioned. I regret the errors.

Geetha Rajagopal

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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 weavers' village a Pitt encouraged

The librarian gingerly handed over the three thick volumes of Love's book on the history of Madras. The brittle papers had withstood the ravages of time fairly well, but I was not so sure of the present state of many monuments mentioned in the pages of the tomes. My mandate was clear, get all the information on temples in Madras you can. I set to work with gusto and by evening was armed with several sheets of paper with closely scrawled notes. But, as always, it was the minor references that elicited my greatest curiosity.

All the famous temples in George Town had several paragraphs, but not so the Chintadripet temples. Their history was equally fascinating. To a modern Chennaiite, Chintadripet seemed to have more to offer than just the fish market – and that was certainly worth a visit.

Poring over the A-Z, the twin temples were marked clearly and the evening was spent in reading through the notes so as to get a "feel for the place". The East India Company's directors had commented on the shortage of calico and the Governor Mortan

Pitt resolved to encourage its manufacture in Madras. Weavers from Salem and "Worriapollam" (Udayarpalayam?) were invited to relocate. They agreed to do so, but asked for open spaces to work in under the shade of trees. Trees were in 1773/4 absent in "Tiruvotriur, Lungumbauk (Nungambakkam) and Wasseravally." Pitt was obviously not going to postpone commercial gain for a few trees and cast his eyes on Sunku Rama's extensive garden. The former chief merchant's property had several trees and copious water. It occupied a peninsula formed by the loop of the Triplicane River and was bounded by the Karanesvari Temple and Periamet. Sunku Rama had a cowl granted to him by Governor Collet in 1719 that proclaimed his ownership, but Pitt had that set aside and in October 1734 the proposal for the creation of the village of 'Chindadrettah' was approved.

Only spinners, weavers, painters, washers and dyers with priests and attendants for the temple were admitted to the new village. Immigrants had to get the approval of Augustus Burton, the special officer who allotted them land. As evidence of the purely commercial interest of the Government, the inhabitants were expected to settle their disputes by arbitration and were not sub-

ject to civil prosecution in the Madras courts. Chinnatambi Mudaliyar and Vennala Narayan Chetti were lent an interest-free loan of 2000 Pagodas to make building advance payments.

In 1735, Pitt's successor Benyon was unhappy with the progress, despite the settlement of 230 families. Two famines had limited the refunds from weavers as well as overall productivity. Benyon asked his dubash, Adiappa Narayan, to help. Much of the development of the village seems to have been in his time. Narayan died in 1743 before he had repaid the advances. He had spent approximately 18,000 Pagodas to construct the temple, and his heirs were unable to repay it. In 1749, the village of Cattawauk, near Ennore, was given by the family to the Company and his son Jaggu petitioned the Board in England regarding the estate. The eventual outcome was in favour of the

● by PRADEEP CHAKRAVARTHY

Company, but the report offers a glimpse of how the temples were built.

"It has in former letter been observed that, in this country, men who are fond of showing their wealth and grandeur have as yet found no better means of displaying them than by the building of temples. Whether from these motives or to draw inhabitants to the new patah, perhaps both, Narrain, out of his money, built two pagodas there; and that they might not want proper endowments, he obtained not only from the inhabitants of every denomination in your bounds some contribution, but also from many of those in the adjacent districts such as Poone-mallee, the Tripossore countries etc. These went under the name of voluntary charitable donations, but when it is considered what power and influence Narrain had over the people, it will be easily conceived that what was called voluntary, and even appears as such at this day under the hands of some of the casts, was merely the tribute paid to power."

Support seems to have returned to the family by way of a cowl granted by Governor Archibald Campbell on 10th August 1787 to Goda Mungapathy Naicker and Diddi Venkata Raya Naicker, the descendants of Narrain alias Audiappa Naick. Through the cowl, the village of

Chintadry Petta (as per the revenue reports of 1730 and 1734) was set aside for support of the two temples. They were to be responsible for ensuring this support and paid the company 30 Pagodas a year in three 'kisths'. They were also asked to keep the streets clean and planted with trees and allowed to collect rent from the shops. They were also allowed to let the paddy fields surrounding the village for revenue generation for the temples. Their descendants still play a small role in the temple that is administered by the HRCE Board.

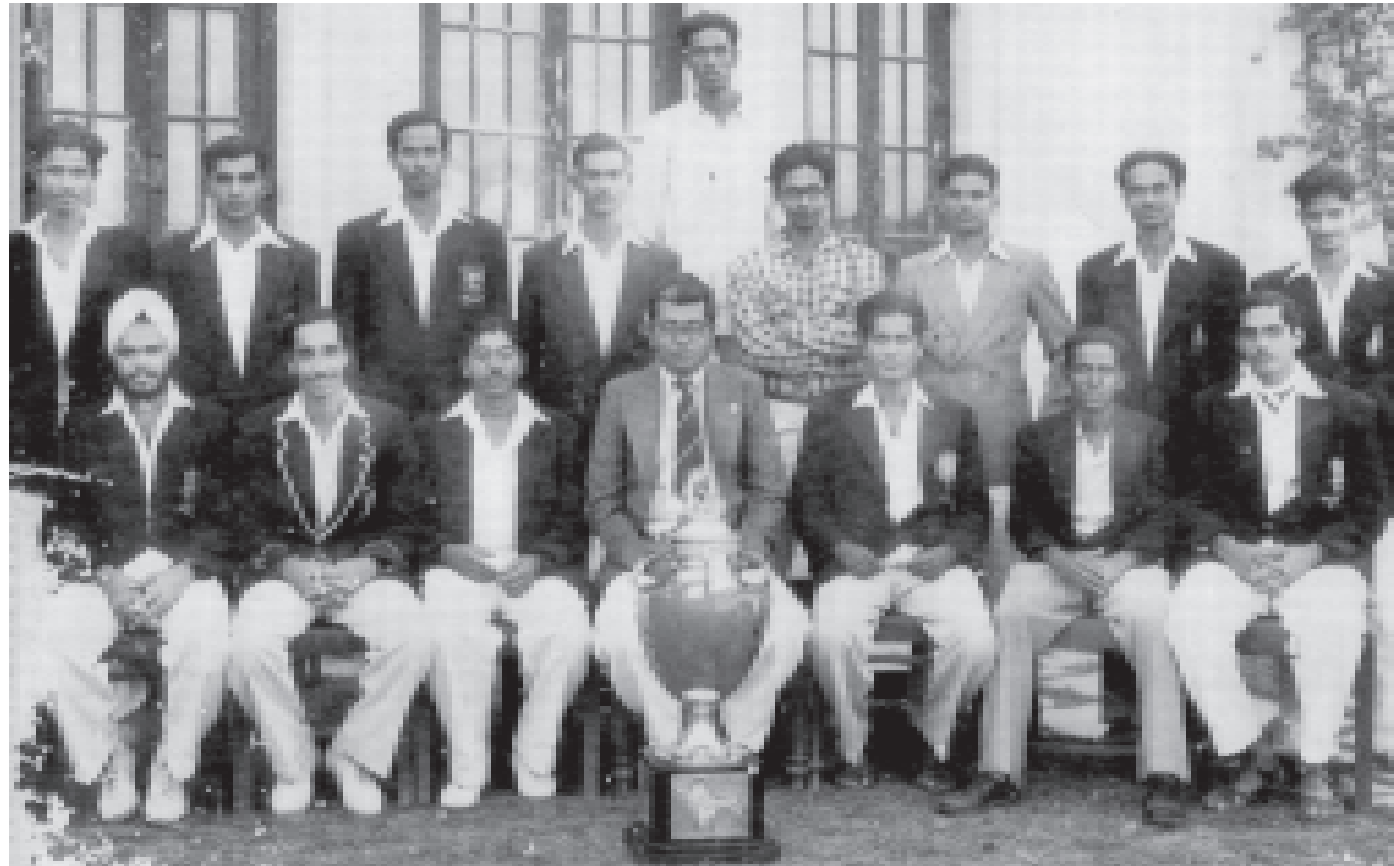
Wondering what the present state of the place was, I set off on a Sunday morning at the crack of dawn – to beat the traffic – to Chintadripet. Turning left behind the Simpson office in Mount Road and passing a church on the right, any remnants of slumber were firmly negated by the powerful odour of the fish market. Thankfully, I hadn't thought of a leisurely walk to discover the temples, I told myself. A few questions on the whereabouts of the twin temples for Shiva and Vishnu led me to Nainiappa Naicken Street. The Adi Narayana temple and the Adi Pureeswara temple share a common wall and a tank.

Going there early in the morning was a good choice; it was quite peaceful and certainly far from the maddening crowd of the fish market. The priest was obviously in a good mood and his lovely recitation was a treat to the ears. The temples are small and unprepossessing. An interesting carving of Yama, the Lord of the Underworld, and two bronze women holding lamps and bedecked with carefully detailed jewellery were noteworthy. The temples will elicit no gasps of admiration from the architecture buff, but for a traveller who wants a moment of rest there are several spots, under the kadamba tree and in the pillared mandapams.

I was fortunate to meet Chandrasekhar, the Executive Officer to the temple. Showing me around, he displayed great pride in the improvements made. The best room in the temple was undoubtedly his office. It overlooked the small temple tank – surprisingly not only was it full of water but it was teeming with fish that rippled the surface. The early morning sunrays glittered on the water and bathed the old buildings beyond the tank in a mellow light. "This tank always

(Continued on page 5)

● Two-pages out of the past



The Madras team which won the Ranji Trophy for the first time in 1954-55. Balu Alaganan captained the team, which beat Holkar in the final at Indore. The team comprised, seated, left to right: A.G. Kripal Singh, C.D. Gopinath, Alaganan, V. Pattabhiraman (Manager), B.C. Alva, D.L. Chakravarthi and M. Suryanarayan, and standing, left to right, B.S. Alva, J. Ramakrishnan, M. Balakrishnan, M. Muruges, A.K. Sarangapani, S. Balakrishnan, M.G. Bavanarayanan and M. Balasubramaniam.

That memorable year When Tamil Nadu were Ranji champions for the first time

Madras won the Ranji Trophy title for the first time, defeating Holkar in the final. Though they had reached the final twice before in 1935-36 and 1940-41, Madras lost to Bombay and Maharashtra respectively. It is also a sad fact that the triumph was not repeated in the 29 years thereafter. The captain of the triumphant team was R.B. Alaganan, a sound batsman and a fine team man, who continues to take keen interest in the game in the various roles of selector, administrator and commentator.

"Many views have been expressed on that victory," recalls Alaganan, "one such being that the victory was a fluke. Whatever it may be, there is no gain-saying the fact that there were in this particular season certain contributory factors which, to my mind, did help considerably in achieving our ultimate victory by merit alone. A predominant desire to win prevailed, which indirectly erased the inferiority complex of some of our younger players. I shall always remember young Muruges walking up to join me for the last wicket in our match against Holkar at Indore in the second innings, when our position was none too rosy, the scoreboard reading 219 for nine.

Instead of being perturbed, he instructed me calmly not to throw my wicket away as he was quite confident of holding one end up. His were not empty words as subsequent events proved. I was extremely lucky indeed to have as my colleagues a band of fine sportsmen whose aim was only to do well as a team. In this respect, much credit is due to our two coaches, Ram Singh and K.S. Kannan. They

● This article is excerpted from P. N. Sundaresan's book, *Ranji Trophy: Golden years 1934-5 to 1983-84*, published in 1984 by the BCCI. Madras, as Tamil Nadu, won the title for the second time in 1988 and has not won since.

spared no efforts in moulding us into a well trained and well disciplined unit."

The outstanding batsman of the Madras team as well as of the season was Ram Singh's eldest son A.G. Kripal Singh, who sported a beard in his early years. He had an aggregate of 636 runs and a sequence of scores which reminded us of Rusi Modi at his peak. The captain himself, with 181 runs to his credit, M. Suryanarayanan, a grandson of the late M. Baliah, who led Madras in their first appearance in the final in 1936, C.D. Gopinath, an

elegant stroke player, and M. Balakrishnan, a delightful striker of the ball, provided him fine support. Like Kripal Singh, the young left-arm spinner M.K. Muruges was the leading bowler of the team as well as of the championship. He had a tally of 23 wickets at an average of 19.52. Kripal Singh, with his off-spinners, provided him admirable support to take 13 wickets. Superior as they were in all

the fifth wicket. T-C were 141 for six in their second innings. The match being drawn, Madras were declared winners on their lead in the first innings.

Madras next beat Hyderabad on similar lines. Consistent batting by the short, stocky and ebullient D.L. Chakravarthi (61), Kripal Singh (67), M. Suryanarayan (54) and the bowling of the spinners A.K. Sarangapani and Muruges saw Madras through. For Hyderabad, Gull Mahomed and Ibrahim Khan, who took seven wickets in the match, bowled well. Earlier Hyderabad's victories over Andhra and Mysore, by an innings and on first innings lead, were featured by centuries from Gul Mahomed, E.B. Aibara and Abbas Ali Baig and the bowling of Gul Mahomed and Ibrahim Khan.

In their only home match of the season, Madras then defeated Bengal by 157 runs. Fresh from his experience of a tour to Pakistan, Gopinath excelled in scoring a scintillating 121 while Kripal Singh missed the hundred narrowly in both innings, 98 and 97. Though Madras (347 runs) dismissed Bengal for 174 runs,

(Continued on page 8)

Finding the past at Alwarkadai

The last time I went to Mylapore to buy a book I was in the VIII grade. The Sanskrit text for my class was available in a well-established bookstore near the Kapali Temple. For a schoolchild from T.Nagar going elsewhere to buy anything was an adventure.

Twenty years later, I was back in the area to find another bookstore which has been in business since the 1950s. Alwar's sidewalk store, a stock of books sitting on plastic sheets, has shifted around, based on the whims of municipal officials, before it became a landmark near Kamadhenu theatre. Three generations of readers have shopped at Alwar's, but I had missed out on the experience till now.

While most of Alwar's revenue was from the sale of second-hand textbooks, his reputation was built on the ability to procure out-of-print books for clients. Even the Maharajah of Mysore has used his services, it is said. Precious finds have been shipped to anonymous foreigners who had all but given up on their search for some rare book. "Give Alwar a week's time and he will get you any title in any language, if it is not already available with him," it has been said of this well-known school-dropout.

Alwar is no longer at his usual spot, a friend reported recently. Did he have to move again or, worse still, (since the newspapers say he was in his seventies) was he truly gone? As a booklover, I simply had to find out. Convinced that a decade abroad had deprived me of the skills required to function in Madras, my mother accompanied me.

When we got to the Luz bus shelter, which once gave Alwar a roof, we saw a vendor of steel vessels at the spot. He gave us directions to his illustrious predecessor's store. Further down, on Luz Church Street, we saw a shirtless man with a Periyar beard against a backdrop of piled-up books. It was Alwar.

Well-thumbed tomes on programming languages stood out in those stacks. Madras was not a beneficiary of the outsourcing boom for nothing! The collection disappointed me because I saw nothing but "useful" books – texts and exam guides. Alwar made no move to help. He must have something to pique the interest of buyers who read or collect books simply for pleasure. I needed to ask him, but I had no idea how to interrupt his chat with his neighbour, the coconut-seller.

Before I could get proactive, a spry man with bare feet, whom I hadn't noticed before, stepped forward to ask if I was looking for anything in particular. He looked too old to be an assistant. Who was he? In response to my implied question, Ramanan simply said, "Speak to Alwar, by all means, but he will refer you back to me."

Brightening at the first sign of customer service, I asked for Sanjay Nigam's *Non-Resident Indian and Other Stories*, a recently out-of-print book. Ramanan candidly said he could not get me this Indian author from abroad. Next, I tried some Mexican comic books. "My Spanish sources have dried up," he said. "Anything in Tamil, perhaps?"

Jaganmohini, an obscure name from a newspaper article, came to my rescue. I am not a big reader of Tamil books, but a women's magazine from another era could be fun to flip through.

● by Vijayashree Venkataraman
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"I sent off the Jaganmohinis with a foreigner. People get PhDs out of those. I have novels by Vai.Mu.Ko, the editor of the magazine. A prolific writer, you know. Come to this address tomorrow for those paperbacks," he offered, but I got him to take us rightaway.

Back by the temple, we reached a tiny outhouse, full of books, after passing through some unbelievably narrow lanes. As he rummaged through the stacks, Ramanan threw names of old authors at me. I recognised only those who had been published in popular weeklies. Others sounded vaguely familiar. To

The weavers' village

(Continued from page 4)

has five feet of water," Chandrasekhar said, as he opened the doors of an old shed to show me the real treasure of the temple, the wooden Nandi that carried the processional image of Shiva for the December/January Arudhra Dharisanam festival. Nothing had prepared me for the sight of a colossal Nandi carved out of wood but beautifully gilded and surrounded by two rows of important members of the Hindu pantheon. Could this have been

help me place a novelist, he named a movie adapted from his book. Such a pity, so few Tamil novels have been retold in celluloid.

Why was the knowledgeable Ramanan only a procurer? "Ah, you should have come to my shop in the old Moore market," he sighed. "That whole building and the one across burned down one night. One wide street connected them. What does that tell you?" He paused dramatically. Whatever the reason for the fire, the thought suddenly hit me that, the tragedy of 1985 reduced several such collections of out-of-print books to ashes.

Aside, the now defunct Madras magazine, must have documented the mysterious fire. Maybe he can get me that issue. I started making a wish-list. Pudhumaipittan's stories on Tirunelveli men and their first brush with urban life in Madras is number one. Going by the translations, there is a new craze for this Manikodi writer.

My mother eagerly scanned the books I had selected, for termites. When Ramanan named a price, she trusted my instinct on the value of the books and made no move to bargain, surprising all of us, including herself.

One lingering look at the bright gopurams of the temple and I was ready to head home, to savour my bounty. But first, we dropped Ramanan back at work. Children in school uniforms were scouring the stacks under Alwar's watchful eye. Too late, I realised, I hadn't exchanged a single word with the legend. However, the possibility of meeting the old Tamil authors, firsthand through these used books, drove away all such concerns from my mind.

I simply could not keep them waiting.

Adiappa's work? Possibly so, for the four corners were embellished with very European-looking winged cherubs. Stacked away in a corner were two incense burners, also beautifully fashioned with chubby and cheeky looking goblins.

With this enchanting sight, I bid goodbye and felt happy that there was indeed some part of Chintadripet that retained if not the structural beauty of its past, at least a vestige of the more leisurely pace of life that it would have once had.

The stormy petrel of Tamil Literature

The stormy petrel of the Tamil world of writers, a maverick man of letters, is the celebrated Tamil writer, essayist, scriptwriter, film-maker and speaker, D. Jayakanthan. The Jnanpeet Award for 2002 was given to him recently for his rich contribution to Tamil literature. It is no exaggeration to state that the Jnanpeet Award Committee has honoured itself, instead of the other way round, by giving it to 'JK' (as he is familiarly known to his friends and fans).



D. Jayakanthan.

After the Award was given to the noted Tamil writer 'Akilan' many years ago, no other Tamil writer until JK was considered, though there have been a few who deserved it. To those who know JK well (like this writer), awards and prizes do not mean much to him; as he remarked, after being awarded the Jnanpeet, "it is only an endorsement!"

Announcing the award, L.M. Singhvi, Chairman of the Jnanpeet Committee, observed, "Jayakanthan has not only enriched the high literary tradition of the Tamil language, but has also made an outstanding contribution to shape Indian literature." He has been doing it and more for nearly half a century and this recognition from the Centre has come to him certainly late.

Jayakanthan set brave new trends in Tamil literature by creating a world of stark realism, breaking conventions, kicking at sacred cows, exploring the lives of the downtrodden and the exploited. Having known poverty as a youth, the experiences he underwent filled him with rage against a smug society comfortably settled and sweeping the dirt under plush carpets. Indeed, JK was the first 'Angry Young Man' of Tamil literature.

He says, "There was a time when I numbered among my close friends rickshaw-drivers, prostitutes, rowdies, pickpockets and cigarette-butt scavengers. There is a sense of involvement with them. Sometimes I even wonder whether I would not have been happier if I had decided to live among them as one of the family. Truly, an attraction for their life was planted in my youthful mind... There is in the lives of such people a flaming passion, a liveliness, and truth!" This indeed formed the theme of his early writing, which first brought him recognition.

Jayakanthan was born into a comfortably placed agricultural family in Cuddalore, on April 24, 1934. He was entering his

teens when the family fortunes dwindled, whereupon he dropped out of school and left home. Like some kind of Dick Whittington, he made his way to Madras and there, through the influence of an uncle who was a communist, found a roof over his head in the office of the Communist Party publication *Jana Sakthi*. Here he hobnobbed with many top leaders of the Communist Party and imbibed the ideals and ideas of Marxism. He helped with composing of *Jana Sakthi* and selling it at street corners in Madras. Thus, he was learning fast in the University of Life many lessons, which would stand him in good

stead when he became a writer.

He began to write short stories during late 1950s for small circulation magazines like *Saraswathi*, *Thamarai*, *Sakthi* and others. His themes and style of writing found him many admirers. Soon, he graduated to write for mainstream Tamil magazines like *Ananda Vikatan*. It was here that his fame began to spread when he wrote about the middle class Brahmin milieu, its mores and morals, the hypocrisy of traditionalism and orthodoxy. Appearing as they did in a traditional family magazine like *Vikatan*, the readers were shocked by his stories at first but soon felt that here was a bold writer who dipped his pen not in ink but in vitriol and vinegar. *Vikatan* increased his fame in a big way and he wrote several novellas and magazine serials in it which established him as a top modern Tamil writer. He also wrote for other noted magazines like *Dinamani Kadir* and *Kumudam*.

Some of his works of this period included *Kokila Enna Seithu Vittal*?, *Agni Pravesam*, *Rishimoolam*, *Vizhuthugal*, *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manithargal*, *Parisukku Po* and *Ganga Engey Pogiral*.

Agni Pravesam, a short story published in *Vikatan*, was about a young Brahmin girl who was seduced. It shocked the predominantly middle class Brahmin readers of the magazine, but created a tremendous impact by focussing on the problems faced by young women going out alone in search of livelihoods. JK expanded the short story into a full-length novel *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manithargal*, which *Vikatan* serialised and brought him greater fame. This was one of the few instances of a writer expanding his own published short story into a novel.

Like most creative writers, he was drawn to the medium of cinema and wrote and directed *Unmai Pol Oruvan* (1965). It explored life in the Madras slums. Survival of the fittest was all that mattered in such sordid conditions of life. Done in realistic style, the movie had a telling impact and proved a critical success, winning the President's Certificate for regional films.

Inspired by the success, he made another film, *Yaarukkaaga Azhudaan* (1966). It was about a sleazy hotel where a poor waiter was falsely accused of theft.

This film did not meet with success although it made a strong socially relevant statement. The role of the poor waiter was brilliantly played by that star-comedian C.K. Nagesh.

JK made two more films but regretfully, they were disasters, with the Censors and others creating problems that prevented their release.

Then came the success of *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manidhargal* (1977) as a film. It was written by JK for the screen and directed by the moviemaker of the melodramatic, A. Bhim Singh. The successful producer-director followed the screenplay to a T and the result was an excellent movie. Lakshmi played the role of the seduced Brahmin girl and won the President's Medal for Best Actress.

In an innovative move, the complete screenplay of *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manidhargal* was published at the price of Rupee One! That was a period when a few screenplays of Tamil movies were published as books. (Not many may be aware that Serukulathur Sama published the screenplay of his film *Shylock* (1940). The screenplay was sold for one-and-a-half annas!) JK was also involved in the



Perumal Murugan.

Murugan began writing serious fiction in the early 1990s – a time when literary debates in Tamil centred on issues of caste oppression and identity. This period saw the emergence of a body of confessional writing by writers from the so-called 'untouchable' or Dalit communities. A new genre of Tamil literature came into existence, called 'Dalit Literature' – a lit-

A writer of protest in running for Kiriyama Prize

Tamil writer Perumal Murugan's third novel *Seasons of the Palm* was one of the five finalists in the prestigious Kiriyama Prize for fiction 2005. The prize is for outstanding books in English (or translated into English) that promotes greater understanding of and among the nations of the Pacific Rim and of the South Asian sub-continent. Past finalists and winners of the award include Monica Ali, Carlos Fuentes, Ha Jin, Rohinton Mistry, Michael Ondaatje and Simon Winchester. The judges had this to say about the novel: "Murugan's third novel focusses on the arduous lives of a group of lovingly drawn child characters with colourful names like "Shortie," "Tallfellow," "Matchbox," and "Stumpleg." Born into the 'untouchable' class in Southern India, the children work as goat herders and face not only the universal difficulties of adolescence but at the same time heartbreaking hunger and dispossession."

Thirtyeight-year-old Murugan is a lecturer in Tamil Literature in a government college in Tamil Nadu. Murugan grew up in a harsh landscape, amidst hardworking peasants. While a student in the mid-1980s, he was involved with socialist literary groups and wrote widely in broadsheets published by the radical left. The experience of 'untouchability' is a strong thematic concern with him.

erature of protest, resistance and subversion.

Perumal Murugan's work may be seen as a response to this genre. His fiction recreates the everyday brutality of caste society in relentless detail. He is credited with restoring literary value to Tamil realist fiction, which had all but died in the post-modern 1980s. No mere chronicler, Murugan writes as a critical insider. His art both records as well as mercilessly indicts the inhumanity he grew up with. "It is a reality," he once remarked, "whose cruelty insists on being written about."

Seasons of the Palm has been ten years in the writing: "I could never finish it, but neither could I stay away from it. And then one summer, it got written. I grew up in this world, but just memories are not enough to write. You have to wait until they acquire colour and shape, and become a story." Murugan's earlier novel, *Current Show* (published by Tara, in English), centres on unusual male friendships amongst dispossessed youth. His current body of work is made up of three volumes of verse and short fiction, a dialect dictionary and a collection of elegant scholarly essays on contemporary Tamil literature. His outstanding literary work has already earned him a national fiction award and several local literary awards. – (Courtesy: *News from Tara*.)

Film Society Movement for some time in the 1960s. During that period, a film society, 'Rasana', was established by S. Krishnaswamy (Babu), S.V. Venkataraman, 'Saavi' (writer and journalist), JK and others interested in serious cinema. That was a time when JK attended many screenings and meetings of the Society in Western dress, once even sporting a dinner jacket! Sadly, like many good things in life, 'Rasana' too faded.

Few today recall that JK was also a talented lyricist who wrote meaningful songs for some Tamil films. Mention must be made of the song he

wrote for *Paathai Theriyuthu Paar* (1960) – *Thenankeetru Oonjaliley*... The tune was composed by that innovative music director M.B. Srinivasan and rendered by P.B. Srinivas and S. Janaki. That was the first time the xylophone was used in Tamil cinema.

JK has written 40 books and hundreds of short stories, essays and two memorable explorations in autobiography. Many of his books won awards in Delhi and in Madras besides being bestsellers.

He has inspired many young writers who treat him as a befitting role model of Modern Tamil Literature.

Trees that fall — and don't fall

(Continued from page 1)

thick canopy of the Rain Trees there. The Peltophorum too is a compact, colourful and showy tree. Its yellow flowers enhance the visual effect of the avenue. Why is there such a hue and cry about tree species that have fallen down due to a natural phenomenon? If a tree has a good anchorage – this is denied sometimes by the side of city roads that are black topped, and alongside cemented pavements – it will stand the velocity of winds. Where trees have fallen, it merely means their root systems are weak. This can be brought about by a) the nature of the particular tree itself (and is not restricted to a particular species) and b) the local conditions in which the tree has to grow. Tree species for avenue planting should be chosen depending on the width of the

avenue concerned. What is wrong in introducing exotics, if they are of a good variety, with good leaf characteristics and good flowering tendencies?"

Dr. Livingstone, Head of the Botany Department, Madras Christian College, says, "Both the Rain Tree and the Peltophorum or Perum Kondrai are exotic species, with generally shallow roots that don't go too deep, but they're quite acclimatised to our region. Quick-growing and shade-giving, they're a popular choice in urban greening. There is nothing wrong in planting these trees – even though native species like Neem, Pungam, etc. stand a better chance – provided some guidelines are followed. To make these trees less top heavy, branches should be regularly trimmed so that the root system is not under strain to hold the extensive weight of the crown.

In gusty wind-prone areas, these trees need not be planted, we need to expect the natural effects of natural calamities."

While a Principal Conservator of Forests was recently reported as saying that Peltophorum is "not a tree suitable for roadsides", another senior official in the Forest Department says, "There is no scientific reason to condemn the species. Maybe, a few trees might fall due to old age or termite attack. Certainly not due to a shallow root system; this is a term used more for agri/horticultural crops. Many reasons are possible for the trees falling – may be due to root borer, termite or insect attack, soil differences, excessive pollution on wind side and, of course, wind pressure. Since 90 per cent of the trees planted on roadsides belong to the Rain Tree or Peltophorum species, they also attract negative attention of this sort when they fall. There is nothing wrong with these tree species.

It's like if, in Delhi, there are more accidents in Maruti cars, it's just because there are more Maruti cars on the road!"

While a Corporation official cited the reasons for the popularity of the Peltophorum and the Rain Tree for urban greening as "quick growing and shade-giving", one 'native tree' enthusiast feels such a choice against indigenous varieties is more "as a shortcut" and to "show results" in spite of the fact that the exotics have a shorter life span than indigenous species. Sources confirm that the latest directive to Corporation officials in the Parks Department has been to plant more of the Gul Mohur, Cassia Fistula and Peltophorum varieties.

Another concerned citizen feels, "Once in ten months, the roadsides are dug up, with tree roots cut or their grip loosened. Support services provided by different government departments, like the Telephones or

Metrowater, often undermine the root system. Spacing between large sized trees like the Rain Tree and Peltophorum is also a crucial factor in their stability."

However, O.T Ravindran, a veteran horticulturist, says, "There are beautiful Rain Tree avenues in many parts of Chennai. It's wrong to say they shouldn't be planted in the city. As softwood trees, they should be planted where wind tunnels are unlikely – between buildings – and not in very open spaces. If enough space is left around the trees so that the roots can grow normally, such tree-falls will not occur. The Peltophorum can also be used as a good roadside tree in the right places. Native species like the Neem, Puvarasu, Tamarind, Pongamia, Cassia, Albezia etc. could also be planted. We just need to take care to plant more carefully. And there is no 'bad' tree. Only people who plant a tree in the wrong place or in the wrong conditions can be called 'bad'!"

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.

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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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Crashing hoardings...

(Continued from page 1)

been going on pursuing this issue for so many years (our Association has written over 1000 unacknowledged letters to the concerned departments at various points in time). Like the Tamil saying '*Erumai mattukku mel mazhai vizhuvathupol*' (like rain on a buffalo's back!), there is no effect at all!" says another member of the Association.

Removing all unauthorised hoardings is imperative, but that is "a difficult proposition, especially with the 'connections' many have," feel several advertisers, who've been trying since 1979 "with no result". The need for enforcement of regulations is even more imperative. "A clause in the Collector's Order in 1968 said that hoardings must be erected in front of the AE Highways, AE PWD or AE Corporation. Later, after the erection, it had to be certified by the officer concerned. But this procedure is seldom followed, and structural stability certificates are issued anyway. Guidelines on where to erect, how to erect, periodic inspections etc. need to be clearly stipulated and enforced," says a hoarding owner emphatically.

In June 2004, a hoarding opposite the Chennai Corporation's headquarters crashed on a car injuring the driver. Again, in September, another giant hoarding collapsed dangerously close to the Judges' Quarters in Adyar. Maybe hoardings need to come crashing down with even more unfailing regularity, for any effective regularising actions to be taken.

Guidelines—but they are challenged

The following are the current guidelines for hoardings. These have been challenged by the Outdoor Advertisers' Association.

- Hoardings on the sides of roads with more than 100 ft width should have a maximum size of 20 x 12 ft.
- Roads between 50 and 100 ft width – 15 x 10 ft size.
- Roads below 50 ft – 12 x 6 ft size.
- Maximum height from ground level should be 30 ft.
- Platform hoardings can be erected only on platforms with minimum 10 ft width.
- Minimum 5 ft distance must be maintained between two hoardings.
- Hoardings should not carry obscene advertisements or messages.
- No hoardings are allowed in front of educational institutions, popular places of worship, hospitals, in-patient treatment facilities and places of historic and aesthetic importance.
- Hoardings in the corner of streets or junctions should be 100 mt away from the junction.
- Hoardings should be erected only on steel structures.

Senate House Conservation Fund

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

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

Dear Registrar,

I am pleased to enclose a cheque for Rs. as my contribution to the restoration and maintenance of *Senate House*. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

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

Date: Signature:

That memorable year

(Continued from page 5)

thanks to the spirited bowling of J. Ramakrishnan, right-arm medium-paced, and Alva—they took five for 66 and four for 59—Alaganan did not enforce the follow-on. Bengal then hit back to skittle out Madras for 139 runs in the second innings, thanks to some excellent effort by Chowdury (six for 35). Only a masterly knock by Kripal Singh saved them from a rout. And it was Kripal Singh, now with the ball, in association with Murugesh who then helped to dismiss Bengal for 155 runs and thus helped Madras to a fine victory. Murugesh took five for 53 and Kripal Singh four for 18.

Consistent batting brought Holkar 441 runs while fine bowling by the left-arm Arjun Nayudu and spinner Sarwate enabled them to dismiss Madhya Pradesh for 161 and 100 runs. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh had beaten Uttar Pradesh on first innings scores. Holkar next met Baroda. In the semi-final at Indore, the rival teams, batting strongly, took three and half days to complete their first innings, followed by Baroda's decision to concede the match. Holkar relished the gesture of Vijay Hazare in sending them in to bat and assiduously built up a score of 492 runs. Holkar then had anxious moments, but in the end got a first innings lead of 80.

"Our final against Holkar," recalls the Madras skipper Alaganan, "evoked much interest among cricketing circles because of the controversy regarding the venue of the fixture. I do not intend to go into the merits or demerits of the issue except to state that the matter was finally decided by fixing the venue at Indore."

Mushtaq Ali surprised everybody by putting Madras in to bat after winning the toss. Alaganan then adds, "Our opening batsmen, Chakravarthy and S. Balakrishnan, gave us a flying start which was later consolidated by another brilliant century by Gopinath. Kripal again batted well scoring 75, but the most enterprising batting came from Sarangapani. His last wicket stand of 65 runs with Murugesh was really worth watching. In our first innings total of 478, I had the dubious distinction of being the only member to contribute nothing to the score. Holkar, in reply, scored 417. Our slow bowlers Murugesh, Sarangapani and Kripal backed by excellent fielding did a grand job. Going in to bat a second time, we scored 311 leaving Holkar to get 373 runs for an outright victory. I must confess the day's game was really exciting with our opponents making a grand effort to get the requisite runs. They just failed by 46 runs, and Madras won the Ranji Trophy for the first time since its inception."

Kripal Singh got seven for 213 in the match, Murugesh got eight for 211, while Sarwate, with six for 194, was Holkar's best bowler. Kripal Singh made 75 and 91, Gopinath 133, Sarangapani 74 not out, while N.R. Newsarkar (85), Mushtaq Ali (55 and 51) Jadhav (77) and Sarwate (56) were the leading scorers on either side.

The attitude of teams and their captains conceding a match, a stray occurrence in previous years, assumed rather menacing proportions to spoil the Ranji Trophy championship of 1954-55. It all started when Gujarat conceded the match to Baroda at tea on the last day of the match after the latter had

taken the first innings lead; Bombay followed Gujarat's example when they gave up the match to Baroda in the West Zone final round about lunch time, after the latter had taken the first innings lead. These two were bad enough but the unsavoury practice was repeated by Baroda even in the important semi-final round against Holkar, after its first innings ended shortly before tea on the fourth and final day.

Indian Cricket, in its notes of the season, condemned "the deplorable habit of some teams conceding a match when their opponents had surpassed their total on the first innings. The laws of the game make no provision for this practice; they envisage every game being played throughout the allotted period. Many State captains are oblivious of the cardinal fact that these practices can only alienate the public, who are deprived of the full complement of a game for which they have paid their money of admittance. The Control Board should insist on the immediate discontinuance of such harmful practices." A most timely comment, as the championship matches, despite keen rivalry between the teams, were not receiving the public support they had in the early years. This decline in popularity was due to the visit of foreign teams diverting the attention of the public to their performance. One critic remarked, "This trend has become so accentuated in recent seasons that most members of the public decline to watch any but a Test match, a most unsatisfactory state of affairs."

**Sport on
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Olive Ridley turtles hatch at city beach

The efforts of M. Murugan of Exnora, Olive Ridley Turtle Conservationist, yielded results one recent morning, when one of the relocated Olive Ridley Turtle eggs nests at Elliot's Beach hatched and 117 nestlings emerged.

Murugan, with the help of the Exnora Life Guards at the Beach, carefully collected them in an aluminium vessel and safely put them back into the sea. The sea, because of the recent earthquakes in Sumatra, appeared withdrawn by about 10 to 12 feet from the normal water line.

However, the nestlings happily took to the water and disappeared into deeper waters very quickly. About 10 to 12 eggs in the nest appeared to have not yielded hatchlings and were found broken. This was the first hatching this year and more are likely to occur in the relocated positions. — (Courtesy: *Environment Ambassador*, journal of Exnora International.)



Till May 20: *Nights In Paris*, an exhibition by Manish Pushkale who was selected under the Indo-French Academy for the 'Arts-Artists in residence' programmes (At Alliance Francaise).

May 20-22 and 27-29: French theatre on screen. In sequence: *Un fil a la patte/A fly in the ointment*. Play by Georges Feydeau; *Inventories/Inventories*. Play by Philippe Minyana; followed by *La Secrete architecture due*

paragraphe: Rencontre avec Philippe Minyana/The architectural secret of a paragraphe: Meet Philippe Minyana; Lapin chasseur/Rabbit in sauce. Play by Jerome; *Phedre*. Play by Jean Racine; and *Tambours sur la digue/Drums on the dyke*. Play by Helena Cixous; followed by *From stage to the screen Ariane Mnouchkine; The Tragedy of Hamlet*. Play by William Shakespeare; followed by Brook by Brook an intimate portrait. (At Alliance Francaise.)

May 25-June 4: *Private vs. Public Views*, a photography exhibition presented by the Embassy of Luxembourg. (At Alliance Francaise.)

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