

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## Let there be light

*And perhaps that will inspire some to conserve and preserve our resources*

Teach them their District and Tamil Nadu in depth if you want them to take pride in where they live and care for it. Teach the District in Class 9, the State in Class 11, their 'holiday' years, when a few minutes taken out of each class will provide the extra time needed to learn about District and State. This was the suggestion made by the Editor of *Madras Musings* while delivering the Keynote Address at the recent 31st Annual Geography Conference of the Association of Geography Teachers of India (read 'mainly Chennai').

compassed environmental heritage, natural heritage, resource heritage, cultural heritage, anything left to us by our forefathers that we feel necessary to leave in the best possible condition for our children. All

● **by Our Education Correspondent**

these aspects of heritage could well vary from district to district, the localities where the young grow up and where, for the most part, they remain throughout their lives. But in their totality, they are part of

the heritage and the wealth of Tamil Nadu. It is to appreciate this concept, to take pride in where they live and to ensure its protection, conservation and sustainability that he was making this suggestion, the Editor of *MM* explained and urged the Association to commend it to the Education Ministry if they believed there was merit in it.

"Know your district as I know Madras that is Chennai", that should be the aim, *MM*'s Editor advocated. Know its

(Continued on Page 6)



### That which moves ... and which doesn't on our roads

Our Chennai... where that which is illegal has the manpower to move and where that which is legal does not have the horsepower to get under way and, therefore, cries for manpower. Two scenes on Chennai's roads captured within hours of each other by RAJIND N. CHRISTY. Does the state of affairs in the City need further comment?



The subject of the Conference was 'Chennai 2011 — Your Vision'. Pointing out that the other speakers, all eminent Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority planners, were all creators of plans for future development of the City and, in many cases, implementers of those visions, *MM*'s Editor warned that all their creations would come to nought if there was no sustainability thereafter. Creation is not difficult if there is the wherewithal, but sustainability and maintenance are the most difficult things in the Indian environment. An answer would have to be found to ensure both, if any vision of Chennai 2011 was to be meaningful, he stressed. A solid foundation must therefore be laid to develop heritage and civic consciousness, he urged.

His own interest may be man-made heritage, but over and over again *MM*'s Editor emphasised that heritage was much more than that, it en-

## OUR SECOND CLASS AIRPORTS

Some months ago, the then Convenor of INTACH, Deborah Thiagarajan wrote to the Chairman, Airports Authority of India, pointing out that "it is depressing and humiliating to enter India's airports... all our neighbours put us to shame. Our airports seem to want to reinforce the feeling among all Indians and visitors that all Indians, including the people in charge, are truly second class."

She went on to add, "For 28 long years, I have been waiting and hoping that someone with authority would take action to put in systems to turn India's airports into visitor-friendly places which reflect positively on the country. I cannot believe that sustained daily cleanliness of an airport can be so difficult that the solution of 'how to do it' or the will to action has evaded so many of our bureaucrats for so many years."

*...and why they cannot be made first class*

She then offered some suggestions to the Authority:

- If our labour and supervisors cannot be made to work, then send them out to the parking lots to sweep and supervise and bring in contract housekeeping into the airports. If you have to pass an Act of Parliament to contract out housekeeping, then, please do so. Contract the best local contract firm in each city, not the lowest tenders.
- Get the cleaning staff and their supervisors properly trained and work with them as trained professionals. Equip them properly. Get them properly dressed.
- with long coats over their

sarees or *salwars* and rubber gloves for bathroom work. Call them 'sanitation attendant' or something like that so they have dignity. Give everyone one space to be responsible for totally, including toilets, in each person's area.

- Have a plumber at the airport at all times.

- Make some toilets 'dry toilets', with no tap, and put a sign to the effect outside on the door.

She recently received a reply from the Member of the Authority. He states that contract firms had been utilised in the past, but, "following a Supreme Court judgement in 1996, that contract staff doing

work of a perennial nature must be employees of the parent department, in this case AAI; AAI, has ultimately had to absorb a few thousand persons who were originally the staff of contractors into AAI all over the country." So contracting is out, he indicates.

He, however, points out that AAI has taken up "the phased renovation of the toilets at the terminals at 30 major airports. On completion of the work within the next 9 months "there will be cleaner, newer facilities to the users". He also states that AAI has started training and motivational programmes for the housekeeping staff. He assured her of AAI's 'sustained efforts' to make our airports 'showcases to the world', as Deborah Thiagarajan wishes them to be.

—A Staff Reporter



# Voices in the wilderness of women's rights

With a wife and two daughters who insist on working after attaining rather greater academic excellence than he did and with an elderly maid of 15 years' standing completing the household, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears a lot more about women's rights than most men. With all four of them more than articulate, MMM is informed of all these rights in no uncertain terms.

Attempts to put that tragic eve-teasing case in perspective are shouted down. And let us not forget there is a perspective which, while outrightly condemning eve-teasing and demanding harsh punishment for eve-teasers, could still ask whether the death in this instance was caused by a deliberate act or through an accident as a consequence of unchecked-by-authority overloading of a vehicle that was allowed to, again unchecked, careen down the streets. While the debate on this gets under way. Police vigilance has increased — and this has had the four taking up another aspect of women's rights. This time it's the right to talk to whom they want where they want — and they're loud in condemning what they call "police-teasing", which results when the occasional policeman tends to go overboard... as has been reported from time to time since the drive against eve-teasers began.

But it's the extension of eve-teasing, sexual harassment of women at work and discrimination at the workplace, that's got *The Man From Madras Musings* joining their clamour. Particularly as much of the Chennai Press has not thought it fit to follow up an expression of anger and bitterness five women lawyers had given vent to recently in that leading Tamil weekly *Kumudam*.

## Apology given

The interview in *Kumudam* speaks of the crude physical behaviour of some male lawyers towards women lawyers, it mentions the women not being given a chance to tackle important cases and it alleges that they are not given much more work than keeping the records in good order. These allegations may or may not be true, but they certainly warranted investigation. Instead, the Women's Lawyers' Association felt there was no substance in the allegations and had the five apologise for showing the legal profession in a poor light.

Badri Sayeed, President of the Association, thereupon resigned and commented outspokenly on the issue. She said, "In any profession, reports of bad behaviour should not be swept under the carpet. I feel it was too harsh to ask these women to retract their statements. How are we going to attack discrimination at work if we don't in the first place take cognisance of acts of omission. To perceive discussions on the issues as 'misdemeanours' only

means that we are unable to face the problems. And without discussing them openly, we have little hope of tackling them. What hope is there then for better treatment of women in the professions?"

Whether the allegations are true or not — and why not the lawyers appoint a committee to find out? — there is no getting away from the fact that eve-teasing, sexual harassment of women at the workplace and discrimination against them in offices is a part of life everywhere in the world and a rather bigger part in India. *The Man From Madras Musings* does not believe that any profession, association or institution can honestly and categorically say that harassment of women and discrimination against them do not exist in their midst. Whatever degree exists needs to be rooted out and that is why conducting a study or investigation is necessary in cases such as this, not getting on one's high horse and taking umbrage.

## Which tourism?

A recent headline, "Rameswaram to be made tourism centre", intrigued *The Man From Madras Musings* for his view of what is tourism is unlikely to gel with the sanctity of a place like Rameswaram. A little further reading brought the discovery that the official Tourist Department view was that it should be made into a 'National Pilgrim Tourist Centre'. But then it is already a pilgrim centre, considered one of the sacred cities of India. So how much more 'national' and 'pilgrim' can you get. Improving roads, amenities and accommodation may be a great — and much-needed help — to the pilgrims that flock here, but how do you make an already existing national pilgrim centre, to which tens of thousands come from all parts of India, into a 'National Tourist Centre'? Can better-equipped Tirumala-Tirupati, one of the country's major pilgrim centres, ever be made into a 'National Tourist Centre'? The official view appears to be that it can be done — "to further boost domestic and international tourism".

NRIs and Indians settled overseas may come to Rameswaram on pilgrimage — and would welcome a much-improved infrastructure. But few other tourists from abroad and fewer non-pilgrim travellers from India are likely to seek Rameswaram unless its sun, sand and sea are exploited to develop beach resorts. MMM has always held that pilgrim centres and tourism centres are two different types of places — and ne'er the twin shall meet. For beach tourism, particularly, with its eat, drink and be merry with less on philosophy is not only unlikely to be enjoyed by those seeking spiritual solace but it is also likely to irk them.

In this context, let's by all means develop a 'National Pilgrim TOURIST Centre', then

let's keep the pilgrim and tourist far apart; let's segregate the seeker of sun, sand and sea to a corner of the island, far from the sacred areas and have strict rules for them if they choose to enter the pilgrim areas. It can be done — and successfully at that, MMM is confident, but it will need a lot of careful planning, not just a Government wish or fiat.

## Forgotten plans

When the case of Rameswaram is studied, the plans for Mamallapuram — which never were implemented — need to be looked at as part of the learning exercise, *The Man From Madras Musings* suggests. Without even a backward glance at those plans, government has already begun to talk of a 'Special Tourism Area' centred on Mamallapuram and stretching on both sides of it along the East Coast Road.

There is much to be said in favour of this thinking, but before developing these ideas further, MMM urges action on two aspects of any such plan. Namely,

- Taking a look at those several plans drawn up in the Seventies and Eighties for Mamallapuram, including a

**SHORT  
'N'  
SNAPPY**

model plan by INTACH, developing them into ONE plan and implementing THAT plan to make Mamallapuram a model beach and heritage resort, with the entire central portion cleared of everything but the monuments and a few tastefully developed amenities.

- Discussing the entire 'Special Tourism Area' plan with not only experts on the Coastal Zone Regulations but also with environmentalists, social workers, NGOs like INTACH etc to arrive at a consensus before any implementation that might run into protest, dispute or litigation gets under way.

Once these are done, and consensus achieved, Government can get private developers to go ahead with turning the Mamallapuram Special Tourist Area into an eco-friendly money-spinner for Tamil Nadu.

## Endangered landmarks

What a sorry state that landmark on the Marina, the Presidency College cricket ground, is in. To sports lovers like *The Man From Madras Musings*, it's the sorriest sight on the Marina. Yet, once, when P R

Subramaniam presided over the sports activities of Presidency College, not only was it the finest college cricket ground in the City but it was also a lush sward, every blade of it tended carefully by 'Subbu' and his dedicated team of groundsmen.

This was a ground on which some epic matches were played. And no doubt *Madras Musings* will hear about one or two from KN Prabhu one of these days. It was here too — or nearby — that the Madras Cricket Association was proposed and, in time, developed, taking over the administration of the game in the City from the sahibs. A ground fit to be considered a heritage landmark, the Presidency Grounds on the Marina cry for restoration and re-development as a lush green turf that will add colour and activity to the Marina. Or is there a reason for this deterioration? Has some Government department got its eye on this historic property, once part of the Chepak Estate of the Nawabs of the Carnatic?

Also in need of prompt restoration is *Ripon Building*, the headquarters of the oldest corporation east of Suez. The City's municipal headquarters building is one of the few buildings in the City that gets an annual coat of paint, its pristine white thus continuously being preserved. But several chunks of the building have been falling off and many areas are sorely in need of repair. A complete restoration, on model lines — NOT as being carried out at Police headquarters — is called for and MMM hopes His Worship will order it to be carried out sooner rather than later and urge his engineers to take the advice of the Archaeology Department and others familiar with the classic methods of restoration. (Also see page 3.)

## In brief

★ 'Leaf Life', an exhibition held at the Alliance Francaise recently, was a model for getting the young interested in the environment, *The Man From Madras Musings* was told. It demonstrated what a teenager interested in the natural resources about him could achieve; if there is too much out there absorb, concentrate on just one facet of it, in this case the leaves of trees, no two of which are alike. Sadly, at the inauguration and in the few days that followed, the visitors to the exhibition were, by and large, adults, MMM was told; if only children had come, or been brought in, in their numbers, it would have been a small step taken in the right direction, a step taken towards getting the young interested in the environment and getting them to do something about it.

★ Prof. Josef James of Madras Christian College has followed up his earlier work on Painting with one on contemporary Indian Sculpture, *An Algebra of Figuration*, that discusses the

work of seven sculptors who belong more or less, to the Madras Movement. The thought struck *The Man From Madras Musings* at the release function that it was remarkably coincidental that the most attention paid to the study of Mamallapuram sculpture had also been by two professors from MCC, Michael Lockwood and Vishnu Bhatt. With Lockwood having left India, a discussion between James and Bhatt on the influence of Mamallapuram on Cholamandalam would seem an interesting evening, MMM feels.

## Business briefs

★ Apollo Hospitals would like its next big hospital to be in Calcutta, *The Man From Madras Musings* understands. It's vying with Infar (India) Ltd, a pharmaceutical subsidiary of a Dutch multinational, for a 23-acre plot in South Calcutta, where once Jay Engineering manufactured the Usha sewing machine. With the Usha unit in trouble, the Shriram company's plans for recovery include moving into the space the Usha fan unit has and selling this prime property which, it figures, is worth Rs.40 crore but is offering for Rs.30 crore. Both Infar and Apollo — which plans a 250-300-bed hospital on the site at an investment of Rs. 125 crore — are bickering over the price and one suggestion has been that they divide the land between themselves and meet the suggested price. MMM is told that Apollo has been trying for the past five years to set up a hospital in Calcutta; a few years back it had discussed a joint venture with Duncan Industries of the G P Goenka Group, but those negotiations fell through a couple of years ago. It doesn't want this second chance to slip through its hands.

★ Mallika Srinivasan of TAFE is the first woman Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a historic chamber formed in 1836. Her father, A Sivasailam of the Amalgamations Group, had been Chairman in 1979 and 1980 and her grandfather, S Anantharamkrishnan, had been the first Indian member of the Committee in 1953. Mallika Srinivasan, an MBA from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, had earlier been the President of the Tractor Manufacturers' Association and the Madras Management Association. *The Man From Madras Musings* noted with interest her comments on the social responsibility of the Chamber: "The Madras Chamber should do something for Chennai... Industry should support the efforts of the Chennai Corporation in the upkeep and maintenance of the facilities in a city which has become an attractive business centre." The Chamber once played a major role in the City; MMM looks forward to a similar role being played again.

— MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE



### Jack and Jill

I was amused and interested by an item in *Quizzin with Ramanan* (MM, July 1) which said that Bad Stone Hill in Kilmerston, Somerset, has been well immortalised in the Jack and Jill nursery rhyme. I wonder what his authority is for saying so. The standard work on British nursery rhymes — and one of my most treasured books — is *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, compiled by Iona and Peter Opie and first published in 1951. No mention of any Bad Stone Hill is included in the entry concerning Jack and Jill in it. One origin mentioned (but not accepted by the authors of this delightful reference book) has a Norse origin for the rhyme, in which figure Hjuk (pronounced Juki and which would readily become Jack) and Bhili (which, for the sake of euphony and in order to give a female name to one of the children, would become Jill). Another interpretation, say the authors, is mystic, for no one in his right senses would climb to the top of a hill in the expectation of finding a source of water.

MM readers, however, might be more interested in the horror of child sacrifice that lies behind the apparently harmless and innocent *London Bridge is Falling Down* rhyme, since this has echoes in India and, in more recent times, during the building of the famous Howrah Bridge in Calcutta.

It will be readily understood that in the days before the principles of engineering were discovered — which was not until the 19th Century — building a bridge across a big river was a risky and seldom successful enterprise. Sacrifices to the River Goddess would therefore have to be made, and this would seem to have been a very wide spread practice, for the authors of the Dictionary say that when the building of the Howrah Bridge was begun in 1872, "the native population feared that to placate the river each structure would have to be founded on a layer of children's skulls". Even more recent and significant is a report in *The Hindu* (July 28, 1997) of mob violence against supposed 'child-lifters' in Bangladesh after newspaper reports that several hundred children would be required for slaughter before commissioning the great bridge over the Jumna. That bridge was opened only last month.

Fraser, in his celebrated work *The Golden Bough*, records that all over the world there were practices in which people were built into the foundations of bridges, and the nursery rhyme records that the only way to prevent a bridge being swept away is to placate the River Goddess with child sacrifice — hence the "watchman" in the rhyme. It is recorded that during World War II, when the Bridge Gate in Bremen was destroyed by bombing, workmen found the skeleton of a small child in the foundations. The practice was to put a child in such a cavity with water, bread and a candle and wall him up.

English nursery rhymes frequently originated from practices that even today would be considered unacceptably bawdy, and others, like London Bridge, in hideously evil and cruel primitive beliefs.

Harry Miller

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### Cleanliness and Godliness

Due 'for a clean-up?' Tiruvanniyur Temple'. Such a move is a step in the right direction. It is indeed sad to note that the upkeep of temples is totally neglected in the computer-world. We go for easy money and forget totally about the divine.

We go to the temple to get His blessings and forget about cleanliness. After all Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

C.R. Krishnan

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Sai Sadan,  
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### Much appreciated

I thank MM for publishing on July 1, the story about Koothupattarai and its founder N. Muthuswamy.

I saw *England and Macbett* at the Island Ground in the late eighties. They deserve appreciation.

Such articles are not available in any magazines or newspapers. They only focus on films and film actors. That is the fate of Tamil Nadu.

S. Velumani

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Chennai - 600 049.

### Equality, Indian style!

That the so-called long arm of the law our authorities boast of is certainly not long enough



The sad state the Presidency College cricket ground and its pavilion (inset) are in today. Yet, it should be a landmark in Chennai. (Pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

### A threatened landmark

I am a nonagenarian. I was one of those responsible for the formation of the Madras Cricket Association (MCA, now TNCA) and the Corporation Stadium, now Nehru Stadium, and the turf pitches prepared there for more than a decade. As the College's Physical Director, I also prepared a splendid turf wicket at the Presidency College ground for a Ranji Trophy match when the MCC ground was unfit for play because of overnight rain. It was a surprise to the cricket officials that we got Presidency College turf ready in 3 hours! What are they now doing to that splendid wicket?

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# Clear footpaths to ensure a 'Singara Chennai'

I come to the great metropolis of Chennai almost every year and stay for about one month. I have noticed a lot of changes, some of them truly praiseworthy. I find a phenomenal increase in foreign nationals living here, which speaks for itself. There is conspicuous improvement in the water supply. The roads, generally, and electric supply are also satisfactory.

However, there is one very important aspect of the city life which has deteriorated tremendously. I refer to the appalling condition of the footpaths, which really do not exist.

About 40-50 years ago, I used to break journey in Madras city on my way home (in Kerala). I still remember with disgust how the roads and footpaths were covered with human excreta, making it unusable by pedestrians. As a result, I had developed a dislike for Madras. But now I am happy to say that this situation has improved to an extent. But the condition of the footpaths and the roads is much worse.

I find that the footpaths in Chennai are totally unusable by those for whom they are meant, the pedestrians. I find their gross abuse all over the city. There is hardly a few yards anywhere free from obstructions. The footpaths have become the most convenient place to dump all sorts of things and nobody seems to give any thought to the consequences. I find garbage and rubbish everywhere, whether a bin is provided or not. Even where a bin is provided, it remains choked to capacity, spilling over to the footpath and road causing such obstruction and stench that the pedestrian is compelled to walk on the road with a handkerchief on his nose. It is a sad

pointer to the civic sense of the citizens of Chennai.

Then there are the builders who seem to have acquired a right to use the entire footpath as well as large portions of the road adjoining to the buildings under construction, to store all sorts of building materials. Some of which, like iron rods, are positively dangerous to the unsuspecting and unfortunate pedestrian. They even use the footpath as workshops to cut, bend, shape etc. the rods, causing a lot of nuisance. Concrete mixing on the road, using heavy machinery, is a common sight near the buildings under construction. You can well imagine the consequent risks to the pedestrians who are compelled to walk on what is left of the road, where modern, silent, high speed vehicles run very fast, driven even by teenagers.

Besides these, there are a host of other obstructions. The vendors of various commodities are legion, occupying large sections of the footpaths. The food vendors especially are a nuisance as they make the entire area filthy by throwing leftovers, dirty water etc., all over including the road. They, with their numerous customers, block entire stretches of the footpath from dawn to midnight.

Stray cattle, walking or sleeping, are yet another menace. Then there are some 'enlightened' citizens who, perhaps, with the misguided intention of keeping illegal occupants at bay, have resorted to the clever method of fencing the footpath adjoining their houses and converting them into private gardens. These are permanent and by the rule of "right of ownership through possession" might be claimed one day as their property if only they manage to vote the right person

to position to legalise their activities — an extension of their properties free of cost. A great idea indeed!

Another abuse which I have noticed is the use of the footpaths as cattle sheds, by the houseowners or by their servants or by 'residents' of the footpath. Other people have made the footpaths their 'homes', literally living on them in thatched shelters.

The list is endless. So let me stop here and suggest some remedies.

The Corporation should — Declare all obstructions totally illegal. — Impose deterrent penalties for violations. — Collect fines on the spot. — Make it obligatory on the part of the residents to keep the footpaths adjoining their houses free from any obstructions, and accountable for any violations. — Use force to enforce the law, if necessary. — Use the money so realised to repair, maintain and beautify the footpaths.

Further, if the rules could also provide for steep enhancement of the penalty, progressively for each day of the violation (doubling, if possible), I am sure all the obstructions will vanish in no time.

Will the Corporation take these steps to ensure a 'Singara Chennai'?

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Excerpts from a letter sent to the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai.)

### Pictorial punishment

The unfortunate death of a college student due to eve-teasing has brought this problem into focus. Many eve-teasers are well-off (as opposed to the lumpen elements) or are well-connected. One way to tackle this group is to catch a few of them red-handed and publish their photographs — along with their names and addresses and possibly their parents' and employers' — prominently in half-page advertisements in the city's leading English and Tamil newspapers. This may be a far more effective method than going through the process of prosecuting them in the courts.

It is heartening to note that there is at least one group that thinks this is a good idea. According to a news item, the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam says, "Apart from punishment to eve-teasers, their photographs should be publicised similar to the display of the photographs of criminals".

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# What have the IITs given us?

● Why should the students of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) be educated at taxpayers' expense while the country's planners neglect primary education to a level that we have become the ultimate illiterate nation?

A recent issue of *India Today* laments the tightening of state funds to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the resulting problems that this is creating for the faculties and student bodies. It invokes the evil influence of the World Bank to say that Indian "economic mandarins" now consider higher education a "non-merit good" and are withdrawing support to these institutions.

The entire tenor of the article is that this is causing unnecessary hardship. But nothing has been said about the quality of students and management of these institutions, which in many ways is appal-

lating. I am an alumnus of one of the IITs myself, yet I don't think IITs and their students should be mollified with state subsidies.

The IITs were set up in the late 1950s and early 1960s to create a pool of high quality technical personnel. But over the years, what has this pool, supported at taxpayers' expense given to the country?

In 1992-93, India's Human Resources Development Ministry was giving an annual grant of about Rs 200 crore to all IITs, according to *India Today*. Therefore, in the three decades of their creation, these institutions have received at least a few thousand crore subsidy, if not more. But a large proportion of their students have gone abroad. Where, of course, they have done quite well.

Colleagues of my own batch who had migrated to the US have, as a group, become so rich that they celebrated the silver jubilee of their graduation in 1995 in the Bahamas. I have no envy of criticism on what they did. But I just want to point out that many IIT stu-

dents have done little to serve this country. Why then should they have been educated at taxpayers' expense?

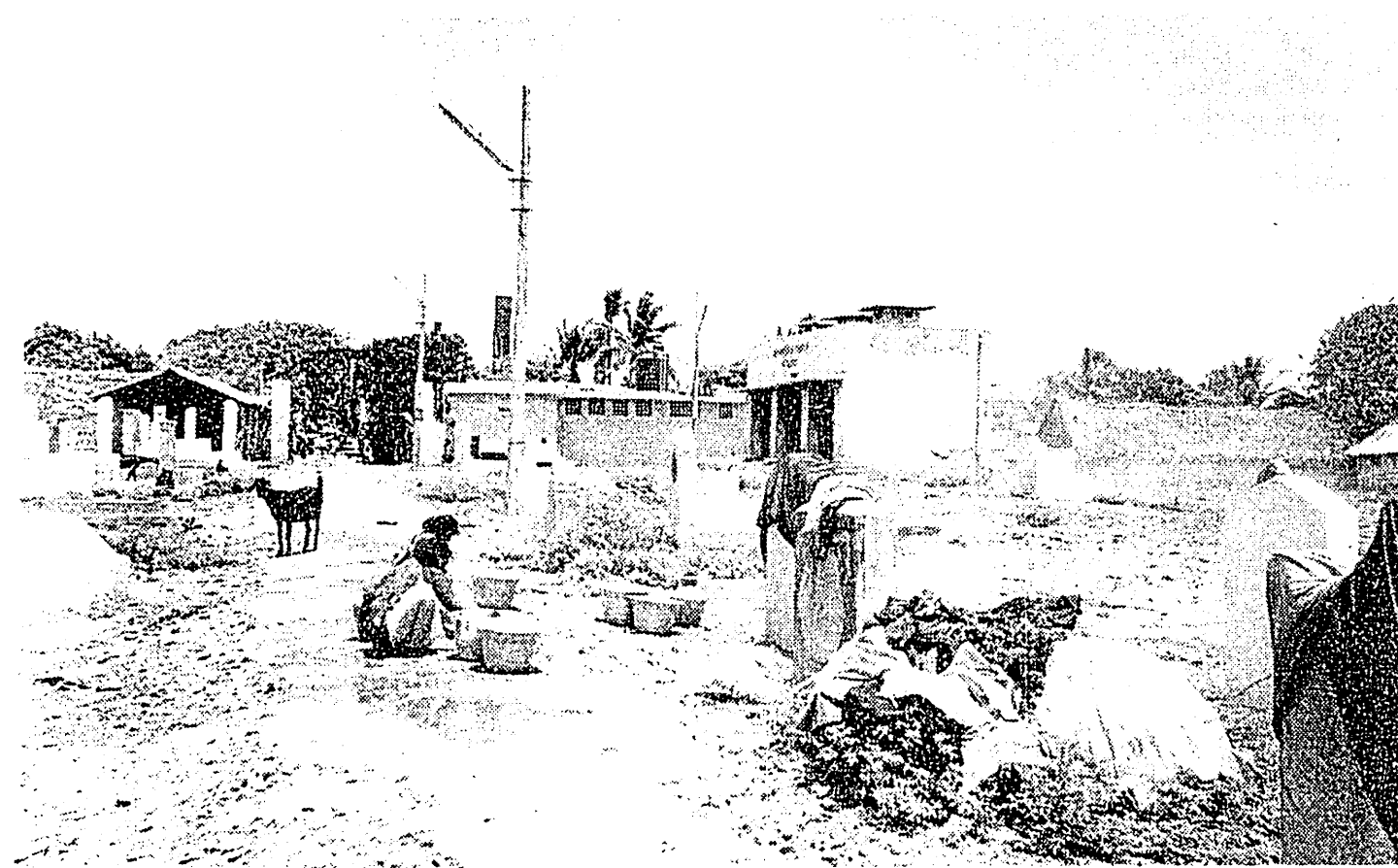
In 1993, when I went back to my alma mater, the students' group which met me asked the same question that my colleagues used to ask in the late 1960s "Do you think there is a challenge out there for such highly trained technical people like in India?" Nothing had changed in 30 years. The students have still not understood India.

What about those who stayed behind? Many tend to migrate into higher paying, non-technical jobs like management. The only people who generally tend to stay back in technical disciplines are those trained in computers and electronics, because rapid technical change has kept Indian industrialists on their toes. The reason is simple. The long years of protection gave Indian industry no incentive to pay good salaries to technical staff. The people who managed

things or fudged accounts were far more important.

The biggest failing of IITs is the culture they have bred amongst their students. Every student is acutely aware of the fact that he/she is brilliant and this breeds a conceit that is unparalleled. IIT teachers do precious little to temper this arrogance. Numerous people have walked up to me after my lectures to say that they never hire IIT students because their work culture is abysmal. They flit from one job to another in search of money or keep looking for opportunities to go abroad.

IITs have rarely attracted poor students. So why should middle-class students be subsidised? I pay my taxes to support the poor and national causes, not to support the personal ambitions of the members of the middle class. When I think back to my time, the fee was only Rs 200 a year. It has been recently raised to Rs 15,000 and is expected to go up to Rs 20,000 soon. But *India Today* also tells us that each undergraduate costs nearly Rs



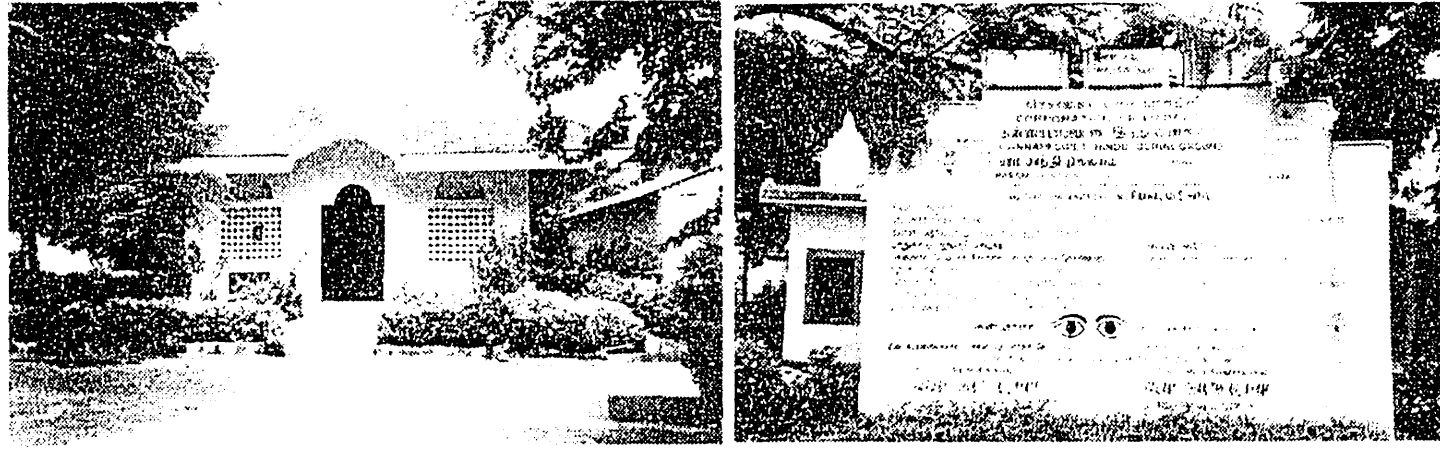
Our OLD is of a typical Madras cemetery burial ground. Like all the others, animals have a field day, humans use it for a multitude of purposes, and the dead are not allowed to rest in peace as the gnomes have a whale of a time after the bereaved leave the ground.

THE OLD... THE NEW

Our NEW is not of a well-tended garden or park with hundreds of trees but a burial ground that's been made a green haven through public commitment. The Kammapet Hindu Burial Ground, behind the T Nagar Bus Terminus, is still the "Corporation of Madras's" property, but it is looked after by the samaj of a particular community and Exnora International. The result is unbelievable: an oasis in the midst of a filthy city.

A haven of peace midst chaos. The samaj has built the lovely new prayer hall seen below, left, and now awaits the commissioning of the electric crematorium. But it also makes sure those visiting this haven know all about its activities, as the huge tablet below, right, demonstrates.

As for the OLD, why don't a group of public-spirited citizens take a page out of the Kammapet book and convert this eyesore into something beautiful? Maybe they too will be able to set an example to others. (Pictures and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



1 lakh a year. Yet it still quotes someone lamenting the hike in fees: "So much for so little"

I felt a surge of anger on seeing this. Only an extremely dishonest, double-talking, pro-rich government could have support IITs for so long and neglected primary education to a level that we have become the ultimate illiterate nation.

The management of IITs has also not been so great. The total intake of undergraduate students has remained at around 1,500-2,000 since their start. Basking in the luxury of state funds, IITs' directors have

had no desire to see their institutions grow. IITs were expected to pull other "lowly" technical institutions along with them. But no such effort was made either.

Finally, let us look at the resources IITs sit on. IITs in Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai sit astride such prime property which, if used properly, could earn them all the money they want. But few IIT directors know anything about financial management nor does the faculty understand India's economics. I have sat in on a few selection boards for professors of IITs and have always been

appalled at the kind of projects to meet the needs of the poor the professors take up, often funded by government agencies. None of these projects have any relevance to the income needs of the poor.

I remain deeply proud of my student days in IIT-Kanpur. The institution gave me pride and knowledge. And I am deeply grateful to all those professors who gave me such wonderful education. But I still do not want a single rupee of my taxes to support IITs. They are quite capable of looking after themselves — (CSE/Down To Earth Features).

## • *The scientist from Chennai* He showed new way to sight



Dr. R. Srinivasan, the Chennai scientist, who has helped give sight to thousands with his pioneering work in the U.S.

● The Editor of *Eyelight*, the house journal of Sankara Nethralaya, recently spoke to a remarkable Indian, Dr. Rangaswamy Srinivasan, the man who co-discovered excimer laser corneal refractive surgery which has allowed thousands of people around the world to see clearly without glasses or contact lenses. This is a report of that meeting in Chennai where they talked about that landmark discovery.

There are two breeds of scientists, generally speaking. The first species includes add the media happy and savvy types who easily impress us with their commanding presence and just that hint of a scholarly air. The other kind of genius is publicity shy and awkward in general company. These backroom boys are happiest holed up in their labs, comfortable in the company of impersonal microscopes and test tubes.

Dr. Srinivasan turned out to be neither. Or a bit of both maybe?

Appearances are deceptive and this could not be more true than in the case of Dr. Srinivasan. He could very easily have been R.K. Laxman's Common Man. Dr. Srinivasan was modest and matter of fact when talking about his work. His answers were not only laced with humour but revealed a clear, ordered mind, the hallmark of a man of science.

This was the man who discovered the photoablative effect of ultraviolet light. The man whom millions of people in over fifty countries around the world have to thank for

helping them get rid of their spectacles forever. Freedom at last from short sightedness. This was Dr. Rangaswamy Srinivasan, the father of excimer laser PRK (photo-refractive keratectomy)

Dr. Srinivasan started his academic life in Madras in the Sri Pennathur Subramaniam High School and later went to Loyola College where he graduated with a BSc Honours degree from the University of Madras in Chemistry in 1949. In the USA he set about earning a Ph.D. degree in protein chemistry at the University of Southern California. He then specialised in organic photochemistry at the University of

was working on ultraviolet light and its photochemical effects. Ultraviolet light has the power to alter organic compounds by a process called photodecomposition. This well-known effect was utilised by the computer industry for creating templates of the complex microcircuitry for silicon chips by a technique called photolithography.

Among the many sources of ultraviolet light used in experiments at IBM was the excimer laser. A veritable ugly duckling of its time, the first excimer was a big monster of a machine made in Germany. "It was acquired by one of my colleagues who discovered later that he

● *Thanks to the Thanksgiving turkey, a dragonfly and his hair, Dr. Srinivasan discovered that the excimer laser could make cuts with a precision at the level of microns... and, thus, a new way to provide clarity of vision was discovered.*

Rochester, New York. After a short stint at the institute now known to us as the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Dr. Srinivasan returned to the USA to join the IBM Thomas J Watson Research Centre for Physical Sciences in Yorktown Heights, New York, where he worked till his retirement in 1990. This research institute was well known not only for its favourable scientific environment but also for producing five Nobel laureates.

Because of his interest in photochemistry Dr. Srinivasan

did not know what to do with it," recalls Dr. Srinivasan, "so he gladly handed it over to me." While working on higher wavelengths of ultraviolet light, such as those produced by the excimer laser, Dr. Srinivasan found to his astonishment that not only was there a photodecomposition effect but a photoablative effect as well. The material exposed to the ultraviolet light emitted by the excimer laser was slowly being vaporised, vanishing into thin air, all this occurring at a microscopic level. Magnified hundreds of times the photoablative effect of the excimer laser looked not unlike an atomic explosion complete with a mushroom cloud, in miniature of course. "I first tried the excimer laser on biological tissue on Thanksgiving Day and the most handy biological tissue available on that day was the Thanksgiving turkey, a dish I was not particularly fond of." Dr. Srinivasan later tried the excimer laser on other tissues — a dragonfly's wing and even his own hair. The effect was visually electrifying. The laser could make precise cuts on a single hair without damaging adjacent cells. The precision was at the

level of microns. He spoke about his findings to his fellow scientists at IBM. Initially sceptical, their doubts were laid to rest after further studies proved Dr. Srinivasan right. "My lost of hair is partly due to the number of times I have had to repeat my experiment," admitted Dr. Srinivasan, a trifle ruefully.

In 1983, IBM published Dr. Srinivasan's discovery in its periodical news release. The story was picked up by the media and received much attention around the world. The natural question now was how this effect could be put to practical use. "All surgical advances in instrumentation have to do with two procedures, namely cauterizing tissue or cutting tissue, concepts that were put forward by Sushruta many centuries ago. Laser is the newest cutting instrument discovered. Several trials to explore the use of excimer laser on human tissue were initiated including attempts to remove atherosclerosis plaques on the arterial wall in human cadavers. But none of these really worked. Then, through a mutual friend at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre, I got in touch with Dr. Stephen Trokel the ophthalmologist." After several trials Drs. Trokel and Srinivasan were able to show the world the effect of excimer laser on human corneas and later its applications in correcting refractive error such as myopia by remodelling the corneal surface.

Until then, the treatment of myopia had been the well established glasses and contact lenses. Glasses were cosmetically unacceptable and contact lenses were difficult to wear and a nuisance to maintain. Many centres around the world were offering a surgical alternative called radial keratotomy or RK, first popularised by Dr. Fyodorov. Although by and large successful, RK was still a surgery and had its attendant occasional untoward result and complications. With its virtually non-surgical, safe and accurate method of correcting refractive error, excimer laser PRK quickly became the talk of

the world's ophthalmic community. With intense public interest in this new treatment, PRK spawned an industry that is now worth billions of dollars worldwide. "There are about 2200 excimer machines around the world today with about 600 in the US alone," said Dr. Srinivasan. The first modern excimer laser machine for performing PRK was introduced in India by Sankara Nethralaya in late 1993.

"Unfortunately excimer laser machines are outrageously priced," deplored Dr. Srinivasan who found this commercialism upsetting. "Cheaper models can be made in India as the country is technologically capable with no dearth of 'super-smart' people. The patent held by Dr. Trokel is valid in the USA only."

Ophthalmologists today continue to search for perfection with their sights set on a world free of refractive errors. Excimer laser PRK and its refinement LASIK (Laser Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis) comprise the state-of-the-art treatment for the correction of myopia and other refractive errors, ushering in new vistas in the fast developing speciality of refractive corneal surgery. With LASIK, recently introduced in Sankara Nethralaya, higher degrees of myopia, hyperopia and even astigmatism can be corrected with a great degree of accuracy.

In 1998, Dr. Rangaswamy Srinivasan was chosen by the American Physical Society for one of its highest honours in the field of biological physics "for the development of an understanding of the effect of intense ultraviolet light on biological materials leading to an ability to "Photoetch" tissue surfaces precisely and safely, and for his role in developing applications to medicine in angioplasty, ophthalmology and dermatology."

Dr. Srinivasan's discovery of 1983 now belongs to the world. But the man who virtually invented excimer laser surgery does not rest on his laurels. Dr. Srinivasan has moved on to newer interests in the field of genetics. By virtue of its precision cutting abilities, the excimer laser has found novel applications in cellular surgery, in vitro fertilisation, DNA fragmentation, genetic engineering and even cloning.

Notwithstanding his new found love in genetics, does Dr. Srinivasan still continue to keep track of his initial interest — PRK?

"Of course," he said without hesitation, "it's my baby."

Courtesy: *Eyelight*, Sankara Nethralaya

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## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the period July 16th to 31st. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.

1. Who is the author of the controversial Marathi play *Mee Nathuram Godse Boltoy*?
2. Which Royal family's remains were laid to rest in the family cemetery 80 years after they were murdered?
3. Nelson Mandela tied the knot, on his 80th birthday, with Graça Machel on July 18th. Of which country was she the former First Lady?
4. Which Pacific island was ravaged by a tsunami which left nearly 1500 people dead?
5. Who captured the British Open golf crown on July 19th?
6. Which was the only gold won by India at the recently concluded Asian Track & Field meet in Fukuoka?
7. Name the director of such hits as *Therav Magan* and *Vaishali* who passed away recently.
8. Name the only Indian company figuring in the global top 50 'Chemical Producers' Club.
9. Who was voted the Most Valuable Player of France '98?
10. Olympian M.K. Kaushik is the new....
11. Who has been chosen for the Rs. 2.5 Lakh Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award?
12. Name the colder cousin of El Nino that is threatening global weather patterns.
13. To coincide with which cricketing legend's sesquicentennial birth anniversary was the Diana Memorial match played on July 18th?
14. A statute to set up an international war crimes court was adopted on July 17th. Where will the court sit?
15. Name the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State who made a high profile visit to India.

16. Name the girl whose death in Chennai, as a result of eye-teasing, sent ripples across the country.
17. The platinum jubilee celebrations of which service organisation was inaugurated by the First Lady, Ms Usha Narayanan, on July 30th?
18. The closure of which school led to a clash between the management and parents, thereby attracting much media attention?
19. Deepak Banker, chairman of Kunal Engineering, has been awarded the highest civilian honour of which European country?
20. Name the city-based missionary-social worker awarded the Chevalier de la Legion D'Honneur by the French Government.

(Answers on Page 8)

# A provocative thesis

Seven sculptors associated with the Cholamandalam school — S. Nandagopal, P.S. Nandhan, S.G. Vidyashankar Sthapathy, P.V. Janakiram, C. Dakshinamoorthy, S. Dhana-pal, and S. Paramasivan, exhibited their work at the British Council recently when Josef James' review of their work, *Contemporary Indian Sculpture: An Algebra of Figuration* (OUP) was released.

His book, profusely "illustrated, contains a major essay and interviews with the seven sculptors. Of the book, E. ALKAZI writes:

"Professor Josef James presents a provocative and challenging thesis about trends in contemporary Indian sculpture, particularly that of the southern region of the subcontinent. He sees these in the context of a sculptural tradition that goes back over two thousand years and is still vital and widespread. Though mainly ritualistic, this tradition remains relevant to a much larger constituency than that enjoyed by exponents of the comparatively recent urban modernism that has been basically western in its inspiration and limited in its impact.

However, he finds in the works of the seven sculptors dealt with in this book what he refers to as a 'distinctively pictorial' and 'frontal' approach by means of which, he believes, a link has been established with the great tradition of indigenous sculpture.

In this succinct yet wide-ranging survey, Professor James discusses the seminal influence of the sculptor, Dhanraj Bhagat, whose pictorial approach was enlivened with 'intimations of a metaphysical subject matter'. He charts the course of Bhagat's sculptural concepts as they were affected by the explorations of the Spanish artist Julio Gonzalez, on the one hand, and the British sculptor, Henry Moore, on the other, whilst his own delicate drawings evoked the sumptuous austerity of the Pallava and Chola draughtsmen of the south.

Professor James' theories emerge out of a careful scrutiny of the practice of some of the most significant practitioners of the craft in India and abroad



S. Nandagopal at work

in the last fifty years. The interviews with seven Indian sculptors are delicately probing and

offer many startling insights into the often mysterious and instinctual processes of creativity. There is a sense of quiet self-assurance and clarity of purpose in the responses, based on the long and sound tradition of craftsmanship; but also one of self-questioning and unease in the face of global changes and the assault through the mass media.

This book is among the first of such scrupulous and carefully reasoned studies that he

● Josef James says: This book focuses on the work of a group of sculptors who have succeeded in making an important distinction in contemporary Indian sculpture. They have established a sculpture which is significantly at variance with mainstream Western sculpture. They have brought forward the pictorial which has characterised traditional Indian sculpture both at the classical and folk levels over the years. That they were able to accomplish this against the strength of contemporary critical schools makes the achievement considerably significant.

The development which these sculptors had advanced started in the late fifties, in the context of the Madras Movement. The Movement proclaimed an art that was "Indian in spirit and world-wide contemporary". It has taken forty years for the development to arrive at the present state of pictorial realisation, from the initiatives taken in the fifties at Madras. The work and deliberation connected with it took place mostly at the Government College of Arts and Crafts, Madras, where the sculptors had been at work either as students or as teachers. Some of it spilled over to Cholamandalam Artists' Village where three of them settled after their college days.



The cover of Josef James' latest book

## LET THERE BE LIGHT

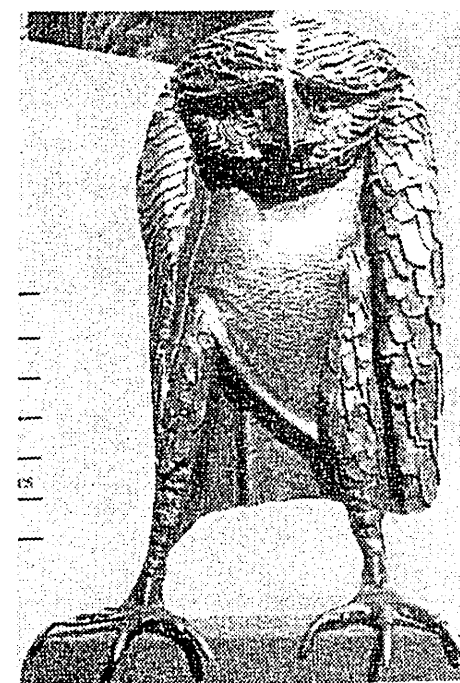
(Continued from Page 1)

history, its geography, its natural and man-made features, its resources tapped and untapped, its traditions and customs, its local cultural forms, its people and those whom it has given the State and the Nation, what makes it tick, what it lacks and what it needs. It is that knowledge which will engender pride and lead to sustainability and maintenance, he felt.

To attain this goal, the District and the State must be taught in detail in schools. And as soon as possible if 2011 is when we wish to reach sustainability. Therefore, advocated MM's Editor, use the comparatively 'easy' years of Classes 9 and 11, when some maturity has also been attained by the students, to detail this

knowledge to them throughout the State. This would need a detailed story in word and picture of each District and one for the State. It would need them in English and Tamil. And, when asked about it later, MM's Editor said, it could be taught by any teacher, not necessarily a Geography, History or Social Studies teacher, but it must be a person interested in, knowledgeable about and caring for the District besides being willing to make the study project- and outdoors-oriented. And if a good mark in those courses is linked with going up to the public exams' classes, maybe we'll get somewhere, he told this correspondent.

Later, addressing an INTACH group focussed on education, MM's Editor repeated this suggestion and was



P.V. Janakiram's Eagle

complex contemporary art scene in India demands. It provides fresh and exciting insights into contemporary creative practice and it clears the ground of many misconceptions. It makes the viewing and study of art objects an intellectually and spiritually life-enhancing experience.

# The vulnerability of nudity

Art and Nudity were very much a presence in Chennai this July. First, there was Gitanjali Kolanad's performance *Walking Naked*, based on the 12th Century South Indian woman saint Mahadevi Akka which used some interesting puppets, including one cast in ice! Then there was the highly touted Mumbai version of Art played in true Mumbai Parsee theatre style. And then there was an exhibition of 'Nudes' curated by Ranvir Shah at the Apparao Gallery. It was also a month of theatre activity. Two of my productions



Ranvir Shah curating the nude

went on the boards — *Laughing Wild*, with Kavari Lalchand was part of the activities staged by the Madras Players around

## Let's put a stop to theatre on the field!

(By the Corner Flag)

There was a lot of brilliant football in the World Cup, there was the challenge-less and suspicious eclipse of Brazil but, above all, Le Monde '98 saw what one commentator described as "The rise of the fall guy". Indeed, all the theatrical tumbling we saw would have helped enliven even the theatre of the absurd! Yet, making all the field a stage did nothing to improve the game.

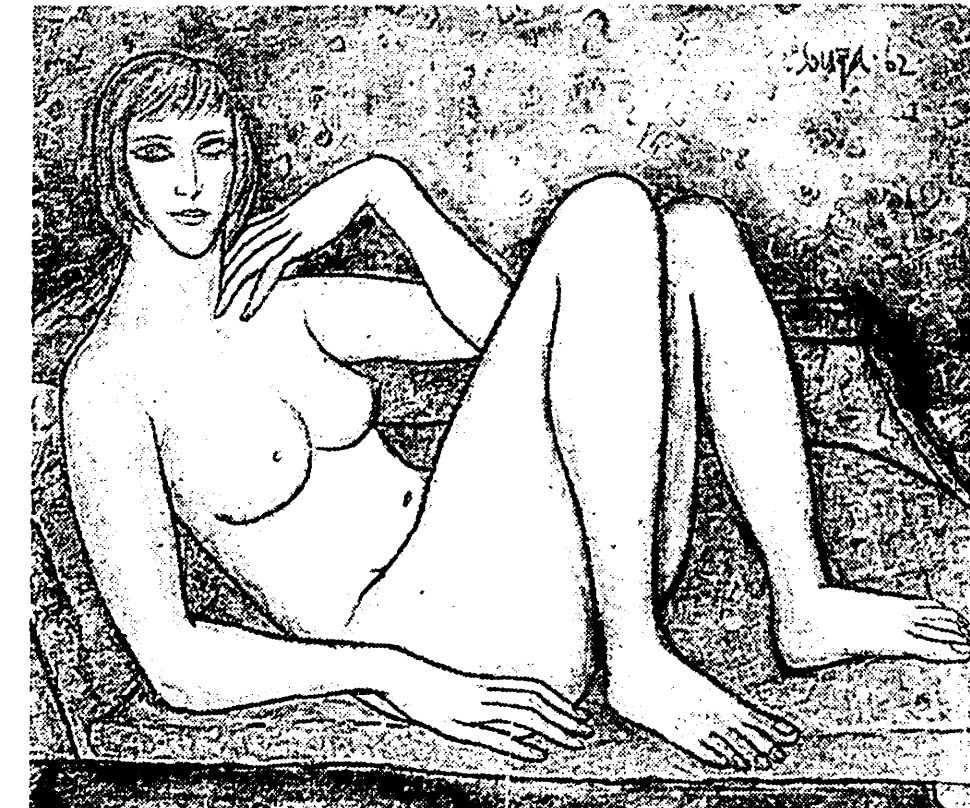
But while trying to discover the truth between an unfair tackle and a deliberate dive could tax the wisdom of the wisest of referees, there was yet another infringement which players kept getting away with more frequently and certainly marred the game more decidedly. And that was all the shirt-pulling and armholding that went on. Why referees were reluctant to take as much action for such offences as on the few occasions they did for illegal tackles and fewer occasions they did for theatrical performances is beyond the ken of *The Corner Flag*. But one thing is clear, shirt-pulling and arm-tugging must be dealt with even more severely than anything but the deliberate, go-for-the-legs tackle. Hockey has managed to handle the situation well. Why can't football?

*The Corner Flag's* answer to such offences is brutal. The first time a player is caught pulling a shirt, tugging an arm or making a tackle that does not touch the ball, he should be OUT. A couple of players thrown out of a match like that will soon bring football back to the days of Stanley Matthews, Ferenc

Puskas, Johann Cruyff and Pele. The covert illegal activities will undoubtedly continue to be tried, but there'll be much less of all that and certainly nothing of the overt action.

It must be stated that such theatricality is not confined to the fields of the muddied oafs. You also find it on the pitches occupied by the flannelled fools. There is an increasing amount of theatre being seen whenever an lbw decision is given and not a little when there is a catch behind. Here too, *The Corner Flag* thinks some brutal action is needed to get a move-on with the game.

*The Corner Flag* has suggested this before and repeats it again. To stop these lbw debates there is only one way. A batsman is given a bat to hit or play the ball with. His feet or arms, pads and gloves are not meant for that purpose. In these circumstances, a batsman should be declared OUT every time the ball hits his feet, legs or pads from the knee (guard) down, and (2) every time the ball hits his forearm, hand or gloves. Mere striking of any of these areas if declared out will put an end to much of the theatre on the pitch and will help cricket become a faster game. And if a refinement is wanted, two parallel lines from the outside of the outer stumps to a yard beyond the batting crease (like a batter's box in baseball) could help define the area where a ball-hit will command the call 'out!' Absurd, did someone say? No more absurd than all the theatre we are seeing on the fields of sport today.



A Souza oil on canvas that attracted attention

Ranvir's bedroom done entirely in black and white. It should have made it to the pages of *Inside Outside!*

In a free-ranging conversation with Ranvir (and it was not a bitch session), he explained his passion for the arts. As the curator of 'Nudes', he felt that nudity in India, especially in the metros, was something you only caught glimpses of — the sight of a woman bathing in the slums, a crack in the bathroom door, the curve of a woman's breast through a wet choli. Yet, India has celebrated the naked human body over the centuries in our temple art, so why the sudden prudery when *Penthouse* and *Playboy* were common coffee table magazines. He was quick to point out that curating can only bring out a perceived perspective. He posed the question, "If someone like Chandrakleha were allowed free access to the bronzes and sculptures available in the Government Museum, surely wouldn't we have a show that would meet international standards?" I couldn't agree with him more as the bronze gallery at the Museum cries out for the touch of a good curator.

Over the years, Ranvir has come to wear many caps. As a director, his *Monkey Grammar*

by Octavio Paz and his *Vikram Seth Retrospective* stand out. His flair for colour and texture in fabric had adorned many a show. His dress sense (which sometimes can be outrageous) has earned him the name of 'Style Guru' and his work with the Citizens' Run has brought him the title of the King of Fund Raisers. For the last run he single-handedly raised over seven lakhs!. An avid reader and art collector, Ranvir's house has become the venue of delightful 'salon' evenings where, sprawled out on ca pets, eating vanilla icecream covered with the liqueur of your choice, topics could range from the *avant garde* artists of New York, Mumbai and Chennai to serious plans on how to clean the Coom.

For Ranvir, the arts are an essential part of his psyche. When he is not pursuing his garment business, he devotes long hours on things as diverse as curating his next shows on mythology and portraiture and his dream to produce Gita Mehta's book *Snakes and Ladders* as a rock opera!

And so, while 'Nudes' may not have evoked the response it was expected to, the quintessential Ranvir will have to wait till his next show.

— Mithran Devanesan

## Dates for Your Diary

Till August 19th : An exhibition of the work of Paritosh Sen (at the Apparao Galleries).

August 19-22 : 'Fritz Lang - Film Images Example'. A photo-exhibition about the work and life of Fritz Lang (1890-1976), one of the most important and influential film directors of Germany between the two Wars (at the Lalit Kala Akademi).

August 19 : 'An Outline of Political Ethics for the 21st Century'. A lecture by Prof. Dr. Vittorio Hösle. After being an Associate Professor at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1988, he had a tenure in philosophy at the Ruhr University of Essen in 1988. Among numerous publications, his book *Morals and Politics* (1977) has gained much acclaim. He discusses the problems brought about by the modern natural sciences and appeals to the politically interested, politically active and politically

responsive citizens to seek a system (an order) or moral principles which should be based on political acts. (At Max Mueller Bhavan, 6.00 p.m.)

August 20-24 : The Max Muller Bhavan presents a retrospective of Fritz Lang films (at the Film Chamber Theatre, daily 6.30 p.m.).

August 20: *The Weary Death* (b/w, silent, English text insert).

August 21: *M* (b/w, English subtitles).

August 22: *The Nibelungen - Part-I* (b/w, silent, English insert text).

August 23: *Dr Mabuse - The Gambler* (b/w, silent, with music, English insert text, 4.15 p.m.).

*Dr Mabuse - Inferno of Crime* (6.30 p.m.)

August 24: *The Testament of Dr Mabuse* (b/w, English subtitles).

August 23-30th : An exhibition of the work of Reddappa Naidu (at the Apparao Galleries).

August 25 : Madras English Association meets to discuss 'The Century Drama' with readings from Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* (British Council, 3-5 pm).

August 28: 'City of the Future — Future of the Cities' by Tara Murali. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan, 6 p.m.)

A curtain-raiser for the symposium entitled 'Sustainable Urban Development' scheduled to take place in October.

September 2-9th: 'Myths', an exhibition (at the Apparao Galleries).

September 6: *Raga — In Search of Femininity*. At Music Academy. Concept & Choreography by Chandrakleha.



# Another Bedi?

Since the Ravi Shastri-Maninder Singh combination in the late 80s, no left arm spinner has found a settled place in the Indian cricket team. V.Raju looked like establishing himself, but was dropped for inconsistency. Utpal Chatterjee and Nilesh Kulkarni have come and gone. It is now Rahul Sanghvi's turn. But waiting in the wings is a highly talented leftarm spinner from Chennai who can also bat better than all but Shastri.

Murali Kartik, a 21-year-old, plays for Railways in the Central Zone Ranji Trophy league. Before moving to Delhi on his father's transfer in 1992, Kartik had represented the Tamil Nadu Under-13, U-16 and South Zone U-13 in the national championships. Encouraged by his father, R. Murali, Kartik joined coach Mohammed Iqbal's local clinic in his early teens. Kartik represented Book Sellers in the fourth division while still in PSBB school.

When Kartik joined SAI coach Gurcharan Singh at the National Stadium in Delhi, his medium pace was converted into spin as it was felt his short height did not suit medium pace. Kartik the spinner immediately began to catch everyone's attention with his impressive performances and, over the next few years, found himself in the Delhi U-16, U-19 and North Zone U-16 teams.

"Going to Delhi was a blessing in disguise", Kartik feels today, after practising and training alongside such cricketers as Kapil Dev, Maninder Singh, Kirti Azad and several other national and international cricketers. Says his father, currently Assistant General Manager, Bharat Overseas Bank, Chennai, "Kartik was fortunate to be exposed to such an atmosphere at a very early age."

Kartik's consistently rich hauls impressed Bishan Singh Bedi, who began to take a special interest in finetuning his skills. Despite his bagful of wickets, Kartik found himself left out of the Delhi Ranji squad. An angry Bedi ensured that Delhi's loss would be the Railways' gain. Selected for the

wicket-taker and won many a match for his sides.

Kartik's talent was recognised by the National Selectors when he was selected for the India 'A' team to play the visiting South Africans in 1996, but he was confined to the reserves bench. His biggest moment had come earlier that year when India U-19 coach Madan Lal, noticing his talent, called him to play the third and final 'Test' against the South Africa U-19 team at Kanpur. Already down 0-1, Kartik helped the home team thrash the tourists by 169 runs to level the series 1-1, returning figures of 4 for 40 and 3 for 30. In the ensuing one-day series, India U-19 won convincingly 3-0, thanks to Kartik's three-wicket hauls in

● by G. Krishnan

Railways U-19 side, before long he was in its Ranji team.

The B.Com. (Hons) student from Hindu College, Delhi, has toured England three times with private clubs. In 1994, he visited England with Gurcharan Singh's Delhi Blues captained by Maninder Singh. In 1995 he toured with Kailash Ghattani's Star CC. In 1997, he toured with Bishan Bedi's team captained by Rahul Sanghvi, whom he considers his best friend. The England trips have taught him to play in varying conditions. On each trip, he emerged as the leading

each of the first two games before retiring from the third. Though Tamil Nadu leg-spinner W.D. Balaji Rao claimed the most wickets in the entire series, it was the left arm spinner who walked away with the honours, earning praise from Madan Lal and his South African counterpart, Stephen Jones. Remarked Madan at the end of the series, "Balaji is very talented, but still has to learn a great deal about leg spin. On the other hand, Kartik bowled more intelligently and never allowed the South Africans to relax." Stephen Jones felt "Kartik made a big difference. Our boys could play Balaji Rao more comfortably than Kartik and, in our team meetings, more time was spent discussing ways to counter Kartik's bowling than anything else. The boys could not figure him out."

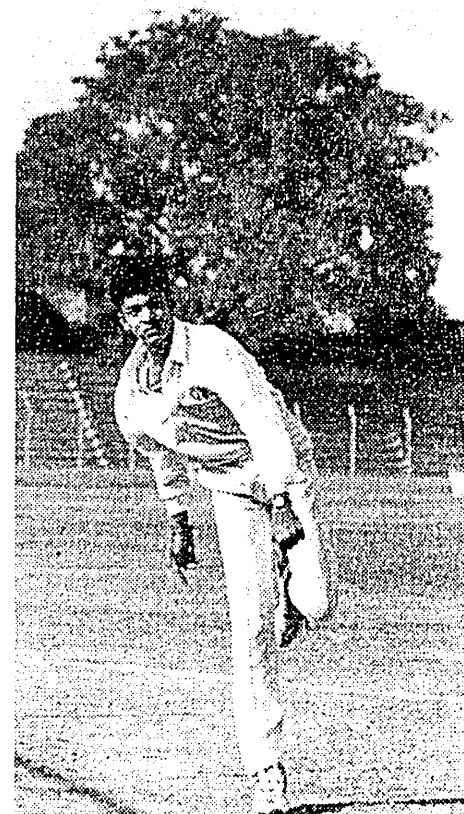
Kartik made his Ranji Trophy debut in 1996-7 and in his

very second game bowled Railways to victory over lowly Vidarbha with figures of 6 for 28 (including a hat-trick) and 3 for 27. He ended his first Ranji season with 16 wickets from six matches at an economical 19.38 runs per wicket. In his second Ranji season he took 14 wickets at 18.43 with 6 for 35, his best, ensuring an innings victory over Rajasthan. He bowled his way into the Central Zone squad for the Duleep Trophy in 1997-98.

Kartik is no mean performer as a lefthand bat. He added 143 for the eighth wicket with medium pacer Zakir Hussain (97) in the Super League against Bengal in his maiden Ranji season, scoring 74. Railways and Central Zone have now moved him up the batting order.

When Kartik began his career, he opened the bowling with the new ball, especially in the one-day matches. His former Railways captain K. Bharathan claims, "I tried him with the new ball and he succeeded with it." During his first major tour with an Indian team, Kartik opened the bowling attack with Ajit Agarkar for India 'A' in the One-Day internationals in Pakistan earlier this year. He managed to dismiss the hard-hitting Shahid Afridi cheaply in the second game, but Afridi had the better of Kartik and the other Indian bowlers in the third encounter.

Kartik's commitment to the game was demonstrated when, less than a month after losing his mother in August 1996, he spun his team, India Cements, to title victory against Hyderabad in the All-India Buchi Babu tournament with 7 for 61. His India Cements skipper V B Chandrasekhar sums up this match winner, "He is an excep-



Murali Kartik, the young left-arm spinning success in the recent Buchi Babu tournament, flights the ball.

tionally good leftarm spinner, an attacking one that is rarely found today", and was surprised that Kartik has not yet earned a senior India cap. Kartik plays for the Chandrasekhar-led Vijay CC in the TNCA premier league. Says Bharathan "He has variety, Bedi's flight and Maninder Singh's arm ball are his main weapons. He is also a sound bat and a very good fielder. He'll play for India within the next two years."

Kartik, who credits Md. Iqbal (in Chennai) and Gurcharan Singh, Bedi and Maninder Singh (in Delhi), with his progress, however, says "I listen only to Bedi sir and Maninder and rectify my mistakes talking to them. I do not want to be confused listening to many". The strictly vegetarian Kartik's hobbies include sleeping, listening to ghazals and Western music and watching cricket. Even today, he plays street cricket with his friends in his colony. Joining them is another cricket enthusiast — his younger brother, Kausik, studying XII in PSBB.

## Answers to Quiz

- Pradip Dalvi;
- The Romanovs of Russia;
- Mozambique;
- Papua & New Guinea;
- Mark O'Meara;
- Women's 4 x 100m relay;
- Bharathan;
- Reliance Industries;
- Ronaldo;
- Coach of the Indian men's hockey team;
- Sunil Dutt;
- La Nina;
- Dr. W.G. Grace;
- The Hague;
- Strobe Talbott.
- Sarika Shah;
- Guild of Service;
- Ramakrishna Mission School (North) at T'Nagar;
- France;
- Rev. Fr. Pierre Ceyac.

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