WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MUSINGS

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June 1-15, 1997 **FREE ISSUE** Vol. VII No. 4

Sex education from Class 1?

Karnataka considering it; will we?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Trging sex education from Class I is Dr Latha Jagannathan, a member of the TTK family who moved to Bangalore in the late Seventies. She also advocates educating juniors on HIV, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STD), condoms and dealing with sexual abuse.

She is at present working on a syllabus for schools in Karnataka based on her premise that "sex education should start in Class I itself along with biology,

education, as it is officially called, will involve teaching the child how to handle unwanted attention, peer pressure, sibling rivalry, gender bias, drugs, alcohol, puberty and all the problems growing up entails. "We will teach a child to say 'No'," Dr Jagannathan states. "No to sexual abuse, peer pressure and, later in life, to unsafe sex."

Dr Jagannathan, a trustee of the TTK-supported Bangalore Medical Services Trust, has been working on this UNESCO



moral science and mathematics".

In Class I, children will be taught about the parts of the body, including the hitherto "unmentionables". "They will be taught to take pride in their bodies," Dr Jagannathan explains. "Slowly they will graduate to good and bad touch. By Class VI, they will learn about changes in the body and puberty. In addition, the effects of tobacco and alcohol will be brought home with assignments like an interview with a chain smoker, alcoholic or addict. In Class VII, they will learn about the reproductive and circulatory system in detail.

"Population education detailing reproductive rights and responsibilities, STDs, HIV, AIDS, contraception, drug abuse will follow in Classes VIII and IX.

"Class X students will be left alone as they are already loaded enough. Classes XI and XII will focus on the legal, social and economic issues involved in the spread of AIDS. 'Don't shun them' will be the message."

project for the last six months. Several meetings with teachers, educationists, drug specialists, child psychologists and government agencies, including the Education Department, have culminated in a detailed syllabus for primary and secondary school students.

The present level of sex education is totally inadequate, points out Dr Jagannathan. With conservatives in the field, the information in books is very little. What is needed is "a change in the mindset" to help students tackle the threatening world. But, she says, fears that such information will colour the minds of their children inhibit parents, especially in the Indian context. So, most parents feel awkward and are quite happy to let the schools handle it. "But when, as at present, teachers find it difficult to teach about the reproductive system, how will they teach children about contraception?" Dr Jagannathan asks.

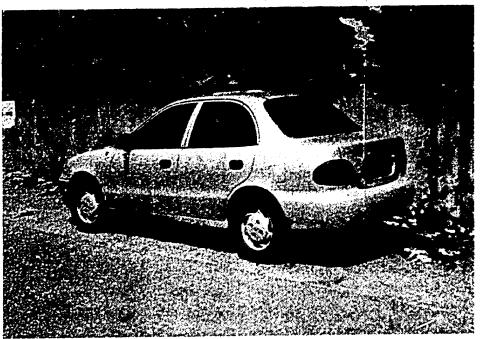
The teachers therefore need to sensitise themselves to communicate the information with-

In addition, adolescence out appearing awkward or preaching, urges Dr Jagannathan. And she points the way:

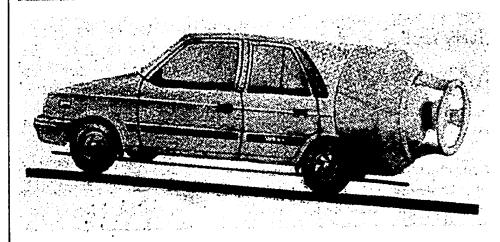
"What is needed most urgently is to teach the teachers." That is where her Teachers' Training Manuals come in. "The books will tell a teacher how to teach the subject in class, counsel students and even detail exercises and projects for them to do."

But all this is a long way off. "The whole project is being done with the cooperation of several government agencies, and we have to carry out trials in some schools, before it forms part of the syllabus," she explains. And she will have to carry both politicians and officials with her.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We look forward to the Tamil Nadu Government following this education pattern. It should note that one of the country's highest rates of AIDS and HIV infection is in Tamil Nadu. Education will surely help bring that down.







The Hyundai Accents are on the roads of Chennai even before the factory has been built. MMM had, in his April 1st column, mentioned that he

horse- and bullock-power had heard that 66 Hyundais in three models had been unloaded in Chennai

for testing purposes. The vehicles seen

here did not seem to be under any test;



instead they seemed to be part of the relaxation and recreation scene in Chennai according to photographer RAJIND N CHRISTY. Which makes us wonder how freely are car imports being allowed in India.

Adding to the confusion on Chennai's roads in the not too distant future will not only be these Hyundais, Fords and Lancers but also 'gas cars', it would seem from a folder distributed freely at road junctions recently. The not-too-good reproduction from the picture on the first page of the folder shows the 'car of tomorrow'; with a rather ugly contraption at its rear. This 'imported kit' from Italy - where gas cars are stated to be popular will ensure the equivalent running distance of 20 litres of petrol, it is claimed. Such economy may well put more vehicles on the road.

When all is said and done, however, bullock power would appear to be still needed by cars in Chennai!

Mr. Harry Miller

Boat Club Road

India 600 028

Tamil Nadu

be written.

3A, Satyanaryana Avenue

clarify the mystery of my location.

ways in English, but they can

NEIL A. ARMSTRONG

September 16, 1996



The Man From Madras Musings has been away for a couple of weeks. The result is a column missed after six years without a break. We take this opportunity to use his page for the numerous letters received by us during the past few weeks. In their place on page 3, we use several of The Man From Madras Musings' 'briefs' that have had to be held over in the past.

— The Editor

Not enough time

read with interest MMM's I thoughts on the heritage act (MM, May 16). His statement that no architects or NGOs were present seems to imply that these groups are not interested at all in participating in such an exercise. I received my invitation about 3 or 4 days before the event. The enclosures included several pages of preliminary material besides which a long reference list of publications were also given as reference material. If discussions have to be meaningful I think sufficient time has to be given for participants to study the papers and contribute in a constructive manner. Otherwise, like most other 'conferences' it will lapse into meaningless small talk. Some of us are also busy with project work and find it difficult to change our schedule on short notice. I hope the fixing of future meetings will take these aspects into consideration so that we will all be able to contribute our mite.

> P.T. Krishnan 1 Second Street, Wallace Garden, Chennai 600 006.

MMM responds: Time, MMM agrees, is what we all need and what we are most often short of. But a few pages of a draft act (based on several other acts) are, surely, something we can all find time for (ignoring all the references for the nonce), despite our preoccupation with "project work" — which, yes, surely all of us have to a greater or less degree.

Harry replies

A ay I reply to three letters is **IVI**MM, May 16?

Hemant Nahar was lucky to have such a good view of comet Hale-Bopp when he was in Rajasthan, but our disappointment in this city was due not only to the incredibly poisonous pollution of our atmosphere but to our latitude. I am told that this great comet was really spectacular in Britain and other countries in northern latitudes. Regrettably, we were too near the Equator for a good view of that one. Let's hope we are luckier when the next comet comes this way. In 1949, the Year of Independence, no less than seven comets appeared, though none was spectacular. (Editor's Note: see below for a couple of different views).

As regards these foolish bureaucratic 'Photography Not Allowed' notices and practices mentioned in K.N. Prabhu's letter, perhaps the authorities might like to note that only the wholly innocent would be deterred by them. In the entirely unlikely event of a terrorist wanting to blow up the Teynampet telephone exchange, for example, nothing could be easier than defying the futile notice outside it with a concealed camera. I would be willing to place a bet that I could take a photograph of any 'sensitive' place or area in the country with no one knowing if I really wanted to,

while, as I have already pointed out, satellites with cameras of superb resolution are passing over us every

Finally, I thank D. Anjaneyulu for his contribution to the 'Man of the Year' racket, and ask him to await my new report on this subject, which, hopefully, will appear in this journal shortly. (Editor's Note: It

Harry Miller 3A Satyanarayana Ave., Boat Club Road, Chennai 600028.

A comet bright

A y experience with the Hale-IVI Bopp comet was different from Harry Miller's (MM, May 1). When I saw the comet towards the end of April, it was very bright (visible to the naked eye) at about 6.30 p.m., displaying a golden colour with a foot-long tail. After a couple of days, it sported a metre-long tail with several branches like the one sketched by Miller in his letter. Perhaps he has not seen the comet when it was at its best and hence the disappointment.

> T.M. Sundararaman 19 Nallappan Street, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

Comet watching

D emembering comets (MM, May 1st), the comet (I think the name is Ikeya-Saki) which appeared in '65 or '66 was a large comet with its tail extending almost vertically over an angle of 20 degrees or more. The comet was visible to the naked eye for quite a having a children's boating centre long period. In comparison, the Halley's comet and the Hale-Bopp comet were total disappointments.

> M. Susikaran 8 First Street, Nandanam Extension, Chennai 600 035.

Using the banks

read with interest "Building roads in the sky" (MM, May 1) The points made therein are relevant, imaginative and practical May I also suggest:

Construction of multi-storied parking lots over the Cooum/ Buckingham Canals at different locations, with pillars on the banks, so as to allow free flow of

2. Leasing out both sides of the Canals just above the flood level for the purpose of plantations, to add to the greenery and reduce the stench from the stagnant water.

> M. Ramanathan Better wording Pantheon Road, Egmore, Chennai 600 008.

An appeal

The Indian Centre of Philan-**1** thropy, a non-profit society registered in Delhi, is a national membership organisation whose objectives are to promote a philan-

thropy movement in the country and to professionalise charitable giving through research, documenration, networking, and assistance to donors and NGOs with relevant information, advice and support.

The Centre proposes to compile region/city and field of interest-wise directories of donors (foundations/ trusts and corporate donors), who give financial and/or in-kind support to individuals and charitable developmental organisations. Those interested in being listed, please contact with full details of organisation, and activities supported, to:

The Executive Director Indian Centre of Philanthropy C-8/8704, Vasant Kunj New Delhi 110 070.

Divya Singh Indian Centre of Philanthropy New Delhi 110 070.

Metro problems

The New Triplicane Metro sta-**I** tion is coming on the Scout Grounds, next to Marina Grounds. With the movement of men and material, that lovely 'lung' will be lost for ever at that place.

Further, that entire stretch of the MRT line will be misused as urchins, anti-social elements and the homeless will take shelter under it. The Government should think of closing both sides and using it as a godown or letting it out to an industrial house for their use.

Of course, the area near the Cooum cannot be used. But with a little bit of imagination, even that area can be put to better use by by deepening the Cooum, and removing the silt.

M. Fazal Flat No.1, Seaview Apartments, 16. Leith Castle Road, Santhome, Chennai 600 028.

Signboard screen

D ef. "Signboard Horrors" in MM Nof April 1st, take a look at the Egmore Wesley church which is going to celebrate its centenary in a few years' time.

Huge advertisement hoardings have come up along the wall of the church facing Poonamallee High Road. It is tragic that this beautiful building which forms part of our heritage is hidden from public view because of the signboards. Who is responsible for this vandalism?

A.P.K. Roy 43, Kennedy Sawar Main St. Chennai 600 011.

D ecently, I had been to the In-I dian Institute of Technology Chennai. The authorities had provided parking lots for bicycles as well as cars. To my disappointment, I found that a notice board, reading as follows, had been put up in the parking lot provided for bicycles: PLEASE PARK YOUR CYCLES PROP-ERLY, IF FOUND PARKED IMPROP

ERLY, PARKED TYRES WILL BE DE-FLATED

I quite agree that a certain amount of discipline needs to be enforced. However, IIT, as a premier education institution in the country, should avoid such wording on its noticeboards.

The following, surely, is a better, and more decent, alternative: PLEASE PARK YOUR CYCLES PROP-ERLY; IMPROPER PARKING WILL ATTRACT PENALTIES

The above will be quite decent and thought-provoking. A. Gouri Sankar

Panapakkam 631052

Caring appreciated

1 Bazaar Street,

am a new reader of Madras Musings. You have hit the nail on the head when you say 'WE CARE' for Chennai city. I have no hesitation in saying that Madras Musings is the finest fortnightly I have seen since 1939 when I first came to Madras. It certainly has its eyes and ears open, alert to point out all that is necessary for the betterment of the life of the common man in the ever-expanding metropolis of ours. Nostalgic memories arise when seeing names of old friends like Dr. N.S. Srinivasan, Harry Miller, E.R.C. Davidar, Oza and others, all experts in their individual spheres and who have done all that they can to better the life of the common man. With such a Herculean foundation as provided by the 12 industrial stalwarts, Madras Musings will, if it has not already, become the finest fortnightly tabloid

K. Sreekumara Menon

Addl. Inspector-General of Police (Retd.) 17 Landons Road, Chennai 600 010.

Plan ventilation

Harry Miller wrote in Madras
Musings some time ago:

"All those fancy blocks of flats, offices and shops are made of concrete, the most unsuitable substance for building in the tropics that can be imagined. All through the heat of the sun, all through the night, it radiates it back."

Is concrete really the most unsuitable substance for building in the tropics? No doubt, the radiation of heat will make you uncomfortable, not only in a concrete house but even in a brick-tiled building if the building has not been planned well and provided enough ventilation. Cross-ventilation is a basic pre-requisitefor any dwelling in the

In the old temple towns, where row houses are very common, i.e., where adjacent dwellings had common walls and where cross-ventilation was provided by keeping all the doors, right from the front entrance to the rear exit, in one alignment. In addition, a central opening to the sky was usually provided to cre-

ate a draught for the hot air to escape. These arrangments were there even if houses were built of sand, brick and lime. Unfortunately, the system of ventilation is not given due importance because we started adopting layouts as practised in European countries, where the winter is severe and where a

closed layout is best. Concrete has virtually replaced every other building material in the construction industry throughout the world, because of its versatility. Could an unsuitable material hold sway? Certainly not.

The ills of Madras flats lie not in concrete but in their planning and layout. The concept of flats should be associated with truly highrise structure, not ground-plus-two or ground-plus-three. When such highrise structures are built, there will be sufficient open space between adjacent structures. The ground and lower floors could be used for dwelling purposes and there would be more than enough breeze to carry away the heat of ra-

Unfortunately, the system of flats is misconceived in Madras. Blocks are now being promoted even in 1.5 ground plots or less. In such structures, it is next to impossible to provide adequate crossventilation without which the buildings will become a hotcase during summer nights and concrete will get the blame.

The concrete jungle is an inevitable corollary of urbanisation and you have to judiciously plan when making use of the best available material.

> D. Srinivasan Secretary-General Indian Concrete Institute 35 Third Main Road, Chennai 600 020.

Calamities help!

D eference various references to LX'Surat as Example', it was the fear of another catastrophe that set the people of Surat on the right lines, bolstered by stricter supervision by the officials. In History, nastural calamities, though a misfortune, help in rebuilding more than any other factor. Take the Great London Fire, for example.

Some fifty years ago, in a thickly populated village called Sangendhi (Pullambadi Taluk, near Dalmiapuram), two rival communities repeatedly set fire to houses occupied by each other. The entire village, which had houses with thatched roofs, was compelled by circumstances to rebuild their houses with Mangalore tiles to avoid future ar-

In Madras that is Chennai, if the Mayor can bring about a change in the civic sense of the people sans calamities, it will be welcome. But Surat's income, with all the industries there, has allowed the Commissioner a free hand. Can Chennai match that?

> K.S. Kandhaswamy 6/6 Rajagopalan Street, Valmikinagar, Tiruvanmiyur, Chennai 600 041.

One man's moon

Lof Thirumullaivayal when the greatest celebrities of all times, thrilling news reached us that two American astronauts had been the first men to conquer space and were the first men to land on another world - our own moon. Chandran, my gardener-handyman, however, was not so impressed. "Now don't go believing all these things the Americans tell you," he lectured me severely. "They tell you all kinds of nonsense, just to make themselves sound big. Look at all those movies they keep making. You don't believe in all that rubbish do you?"

1997

"But, Chandran," I answered gently, "this is different. This isn't a movie, Chandran. This is real. Neil Armstrong and his friend have actually landed up there on the moon and have walked about on it. And now they are coming back. We've seen photographs, movies of them doing it.'

"Yah!" said Chandran "Those Americans! Movies and photographs is it? Don't you believe things like that! Those Americans! They can fake anything! And anyway," he added, after a pause, cupping his hands together in front of him to form a sphere about the size of an orange, "whoever could walk about on a thing only that size!"

A long time later — only last he found it as amusing as I did. But what would I be doing, you may well ask, corresponding with The First Man On The Moon? How come your Man in Madras happens to be in corre-

T was still living at 'my' village spondence with one of the a man whose name will go down in history alongside that of Columbus, Captain Cook, Scott of the Antarctic and Dr. Livingstone — and indeed outshine them all, as the first human being not merely to explore unknown parts of our own world but to stand and walk about on another world altogether?

Well, it so happens that I had a letter from that almost equally great man, the scientist and science-fiction writer Dr. Arthur C. Clarke, who has lived down there in Colombo for as long as I have lived in Madras, and has been a friend of mine most of that time. You may

by HARRY MILLER

have read that Arthur Clarke is "hitting the headlines" again, as they say, with yet another book, this time the final sequal to his original 2001: a Space Odyssey. In between, there have been Odyssey Two and Odyssey Three; and now he has completed the quartet (NOT three, Quiz master Ramanan) by jumping not a mere decade or so into the future but another millennium ahead with 3001:, year in fact — I told Neil The Final Odyssey. He is, I hear, Armstrong that story and — as currently besieged by television you will see from his letter to me crews and reporters from all over the world who, regarding him as the century's greatest Oracle, are deluging him with demands to be told what's going to happen to the human race in the future and are seek-

ing all manner of details conbut I was curious to know why a man like Neil Armstrong would cerning history that is as yet to want to live in a disturbed and Last year, in a casual letter somewhat hostile country like to me, Arthur happened to the Lebanon, so, instead, wrote Neil Armstrong himself. At the address in THE Lebanon Arthur C. Clarke had given me. Now I don't know and probably never shall discover what ge-

Thank you for your letter, which somehow made it to the correct

address in the United States. The address on this letterhead should

My wife and I had the opportunity to visit Madras a couple of years

I enjoyed your Chandran story. Please give my best to Arthur when

Sincerely,

nius we have here in the Gen-

eral Post Office of Madras. I've

always said that the Indian Post

Office (with the sad exception

of our hopelessly inefficient

telephone service, I regret to

say) is still the world's finest.

I've heard stories from England

where postmen, probably the

worse for drink, instead of de-

livering their letters have sim-

ply posted them again in the

nearest letterbox, and then

gone home to sleep it off or

even gone off on holiday. Our

postmen are more industrious

and utterly reliable. Our post-

men are downright clever. Not

only can they read the name

and address of this writer,

which is usually though not al-

ago and found the streets as crowded as anywhere we have

mention that Neil Armstrong was now living in the Lebanon. THE Lebanon? Neil Armstrong? I wrote and asked Arthur why on earth a man like Neil Armstrong would go and live in a country where Americans are none too popular these days, to say the least, and a country which has been torn apart by years of ugly fratricidal strife. Arthur didn't answer, but that's not unusual. He's nearly

eighty now, suffers severely from the effects of poliomyelitis which struck him thirty years ago (and was wrongly diagnosed at the time) and is overwhelmed by correspondence, e-mail, faxes and demands for articles, reviews, stories, interviews from the international media and letters from a host of friends like me throughout the world.

Knowing this I wasn't concerned that he'd not replied,

read the names and addresses of some of my neighbours which may be in the Tamil, Telugu, Hindi or any of the other fourteen major scripts of India you will find samples of on every banknote in your pocket. Not only that, but few of the

addresses have been neatly printed out (as mine are) on a computer inkjet or leser printer, or even old-fashioned typewriters; they are usually written in pen and ink, often by shaky or incompetent, indecipherable hands. Yet their letters seldom go astray. Their letters always find their owners. They never post them back again to their own post offices, nor have any of them been known to be the worse for drink, at least not while on duty, or to go off on holiday, their precious letters undelivered. These days, that alone's a blessing.

But who among these noble souls, do you imagine, who was the genius, the Einstein or the Galileo of our gallant corps of postmen, who spotted the fact straight away that Neil Armstrong could not possibly be living in the COUNTRY called The Lebanon, and — no doubt with considerable industrious research, unaided by me or anyone else in this city -- hit upon the idea that there may be more than one Lebanon on this planet? For sure enough, after a remarkably short interval, Neil Armstrong himself took the trouble to write and explain that he isn't living in the country called The Lebanon but in a town called Lebanon in the State of Ohio, in the United States of America. A delightful letter to be sure,

and one to be treasured. But did you notice that casual little remark about Madras: he and his wife have travelled extensively — on this planet I mean — and "found the streets as crowded as anywhere we have travelled". For many years I have been writing deploring not only the now uncontrolled population explosion in this country but, even worse, the exponentially increasing density of people and traffic within the city. I'm told it's even worse in other major Indian cities, and hope I'm never so unfortunate as to have to go to any of them and find out.

Apart from that one unpleasant observation, Neil Armstrong was not only courteous enough to set me right geographically, but he seemed to have enjoyed the joke about my gardener-handyman Chandran, in spite of the fact that there was an important element in the story that I quite forgot to tell him.

As most readers of Madras Musings know full well, but I didn't think to tell Neil Armstrong, Chandran means, of course, The Moon!!

SHORT'N' SNAPPY

In brief

★ The Man From Madras Musings has been reading of an innovative step in education that might be well worth following in Chennai. The Doon School, led by Headmaster John Mason, has started an Education Research Centre with the help of the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research. The Centre will organise programmes for teachers of the Doon Valley to meet, share views and "improve their expertise and professional capabilities". The participants to workshops scheduled at least once a fortnight will find themselves being kept informed about the latest teaching models and aids. About 25 schools are participating in the programmes of the

Centre. MMM wonders who

★ Roads along the banks of the

will take the lead in Chennai.

★ When one of the City's prestigous clubs went back in time and organised an old-fashioned ballroom dance, atten-

dance was thin to say the least. Nevertheless, ballroom dancing is making a comeback, The Man From Madras Musings is assured by Stina Vasu, as a way of keeping fit. Her Arogya plans to offer instruction in the waltz, foxtrot and the quickstep for those wanting to join those who are already saying "happy days are here again". Can the rhumba,

Cooum have been suggested by

the City Traffic Police to decon-

gest traffic, The Man From Ma-

dras Musings hears. The first of value of the rupee in Madurai these roads is expected to con-(26.39) and in Chennai (26.46) nect Greame's Road with Binny is only better than Mumbai's Road and Anna Salai near the 26.56 paise. Coimbatore is in Bata showroom. MMM is told eleventh position (28.17). The that 125 offices and complexes best southern cities are Hyderahave agreed to shift their enbad (30.96) and Vishakhapattrances to face this road. nam (29.67) which trail only Ludhiana, which is where the rupee, valued at 31.65 paise,

goes the furthest. Bangalore (28.41) is in tenth position. ★ An old Madras State Bank of India hand, whom The Man From Madras Musings remembers for a history-of-the-SBI exhibition she organised and a colourful booklet of the Bank she produced (wish a copy were still available!), is Shanta Raghavan. MMM hears she has now been appointed Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Inspection & Audit Departsamba and tango be for behind?

ment, at headquarters. MMM ★ Amongst the country's hopes her inspection and audit twenty 'million cities', the three will include a second look at the Tamil Nadu cities in this category are amongst those where Madras Main Branch (especially its beautiful Irwin intethe rupee can buy the least, The rior) and Mount Road Branch Man From Madras Musings finds in a survey report. The and see how these two beautiful old buildings could be restored to their original splendour. MMM knows she played a role in saving the Mount Road branch when there was a proposal to pull it down. Now here's an opportunity to play a role in restoration.

> ★ The Indian film industry seldom goes in for sequels, like Jaws, Jaws II and Jaws III. But The Man From Madras Musings hears there is every chance of there being Indian II before long. Shankar's Kamal Hassanstarrer proved far more successful than had been envisaged and with corruption still a hot topic, the producers appear to feel that what's been a failure in India so far, namely sequels, might well prove a hit if the vigilante hits the trail again.

1997

THE OLD ...

An agenda for Singara Chennai - 2

Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own Waste. CHIEF SEATTLE

Thennai, on the threshold of growth and change, has come a long way from 1639. As the Chennai Metropolitan Area today, it covers about 1177 sq. km and comprises of, among other areas, the Corporation of Chennai, five Municipal towns, four townships, 27 town panchayats, 211 villages in 10 panchayat unions, and the Defence Cantonment Areas of St. Thomas' Mount-Pallavaram. I wonder whether we should be elated or concerned over such development.

The population in the metropolitan area is estimated to increase from 5.9 to 9.5 million between now and 2011! Of this 3.6 million increase, about two million will be added to the City and an equal number to the area outside. Such a burgeoning population, and the fact that its per capita income of about Rs.425 is the lowest among the four largest cities in the country, will certainly pose problems for the City administration.

Among these problems, a major one in the city is the management of solid waste. The problem arises because the volume of waste generated is beyond the capability of the existing systems and structures to manage effectively.

The sources of waste generation are, broadly, domestic, industrial, and others. The waste can either be bio-degradable or not. It terms of quality, it can either be non-toxic, or toxic and hazardous. All waste should, however, be collected, treated and disposed of, and it is in this process that problems arise, resulting in the situation where piles of garbage or other types of waste are dumped on the street, roads, and vacant spaces, creating conditions for ill-health and bad hygiene, exposing the entire community to the consequent risks.

The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority commissioned an international consultancy firm to study the problems of solid waste management in the Metropolitan Area and submit suitable recommendations. The findings are revealing, but the recommendations are open to discussion. On the basis of 1995-96 estimates, the solid waste in the Corporation area is around 2,400 tonnes a day. It is about 1,200 tonnes a day in the other parts of the Metropolitan Area. Of the 3,600 tonnes of waste a day needing management, 63 tonnes a day are hazardous wastes generated by industries in the Metropolitan Area.

It is relevant to mention that there are over 600 hospitals and

clinics in the Metropolitan Area. Only two of them have incinerators! Of the 25 to 50 tonnes a day of bio-medical waste generated, about 6 tonnes could be considered infectious. Unfortunately, there is no segregation of this in the hospitals and all the hospital waste is taken to the communal dustbins to be handled in the same manner as other municipal

Under the existing arrangements, the Corporation area is divided into ten zones, and the



Garbage by any other name — such as solid waste — remains an ugly, nose-wrinkling sight. And it's garbage, garbage everywhere in Chennai. How do we get rid of it in a manner better than what is practised in the City today? (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

structure, without even consid-

ering and presenting a possible

viable alternative. The sugges-

tion to set up Metrowaste, to

manage landfill sites, is like put-

ting the cart before the horse.

The Consultants also refer to

the induction of new technolo-

gies. Except for the manage-

ment of the landfill sites in an

environmentally sustainable

manner, all other operations are

of a routine and repetitive na-

ture, not requiring any compli-

cated technology. The critical

aspect is the prompt and regu-

lar clearance of the waste, and

conveyance either to the trans-

fer station or the landfill site.

Any system which ensures this

is sufficient. But to succeed

there should be sufficient moti-

I therefore suggest that the

entire system of collection and

conveyance be privatised, but

that the management of the

landfill sites be continued under

the Corporation, with improve-

ments on the technical side.

The advantage of this approach

is that the Corporation will be

relieved of the need to raise

large sums of money to manage

an activity of a recurring na-

ture, which, under the present

ethos, cannot be improved be-

* * *

yond a point.

We must manage solid waste better

which means street cleaning and waste collection, rests with the zonal officers, who work under the overall supervision and guidance of the Commissioner. The waste that is generated is usually dumped in the municipal dustbins or heaped on the roadside. This is collected by a 'primary collection service', using light vehicles, like bullock carts and tricycles, and taken to Transfer Stations, where the waste is dumped and kept till taken by heavier vehicles to the landfill sites for final disposal. Waste is also collected from the roadside or mu-

nicipal dustbins by the heavy

vehicles and taken directly to

the landfill sites. This is called

the 'secondary collection ser-

vice'. There are seven Transfer

Stations serving the ten zones,

but for the entire Corporation

area there are only two landfill

from the Zonal Officer. — Secondary collection service

In respect of the 'extended' areas, there are neither transfer stations nor landfill sites. No access is permitted to the landfill sites earmarked for the City. It is estimated that only about

50% of the waste that is generated in these areas is collected. The scenario is quite dismal. In the City Area, "the dilapidated state of the transfer stations make them extremely difficult to manage." As for the landfill sites, it is a matter of serious concern that "no site engineering, specifically designed to control the environmental impacts, or developed sanitary landfilling management practices are being employed". Also, the working conditions of the conservancy workers are pathetic. They handle all kinds of waste with their bare hands and without any protective gear. Many of them suffer from surprising that the Consultants

chronic and serious illnesses. should even suggest that the so-It is clear that any improvelution lies only in improvements

ment to the existing practices of solid waste management should involve a comprehensive overhauling of the present system, starting from the way in which the manual operations are carried out to the scientific management of the landfill sites.

Surprisingly, the Consultants are of the view that improvements to the existing system alone will suffice. Their main recommendations are: — Primary collection service to

be managed by the local communities with assistance

to continue as a responsibility of the Zonal Officer. -Creation of a new organi-

sation called Metrowaste which will be responsible for the management and operation of landfill sites. In due course, it is envisaged that Metrowaste will take over the responsibility of haulage and management of transfer stations.

Before discussing these recommendations, it would be useful to identify the major ills of the present system. The main problem is low productivity of the conservancy staff, due to a combination of factors, such as absenteeism, overstaffing, inadequate supervision, and, most importantly, lack of motivation. Under the existing milieu there is a limit beyond which productivity cannot be improved, and

this manifests itself in different ways. The waste is not cleared in time, vehicles are not available, transfer stations are badly maintained, and, finally, the landfill sites are examples of what a landfill site should not In these circumstances, it is

Management of landfill sites, on the other hand, is the most critical component in the entire sequence. Its proper and scientific management is of utmost importance to the entire Metropolitan Area. It is also not easy to convert this activity into a commercial enterprise overnight. Therefore, there would be advantage in the Corporation continuing to operate and manage it as a 'service', deploying its readily available technical manpower, and inducting

scientific methodology, also available easily from various Privatisation does not mean

1997

the parcelling out of small areas; that would be unviable and unattractive for the prospective entrepreneur. Given that about 3600 tonnes of waste has to be managed daily, this quantity could be divided among four enterpreneurs, so that each has a viable size of operation. The Government/Corporation should, however, evolve appropriate guidelines for their operation, which, among other things, should guarantee employment opportunity for conservancy staff who wish to work under the new management, while the rest could be redeployed by the Corporation. The staff will have to be retrained, better equipped, and presented with an attractive productivitylinked wage structure to secure the desired objectives. In parallel, suitable legisla-

tion, which will require generators of waste to discharge their waste in a regulated manner and pay a price fixed on a costplus basis for the service availed of, should be put in place. For the areas inhabited by the weaker sections, the Government/Corporation can reimburse the operator the difference between the cost of service and the amount collected, so that there is no additional burden on them, while, at the same time, the area continues to be served.

Obviously many details need to be worked out. But there should first be a willingness to get off the beaten track, look dispassionately at alternate workable models, and, finally, the courage to combat vested interests and the sceptics.

The problems of solid waste management are too serious to be left only to inadequately equipped NGOs or overburdened systems. Neither can these problems be wished away. Answers have to be found if we are to have a better city.

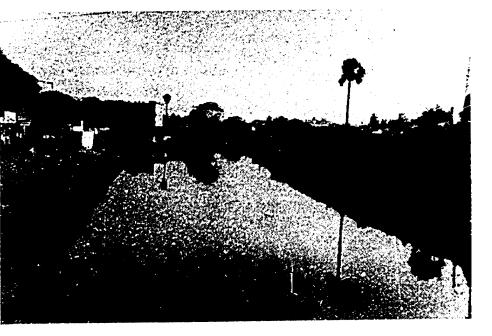
P.M. Belliappa Retired Civil Servant and currently an Environment Consultant The problems existed even then Slums have sprung up in

large numbers on the Canal and River banks. Highly insanitary conditions prevail on River and Canal margins near these slums. Since the schemes of improvements to the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal cannot achieve the desired results without the removal of insanitation caused by the slums, it is of utmost importance that all the slums that have sprung up on the banks of the River and the Canal will have to be cleared as early as possible and the slum dwellers rehabilitated elsewhere.

A coastal road from Madras to Thanjavur and even further down to Tuticorin and Kanyakumari would perhaps have a great



...& RIGHT NOW



These pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY show the Canal of today. They show the Canal on either side of Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai. On one side, the Canal is a morass and awaits attention. On the other side, attention has been paid to it in recent weeks and it has begun to look somewhat like what it used to be in the past. Will such 'good works' continue?

Revenue is realised by selling

The capacity of the boats is

licences and by collecting other

fees, such as wharfage and de-

determined by volumetric mea-

surements and the fees are lev-

ied based on the tonnages so

arrived. Cargo boats are

charged Rs. 4.50 a ton a year

and passenger boats Rs. 6 a ton

a year. The average revenue

realised in a year from both

South and North Canals is

about one lakh. The annual ex-

penditure in maintaining the

Canal, i.e., periodical clearance

of silt, cutting open of sand bars

at the mouths of rivers and cost

of the necessary establishment

for operating the locks etc., is

Various proposals have been

considered from time to time to

improve the Canal but the

schemes have not materialised.

Schemes for improving the

North Buckingham Canal upto

the limit of Madras State in-

clude widening and deeping of

the Canal. It was proposed to

widen the Canal upto 40 feet

and deepen it upto 6 feet so that

boats upto 100 tons capacity

(including power boats) could

decided to be kept at 33 feet.

ply. The width of the Canal was

Plans for North Canal

about Rs. 2 lakh.

A lifeline of the City was the Buckingham Canal as these two pictures show. The Vintage Vignettes greeting card on top, featuring a picture from their photographic collection of old Madras, shows the Canal in use in the 1920s by Central Station, while the other picture, from The Hindu archives, shows the canal still in use in the 1960s.

(Continued from last fortnight)

The Buckingham Canal en-**L** ables the produce of the two great delta systems, Krishna and Godavari, to be brought to Madras from as far north as Kakinada. It has placed Madras in cheap and easy communication with no less than five districts and with the important towns of Kakinada, Vijayawada, Masulipatnam, Ongole and Nellore, besides numerous small trade centres. It has entirely superseded the uncertain and precarious coastal traffic which formerly existed at numerous minor ports along the

The traffic in the Canal is mainly of country-boats of capacity ranging from 5 to 30 tons. The weight of an empty boat is from 3 to 5 tons. These boats are built locally with the help of men trained in the profession, but there is no wellequipped boat building yard. All boats sail day and night when the wind is suitable; otherwise they are towed or poled. The crew consists of 3 to 5 men. Passenger boasts are now on the decline. The total number of boats that ply exceed 1200, of which about 300 ply in the South Canal. The North Canal transacts more business than the South Canal. The low water level prevents the plying of mechanical and heavier boats.

Cargo carried southwards in earlier days consisted principally of grains, condiments, salt, fish, firewood, chunam shells and charcoal, while those taken northwards were chiefly coconuts, coir, palmyrah rafters,

When the Canal was a waterway

fish, salt, jaggery and banana shoots. The bulk of the cargo at present consists of firewood, shell, salt and coconut leaves. A major portion of the cargo is terially changed. If the Canal conveyed to the city. The boats on most occasions go practically empty on their return trips, excepting for a limited quantity of

Madras mostly depends on the supply of firewood brought in by the boats. Large belts of salt pans and shell deposit are situated in the vicinity of the Canal. Hence, the cost of conveyance of these commodities by boats is cheaper than by road or rail, although the time taken for transport by boats is much more. According to the owner of a boat, which plies in the South Canal, the freight rates of boats are more or less half of lorry rates and it will take about 10 to 12 days to complete a trip from Marakanam to Madras, a distance of 62 miles.

The Canal had to face serious competition from road and rail transport in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War and Canal traffic was in the doldrums. Receipts dwindled, while the charges of maintenance became more and more, resulting in loss to the Government. With the Second World War, the Canal's traffic position took a favourable turn as the railways and motor lor-

ries were diverted mostly to the transport of War supplies. And now after the conclusion of the War, the position has not macould be developed and powerdriven vessels put into commission, it would definitely attract better traffic and to some extent relieve the congestion in the

The value of the goods conveyed through the Buckingham Canal at different periods will give you an idea of its traffic:

goods traffic of the railways.

1892-93 — Rs.128.12 lakh; 1938-39 — 134; 1951-52 (before separation of Andhra State) — 415.55; 1956-57 (Madras State limits) — 284.07; and 1960-61 — 184.21.

Benefits

The Canal passes generally through what was, before its construction, a dreary waste of sand, but much of this barren and arid country has been greatly developed and improved owing to this cheap means of communication. Cultivation has been introduced or extended owing to the facilities given by the Canal for the drainage of lowlying lands, numerous casuarina and other plantations have been raised along its entire length and along the shores of adjacent backwa-

It was proposed to deepen

Plans for South Canal

the Canal to (+)14.00 with a bed width of 33 feet. It was also proposed to excavate a link canal connecting Madras Harbour with the Cooum River so as to establish a continuous navigation line between the Harbour and the Buckingham Canal. The object was that exportable cargo such as iron and manganese ore and importable cargo such as timber from the Andamans could be transported economically through the Buckingham Canal. It was expected that such a proposal would also enable the drawal of tidal water of the sea during the high tide and eliminate the stench nuisance in the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal within the city limits.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research in its Report on the Techno-Economic Survey of Madras, 1960, discussing the improvements that may be made to the Buckingham Canal, stated:

"If the Buckingham Canal could be rendered navigable for larger power driven boats, it could take some of the strain off the railways. Further, if it could be joined with the Vedaranyam Canal, it could provide a cheap means of transport from Madras to Thanjavur through Cuddalore. There is also the possibilty of linking the Canal to Madras Harbour to make transshipment easier. According to the findings of the Traffic Survey Report on the Buckingham and Vedaranyam Canals, the arge expenditure necessary for (Continued on Page 6).

MM-0497.PM5

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMA-NAN's questions are from the period May 1 to 15. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

- 1. Who was recently sworn in as the youngest P.M. of the U.K. in 150
- 2. Why was a Spanish gypsy, Ceferino limenez, who was killed in 1936, in the news recently?
- 3. Where else in Tamil Nadu is the Regional Passport Office planning to set up a collection centre?
- 4. Which Indian advertising luminary was named for the panel of judges of the prestigious international advertising festival at
- 5. Who regained the men's singles title at the world table tennis championships thus preventing a Chinese sweep?
- 6. Which Tamil film has picked up National awards for best music, best male and female playback singing, and best choreography?
- 7. Name the security group set up, in place of the disbanded SSG, to provide protection to the Tamil Nadu C.M. and visiting VIPs.
- 8. Name the academic appointed Officer on Special Duty in the PMO, who resigned in a day following protests?
- 9. The setting up of which transport corporation in the State precipitated communal violence in southern Tamil Nadu recently?
- 10. Which member enrolled on May 8th as a primary member of the Congress (I)?
- 11. On May 12th, the CBI released as information an explosive answer to a big question nagging the nation. What information?
- 12. Where was the 9th SAARC summit held recently?
- 13. Which province of Iran was hit by a devastating earthquake that left nearly 2400 people dead?
- 14. According to the Indian Finance Minister, how much money is required for infrastructure development over the next five years?
- 15. Name the computer which beat the world chess champion Garry Kasparov in New York recently.

16. Name the global mobile phone launched by VSNL in the City on May 12th. It is described as the smallest mobile phone.

17. India's first, and only the world's sixth, 'Double Loop' rollercoaster was inaugurated in the city. Where?

18. Which famous 300-year-old landmark of the city was sealed by the Corporation on May 7th?

19. Where has the city's third electric crematorium come up?

20. In a move that can have farreaching impact on the building industry in the city, the CMDA has recently allowed what in buildings?

Answers on page 8

The other side of preservation

The other day, tired of the home, the smooth flow of the concrete... People of all types **I** pressure of routine work, we decided to take a day off. To escape from all the noise and bustle, we went on a picnic. The place we went to was a faraway spot on the banks of a river.

It was a beautiful place calm and peaceful, the quiet broken only by the occasional chirping of the birds. The river started somewhere from the top of the mountain and ended at its foot. Along both sides of its course were beautiful trees, animals ran uninhibited ... years of undisturbed beauty surrounded

We swam, we sang, we laughed and were a part of what I can only describe as the majestic splendour of nature. In the evening, we watched the sun disappear on the far horizon, the sky changing colours from fiery red to pink, to violet until, finally, darkness engulfed us. Standing on the hill, we watched spellbound the birds that seemed to be returning

river, while nature obligingly followed its pattern. For a few minutes, we let the silence be, for we feared to break the magical moment, lest it never come back to us. The serene tranquillity of the place was like finding an oasis in the desert.

Until that moment I never

will invade this heaven on earth... Cars, transistors and stereos will replace the soft twittering of the birds... where will the birds go? (The practical side of my mind said they would probably find another place... but how long before Man stamps his foot there?) The cool gave environment preservation breeze would be of no use; they

by Anita Nanavati Varghese

a thought, never thought it worth wasting my time condemning men for destroying something as beautiful as Nature. I was busy acquiring the comforts of modern life. However, standing by the calm river, my mind churned out thoughts that left me stunned...

May be in two years, there will spring up a huge forbidding building surrounded by many others of its type... The lush majestic grandeur of these trees will be replaced by cement and

resulted in many distraught

ladies-of-the-house; but there

was also the birth of a cuisine

which was rather 'different'.

Apparently, the matter of not

getting exactly what they

wanted was overcome by the

delights of 'new' tastes. So, the

first ingredient of Nilgiris Cui-

sine was the modified Anglo-

this cuisine is the tribal influ-

ence. The Badagas are a tribe

believed to be among the earli-

est settlers in the region. Being

farmers primarily, the Badagas

have a fairly well-developed

cuisine, the main ingredients in

their cooking being local pro-

duce. Another tribe of the re-

gion are the Todas whose food

habits are generally based upon

milk and milk products. Other

tribes of the region include the

Kothas, Kurumbas and the

Irulas. They were considered

rather primitive and their food

habits were based upon the for-

considered to be a marriage of a

modified Anglo-Indian cuisine

and Badaga food. There is also

a great emphasis on using local

Thus, Nilgiris cuisine may be

The second ingredient of

Indian food.

would close their windows to stop this wind and switch on their air-conditioners instead. Stunned, I sat down. Man

cannot be so cruel, so stupid as to destroy this beauty... The practical side of my mind however began to argue back. Had Man thought in the same vein during the Stone Age, where there was nothing but beauty surrounding him, would he ply beauty instead of replacing day? Would men have pro- we all can... and may be we all gressed from carts to rockets... will succeed.

allel to his own mind — computers - or would he have, through medicines, conquered life and postponed death? Everything in life is born out

A POINT

OF VIEW

Would he have invented a par-

1997

of pain. Something has to die for something to live. Is this not the law of Nature? Then what is so callous or selfish about what Man has done. He has killed or obliterated a certain beauty to discover a newer one. Whether it is better or not is open to debate.

Historians will write books on the destruction of the old order and the birth of a new world. Modernists will write about the triumphs of men, while environmentalists will write eulogies on the tombstone of Nature. But I cannot help but wonder whether we will really destroy it all... Or will we create something even more beautiful? Can't we preserve this and yet create something even more beautiful? Can't we not multihave reached where he has to- it? If you think like I do, may be

Blue Mountain bounty While spending two long fares they were used to and or- using the basics of tradition and ion and coriander leaves in a

W holidays in Coonoor dered accordingly. Communiabout four decades ago, I had cation failures between the ranging from snacks to desserts. Coconut Rice (a 'pulao' made the good fortune to come across Mems and the cooks and the These include: Cotton's Button with coconut milk), Ottakuddi the culinary magic of Muthu- addiction of the cooks to spices, (baked marinated mushroom Gassu Poriyal (a dish popular sammy. He was a grizzled old man with a distinguished claim to fame based upon the fact that he was said to be one of the best cooks at the Staff College at Wellington, a man who had made a great many officers and their families — extremely happy. He had a fat big file of testimonials praising his cooking in glowing terms. But in matters of food, mere bits of paper talking about great cooking are not enough. The proof lies in the eating. I tasted just one curry cooked by Sammy, and I was a believer.

During a recent visit to Ooty, I met Mahendra I Ahluwalia, who looks after the three Taj group properties at Ooty and Coonoor. Inevitably, the conversation veered around to food. Ahluwalia spoke about the 'Nilgiris Cuisine'. He had done some research and found that there was a distinct cuisine of the Nilgiris, with its own looks and taste.

In the early 19th Century, the British had established the towns of Coonoor, Ootacamund and Kotagiri as places for rest and recuperation. Then came the planters. All of them employed locals as cooks.

produce. The memsahibs desired the Ahluwalia has experimented

est produce.

caps stuffed with chopped spinach topped with grated Ooty cheese and served on fried bread rounds), Fish Fairways (Erimeen from the Pykara lake shallow-fried using a marinade of green herbs and served with a coating of 'green masala'), Chicken Ball Curry (balls of minced chicken mixed with ginger, green chillies, garlic, on-

evolved many interesting items gravy of spiced cocount milk), with the Badagas at the onset of the monsoon, made with tender bamboo shoots and potatoes; seasoned with red chillies, mustard seeds and curry leaves), and Thuppathittu (a popular sweet of fried flour dumplings with cashew nuts and raisins). (Courtesy: Express Hotelier and

Rajen Bali

BUCKINGHAM CANAL

(Continued from page 5)

broadening and deepening the Canal would result in greater advantages if employed in developing the alternative means of transport. These major developments aside, proper dredging of the Canal and improvement

of the boats would undoubtedly assist in relieving some of the traffic congestion in Madras area and should be under-

However, none of the schemes materialised. (Concluded)

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Looking back with Lalgudi

When I went to see violin maestro Lalgudi G Jayaraman to discuss the launching of the Brahaddhavani Art Circle, he was reading an article in The Hindu on the Gandhi Museum in Gandhigram and how, years ago, a road roko had been organised nearby, near Chinnalampatti village, by weavers wanting to have a darshan of Mahatma Gandhi

Lalgudi remembers vividly that tour of Mahatma Gandhi around 1942. He was a young man in Lalgudi when the Mahatma was to pass through the village. Javaraman remembers the entire village coming to the railway station long before Gandhiji's expected time of arrival, 9 a.m. But the train came in only at 12.30 p.m.; it had to make many unscheduled stops.

"We all shouted Mahatma Gandhi ki jai with great fervour. There was one compartment that was not completely covered. It had a verandah-like open space with railings. Rajaji came out first and Gandhi followed him and smiled at all of us. We all surrendered to the power of the man who offered such brightness, yet was in such a simple attire. We were all some more. When he started speaking, we all fell silent. His was a bass voice. If he sings he might sound like K L Saigal, I thought

Mahatma Gandhi's Hindi apology for coming late was translated by C N Gopalaswamy. Ganapati Iyer, an important man in Lalgudi, went up to Mahatma Gandhi and got his autograph. Gandhi wrote his name in Tamil. "The piece of paper was touched by all of us. We felt there was some power in the paper also." It was a great irony that when they all got back to Lalgudi village, thrilled after seeing Gandhi, they found some houses had been burgled! While the entire population of the village was away, thieves had a field day! * * *

Lalgudi Jayaraman belongs to a family of musicians which can trace its music lineage to Saint Tyagaraja. Jayaraman's great-grandfather Rama Iyer trained under the saint. Tyagaraja visited Lalgudi and composed five kritis on the presideing deity in the Lalgudi temple. They are called the Lalgudi Pancharatnas. Grandfather Valadi Radhakrishna

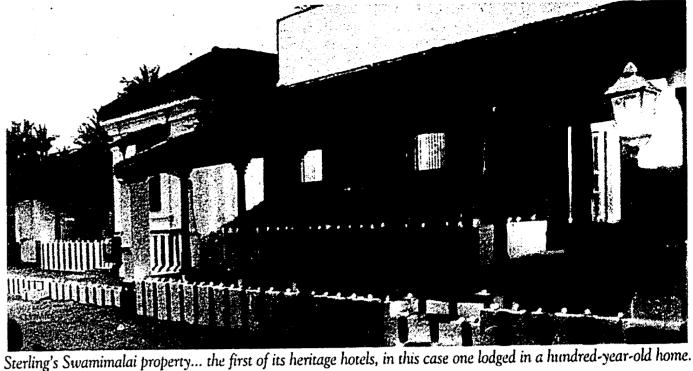


Iyer took up the violin and was patronised by the ruler of Ramanathapuram. His two sons, Kandaswamy lyer and Gopala Iyer, were respected violinists. Gopala Iyer's son layaraman learnt vocal music first, in the family tradition, and only later turned to the violin. By the time he emerged as a violin artist, the violin had been fully accepted as an indispensable accompaniment for vocal music in the Carnatic music tradition. But full-length instrumental performances were not a common feature on the concert stage at the time. The veena was the only solo instrument from antiquity. Some flute music was also played solo on rare occasions and nagaswaram was played at auspicious functions as a social custom, but not much on the concert platform. Carnatic music on the solo

violin was played only by a few, stars like Mysore Chondiah and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu. who began as accompanists but turned more and more to solo concerts. Jayaraman too first gained experience of various styles of music as an acompanist to many great vocalists of his time. He would change his style to suit the style of the vocalist. But as a solo artist he developed his own style. He went on to great heights and Yehudi Menuhin presented him with a violin. In 1986, the Krishna Gana Sabha celebrated 50 continuous solo concerts on the same platform by Lalgudi. Lata Mangeshkar presented him a gold violin on the occasion. Lalgudi Jayaraman is known for his compositions for dance. His tillanas are danced by many a Bharata Natyam dancer.

* * *

After the visit of Gandhi, the village turned completely nationalistic. Lalgudi Gopala Iyer was a keen nationalist and held many discussions on it at home. He had a big music school in Lalgudi and made all his students sing the nationalistic songs of Subramania Bharati. "On August 15, 1947, the tricolour went up on all the



(By A Staff Reporter)

C terling Swamimalai is a unique Heritage Hotel which offers an "authentic Indian experience" rather Omade to order.

The Heritage Hotel has refurbished Thimakkudy House (the house where Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam stayed when he used to visit Swamimalai) is over hundred years old. It has been renovated without losing anything of the antiquity of the exterior of the house. The interior decor, with typical lamps and other antiques, gives a glimpse of the rich heritage of India — but seems obviously laid on.

A traditional experience is arranged right from 5.30 a.m., with strains of morning music waking the guests to see a traditional-looking 'Maragathamal' sitting on the thinnai weaving garlands of fragrant flowers. The flowers are offered for a puja in the traditional way. Then a Muslim priest fumigates the whole place with sambrani (frankincense). Yoga follows in front of the huge Siva mural in an open air ambience, with trained teachers guiding the guests. Then begins the Royal Bath, with an age-old ayurvedic herbal massage done by professional masseurs. The breakfast, lunch and dinner are traditional, with thematic spreads served in banana leaves. The tour includes rides in bullock carts in Swamimalai and excursions to nearby destinations. Sterling Swamimalai also offers a full-fledged Ayurveda Health Care Centre, established in collaboration with the Arya Vaidya Chikitsalayam of Coimbatore. The traditional Copper Sauna Bath facility in Sterling Swamimalai is available in very few

It might seem like a bit of make-believe, with bits and pieces of traditional India offered in and out of context, but fun is suspending reality for a couple of days.

houses. Pandals made of green palm and flowers came up everywhere. The music students gave continuous concerts at the street corner." Lalgudi Jayaraman had been

making regular visits to Madras for concert engagements. On January 30, 1948, he was playing in a concert in Tiruchi. "It was Thyagaraja Bahula Panchami and we were on the stage in the hundred-pillar hall when F A Natesa Iyer, a leading personality of Trichy, came on to the stage and announced the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. People could not comprehend what he said at first and sought information from others, but a huge snake-like hiss to quiet the people arose from the audience and we stopped the concert. I remember sobbing uncontrollably. To think that Gandhi was dead and that too killed! I still remember the man with a charisma that cannot be described, standing on the train in Lalgudi station.

Lalgudi Jayaraman's children, G J R Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi, are continuing the family tradition of the violin. His daughter-in-law is a vocalist and is now on a tour of the US. The Lalgudi couple dote on their granddaughter and are keeping her busy during the summer holidays by telling her stories about Mahatma Gandhi and giving her lessons in music in the absence of her mother.

— V R Devika

The book that has caught the attention of the media worldwide is Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (IndiaInk - Rs.395). A semiautobiographical novel, it captures the sociopolitical climate of the 1960's in Kerala, when Communism took the state by storm. The novel is also about the Syrian Christians and their lifestyle. Rov weaves a beautifully — and meticulously worded story about the twins Estha and Rahel and the turn of events after the arrival of their cousin Sophie in Ayeme-

nother autobiographical novel to hit the stands is Manohar Devadoss' Green Well Years (EWB - Rs.295). The book captures the childhood days of the author in the temple town of Madurai. What really stands out in the book is a series of ink drawings done by the author himself. The drawings, exquisite and minutely detailed, capture the essence of Madurai. These drawings are very special because the author is near-

Damanujan: Letters and Com Mmentary (EWB - Rs.295) is

a compilation of the correspondence between the two great mathematicians, Ramanujan and G H Hardy, and letters from Ramanujan's family. Bruce C Berndt and Robert A Rankin have retrieved a lot of letters, including the famous letter written on 16th and 27th February, 1913. These letters are considered landmarks in the field of maths. A must for maths lovers.

* * * In the popular fiction section, Philip Kerr's Esau (Vintage -UK £2.95) is set to make a mark. Tipped to be Britain's Micheal Crichton, Kerr churns out a gripping story set mostly in the Himalaya. A search is on for the Yeti, there is a psychopathic spy on the loose and a possible nuclear war, all leading to the discovery of the Abominable Snowman. Disney has already bought the filming rights for Esau.

Toromandel (HarperCollins -UK £3.20) by Owen Sela is an epic tale of passion and intrigue, set in 17th Century India. The book is about the establishment of the East India Company — a saga of men and women who struggled to gain a foothold on foreign soil. This is about Richard Darnell who has this passionate dream of establishing an empire in India.

* * *

Savitha Padmanabhan

State tennis awaits stadium decision

The magnificent ATP tournament held at the Nungambakkam Tennis Stadium. while an unqualified success, raises the question: After ATP what?

8

During the last monsoon, several leaks were reported in the roof of the stadium, more recently, during the tour event, the high standard of tennis on view was occasionally marred by the uneven bounce on the synthetic courts, especially the centre court. Apart from last

might have had an effect on the way the playing surface behaved. The stadium itself had been constructed in record time during the regime of the previous state government. Though it was a remarkable achievement, minor faults were, perhaps, unavoidable in the circumstances.

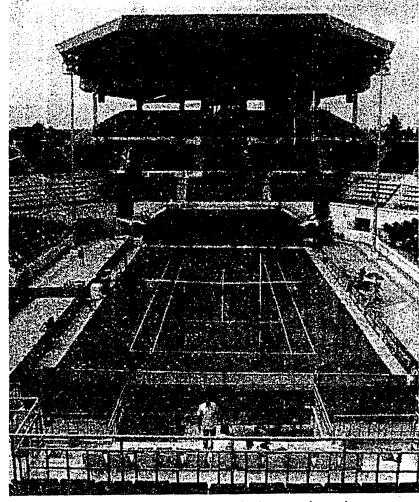
The TNTA submitted a proposal some six months ago to the State Government requesting that the stadium be handed over to them by the Sports Deexcept for clay in Europe and grass at a handful of centres like Wimbledon and Birmingham.

The TNTA would have to resort to fund-raising, through corporate sponsorship and collections from the public at tournament time, to build a corpus to maintain the courts. International tournaments would be an important feature, while at least three of the eight courts would be earmarked for the coaching schemes of the TNTA for juniors. The TNTA charges the least for such programmes, according to Premkumar — from Rs.175 to Rs. 375 a month. For the last 15 years these have been conducted at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Egmore by Hiten Joshi.

With the Tamil Nadu set up of 50 coaches training some 2500 players, including 100 seniors, at 150 centres, we can expect solid results once the stadium becomes part of TNTA's infrastructure.

Why is the Tamil Nadu Government taking its time over a decision regarding the handing over of the stadium to the TNTA? Is the government postponing a decision until a comprehensive decision can be taken covering all the stadia? And is Government delaying that decision because it does not have confidence in the ability of some of the sports bodies concerned to maintain the facilities once they are handed over to them?

Premkumar believes that it is only a matter of time before the TNTA is entrusted with the task of maintaining the Nungambakkam Stadium. It has a leadership that can ensure the maintenance necessary. The Association has had some distinguished men at the helm of affairs in the past and it is now headed by N Kumar of the Sanmar Group. The Vice-Presidents, M A Alagappan, L Lakshmanan, Dr. S Srinivasan and V Narayanan, are all keen sportsmen who have headed corporate houses and bring rich administrative experience to the task of giving Tamil Nadu tennis a filip. Prof. Narasimhan, the Chief Referee, PB Santanakrishnan, the Treasurer, and Hiten Joshi, the Chief Coach, complete a capable team of tennis administratrators. A concerted effort by all of them can make the Nungambakkam Tennis Stadium a beehive of activity and tennis capital of India.



The Nungambakkam Tennis Stadium looks superb in this picture, taken soon after it was readied for the ATP competition. But what happens to the stadium after such once-in-a-blue-moon tournaments? What does Government want to do with such a splendid stadium?

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Tony Blair; 2. He has been beatified by the Roman Catholic Church; 3. Cuddalore; 4. Arun Nanda of Rediffusion; 5. Sweden's Jan-ove Waldner; 6. AVM's Minsara Kanavu; 7. The 'Core Cell'; 8. Prof. Bhabani Sengupta; 9. Veera Sundaralingam Transport Corpn; 10. Sonia Gandhi; 11. That Rajiv Gandhi was 'aware' of the commissions payed in the Bofors deal; 12. Malé in Maldives; 13. Khorasan province; 14. \$ 100 billion; 15. Deep Blue.

16. Inmarsat Mini-M; 17. MGM Dizee World; 18. Kothawal Chavadi.

19. Moolakothalam in Washermanpet; 20. It has proposed to allow covered car parks areas in special buildings and exclude it from floor space calculations.

by V. Ramnarayan

year's ATP challenger event and this year's tournament, hardly any tennis has been played at this world class facility. Arising out of these shortfalls are these questions: Who is to maintain the stadium and the courts on an ongoing basis? Who will ensure their regular usage?

K Premakumar, Honorary Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association (TNTA). attempted to answer both questions when Madras Musings spoke to him. According to him, the construction faults had been rectified and the uneven bounce of the courts could be velopment Authority (SDA) of Tamil Nadu. Under the scheme proposed by the TNTA, camps would be conducted for trainees at the various tennis clinics in the city and the state, prior to important national events. There would also be regular coaching clinics for serious tennis players under the supervision of Hiten Joshi, the chief coach of the Association. Some of the courts would be made open for the public to be used on a 'Pay and Play' basis at a cost of Rs.50-100 as hour, the players bringing their own tennis balls. State players could play regularly at the stadium and hone their skills on the synthetic hardcourts which are the order of the day the world over,

Nostalgia

corrected without too much

ado. The fact that the courts

had been laid on 'lake area' land

When Madras beat the Olympians

was delighted to read K.N. LPrabhu's reminiscences of the vintage hockey which he witnessed in 1941 (MM, May 1). I would like to narrate what happened a decade later.

An outstanding victory was registered at the M.C.C. ground in 1952 when the Madras State Hockey Team, which I had the honour to captain, defeated by one goal to nil the Indian Olympic Team on its way to Helsinki, where it won the Gold Medal.

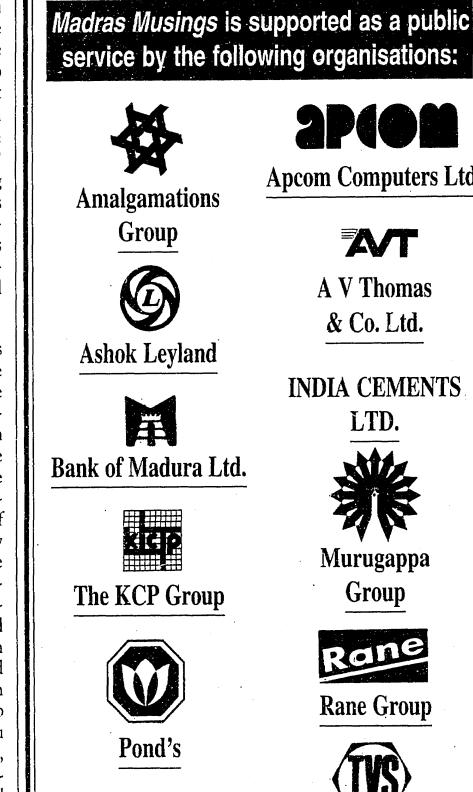
I had captained the Madras City Police Hockey Team from 1950 to 1953, when we won the annual League Tournament, conducted by the Madras Hockey Association, three years in succession (1950, 1951 and 1952). It was on the strength of my performance in the League Tournaments that I was selected by the Madras Hockey Associa-

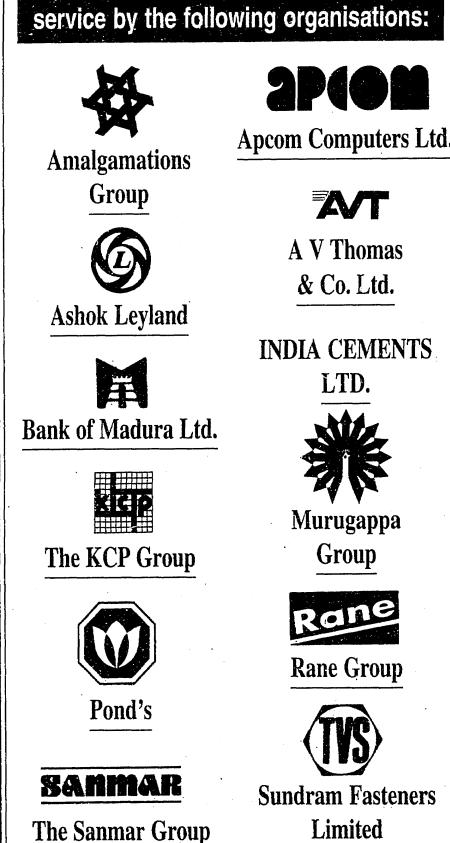
tion to captain the State Team to meet the star Indian Olympic team captained by the famous K.D. Singh (Babu).

In my view, the defeat of the Indian Olympic Team was due to the spectators shouting out to the individuals in that star-studded team who, thereupon, tried to exhibit their individual brilliance instead of contributing to teamwork, which is the essence of success. This resulted in Madras registering the only victory in Indian history against an Olympic Team!

F.V. Arul

EDITOR'S NOTE: What's happened to Police hockey these days? Indeed, what's happened to Police sport? The Police should be a major contributor to Tamil Nadu sport; instead, it has virtually forgotten sport.





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