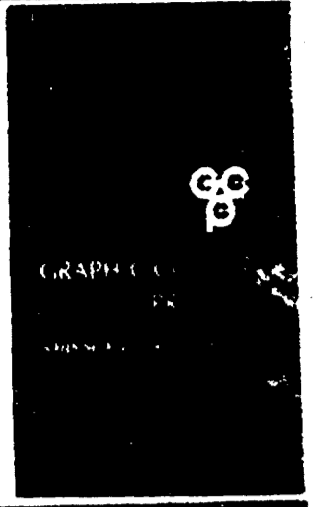


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MADRAS



MUSINGS

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Last-minute reprieve?

A glimmer of hope for 'Madras Musings'

Thank you all, all of you who rang in over the last fortnight and expressed your sadness over the impending closure of *Madras Musings*. Many of you offered advice, a half a dozen offered hope. And so we too live in hope that a way will be found to give *Madras Musings* a longer lease of life.

As of today, a well-wisher, who wishes to remain anonymous, has agreed to sponsor, the next two issues. "That will give me time to put together a proposal to give *Madras Musings* a new lease of life", he has told us. And so *Madras Musings* continues for two issues more in the hope that by the May 16th issue an answer will be found to its financial problems. On behalf of the publishers and all associated with *Madras Musings*, we take this

opportunity to thank our anonymous well-wisher for all the trouble he is taking in this matter.

Meanwhile, we need to put a few things on record. With this issue, we complete five years. They have been years of great satisfaction to all of us associated with *Madras Musings*. There's been the recollection of the past, there's been the focus on achievers little known, there's been the quality of the writing: But what has given us the greatest satisfaction is that we have been able to create an awareness about Madras among many who mattered and got other publications to show a greater interest in the City that in the recent past. We hope that, if all goes well, we will be able to take that awareness-building further forward, in the years to come.

On behalf of the publishers, Lokavani Hall-Mark Press, who were for ever willing to give *Madras Musings* one last try, and myself, I'd like to thank all the subscribers who **took the trouble** to send in their subscriptions and the dozen or so individuals, companies or business groups that generously supported us with advertising over these past few years. If it wasn't for your support we would not have lasted as long. But what is more important is that by your support you demonstrated that you too cared about Madras. If all of you who supported *Madras Musings* continue to expend some effort in making Madras a better city, then *Madras Musings'* five years have not been in vain.

S. Muthiah
 Editor



These stone carvings mysteriously appeared on the Vaimiki Nagar (Iruvanmyur) beach one day recently and as mysteriously disappeared. Local enquiries did not reveal the secret behind them, but versions ranged from the idols being discarded objects from affluent homes, a possible shore temple taking shape, or even stolen artefacts. Why they were arranged in this fashion on the sands and why they vanished a day after this picture was taken, no one knows.

(Photo by V S RAGHAVAN)

Will City be water-short?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Those tortuous days of waiting for water tankers at odd hours are likely to be back in Madras before long.

Madras Musings learns that from June onwards there will be a scarcity of water in Madras, regardless of present optimistic pronouncements. According to officials, the city's three reservoirs — Poondi, Sholavaram and

Red Hills — currently hold only one-third of their capacity, which is half the levels they held last year around this time. Further, with the daily supply of water, levels are fast receding with no inflows.

The water shortage has been caused by the failure of the Northeast

monsoon and the Telugu-Ganga project not coming through.

The 300 tmc of Krishna waters which were supposed to reach Madras in January, did not come due to the alteration of political equations and the corresponding changes in the policy towards the project in Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh Government has now demanded power in lieu of the Krishna water, even though no such barter was thought of at the time the project was conceived or during its early progress.

The Tamil Nadu Government has sunk crores in this project — but now finds itself not being given its due because of what smells like political blackmail.

Finding her way to an elephant's heart

(By A Special Correspondent)

Nibha Nambodri, a 22 year old science graduate from Coimbatore, has recently undergone mahout training in Kerala and could well be the only woman mahout in India, if not the world. The unique course is conducted by the Elephant Welfare Association (EWA) and the Coimbatore-based Zoo Outrage Organisation (ZOO).

Nibha is actively involved with ZOO which co-sponsors the training programme. When, ZOO sent her to Peechi to coordinate the training programme for mahouts, she thought the best way she could understand the animal would be by becoming a mahout and so she joined the course.

The 3-month mahout training programme, conducted

on an experimental basis in Thrissur, used a scientific approach to train aspiring mahouts and teach them to handle elephants with care. The trainees were paid a stipend of Rs. 600 a month and were provided with boarding and lodging facilities.

Nibha says the study of the physiology and behavioural patterns of the elephants has helped make the students better mahouts.

"Elephants are very intelligent," says Nibha, and adds, "They quickly get attuned to the voice of the mahout. While some of the male mahouts tend to wield the stick too often, I refrain from doing so unless absolutely necessary. The best way to an elephant's heart is through affection and reward."



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MORE POWER FOR TAMIL NADU?

(By A Staff Reporter)

The third unit of the North Madras thermal power station will be synchronised with the grid this month and all four units, each with a capacity of 30 MW, would be synchronised by the end of the month.

In the past five years, 648 MW have been added to the installed capacity in the State. Another 645 MW would be added before the end of the Eighth Plan period.

The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) proposes to put up liquid full-based power plants of upto 100 MW

capacity at 15 locations near industrial estates in the State. Funds will be sought from private promoters for the plants. The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) will provide all the infrastructural facilities, such as land and water, while the TNEB will buy the power from the promoters and wheel it to the grid.

Simultaneously, the TNEB and TIDCO are working on formulating a policy to attract private investment for power plants of 50 MW capacity.

The State had also signed 16 memorandums of understandings to create 10,650 MW. These include seven coal and lignite-based power projects with a total capacity of 5320 MW, three gas-based power projects with a total capacity of 3300 MW, three diesel-based power projects with a total capacity of 400 MW, one hydel power project of 10 MW and an ocean thermal energy conversion project of 110 MW.

Central investment in the power sector in Tamil Nadu, however, has not been forthcoming.

A rather curious Madras revealed

A recent survey on the 'Urban Pulse' has revealed a rather curious middle class Madras. What started *The Man From Madras Musings* about the survey, which was conducted in nine major cities, is not the fact that 86 per cent of the respondents in Madras do NOT use lipstick, the highest in any of the cities by far. It is the fact that Madras has the second largest number of TIPPLERS — 51% against Cochin's 64%. In fact, Bangalore, seen as a drinkers' city, had only 46% of the respondents stating that they drank! And that's only slightly more than the national middle class average of 41%. Madras leads the urban drinking set in the consumption of beer (96%), and gin (17%). In brandy consumption, Madras is second (57%) to Cochin (75%) and in rum consumption it is third (36%), but in whisky consumption it is one but the last (58%) as against Bangalore's 52%.

Another find which startled MMM was that the largest percentage of households NOT using herbal shampoos were in Madras (98%), with Ahmadabad and Calcutta following. But Madras reported the largest usage of herbal haircare powders. Another beauty care product used by the largest number of households in Madras is talcum powder: It is regularly used by 91 per cent of the households in Madras. The City also reports high usage of after-shave products, 41 per cent of the respondents regularly using this product. Bangalore, with 51% users, leads in after-shave usage.

A not surprising statistic is that, when it comes to eating out, Madras has the least percentage eating out once a month or more: 26 per cent! 32 per cent don't eat out at all. And when Madras eat out, 82 per cent spend less than Rs. 50 per person, the highest percentage in the lowest category in any of the cities.

So how does MMM see the average middle class Madras household? A man who likes his drink but who wants to eat at home where a conservative wife, who doesn't like to primp (she leaves it to him!), serves traditional fare. Is that how you see middle class Madras too?

An American view

Ambassador Dennis Kux, now retired, started his career in the early Sixties in Madras, *The Man From Madras Musings* was

delighted to discover the other day. Since then he has been a State Department South Asian expert and in recent years has been demonstrating an academic side. A couple of years ago there came out a well-researched book by him on the estranged Indo-American relationship from 1941 to 1991. Now he's working on a similar book on the rather happier U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

Discussing his 'Indian' book with a small group of academics in Madras recently, Ambassador Kux pointed out how often personal equations influenced bilateral relationships. The abrasive Krishna Menon could never hide his "active" dislike of Americans and, so, the Americans he met in Washington and New York never liked him. The result was a very cool Indo-American relationship until Krishna Menon was out of the scene. On the other hand, President Clinton hit it off well with Benazir Bhutto (after all both have Oxbridge backgrounds) and, ever since, the American tilt towards Pakistan has increased.

The Man From Madras Musings was very pleased to hear some of Ambassador Kux's remarks made in passing on this occasion, especially those remarks about Indo-American similarities that are greater than the dissimilarities. Take for instance 'going up'. Apparently American efficiency can also have its moments of inefficiency! For instance, when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles put his foot into it and made a statement commending Portuguese colonialism in Goa, it was not Dulles' fault at all. The statement had been, as usual, prepared by the Portuguese desk man at the State Department and it should then have gone to several other officers for their inputs. But as things would have it, all those others were not able to vet the statement for one reason or the other. And Dulles, who knew little of the situation, read the unvetted statement and put his foot in his mouth. A snafu is what the Americans would call it: "Situation normal, all fouled up!", only 'fouled' would be replaced by a more expressive term, MMM is inclined to think!

A passing remark Ambassador Kux made also struck MMM as being particularly candid. Come election time, American candidates receive large contributions not only from business organisations but from thousands of individuals. These might be officially declared contributions, but they are nevertheless an instrument of corruption. And with some of the largest individual contributors in the US Indians settled there — many of them being affluent professionals — it's time they stopped calling the kettle black, MMM is inclined to think. Legalised contributions also lead to favours in repayment, so the holier than thou attitude strikes MMM as rather exaggerated.

Tomorrow's govt.?

Corruption was the focus of far greater attention at another meeting *The Man From Madras Musings* dropped in at recently. At a discussion group organised by the Madras Book Club to chew over Civil Servant

B G Deshmukh's suggestion of a "government by experts", it was generally agreed that the situation in the country was not so alarming as to warrant such a radical, unconstitutional solution.

What rather surprised MMM, however, was that a rather elderly audience, used to the "good years" of the Republic, did not think corruption had become a very serious problem; rather, they tended to feel that it had been with us ever since they could remember. More heartening was their view that

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

democracy was alive and well — and that the country should not veer from this path.

There were, however, suggestions that need greater attention being paid to, MMM feels. Corruption is not the bane of politics in India; what is serious is the criminalisation of politics. And ways and means have to be found to keep the criminal nexus out. Also in need of a closer look is the Constitution in terms of greater States' Rights and inter-state infrastructural linkages. These would seem to be greater priorities than finding ways and means to root out corruption, according to many.

Private excellence

Two institutions *The Man From Madras Musings* happened to visit recently rather took his breath away. One was the Sri Ramachandra Hospital in Porur and the other the Vellore Engineering College.

The hospital is not only the cleanest hospital MMM has seen anywhere in India, but it must be one of the cleanest institutions of any type. These are standards it maintains from its excellent private rooms down to the largest general wards. Apart from its splendid facilities, another area of excellence is the helpfulness and friendliness of the staff, from the top to the lowest levels. And an amazing feature was the amount of time doctors spent on explaining to each patient what his or her health problem really was.

Perhaps the biggest private hospital in Madras, the Sri Ramachandra Hospital is fast expanding with the aim of becoming one of the biggest hospitals in Asia. And it vows that even when it reaches that size, its standards will not drop one whit. At present, work is going on building a 1000-bed free hospital and on developing new colleges apart from the Medical College already functioning. Its Nurses College promises to be one of the best in the country.

Maintaining rather similar standards is the Vellore Engineering College. Its facilities for computer education are the best MMM has seen anywhere in India. Its library is spending lavishly on adding to its large collection. Every few months a new building keeps coming up to provide space for the expanding laboratory facilities for each of the half a dozen engineering disciplines taught. And the toilets in its hostels are kept cleaner than any five-star hotels.

Both institutions demonstrate that excellence is possible in India, that cleanliness can be maintained. MMM had almost given up on both ideas. But privatisation alone would appear NOT to be the reason for this excellence. India has thousands of private institutions and MMM knows none among them with comparable standards of cleanliness. Perhaps then it is the men and women behind the institutions and those who lead them who provide the answer. But why aren't there more men and women like this? If only we had

a few hundred thousands more like those in these two institutions, a more disciplined, a better country will emerge.

Meanwhile, here are two institutions that MMM commends as ideal models for future planners of corporate medical and educational institutions in India.

In brief

* The Madras Craft Foundation's Dakshinachitra has started work in earnest on its second phase, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears. The Tamil Nadu section has been more or less completed and was to be opened to the public in March, but it has now been decided to have the formal inauguration on September 21, 1996. By then, there will be considerable progress on the Kerala section, consequent to generous support from Sterling Holiday Resorts, MMM is told. Work is underway on reconstructing a 19th Century Malabar Hindu house from Kozhikode. A Syrian Christian complex of several buildings has been purchased and work on reconstruction of its several buildings is expected to start soon. The MCF is now looking for a Muslim taravad, preferably from Tellichery, MMM is informed.

* Is the next threatened area in the City Panagal Park? *The Man From Madras Musings* hears ugly rumours about plans to 'develop' it for 'commercial exploitation'. MMM hopes that it's not true. The park may be neglected by the authorities but it is a valuable lung in a crowded part of the City — besides being a memorial to one of the founders of the movement in which the Dravidian movement had its beginnings. An underground car park might be an answer to please all.

* Madras's own Residency has, for the second year in a row, been voted the 'Economy Business Hotel of the Year'. *The Man From Madras Musings* feels the GN Chetty Road hotel deserves even higher accolades, but wonders how it's going to meet the challenge in 1997 from its Coimbatore clone. The Appaswamy Group plans to open their second Residency in the textile city by the end of this year.

Business briefs

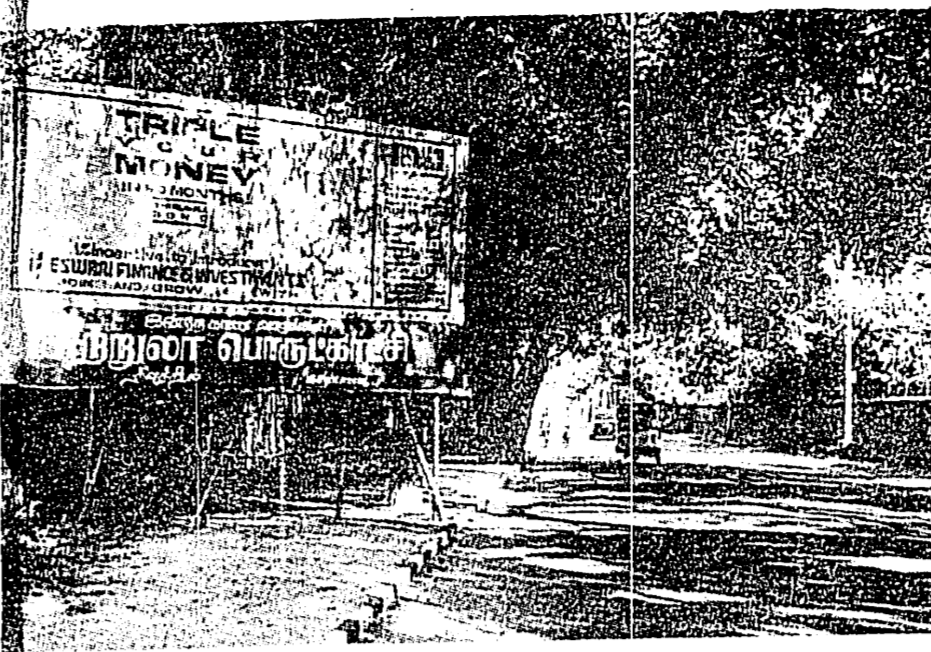
* With the ten-storied Oberoi hotel fast coming up in Teynampet, Madras was all set to get its tallest building, *The Man From Madras Musings* had

thought — and he was not at all pleased with the idea. Now MMM hears, further west on the road and not far from the Oberoi is coming up an even taller building — FOURTEEN STORIES tall! Is this the thin end of the wedge? Once 10- and 14-storey buildings are permitted, what is going to stop many more such buildings and even taller ones coming up? MMM wonders how environmental groups are viewing the 14-storey 'Arihant Trade Centre'. It certainly strikes MMM as a marvellous complex, with a 13th floor golf course, swimming pool, health club, cafeteria and office pantry facilities, besides underground parking. But marvellous as all this sounds, does Madras really want this, does it need it, wonders MMM, if it is 14 stories high!

* Spencer's Plaza may not be anything like Spencer's of old, but Mangal Tirth Estate's, the real estate developers, are making every effort to make the Plaza the prime shopping destination in Madras. The first phase, involving about 30 per cent of the planned built-up area has been functioning for a couple of years now and has been attracting attention, despite the dirty and untended nooks and crannies in public areas that *The Man From Madras Musings* has noticed — most of them with tell-tale betel-red prominence. In the second phase, besides more shopping areas and offices, a 6000 sq ft exhibition area, an executive centre, an upmarket restaurant and a 20,000 sq ft playing area are to be developed, besides car parking on each of the three floors. But what intrigues MMM is the claim that in the third phase "we will retain the interiors of the original Spencer's building, which was considered a heritage building of the city". Now that's nice, isn't it, after pulling down what is admitted as being a heritage building! But, MMM supposes, we should be thankful for small mercies in this day and age — like the plan to provide foot overbridges across Mount Road once the development is complete.

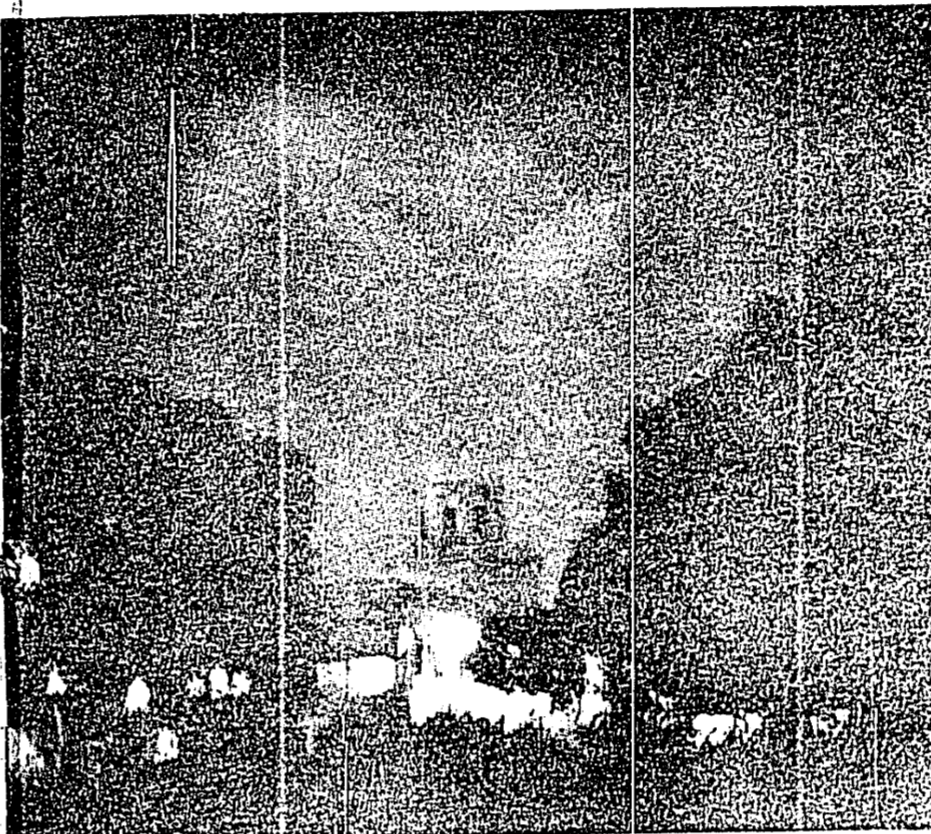
* Parry's, possibly the oldest continuous name in India in agricultural industry and fertilisers, is the newest entrant in the field of making best use of neem (*margosa*). A Rs. 20 crore plant will go on stream in Cuddalore (once, virtually a Parry company-town) before the end of the year and produce 200,000 litres of a neem formulation at peak capacity. The formulation, 'Neemazal-F', at present being produced for trials as a pilot project in Ranipet, is meant for use as a prophylactic against sucker and chewing pests that attack crops, particularly tea. Parry's, who through Parry-Agro have large tea holdings, have got clearance from Sri Lanka and plan to target tea plantations in both countries besides other crops in Southeast Asia. The neem formulations, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands, will be a boon to tea exporters who have been facing problems in importing countries which monitor pesticide residue and taint. Neem is by far the most acceptable pesticide in all countries.

MMM



Besant Avenue, Besant Nagar, gets its first hoarding. Is this the beginning of the end of this lovely road? asks photographer V S RAGHAVAN.

OUR READER'S WRITE



Sir Pitti's house

The account of Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty by Randor Guy (*MM March 1*) was quite comprehensive. However, his bungalow was not in Sanjeevirayan Kovil Street, as stated, but in Balu Mudali Street from which Sanjeevirayan Kovil Street takes off (see sketch). The corner plot abutting Balu Mudali Street and Sanjeevirayan Kovil Street opposite his residence also belonged to him. This he had made into a park in which his family members relaxed. He also conducted meetings with his colleagues or entertained his guests here. The entire road space in front of his bungalow was made into a wide portico in which his visitors parked their phaetons, victorias and cars. It did not hinder traffic as this area in those days was sparsely populated and wheeled traffic, if any, were few and far between. He had also constructed a closed foot overbridge on the portico connecting the upstairs of his bungalow with the garden opposite it. Servants could carry refreshments through this passage to the guests in the garden without stepping on the road.

By the mid-thirties the family of Sir Pitti moved from this bungalow and the premises were kept locked, with only a lone caretaker as watchman. The adjacent parts were partitioned and rented out as family portions. The main building and the garden were allowed to deteriorate due to disuse and neglect. This was the condition when I left the area in 1939. I have not visited the place since.

Sir Pitti was a great educationist. When he found that Tondiarpattai lacked a good school, he started one in a large tract of land adjacent to Tiruvottriyur High Road. The school was named 'Sir Pitti Thyagaraya Chetty Hindu Secondary School'. The mediums of instruction were Tamil and Telugu. Classes were from 3rd Standard to 3rd Form (8th standard) for boys. A separate primary school was started for girls on the same premises. The boys school in course of time grew into a high school. It has now flowered into a college and stands there proudly in Sir Pitti's memory.

Since Sir Pitti was deeply involved in the Non-Brahmin Movement it is usually believed that he disliked Brahmins. It was not so. Almost all the teaching staff in the school he founded were from the Brahmin community!

M. Sethuraman
8, Second Cross Road,
Mahalakshmi Nagar,
Adambakkam, Madras-600 088

Presenting the Past beautifully

This is the first time I have ever been asked to review a book for which I have myself to some extent been responsible, for the heart and motivation of it comes from the hoard of old Madras glass-plate negatives I acquired years ago, and others from another source more recently. And like my friends Arthur C. Clarke and that late superb polymath Isaac Asimov, I am not remarkable for my modesty.

So let me say at once that *Madras — Its Past and Its Present*, is a book for everyone with the slightest interest in this city, still very young at the age of only 357 years, or thereabouts, and let me congratulate the two hard-working and talented photographers (the two qualities don't always go together), D. Krishnan and G. Vijayan, for achieving something I once tried to do several years ago with far less success: namely, trying to find vantage points as near as dammit to the places from where the very old pictures were taken, for comparison's sake.

Yes, I tried, but gave the job up as hopeless. I simply couldn't find the right places; with all those hideous new buildings, the city had changed so much. I simply couldn't connect the old with the new. But Krishnan and Vijayan have done a very great deal better, and they deserve from me, as a trained professional photographer (though now, regrettably, inactive in that field), my most earnest and heartfelt praise.

My own introduction to the book is pretty good too (there goes that modesty again), though N. Ram of *The Hindu's* magazine *Frontline*, writing of it in *The Indian Review of Books*, seems to doubt me, since he says the story of how I found the glass negatives is interesting "if photographer and raconteur (sic) Harry Miller's account, can be credited." Why my account should NOT be credited is a question he appears to leave open. He could check with that superb policeman we

Eric AUZOUX
Director
Alliance Francaise
Madras 600 006

Editor's Note: This was one of several letters received by us on the theme 'Musings should not die.' Thank you all for your faith in us. However, it was sad that no one had an answer to 'how to make Musings live'.

lost to Australia. Inspector-General of Police Eric Stracey, very much alive and well. We still exchange letters occasionally, so I'll give Ram Eric's address if he likes.

But most praise for this lovely, graceful book must, as always, go to that indefatigable S. Muthiah, who these days — and since he started

writing so beautifully for *Aside* — seems to have a hand in practically everything published in Madras. Madras doesn't deserve a Muthu, but we've got him and should cherish him.

The book's a bit expensive, but there seems to be loads of money about these days and I can't think of a better buy for only Rs. 550.

Harry Miller

Now if they had listened to him....! amateur photographer

The following letter appeared in *The Times* in 1851 — *The Photographic Habit*

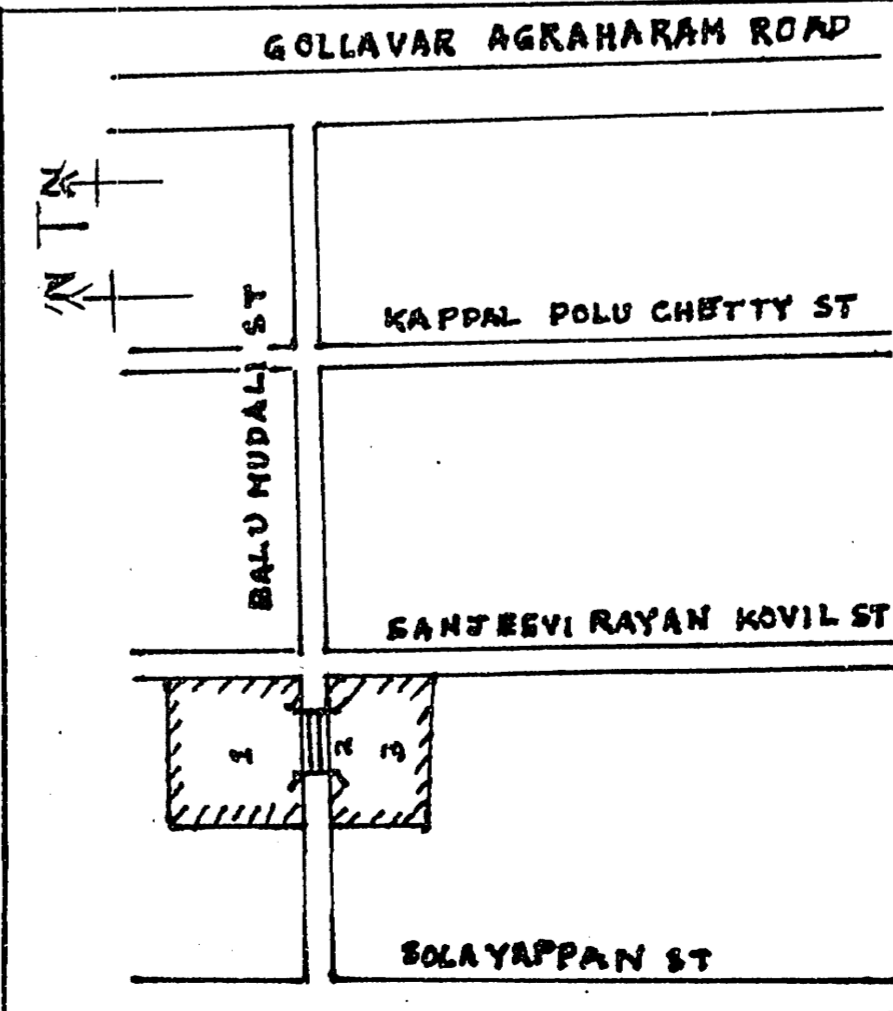
Sir, — I beg to bring to your notice the serious harm likely to come from the increasing popularity of photography. Since Mr. Talbot and M. Daguerre perfected their processes for fixing a living image on paper a few years ago, there has been an alarming increase in the popularity of this unnatural pastime. The stage has now been reached when permanent damage is likely to be inflicted not only on painting, engraving, and the arts in general, but upon industry, manners, and the home itself.

Already, I am informed, the fascinations of the photograph album have had their effect on the thousands of children who would be better employed in pit or mill; already the reputations of Landseer, Turner, and even of Martin and Westall are believed to be suffering; and I can myself vouch unhappily from my own family circle that idleness and vanity are encouraged by the constant posing for portraits, and the subsequent poring over them in unhealthy cringing attitudes. This day, alas, I have been obliged to call five of my daughters before me for reproof. A smaller point, Sir, but one to be remembered, is that the Great Exhibition to be held in Hyde Park this year is likely to suffer if photographic reproductions of its features are distributed wholesale.

I beg to subscribe myself, Sir, your obedient Servant,
Old Vicarage.
Shinfield, Berkshire.

PATRICK LAWRENCE

Photographer HARRY MILLER sent in his review of Madras — Its Past and Its Present with this copy of a cutting from his collection. What would have happened to his passion and to this commemoration of Madras past and present if Patrick Lawrence had his way in 1851? Fortunately, Lawrence didn't!



Sketch showing the position of Sir Pitti's bungalow (1), garden (2) and the covered footbridge on the portico which joined them (3).

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Sri Lanka's passion — Cricket

It's nice to know that neighbourly solidarity exists after all. My telephone hasn't stopped buzzing since Sri Lanka became world champions in cricket. Probably because I'm the only Sri Lankan they know, my friends have been jostling to congratulate me and seem genuinely happy, almost euphoric, that Sri Lanka has won the World Cup for the very first time.

During the past few weeks, I was pleasantly surprised that Sri Lanka's amazing performance in the World Cup had triggered a surge of interest in the island nation. During the tournament, Indian friends and acquaintances,

watch cricket here for well over two decades, interpreted the interest shown in the visitors as a marked change in attitude. He put it down to the fact that the Sri Lankan team had proved their mettle by winning every game.

Cricket has been played in Sri Lanka since the days of the British Raj when our colonial rulers introduced the game to the entire subcontinent. In fact, the 117-year-old annual match between the two leading Colombo, public schools, Royal and St Thomas' Colleges (modelled on Harrow and Eton respectively), is reputed to be one of the oldest in the world. As in India,

by Milika Hariani

aware of my Sri Lankan connections, pined me with questions, not only about the Lankan team and cricket in Sri Lanka, but facts and figures about the country.

When Sri Lanka has been in the news for less cheerful reasons, people have shown sympathy and concern but have not been inclined to dwell on the topic. Protracted ethnic conflict in a neighbouring country is far from engrossing but cricket is obviously a universal passion.

Maybe because they were perceived as underdogs, or perhaps because they posed no real threat to anyone at first, or simply because the Sri Lankans exuded a quiet confidence and lack of arrogance, many cricket fans took to the Sri Lankan team from the very first match. Several people told me they were rooting for the Sri Lankan team long before India was out of the running.

This attitude was also noticed by two Sri Lankan friends of mine who came to India to cheer their team. During the matches in Delhi and Calcutta, they were heartened to find the crowd friendly and encouraging towards the Sri Lankan team.

For complex reasons, Sri Lankans have historically had a somewhat ambivalent relationship with India and Indians. It is a relationship that Professor E.F.C. Ludowyk, in his book *The Modern History of Ceylon*, likens to the ambivalence associated with a son to a father, in this case a much stronger father. Professor Ludowyk also stresses that the Sinhalese and their culture, strongly influenced though they may have been by India, were different.

That's probably why my Lankan friends were so delighted when they were told "Our hearts are with Sri Lanka" by several people in Calcutta before the Eden Gardens debacle. They were equally pleased that members of the Calcutta crowd came and apologised to them for the unruly behaviour of their fellow citizens.

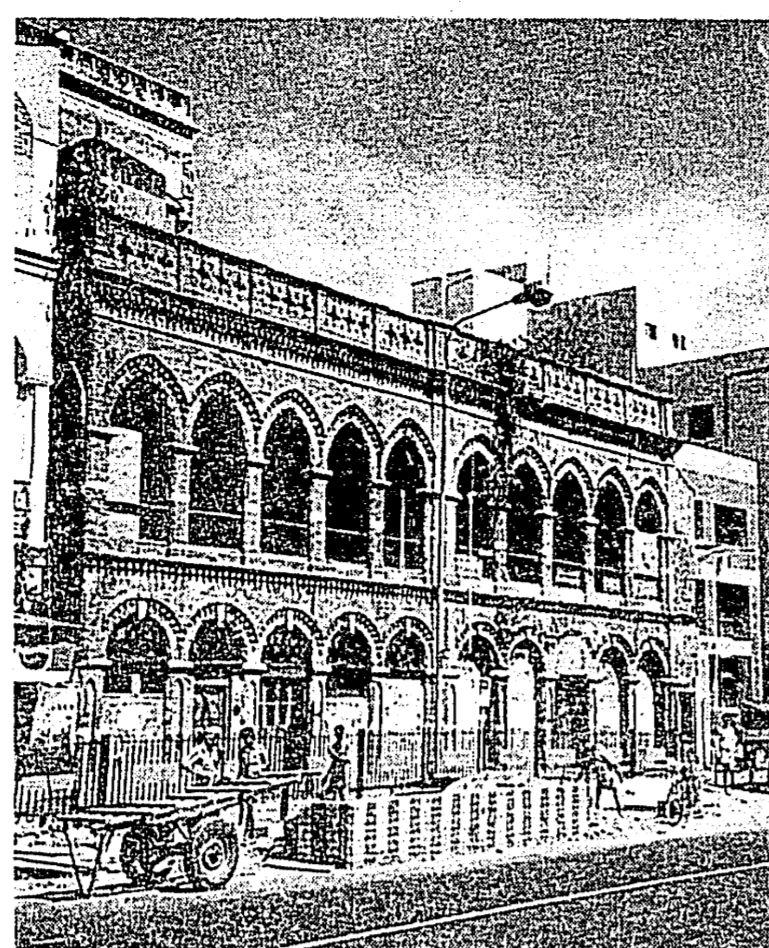
There were about 200 Sri Lankans among the spectators that day. The one-man cheering team Percy Abeysekera (who follows the Lankan team wherever they go) and his second-in-command Lionel were threatened with bodily harm if they continued to flourish the lion flag, but no one was harmed.

Another friend of mine, a cricket buff who has been coming to India to

cricket was then an elitist game which helped to inculcate a British sense of values into budding brown sahibs. After independence, its popularity increased and it became, in the words of a columnist in the Sixties, "a virtual religion which contained in miniature the Victorian code". Although interest in the game has never waned, the scenario has changed dramatically during the past decade or so.

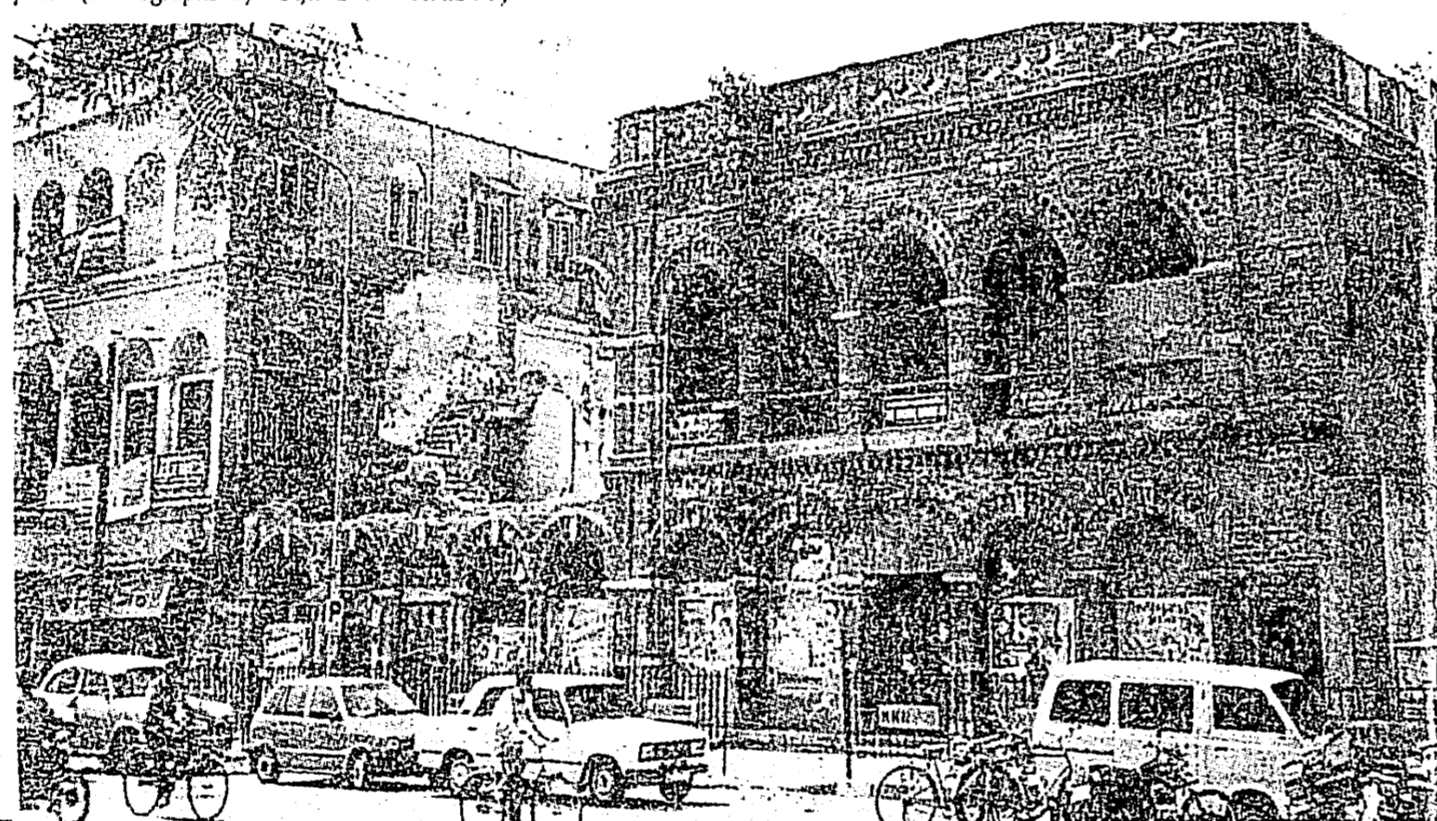
It is no longer an exclusive or elitist game. Its popularity has grown in rural areas and cuts across social barriers. As in India, this sea-change has been fuelled by television, while the

(Continued on P6)



Next to each other, on North Beach Road's (Rajaji Salai) northern end, where many of the shipping companies have their offices, are our OLD and the NEW this fortnight. The OLD, reflecting the Indo-Saracenic style so favoured in Madras in the late 19th Century, is believed to be about 90 years old and houses commercial offices. It rather resembles the Small Causes Court in the High Court campus. The NEW, to its right, is Harbour Gate House, built by International Services, a firm closely linked with shipping activity. The building houses the Norwegian Consulate, which moved here in 1986 from Dare House.

THE OLD... & THE NEW
Within days of taking the picture above, RAJIND CHRISTY found one half of the OLD being demolished. Apparently the building has not only two owners but had been separated down the centre over the years. Now, one half of a building which is part of the architectural heritage of the City has gone. How long will the other half last? Or will it be restored by anyone who cares for the past? (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY)



Is more than one exchange needed?

For the past few months, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) has been regularly recording higher trading volumes than the 'Old Lady of Dalal Street', the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). Maybe this is the reason why the former is being hailed, though prematurely, as the victor in the Battle of the Bourses. A few questions, both interesting and disturbing, crop up with the NSE establishing itself as one of the country's premier Exchanges. The first subject we are forced to address concerns the relevance of the Regional Stock Exchanges (SEs).

Some analysts are wont to point out that a nation-wide electronic Exchange like the NSE or the OTCEI (Over The Counter Exchange of India) has advantages of transparency and in ease of settlement that are lacking in the regional SEs. More importantly, observers claim, with a truly nation-wide Exchange, India can finally think in terms of developing a single market. They also point to the disparity in the operations of the various SEs around the country and say that these have proven time and time again that they are incapable of functioning cohesively in terms of legal framework and procedures regarding trading or settlement.

The proponents of such a theory seem to miss the forest for the trees. A country-wide Exchange does not take into consideration the unique nature of the corporate structure in India, a country which has disparate

geographical regions. Also the quasi-federal nature of our polity means that companies have to function under differing conditions. Most importantly, investors need access to information regarding the scrips and companies they are interested in and for them to go to the hub (a city like Bombay) of a national Exchange every time is neither practical nor advisable. To put it succinctly, regional companies need regional SEs to function as clearing houses of information which can be accessed by investors quickly and immediately.

Yet another reason, and as important as the previous one, for the continuation of Regional SEs is that, like in all matters pertaining to markets and consumers, no single or monopolistic entity can provide a truly efficient service. That competition is a must for the Stock Markets too was proved emphatically during the BSE-Reliance face-off. The powers-that-be would do well to consider an overhauling of the system rather than do away with it in favour of a new one. For that would be too much like the man who cut his nose off to spite his face. Meanwhile, here are our selections for this fortnight:

RR Medi Pharma (CMP: Rs. 54.00): The Madras-based RR Medi Pharma manufactures 140 lakh bottles of IV Fluids p.a. using an aseptic and state-of-the-art FFS (Form-Fill-Seal) technology. Having been making losses this was taken over by Wockhardt in July 1995 by

acquiring a 51% stake in equity. Now, RR Medi's products are purchased by Wockhardt which markets them under their brand name 'Wockhardt'. In the post-takeover scenario not only its capacity being increased to 300 lakh bottles p.a., with Wockhardt funding this expansion, but so has capacity utilisation. Having been languishing at 52% in 1994-95, it has gone up to around 80% in 1995-96. Also, its entire debt has been replaced by



Wockhardt's interest-free loans. For the year ended March 1996, a turnover of Rs. 8.5 cr is expected as well as a loss of Rs. 60 lakhs. For 1996-97, with the increased capacity, we estimate a turnover of around Rs. 16 cr and profit of around Rs. 1.2 cr, translating into an EPS of Rs. 2.55. Existing holders may retain holdings with a stop loss at Rs. 50, considering Wockhardt's good track record.

Indrad Auto Components (CMP: Rs. 25.75): This MAC Group company is continuing its growth trend. Net Sales and PAT saw an increase by 44.4% and 27.5% respectively in the first half of the current financial year over the previous

corresponding period. The EPS improved from Rs. 5.20 to Rs. 4.08 on the unchanged equity of Rs. 2.5 cr. However, during the period under review, the profit margins have dropped marginally.

Promoted by A. C. Muthiah and V. Chidambaram with group company Agre Cargo Transport Ltd (ACT Ltd), Indrad Auto Components Ltd (IACL) manufactures motors for wipers, washers and fans which are supplied to all leading OEMs such as Maruti, Telco, Eicher, Ashok Leyland etc. Having commenced operations in March 1987, IACL's market share is an impressive 90% in washer motors and 40% in fan and wiper motors. To achieve economies in operation, ACT Ltd (CMP Rs 100), which is mainly engaged in transport business, is now being merged with IACL. Every one share of ACT Ltd will get five of IACL.

ACT Ltd derives about 44% of income through its dealerships in LCVs and passenger cars, warehousing and other services, with transport accounting for the balance. It has an excellent track record with Sales and PAT registering a CARG of 83% and 147% respectively from March 1992 to March 1995. For September '95 it has achieved the same at Rs. 64.16 cr and Rs. 2.84 cr respectively. The annualised EPS on an equity of Rs. 1.8 cr stands at Rs. 31.60.

Both companies have chalked out expansion plans and, given the good prospects of the auto industry and the tremendous potential in the road transport business, the future outlook of IACL seems bright. The CMP of Rs. 25 of IACL discounts the annualised EPS by six times as against the industry average of around 20, thus leaving ample scope for appreciation. Buy with a stop at Rs. 21.

K. Gopalakrishnan

A home at last

— For the Roja Muthiah Collection

The unique Roja Muthiah collection of about 1,00,000 books on Tamil Literature, Medicine, Folklore, Religion, Cinema, Women's Studies etc., besides thousands of invitations, theatre playbills, popular songbooks and the like, has at last found a home! The collection used to be crammed in Roja Muthiah's home in Kottaiyur in Chettinad, in a neighbouring shed and a rented garage, all stored in handmade wooden book-cases. Things are different now at the Roja Muthiah Research Library in East Mogappair.

Roja Muthiah was a businessman who inherited his love for books from his father. Even as a young man he began his search for material to make up a collection. He built his collection by subscribing to journals and buying them new and old. 'Old book' dealers were a steady source and so were scrap dealers in the area whom he asked to search through their purchases.

This huge collection was used by research scholars, both Indian and foreign. He had no catalogue, but he had his collection organised in his head and could retrieve anything asked for quite easily. He used powerful insecticides to keep away vermin, but the insecticides affected his health. As his health failed, he tried to get various persons to acquire the collection, but without success.

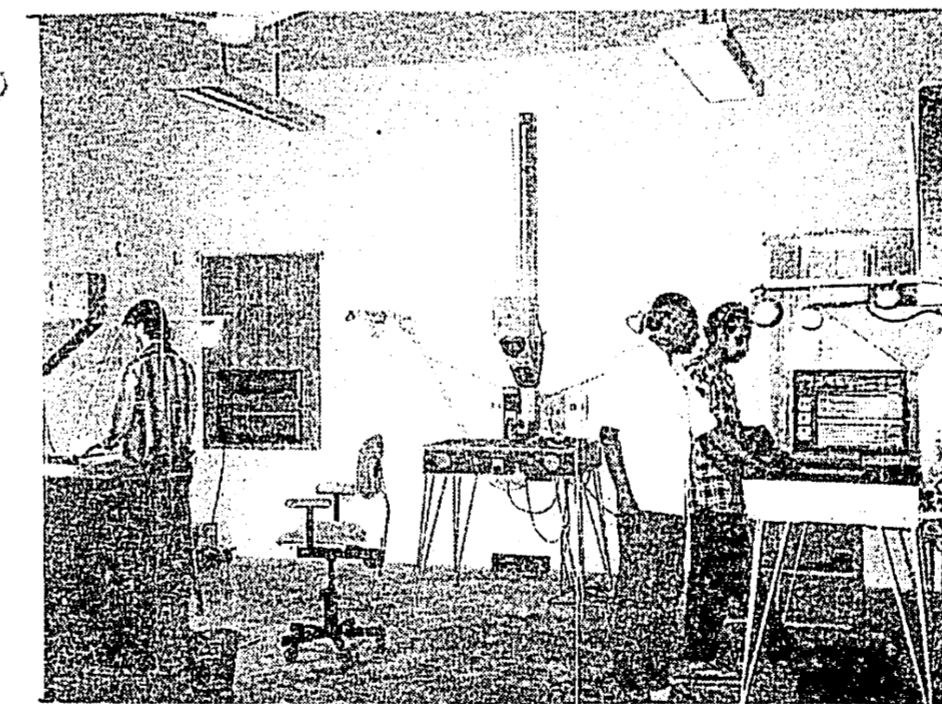
When he 'advertised' the collection in a Tamil journal, C S Lakshmi, a visiting scholar from the University of Chicago, who had used the collection for her research, drew the attention of

James Nye, Bibliographer of the South Asian Collection of the University of Chicago Library, to it. Nye, realising the importance of the books, raised nearly a million dollars for its purchase, microfilming and cataloguing from the National Endowment for the Humanities, US Department of Education, and the Ford Foundation.

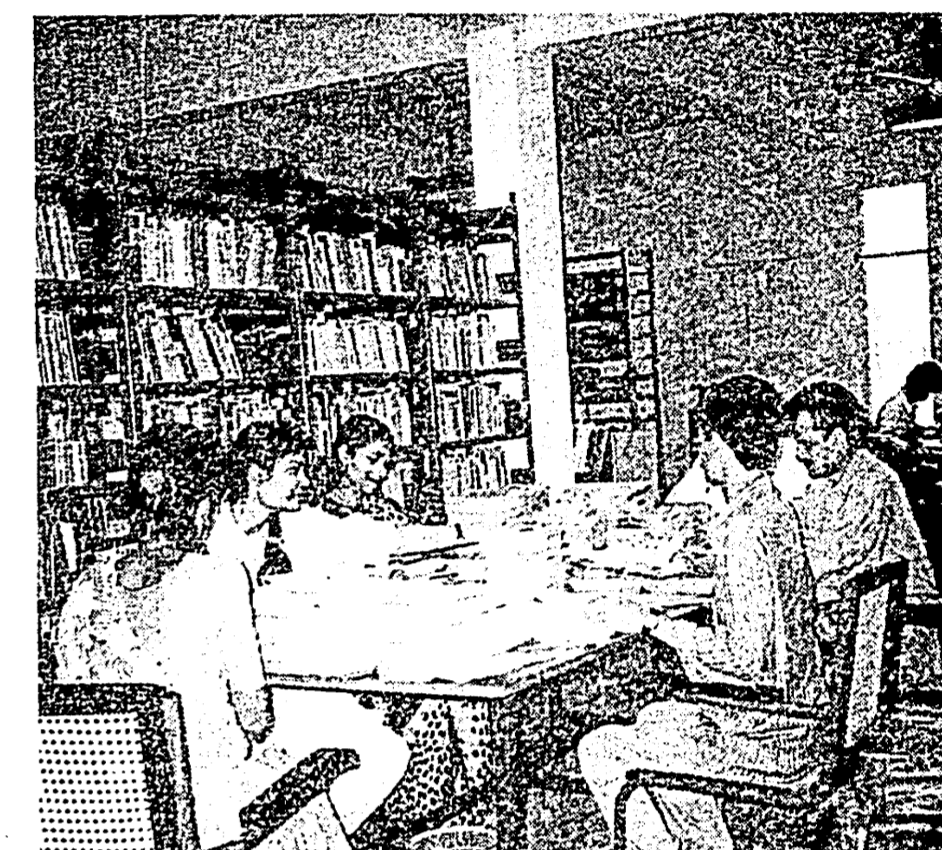


A portrait of Roja Muthiah Chettiar

The Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL) at Dr Jayalalitha Nagar East, Mogappair East, is in a new, 5600 square foot building built exclusively for the collection. The project is sponsored by the University of Chicago in collaboration with 'Mozhi', a Madras-based public charitable trust engaged in developing resources in Language and Culture. The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, United Kingdom, is extending collaboration in the area of medicine.



The latest equipment has been installed at the Roja Muthiah Research Library, Mogappair East. Microfilming equipment above, photo processing equipment below



Cataloguing a wealth of old titles... both books and journals. (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

This unique collection will not be moved out of India and it will remain in Tamil Nadu to form the nucleus of a Research Library for Tamil Studies.

The library has already catalogued about 40,000 volumes and the work continues. The oldest book in the

collection is *Nistanupati Mulam* published in 1803 in Madras and *Kandaramhathi*, a work by Arunagirinathar, published in Jaffna. The Library is expected to be opened shortly to research scholars.

— Rajind N Christy

We welcome the first steps to THE HERITAGE ACT

We look forward to its enactment and implementation

Space donated by TAMARAI MILLS

He battled for social justice

He was one of the founding fathers of the Non-Brahmin Movement which blossomed into the Justice Party. A strong, sinewy man, he was a surprisingly skilled writer and speaker. A selfless social worker, he was ever a fighter for the downtrodden, raising the issue of job reservations in government service, on the basis of caste and community, long before the Mandal Commission. Indeed, in his short life of only 51 years, Dr T M Nair became renowned for his contribution to social justice.

Tarawaj Madhavan Nair was from an affluent Palghat (now Palakkadu) family. He was born in February 1868. His father was Sankaran Nair, a District Munsiff known for his impartial judgements. His sister was Tarawaj Anmalu Amma, a Sanskrit and Malayalam scholar who wrote the lives of the Arubathamoovar Nayanmarga in Malayalam verse.

Madhavan Nair excelled both in studies and sport at school and passed the Matriculation examination when he was barely 15. Even as a student he made a mark as a prize-winning debater and orator in Malayalam and English. He came to Madras for further studies and joined Presidency College. Later, drawn to medicine, he joined Medical College.

Nair had a fine physique and always appeared larger than life. One day, while seated in class at Medical College, a mischievous student seated behind him cut his hair. Without moving from his seat, Nair reached back, bodily lifted his tormentor and threw him out of the door as if he were a paper ball! An act of physical strength which stunned the entire class!

Before completing his medical education in Madras, Nair left for Edinburgh where he took his MB & CH degree. Later, he moved to London to specialise in the ear, nose, and throat, and took his MD. In those days, to qualify in medicine at Edinburgh, a student had to study an ancient language like Latin, Greek or Hebrew. Nair revealed his flair for being different by choosing Sanskrit, which, understandably, surprised the university dons!

As a student in London, he took an active part in socio-political activities and worked as the secretary of the London Indian Society. Its president then was Dadhabai Nowroji.

Back in Madras in 1897, he set up practice as an ENT surgeon and quickly attained success. During his free time he read voraciously, buying books by, it seemed, the cartload. Another successful city doctor of the time was U Rama Rao (his son, Dr U Krishna Rao, was a Mayor of Madras and a member of the Congress ministry. Another son was the famed surgeon Dr U Mohan Rao). Together they founded a monthly medical magazine, *Antiseptic*, the first of its kind in India. In spite of its name, the publication had articles on the social and political issues of the day, written in a strong, hardhitting language by Dr Nair. His writing was laced with punches of humour and, not surprisingly, the magazine became popular among the educated of Old Madras.

That was a time when politics attracted the cream of society, such as lawyers, engineers, doctors and

scholars. Not surprisingly, Nair was drawn into politics and in 1904 he successfully contested the Madras Corporation elections from Triplicane. He served that body for 16 long years.

Molony, a British ICS man, was the Commissioner who introduced a protected water supply for Madras city. Initially, the entire city was not covered under this scheme, but Nair waged a relentless battle on this issue and got



'Strong-man' T M Nair (Photo courtesy RAGAMI Collection)

the city its water. His debating skills, oratorical talents and ready wit made the proceedings lively and helped to increase his popularity in the city and beyond.

(In those days, the Corporation tap water was referred to as 'Molony's Mixture' because of its odour! In several orthodox homes, the Corporation tap was kept outside the kitchen because it was thought that the chlorinated water would contaminate the purity of the kitchen where, in most homes, only well-water was used! For many years afterwards, well-water continued to be used for cooking during religious ceremonies in many Madras homes. The elderly orthodox would not touch Corporation water!)

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period March 1 to 15)

1. What is the newly formed subsidiary of Indian Airlines called?
2. Which horse won the Classic Indian Turf Invitation Cup, the Blue Riband event of the Indian racing calendar, at Guindy on March 4th?
3. John Howard is the new Prime Minister of...?
4. Who is the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India?
5. Which player was voted the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the Wills World Cup and presented a new Audi A4 car?
6. The U.S. has sent a huge flotilla of warships near the waters of an Asian ally because of the aggressive attitude of a neighbour of the latter. Name the Asian nations.
7. What famous proclamation by the late Ayatollah Khomeini did Iran rescind recently?
8. Which satellite TV channel did a first of sorts by sponsoring a trainload of 750 spectators to the Wills World Cup cricket quarter-final in Madras?
9. The BJP leader started his second *rath yatra*, in six years, on March 8th at Emakulam. Name his chariot.
10. Which Tamil Nadu minister has been in the centre of a controversy, dubbed the 'Textile Scam', which has allegedly cost the exchequer about Rs. 34.50 crore?
11. Sachin Tendulkar recently signed a whopping Rs. 1.5 crore deal with a

The Council proceedings witnessed two leaders regularly clashing with each other on many issues. One of them was Nair, the other Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetti. Another Councillor from Triplicane watched both in action and wondered how much could be achieved if only the two clashing giants could be brought together. After much effort, he succeeded and the three came together to sow the seeds of the Non-Brahmin Movement and, later, the Justice Party. The Triplicane Councillor was Dr C Natesan Mudaliar, a forgotten name today who lives only in the name of a road in Triplicane, Dr Natesan Salai.

There were at the time two major groups in the higher realms of Madras society. One was the 'Mylapore Group' consisting of giants like V Krishnaswami Iyer, Sir S Subramania Iyer, V S Srinivasa Sastry, P R Sundara Iyer, G A Natesan, and V C Desikachariar. These men were mostly lawyers and all of them were Brahmins. The other was known as the 'Egmore Group' and its front-rankers were Dr T M Nair, Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair, and S Kasturi Ranga Iyengar (of *The Hindu*). The two groups rarely saw eye-to-eye on any issue, but the Mylapore Group enjoyed greater clout than the other.

During the 1916 elections to the Imperial Council, Delhi, Nair contested against the Rt. Hon'ble V S Srinivasa Sastry and lost badly. Around this time, Dr Annie Besant founded the Home Rule League to fight for freedom and her supporters included Sir S Subramania Iyer and Sir C P Ramaswami Iyer. Nair was a staunch critic of Dr Besant and described her as the 'Irish Brahmini'. He criticised her in pungent terms and at one meeting

They made OUR Madras A walk down Memory Lane with RANDOR GUY

● Many men and women contributed to the unforgettable Madras that existed in the first half of this century. Statesmen ... lawyers ... judges ... doctors ... writers ... journalists ... musicians ... film personalities ... theatre-devotees ... performing artists ... social workers ... educationists ... Indians ... British ... All of them did their bit to make Madras the grand

R.G.

made a classic much-quoted statement about her: "Quick in penetration, fast in conception, and easy in delivery!"

Not many are aware that Nair was, in his early life, a member of the Indian National Congress. He attended the 1898 Congress session of Lucknow as a delegate and presided over the Provincial Congress conference held in Chittoor in 1907. The reason for his abandoning the Congress Party was because he felt it was dominated by Brahmins.

He was a strong supporter of the downtrodden and the depressed classes, who were then called 'Panchamas' and, worse, treated as 'untouchables'. Nair took up their cause and for the first time in the social history of Madras he organised a conference of the downtrodden. The conference, held at the Spur Tank *maidan* in Egmore, created much controversy and was opposed by the so-called high-born of

Madras. Undaunted by threats, Nair came to the conference armed with a huge wooden club! 'The Spur Tank Panchama Meet' as it came to be known, was attended by thousands and created history. Somewhat ironically, many of the Justice Party leaders expressed their displeasure at their colleague organising such a conference!

In 1919, Nair went to England to argue the case of the Non-Brahmin Movement before Parliament, but, sadly, he died in London on July 17, 1919. Diabetes took its toll suddenly, just when he was poised to reach great heights. He was buried in London and his tomb at Golders Green Cemetery became a pilgrim centre for Justice Party members and admirers.

Today, his memory lives on in Dr T M Nair Road, Theagaraya Nagar, Madras.

Passion for cricket

(Continued from P4)

introduction of racy commentaries in Sinhala ensured that it caught on as a spectator sport even in remote villages.

This is amply proved by the fact that there isn't a single Royalist or Thoman (like the vast majority of earlier Sri Lankan cricketers) in the team today. Most team members are from schools outside Colombo. The World Cup champions were diligently coached by Australian Davenal Whatmore, who was born in Sri Lanka. Remarkably, the Sri Lankan cricketers have come so far despite all the problems plaguing their country.

During the past two decades, Sri Lankans have had to contend with more than their fair share of trials and tribulations. They have been battered and bruised by insurgencies, political violence and a gory ethnic conflict that refuses to go away. The friends I grew up with who continue to live there have become amazingly resilient and optimistic in the face of enormous difficulties.

The economy is in the doldrums. The quality of life at most levels is depressingly bleak. The cost of living is staggeringly high because of the additional taxes raised for defence. Last December, the festive season was thoroughly low key. Dances, parties and large gatherings were cancelled. Every carol service I attended ended with a special prayer for peace and unity in the country. The staff in many establishments voluntarily gave up their annual Christmas parties so that the money could be donated to deserving charities.

Even at that time, World Cup fever was already in the air. The friends who planned to visit India to cheer their team badgered me for advice on hotels

and flights. My lawyer (who hails from a prominent Sri Lankan family of cricketing lawyers) suggested that I time my next visit to Colombo to coincide with the World Cup matches there.

The uneasy calm that pervaded the capital during my last visit was shattered by the massive bomb explosion on January 31 which wrecked a large portion of the commercial district, killed 78 and injured around 1,250. It was this incident that scared off the Australians and West Indians from going to Sri Lanka.

It was therefore immensely gratifying to see that Ranatunga didn't forget to thank Azharuddin and Wasim Akram for leading a joint India-Pakistan team to Colombo on the eve of the tournament in a display of solidarity with Sri Lanka: He did so warmly, using their first names.

A cricket buff I spoke to over the telephone after the final match agreed that the friendly match had done wonders for the relationship between the three countries and between the players of all three teams. "It is a great feeling of solidarity."

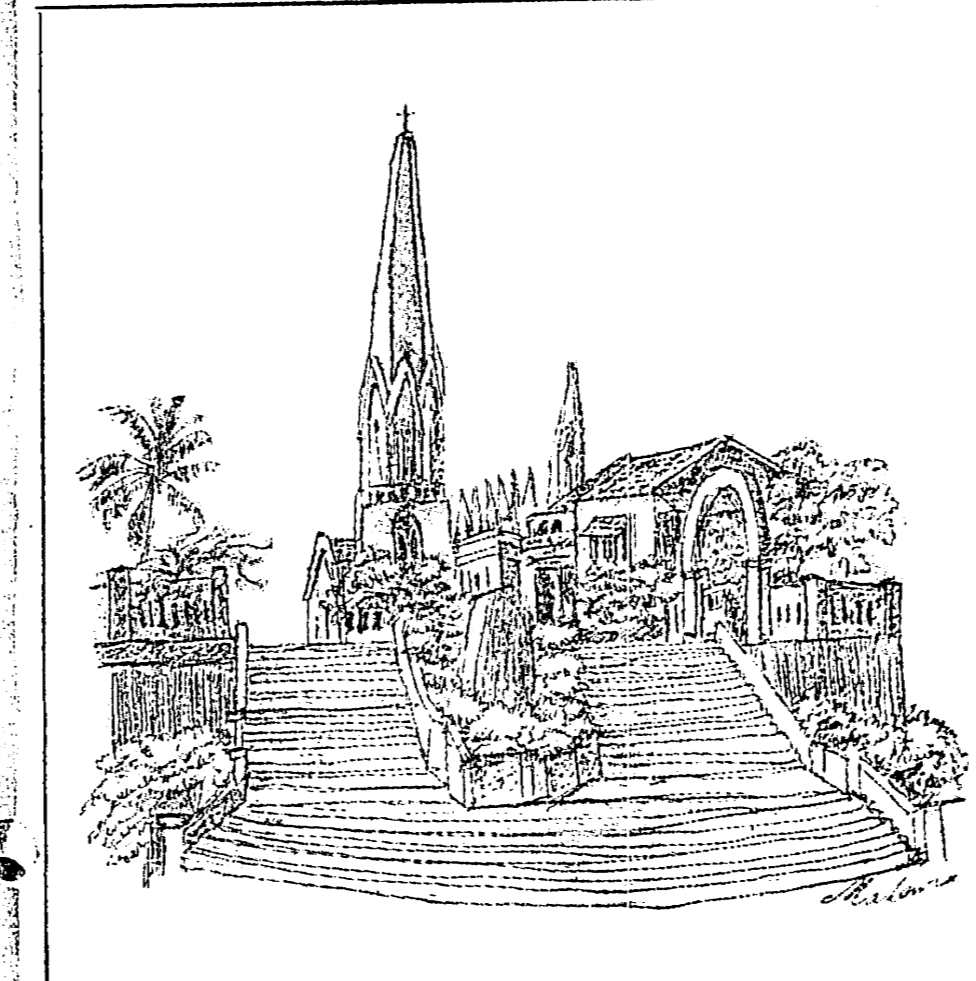
Added Aruna Jayawickreme, a partner in a firm of auditors for the Board of Control of Cricket in Sri Lanka: "Sri Lanka becoming World Cup champions will give our image a tremendous boost internationally, not just for a day or a month but for the next four years at least. This should buck up tourism and also give us a chance of negotiating for longer tours in traditional test playing countries such as England."

Would that our political and community leaders showed the same spirit as our cricketers and sports nuts. (Courtesy: *The Times of India*.)

Down San Thomé way

Every time I drive down the gently-meandering San Thomé High Road nowadays, I get a lump in my throat. This narrow road that curves gently at St. Thomas' Basilica was once lined with spacious garden houses. Today I see that yet another gracious old building has fallen victim to the wrecker's hammer to make room for yet another nondescript multistorey structure.

I remember Norton's Dispensary — an old-fashioned drug store where prescriptions would be compounded — with its mysterious dark corners, walls lined with tall teak wood cupboards filled with bottles of all shapes and sizes. Most prominent among these was a gigantic glass jar filled with a clear pink fluid. As a child, I used to gaze upon it with fascination. In my childish fantasy, I would perceive sea horses and mermaids dancing in what seemed to be a magenta ocean captured forever in this strangely shaped jar.



Down to the beach from St. Thomas' Basilica, as MAHEMA DEVAOSS remembers it.

Norton's Dispensary closed down many years ago and the building thereafter housed several different agencies, the last being Allwyn & Co. Now the old building with its gabled roof and intricate wrought iron balustrades has vanished. Instead, there is a large gaping hole, awaiting the rise of some modern superstructure, probably with a characterless facade.

I live in one of the many lanes which branch off San Thomé High Road. It had a gracious name, 'Palace Road' because it faced the palace enclave on San Thomé High Road which used to belong to the Maharajah of Mysore. In the late Forties, this lovely property of about one hundred grounds was bought by Dewan Bahadur A.M. Murugappa Chettiar.

Through its tall, wide gates, you get enticing glimpses of beautiful flower gardens, shady trees and clean, white bungalows ... I remember wandering into the compound as a child one day, unknown to my parents. The friendly old gardener took me by the hand and showed me around. I looked admiringly at the colourful flower beds and his prized, rare plants. When my harried parents eventually found me, I was sitting on the lap of the ancient gardener, under the shade of the *maghila* tree, nonchalantly munching

its astringent berries. Now a major part of this property belongs to the Russian Consulate and the gates have been covered over with sheet metal, giving the complex a forbidding appearance.

Some old houses still stand on Palace Road. Our house is surrounded by shady trees but it may not qualify as an old house because it was built a mere sixty years ago! The adjoining property, belonging to the FMM of St. Thomas' Convent, once had a huge coconut grove. As a child, I remember waking up to the rhythmic singing of the men who relentlessly worked an *yetrnam* to draw water from a deep, old well to nourish the extensive *keeraiholam* that flourished under the coconut trees. The *keeraiholam* has long since vanished, the coconut trees felled. A three-storey building currently housing Rosary Matriculation School came up and that's where I taught for a year as a fresh graduate. So, the joyous singing of birds in our

or P.U. Chinappa, while the children capered wildly on the sands.

Today, this area is more or less filled with makeshift thatched huts to become 'Thideer Nagar'. The ozone-laced sea breeze which used to waft musical ragas, now carries the burdened odours of this crowded tenement.

Adjoining the Archbishop's house, with its splendid wrought iron gates, is the old M.E.S. (now T.N.E.B.) building and, beside it, Dr. Millet's house, now fallen to ruin with bushes sprouting from the ceiling of its pillared verandah. A narrow driveway took one to *Tramore*, which was next to Millet's house. This bungalow was pulled down too and two new buildings have come up here.

The Cultural Academy stands on what used to be a spacious compound with a cottage at the far end, facing the sea. This large house had an impressive flight of steps leading up to it. A multistorey apartment building has come up in the compound beside it. Till recently a lovely cottage stood here with a split level garden, its compound wall overflowing with brilliantly coloured bougainvillea.

Every Sunday, my mother and I would walk down to our little church-by-the-sea tucked in at the end of a tree-filled compound. It is called St. Thomas' English Church, just to differentiate it from St. Thomas' Basilica to its north and St. Thomas' Tamil Church to its south. A high wall separated the church from the sloping white sands of the beach.

There was a little brown door in this wall which would often get half covered by the wind-swept sands of the beach. We would push the door open partially and squeeze through to walk down the sands after the morning service or the evening Sunday School. I would look forward to the Easter sunrise service which was held on the sands of the beach at the crack of dawn. A group of us would gather on the beach, in the cool, early morning air, with the sounds of the waves keeping time to the ragam '*Bhoopalam*' rendered by one of the church members who was an A.I.R. artiste.

The pastor would read from the New Testament, the story of Easter — that of hope. Even as he read the passage, streaks of light would appear in the sky and we would be treated to a glorious sunrise, as the message of the rising of the Son of Righteousness filled our hearts with joy.

Present reality tugs at my saree, waking me from my nostalgic reverie and today, as I drive along, I see the spire of the Basilica towering above all, now standing serenely as a witness to the more enduring aspects of San Thomé High Road. It is school time and all around me are children in a variety of school uniforms, "with their satchels and shining morning faces", making their way to the many schools that abound in and around this high road. I look at them and think, "There is hope — All is not lost. The best may still be preserved"

Mahema Devaoss



Purisi's Sambandam in koothu gear. (Photo courtesy Koothu-p-pattarai Trust.)

Koothu makes its mark

Koothupattarai said farewell in a grand manner to Klaus Schindler, Director of the Max Mueller Bhavan. Schindler leaves Madras after 7½ years — the longest duration for any director anywhere. He says it surprised even his head office when they caught up with the record.

Max Mueller Bhavan helped Koothupattarai, the only professional *avant garde* Tamil theatre group in Tamil Nadu, enormously in its initial years of struggle, and the sumptuous cultural farewell organised by Koothupattarai was most appropriate.

The farewell party began with a performance of *koothu* by the Purisai

its ritual context and of foreign elements corrupting our art forms. These are people who want to deny traditional artists their access to a creative world. At the Krishna Gana Sabha, at this year's Natya Kala Conference, a heated debate had ensued about whether folk artists had a place in the urban context at all. Several wanted a dividing line between folk (rural?) artists and the classical (?) performers!

Most of the so-called classical traditions, like Bharata Natyam and Carnatic music, were part of temple ritual or chamber concerts limited to the palaces of kings and the mansions of the moneyed. They are now on the concert stage mainly because the ritual aspect was removed. Those involved in the performance of classical traditions have succeeded in elevating their rank, though they are mainly performing an erstwhile tradition or ritual. Folk art is certainly ritualistic. But it is also performance and drama, and when the group goes to Colombia — and also to the US and the UK — the musical and the dramatic is what crowds will see. It's time we saw this view in India too!

The hero

Sambandam, the hero of the *koothu* tradition today, was a casual worker in a post office in Madras. His father had been a struggling performer. Padma Subrahmanyam, the dancer, took Sambandam to task and advised him to go back to the tradition of *koothu*. Sambandam says he was extremely reluctant to do so then. But today he is an honoured artist with the State Government's Kalaimamani award and travels far and wide. Most important is the respect he commands as an artist and the creativity that he unleashes, especially while working with children.

We are witnessing a change. While talking about the negative propaganda aimed at keeping the village arts in the villages, Sambandam says that he is proud to be an artist today mainly because of the adulation he has received from the cityfolk who had treated them very badly in the past. In the city, they also rise above the caste barriers.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April: 'Artist of the Month' — Vannathan Kandi Satyendran from Kerala. He has been afflicted with a major mental illness since 1974, and is under the care of SCARF, Anna Nagar. But he continues to paint. His works are abstract and a depiction of his thoughts and feelings about his state of mind. (At MMB.)

April 21: Instrumental and choral concert by local ensembles and musicians. (At Max Mueller Bhavan)

"I prayed hard for the Sri Lankans. They have known nothing but misery as a nation for the past two decades. I was overjoyed when they won," gushed an old aunt whose only cricket involvement hitherto had been fanatical support for the Indian team over the years. Surely, there were millions like her, rooting for the Lankans during the World Cup final at Lahore, even if for non-cricketing reasons, to judge from popular sentiment within one's own circle of friends, relatives and business acquaintances.

Yes, Arjuna Ranatunga's men were popular winners, there was no doubt about that. They started with the obvious advantage of public sympathy over the refusal of two major competitors to play on their soil. They bowled everyone over with their winning ways, and the way they belted the ball around in the first 15 overs was

Not necessary to slog

tailmade for customer delight. Batting excitement followed the Most Valuable Player of the tournament Sanath Jayasuriya in the form of Asanka Gurusinghe and Aravinda de Silva, who both blazed their way towards commanding totals against Zimbabwe and Kenya, and, later, by the relatively sober efforts of Ranatunga and Tillekeratne. They were so strong in the batting department that most of us nearly forgot the existence of a certain

Roshan Mahanama until he surfaced at a vital juncture to play a pivotal role in the semi-final.

Their fireworks apart, the Lankans proved in the crunch that it was not always necessary to slog in limited overs cricket. In both the semi-final and final, they shrugged off the early loss of their openers with insouciance,

being swatted around by batsmen armed with no more than brave hearts and meaty bats. In Madras on his annual visit to the MRF Pace Foundation, Dennis Lillee demanded quite indignantly that Indian wickets be made more sporting in line with wickets abroad, to give bowlers a reasonable chance. "Can you imagine Chris

World Cup Special — by V Ramnarayan

de Silva doing masterly repair jobs through authoritative, correct batsmanship, yet exhilarating the crowd with his timing and placement. Some of his strokes were breathtaking because they were executed off good bowling but without a semblance of risk. His captain was assurance personified; he never lost his composure when the chips were, well, not exactly down but sort of dropping, or while marshalling his no-more-than-adequate bowling resources.

The Lankans have also proved that cricket is still a team game. In a World Cup dominated by hype of unprecedented proportions and the unabashed promotion of the personality cult, the islanders boasted no superstars when the action started. At the end of the championship, it was still difficult to pick the one Sri Lankan who made the vital difference to the success of the team. Everyone played his part to perfection. The captain led from the front, yet retained a low profile, showed magnanimity and grace in victory, and deservedly got the lucky breaks that make a winner.

The saddest aspect of the World Cup has been the virtual decimation of some of the world's leading bowlers. It is painful to watch great fast bowlers

Harris scoring a century against the Australians on a decent wicket?! It's disgraceful the way good bowlers are thrashed by ordinary batsmen," the Australian fumed. While no one in his right mind would disagree with Lillee's assertion that the game has become unfairly loaded against bowlers, often reducing them to spectator status, that bowling standards have declined was obvious in the World Cup. Geoff Boycott never tired of repeating his lament that England did not have a bowler who could land six balls in a row on a spot. The Englishmen were not alone in this pathetic deficiency. Repeatedly in the tournament, batsmen got away with murder simply because the bowlers could not bowl a consistent line and length. Perhaps the time has come to take a closer look at the current field restrictions in the first 15 overs, which make opening bowlers look like clowns. Especially with the majority of teams opting for unorthodox methods, fielding sides are increasingly resorting to equally unusual responses, sometimes opening with spinners and protecting(!) their quickies. As a staunch member of the bowlers' union, I deplore this development, its entertainment value notwithstanding.

For Mohammed Azharuddin, it was a miserable World Cup. He must have realised as so many captains before him have, that you only have to make one wrong move to become a national villain. He explained the Calcutta debacle away by disclosing that it was a team decision to insert the Lankans at Eden Gardens. Modern captains are indeed lucky. They can share the blame for their decisions!

The wicket at Eden Gardens was well nigh unplayable when Jayasuriya was firing them in on the rough, but Azhar and his men went down without a fight, probably overawed by the target ahead rather than attempting it ball by ball. On a wicket on which great batsmen would have let the ball come on to the bat and used the pad effectively, Azhar in particular committed himself early, playing well in front of his front pad. A couple of

WANTED: The best to run the stadia

Only when Tarapore and Co. put up their self-congratulatory hoardings at prominent centres in the city did the average Madras citizen come to know that they were the 'creators' of the ultra-modern aquatic, tennis and hockey stadia, which helped the Jayalalitha Government successfully organise the VII South Asian Federation Games in Madras. The contractors indeed deserve to be congratulated on the excellent manner in which they accomplished their job in time for the stadia to be 'baptised' by the biggest and costliest sports meet to be held in South India.

The Government which put up the stadia at a phenomenal cost for the organisation of the Rs 240-crore SAF Games however now has a problem.

It is to find suitable persons for the maintenance of the stadia. From all accounts, an unprecedented race is on for the capture of power in the new stadia. It is for the State Government's Sports Development Authority to make full use of its knowledge and information to pick the right officials without being influenced by propaganda and salesmanship.

Only honest, dedicated and knowledgeable officials can help Tamil Nadu sportspersons gain from the usefulness of the country's most modern and best-equipped stadia and benefit from the facilities they provide. Only the proper and correct use of the stadia can vindicate the sport-minded Chief Minister's exceptionally costly gesture.

JAICI

A club in need of new life

The Madras Race Club's Committee of Management has a momentous job on hand. Well as the Committee, especially its president, M.A.M. Ramaswamy, earned the gratitude of the country's entire racing fraternity by bringing the MRC back to life through a historic Supreme Court judgement, it has to find ways and means to give the Tamil Nadu turf at Guindy and Ootacamund a new look. Guindy in particular is sorely in need of a revolution, which alone can help it regain its status and reputation as South India's No. 1 turf.

For various reasons, Guindy, India's oldest turf, is not what it was, say, a couple of decades ago. This is clear not only from the average size of the fields for the races for the higher class horses but also from the average size of the jackpot pool. Three or

four horses contesting a Class I or Class II race is not an uncommon sight, while a Rs. One lakh jackpot pool is a thing of the past. To add insult to injury, as it were, not infrequently an off-course jackpot pool on a Bangalore or a Hyderabad meeting is bigger than the day's Guindy investment!

Not to mince words, the MRC has, ironically, been left way behind by both the Bangalore and Hyderabad turf clubs, both of which had for decades depended on the ancient Guindy club for their growth and development. While the MRC stagnated, the Bangalore and Hyderabad clubs prospered to provide Indian sport's biggest irony of a parent body being overtaken by its subsidiaries. Guindy is indeed sorely in need of a revolution. Even if the MRC as such cannot regain its status

in the near future, it certainly can fashion an effective policy to help the sport regain its popularity in Tamil Nadu.

Nothing seems more effective than boosting ownership. Ways and means have to be found to swell the number of small owners. The bigger the number of owners, the more competitive the racing will become. Competitive racing is what is wanted in Tamil Nadu, and not the virtual one-way traffic the sport has become — at Guindy, at any rate. It is up to the Committee of Management to induce more and more MRC members to invest in horse-flesh. Competitive racing alone will pull in the crowds and help MRC regain its status as South India's No. 1 turf. It is up to the reborn Committee of Management to rise to the occasion.

AJAX

others perished to the sweep shot exposing the leg stump.

The Indian selectors have reacted predictably, finding scapegoats for this poor performance. Prabhakar, who was earlier given an extended spell when young talent might have been blooded, has been shown the door on the basis of a single failure. Kambli, another favoured son of the past, has been dropped just when he has begun to find his touch. And, of course, the selectors have once again resorted to that panacea for all our ills — bringing Prashant Vaidya back!

The forgotten Press

Never before in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India has a competition received wider coverage than the World Cup cricket championship. The sports section of every daily more than trebled itself. And it was World Cup on every page. Even National championships got step-motherly treatment. Readers indeed had a tough time spotting the local reports they wanted, and were amazed not only by their brevity but also by the insignificant corners into which they were shelved.

This was perhaps in tune with the facilities available at the press boxes. The Madras Press

by
JAICI

box provided a sight for the gods to see. Never before was it so populated as during the Australia-New Zealand tie. On the eve of the one-dayer, the organisers had assured Pressmen they would be provided with all facilities. Perhaps the facilities were there all right. But to reach them, or receive them, was an ordeal. With dozens of writers having squeezed themselves in, there was hardly any room for use of a typewriter or to reach a telephone.

A few days later, the organisers were none the better for the lessons learnt. They totally ignored the Press for the Tamil Nadu-Delhi Ranji Trophy semi-final! They seemed to have completely forgotten the existence of the media. Not a chair was provided in the Press Box, not even on the second day! It was left to the Tamil Nadu Sport Journalists' Association secretary, who came in the afternoon, to openly and vociferously criticise the organisers for their negligence. Only then did the officials realise their responsibility and do the needful.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Allied Services; 2. 'Supreme Choice'; 3. Australia; 4. V.K. Shunglu; 5. Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka; 6. Taiwan and China; 7. The fatwa on Salman Rudhdie; 8. Sun TV; 9. 'Surajya Rath'; 10. The Social Welfare Minister, R. Indrakumari; 11. MRF; 12. Shrikantadatta Wadiyar of

the Mysore Royal family; the Bangalore Palace; 13. The Lok Sabha; 14. Rajapalayam; 15. Mars; 16. By setting 30 computerised sets of question papers and choosing the one for the exam by draw of lots; 17. Kamaraj; 18. Amitabh Bachchan; 19. Bombay; 20. Women to perform seva.