

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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A threat to Palace?

Musings hopes it's only a scare story

(By the Editor)

Mr Chief Minister, please tell us it is not so. Please tell us that Chepauk Palace, in no matter what unkempt state it is, is not to be pulled down. Please tell us that what we've heard is only an ill-founded rumour.

What we've heard is that there is a Government proposal to pull down the "Nawab's Building" where the Department of Agriculture is and put up in its place a multistorey building. The only "Nawab's Building" with the Agriculture Department in it that we know of is the Chepauk Palace. Ergo, it's Chepauk Palace that is threatened.

All that we said in the past about the DGP Building (still awaiting restoration) applies to Chepauk Palace too. Coastal Zone regulations (referred to below), the evening breeze being blocked by highrise, and the

building's heritage value. This last is even more so in the case of Chepauk Palace.

The Palace is not only a Heritage Building on the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority's limited list of buildings to be protected, but it is also the most important bit of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the country. Built in 1768 by, very likely, Paul Benfield for Nawab Mohammed Ali Wallajah of the Carnatic, this building undoubtedly pioneered the Indo-Saracenic style that others like 'Mad' Mant, Robert Chisholm and Henry Irwin built their reputation on in the second half of the 19th Century and the early 20th Century.

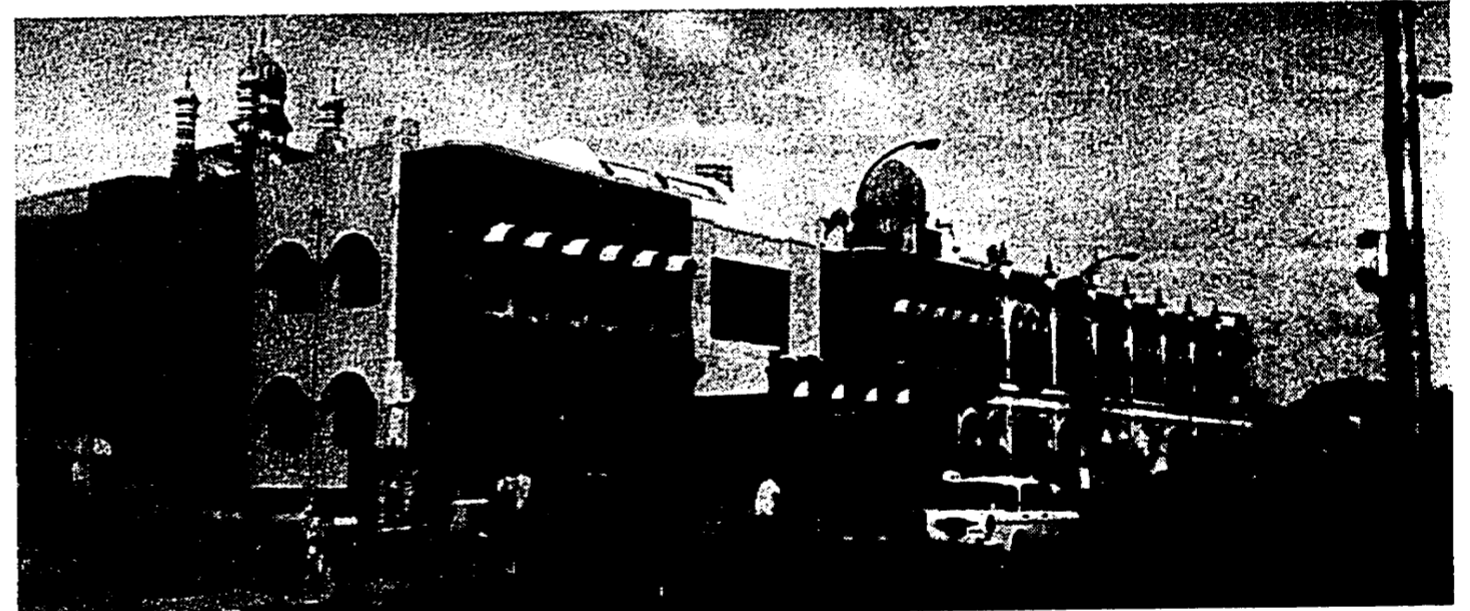
As a pioneering architectural attempt, Chepauk Palace should not only be preserved but it must also be restored. Not a single part of it should be

THE OLD...



Seen for a few months recently... in all the splendour it displayed years ago...

...& THE NEW



...Today's building, a far cry from yesteryears... and hiding it all. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

pulled down, if there are any such plans.

In post-Independence years, *Ezhilagam* and, then, wild growth hid the beauty of Chepauk Palace. Recently the wild growth was cut down and for a few months we were able

to get a glimpse of the past (see our OLD on top). At the time, we were told that in the clearing would be raised a new building that would integrate with the OLD and would in no way hide its beauty. Our NEW shows what's come up — and

of the OLD we can hardly see anything. But hidden or not, that OLD, Chepauk Palace, and every building that is a part of the palace complex, must be allowed to stand as a heritage building. Please say it will be so, Mr Chief Minister.

Will CRZ rules be implemented?

(By A Staff Reporter)

With the Supreme Court keeping a strict vigil over the implementation of the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) rules framed by the Union Environment Ministry, and with the Ministry insisting on the rules being implemented by local planning and development authorities, there may yet be hope for Chennai's coast and estuary banks. With the penalty for flouting CRZ rules stiff — including imprisonment or fine for any official of the approving body or authority — many an

official might well think twice before bending to political interference, which, in turn, is, in most cases, wielded on behalf of wealthy developers.

The city's entire coastline has been classified as CRZ II, which means that no construction activity will be allowed upto 500 metres from the high tide mark on the sea shore and upto 100 metres from rivers, backwaters and nullahs where high tides have some effect. This classification also applies to the coast from north of the city limits to the northern

Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) boundary, except in the Ennore Creek area. The Creek area has been declared CRZ I, no further development at all being allowed here within 500 metres of the high tide mark.

In the south, the area from the city limits upto the CMA boundary has been classified as CRZ III. Here, no development is permitted upto 200 metres from the high tide line while between 200 and 500 metres restricted construction activity will be allowed.

There, however, appears to

be a loophole in the rules which is reported to state that if there is already an approved road or building existing on the 'landward' side of the water, construction could still be allowed. With much of the Chennai coast having such 'approved' constructions, would the authorities adopt the moral high ground and cry halt to new building activities when they are given this loophole? But as a symbol of its good intentions, the CMDA has suggested to Government that water and power connections should be

cut to unapproved buildings coming up on the east coast.

The CRZ rules, though comprehensive on paper, are not all that easy to implement. From a practical viewpoint, it may be difficult to ascertain, for instance, upto what extent the effect of the high tide is felt in the backwaters and nullahs in Chennai. Only sophisticated equipment would be able to detect tidal effect well away from the sea shore. But where there's a will, there can be a way. So it's up to the planning and development authorities now.

What's in a name but trouble!

The Man from Madras Musings, after his two-week break away from it all, hasn't quite caught with all that's been happening in the City and the State. But he did note that the Chief Minister was beginning to consider again the wisdom of name-changes in a State where casteism and cultism, the latter in the shape of deification of leaders, have long thrived. No other State, as far as MMM is aware, has gone around naming districts and transport corporations after local leaders and heroes of the past. In a State where caste, tragically, still plays an important role in everything from local elections to education, this was to ask for trouble, as every district has a multi-caste population, many of whom would resent such preferential naming.

Such trouble has only been increasing every year these past few years and it's time a way was found to cry halt. MMM must congratulate the Chief Minister for calling an all-party meet to discuss the issue and consider doing away with the personality cult while naming districts and bus corporations. MMM is also pleased that most of those present agreed with this view. But small groups, most of them strongly casteist, still seemed to feel their leaders should be honoured. And that appears to have put the Chief Minister off his stride and prevented him from taking a strong decision on the spot. The Man from Madras Musings hopes that when that decision is made — it may well be before these lines see the light of day — it does away with all these names that not only we have been saddled with but which have also confused travellers and geographers around the world. More strength to you, Mr Chief Minister, if you take a step towards doing away with casteism and personality cults by doing away with these names that embellish districts, bus services and buildings.

MMM also feels that the Chief Minister would be doing considerable service to the young in this State if he asked his Ministers to reconsider the whole question of teaching technical and other important subjects at the University level in Tamil. As one who, from time to time, teaches at this level, MMM appreciates the struggle of those who enter university with only a Tamil-medium background. But almost every one of those students wins his or her struggle at the end of four years — and is able to handle English adequately to achieve a grade ranging from the modest to the good. By teaching many an engineering course in Tamil, there may or may not be good grades at the end of it, but one thing is sure. Four years from now, and every year thereafter, Tamil Nadu will have a couple of thousand engineers, for in-

stance, who are qualified in 'Tamil Only'. Will the Government have jobs for all of them? Certainly they won't have a place outside the State or abroad, while many a private sector unit, employing people from all over the country, will not want them. The Tamil Nadu Government will then have to offer them employment — or face new protests. Is it ready for that?

The Chief Minister has shown statesmanship in looking at this whole question of naming districts, bus corporations etc. MMM hopes he will look again, in similar fashion, at this move to conduct certain technical courses and specialised subjects in Tamil.

Hail & farewell

When U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner visited Chennai recently to say farewell, after a 3-year stint in India that brought with it considerable Indo-US trade — over \$9 billion, it is said — not to say moments of controversy over what was seen as repeated political interference, it was roses all the way at the farewells. But The

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Man from Madras Musings was struck by the miscellaneous nature of the main gathering, in which the absence of the City's leading industrialists was rather noticeable. Maybe it was the weather and the holiday season.

Heads of American-linked industry, that which was ushered in by Wisner, were, however, present in their numbers and said all the right things. In speeches on the occasion, Wisner was compared to Chester Bowles and Galbraith — no one dared mention Moinihan — and everyone looked forward to his continuing links with India. S Viswanathan, of the *Industrial Economist*, brought out a special issue on Wisner that was released on the occasion. In it, Viswanathan made no bones about the fact that he believed Wisner's contribution to a newly liberalised India has been considerable and would make all the difference to the country in the future. MMM doesn't quite agree with that view — but that's a debate for another occasion.

Meanwhile, Wisner has called it a day as an American diplomat; he had hoped to end his career with a posting to France from where his wife is. But, not given his wish, he has decided to enter the business world. Did MMM hear it as 'in Insurance' or 'in Infrastructure'? Whichever it is, all those contacts the ambassador of the hard-sell made in India will

prove extremely rewarding back home.

Back Home

Returning Home after a short spell abroad, things seemed to look worse than ever. Delhi's Arrival Halls — and the swift clearance of passengers, especially by smartly-uniformed Immigration inspectors, quite a contrast to the casually dressed ones in Chennai who take their own sweet time — was a pleasure. But just outside the Hall it was a shambles. The potholed roads, much of them with pools of water, the filthy verandahs and the scores of ill-clad people sleeping with the least protection and the greatest exposure at these entrances, not to mention the touts or all those others offering services, clearly told The Man from Madras Musings that he was back Home.

The point was driven home even deeper on arrival in Madras. The first two buses MMM passed belonged to the MGR Transport Corporation, and MMM must state that he has never seen dirtier, more battered buses anywhere. Windows were missing, the driver's door was

missing in one, in the other it was crumpled and tied to the frame with string. Both vehicles appeared to have been in a battle zone and come out badly damaged.

We may be a poor country, a developing one they say, those being kinder, but for a State that boasted the best bus fleets in the country not so long ago, must we be reduced to this? Something seems to have gone wrong along the way in the last few years — and it's not that we've become poorer.

When, oh, when are we going to take pride in our public property?

Tickets for whom?

All The Man from Madras Musings has been hearing about ever since he got Home is the match he missed and the crowd at that match. It's been a long time since MMM missed an international in Madras, but an occasional miss is inevitable, as even Sachin Tendulkar will admit. What should not be inevitable, but which is becoming just that, is what might be called 'The Case of the Missing Tickets'.

The stadium capacity for the recently-concluded match, MMM is told, was 40,000. Of the tickets for these, 10,000 were sold to the public in less than a day. Clubs that are members of the TNCA and those clubs to which it is obligated for

the contributions they have made, like the Madras Race Club, accounted for a further 10-15,000 tickets. Fair enough, the clubs being the backbone of an association committed to promoting cricket. The great mystery, however, is what happened to the remaining 15-20,000 tickets. And that is what several questions are being asked about.

There could very well be a perfectly good explanation, with the accounts one day revealing even the greater part of these as sold. But those accounts will also undoubtedly reveal an excessive number of complimentary tickets having been issued.

Given the state of affairs in India, complimentary undoubtedly have to be issued — to politicians past and present, Government officials and Police officials. But must more than two tickets be issued to any such dignitary? Can't the TNCA take a stand and announce publicly only two tickets to a dignitary? If it did that and kept its word, there'd be no more than 4-5000 tickets being issued in this category. But that would still leave about 10,000 more tickets for

sale to the public. It's the mystery of those 10,000 tickets that MMM hopes the TNCA's accounts and annual report will one day reveal.

In brief

★ Tamil Nadu's population of 55.5 million was projected to grow to 70 million in 2011, according to demographers. The Man from Madras Musings had spoken with at different times during the last ten years. They also felt that that figure might even be LESS, considering the success Tamil Nadu has had with family planning. MMM, however, was shocked to hear the Minister for Housing state in the House recently that the figure for 2011 is expected to be 73.2 million. Has there been a mistake or has family welfare success rates begun to diminish? If they have, then the situation needs to be viewed with some alarm. The urban growth prediction, of a 2011 population that would be DOUBLE the present 19 million, is cause for even more concern. Demographers MMM had spoken to in the past predicted 30 million urban dwellers by 2011, quite a bit lower than the 38-40 million being now predicted. Not only need Family Welfare measures be pushed harder than ever, but urban planning must also be looked at more closely on a priority basis, it would seem to MMM.

★ Iggri Resorts' plans to open international class motels every 100 km along Tamil Nadu's main highways, have got off to a quiet start with one opening up near Sriperumbudur and two more partially opening up near Krishnagiri, on the Ranipet road, and near Kayathar on the Madurai-Kanniyakumari national highway. The Man from Madras Musings hears that these three plus twelve more will be fully operational in stages within the next year or so. Highway users will have pleasant driving to look forward to on Tamil Nadu's highways when that happens.

★ A recent study *The Man From Madras Musings* came across reports that Chennai's 55 hotels, 28 of which are in the star category, offer 4632 rooms. But the demand in five years' time is expected to be 6820 rooms. Of the 2188 rooms that will be required, 17 projects underway will offer 1678 rooms by then. Other new projects will quickly have to get off the ground if this demand, mostly in the five-star sector, is to be met. The latest project MMM has been told about is Accor Asia Pacific's anticipated tie-up with Le Meridien to set up a Novotel in the latter's Guindy plot. Accor, MMM hears, has valued the 13-acre Mount Road site at Rs.125 crore.

★ One of Dr. M S Swaminathan's minor crusades is to get the names of a couple of minor millets changed. The Man from Madras Musings has heard him repeatedly wonder why we should refer to these nutritious foods as 'coarse grains'. He also keeps pointing a finger at our calling some of the pulses CHICK peas (Bengal gram) and PIGEON peas (Toor dhal), following Western countries which think they are fit only for livestock. These are among the most nutritious grains and pulses in the world, he points out, urging that they be renamed, to reflect their nutritive qualities, and their cultivation encouraged.

Business briefs

★ Surprise of surprises. The Man from Madras Musings has found only four business organisations in Tamil Nadu among the top ten companies in the South, based on their 1996 turnover. And Madras Refineries, Ashok Leyland, SPIC and NLC are headed by Cochin Refineries in Kerala and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam in Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu's own top ten include India Cements, NEPC-Micon, EID Parry (India), Tube Investments, TVS Suzuki and Lakshmi Machine Works, in that order.

★ Iggri Resorts' plans to open international class motels every 100 km along Tamil Nadu's main highways, have got off to a quiet start with one opening up near Sriperumbudur and two more partially opening up near Krishnagiri, on the Ranipet road, and near Kayathar on the Madurai-Kanniyakumari national highway. The Man from Madras Musings hears that these three plus twelve more will be fully operational in stages within the next year or so. Highway users will have pleasant driving to look forward to on Tamil Nadu's highways when that happens.

MMM

Socrates reconvinced

The story of the suicide of a schoolboy who had failed the S.S.L.C. examination makes sad reading (MM, May 16). Any such act, particularly in the prime of life, must be a source of anguish to everyone concerned. But from the major premise of suicide due to a student's failure in an examination to the conclusion that the whole system should be abolished is hardly a logical process.

Persons of high talent, even those of genius, have been dropouts from school or college, but they didn't choose to end their lives. Winston Churchill did badly at Harrow and his father had to put him in Sandhurst. Churchill's reply to his father was quite resourceful: "They asked me questions, answers to which I didn't know; on the contrary, they didn't ask me the questions answers to which I happened to know". Srinivasa Ramanujan failed not only in English but in Tamil as well (in the Intermediate class), though he scored hundred per cent in mathematics. But neither of them committed suicide.

It is for parents to understand and reassure their children that they should not give way to despair, after doing their best. Failures could be stepping stones to success.

The argument that Tamil children should not be asked questions relating to Shakespeare (in the English paper, mind you, not the Tamil paper) is not convincing. It is not even plausible, but misleading. Even fifty or sixty years ago (since the days of Provincial Autonomy in 1937), we had the regional language medium in District Board schools. I studied most of the subjects in Telugu (except for English and the optionals).

Whether the medium of instruction was Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam or whatever the language, the paper on English would be in English and deal with English authors, including Shakespeare, at that (i.e. school) level. SSLC boys would not be expected to discuss the theories of Shakespearean scholars and writers, but they would certainly be expected to know the outlines of the story and identify the characters. Mary and Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* helped considerably.

It is not a question of Tamil, Telugu or any other regional language spoken by the parents of a student that should be a decisive factor in drafting the syllabus of a language chosen for study at school. He who studies German as a language ought to know something about

Goethe, Schiller etc and about Balzac and Racine for French, Pushkin and Tolstoy for Russian etc.. Shouldn't a Tamil child know something of the Indian greats like Tagore and Premchand, even of Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa?

As for the question on Socrates, the question mentioned was there probably because it had something to do with the English paper directly or indirectly. But is it necessary to suggest or imply that only Greek children should know of Socrates (Plato and Aristotle) and not our children? Socrates is mentioned in school lessons not as a part of classical Greek literature and philosophy but as a symbol of the honesty and courage of man, of one who was ready to die for his convictions rather than compromise with his principles. He need not be 'Greek and Latin' to modern children who enjoy a lot more facilities for tapping new sources of knowledge than their predecessors.

The idea of abolishing the examination system altogether reminds me of a saying of GK Chesterton that cutting off the head is not the best way of curing a headache. There might be a case for reforming the system by simplifying the complexity, or relaxing the rigidity, by allowing the candidates to refer to their textbooks and giving such other concessions. But we need not jump to hasty conclusions or play to the gallery.

D. Anjaneyulu

"Saketa",
14 Mandavalli Street,
Chennai 600 028.



'Love letters'

Your tips from the Calcutta Police (MM, May 16) strike me as carrying coal to Newcastle.

The practice of issuing 'complaint cards' is nothing new. As D.C. Traffic, Madras City, in the Sixties, I had a set of cards called by some as 'love letters'. They were traffic violation notices pointing out the time, place and violation committed — mostly serious violations affecting the safety of the road user. In it was also included a 'request' to produce the car and driver at 10 a.m. on a fixed day at the Traffic Office, failing which prosecution would be initiated. The DC Traffic and Licensing or anybody deputed by him would hear the violator and issue an oral warning and let him off. The very fact of having to come with the car during office hours had a deterrent effect on chronically erring drivers, most of whom

I have a dream...

I have a dream that the streets are clean,
No garbage seen anywhere,
That the beach is rid of ice cream cups,
Coke cans and paper.

I have a dream that girls can travel anywhere,
Without fear ... of being teased, abused
Or worse.

I have a dream that people follow traffic rules,
No overtaking, right and left,
No hogging, no jostling,
No tempers frayed!

I have a dream that telephones will work,
Lights and fans will burn and turn,
And there is enough water for one and all.

I have a dream that auto drivers
Take you where you want to go,
Without excess fare.

I have a dream that one day I can say,
"I am proud to be
a Madrasi or Chennaivasi ..."
One of these days ... May be !!!

U.S.

Some suggestions for the Mayor

Here are a few suggestions to the Mayor of Chennai. Would His Worship please consider them?

On garbage removal: Send a few people to see how they have recently cleared the garbage in Calcutta. If it has been possible to clean up that city, it can be done anywhere!

In Madras, we do see the garbage removal trucks, but it is almost always in the busy morning hours, when they effectively block traffic as well as blow noxious fumes and bits of flying garbage into the faces of passers-by! Surely this can be remedied by collecting the garbage in the early hours of the morning. It would also be more effective to have the garbage collected in covered bags or containers.

Vendors of foodstuffs should be given garbage disposal bags and penalised if the area is not left clean every day.

On the maintenance of beaches (Marina as well as Elliot's Beach): The play equipment is corroded. Its jagged

edges could well cause serious injury to users. The beach has its own natural play material in the form of sand, water and sea shells. Generations of children have enjoyed the unique pleasures of building sand castles and playing improvised games with shells. The wide open space lends itself to different games. Why not encourage this? The Corporation can use its funds for the maintenance of the beach rather than wasting it on such equipment which is easily corroded by the sea air. Perhaps these can be provided in smaller park areas in the city where the advantages of the beach are not found. But even there, they should be of material which will not easily corrode.

On road works: Whenever the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, Metrowater or Madras Telephones needs to dig up roads for their repair work, it should be co-ordinated with a special unit created for the relaying of roads. This unit should be independent

and have people who are expert in the relaying of roads. When the work taken up by, say TNEB, is completed, it should hand over the filling up and relaying to this special unit and pay it for the work. This way, the authorities responsible will be more judicious about digging up roads. Ideally, all these units should co-ordinate with each other so that a road is not dug up days after it has been tarred and smoothened.

It would also be most effective if such road repair work is taken up at night. The workers should be suitably compensated for working nights.

On Corporation workers: They should be made to feel that they are respected members of the metropolis and that their contribution towards keeping the city clean and beautiful is valued. This will help motivate them to do what most people consider a dreary and demeaning job.

Uma Shanker
A1/4/4, 3rd Main Road
Besant Nagar
Chennai 600 090

All together

On reading this news item in *The Hindu*, I was wondering why the Madras University couldn't follow suit and raise funds for the restoration of *Senate House*, a heritage building worth preserving.

"Mumbai University is hopeful of collecting Rs.2.75 crores with contributions of just Rs.100 from its alumni scattered all over the country for repair and restoration of its magnificent buildings in the fort campus.

The Vice Chancellor has declared a separate account for receiving contributions and 'we are confident that alumni, clerks and peons in various offices will not hesitate to donate Rs.100 at least'.

It is proposed to restore, among other edifices, the 288 ft Rajabai clock tower dating to 1874."

The other day I happened to go to the Public Relations Office at the University which is in *Senate House*. What a sorry impression this image-building office creates. The Main Hall is worse. The walls could surely be brightened with at least a coat of lime wash to make the atmosphere more cheerful.

Anna K Varki
"Aalil", 9 Central St., Kilpauk
Garden Colony, Chennai 600 010.

Dog menace

Chinnmaya Nagar, Sri Aiyappa Nagar, Chennai 92, is once again dog-infested after a ridding of them some time ago. Recently I saw the ghastly sight of streetdogs chasing two boys riding a cycle. The boys got mauled by the dogs and ran away abandoning the cycle.

Will the civic authority please rid the menace permanently?

J. Krishnamurthy
76 1 Main Road, Sri Iyappa Nagar,
Chennai 600 092.

Too parochial?

I'm beginning to wonder. *Madras Musings*? Is this perhaps too parochial a title for our modest little journal? Are we only addressing the affairs of Madras, or is our interest rather more widespread? I know of readers in the U.K. and two or three in the U.S.A., but it came as a surprise recently to learn that we have one also as far away as Australia.

This turned out to be Eric Stracey, formerly Inspector-General of Tamil Nadu's police, when that title was the highest rank in the force, long before we started to have Additional Inspectors-General, then when there became too many of them, a Director-General, and now more than one Director-General. Eric read my satirical account (MM, April 1) of how some bogus institute was trying to convince me — for a substantial fee — that I had been named 'Man of the Year' for 1997.

Of Straceys and Straceys...

Eric's letter also speaks of an aristocratic family of Straceys, some of them even associated with Madras, though his own family were NOT remotely related to them. Among the servants of the old East India Company, he tells us, there was an Edward Stracey, son of Sir John Stracey, Recorder of London, whose wife was a Hardinge and who died of 'jail fever' (typhoid? Prince Albert, Consort of Queen Victoria, died of that terrible disease — H.M.) caught when trying prisoners at Highgate (the notorious London prison). Edwards came to Madras as a writer in 1759 at the age of 18 and rose to be a Member of the Council, Fort St. George, after serving as a Junior Merchant, Registrar of the Choultry and Persian Translator to the Company.

In this last capacity he attested Haider Ali's signature to the Treaty of Madras that ended in the First Mysore War in 1769. He married Elizabeth (nee Latham), the young widow of a Company colleague, John Williamson, at St. Mary's Church in the Fort in 1766 and had five sons, all apparently born in Madras. Three of them succeeded to the title of their father who was made First Baronet of Rackheath Hall, Norfolk, in 1818, many years after his return to England in 1776. He later became High Sheriff of Norfolk in 1785 and died in 1829.

Even Australia's heard of my 'Man of the Year'

That article provoked an astonishingly wide response from many readers of *Madras Musings*, including some as eminent as the great M.S. Swaminathan of Green Revolution fame, for it seemed just as I predicted in the article that I was by no means the only 'Man of the Year' for 1997, and the whole thing smelled as I suspected from the first. It also appears that the source from where my nomination of 'Man of the Year' came is by no means the only one. There are several. One of them has an address in the English University town of Cambridge, and who could resist a diploma on the wall bearing so revered a name! And there are others, and other variations on the theme too. It

**One Man's
Madras —
HARRY
MILLER'S**

seems to amount to a worldwide commercial venture aimed at the gullible, and Eric Stracey's letter reveals another almost unbelievable aspect of it. His letter is worth quoting at some length. He writes:

"I myself was the target of a similar appeal which, in exchange for a substantial sum in Sterling, promised to send me *The Burke's Peerage World Book of Straceys!* The literature was attractive and cleverly devised and would have been a nice play had I been susceptible to that kind of lure. But my ex-police nose apart, I fortunately lacked the yen for status of that sort, not to speak of any yen of the other sort that I could afford to part with... But a Stracey relative in England took the bait and in exchange for money was sent the equivalent of extracts from phone directories of almost every ordinary Stracey living. But not a peer among them!"

A word of explanation here. There is a justly famous and authentic work of reference known as *Burke's Peerage*, which does in fact give every hereditary detail of all aristocratic British families from the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. The late Cyril Cayley of the Madras Club, who died several years ago, was among them, a genuine British aristocrat. After his death we found among his papers documents from *Burke's* showing that his earliest ancestor was a Cyril de Cayley who served Henry I in 1100. Our Cayley, however, was the sort of gentleman who would never mention such a thing, and it was not until after his death that I or any of his friends knew of his distinguished ancestry.

Meanwhile, these 'Man of the Year' people have had another go at me! Obviously they are not on *Madras Musings'* mailing list.

This time it seems that "due to my influential position in society", I am being asked to accept their nomination and become a member of the American Biographical Institute Inc's, RESEARCH BOARD OF ADVISERS. Well I never! After so many other honours thrust upon me! Mind you, the invitation comes with the warning, printed in a single line of very large heavy black letters, that 'ELIGIBILITY EXPRESS 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE ABOVE'. I do hope I have not disappointed them, but, fool that I am, I quite forgot about it

Eric concludes, "I must again state that I make NO claim to kinship with this family. My own beginnings were more humble and stem from an Anglo-Indian family of Madras who made their living as jewelers, silversmiths and engravers on Mount Road and Popham's Broadway about the middle of the last century."

(Continued on page 8)

TIDCO backs pleasure and lights

Two 100% export-oriented projects promoted by the Tamil Nadu Industries Development Corporation Ltd (TIDCO) in the associate sector (11% equity stakes) are fast coming up in Chennai. According to S Bagavathy, General Manager (Projects), TIDCO, "both are novel ventures". One is for the manufacture of condoms, the other to produce metal halide lamps.

But what is special about the condom project? What is different about it from all those value-additions, like making the sheath thinner, colouring it, flavouring it, adding odour to it,

sue. ICICI is assisting the project by extending a Rs. 1.2 crore term loan.

The other TIDCO project, the first of its kind in India, is the Rs. 27-crore metal halide project of Asian Lighting Resources India Ltd (ALRIL), a joint venture between two US-based firms, Axes Technologies Inc and Advanced Lighting Resources Inc (ADLR). This is coming up in the Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) and hopes to manufacture 4 lakh lamps a year.

Axes Technologies, founded by Paul Pandian, an Annamalai University alumnus and a US-



ribbing or dotting it, providing a reservoir tip to it, adding spermicidal lubricants to it or even introducing a glow-in-the-dark element?

In 1991, a Stanley Medical College alumnus, Dr A V K Reddy, now chairman of Reddy Medtech Health Products Ltd and a US-based NRI, patented a differently designed male contraceptive, 'Pleasure Plus'. He has also patented a female protective he calls the 'Bikini Condom'.

According to Dr Reddy, test marketing of one million pieces of 'Pleasure Plus', after they were contract-manufactured in Thailand, showed they were a big hit in several parts of the US. The reason was the condom's design.

The USFDA-approved 'Pleasure Plus' is a normal sheath except for a small pouch of latex with rolling folds at the under side of the closed end. The pouch's movements while in use provide pleasurable sensations to the users, Dr Reddy states.

Though 25% of the production could be sold in the domestic tariff area, Dr Reddy plans to export his entire production (200 million pieces a year) for the next four years to the USA, the CIS, African countries and the Philippines.

The Rs. 27-crore project at Mevallurkuppam, Chengai MGR District, is expected to go on stream next month. While Reddy and his associates will invest about Rs.6.8 crore as equity, TIDCO will put in Rs. 1.6 crore and Rs. 7.2 crore is planned to be mopped up from the public through an equity is-

The birds of industry!

An industrial estate as a bird habitat? And why not? Simpson Estate, about 2 km from Perambur Railway Station, is showing the way.

The Amalgamations Group's sprawling, green campus is a breeding habitat for wetland birds on the east coast.

This unique sanctuary, midst factories, started in a small way when about 50-60 Black Crowned Night Heron colonised the trees at the southeastern corner of the estate. This happened during the northeast monsoon in the early Sixties. Everyone on the Estate has welcomed the birds since. In the early Eighties, hundreds of wetland birds, like Little Cormorants, Shag Cormorants and Egrets, colonised the habitat. And brought more joy to watchers.

The estate has about 10,000 large trees and numerous ornamental plants, exotic shrubs and well-laid out gardens, providing visitors an ideal spot for bird-watching. You can smell the bird droppings and see the telltale marks on the well-maintained road. Not even the brand new tractors parked under the trees are spared the splashes of white.

The tree canopy includes native and exotic trees, such as Tamarind, which incidentally hold more nests, Delnoix regia, Casuarina, Pongamia, Nuna and Albizia. Trees are also grown in the Social Forestry area of the compound.

The uniqueness of this habitat is that wetland birds breed here throughout the year. The first cycle is from June to September, during the southwest monsoon, and the second cycle is in November-December during the Northeast monsoon. The bird population has been increasing over the years. The first breeding cycle witnesses about 600 birds' nests and 350 pairs breed. The last Southwest

Monsoon saw about 1100 pairs breeding, higher than during any previous season. About 20,000 birds roost and 2000 pairs breed throughout the year, says the ornithologist Guruswamy, who also keeps records and statistics of the birds and has an eagle eye for any new bird that visits the sanctuary for the first time.

The lily pond inside the estate holds eight to nine feet of water during the monsoon season. It entertains native fish,



Birds coming home to roost. (Photograph courtesy Simpson Estate.)



Welcoming breeders! (Photographs by author.)

northern latitudes and Central Europe. Some rare birds, like the Red-winged Crested Cuckoo and the Penisular Scops Owl, have also been spotted on the campus.



The nests and the nest-builders in Simpson's 'sanctuary'

Snakes are also part of the ecosystem at Simpson Estate, where no one is allowed to harm any free, living animal. There are also birds of prey, like the Brahmin Kite, Srika and Booted Eagle, which attack juvenile birds. Mongoose too frequently attack birds and snakes, but none can qualify as a serious predator, says Guruswamy. Crows, however, are serious pests, which harass the birds, steal eggs, compete with young birds, and scavenge under the trees for food dropped from the nestings. Treating the injured wetland birds is not easy, as they require special care, says Gurumurthy. Most injured birds die because they suffer head injuries when they fall from nests. Others are taken by predators or crows.

The heronry tree canopy in the estate is vital for the Night Herons, Large Egrets and Cormorants to rest and nest. The birds are well-protected and they have adapted to carry on their seasonal activities amidst the industrial activity the Estate is meant for. The gathering of fruit and other products from the trees is strictly prohibited. Only biofertilisers, like leaf humus and biocides, are used. Synthetic fertilisers and pesticides are not used, says Estate Manager P Shivaramamurthy.

The birds feed at the nearby Chembarambakkam Reservoir, Retteri, Red Hills and the Madhavaram and Manali Lakes. The estate has been recognised as an important wetland bird-breeding habitat and is earmarked for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Birds Habitat. A Krishnamoorthy, the Vice-Chairman of the Amalgamation Group, is a staunch supporter of the sanctuary.

by
**Rajind N
Christy**

Spotted Deer are also bred in captivity and there are about 40 tended carefully here.

Bird watchers are allowed to visit. The ideal time to spot the birds is in the evening, when they return to roost in large numbers.

Not even the noise of the bustling city and industrialisation seems to deter these wetland birds in the estate, which is, indeed, a splendid example of the coexistence of Industry and Eco-systems, a model for other industrial campuses to follow.

A deer park under development... and a lily pond waiting to bloom



The founder of Cinema South

He was a founding father of Cinema in South India. He established the first talkie studio in Madras in 1934. He was A Narayanan; his Srinivasa Cinetone Studio (also known as 'Sound City') was situated on a sprawling stretch of land on Poonamallee High Road, opposite the present Nehru Park. Its front gate was on Lauder's Gate Road in Vepery, the rear gate on Flower's Road. It was the first studio in Madras to have facilities for the recording of sound. Before it, producers had been compelled to go to Bombay, Calcutta, Kolhapur and Poona to make sound pictures.

The dynamic Narayanan was a prolific producer and director. Possessing considerable vision and organisational skills, he let no hurdles retard his progress. In the movie business since the 1920s, he was an active 'silent' film-maker and made the transition to the sound era with the smoothness of a "lap dissolve".

* * *

Ananthanarayanan Narayanan, born in 1900, belonged to the zamindari town of Sivaganga in the deep south. After graduating from famed Presidency College, Madras, he tried a variety of jobs — insurance salesman, bank clerk, and travelling representative for a Bombay-based film company. And it was, thus, that he came into the film business and founded a business of his own, 'Exhibitor Film Services'. He supplied Indian and foreign films to cinema houses in South India and elsewhere. He also took cinema houses on lease in Madras, Madurai and Calicut.

As a representative of the Indian film pioneer Ardeshir Irani he took a print of Irani's silent film *Anarkali* and went West to hawk it. He stayed in Hollywood for some time, establishing contact and making friends with legendary figures of cinema like Cecil B De Mille, Robert Flaherty, John Barrymore, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Later, when the 'Great Profile' and marquee idol of his day, John Barrymore, was afflicted with severe arthritis, Narayanan persuaded him to come to Madras and made arrangements for the Hollywood star to be treated under a

famous Ayurvedic *vaidhyar* in Kerala.

Narayanan joined hands with the pioneer film-maker Raghupathi Prakash when that foreign-trained film-maker launched his first silent film, *Bhisma Prayagna* (1922), at the Star Of The East Glass Studio in Purasawalkam. This pioneering studio was situated behind Roxy Theatre, which was owned by Prakash and his father Raghupathi Venkaiah, who brought movies to Madras. Besides working on the creative side, Narayanan also played the role of Lord Krishna.

When Prakash ran into problems with both his studio and productions, Narayanan thought it prudent to take off on his own. Then, in 1929, he invited Prakash to join him! Setting up a studio of his own in Tondiarpet, Narayanan steadily made silent films there. The long list of his silent films included *Dharma Patni*, *Gnana Soundari*, *Gajendra Moksham*, *Kovalan*, *Garuda Garvabhangam*, *Sarangadhara*, *Pavalakodi*, *Rose of Rajasthan*, *Leila* and *The Star of Mingalia*, directed by R Prakash. This last film sizzled with sex and, not surprisingly, was a box-office bonanza not only in India but also in Ceylon, Burma and other neighbouring countries. Regretfully, not even a trace of these silent films remains, not even a few frames.

COOKING with Chandra

The king of all peppers. Serve it as a gravy for *rotis* or rice or make a dry curry. The Capsicum Rice has an aroma that's hard to resist. The crisp *bajjis* are, of course, just yummy.

KAIRAS

1/4 kg capsicum
1/2 cup raw peanuts, pressure cooked
2 tbs grated jaggery
Salt to taste

Ground paste

3 tbs grated coconut
2 tsp coriander seeds
1 tsp Bengal gram dhal
4 red chillies
2 tsp white sesame seeds
1/2 tsp asafoetida powder
Marble-sized tamarind
2 tsp oil

For tempering

2 tsp oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1/2 tsp cumin seeds
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

Method

Heat oil and fry all the ingredients for the paste, except the tamarind. Grind to a paste, add-

The well-read Narayanan realised that the new medium that was cinema could be a tool to effect changes in society, that it could be used to educate and enlighten the masses. He showed great foresight in thinking on these lines and, sixty years ago, made *Dharma Patni*. It was a film which highlighted the ruinous effect of drinking and the impact drink had on the family. It was one of the earliest films made in South India advocating Prohibition.

Movies began to talk Tamil in 1931 with H M Reddi's *Kalidas*. Narayanan was anxious to follow suit, but was not for going outside Madras to make talking pictures. With characteristic drive and pioneering spirit, he established the sound studio he named after his son Sreenivas. Inspired by his visit to Universal City in Hollywood, he gave his studio its other name, 'Sound City'.

His maiden talkie was *Srinivasa Kalyanam* (1934). To choose his cast he had a 'Wanted Actors' board exhibited at the Crown Cinema on Mint Street, which was then owned by Raghupathi Venkaiah. The unusual board attracted considerable attention and many passers-by, mostly males, called on Narayanan, the stardust in their eyes!

Srinivasa Kalyanam had in the lead roles the popular star

ing the tamarind and a little water. Set aside.

Heat oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add the chopped capsicum and a little water. Cover and simmer till the vegetable is tender. Set aside.

Add one cup of water to the ground paste and bring to a boil. Add the grated jaggery, cooked peanuts, salt and the cooked capsicum. Simmer till well blended. Serve with rice or *rotis*.

KUDAMULAGAI SADAM

4 capsicum, chopped fine
1 cup shelled peas
2 small brinjal, chopped fine
1/2 tsp turmeric powder
Marble-sized tamarind
1 cup good quality rice
Salt to taste

Ground paste

2 tsp oil
2 tbs coriander seeds
2 tbs blackgram dhal
3 tbs Bengal gram dhal
1/2 tsp asafoetida powder
5 red chillies

For tempering

3 tbs oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp blackgram dhal
1 tsp Bengal gram dhal
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

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

of the day, P S Srinivasa Rao, and as heroine R B Lakshmi Devi, a fashionable, vivacious Westernised woman who is, happily, still with us.

Like most producers of the day (and even today), Narayanan was not financially strong and had to raise funds from every source, big or small. One of his financiers was a Brahmin businessman who later entered films and carved a niche for himself as a leading film-maker. His name was S Soundararajan and his unit, Tamil Nadu Talkies, was a famed company in its day. (An old-timer once told this writer how Narayanan always asked him for the precise sum of Rs.12. When he wondered what the significance was of that figure, the pioneer filmmaker explained it was the price of a 1,000-foot roll of sound-negative film!)

Under the Srinivasa Cinetone banner Narayanan produced in quick succession several talking pictures ... *Rajambal*, *Tara Sasankan*, *Vipranarayana*, *Porveeranin Manaiivi* and many others.

Narayanan was also a pioneer in documentary film-making. A patriot and a member of the Indian National Congress Party, he was close to leaders like S Satyamurti. He made a film on the Gauhati Congress Session of 1927, held under the presidentship of the legal giant

and Congress leader S Srinivasa Iyengar. He also made documentaries on maternity and child welfare, agriculture, and venereal diseases. He also had the distinction of making one of the earliest ad films in Madras — to promote Dodge cars.

A significant development introduced by Narayanan was to get his wife Meenakshi Narayanan to work with him — as a sound recordist. Brahmin women of that time, especially married ones, hardly stirred out of their secure homes and were not expected to work. But thanks to her husband's progressive views, Meenakshi broke tradition and taboos and created history as the first woman sound-recordist in India, perhaps in the world. An earth-shaking event for its day!

Regretfully, Narayanan was addicted to the bottle and, sadly, he died in 1939. He was only 39.

Method
Pressure cook the rice and set aside to cool on a platter.
Heat oil and fry all the ingredients for the paste. Grind to a paste adding the tamarind and a little water.

Heat oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add the chopped capsicum, brinjal, peas and a little water and cook covered on low heat till done.

Add the ground paste, turmeric powder and salt. Fry for a few minutes. Add the rice and blend till well mixed.
Serve hot or at room temperature with potato wafers or fried *papads*.

CAPSICUM & POTATO PORIYAL

1/2 kg capsicum, chopped into 1/2" pieces
1/2 kg potatoes, boiled, peeled and chopped into 1/2" pieces
1/2 tsp turmeric powder
4 tbs grated coconut
Salt to taste

For tempering

2 tsp oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp blackgram dhal
1/2 tsp asafoetida powder
1 red chilli, halved
A few curry leaves

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Regretfully, Narayanan was addicted to the bottle and, sadly, he died in 1939. He was only 39.

Method
Heat oil and add all the ingredients for tempering. When the mustard seeds splutter, add the chopped capsicum, turmeric powder, salt and a little water. Cover and simmer till the vegetable is partially done.

Add the chopped potatoes and salt. Cook on low heat till blended.
Add the grated coconut and mix well. Serve hot.

CAPSICUM BAJJI
4 capsicum, chopped into 1" pieces
1 cup Bengal gram flour (*besan*)
1 1/2 tbs rice flour or leftover sour *dosai* batter.

1/2 tsp cumin seeds
1/2 tsp coriander seeds powder
1/2 tsp asafoetida powder
Salt and red chilli powder to taste
Oil for deep frying.

Method
Mix *besan*, rice flour, cumin seeds, coriander seeds powder, asafoetida powder, salt and chilli powder.
Add sufficient water and beat until smooth to make a thick batter of pouring consistency.

Heat oil in a frying pan, dip the capsicum pieces in the batter and deep fry till golden.
Serve hot with tomato ketchup or a coconut chutney.

Chandra Padmanabhan

Architectural grandeur

Pierre Pichard of the French School of Far Eastern Studies at Pondicherry has made a truly monumental study* of the architectural beauty of the Thanjavur Brihadisvara. The book notes these features among several others.

The great temple at Thanjavur, dedicated to Siva as Bri-

• by A. Ranganathan

hadisvara in the form of a huge lingam, was consecrated by Rajaraja Chola on the 275th day of the 25th year of his reign in 1010 A.D. The architectural grandeur of this temple, also known as Rajarajeshvaram, cannot be merely ascribed to its size. In fact, it is derived from an architectural balance of forces between the main structure, which is 180 feet long, and the superbly beautiful pyramidal tower, which rises to a height of 190 feet. Again, this balance is sustained by the component parts of the pyramidal tower of the *vimana*. For the square base imparts dignity to the 13-storied tapering body which, in turn, is set off against the graceful domical finial.

An impressive gateway, dominated by a *gopuram*, is in the East and leads to the outer court and, through a more impressive second gateway, into the main court of the temple. This court, paved with brick and stones, is 500 feet long and 250 feet broad. The main shrine of Brihadisvara is situated at the western end of the main court. Behind the main temple is a shrine dedicated to Karuvur Devar, who assisted Rajaraja Chola greatly in installing the image of Brihadisvara in the sanctum.

The bronze Nataraja, in a separate shrine to the north of the Nandi, is one of the greatest sculptural masterpieces of all time. For this haunting fixture reflects the artistic idiom of the Chola age. Truly, it can be said of this Nataraja what was said of the Zeus of Phidias, that all sorrow and misfortune are forgotten when standing before it. The beauty of this form in the Ananda Tandava pose, with its exquisite equilibrium of pattern and of movement, of infinite energy and of infinite repose, has again and again inspired poetry in the minds of the poets and artists who have reflected on it. Indeed, the leap of the dancer calls for not only a leap from illusion into understanding in the philosophical sense, but also a leap of the historical

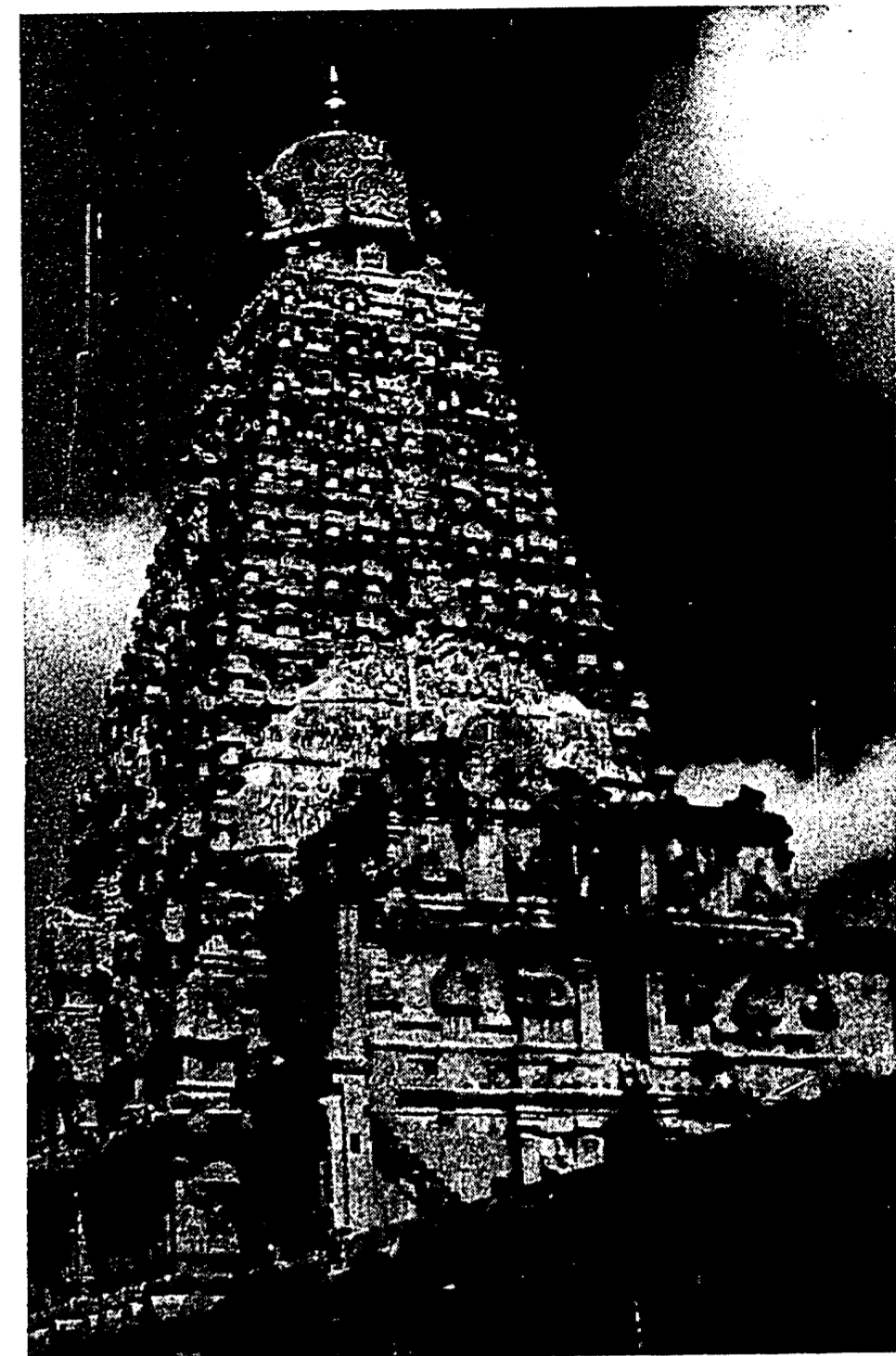
imagination from the 'Samhara Tandava' into the 'Ananda Tandava'.

In addition to the axial structures, such as the *vimana*, the *ardhamandapa*, the *mahamandapa* and the big *nandi*, there are several small shrines within the courtyard of the temple.

No account of the Chola ambience in Thanjavur can be complete without referring to the unfinished symphonies at Brihadisvara and Gangaikondacholapuram at different levels of aesthetic perception. For instance, the unique *bas relief* figures of Siva carved on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum illustrate the dance *karanas* which are formulated in the fourth

chapter of Bharata's *Natya Sastra*. Unfortunately, however, there are only 81 *karanas*, beginning with the *Talapushpaphuta*, or the flower-like gesture, and ending with the *Sarjitam*, or the serpentine movement. The remaining 27 *karanas* have not been completed. This unfinished symphony of Rajaraja Chola is one of the unsolved mysteries of Indian history. Similarly, the unfinished structure of Rajendra Chola's Gangaikondacholapuram, which has also been studied in depth by Pierre Pichard, is yet another unsolved problem of Indian history.

**Thanjavur Brihadisvara* — An Architectural Study by Pierre Pichard. English edition by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, and the Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry. 244 pages. 1995



The beautiful *vimanam* of the Brihadisvara Temple, Thanjavur, whose *kumbhabhishekam* was recently celebrated. (Photograph by S. Anwar.)

Debating our secularism

Sun TV has this exciting 'Nerukku Ner' (face to face) series with several controversial people appearing on it. When Sun was the 'opposition TV', it was more interesting to watch this serial, with Ravi Bernard not sparing anyone. Remember those exciting days of the Subramanian Swamy interview? Veerapandian, who has replaced Ravi Bernard, who has switched loyalties to the rival Vijay TV channel, is quite an incisive interviewer too. He does his homework well and gives his interviewees a hard time.

Veerapandian's interview with the Hindu Munnani leader Ramagopalan cited Saudi Arabia for its intolerance of Hindus but made no mention at all of countries like Malaysia and Indonesia which have nurtured large Hindu populations.

Veerapandian, on the other hand, was unhappy with Muslims for their adherence to the *Shariat* and taking four wives, but he did not talk about Hindu attitudes to Dalits. It was a war of words and very necessary too. But both were unconvincing in their replies.

Malaysian tribute

From Malaysia comes a huge contingent of Indians belonging to the Shivanjali Trust and the Temple of Fine Arts. The Trust runs the Annalakshmi restaurants in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Sydney, Penang and Chennai. It also



Kalairani as Nandanar

runs a dance school. The Trust and its religious head have done very well in an Islamic country and its following keeps growing. Every year, the Swami choreographs a mega production and brings it to India. Last year it was the *Ramayana*, in all its colour, and this year it has been *Taj Mahal*, the story of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal in all its extravaganza.

The production seemed like a tribute to the country of their adoption and its official religion, Islam; there was even a *namaz* thrown in. It was the high-tech lighting, good sound and the devotion of the participants that were the winners. The cinematic overtones and the effects, the light music, the gaudy dresses were the drawbacks, I felt. The show was on for a week at the Kamaraj Hall and it was house full every day!

The Hindus of Malaysia live in a predominantly Muslim country that tolerates their religious pursuits. I wonder why Veerapandian did not take up Ramagopalan on this issue.

When an Islamic country can give all these facilities for Hindus, why not a secular country like ours to Muslims? But then, Ramagopalan's point of view about the Vinayaka idol procession through Triplicane was worth pondering over. He wanted to know why the Muslims in the area did not extend an invitation to the procession, and themselves assure its safety. Why not indeed? That we are a secular nation is the truth and that we must respect each other is a necessity. This is the feeling that came through in the Temple of Arts presentation of *Taj Mahal*.

Moving solo

Kalairani of Koothupattarai has been presenting a solo contemporary theatre piece called *Nandanar* and been winning accolades. She presented one performance at the Bhuvara Arangam of the Brihadhavanani Music Research Centre, which is an intimate space for small programmes. Brihadhava-

vani also plans to present several face to face programmes, where performers will be able to share the joy and agony of their artworks with stalwarts, and where young creative people will get space to display their work.

Kalairani's piece is from Gopalakrishna Bharathi's *Nandanar Charitham* 'Varugalamo', which is sung as a classical song and danced as a moving *padam* by Bharata Natyam dancers. Kalairani has converted this into a moving piece of theatre, which speaks of the personal agony at not having a choice and not having the right and freedom to do things of one's own choice. It has turned out to be a classic piece. She performed it for the first time at Protima Bedi's 'Nrityagram' in Bangalore at the instance of Anita Ratnam. Audiences all over India have now seen Kalai use her voice and body movement in a skillful and touching manner.

V.R. Devika

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On Holiday

Quizmaster Ramanan is on holiday. You'll be back Quizzin' with him in a month. — THE EDITOR

Chepauk crowd a winner

Saeed Anwar's world record-breaking batting effort not only made for spectacular viewing, it brought out the best in the vast Chepauk crowd. After the tremendous ovation the Pakistani left-hander received on completing his hundred, on passing Viv Richards' 189 and on his return to the pavilion, the citizens of Chennai could be forgiven for walking around with heads held high. It was indeed a proud moment.

Local boy Robin Singh did himself proud, too. With reflexes and mobility that belie his 33 years, he was easily the best Indian fielder, his bowling was good sense personified, and his

little piece of trivia now that the State does not figure in the Indian XI except in the form of an erstwhile Trinidadian!

In a more serious vein, both Dravid and Singh displayed nerves of steel and the belief that even a target of 328 was attainable. If every other Indian cricketer were equally focussed, and not inhibited by fear of failure, there would be more Indian victories than the case at present.

The raging debate over Saeed Anwar being granted a runner has led to suggestions that the cricket laws be modified to ban runners in one-day cricket. Unless that is done, de-

My mother who is Sri Lankan and is (well if I put her age down in print she'd disown me) and who serves the rural poor with a zeal that makes Mother Teresa pale, has recently been caught up in the Pepsi Independence Cup. Mainly because ours is a democratic household and the majority voted to watch the cricket, despite my dislike of the game which once prompted an uncle of mine to gift my children with a bow and arrow set and me a T-shirt with a large target painted on the back.

While we sit in front of the TV set, I have from time to time

Chepauk. The spectators' wonderful behaviour was all the more praiseworthy considering the debilitating humidity and the overcrowding. The one jarring note was struck by foul-mouthed hecklers of Indian bowlers and fielders — some were rabid Pakihaters — who were seen in considerable numbers in the pavilion terrace enclosure. In the past, this enclosure was dominated by cricketers and those closely connected with the game, but increasingly now it is populated by partisans whose aggressive behaviour is fuelled by the hip flask that jeers. Some former state and zone cricketers were given tickets to stands on the other side of the stadium — I know for sure one outstanding batsman with a century against England under his belt who was so treated — while crude abuses were hurled from the pavilion terrace. The mildest epithet directed at Sunil Joshi, for instance, was 'dog'.

Money can't buy cricket knowledge or the sporting spirit and gentlemanly conduct (pavilion terrace tickets were Rs.2,000 apiece) nor can indiscriminate distribution of complimentary passes promote these attributes. Isn't it significant that the crowd in the lower-priced stands covered itself with glory with its splendid appreciation of the finer points of the game?

TOO PAROCHIAL?

(Continued from page 4)

in the excitement of receiving letters from Australia and those 60 days have long ago expired.

What are they up to this time? Well, it appears that I am in an excellent position to nominate those who, in my opinion, are worthy of public recognition 'in permanent book form'. There now, isn't that nice! And in return for nominating 250 such worthies, I will receive in appreciation the American Biographical Institute Inc's antique Silver Coin; moreover, if I am able to nominate double that number, I will be eligible for the Institute's an-

tique GOLD coin, though I can't help but wonder how these coins can be antique when they have been, as the Institute assures me, "custom designed for ABI Research Fellows by a reputable American craftsman". Perhaps he's an antique craftsman. That would make all the difference, wouldn't it? And why should I quibble about such a detail when the Silver — or Gold — Coin is a substantial 1½ inches in diameter and is carefully packaged in a case for safe keeping and will be shipped to me postage paid? On receipt of my nominations, of course.

So, you out there! Want to be nominated, do you? Like to help me get awarded one of those Silver/Gold hand-crafted antique American Biographic Institute's coins would you? Hurry up then, there may still be time! And be quick please, because the Institute warns me that "A limited number of these (antique?) coins will be struck this year", and that therefore I am urged to respond to this offer by the indicated date. Well, as I said, I've missed that, but no harm in trying, even so. After all, these American Biographical Institute chaps seem an awfully nice lot, don't they?

HOWZAAT!

to explain the intricacies of the game to her. For example, why the umpires signal 'bye' when they have no intention of going anywhere, why there are no women in the game despite Venkatesh Prasad 'bowling a maiden over' and why 'fielding in the slips' has nothing to do with voyeurism in underskirts.

She supports anyone who is batting well despite the country he represents. She can now tell the difference between a bouncer and a bumper (a bouncer is bowled by the wicked opposition who try to hurt our clean-cut Indian batsmen, while a bumper is bowled by our clean-cut Indian bowlers and is perfectly legal).

She tells me that back in Sri Lanka, village youths play the game using a poll pitha bat (the stem of a coconut branch) and kaduru balls (a hard, round fruit) and that she too played a game or two of cricket in her day. Often unrelated bits of information, prompted by a six from Jayasuriya, will pop out, like during the Sri Lankan-Pakistan match, she told me that Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, had dinner with my grandmother at our ancestral home in Panadura. What

prompted this tidbit is still a mystery!

I do hold back bits of information from her tho', like the time Australian umpire Darryl Hare no-balled Muralitharan for chucking (Murali was later cleared by the powers-that-be). Anyway, just before the World Cup, remember a joint Indo-Pakistan team went to Sri Lanka to play a one-dayer in a show of solidarity after Australia and the West Indies refused to play there? Well, one fan in the stands had a sign that read, 'With or without Hair, Murali's balls are fair'. I haven't told her this, tho' she's far from prudish. I just can't imagine how I'd explain a 'no ball' to her, especially when the ball is very much in sight!

She listens avidly to expert commentators like Ravi Shastri who come out with such words of wisdom as "Well, Sachin will want his team to score as many runs as possible and Rameez will want his bowlers to take as many wickets as possible."!

Anyway, since we didn't make it into the final, at least our neighbours toasted our 50 years of Independence for us. Mother was pleased about that!

Mithran Devanesen

• by V. Ramnarayan

batting an inspirational piece of rearguard action aborted by an unnecessary run-out. Knowing Robin's utter dedication to the team's cause and ability to maul a cricket ball, he might well have pulled off the impossible had he not committed suicide.

The other Indian batsman to show similar commitment was the superbly focussed Rahul Dravid who won the hearts of the Chennai crowd with a masterly exhibition of controlled aggression in trying physical conditions. In some ways, the Karnataka batsman is a local boy too, given his employment with India Cements Ltd (ICL) and the crucial role he has played in the growth of ICL's cricket team into a formidable force. Dravid's paternal ancestors belonged to the holy town of Chidambaram and we Tamils can seek consolation in that

hydrated batsmen afflicted with cramps will ask for and be given runners because such assistance to a batsman is perfectly legal under the present rules. While injury-faking by a player carrying a prior fitness problem into a match is always a possibility, the flip side of the coin is that batsmen often do not trust anyone else to do their running for them. There was some interesting speculation in the stands when Sachin Tendulkar ran briefly for Rahul Dravid only to return to the pavilion all of a sudden. At least one keen observer suggested that Tendulkar was distracting Dravid with on-field advice, leading to the batsman's dramatic recovery!

With the prices of admission for the Independence Cup reaching astronomical proportions, it was quite astounding that a record crowd came to

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