

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Nowadays I wear the headphones to cut off the need to make polite conversation rather than to listen to music!

Wired for sound!

The human race is ace at discovering the best possible spot to hang something — a picture, an artefact, an umbrella...

That's why we make such good use of that useful appendage — the human ear, devoting both time and money to making it look pretty.

Today, a new dimension's been added.

More and more human ears have wires pouring out of them, creating a wandering-Martian look out of a decades-old comic book.

But talking into space can create confusion, apart from alarm.

Now, you naturally assume that someone who's looking at you while speaking deserves a reply, and launch into speech happily. A minute later, you realise something's not right — responses seem off; the person looks puzzled, and you both are speaking simultaneously.

You then glance at the person's ear. Understanding dawns, and you, pretending you were addressing some phantom spectre behind the person, beat a dignified, though hasty, retreat.

The wired ones are liable to yell at you over a volume of noise only they can hear, so if it looks they're listening to their favourite music, approach with caution.

They also sometimes forget themselves and join in the chorus, causing you to bite your tongue in shock at this sudden explosion of noise in your face.

Please note — Wires mean 'I'm switched off from the rest of you.'

Ranjitha Ashok

Is VPH to get a new lease of life?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Matters appear to be moving ahead at Victoria Public Hall, albeit in a cloak and dagger fashion. Reliable sources indicate that the various parties concerned have arrived at a decision to amicably resolve differences and see their way to restore and then throw open the hall for public use.

Victoria Public Hall, built in the 1880s, was conceived as a Town Hall for the city of Madras. Designed by Chisholm and constructed by Namberumal Chetty, it was made possible through the munificence of the Maharajah of Vizianagaram who made available the greater part of the funds. The Corporation leased out the three and a half acre (57 grounds) parcel of land needed, from People's Park at the rate of 8 annas (50 paise) per ground for 99 years.

The lease expired in 1986/87, but long before the controversy over the renewal of the lease, the venue had deteriorated from the pristine location it once was even in the 1950s. C.N. Annadurai had announced renovation of the structure in the 1960s, but that never took off. Encroachments by shops, following the destruction of Moore Market and the sudden construction of a hotel right before the building, only hastened the degeneration. In the 1990s, when industrialist Suresh Krishna was Sheriff of the city, attempts were once again made and the Trevelyan Fountain, which is in the forecourt of the building, was restored. But the legal cases over the extension of lease ensured that no concrete restoration was made possible, a high profile "rededication of the Hall to the city" by C. Subramaniam in 1993 notwithstanding.

The Hall was administered by a Trust that was founded to raise it. The body was chaired by the

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Can we get the Town Hall back to this? (Photograph Courtesy: VINTAGE VIGNETTES.)

Residents make voices heard over Pallikaranai dumping

It looks like, in spite of all the bad news around, the environment has more champions these days! As the angry faces (behind the symbolic surgical masks they wore!) showed in the recent public demonstration on the Thoraipakkam-Pallavaram Radial Road — while demanding immediate stoppage of non-segregated waste being dumped in the area.

Irate residents from nearby Gandhi Nagar, Customs Colony, Sai Nagar, Balamurugan Gardens, TVH Park Villa and MCN Nagar joined hands with environmentalists and human rights activists, carrying placards in Tamil and English — 'Radial Road or Dumpyard?', 'We need Marsh, Do not Destroy', 'Erikkathe, Erikkathe, Kuppaikalai Erikkathe'. Traffic was blocked for some time too and agitators even issued an ultimatum threatening a road roko on the Old Mahabalipuram Road if the Corporation failed to set things right within ten days!

Already the Corporation of

Chennai has encroached on the ecologically sensitive wetland — recently declared protected — by dumping wastes on land to an extent of over 400 acres (when the allotted acreage is only 65). A black residue coats the entire area by dusk, when burning of biodegradable wastes is generally high. A sample of air from a burning garbage heap sent to

liver, eight the kidneys, seven the blood, five the cardiovascular system and the reproductive system and two the gastrointestinal system and the peripheral nervous system. A resident angrily complains, "The elders and children are all suffering from breathing difficulties."

According to a spokesperson from Care Earth, an NGO fighting for the Pallikaranai wetlands for many years now, "Garbage abuse in this area is a major reason for the heavy inundation of the entire surroundings during monsoons." Pallikaranai Marsh's unique ecology has been rampantly ravaged by civic agencies and many 'invisible or unknown' perpetrators.

This marsh, spread over approximately 4000 ha not so long ago, was decimated to about 600 ha in 2002 and to 420 ha by 2005. A mosaic of grasslands, scrub, marsh and water-filled depressions, it is home to 115 species of birds, 114 species of

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• by
Shobha Menon

Columbia Analytical Services in Simi Valley, California, in September 2005 revealed that it contained 27 volatile organic compounds of which 15 exceeded the standards set by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Three of these are carcinogenic — 13 butadiene, benzene, and chloromethane — found to be 34,782 times, 2360 times and 209 times higher than safe levels! 24 of these target the nervous system, 23 the respiratory system, 22 the eyes, 21 the skin. At least ten target the

• **A little bit of history**

An act of vandalism

After the French surrendered San Thomé to the Dutch in 1673, the French moved to Pondicherry, and turned it into their base. It was expected then that the Dutch would turn San Thomé into their base for commercial operations. But the Dutch, who were hands in glove with the Court of Golconda, had entered into a pact with the King and his Minister Madanna. The Dutch demanded that, after the departure of the French from San Thomé, all the spoils of war, including cannons and ammunitions, should be equally divided. This agreement was executed punctiliously and the city was handed to the King of Golconda.

ter and layout of the land. Its strategic location on the trade routes of the South was emphasised well.

Martin, who feared the acrimony of the Dutch and their strong influence in the Golconda Court, was proved right. Foreseeing the spread of French authority in the Golconda territory and their two-pronged alliance with Chinnapalli Mirza and Sher Khan, the Dutch devised a devious plan. They impressed upon the King's Minister Madanna that the re-entry of the French into San Thomé would be detrimental to the interests of the Golconda Court. Fearing an erosion of his authority, the Minister conspired

An occasional look at the
Madras-Pondicherry connection
• by RITA NATH KESHARI

If the Dutch were not interested in occupying San Thomé, then why did they take so much pain to oust the French from it? Basically, they did not want any other European rival in the Golconda territory, least of all the French.

In October 1674, a Brahmin intermediary proposed a reconciliation between Governor Baron, in charge of the French trading post in Surat, and the King of Golconda. Chinnapalli Mirza, a General of Golconda, proposed that the French could re-take possession of San Thomé along with some adjoining villages in exchange for 100,000 pagodas. The icing on the cake was that the French would also get back the artillery. Quite pleased with the outcome of the negotiations, Governor Baron and Chinnapalli Mirza signed the draft treaty. It was expected that the King of Golconda would put his seal of approval on it.

Why did the French evince such keen interest in regaining San Thomé? According to Francois Martin* (1670-1694), who founded the settlement, Pondicherry was far superior to Madras in terms of its soil, wa-

with the Dutch. They convinced Madanna and the King about the need to destroy San Thomé and raze its buildings to the ground.

A judicious distribution of rich gifts made the King of Golconda issue orders for the demolition of the place – which included not only the fort, but also all the houses and churches within the city. Actually, Chinnapalli Mirza, in league with the French, was reluctant to indulge in this kind of vandalism and reasoned with the King of Golconda in every possible way. But his was the proverbial lone voice in the wilderness.

According to Martin, the beautiful Cathedral, after which the settlement was named, did not escape destruction. Martin, who had prayed there and marvelled at its exquisite beauty, described this Cathedral as one of the best monuments of early Christianity in India. He claimed that the Dutch secretly hastened the demolition proceedings. The city and its rich heritage were razed to the ground – an irreparable loss for posterity.

It would seem that the English in Fort St. George secretly endorsed the demolition. They wished to get rid of any possibility of French domination in the area. A place like Pondicherry, relatively underdeveloped, would tax the French in many

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Protests that inconvenience only innocent bystanders

The *Man from Madras Musings* sees a lot of heat and dust being generated by *bandhs*, *hartals* and other forms of protests that have become very common. And he was witness to one at, of all places, the international airport of our city.

MMM was on his way abroad (yes, he does get around quite a bit, doesn't he?) when, having cleared Immigration, he was on his way to the Customs clearance section. And what did he find was a group of people squatting on the ground, refusing to allow anyone to pass. On the other side of this human barrier sat the Customs official looking on rather bemusedly at the protest. Any passenger who dared make his way through the crowd was heckled and also physically prevented from doing so by the protesters.

Enquiries revealed that the lightning protest was due to the

Kolkata) that *bandhs* would always be called only on Monday or Friday. That way, everyone, protesters and others, was ensured of a long weekend and nobody complained despite the loss of productivity.

Now, Chennai too appears to have woken up to this magic formula and, not only did we have a long weekend, we had a longer weekend what with October 2nd being the Mahatma's birthday. A wag felt that it was appropriate that the Father of the Nation's birthday fell at the end of this *bandh*-laden weekend, for, was it not he, said the wag, who taught us such methods of protests? *The Man from Madras Musings*, however, disagrees with that assessment. True, the Mahatma made peaceful protests and strikes meaningful, but he was the last one to cause industrial and business losses for narrow political gains. Be that as it may, it is an

LIC's golden jubilee

Meanwhile, the Life Insurance Corporation rang down its year-long Golden Jubilee celebrations with medical camps, competitions for the children of its employees, and the release of a souvenir. But what of the Bharat Insurance Building that still remains "topless" and open to the elements? *The Man from Madras Musings* is most disappointed that apart from erecting scaffolding, which fools none into believing that renovation is on, the LIC has done nothing about this magnificent heritage structure.

The driving challenge

The *Man from Madras Musings*, while abroad, invariably depends on public transport and, if that is not available, on friends to ferry him about. This time he was advised by an acquaintance

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

cancellation of a flight by one of our national carriers. The subsequent flight, on which all those affected were promised seats, was only after six hours and this was not acceptable to the passengers and so they had decided to protest. Why they chose to put other passengers to difficulty and why they were protesting outside the Customs section and not making their views clear to an official of the particular airline was a great mystery. But they did manage to hold up everything for half an hour or so. At the end of it all, a Government official arrived and threatened them all with "dire action" in case they continued to obstruct the official machinery from going ahead with its work. This had the necessary effect and the protesters moved out, allowing MMM and others to proceed towards their flight.

To MMM it appears that protests in our city only mean putting innocent bystanders to inconvenience. And yet, this is hailed as a democratic right. How such methods can be democratic when it involves a small brute force throwing its weight about and forcing others to comply is completely beyond MMM's comprehension. But, that is the way of the world.

The long weekend

It was a time-honoured tradition in Calcutta (now

ill wind that blows none any good and a city-based daily reports that the IT Industry in the city in particular looked forward to the long weekend. Why the techies alone, MMM wonders. Are others immune to the joys of an unexpected holiday?

Protecting tanks

The *Man from Madras Musings* learns from the newspapers that the State Government has notified rules to protect tanks and waterbodies from encroachers. It has also outlined procedures for evicting those encroaching into lakes and tanks.

The 'Protection of Tanks and Eviction of Encroachment Act' came into effect from October 1st. The Government apparently felt that it had become difficult to deal with such issues in the absence of a specific law. MMM welcomes this. At the same time, MMM would like to remind the Government of yet another burning issue which suffers from the absence of a specific law, namely the protection of heritage buildings and sites. MMM would like to know what exactly has happened to the proposed Heritage Act? Or could MMM at least be let into the secret of where the draft heritage regulations are that we put together with the help of INTACH, Tamil Nadu, and submitted to the Government quite a few years ago?

from India who had recently moved abroad to get an International Driving Licence and drive about freely in foreign climes. MMM, who considers driving in Chennai enough of a pain, asked his friend as to how difficult it was to get such a licence. The easiest place, said the friend, was India and what better location than Chennai. Don't they have a test for it, asked MMM. 'No', came the answer. Apparently the powers that dispense that document consider driving in Chennai enough of a qualification for the licence. If you can drive in Chennai, you can manage anywhere, is their firm conviction.

On the subject of driving in Chennai, MMM has a tale to relate of yet another friend of his who recently moved to Chennai. His aged father paid him a visit and suggested that he hire a chauffeur as soon as possible, for he was afraid that his son would soon become a victim of high blood pressure, given the traffic conditions in the city.

A month later, the father came back for a visit and was happy to be picked up at the station by the chauffeur. But on reaching home he found that his son was driving himself, keeping the chauffeur idle by his side. The son claimed that watching the chauffeur drive took his BP to new heights and, hence, the new arrangement satisfied everyone.

– MMM

* *India in the 17th Century (Social, Economic and Political) Memoirs of Francois Martin (1670-1694) Volume 1, Part II. Translated and Annotated by Lotika Varadarajan, Manohar. New Delhi, 1983.*

OUR
READERS
WRITE



Goodbye Dugongs?

A newspaper report recently stated that a 12-foot long, 500 kg, *Dugong dugon* (Sea Cow) was found washed ashore at Dhanushkodi in a decomposed state. Its mouth and stomach bore injuries. Dugongs, also called Manatee, are found in the West Indies, Florida and Amazon river, but are of different species. These mammals are related to the elephants, have a tough grey brown hide and, instead of hind legs, have a paddle-shaped tail to thrust up and down to drive the body forward. A dugong could weigh 600 to 900 kg. It attains maturity at the age of 9-10 years and lives upto 60 to 65 years, though today a quarter of these animals are killed by propellers in Florida alone. Dugongs live in coastal shallows, bays and estuaries and fresh water rivers. They seek out sites where the water is at least 2 m deep, with a sluggish current and a temperature of 20° C. Dugongs are great feeders, consuming 10 to 15% of their body weight with sea grass on the coastal beds. Like elephants they do not have compartmentalised stomachs and their intestines are over 45 m (150 ft) long. Plants dominate a dugong's diet, and crustaceans end up in each mouthful. The dugong specially adopts to its habitat. Its eyes have an oily substance to protect them un-

derwater. It comes up to breathe once in 10 minutes. It is a lazy giant, well streamlined, a life spent nosing against gentle currents, hanging motionless in the water or resting on silt. The shallow waters, from Valinokkam to Pamban, which boasts of abundant sea grass, is a sea cow belt. With ships taking charge and increase in boat traffic in the region, they are now highly vulnerable. Some time back 5 whales died. Now it is the turn of the dugongs to follow their cousins off the Florida coast.

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Clarifying a title

We must profusely thank Reader C. Lakshmi Narain for giving a firsthand account of the drama, *Sub-Assistant Magistrate of Sultanpet*, written by VCG in which Lakshmi Narain also acted along with the lawyer-dramatist, VCG. In passing, he has mentioned that the title of the drama was not as mentioned by me, which was 'Sultanpet Sub-Assistant Magistrate' (MM, July 15th). Actually, the whole idea in my writing that letter was to correct Reader M.R. Pillai who gave the title as 'Sattampillai, Sub-Assistant Magistrate' (MM, June 1st). So, I am not wrong as what I mentioned was the verbatim English translation of the title of the Tamil drama, 'சுல்தான்பேட்டை ஸப் அஸிஸ்டன்ட் மாஜிஸ்ட்ரேட்' which was serialised in a Tamil magazine nearly sixty years ago.

Appreciation, at last

The International Women's Association of Chennai celebrates Music Day on 1st October, the birthday of Nirmala Seshadri, one of the founders of IWA. When Nirmala died, her family gave an endowment in her name and IWA very appropriately selects a promising young musician to receive a citation and cash award each year, as Nirmala was a great lover of music. The Music Committee chose 16-year-old violinist K.P. Nandini this year. But owing to the "threatened" bandh the award function was postponed to October 8th.

At the meeting, I met my old friend Stina Vasu and she laughingly reminded me of a conversation I had, in her presence, with her late husband T.T. Vasu many years ago. I had the temerity to tell him – the President of the Music Academy and a great connoisseur of Indian classical music – that Carnatic musicians ruined the violin. To my ears it sounded like "fiddling". Where were the soaring, sweet sounds of this sublime instrument?

Vasu looked horrified, but was kind enough to forgive this foreign woman and her opinion! Over the years, that opinion never changed; my ears were attuned to the sounds of Yasha Haifitz or Yehudi Menuhin. If you have ever listened to music by Claude Debussy, you will understand what I mean... and so, I sat and waited for Nandini to begin her recital. To my surprise and delight I found myself truly enjoying her performance.

Meeting Stina later, I told her that, perhaps, with age and "wisdom" my mind was more open to the possibilities that artistes with magical skills could combine what are essentially Western instruments and South Indian classical music... and produce beautiful sounds. Stina went on to tell me that at the recent Ganesh pooja in her house, the musicians had a saxophone instead of the usual *nadeswaram*.

So, Vasu, wherever you are now, with folded hands I tender my apologies. You must have thought of me as an ignorant young woman, indeed I was... but not any longer. Thanks to young Nandini I will pay more attention, with an open mind and hope I can learn to appreciate this most South Indian of the performing arts... Carnatic music. I must also confess that Nandini stole my heart when I saw her wearing the now rarely seen *pavadai* and *dhavani*... how much more beautiful than the ubiquitous *salwar-kameez*.

Driving home after the meeting, thinking about the morning, it occurred to me that there was yet one more strand tying me to Tamil Nadu, and especially to Madras. Frustrating, exasperating... still, it is home.

Radha Gopalakrishnan
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The English version of the drama (which I have neither read nor seen) must have been 'Sub-Assistant Magistrate of Sultanpet', as authentically given by C. Lakshmi Narain (MM, August 1st). I hope I have clarified the position.

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Birdwatching in Pulicat and Guindy

A recent trip by members of the Madras Naturalists' Society to the wetlands in and around Kudri tank and areas adjoining the northern part of Pulicat Lake found the tank almost full with heavy grass and reed cover. The birds were difficult to spot unless through movements. On the first day, around 4 p.m., coots (300+), dabchiks (25+), redshanks (50+), spotbills (200+), cotton teals (250+), wood (100+) and common sandpipers, blackwinged stints (100+), Indian and purple moorhens, and purple herons were spotted. Along the SHAR Road, painted storks (80+), median (50+), large and little (100+) egrets, and grey herons were spotted. The following morning, along with many of the birds already listed, glossy ibis (120), gull-billed and whiskered terns, lesser whistling teals (1000+), whitebreasted water hens, Pacific golden plovers, flamingos (250+), lesser ringed plovers, little stints, blacktailed godwits (125) were seen. The areas around SHAR Road and Kudri tank need careful monitoring as they are a part of a very fragile but important ecosystem.

S. Thyagarajan

* * *

The Madras Naturalists' Society organised a nature walk in the Guindy National Park one recent Sunday evening. Led by Dr. R. Bhanumathy, the group saw not only birds (coppersmiths, rose ringed parakeets, tree pies, common partridges, red wattled lapwings, common babbler, white browed bulbuls), but also the elusive blackbuck and chital as well as many species of butterflies, spiders, bugs and beetles, reptiles (including star tortoises), plants, trees, climbers and shrubs that go to make up the tropical dry evergreen / deciduous forests. (Courtesy: Madras Naturalists' Society.)

Remembering a teacher

I met M. Anantanarayanan for the first time on the day he took charge as Director of Legal Studies, Madras. I was then doing my second year Law (BL) in the Madras Law College (1956). He took classes for us on the Law of Evidence. Though it is a dry subject, he made it interesting. His predecessors confined themselves to administrative work and did not take classes.

Shortly afterwards, Anantanarayanan was made a judge of the High Court of Madras and rose to be Chief Justice. My contacts with him were few and far between when he was a judge. But after his retirement, we used to meet often.

He and I had common interests. Both had a passion for Thyagaraja *kritis*. He could, without seeing a book, repeat the *sahitya* of all popular *kritis*. Not only did he know the *sahitya* by heart, he could also give the meaning of every word and explain to his listeners what the composer was conveying in the *kritis*. He loved English literature too. So, at times, when discussing Thyagaraja *kritis*, he would make cross-references to what poets like Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats had said in their poems.

We were members of the Music Club which used to organise concerts once a month at Ashoka Hotel, Pantheon Road, and of the Fifty-Fifty Club, which used to organise concerts once a month at the SGS Sabha, T Nagar. I used to pick him and his wife up to go to these concerts. While on our way there and while returning home, he would explain the nuances worth noting in *kritis* and *ragas*. Thus, I had the unique opportunity to learn many things about Thyagaraja *kritis* which could not have been

learnt from books. He opened my eyes to the beauty of Carnatic music, particularly of Thyagaraja *kritis*, and of English literature.

Once he said, "To compose *kritis* is not difficult. Anyone with fairly good *swara gnanam* and proficiency in language can turn out compositions in Carnatic music. But mere words, *raga* and *swaras* do not necessarily make a good composition. In fact, the *kritis* recently composed cannot come anywhere near a single composition of Thyagaraja. The reason is that the *kritis* of Thyagaraja not only have words, *raga* and *swaras*, but there is also in them an 'x' factor which is, unfortunately, inexplicable. It is this 'x' factor that has made Thyagaraja *kritis* immortal."

He once explained how "Nadopasana is the reverse of other *upasanas*. In the case of meditation (*upasana*), the meditator has to control his mind, which goes after external objects, and constantly bring it back to fix on the object of his meditation. But in the case of *Nadopasana* by Thyagaraja, the melody captured his mind and he could not think of any external object. There was no need for him to try and control his mind. His mind did not go after any external object. The *swara devatas* took hold of him and melody just flowed out."

I learnt much from him that I would not have found in books. I remember Anantanarayanan today in his birth centenary year.

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READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** 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 Emden refuses to vanish

(by K.R.A. Narasiah)

During the Madras Week celebrations in August we heard quite a bit about SMS Emden and, as an ex-sailor, I have since been trying to find more about this legendary ship.

From the *Encyclopedia of Ships*, I find there were more than one German light cruisers named Emden. At least three are remembered.

The one that shelled Madras was the first. She was a German cruiser of 4,336 tonnes displacement with a length of 118 m and breadth of 13 m drawing a draft of 4.8 m. She was still fitted with those old, faithful reciprocating steam engines of triple expansion type and could race at a top speed of 25 knots. She had twelve boilers, coal fired. Its main armament comprised ten 102 mm guns. Her hull was reinforced with a 100 mm thick waterline belt. She was launched on May 26, 1908 and was commissioned into the Kaiserliche Marine (Germany's Navy) on July 10, 1909. She was named after the German town Emden. She had a sister ship similar in



construction, named Dresden. However, the main engines for the Dresden were Steam Turbines. Commanded by Captain Karl von Müller, known as the "finest German Naval Officer", she entered the Indian Ocean in August 1914 and preyed upon unescorted English merchantmen, sinking 16 of them. Naturally it caused great panic in the Indian Ocean and the insurance premia for English ships shot up, causing great embarrassment to the British. The Admiralty despatched several Naval vessels to destroy the Emden, but von Müller was a clever man and disguised his ship in such a way that the Royal Navy mistook it for its own cruiser H.M.S. Yarmouth! In fact, some of the Royal Naval ships passing the Emden saluted her in a traditional manner! Then the Emden would fire on the ship and claim victory.

As is known through the media (thanks to the Madras Week organisers), on the night of September 22, 1914, the Emden quietly approached the port of Madras and opened fire on the fuel tanks of the city. In all, 130 shells were fired on the city, causing not so much physical damage as a severe blow to the morale of the British. The Emden then left as quietly as she came, leaving behind her memory in a word coined to denote a 'tough guy'.

The Royal Navy was hunting for the Emden, and the British communications station on Cocos Island was trying to track down the predator. von Müller decided to destroy this station and sent a landing party after anchoring off the island on which it was. In the meantime, Australian light cruiser H.M.A.S. Sydney was despatched to engage the Emden. The Sydney was a faster ship with larger displacement and better armour. The gun battle between the ships went on for an hour and a half, when von Müller decided to ground the vessel to avoid it sinking. He beached the vessel in North Keeling Island in November the same year. Captain John Glossop was on the Sydney and fired till the German ship lowered her colours. The result was 131 dead and 65 wounded on the Emden. Captain von Müller and the remaining crew were captured. The Emden's wreck was partially dismantled in 1950 by a Japanese company for scrap metal.

As mentioned elsewhere, as a mark of respect to all the surviving members of the crew of the Emden, they were allowed by the Kaiser to suffix their names with EMDEN. The mascot of Emden, a 12 cm bronze figure of a woman, was presented to Sir John Hope Simpson of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

In 1917, a salvaged 105 mm gun of the Emden was installed as a monument in Sydney's Hyde Park. Another gun was put in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.



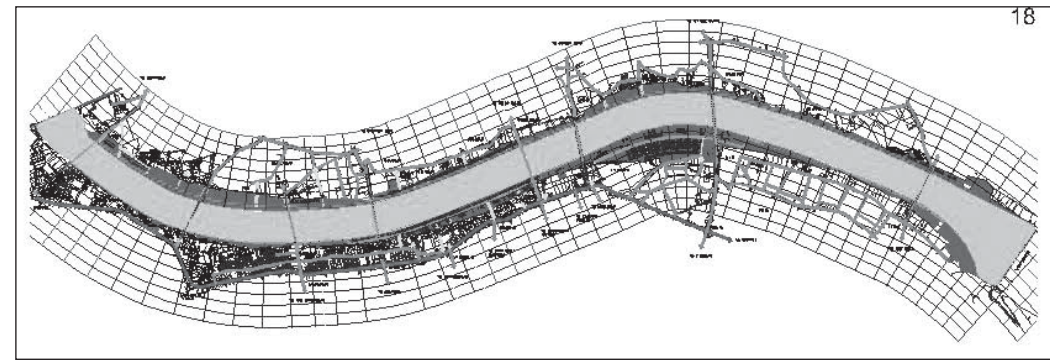
A second Emden was built for German Navy with a displacement of 7,102 tonnes and a length of 155 m, breadth 14 m, and draft of 6.6 m. This was fitted with twin screw turbines and had a top speed of 29.4 knots.

The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 stipulated that Germany could only retain six old cruisers, and that they could not be replaced until the existing vessels were 20 years old. The first new cruiser built for

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Chennai Heritage showcases a way...

To clean the city's waterways



The 10-km stretch of the Sabarmati's riverfront that is to be reclaimed and developed.

For long, the waterway had been an eyesore. In its heyday it had been an important source of water for the city and its banks a recreational space for its citizens. But over the years, with rampant pollution, the discharge of untreated sewage and the mushrooming of slums and shanty towns on its banks, it had degenerated into an ugly, stinking, sometimes dry, sometimes wet natural feature that was a backyard to two halves of a city. Many plans had been mooted for its cleaning up and the rejuvenation of its banks, the first being proposed in the early 1960s, but nothing had ever come out of them. During the rains, the riverbed had water and in summer it was largely dry except for the water that came from the sewers.

Reads like a paragraph on the Adyar, the Cooum or the Buckingham Canal? It could actually be the epitaph on any Indian river's tombstone. But what it actually describes is the condition of the Sabarmati River as viewed from Ahamadabad. Only the citizens and the leaders of that city have not let matters remain that way. 10 km of the riverbank, which roughly bisects the city, has now been taken up for development in a holistic

fashion, taking into consideration all aspects of such a project (see page 5 for further details). The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP), envisaged at a cost of Rs. 1250 crore, is promising to transform the cityscape.

Chennai Heritage, which is a not-for-profit company that brings out Madras Musings and which is supported by 20 corporate houses of the city, took the initiative recently to invite Dr. Bimal Patel, architect and urban planner, whose organisation is managing the SRFDP. The visit involved two separate presenta-

by A Special Correspondent

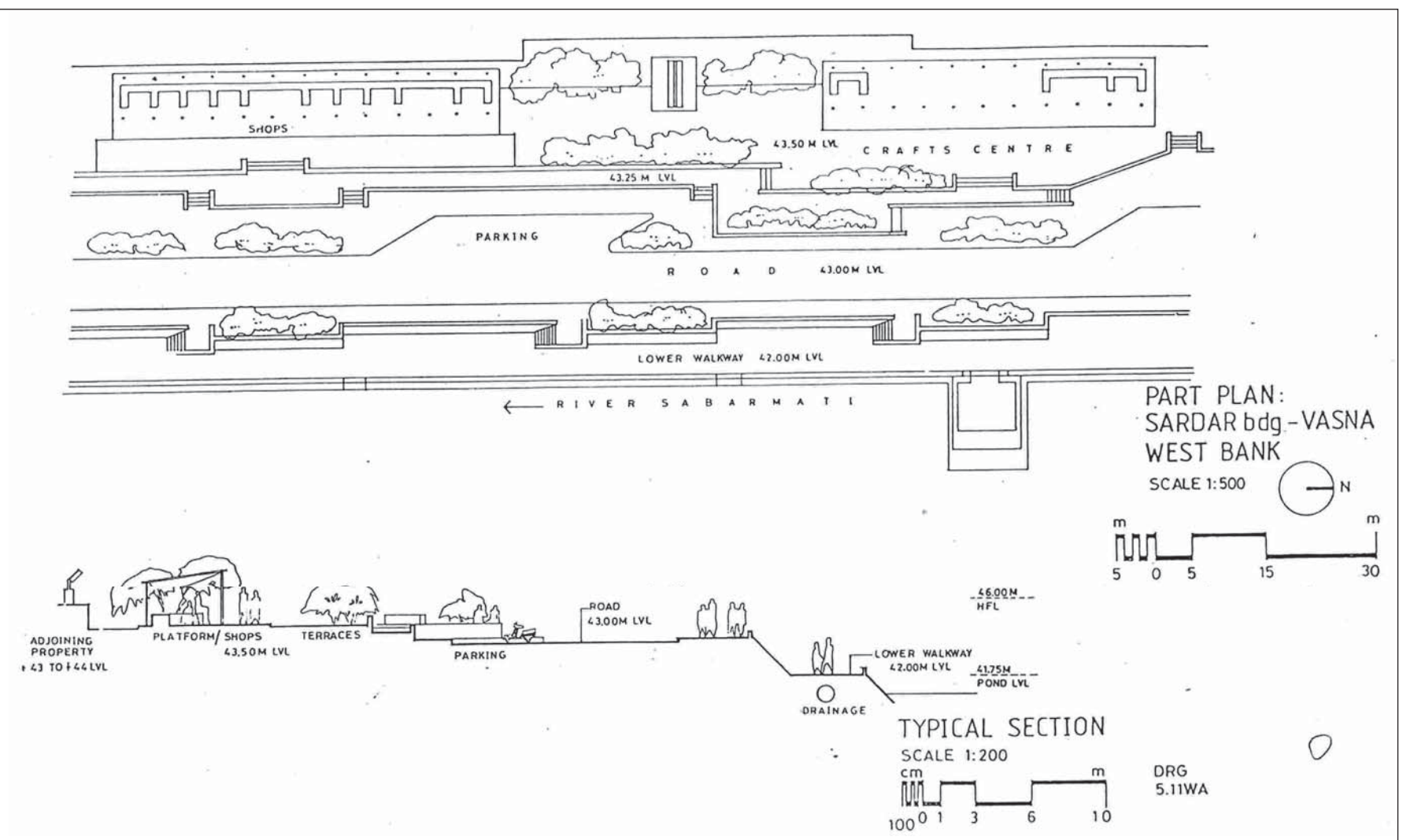
tions on the subject in one day. The first was hosted by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority and Dr. Patel made a detailed presentation on what has been done in Ahamadabad. The meeting resulted in a very positive interaction with senior officials from the CMDA and other Government departments connected with the city's waterways. Their keenness to do something for Chennai's waterways was quite evident in the number of questions that

were asked seeking details. In the evening, Dr. Patel made his presentation to a gathering of city's opinion makers. This included the Mayor of Chennai, M. Subramanian, the PWD Minister, Durai Murugan, captains of industry and representatives of the Press. As Dr. Patel took the audience down a journey in time to trace the history of the Sabarmati and the new developments being proposed, what struck each member of the audience was that it was almost holding a mirror to the scenario in Chennai.

The Minister in his speech traced the history of the various efforts made to clean up Chennai's waterways and said that the failure to do so was due to lack of will, both on the part of the political leadership and on the part of officialdom. He listed some of the difficulties involved in such exercises, including the multiplicity of agencies, the intervention from Courts and the unique situation in Tamil Nadu politics where Governments largely act along party lines which means that plans and proposals of previous Governments are usually put on hold. He, however, left the audience with the positive feeling that the Gov-



Dr. Bimal Patel makes his presentation on the Sabarmati Riverfront at the Chennai Heritage initiative held recently in Chennai.



The Sabarmati River originates in the Aravalli Hills and goes to the sea via Ahamadabad. It is not a perennial river. During the monsoons it is subject to floods, the last of which happened in 1976. Since then, the construction of three dams, upstream of Ahamadabad, has ensured that floods are prevented and the surplus water is stored. A barrage was constructed downstream of Ahamadabad in 1976 to store water in the riverbed as well. During summer, this water is released for irrigation purposes and that invariably dries up the riverbed which is then abused by the discharge of drains, the settlement of slums, and also by sand quarrying.

ernment is quite serious about its plans to restore the city's waterways to their original glory. It is believed that a team of experts may soon be visiting Ahamadabad to see what has been done there — and how.

To Chennai Heritage, it has been the culmination of a six-month-long effort. After the restoration of Senate House, in which the body played a very important role, this is the next project that it is espousing.

It is to be hoped that its catalytic efforts will be successful in getting the political leadership of all parties, officialdom, corporate houses and, most important of all, the general public to work together in a give and take spirit to improve the city's waterways.

A closer look at the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project

The Narmada Canal, a development in 2002/3, passes under the riverbed upstream of Ahamadabad and an inlet has now been built from the canal to the river which ensures that the riverbed has water at all times for a distance of 21 km from the canal to the barrage downstream of Ahamadabad.

The SRFDP focusses on 10 km of the riverfront on both sides of the river which divides the city of Ahamadabad into two. The plan is based on the following salient features:

1. The river is an important channel for monsoon waters. No development can compromise on the flood draining capability. However, it was found that the river width varies along the 10 km stretch from 680 to 330 metres. Calculations showed that if a uniform width of 275 m was maintained across the 10 km stretch, the flood draining capability would in no way be reduced. This allowed for land to be reclaimed all along the river. This land could then be developed for public use. It must be noted here that like Chennai's waterways, the banks of the Sabarmati are not accessible to the public, for

they are flanked by either private properties or slums. This has also ensured that the city has turned its back to the river when it comes to development orientation. However, with the reclamation, it is felt that the focus will once again shift towards the river with the reclaimed land being put to a variety of public purposes.

2. The water that is presently flowing through the riverbed is polluted. It has been decided to run interceptor drainage lines parallel to the river and not draining into the river. The water from these drains will be taken to a sewage treatment plant and the treated water will then be discharged into the river.

3. The relocation of slum dwellers is a matter of high priority. A detailed socioeconomic survey has been done and it identifies 7500 household that would be affected by the development. What is significant is that the rehabilitation of those affected is being planned along the riverfront itself and not at a different place which causes not only dislocation but also economic hardship. The survey was done by agencies from Mumbai

to ensure that no political colour was given to the activity. However, the rehabilitation was opposed in the law courts and a public interest litigation is now pending decision. The Court has, however, not stayed the development activity.

4. Necessity to involve citizens has always been kept in mind. Prior to the project taking off, it was discussed in detail in several forums involving NGOs, professionals, representatives of commercial and corporate bodies, and the common citizens. As a result, the project was perceived to be a city activity rather than a Government scheme and has survived the changes of Governments of various political hues.

5. The problem caused by multiplicity of agencies was eliminated by the SRFDP becoming a special purpose vehicle (SPV) and, therefore, a single nodal agency. The State Government which owns the river lands transferred its rights to the Municipal Corporation to allow for quick decision-making.

6. The main focus of the project involves the construction of platforms at two levels all

along the riverfront. This platform is supported against river erosion by the construction of a trench dug into the riverbed into which reinforcements have been placed. The lower level will largely be walkways and parks which can submerge in the rains without suffering too much. The higher level will have gardens, walks, malls, buildings and rehabilitation for those displaced from the riverbed.

7. A total of 185 hectare of land is expected to be reclaimed. The land allocation will be: public promenade 7%, parks and gardens 24%, road space 30%, relocation housing 10%, informal activities (Sunday markets etc) 5%, sale of land for commercial development 20%. The relocation envisages giving land free to those displaced but the construction will have to be paid for by the proposed owners. The percentage of land for relocation was first identified and it was only then that the balance was opened up for other development. Some old mill land which was being sold by liquidators is also being acquired for relocation housing as it too is near the river.

8. The commercial development is expected to fund the project. It is estimated the commercial development will be of the order of 1 crore square feet and at the rate of Rs. 1500/sq ft in Ahamadabad, the entire project cost of Rs. 1250 crore plus interest can thus be recovered. The commercial development will be under strict guidelines to ensure harmonious development of the riverfront.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period September 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Name the spacecraft launched by NASA on a mission to explore mainbelt asteroids Vesta and Ceres.
2. Where did Viswanathan Anand regain the world chess championship recently?
3. How much have donor countries recently promised The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria?
4. Which are the two most corrupt countries, according to the 'Corruption Perceptions Index' prepared by the Transparency International?
5. Who is the new Prime Minister of Japan?
6. Who was the Man of the Match in the ICC World T20 final won by India?
7. Which world leader made a gaffe in his speech saying Nelson Mandela was dead?
8. Sotheby's is to auction one of the earliest versions of which famous English Charter?
9. Who was officially stripped of his win in the 2006 Tour de France and banned from competition for two years after an arbitration panel found him guilty of doping?
10. Name the influential and successful manager of Chelsea who quit the club suddenly on September 19th.

* * *

11. Who is the grandfather of actor Dushyant, who made his debut in the film *Success*?
12. What links the island of Rameswaram to the Indian mainland?
13. Who wrote the *Periya Puranam*, the work which touches upon the life history of the 63 *nayanmar*?
14. Which cricketer from Tamil Nadu, who scored a century on his Test debut, was nicknamed 'Pali'?
15. Which university was created in September 1997 to cater to the educational needs of the people of Salem, Namakkal and Dharmapuri Districts?
16. What was founded in 1916 by Dr. T. M. Nair and Sir P.T. Tyagaraya Chetty?
17. What term is used in Tamil Nadu cricket for hogging the strike at the crease?
18. Which river's chief tributary is the Cheyyar River?
19. Which 'evergreen' actor made his debut in *Motor Sundaram Pillai*?
20. Later in life, he was awarded the Bharat Ratna. But in 1952, he was appointed the Leader of the House in the State after the first assembly elections in 1952. Name him.

(Answers on page 7)

It's raining Sales

There's a different kind of downpour in the city these days — Sales, Sales and more Sales.

While the inveterate shopper needs little persuasion, even the most disinterested, shop-only-under-duress-or-threat brigade can't help but feel a little tingle when that word springs out at them in the media.

There was a time when Sales were 'timed' — festivals, or just before the holidays.

That's changed now.

Anytime is shopping time, as long as the money lasts and credit cards do not crumble to ash with sheer over-swiping.

Now, Sales come in many shapes and sizes, and — costs.

Some are matter-of-fact and down-to-earth. They draw the many-headed in large multitudes, looking for and finding great bargains, while being too smart to be fooled into purchasing any old thing, or falling for that trick of tags with 'original' prices prominently scored out.

Then there are the very specific Sales — content-wise that is, where the to-go-or-not-to-go decisions are easy.

Like, why would you go to a garden furniture gala if your entire garden comprises three potted palms in a very tiny balcony?

"Thanks, but no thanks," you shrug, glad to have one less spending temptation to worry about, even going so far as to

feel sorry for those with houses and gardens.

(See? There's a moral science lesson in everything. And you thought that was a course that had been designed just so you could bunk classes.)

Some Sales require you to put aside a few hours; others, you breeze through within minutes, especially if it involves the male half of your young brood.

Now, your thinking is very clear.

Your child's clothes are so old that they are disintegrating in chunks before your very eyes. You are also tired of family (especially your mother — you never really outgrow certain criticisms, do you?) looking

● by RANJITHA ASHOK

pointedly at your new *kurta/saree/curtains/pretty thingummies/jewellery*, while the kid lounges around in a T-shirt held together by large holes.

Ergo, you need to shop.

Your child, being of the sex that tends to get off to a slow start on most things, and so not 'into' appearance exactly, feels this is an utter waste of time, and anyway only wimps need more than a couple of T-shirts and worn-out jeans.

The Sale visit inevitably follows a set pattern: Brisk entrance — long argument on the number of clothes to buy —



Isn't it true that the reason we are all here is to be 'seen' and to 'show' what we have...?

swift denouncing of your taste in colours — equally completely ignoring your comment that you're tired of the same old blues, greys and blacks... ("There are other colours, you know, and no, not necessarily sappy") — then, toss a few pieces together — and that's it, you are out, with your young

two groups briskly avoiding contact, using the sort of nimble footwork a WWE wrestler might envy.

The problems begin before you leave your home.

Like, clothes.

No, not the ones you hope to find, but the ones you'll wear TO the Sale.

Don't forget, the items with the actual price tags are not the only ones on display, dahling.

So you'd better dress up in order to be treated nice.

But never make the mistake of thinking a beautifully choreographed appearance indicates weakness.

Humanity in search of a bargain, or hunting for itself or its young, is a vicious, competitive specimen.

Reach for that pretty bangle out of turn, and you'll find that finely-manicured, delicate, never-chopped-an-onion-in-its-life hand turning into a talon that swiftly suppresses any pretensions.

If you are a shrinking violet type, and cannot bring yourself to tug hard at one end of that gossamer silk saree on display, stay away.

Next, navigating the various offerings.

This calls for strategy, for sensible reconnoitering of the land. Keep a sharp look-out, zero in on where the hostesses of the season are the thickest, and get a move on. See if you can discover a tiny, as yet unknown designer, hidden behind all that bling from an adjoining display. That sometimes works, because it means you get bargains before the sellers are 'discovered', and up their prices.

Price tags must always be checked discreetly — if you have to ask the price, you obviously cannot afford it. And never let your jaw drop at the amount mentioned.

Keep a close watch on certain shoppers — wardrobe secrets are usually unearthed this way.

Remember, the woods are really dark and deep, and you have so much to buy before you sleep.

Or until your much-ignored soul cries out "Enough"...

Not that you have to listen.

VHP: new lease of life?

(Continued from page 1)

Sheriff of Madras, and included representatives from the Corporation and the Maharajah of Vizianagaram's family as well as leading citizens of the city. Getting these diverse elements to see eye to eye is a difficult task, particularly with the office of the Sheriff now defunct. At the heart of the matter is the revision of the lease rates and also the question of ownership over the structure with the expiry of the lease. In July 2006, the Local Administration Minister of the State, M.K. Stalin, met a couple of representatives of the Trust and promised speedy action in resolving the disputes and ensuring that "heritage buildings such as the Hall would not be allowed to rot". The much-delayed Heritage Act was also promised, but things have not moved much beyond that. In the case of the Town Hall, however, *Madras Musings* understands

that things have begun to move as promised and a favourable resolution is expected before long, which will enable the Hall to once again serve the purpose it was built for. And that will ensure North Madras a splendid performing space.

Madras Musings, which has consistently championed the restoration of the Hall, has on several occasions in the past carried detailed articles on the subject, including relevant sections of the original lease agreement. Suffice it to now say that the Hall has played an important role in the city's history, having been host to several landmark events, including the first screening of cinema film. The theatre movement was fostered in this location and many a subsequent public personality has cut his teeth under its proscenium arch. Perhaps it will be appropriate to rename the Hall after Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, the patriarch of the

theatre movement whose Suguna Vilasa Sabha used the Hall as its venue for many years. This luminary does not have any lasting memorial in the city.

Yet another welcome development is that a decision has been arrived at on carrying out restoration work at the *Ripon Building* on the lines of what was done at *Senate House*. The landmark book on Madras architecture, *Madras, the Architectural Heritage*, by K. Kalpana and Frank Schiffer had noted that the building required attention to its worn-out roof and to the damage caused by the "unscrupulous insertion of toilets". Obviously these will be attended to. In addition, the Corporation has also decided on building a new and larger Council Chamber at the rear of *Ripon Building*. Hopefully the new structure will be designed to harmoniously blend with the existing profusion of Indo-Saracenic buildings in the area.

● **Pallikaranai dumping**

The residents protest

(Continued from page 1)

plants, 46 species of fish, 21 species of reptiles, 10 species of amphibians and about 10 species of mammals. The plant diversity of the marsh is enriched by the presence of at least two species of grass that are endemic to peninsular India, viz. *Cynodon barberi* and *Iseilemea enthephroides*. It was in this marsh that the white-spotted garden skink was first reported in Tamil Nadu.

Recent studies have highlighted the critical role the marsh has played in draining the excess/flood water of South Chennai. Central to the abuse of the marsh is the categorisation of this marsh as a 'wasteland' and its use as a dumpyard, even to discharge partially treated sewage into, till some time back. Unauthorised dumping of waste is the most hazardous of happenings here. Garbage choking prime marsh land has both fragmented the marsh and hindered drainage and flood control. Water quality in all the residential areas abutting the marsh has, at all depths, been proved to be unfit for human consumption, having significantly high levels of mercury, cadmium and lead.

But the 4000 tonnes of garbage that is being generated by South Chennai every day has to find a place somewhere, I guess. Also an additional burden of 150-200 tonnes of debris. And so it goes on. Activist Nityanand Jayaraman says, "Actually the Pallikaranai

Marsh got some respite recently — in the initial days, when Neel Metal took over and couldn't deliver! If you can't dump here, find somewhere else seems to be the agenda of the Corporation. In the name of protecting Pallikaranai, the dump is sent to Kodungaiyur (where too residents staged a protest a couple of weeks ago).

"Pallikaranai is under threat from various directions. The dumping is only one factor. What about the massive real estate boom and the IT sector coming up all around AND the waste generated by all this infrastructure? There is no regulation, no monitoring, but complete lack of sensitivity to the environment. Unless long-term solutions are looked into, the situation is hopeless."

Meanwhile the Save Pallikaranai Marshland Forum (SPMF) has demanded that:

- Chennai Corporation and Neel Metal Fanalca stop burning of unsegregated solid and biomedical wastes in the area.
- Demarcate immediately area for dumping after consultation with local residents, and clear the wastes already dumped in the area.
- Strictly implement guidelines and rules given in Municipal Solid Waste Rules (2000).
- Develop demarcated area as a scientific landfill.
- Local area monitoring committees to oversee implementation immediately.

- The government to declare remaining areas of marsh north of Thoraipakkam — Pallikaranai Radial Road as Pallikaranai Swamp Forest Block under TN Forests Act, 1882.

- The culvert near Oggiam Madavu to be desilted to allow free flow from marsh to Kovalam estuary to prevent flooding of Velacheri, Adambakkam and areas west of marsh.

V. Srinivasan, Convenor, SPMF, says, "The major issue here is the question of unsegregated garbage that is dumped in two areas — Perungudi and Kodungaiyur. Why can't source segregation be made mandatory across the city — in individual houses, residents' complexes, apartments, etc? The truth is that the lowest income groups actually generate the least harmful garbage!" It just boils down to the fact that each individual who does not segregate at source can actually be held responsible for what is happening to Pallikaranai and its surroundings.

The recent agitation is one more call — on a more urgent note. Will the agencies involved with Pallikaranai get into their act in a holistic and sensitive fashion before the situation really blows up? Or are they waiting to be crisis managers? With sustainability always the issue, that is probably the easier choice. But affected residents and citizens CANNOT afford to wait any more — to segregate the waste they generate each day at source. For their own sakes, and for the environment's.



Till October 19: *Kolu* exhibition of Kondapalli, Etikoppaka, Terracotta, Calcutta, Cloth, Marble, Chennaiapatna and Glass Dolls. (At C.P. Art Centre Vennirul Art Gallery.)

October 19: *Live en fête*, a celebration of books. The festival will revolve around theme *A City, A Book*. There will be readings on this theme. (At 4.00 p.m. at Alliance Francaise.)

October 20: *Art Auction* conducted by Vinnyasa Art Gallery. (At Clive Duplex Hall, Taj Coromandel, 7 p.m.)

October 21-November 10: *All-Women-Show*. An exhibition of paintings and sculptures by women artists from all over India. (At Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

October 25-31: *Tenth Anniversary Show*. Exhibition of paintings and sculptures by artists from all over the country. (At Art World.)

October 27: Inauguration of a boutique cum workshop to promote Tamil culture, tradition and support of women is being done by two French women. For more details call 0413 2260310. (At The Red Courtyard, 5.30 p.m.)

October 27: *Inter-Corporate Mini Olympics*: Fitness One and Corporate Challenger host the first ever Inter-Corporate Mini Olympics an all day event. (At the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.)

Till October 28: *Nirvana*, an exhibition of photographs by Vinoth who lives and works in Chennai. His photographs are a witness to an emotion of poetry in a universe of poverty. For 'Nirvana', he has chosen to showcase sleeping people. (At Alliance Francaise.)

October 30: *Halloween Evening*: Stagefright productions and Sparky's Diner present a Halloween-themed dinner by creating a haunted diner with events and activities for guests to participate in. (At Sparky's Diner.)

October 31: Last day for entry of photographic competition. Topics: Wildlife - General; Urban Wildlife; and Human interference in wildlife. (For details contact: C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre. Ph: 24346526/24337023, E-mail: cpreec@vsnl.com)

November 1-17: An exhibition of Monsoon photographs. (At DakshinaChitra.)

November 6: Concert featuring Lychee Lassi. Live Illetronic Jamband? That's just one way in which people have tried to describe Lychee Lassi, which has gained respect for its freaky live shows. (At the Museum Theatre, 7 p.m.)

November 19-25: To commemorate the World Heritage Week a photography exhibition of rare heritage photographs of Chennai-Madras will be displayed, together with maps and photographs of the World Heritage Sites of South India. A heritage walk in the city by Dr.S. Suresh will also be conducted for young friends as part of the celebration. (At DakshinaChitra.)

December 2-16: Painting exhibition by Madhumathi (at Dakshina-Chitra.)

WORKSHOPS AT DAKSHINACHITRA

For Children

October 20: Origami workshop. Resource person: Augustin (MFA).

November 3: Cartooning workshop. Resource person: Antony Raj (MFA).

December 22: Gift box making & wrapping workshop. Resource person: Manohar.

December 29: Heritage Walk (Chennai). Resource person: Dr. S. Suresh.

For Adults

October 27: Soft Stone Jewellery. Resource person: Thirupathi.

November 17: Handmade Paper Products. Resource person: Malarvizhi.

November 24: Silk Thread Jewellery Making. Resource person: Karpagam.

December 1 & 2: Glass Jewellery Making. Resource person: Srinivasa Ragavan. (To register, please call 24462435/24918943).

Answers to Quiz

1. Dawn; 2. Mexico City; 3. \$9.7 billion; 4. Myanmar and Somalia; 5. Yasuo Fukuda; 6. Irfan Pathan; 7. George W. Bush; 8. Magna Carta; 9. Floyd Landis; 10. Jose Mourinho.

* * *

11. Sivaji Ganesan; 12. Pamban bridge; 13. Sekkizhar; 14. A.G. Kripal Singh; 15. Periyar University; 16. The Justice Party; 17. Gaaji; 18. Palar; 19. Sivakumar; 20. C. Subramaniam.

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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

The Emden refuses to vanish

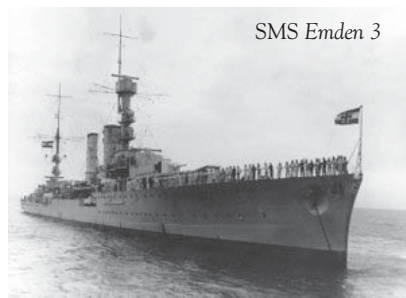
(Continued from page 4)

the German Navy was based on the old wartime cruiser design. The second *Emden* was intended for overseas service and its combined fuel supply was 1,138 tonnes of coal and oil, giving her a range of 6,500 miles. She took part in the attack on Norway early in World War II. According to the *Encyclopedia of ships*, after suffering bomb damage at Kiel, she was scuttled in May 1945. Her wreck was broken up in 1948. However, the information available on Wikipedia says she was beached in Scapa Flow in 1919, was later handed over to the French Navy and scrapped in 1926.

The third *Emden* was also a light cruiser specially designed for training and was launched on January 6, 1925. The commissioning took place on October 15, 1925. This *Emden* was commanded by Karl Donitz, later Admiral of the fleet during World War II. He has

referred to it in his memoirs, *Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days*. This *Emden* was severely damaged during an air attack on April 10, 1945 and was towed into the harbour with a severe list. It was decommissioned on April 26, 1945.

I wonder if there are any other *Emdens*!



SMS Emden 3

An act of vandalism

(Continued from page 2)

ways. Secondly, the people of Madras had always been drawn to San Thomé for purposes of migration and settlement. The destruction of San Thome, the English knew, would lead to a huge number of refugees seeking shelter in Madras. In the words of Martin, the English Governor provided gunpowder for blowing up the stone walls of San Thomé in December 1675 and allowed the residents of Madras to bring away stones or any other building material from there to use in building their own residences.

San Thomé lay in ruins but not for long. By April 1676, the people of the town were determined to rebuild it. The Dutch opposed such plans, but the

King of Golconda, regretting his psychological myopia, issued formal permission. He finally became aware of the financial loss that his rashness had caused. Even the Portuguese, who had tried to steer clear of Franco-Dutch rivalry, began to construct houses and churches there.

Chinnapalli Mirza, who continued to argue for the re-establishment of the French in San Thomé, gathered the evidence necessary to expose the chicanery of Madanna. Mirza died all of a sudden without meeting the King. A case of poisoning was suspected, but nobody dared raise a finger at Madanna. With Mirza's mysterious death, the last hope of the French to regain the coveted settlement was snuffed out.

TN's young cricketers promise much



Anirudha Srikanth

Badrinath is in the India 'A' that toured Kenya and Zimbabwe. Anirudha Srikanth may not have made it to the final squad, but Abinav Mukund was in the Indian Under-19 squad that played a tri-series involving Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India in Sri Lanka. Mukund has been an extremely compact batsman in the Sunil Gavaskar mould since his Under-15 playing days for St. Bede's School. He has a compact defence and is conscious of taking control of any kind of bowling.

Coming back to the seniors, Badrinath, Anirudha and Yo Mahesh caught the attention of the national selectors a while ago. Rather than playing him in one-dayers, Badrinath should have been an automatic choice in the senior Indian team once the likes of V.V.S. Laxman and Sourav Ganguly hang up their boots. Badrinath is a stylish batsman who came to the forefront in 2004 and earned recognition by being selected for the Challenger Series and Irani Trophy games. He's a fantastic close-in catcher with a daring attitude and never flinches while standing close to stroke-makers of repute. Few captains have realised his ability to bowl tidy and tight off-breaks.

Mahesh attracted the selectors' attention while playing for India Under-19 teams. His athletic body reflects his fitness and his smooth run up to the wicket and delivery stride are sure to attract the attention of high level cricket pundits. Physically,

he has everything in his favour to develop into a genuine quick and swing bowler. However, he will have to compete with the likes of Delhi's Ishant Sharma and Maharashtra's Srikant Mundhe. Mahesh needs to be level-headed to maintain accuracy and to bowl to a proper line and length.

Mahesh, who recently returned from Australia after a stint at the Australian Cricket Academy, was thrilled to bowl on the lively tracks in Queensland. He highly commended the fitness schedules which were "shorter than in India but more intense." He also enjoyed the one-to-one sessions with various coaches and the week-long interaction with

● by
BHASKERAN THOMAS

Greg Chappel who turned up to address the participants.

Anirudha is cast very much in the mould of his father Krish Srikanth. His willingness to go after genuinely quick paceman will be very handy in the Twenty/20 and 50-over formats.

He did extremely well in the Under-19 series against the Australians a couple of years ago, having consistently high scores aggressively compiled. When he was barely 17, he stood up bravely to the fastest English bowler of that time, Simon Jones.

Indian selectors should be

bold like their Sri Lankan counterparts who induct players just out of school to international cricket with positive results. Examples are Uppul Tharanga and Chamara Silva.

It's no harm in exposing a young player like Anirudha to the big guns in international cricket. His father too had an early baptism by fire against the likes of Pakistan's Imran Khan and England's Bob Wills, though ODIs were far fewer in those days.

Young players from Tamil Nadu who have been unlucky in catching the eyes of national selectors at various levels included "sixer specialist" V. Devendran and pace bowler C. Ganapathy. Devendran played a vital role in Tamil Nadu winning the inaugural National Twenty/20 tournament. After a year's absence and uncertainty, Ganapathy bowled extremely well and should be made ready to face the tough competition at the national level.

Off-spinner R. Ashwin and left-handed all-rounder S. Vidyut should also consider themselves distinctly unlucky not to find a place in the India 'A' team. Opener M. Vijay, with sufficient hard work, may not be too far off from opening the Indian innings at the Test level. He must take a leaf out of Dinesh Karthik's book. Karthik's temperament and willingness to learn from seniors have been vital in all the successes that he has achieved so far. — (Courtesy : *Straight Bat.*)



S. Badrinath

Both Coach and Chief Selector

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) recently appointed former Indian opening batsman W.V. Raman as the chief of the State selection committee and retained him as coach. The left-handed all-rounder is the ideal choice for both roles. It is probably the first time in cricketing history that one person has been asked to hold the two positions concurrently.

Ardent followers of the State's cricketing fortunes last season would have observed the gradual emergence under Raman's guidance of a young team full of promise. Despite a none-too-impressive show in the Elite 'B' group matches of the Ranji Trophy, the side did finish second in the South Zone one-dayers, lost narrowly in the one-day national Ranji Trophy quarter-finals, and became the national champions of the first Twenty/20 tournament conducted by the Board of Cricket Control in India.

Despite the fact that only Dinesh Karthik has successfully held on to his place in the Indian team, many more are on the verge of getting into national reckoning. With impressive performance last season, the likes of Captain S. Badrinath, V. Devendran, M. Vijay and R. Ashwin could be in the reckoning for places at the national level.

Raman says that the dual assignments place a higher responsibility on him. "But I must add that there are a few things that such combining of jobs makes my task easier." He also points out that he can have better coordination with his co-selectors as he'll be

spending more time with the team and monitoring their performances as coach and selector. He



W.V. Raman

agrees that the team may not have performed well in the past season despite the selectors doing a fine job in picking the right teams. "Now, the players will be in a better frame of mind and know what is expected from them and will have no need to panic about their places in the squad."

Raman further observed: "We had a lot of young players come through. There's a distinct shift in how they approach the game. It's also shown them that once they get their chances they need to keep working at it. When players come to the first-class level after success at the junior level, at times they tend to think this game is a bit easy. What is important is graduating quickly, making the transition easy."

But Raman warned against rushing young players into Twenty20 cricket. "If you're trying to form a young side, get players to improve their skills and aim for Ranji Trophy success, players should not be initiated into Twenty20 initially," he said. "It's probably a better idea for players to get a hang of the four-day game and then come to Twenty20. It's easy for cricketers who are decent at first-class cricket to adapt to shorter games, but not the other way around." — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)

— B.T.

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