

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

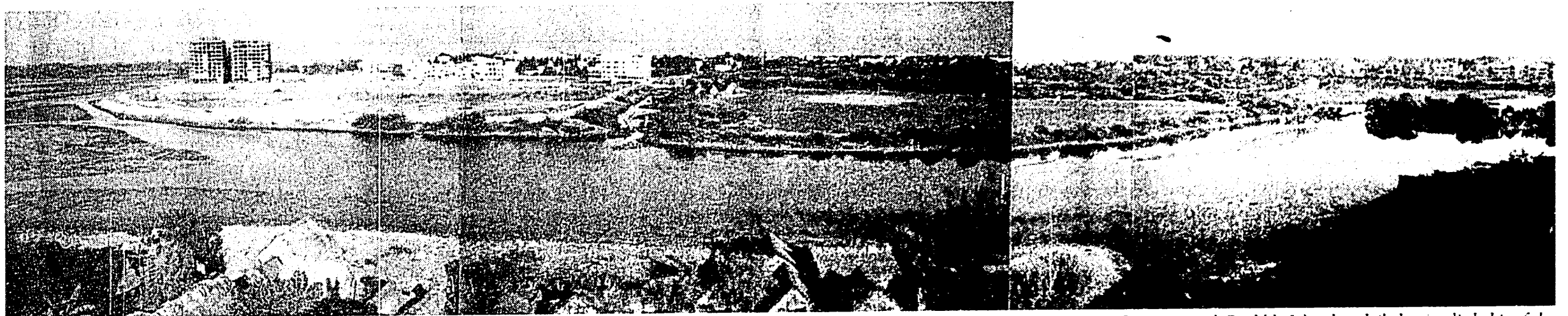
INSIDE

- An Indian library
- Talking only of duties
- Save your own water
- When do we see *Daayra*?
- T.N. hockey stars

Vol. VII No. 12

FREE ISSUE

October 1-15, 1997



These photographs from the Exnora Naturalists' Club and the other NGOs petitioning to save the Adyar Creek, show (above) the Creek as it flows around Quibble Island and (below) a little bit of the vanishing birdlife in the Creek.

Whither Adyar Creek?

Five NGOs petition Government

Chennai has one of the most extensive waterways systems to be found in a city in India. Among these natural heritage sites, one of the most magnificent is the Adyar Creek and estuary area, with its natural beauty, unique bio-diversity and large open spaces.

Following a report by the Environmental Youth Service Programme of the Exnora Naturalists' Club, who made a study of the Creek, FIVE groups of concerned citizens have publicly appealed to the Government to protect the creek. They are the Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group, Exnora Naturalists' Club, Madras Naturalists' Society, World

Wide Fund for Nature – India and Environmental Society of Madras. In their appeal they say,

"We believe that the Adyar Creek and estuary area, like all other natural heritage areas be-

● **By A Special Correspondent**

longs to us citizens, and that these areas should not be privatised. We object to the conversion of the few remaining natural heritage sites into concrete jungles by builders assisted by uncoordinated wings of the Government. Stop fur-

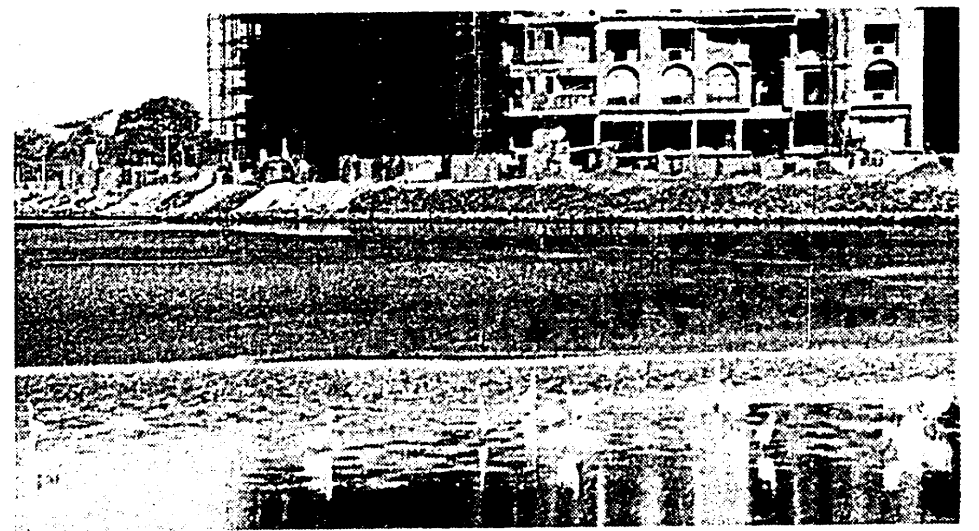
ther destruction of the Adyar Creek Estuary."

The highlights of the Exnora Study and the concerns of the group of citizens seeking to stall "the threat to the Adyar Creek" and save another bit of "vanishing natural heritage" include the following:

- The original creek area consisted of about 100 acres. Of this, roughly half remains as a creek, where tidal effect is felt twice a day. The other half is either encroached or 'reclaimed' for development. A Survey of India map published in the 1960s shows the full extent of the creek. However, in recent maps of Chennai one whole portion of the existing creek has been blanked out and is marked as "landmass". Nothing could be farther from the truth. Moreover, the complete north bank of the river is marked lush green. In reality, there are only government buildings here. The creek, once a paradise, has now been practically ruined.

- Heavy encroachment along the creek has resulted in gross pollution of the wetland turning it into a health hazard. Moreover, stagnation of rainwater has turned the creek into a breeding ground for mosquitoes. To worsen the existing situation, officials sketch plans to 'develop' (by reclamation, nor restoration) the creek and fill it with city garbage as well as construction debris.

- The area is State-owned and was declared as a 'protected area' (ban of hunting) under Section

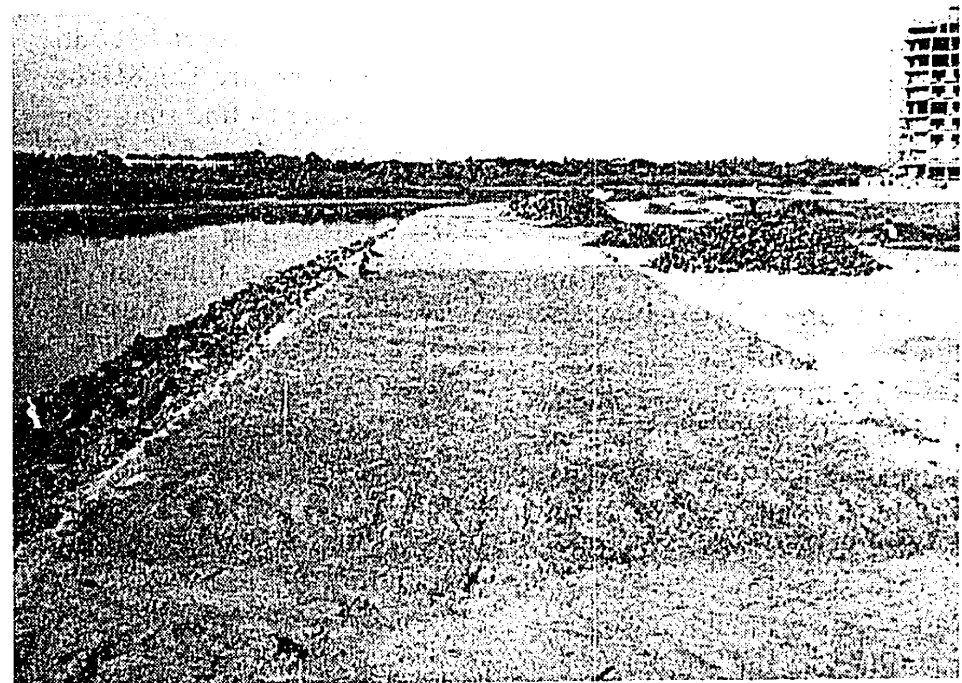


reef heron, blackwinged kite, pied bushchat, and the spotted munia, all species that used to frequent the area a few years ago, according to the Madras Naturalists' Society. It is felt that these numbers will continue to decrease at this alarming rate if no immediate plan to conserve the ecosystem is undertaken.

- Earlier, there was an abundance of zooplankton species, sea hares, segmented worms, sponges, jelly fish and at least seven species of anemones. Added to this was the presence of at least nine species of frogs, 23 species of reptiles and five species of mammals. Most of this fauna is now rare in the area, essentially due to pollution and human interference, though with suitable protection the area could see a regeneration of most species. Of the hundred-odd species of fish reported from the estuary, only 39 have economic value but these are highly contaminated due to the pollution of the Adyar River.

- The flora in the area has reduced greatly both in terms of quantity and composition of species. Earlier there were mangrove (remnants are still found on the Theosophical Society side of the creek), macro-flora, marsh plants and a luxurious algal bed, all of which has dwindled. All the trees growing on the islands are self-grown. *Velikathan* is dominant and is cut by locals for firewood. The area, however, has a high concentration of earthworm species in the relatively undisturbed areas of the estuary, indicating that the soil is rich and there is scope for more flora if the area is protected from encroachments and pollution.

(Continued on Page 5)



Sand and rock rubble being dumped on and by the side of Quibble Island to create a new road. The shoring up of the road with rock ensures a little bit more of the Creek — a bit more of our natural heritage — is lost.


A promise of an improved library

Shortly after *The Man from Madras Musings* drew attention to the sad state of the Connemara Public Library in its centenary year (MM, September), he was delighted to hear the Chief Minister's promise that Rs. 1 crore would be spent on providing improved facilities for the reading public. This, the CM said, would be in addition to the nearly Rs. 1.5 crore sanctioned for three new buildings. MMM was also delighted to hear Education Minister K Anbazhagan state that the new buildings would be in consonance with the architecture of the existing buildings. MMM hopes that the building chosen for the new to merge with is NOT the Children's Art Gallery with its Lost World characters making the Museum-Library-Art Galleries complex seem even more prehistoric than it is.

While welcoming all this enthusiasm and the donations made towards a better library on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations, MMM wonders what defines "improved facilities". More journals, more books, airconditioned reading comfort, easier accessibility through better cataloguing, a bigger, more streamlined reference section, better staff, a restored, renovated and better maintained building? None of this has been spelt out in the promises and there is no word on whether these grants are to be spent through the usual channels of the administration or whether there is a possibility of a high-powered, highly qualified committee being appointed to study the Connemara Library and recommend on the priority areas.

Taking just one instance that is specifically connected with the particular interests of this journal, what is going to be done with the old books collection of the Connemara, especially its books on the Madras Presidency and the rest of India? At the Centenary celebrations the charge that several old books had been destroyed was categorically refuted. They may not have been destroyed, but they are certainly missing, MMM contends. In fact, several valuable books on India, particularly Madras and the South, are not only not to be found in this Library but in other important libraries and record institutions in the State as well. Researcher after researcher has complained to MMM about this.

The Man From Madras Musings is also glad to hear that the Archives is in the process of microfilming some of its material and is busy laminating other material. The Madras Literary Society also says that all material it now has is being more carefully preserved and is being better catalogued. Bully for all of them. But MMM feels strongly that none of this is enough — at least for the valuable India, South India and Madras reference material left in the City. It



am only one; but still I am one.
I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.

- Helen Keller

On its 4th Anniversary,
The Banyan salutes
the power of an individual
to make a difference

3000 people like you who wanted to do 'something' to help,
167 mentally ill destitute women in Chennai a life beyond the streets
and 67 others a future to look forward to.

Thank you for seeing The Banyan through the past 4 years.
So hope you'll be with us on this occasion. Do join us at 6:30 p.m.,
Vandana and Vaishnavi
For The Banyan team

One of the most poignant and imaginative invitations *The Man From Madras Musings* has received is this one for *The Banyan's* fourth Annual Day. On left is page 1 and on right page 3 minus time, date and place details. Two dedicated young girls who gave up good jobs to found *The Banyan* have ensured that under its shade scores of mentally ill, destitute women have found a home and a helping hand.

is time all these institutions got together and set up an INDIA LIBRARY in the City, with special attention to South India and Madras, as a 'reference only' library. In it, whatever wealth these institutions have on these subjects should, after repair and restoration, be carefully preserved, better maintained and properly catalogued to make it more easily accessible to research scholars and students. Such a library should also hold microfiche copies of at least *The Madras Times*, *The Madras Mail*, *The Hindu*, as well as the Government Gazettes and Almanacs. Much of these microfiche copies are already available with the Jawaharal Nehru Memorial Museum and Library at Teen Murti, New Delhi. Storing them locally will, however, become meaningful only if enough reading stations and proper copying facilities are made available.

Apart from such an India Library for books in English produced in, let us say the last 200 years, a similar Library for Tamil writing during this period should also be set up. That'll leave the Connemara and other libraries free to concentrate on recent and literature-oriented reading material and the Archives on record-keeping. A look at the whole library question along these lines might make the concept of "improved facilities" more meaningful than piecemeal improvements to building, comfort, stock and cataloguing.

Police in action

There's been more cause for delight in September. The Police are on the ball, *The Man From Madras Musings* reads.

Chennai Police Commissioner V K Rajagopalan recently informed *The Hindu* that there is NO political interference in traffic enforcement and removal of encroachments, that action is regularly being taken against autorickshaws, that accusations of corruption in the Force are unsubstantiated, that even transport corporation buses (drivers or the Corporation, it is not stated) have been penalised for traffic violations, and that

only the occasionally aberrant police station is not helpful.

MMM is delighted to hear these categorical statements on affirmative action by the Police. But at two recent workshops on the problems of traffic in the City, MMM also heard all the same things being stated against the police in a most accusing manner by the public as well as leaders of several NGOs. The Police response was nowhere as positive as this.

Now MMM is not going to spend time going into the rights and wrongs of all these charges

**SHORT
'N'
SNAPPY**

and denials, but one thing he sees every day is traffic — particularly buses, autos and two-wheelers — ignoring red and yellow lights, with no police constable or officer — sometimes three or four of them at major junctions — paying heed to the blatant violations. In fact, MMM remembers a couple of occasions when, waiting patiently for the green to come while traffic flowed to his left and vehicles behind him honked continuously, the policeman by the light watched MMM being law-abiding with a broad smile. As for lane violations, they're nobody's business.

MMM agrees that these are trivia compared to all those weighty matters the Police, according to Mr Rajagopalan, are meticulous about. But to MMM, this regular breaking of road rules seems to be symptomatic of the growing lawlessness all around us at all levels. And that, Mr Rajagopalan, is a matter of concern.

Part of this lawlessness is also the encroachments on the pavements, whether they've been there 15 years or whether it was building material parked there yesterday. An encroacher is an encroacher — and MMM wishes the new spirit of judicial activism will consider

THAT aspect a bit more often, particularly when it violates others' rights.

The other Indian

Will America have 580 new States added to the 50 some day? Well, it could happen if the 580 Indian nations decide to want to get into the mainstream of American life yet preserve some of their traditional ways, all of which are guaranteed to them through the tribal government of each tribe which derives from treaties each Indian nation has signed with the Federal Government. With tribal nations settled on land ranging in extent from 3-4 acres to 24,000 sq.miles, the size of West Virginia, the 41st State in terms of area, and most of them scattered in widely separate parts of the United States, it is unlikely that so many new states will emerge. But that a few might, is a possibility *The Man From Madras Musings* heard Indian Rights lawyer Susan Williams express in Chennai recently.

Williams' talk, which seemed to MMM the most interesting part of her visit, was, however, a bit of serendipity to people like him, for her trip to Chennai was as a drummer in 'Poetic Justice', an American Indian band that teamed with Anita Ratnam to present a set of programmes fusing Indian music, dance and Native American poetry. A lawyer out of Harvard with a Radcliffe economics background, Williams came across every bit as eloquent in describing the American Indians' status today in the US as she did whipping up a storm with the drums.

MMM was particularly pleased to have a favourite theory of his confirmed during the course of the evening: namely, that Christopher Columbus was a lousy navigator. By going the wrong way, he got the whole world confused, which is why the wrong Indian is now working hard on getting known as the Native American. Another point that struck MMM rather forcibly during the evening was the similarity between India's 'native states' during the Raj and the tribal nations

of the US. Whereas the Raj recognised their sovereignty, India didn't; the U.S. Courts — and the Federal Government — however, seem to recognise tribal sovereignty as being far older than U.S. sovereignty. While on paper that sounds very nice, the tribal nations in the U.S. don't seem to have fared anywhere near so well as the Indian princely states that were absorbed by India lock, stock and privy purse. Maybe there's a case for each side.

Williams, perhaps one of the finest examples of Indian progress in the U.S., is a Sioux, whose nations stretched from the Dakotas westwards. She sees the Cherokee of the South as having made the most progress. But she notes that many more tribes are making faster progress nowadays through a means an Indian audience might look dubiously at. And that is through GAMBLING, with the establishment of casinos for it. Using the benefits of tribal sovereignty to the full, strictly controlled gambling establishments have been set up in many a tribal territory. Traditional gambling practices — based on competition — and games like tombola did not run into much opposition, but hard gambling had the State Governments challenge Indian rights, but now they seem to have worked out solutions and the casinos are benefitting many a tribe. Williams, citing cases of community benefit, sees gambling as one way for the tribes to raise enough money to develop schools, medical facilities and other welfare benefits. MMM wonders whether that might not be a way to go here. After all, the lottery has done some good to many States in India.

In brief

★ During the previous Government there was much talk of improving about a dozen towns in the State that the Authorities at the time named Heritage Towns. One of those towns, *The Man From Madras Musings* remembers, was Tarangambadi, the ancient Danish settlement of Tranquebar. Some official interest has once again been taken in the Heritage Towns project, but MMM was surprised to find only eleven towns on the list; Tarangambadi had been left out. MMM wonders why. Could it be that it is easier to find funds for temple towns than for places with a colonial heritage, especially when the erstwhile colonialists seem reluctant to help? If ever there is a heritage town, a place that must look exactly as it was a couple of hundred years ago, it is Tarangambadi. With very little attempt, a good part of it can be made Tranquebar again, MMM is convinced. Surely, we can think more broad-mindedly?

MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



They're hideous

Hoardings are hideous. A.P.K. Roy (MM, September 1) bemoans the huge hoardings that have come up along Poonamallee High Road blocking from public view the Egmore Wesley Church, a heritage building. Are we to understand (although this is probably not his intention) that hoardings elsewhere are acceptable?

A hoarding is a hoarding is a hoarding, meaning it is ugly, ugly, ugly. It is an eyesore and a disgrace to the city. If Chennai is to become Singaara, the Mayor must ban hoardings (and all its variants) on the roads, on the banks (of waterways), on the tops of buildings, near bridges, around parks, in front of playgrounds, on walls (painted advertisements), on trees (boards), between posts (banners) etc. — be they on public or private property.

Hoardings are hideous. These monstrosities gobble up space, take over the pavement, hide trees and buildings, dominate the skyline (if at all there is one) and mar the beauty of the city (whatever there is left). Just as we have wall-to-wall carpeting, the Corporation seems to follow a policy of end-to-end hoardings. The Mayor should put an end to this.

As an experimental measure, the Corporation should remove all hoardings in one section of the city so that we can see for ourselves what a hoarding-free area looks like. Believe me, you'll like it.

We can certainly do without the advertising — and rest assured that, as a result, no company or advertiser will down its shutters and no ad agency will close shop. As for the Corporation, the licence fees from hoardings probably constitute only 2 to 3 per cent of its income. Surely it can manage without this amount? This is a small price or, rather, an 'affordable price' we should be willing to pay (by way of slightly reduced services from the Corporation) for the sake of a beautiful city, sorry, *Singaara Chennai*.

The only downside is the future of a few thousand people belonging to the weaker sections who eke out a living painting these hoardings. Something will have to be done for them. What, I wonder.

B. Gautham
122, Wallajah Road
Chennai 600 002.

Cruelty to elephants

As propos two articles on elephants (MM, July 16 and August 16), we received a communication from K.A.R.E., (Kindness to Animals and Respect for Environment), enclosing a distress call from an animal lover at Trichur (anonymous) highlighting cruelties meted out to temple elephants. It would appear they are ill-treated by mahouts and the public, who indulge in unnecessarily teasing them. The writer also states that they are made to stand in the hot sun for hours on

end and get beaten if, out of fatigue, they become restless.

Harry Miller emphasises that Indian elephants abhor sun and heat which are torture for them. Further, he states they like to live in the company of their kind, not chained in confinement in temples from where they are taken out on daily begging tours. All amounts to cruelty of a tall order.

As elephants are considered sacred animals — sensitive and gentle, unless provoked — it follows that it is human duty to ensure that they are treated humanely at all times.

To implement remedial measures, it is suggested that both Govt. (e.g. the Animal Welfare Board of India) and NGOs (e.g. S.P.C.A.s) act in unison to bring about a total ban on elephants in temples being used for begging purposes. (A ban similar to that on certain animals being employed in circuses).

The provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act should be made more meaningful in order to act as a proper deterrent.

Violet Memorial Trust
30, 6th Main Road,
R.A. Puram,
Chennai 600 028.

More on waterways

The problems of Chennai's waterways have been discussed extensively in your columns (P.M. Bellappa, MM, June 16, M. Sasi-karan, MM, September 1). Though I generally agree with what has been said in these articles, I feel there should be a Master Plan that can be executed in parts.

Forming an autonomous authority with a professional as its head should be the first step. We do have experts who can achieve what is required without depending on outside assistance.

Much of the land on either side of the present waterways could be reclaimed and with land prices being what they are, the whole scheme could be self-supporting.

Another aspect, is that it is a dry waterway. Through the efforts of Corporation Health Officer, the IIT Oceanographic Department's Professor J.S. Mani had undertaken a study whereby he found a way of laying pipelines below the level of the Cooum bed and connecting the sea to the Cooum. He has estimated that the pipes will need to be taken on the seaside to a distance of 165 meters and worked out the costs at about Rs. 2 crore.

We have talked enough about the problem. Let us get on with the work.

Commodore L.N.C.
Jesudason, I.N. (Retd.)
'Ocean Crest'
AC/25 Anna Nagar,
Chennai 600 040.

Time to go beyond normal duties

The Workshop on the Sustainable Chennai Programme, reported at length in these columns last fortnight, has evoked yet another pertinent response. Writing about 'Choked Chennai' in Business Line, B.S. RAGHAVAN, a former West Bengal Civilian, draws attention to the forgotten obvious and urges attention being paid to more basic necessities. All emphases are ours.

— THE EDITOR

“The skewed nature of the priorities the SCP has set before itself bespeaks of confusion between congruous but separate aims: livability and sustainability. The three problem areas identified as the most pressing — improvement of waterways, reduction of traffic congestion and solid waste management — are no doubt important, but they already fall within the NORMAL purview of ongoing responsibilities of existing agencies such as the CMDA itself, the Transport Department and the Municipal Corporation.

Addressing them will certainly enhance the livability of the city, but for that purpose, all that needs to be done is for the agencies concerned TO RAISE THE TEMPO AND EFFICIENCY OF THEIR ACTIVITIES by provision of adequate funds and GET WORK OUT of thousands of employees by effective supervision.

Let's compensate

Lakshmi Venkataraman has lamented (MM, September 1) that Neville Tuli, in his book *The Flamed Mosaic* has not given adequate representation to the Southern region and as such the book is less comprehensive.

What Tuli did, can we not do? Or, what Tuli forgot to do, can we not compensate for adequately by bringing out another book. Let there be a glut of books. An imbalance in representation can always be corrected by anyone. By Lakshmi?

K.S. Kandhaswamy
6/6 Rajagopalan Street,
Valmiki Nagar,
Tiruvanniyur,
Chennai 600 041.

Mystery flights

I wonder if there are any ornithologists among your readers who could help me solve a little puzzle about birdlife in the city?

For a great many years I used to sit almost every evening from

The Government need no more than put its effort behind the CMDA's efforts to secure the necessary funds and get going on a ready-at-hand bankable project for cleaning up the waterways at a cost of Rs. 741 crore.

Traffic congestion is a matter of exercising day-to-day administrative and police vigilance so as to rid the roads of encroachments, stray cattle and accumulations of garbage, and of strictly enforcing existing laws and regulations against drivers who violate them with impunity.

Even without any need of grandiose concepts, if only the

● by B S RAGHAVAN

Corporation, the Transport Department, the Public Works Department and the Police attend to their mundane duties with a sense of accountability and honesty of purpose, and if only the political busybodies will leave them free to function, they can make the city not only livable but also attractive.

In regard to solid waste management also, there are any number of tested technologies available for adoption by the Chennai Corporation, and it is simply a question of making the right choice, drawing up schemes and implementing them.

around 6 to 8.30 on the terrace of a social club in South Madras watching first the birds, then, after the sun had set, how the patterns of the stars changed as our planet made its annual march around the sun. Often, too, great fruit-bats from somewhere in the centre of the city would be seen winging their soundless way across the Adyar, presumably to Guindy Park. Almost every evening a man-made satellite would appear like a slowly moving star out of the West and silently cross the sky until it abruptly disappeared as it entered the Earth's shadow.

This went on for many years, but because of health reasons I have not been able to spend such pleasant evenings for a long time. I did so again, however, on the evening of April 29th, sitting on that terrace from about 5.30 to 6.30, and this time saw something quite new to me.

Around six o'clock a flock of very small birds appeared and winged their way at surprising speed across the trees and the river. Presumably, like those great fruit bats, they were heading for Guindy Park, not for food, as in the case of the

Calcutta and Surat have shown what determined leadership and public-spiritedness on the part of the city fathers can achieve. If they can, why can't we? to echo the August 16-31 issue of *Madras Musings*.

* * *

For Chennai to become truly sustainable, as distinct from being merely livable, it needs a set of priorities quite different from the ones identified. In their content and durability, they should be capable of generating long-range multiplier effects by way of replenishing the resources and evoking the synergies of all sections of the people. They have to do with human resources development in the form of literacy campaigns; introduction of compulsory and universal primary education and healthcare, with emphasis on women's development; training in employable and income earning skills, especially for slum dwellers; accelerated formulation and execution of schemes for basic amenities such as housing, drinking water, sanitation and micro-finance; designing and putting into effect a stringent environment protection and pollution control strategy; and vigorous measures for control of population.

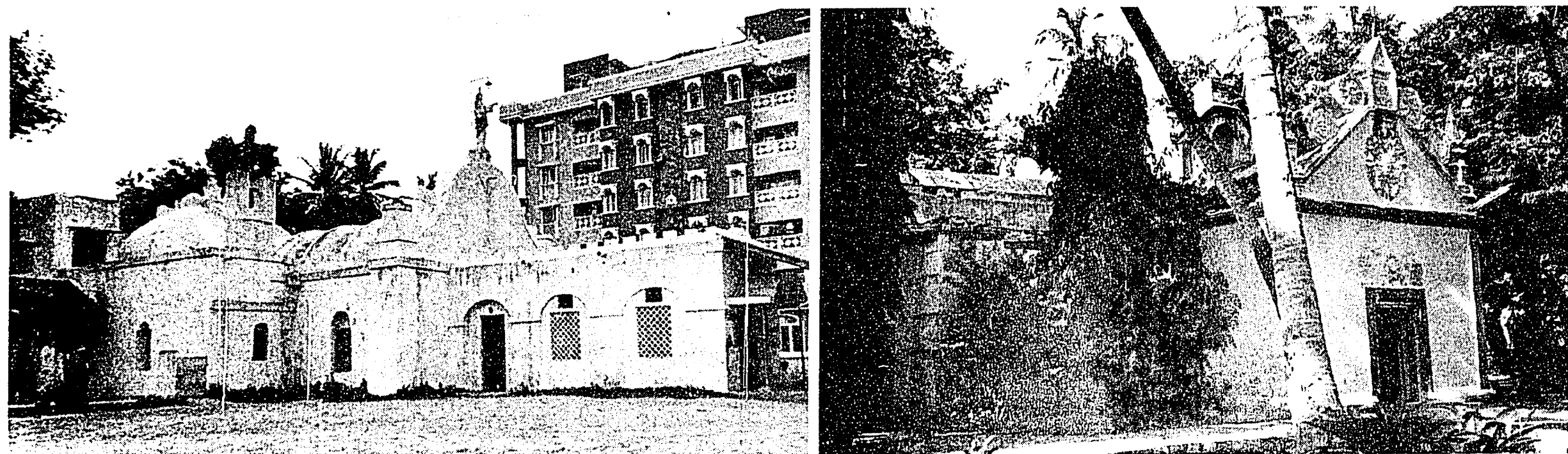
The imperative of human capital formation as almost the only way of defusing the time bombs that urban conglomerations represent is so self-evident as to demand little supportive argument or elaboration.

bats, but probably to roost there among the trees.

This flock was quickly followed by another, then many more. Each flock comprised of, at a rough guess, between fifty and a hundred individuals. They were very small, moved very rapidly, and their flight was of the swooping type, probably the result of many very rapid wing flaps, followed by brief intervals during which they swooped, to recover again with a further burst of flapping.

Again, at a rough guess, I would say I must have seen some two or three thousand of these tiny birds during that half an hour. They were all evidently coming from somewhere in the city and all going towards Guindy. Can any of your readers tell me what they could be, what they would be doing and feeding on in the city, and why it is I have never seen them before over such a long period of observation from the same place at the same times?

Harry Miller
3A Satyanarayana Ave.,
Boat Club Road,
Chennai 600 028.



Coconut It should be a plantation crop, says TN study

In Sri Lanka and other parts of the world, coconut is a plantation crop. Why is it a garden crop in India? Being a garden crop, it loses out on all the advantages of a plantation crop, especially in terms of growth as an industry and scientific inputs. All this might soon change if the recommendations of the Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organisation of Tamil Nadu Ltd (ITCOT) are accepted by the Tamil Nadu Government. It is essential to promote coconut cultivation on a plantation scale with the same management care bestowed on the common plantation crops,

largest coconut producer in the world. The main reason attributed is neglect of research on product utilisation. In the non-edible sector, where coconut finds use as oils, the total requirement in 2000AD is expected to be 7,80,000 tonnes for the projected production of 15,00,000 tonnes of soap. The estimated oil availability for the soap industry, by the turn of the century, however, is expected to be only 7,30,000 tonnes.

The estimated requirement for edible coconut oil is around 27,000 tonnes. Here again a gap of 7000 tonnes is forecast.

Technology development, product diversification and by-product utilisation are necessary to make the industry globally competitive the study says.

There is also a huge export market for coconut. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and New Zealand are all major importers.

Emphasising the need for better utilisation of by-products, the study notes that coconut shell and products from it have export value. While the shells are either wasted or used as a fuel in India, there is a great demand for coconut shell cups for use as icecream containers in European countries. There is also a growing demand in many nations for buttons, spoons and forks made out of coconut shell.

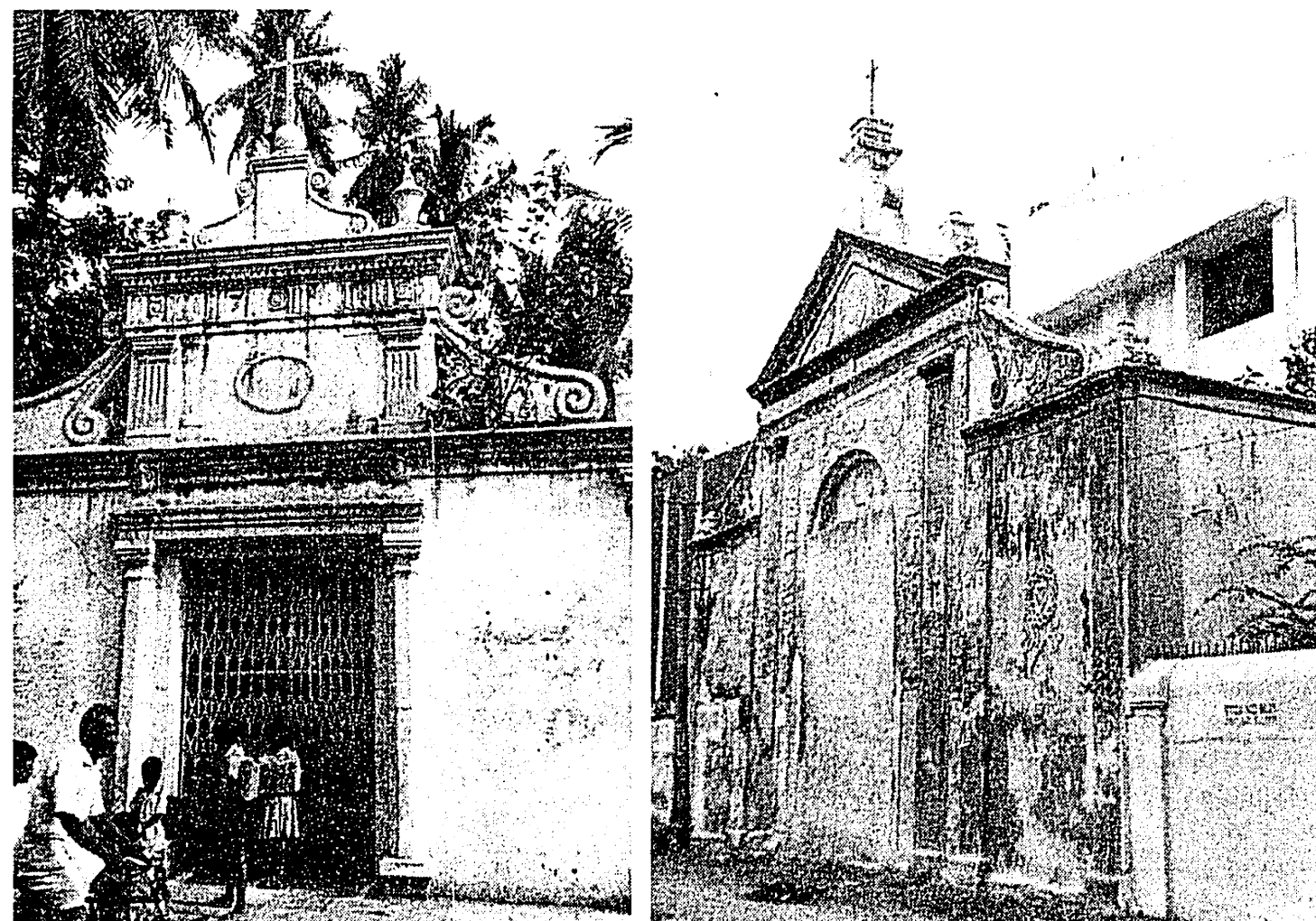
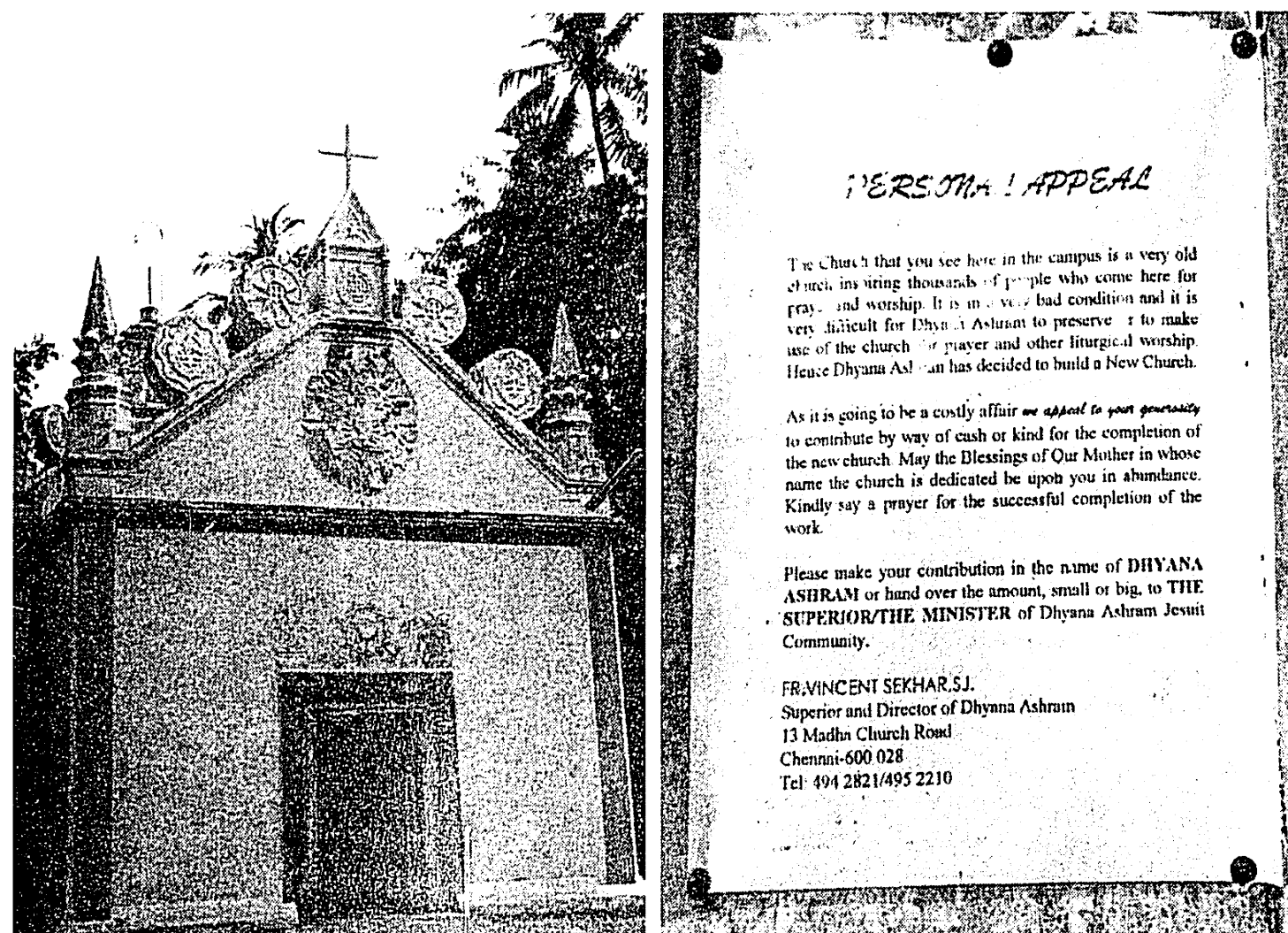
Coconut shells also yield charcoal, pyrolygenous acid (an impure, dilute acetic acid), settled tar (which can be distilled fractionally to give phenol creosote and pitch) and fuel gas. The most important use, however, is as charcoal, and in the manufacture of activated carbon. Indeed there is a major future in coconut, if only plantation-scale cultivation is undertaken and by-product manufacture introduced.

Our NEW, top left, is indeed OLD. In fact, it is one of the oldest churches in Chennai. Descanco Church, or the Church of Rest — officially known as the Church of Our Lady of Visitation, but better known as the Ellapatha Matha Kovil or 'The Church of Our Lady who Gives Rest to the Weary' — is believed to have been built by the Madeiros, or Madra, family in the mid-16th Century and is a fine example of early Portuguese Church architecture. The Church, according to legend, was built in a mango grove that used to be the place where St Thomas rested on his daily journey from Little Mount to the Beach at San Thomé. The Church, restored in 1783 and renovated in 1976, reveals from time to time what a coat of whitewash can do to make an ancient building look smart and sprightly.

That is all that is really needed to bring to life again another old Church in Mylapore San Thomé — not the destruction of it and the building of a new Church and a multistorey building on its site. But those seem to be the plans for this Church,

within the spacious garden premises of the Dhyana Ashram on Matha Church Road. Our pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY show the Church (above) hidden amidst trees, its entrance and appeal for funds below, and, at bottom, the two old entrances to the Church from two parallel streets. One entrance has been blocked and highrise developed behind it, the other made a shrine, and entrance is now through the gates of the Ashram garden.

It is said that this Church too goes back to a small Portuguese shrine, a shed, in fact, built amidst five acres of woods in 1575. Above the barricaded roadside shrine, however, the date 1748 has been cut into the pedimentation, the '7' being particularly visible. If that date is indicative of the date of construction or reconstruction of a 17th Century church that replaced the shed, that dates the present building to the period of the French occupation of San Thomé and Madras. And, indeed, the Church reflects a more French (Pondicherry) style of architecture than old Portuguese. In which event, its uniqueness in Chennai makes it even more necessary to save the Church and preserve it as a distinctive style of architecture. Certainly, this is not a church for the wreckers' hammers; indeed, it is in NOT so bad a condition as it can't be restored and renovated and made to look like new.



THE
NEW...

...& THE
OLD

By A Staff
Reporter

states ITCOT which has made a study on coconut growing in the State.

The study also emphasises the need to harness the full potential of the coconut palm as a multiproduct tree crop. It urges the corporate sector to play a major role in the production and processing of coconut and in the development of integrated coconut plantations.

The study also points out that coconut plantations offer tremendous scope for practising the system of farm forestry and agro-forestry. Compatible combinations of quick-growing tree species and herbaceous plants with or without the combination of livestock can be introduced in the interspaces of properly spaced coconut farms with success. In Sri Lanka, pineapple has become a thriving intercrop.

According to the study, India lags behind in the production and marketing of coconut-based food and non-food products, although it is the third

Save your own water

Water has become a source of almost permanent concern for Chennai residents. With the city's population continuing to grow and the proliferation of multi-storeyed flats, water availability in many areas can no longer be taken for granted. In fact, in some places, residents have been managing without potable water for years.

Most of the city's water needs in the Fifties were met by shallow open wells that were an integral part of most households. Chennai also had a number of temple and public tanks fed by the stormwater drainage system in the areas surrounding them, in turn feeding the shallow wells through the sub-surface soil.

With the passage of time, the quantity of groundwater tapped has increased steadily, the drainage system has remained uncared for, and the tanks have gone dry. The net result has been an alarming fall in the groundwater table and the drying up of shallow wells. Bore wells, which came into use subsequently, often yielded water unfit for drinking.

Today, many building project contractors embark on construction work without really assessing the groundwater levels, the requirement of water, etc. The need of the hour is to evolve an integrated water management system that ensures the continuous availability of adequate water for every neighbourhood. Such a system should include the harvesting of rain water and used water recovery and reuse.

According to the National Building Code (NBC) as well as the Indian Standards recommendation, an individual requires about 135 litres (nine buckets) of water every day for hygienic living, including drinking, bathing and washing of clothes, vessels and floors. Extra water would be needed to water plants and clean vehicles, staircases and driveways.

Although the quantum of water needed for cooking and drinking constitutes only ten per cent of our total needs, absence of, or limited, potable water, either from treated water supply or from groundwater sources, means that it has to be purchased.

How many Chennai residents are fortunate enough to get a daily supply of 135 litres of water? Not many, certainly. The CMWSSB, which is responsible for all the water supply and sewerage systems in the

city (the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board is entrusted with the task outside Chennai), admits to an individual getting only 78 litres daily. Many get less.

Where does Chennai's treated water come from? Metrowater, as it is popularly called, comes from the Poondi, Sholavaram and Red Hill reservoirs, which are fed by rainwater falling over the catchment areas and around them during the Southwest and particularly the Northeast monsoons. In a year of meagre rainfall, when the reservoirs do not fill up, there is invariably an acute water problem in the city the following year.

By A Staff
Reporter

The problem is not one of rainfall alone. All three reservoirs are many years old and have become badly silted, reducing the effective holding capacities. To make matters worse, the storage capacities are inadequate to store all the rainwater flowing into them from the catchment areas. Not surprisingly, substantial quantities of precious rainwater end up in the sea (this quantity is estimated to be much more than the city's annual consumption)!

Annual evaporation from the three reservoirs averages about 44 per cent of the total storage capacity.

Therefore, there is a desperate need to remedy these shortcomings and augment sources of water supply. Efforts, years ago, to extract groundwater, from nearby water-bearing aquifers have been unsuccessful. The CMWSSB has promised potable water in Chennai's extended areas once the Krishna River water is received, but will find inadequate the existing pumping system to distribute water supply equitably.

Locating a good underground water source is not easy. If it is located, continued availability cannot be assured. In the light of all this, it is to an integrated water management system that we must turn. A system that can be easily adopted by individual houses as well as by flat complexes. It is a system which has been successfully followed over the past three years by one of Chennai's most respected building promoters, Alacrity Housing Limited. In a booklet published by the Company, *Self Reliance in Water*, it states that an integrated water management system involves just a few simple measures to tap and conserve rain-water.

If rainwater is tapped and

Flat-builders, it is reported, have to nowadays ensure water-harvesting facilities in the complexes they develop. With the Monsoon around the corner, houses and apartment blocks built before such enlightened rules came into force will find in this article how they too can join the water-harvesters and make life easier for themselves. Chennai has been lucky with its last couple of Monsoons, but come a bad year and we'll soon realise how helpful water-harvesting could be. So perhaps a step taken now will be worth several later.

stored by individual households or apartment blocks, not only would roads be considerably free of flooding but there would be much more self-reliance for water needs as well. According to Alacrity, rainwater adequately tapped during the year would be sufficient to meet the entire water needs of an eight-flat complex for 133 days.

A shallow open well can be dug in the premises and water falling on the terrace can be channelised through pipes into the well (the terraces, however, have to be kept quite clean). Alternately, a 4-foot diameter pit can be dug to a depth of 12 to 20 feet (until a reasonably sandy stratum of the soil is reached) and the terrace rain diverted into it in the same way. Rainwater falling on paved open spaces around the building can be tapped at the gate in

a shallow pit provided with grilles and this water too can then be channelled into the storage pit inside the premises. Terrace rainwater can also be fed through pipes into an old well that has dried up, if one exists in the premises.

Recycling of used water is another means to procure fresh water. Grey water (water after it has been used for bathing and washing) and black water (water that flows out from the WCs) together constitute used water. In individual houses, grey water usually finds its way to the garden where it gets purified by natural soil processes and flows into the well again, to be drawn later. Black water, on the other hand, goes into the sewerage system.

With the mushrooming of flat complexes and the consequent thinning of greenery, grey water tends to get drained along with the black water into the sewerage system — proving detrimental to the recharging of the groundwater table and contributing to the overloading of the sewerage pumping stations. A suitable process by which the treatment and reuse of grey water will be possible in urban areas, is necessary.

As more buildings and flats come up in Chennai, it becomes imperative for us to become self-reliant in meeting our water needs by accessing satisfactory water sources within our premises. Let us pursue that objective in the days ahead.

(Interested readers can get a free copy of the Alacrity booklet by writing to: Alacrity Housing Limited, 15 Thirumalai Road, T'Nagar, Chennai 600 017.)

WHITHER ADYAR CREEK?

(Continued from Page 1)

The 'development' of 45 acres of the Adyar Creek by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) has been in the pipeline since 1990. The first major proposal of the Government was to allot the land for the construction of a colossal auditorium and memorial. This was objected to by local citizen groups on the ground that the area was a fragile wetland and must be protected. The High Court at Chennai directed the State Government to protect the area and disallowed any construction as originally planned.

Subsequently, the CMDA came up with a 'Wooded Area' plan at a cost of Rs.7.50 crore, which would include concrete paved pathways, boating areas and other leisure and recreation-oriented activities and a proposed afforestation programme. The local citizens groups, while welcoming the changed attitude of the CMDA, could not agree to the concrete constructions and elaborate recreational plans for the area and had, instead, suggested that the area be left alone. Additionally, they had suggested that the Forest and Wildlife Department proposal to declare the area a

Sanctuary be considered. This 'Wooded Area' proposal was withdrawn in April 1997.

Highrise construction has been embarked upon on the northern bank of the Creek, barely 50 metres from the waterfront, close to where much flora and fauna was sighted earlier. Simultaneously, a portion of the Creek is being filled with mud and boulders to allow for the construction of a road. This road may allow further 'development' of the surrounding area, since the Adyar Creek has not been awarded any special protection under the Environmental Laws of the country.

The Adyar Creek is an ecologically significant area as already mentioned and as such should be categorised as a CRZ-I area where no activity is permitted within 500 metres of the High Tide Line. The State Government of Tamil Nadu has failed to realise the immense ecological significance of the area and has clubbed it along with other parts of coastal Chennai in its categorisation. Any development within the CRZ area needs the permission of the Union Government.

The ecological significance of the area is substantiated by the Tamil Nadu State Forest & Wildlife Department's repeated request

to classify the entire creek and estuary area as a Sanctuary under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

The total disregard shown in not protecting the fragile wetland is a violation of the State's duty under Article 48-A of the Constitution of India, 1950, and the citizens' 'Right to Environment' guaranteed under Article 21.

Ecologists the world over are pointing out the unseen, and previously unknown, benefits of wetlands. Wetland plants cleanse and detoxify polluted waters, and eliminate toxic heavy metals and pesticides, wetlands are inexpensive alternatives to conventional sewage treatment plants and are capable of tertiary sewage treatment, they help diminish the fury of floods by storing rain water and releasing the runoff evenly, and they have a key role to play in groundwater recharge and discharge.

There seems to be an absence of wholesome urban planning in the permission granted for construction in this area. The population increase that will result will only add very high traffic density in the area, a density increased by school traffic and the diversion of motorbuses through Greenways Road.

Conclude the petitioners, "the Government of Tamil Nadu and its departments must set an example for the rest of India by not permitting development along ecologically sensitive areas and fragile natural heritage sites, like the Adyar Creek. It should, instead, approve the proposal of its Forest and Wildlife Department to declare the entire stretch of the Adyar River mouth, including the estuarine islands and the Creek, as a "Sanctuary" or "National Park". And it must classify and persuade the Union Government to approve the classification of the Creek area as a CRZ-I area (ecologically sensitive area) in the Coastal Zone Management Plan of the State, in order to protect the area from further denudation and destruction, after ascertaining the extent to which tidal action is felt in the Adyar River. There is also need to classify the Adyar Creek and estuary area as a 'Forest' and initiate afforestation of wetland species."

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

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

1. Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu died on September 5th leaving the world poorer. What do we know her better as?
2. Which well-known Bollywood figure has been identified as a prime suspect in the Gulshan Kumar killing?
3. Name the business leader recently forced to step down from the helm of the Tata Group's hotel chain, Indian Hotels Limited.
4. On September 6th the only Indian battalion to be air-dropped in war, celebrated the bicentenary of the regiment. Name this unit of the Indian Army.
5. Name the grandson of the Mahatma appointed as Secretary to the President.
6. According to Forbes, who is the world's richest entertainer? He is said to have had an income of \$313 million in 1996-97.
7. Who is India's third and latest chess Grandmaster?
8. Name the Indian honoured with the Olympic Order at Lausanne recently.
9. Buckingham Palace recently broke a tradition following Princess Diana's death. What?
10. Which city will host the 2004 Olympic Games?
11. Which capital city celebrated its 850th birthday recently in a grand manner?
12. Mobutu Sese Seko, who died on September 7th, was a ruthless dictator of which African nation?
13. Who are the new U.S. Open tennis champions?
14. Name the three TMC MPs forced to resign following a petition?
15. According to a World Bank report, name the 'Big Five' emerging economies that will shape global business in the next 25 years.

* * *

16. A special postal cancellation was done on September 12th in connection with the centenary celebrations of a Chennai Institution. Name it?
17. What has the Madras High Court directed universities and institutions to mention while awarding foreign degrees?
18. Which city school has in coordination with the police, embarked on a novel decongestion programme in front of their school on Ormes Road?
19. What are the minimum and maximum fares for travel in Chennai metropolitan buses after the recent hike?
20. Which leading professional took the golf honours in the prestigious *The Hindu* Open tournament held in the city recently?

(Answers on Page 7)

Bringing down borders in Chennai

The thought of spending a week in Pakistan would be daunting to most of us. Particularly if the life of a child depended on it. Picture then the immense apprehension of Ziaulla Khan, of Peshawar, when he was faced with the prospect of bringing his two young sons to Chennai to undergo a critical medical procedure.

Amir, his three-year-old son, suffered from a condition called thalassaemia. He required a sibling donor for a bone marrow transplant. The donor was to be his 18-month old-brother, Beharam. Ziaulla Khan was acutely aware of the medical risk involved since he was himself a medical practitioner. And to make things worse, he was worried about spending such a long period of time in what he thought would be a hostile social environment.

Apollo Hospital in Madras

offered the Khans the only option they had ... to reach it they had to travel the long distance from the Pakistan frontier town to a strange city in South India. They were in for a surprise when they arrived. Both the warm welcome and care they received upon arrival were unexpected.

were able to spare themselves the Rs.35-40 lakh they would have incurred in the US, the UK or Europe.

For the Khans, it wasn't just the success of the transplant that meant a great deal. It was also the reversal of their expectations — the warmth that they experienced during their stay in

sturdy woman was more vocal than her son. "Never have I seen such good people, so much love. I could not hope to get this even at home," she declared. At a time when both nations celebrate fifty years of freedom, a more encouraging and positive statement would be hard to find.

The Khans made a difficult decision to bring their sons to India, despite the discouraging stories they heard in Pakistan. They go back with a wonderful tale of treatment and recovery and the determination that their children will grow up without the same prejudices their schoolmates have about India — or, for that matter, those that children in India have about their fellows in Pakistan. It has been through love and kindness that the border has lost its significance for the Khans. May Amir and Beharam feel the same way.

• by A Staff Reporter

In the hospital, Amir received the transplant successfully, and Beharam became the second youngest donor of bone marrow in the world. The transplant was carried out a relatively low cost — less than Rs. 10 lakh — and the Khans

Chennai. "By the grace of God, we now have two normal children," he said. "But I am also grateful to the people here for their cordiality and help," he added. "They made us feel so much at home here."

Dr. Khan's mother, a tall,

Cookery Corner

FISH STEW

250 gm seer fish (or any other fish) cut into thick pieces
2 big onions
8 green chillies (sliced)
3" piece ginger
1/2 coconut (grated)
4 piece cinnamon
4 cloves
4 tbs chopped coriander leaves
2 sprigs curry leaves
2 tbs coconut oil
Salt to taste

Method

Clean and wash the fish. Grind the coconut and take out 1/2 cup thick first milk and 1/4 cup second milk. Heat oil, add cloves, cinnamon, onion, chillies and ginger. Fry till onion turns soft. Add second milk, fish, salt and curry leaves. Cook till the fish is done. Add first milk. When it comes to a boil, remove from fire.

VERMICELLI KHEEMA BIRIYANI

200g kheema (minced mutton)
2 big onions (chopped)
1 tsp ginger paste
1 big tomato (chopped)
3 tbs coriander leaves (chopped)
Salt to taste
200g fine vermicelli (semiya)
4 green chillies (sliced)
1 tsp garlic paste
1/2 tsp garam masala powder
4 tbs oil

Method

Roast vermicelli in 2 teaspoons oil till light brown. Keep aside.

Heat oil. Add onion and chillies. When onion turns soft, add ginger, garlic paste and fry till aroma comes. Add mince and fry for a few minutes more. Add tomatoes, salt and one cup water.

Cook till the mince is half done. Add roasted semiya and stir well. Add one cup water and chopped coriander leaves and cook till the semiya is done and moisture absorbed. Sprinkle garam masala powder and remove from fire. Serve hot with chutney.

CHICKEN JELDI FRY

Ingredients
1 medium size chicken (about 500 g)
1 big onion - chopped
2 big onion - sliced
1 tsp garlic paste
1 tsp chilli powder
2 tbs coriander powder
1/2 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp garam masala powder
50 ml refined oil
A few sprigs curry leaves
Salt to taste.

Method

Clean and cut chicken into 6 or 8 pieces and wash. Add all the ingredients, except sliced onion, garam masala powder, curry leaves and oil. Add one cup water (250ml). Cook in a pressure cooker for 15 to 20 minutes.

Heat oil and fry the sliced onion. When it becomes golden

brown, add the cooked chicken, curry leaves and garam masala. Fry on a slow fire till the gravy becomes thick. Remove and serve hot with chappathi or paratha.

PRAWN VADA

100 shelled prawns
2 big onions
4 green chillies
1 tsp coriander powder
1/4 tsp turmeric powder
1/4 tsp garam masala powder
4 tbs chopped coriander leaves
A pinch soda bicarbonate
Oil for frying
200 g rice flour
1/2 tsp garlic paste
1/2 tsp ginger paste
1/2 tsp chilli powder
1/2 cup grated coconut
A few sprigs of curry leaves
Salt to taste

Method

Clean and wash the prawns well. Squeeze out the water and chop prawns into small pieces. Chop in onion, chillies and coriander leaves.

Heat oil. Add onion and chillies and fry till onion becomes soft. Add ginger and garlic paste,

coriander powder, chilli powder, turmeric powder and prawns. Fry for a few minutes. Add a little water. Cover and cook till the prawns are half done. Add coconut and coriander leaves. Cook till prawns are done and moisture is absorbed. Add garam masala powder and remove from fire.

Boil two cups (50 ml) water in a vessel. Add salt and a pinch of turmeric powder. When the water boils remove from fire. Add rice flour and soda bicarbonate and mix well, using the handle of the spoon. Cook and knead to a soft dough with one teaspoon dalda or oil.

Divide the dough into 30 small balls. Take a piece of polythene sheet and oil it. Put one ball and flatten into small rounds. Place one teaspoon of prawn filling and cover with another flattened round. Press the edges well with fingers. Place it in a plate and cover with a wet cloth.

Finish all the vadas the same way. Deep fry in hot oil till crisp. Serve hot.

Ummi Abdulla

Archives have documented the developments in the Federal States before and after the Unification. (At Max Mueller Bhavan).

October 16 to 23 : *Die Bruder Skladanowsky* (The Skladanowsky Brothers), a film by the Munich Academy for Film and TV.

A feature film in the guise of a rather humorous documentary. These short films by Wim Wenders and his students portray the events in a slightly ironic manner, in the form of a silent movie (black and white). The first part (1994) is seen through the eyes of Max Skladanowsky's first daughter. In the second part (1995), Max Skladanowsky himself reports on the Premiere of the Bioscope at

the Winter Garden in Berlin. A third part shows an interview in 1995 with a daughter (well advanced in years) of Max Skladanowsky. (16th, 7.p.m. at Max Mueller Bhavan and 23rd, 6.30 pm at South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce).

October 16-30 : An exhibition on Max Skladanowsky, film pioneer, entrepreneur, photographer. From 1892, Max and Emil Skladanowsky in Berlin worked on the realisation of their dream, the creation of 'living photographs'. After some setbacks, a working projector, the Bioscope, was finally invented. On November 1, 1895, Max and Emil Skladanowsky presented their bioscope at the Berlin Wintergarten Music Hall. (At Max Mueller Bhavan, Seminar Room.)



October 8 & 9: Exhibition-cum-sale of pottery, paper products and textiles from The Potter's Shed, Kodaikanal. Sponsored by The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, Chennai at CP Arts Centre, Eldams Road, 10 am to 7 pm.)

Till October 15 : Zwischenstationen (Stages), an exhibition of work by the Press and Information Bureau of the Federal Government, Germany. Photographers of the Federal

When do we see it?

Be it a landmark or not

It's the film many are waiting to see in India. It's been seen in London and New York and been greeted warmly. But in India, *Daayra* (The Square Circle) scripted by Chennai's own Tim Murari, has not found a distributor in its abbreviated form or otherwise. Which would seem a pity, going by these excerpts from reviews in the London Press.

Derek Malcolm of *The Guardian*, an old friend of Indian Cinema, chose it as his 'Film of the Week', gave it almost a quarter page (with picture) and said, "The Indian cinema is still the most prolific in the world, outmatching Hollywood. But it's had such a bad deal in this country, apart from festival screenings, that anyone could be forgiven for thinking it was either Ray or rubbish. Actually, there's rather a lot in between ... Amol Palekar's *The Square Circle*, for instance ... It was written by Timeri Murari, an old *Guardian* hand, and not intended as a hybrid between art and commerce. But, in the hands of Palekar, it certainly gets bastardised... Still this is an intriguing film, especially when Murari's script is allowed to take wing..."

"... the lead performances — from Sonali Kulkarni and Nirmal Pandey — ensure that this is a moving story about gender, desire and identity..."

"*The Square Circle* is aptly named, even if it is only half achieved. That half, however is worth seeing considerably more than anything else this week..."

Andy Richards writes in the prestigious *Observer*, "Director Amol Palekar and writer Timeri Murari offer an Indian film that does constitute some kind of breakthrough, examining sexual identity and gender stereotyping within a traditional rural society..."

"Both leads are excellent, with Nirmal Pandey... particularly fine as the film's transvestite 'miracle of nature'... The intriguing subject matter is convincingly handled, and this strange, sad road movie of sorts delicately probes complex issues, showing that marriage can be a blessing and trap, and that relationships are often forged at the intersection of romance, duty and compulsion."

Sheila Johnston says in *The Telegraph*, "*The Square Circle*, directed by Amol Palekar, is fascinating for expressing views that one is surprised to hear in a popular Indian movie; the unimportance of virginity to a woman's worth; the unappealing prospect of marriage (servitude, a production line of children, premature old age at 30, and the certainty of being cast aside for a younger replacement); and, above all, the rejection of clear-cut gender roles. For all its irritations, it commands interest for sheer curiosity value and the contortions of the plotting".

are quietly confident they can win audiences without using the eastern clichés of singing heroines, virile heroes and musical interludes..."

Giving it a three-star rating in *Film Review*, Marianne Gray feels, "The strength of the film is Pandey. This is a popular Indian movie set in contemporary India where yobbos in jeans on scooters plague innocent girls as they walk down country paths and leery women lure trade into their dens. It is rare to see a film like this, made by non-tradi-

● *The Square Circle* (Daayra), the film Chennai's own Tim Murari wrote the story for and co-produced, has recently been screened at the four metro British Councils in India and not only attracted attention but also appreciation. Many have wondered — echoing what *Madras Musings* has said from time to time — why the film has not been made available to a wider audience, especially when it has been well-received wherever it has been shown. We publish here today excerpts from some of the reviews that have appeared in the UK, reviews that range from warm appreciation to lukewarmness. But whatever the reaction, it has been a film that received attention. Sad that it is without honour in its own country and it is the British Council that has to screen it.

The *Independent's* reviewer feels, "Whether you warm to *The Square Circle* or not, it's fair to say that you won't have seen anything quite like this giddy and endearing Indian fable... *The Square Circle* is driven by an infectious buoyant spirit, and even the incongruous Indian pop songs have a pleasingly spicy aftertaste... This is mostly a sensitive exploration of sexual identity in a country where such issues aren't open for negotiation. Special mention goes to the delightful Nirmal Pandey; it takes an actor of considerable talent to elicit sympathy for a character whose idea of rape counselling is to tell the victim to stop whingeing".

"Unveiling the bra men of India" is the snazzy headline the *Evening Standard* uses for its comment: "Here's a genuine curiosity. I recommend it to young Asians or liberal parents of the same, and indeed to anyone seeking enjoyment, humour and instruction. The sound they'll hear throughout is the breaking of religious taboos and social stereotype in today's India."

"Amol Palekar's direction, Pravesh Sippy's production and Timeri N Murari's screenplay

and the more complex issues it draws upon. What does it mean to be a man or a woman? Can we ever quell sexual longing in favour of companionship? Only the individual can decide these answers which, ultimately, depend on the individual's singular strength over society's. But one thing we can be sure of, according to the film, is that man's physical strength will forever make this world a dangerous and unfair place for women.

"Ironically, however, this does not stop the eunuch, the mouthpiece of feminist argument, from wishing he was a woman, believing there's something undefinably wonderful about being a woman and that this is her saving grace."

"A moving and meditative film, *The Square Circle* pays quiet testimony to the talents of film-makers on the fringes of India's commercial film industry."

Trevor Johnstone writes in *Time Out*, "... one thing that makes *The Square Circle* so fascinating is the tension between the contemporary, international perspective of Murari's script, and the tried-and-tested direction of Amol Palekar, which struggles to contain the liberating ideas within a saleable popular format..."

"... Pandey's resourceful performance as the wise bisexual transvestite who's experienced life from both a male and a female perspective gives the film its real thematic kick."

"Certainly, screenwriter Timeri N Murari has come up with a richly resonant central conceit, but the real excitement is that you simply don't expect to see it in popular Indian cinema... Amol Palekar's direction is relatively restrained but the praise a touch too far, it's an entertaining and... unusually sweetnatured film."

In Asian Entertainment, Divya Kohli feels "... the raw landscapes of India's countryside are as instrumental to the plot as they are aesthetically pleasing. Unending stretches of beaches, wild forests, caverns and waterfalls provide the awe-some backdrop to what is essentially a philosophical look at sexuality..."

"The beauty of the film is a mixture of the story's simplicity



Nirmal Pandey (right) and Sonali Kulkarni in *The Square Circle* (Daayra).

which offers little room for manoeuvre. While Kulkarni draws our sympathy, it's Pandey's caring, pragmatic, worldly-wise performance as the resourceful tranny that really draws you into the film's imaginative sphere. Forget your preconceptions about Hindi cinema; this takes us on a touching, witty, always surprising journey through terrain that's unfamiliar and human dilemmas that aren't. Quite an achievement, in any language."

And Mansel Simpson writing in *The Gay Times* says, "This is the film which deals with gender issues as centrally as *Orlando*, while taking as its hero a transvestite..."

"Towards the end one fears that the writer, Timeri N Murari, is going to back-track, but, although the conclusion involves a death, the film rights itself in a last scene which, reasserting the truth the film-makers wish to convey, is handled with dignity and conviction. The picture provides a strange experience but a rewarding one, and it transforms Indian popular cinema. *The Square Circle* has been called a landmark film, and it is exactly that."

Answers to Quiz

1. Mother Teresa; 2. Nadeem (of Nadeem-Shravan fame); 3. Ajit Kerkar; 4. The 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment (Marathas) or the '2 Paras'; 5. Gopal K. Gandhi; 6. Steven Spielberg; 7. Pravin Thipsay; 8. B. Sivanthi Adityan; 9. The Union Jack was flown atop it at half mast on the death of a person not a part of the reigning family; 10. Athens; 11. Moscow; 12. Zaire (now Congo); 13. Patrick Rafter and Martina Hingis; 14. G.K. Mooppanar, Jayanthi Natarajan and Peter Alphonse; 15. China, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia and India;

* * *

16. The Connemara Library; 17. To mention in brochures and forms that the degrees are not recognised by competent authorities in India, like the UGC etc; 18. Bains School; 19. Re.1 and Rs. 4.50; 20. Ali Sher.

Tamil Nadu stars make national impact

The new-look Indian hockey team got a thrashing at the hands of Australia, Holland and Germany in the recently-concluded Panasonic four-nation hockey tournament at Hamburg, Germany. It became apparent that two debutant coaches, with more than half a dozen new faces in the team and just a mini-camp behind them, cannot deliver the goods in a top-class competition of this kind. On the other hand, the Under-21 side, playing in the Junior World Cup as I write, had done well to wrap up the series against the German under-21 team, beat England in an exhibition tie and win the Challenge Cup at Poznan recently. The way they shaped up during the MCC tourney in Chennai was heartening — they won that title too.

These are proud days for Tamil Nadu because Dr. Kumar, the coach of the Tamil Nadu side, has been chosen to be the deputy to Pargat Singh, who is making his debut as the Indian hockey coach. Kumar

has produced good results with the State team and has been identified as an up and coming coaching talent. His sincerity and his knowledge of modern hockey have been rightly rewarded by the IHF. We will, however, have to wait and see how he performs at the international level.

Contributing to our pride in Tamil Nadu hockey should also be the fact that out of the 30 probables nominated for the camp, six were from the state and four of them found berths in the Indian team. It is a long time since as many as four Tamil Nadu boys have been in a national hockey team at the same time. What is of significance is that all four are from Indian Bank, an institution

contributing much to sport in the State.

These four had already served the country with the makeshift Indian side which played three 'tests' against the visiting Polish team in Chennai earlier this year. Their getting the nod for a competition of a higher calibre confirms that their selection was not a flash

● by Augustine Paul

in the pan. This was again demonstrated when the four were chosen for the preparatory camp for the Aslan Shah tournament to be held in Malaysia.

Mohamed Riaz has been a regular choice since 1992 and

was in the reckoning for captaincy this year along with Anil Aldrin and Harpreet Singh. He played for Indian Airlines when he was part of the Indian Junior team. Then after a brief stint in Malaysia, he joined Indian Bank in Madras. His brother, who is with IOB, is also a State player. Their father, Mohammad Nabi, was a prominent player with the Railways. Riaz is a product of that nursery of Chennai hockey — the Madraza-I-Azam School on Anna Salai — which has turned out scores of good players over the past several decades.

L. Prabhakaran, an athletic forward, is from Thanjavur. He came into prominence when he played for the Indian Universities in the Nationals.

Since then he has won several awards for "the best forward". He played for the country in the Under-21 team which helped India to qualify for the Junior World Cup. He has three brothers, all of whom are also sportsmen.

Dinesh Nayak who was also in the team which qualified for the Junior World Cup is from Kerala. Kerala has produced stars in games like football, volleyball, basketball and athletics. But a hockey star is a rarity. The exodus of sportspersons from Kerala has helped the other states. Nayak, after failing to get admission to the SAI Sports Hostel in Tamil Nadu, was accepted by the Sports Hostel in Karnataka. He joined Canara Bank and was chosen to represent the Indian Junior side. Then he shifted to the Indian Bank, Chennai, to Tamil Nadu's benefit.

Thirumalvazhavan is from Chennai and was in the lime-light while he was playing for Pachaiyappa's College. He was selected to represent Madras University. Born into a family of hockey players — his father played for SBI and his brother for Port Trust — he learnt the game early in Adyar. He is talented and is a good example of a total hockey player. The former Indian coach Cedric de Souza predicted a bright future for him. If he is made to play either as a left half or a centre half in a strict, traditional pyramid formation, not even half his potential will be tapped. He is best when attacking in a fluid formation where players do not stick to positions.

The outcome of the Aslan Shah tournament for the Indian side and the performance of the Under-21 team in the Junior World Cup will prove crucial in selecting the Indian coaches and team for the 1998 World Cup. Tamil Nadu may well have several faces in that selection.

Where next, Paes and Bhupathi?

(By A Sports Reporter)

Two players with long Madras associations have ensured that India stays in the elite World Group of the Davis Cup tournament by eking out a great win over pre-match favourites Chile.

This time India owed it to Mahesh Bhupathi, not Leander Paes. For a few years now, tennis fans have cheered Paes' incredible affinity for scalping big names in Davis Cup duels. Bhupathi's tie-clinching win over Gabriel Silberstein was a refreshing change. In doing so, he displayed strong nerves and a big heart, winning from a hopeless position of being down two sets to love and struggling in the third set.

Paes and Bhupathi are now aiming for a spot in the World

Doubles championships for the top eight teams of the year. They are now ranked No. 5 and should clinch a spot but, says Ramesh Krishnan, "nothing should be taken for granted. The remaining tournaments of the year are to be played indoors and competition will be tough, especially at both Stuttgart and Paris which are big prize money events. Both Leander and Mahesh have not had much experience playing indoors. The lighting at each arena is different and it takes a while to get used to them."

While appreciating their doubles successes, Ramesh, however, hopes that these are not at the expense of their singles performances. "There are plenty of doubles specialists on the tour and I would hate to see them end up as one. As of

now, their doubles ranking gains them entry to all the major tournaments in the world but this means that they do not get to play enough singles matches," Ramesh feels and advises "Come next year, they may have to plan their calendars judiciously and play some lower level tournaments just to get their singles ranking higher."

Bhupathi, however, views the single-doubles conflict affecting his single points rather differently. "I agree it's a Catch 22 situation for me. Either I play the Challengers to pick up easy points and improve my singles or I compete in the big Tour events where I can play doubles with Lee but have to qualify for singles. Right now, since we are doing so well in doubles, I'll go on taking the second option. I did qualify for four of the five

Tours events in recent months, so I'm optimistic."

With an individual doubles ranking of 15 and No.225 in singles, Bhupathi's aim is to break past the 200 singles barrier by the end of the year. "I have three or four Tour meets where I'll try to qualify. If I can qualify and win two or three rounds in any one Tour event, I should get there. That's easier said than done, but if I can play like the way I did in the last three sets against Silberstein, I'll have no worries."

But then he comes back to doubles... specifically to Leander's coach Bob Carmichael. "The fact that he was World No.1 in doubles, that's a big plus for us right now."

Next year, it would seem, might be different.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



Amalgamations
Group



Apcom Computers
Ltd.



Ashok Leyland



A V Thomas
& Co. Ltd.



Bank of
Madura Ltd.

EIH
ASSOCIATED
HOTELS
LTD.



Housing Development
Finance Corp. Ltd.

HongkongBank
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited
Member HSBC Group

INDIA
CEMENTS
LTD.

KASTURI &
SONS
LTD.

The KCP
Group

Murugappa
Group



Pond's



Rane Group



The Sanmar Group



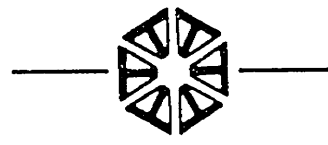
Sundaram Finance
Limited



Spencer &
Co. Ltd



Sundram Fasteners
Limited



The Taj Group
of Hotels



Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd



TVS Suzuki
Ltd.



WELCOMGROUP
Park Sheraton
Hotel & Towers