

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Transport's Promised Land
- Vale, Harry...
- Ellis Road memories
- Ploughing Champions
- Promising Under-15s

Vol. VIII No. 13

FREE ISSUE

October 16-31, 1998

Traffic plans by auto firms?

The Swedish auto company Volvo is proposing to draw up and develop a traffic plan for Bangalore in the same fashion that BMW has been planning and implementing total traffic planning for Munich. With four major vehicle manufacturers in Chennai, namely Mahindra Ford, Hyundai, Mitsubishi and Ashok Leyland, why can't we get them to take an interest in improving and strengthening the road infrastructure in the metropolis? They should be called upon to participate in the consultative process of the Sustainable Chennai Project (SChP) and invited to contribute in a big way to building and strengthening the road infrastructure, including implementation of traffic management plans. This was suggested at a recent SChP workshop in the city on 'Reduction of Traffic Congestion and Improving Air Quality'.

Other suggestions included the following:

- Rail transit, given its network and carrying capacity, should serve the greater part of the transport needs of the metropolis. The existing urban rail network should, therefore, be strengthened and extended by integrating the rail and bus transit system (physically, routewise, farewise and institutional frameworkwise) and terminate the ongoing MRTS Phase-II at St. Thomas' Mount instead of at Velachery, thus completing a rail loop. In the first stage, the MRTS corridor from Chintadripet RTS station up to Thirumylai RTS Station should have park-and-ride facilities at all stations, interchange with the rail system,

Getting them involved, one strategy suggested at workshop

improved access to the stations, landscaped canal banks and other improvements to environmental quality. Eventually, park-and-ride facilities must be provided at all stations.

- With walking now accounting for 30% of the total person trips in the metropolis, and becoming even more

● **By A Staff Reporter**

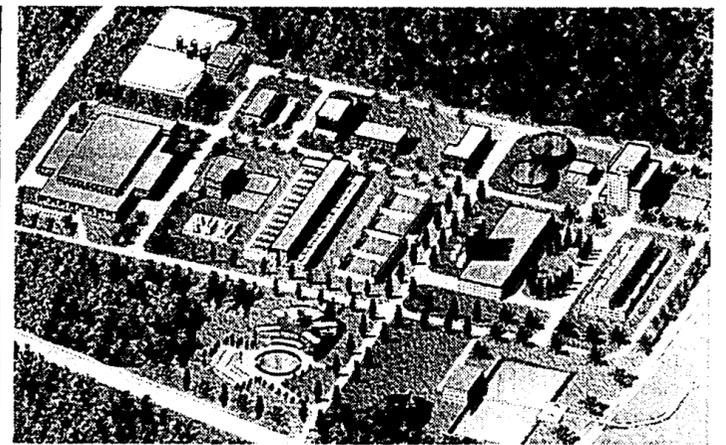
popular, future transportation planning should be focussed towards promotion of pedestrian facilities. Encroachments on footpaths on important roads should be removed. Pedestrian underpasses/overpasses should be built on all important roads, especially Anna Salai and Kamarajar Salai. Any expansion of the road infrastructure should not be at the cost of the existing pedestrian facility but should include expansion of pedestrian facilities. As a trial project to encouraging walking, it was agreed to take up improvements to the pavement along Usman Road from Panagal Park, CIT Nagar I Main Road up to the junction with Anna Salai.

- Encouragement of eco-friendly modes of transport like cycles by clearing encroachments on existing cycleways and enforcing us-

age of such cycleways. As a trial project, a cycleway from Kathippara to Ashok Pillar (3 km) is to be tried out.

- Implementation of strict licensing procedures by ensuring that people who get licences are aware of traffic rules and procedures and by ensuring punitive disciplinary action when the rules are violated. Autorickshaw drivers, particularly, to be disciplined through education and strict enforcement.
- Staggering of working hours, particularly for schools, and staggering holidays for wholesale markets.
- Implementation of the ongoing 3-year traffic action plan (TAP) needed to be speeded up. The Association of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (AIAM) are participating in the implementation of traffic management measures in cities such as Pune and Mumbai. This is an indication that, given the appropriate investment environment, the private sector will show an interest in planning and implementing transport infrastructure development. The private sector's assistance should, therefore, be sought.
- There has been a deplorable level of laxity in urban governance, particularly in the implementation of urban development projects. Similar developments are completed with a reasonable timeframe in the other metropolises, NOT in Chennai. For instance, the cattle menace has been tackled in Mumbai, Delhi and Calcutta, but implementation of action in

(Continued on Page 7)



The new Chennai water reclamation facility, as shown in an artist's rendering, is designed to produce up to 100 million litres per day of water for industrial use.

Largest water recovery plant in the world

In what will be the largest water reclamation programme of its kind in the world, the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Metrowater) is teaming with CDM (Camp Dresser & McKee) International (U.S.) to implement an innovative project involving tertiary treatment and reverse osmosis technologies for production of high-grade industrial water. When completed, the project will meet a projected demand of 100 million litres per day (mld) of water supply serving factories and processing plants in the Manali petrochemical complex in North Chennai.

Metrowater modelled its proposed programme after earlier pilot projects by two of the Manali industries, which had sought to develop reliable water supplies by reclamation during recent water shortages. The industries had developed sewage renovation facilities that reclaimed Metrowater secondary effluent by processes of tertiary treatment and reverse osmosis.

To create this expanded industrial water supply from re-

claimed wastewater, Metrowater secured a loan from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan. Following six months of intensive collaboration with Metrowater, CDM International designed a 100-mld industrial water supply facility to serve the industries of the Manali complex.

The project will convey some 140 mld (34 mgd) of treated effluent from nearby municipal wastewater treatment plants and reclaim the effluent using advanced treatment technologies to produce exceptionally high-quality water that will be suitable for nearly all industrial applications. Secondary effluent from these facilities will be pumped to a nearby site, where a new tertiary treatment plant and reverse osmosis (TT/RO) water reclamation plant will be constructed. Up to 100 mld of product water from the new TT/RO facilities will be pumped to the Manali industrial area.

According to CDM Vice President and project engineer,

(Continued on Page 6)

The way to Transport's Promised Land

They were all there at the Max Mueller Bhavan on three days recently...

... the veteran town planners and urban strategists, describing the steps they had taken to give life to the Sustainable Chennai Project, no matter the Project, due to end this month, seemed no longer sustainable;

... the younger town planners of Chennai who saw in Master Plans the hope of tomorrow, no matter that the plans had little or no people's participation;

... the veteran transport planners who saw in Rs. 300 crore projects packed with building plans for new roads and flyovers the answers to the traffic problems of the City;

... the articulate corporate types who saw a symposium on 'Sustainable Urban Development' as an opportunity for a public relations and promotional exercise, but who got irked when it was attempted to bring the discussion down to symposium level realities;

... and there were the German experts talking of a world apart, not about their experiences in Nepal and Africa and other developing parts of the world, but presenting the German approach to sustainable development and how Dresden and Berlin were being restored to landmark proportions.

But the team that *The Man From Madras Musings* found most fascinating came from Delhi's IIT and School of Economics. Putting to shame local academics and planners in language, presentation, confidence, ideas and hard work, they didn't deserve the loose use of words like "bias", gratuitous challenges like "why don't you implement it", and expressions of doubt like "I know the place; it's not like what you say it is" (this when a detailed survey plan had been presented!) that were volleyed at them by a few of the older Chennai school.

Be that as it may, the Delhi team was led by a Moses-like figure, Prof. Dinesh Mohan of IIT, who turned the symposium on its head with his plans to lead Delhi, if not the other metropolises, to Transport's Promised Land. Then there was Poonam Tiwari (IITD) who had worked with him on two of the most congested stretches of Delhi, one with 300 buses passing through per hour, and the other with 5000 cycles passing through per hour, and had some suggestions to offer, which needed testing and might in practice work. And there was Rinki Sarkar (DSE) whose worldwide study of numbers led her to the same conclusion as the others. And that was:

- On major congested stretches, ensure safe separated pedestrian pathways and cycleways, alongside service lanes; provide separate lanes with halting bays for buses; and leave cars and other motorised vehicles to fight for the rest of the congested road; they'll each find their space.

Radical thoughts

What Mohan so passionately expressed might have sounded radical to many, but there was much food for thought in what he had to say, *The Man From Madras Musings* felt. In the Delhi presentations — on transport and traffic — were, MMM thought, the only worthwhile ideas in a symposium which covered land use and management, economic and environmental sustainability, sustainable urban development, transport and traffic, and affordable housing. The Delhi contribution, best expressed by Mohan, made several significant points.

- Metros have traditionally been kept underground because the rich who claim the roads don't want to see the great unwashed. In India, too, it is only those who travel by car who advocate Metros — which not one of them will use! And they do this despite India not being able to afford a single Metro. A single Metro's cost is the equivalent of the cost of four lanes of bus traffic. So, no Metros, please!

- Traffic mix, anywhere in the world, no matter how congested, finds its own level and manages to move. Informal road rules — like blinking headlights and blinking tail-lights — soon come into general practice. A survey in Delhi found that within days of settling in Delhi, expats had got used to the informal rules in existence and had forgotten all the road rules they had been taught. Don't waste time on re-training trained drivers.

- The planners can't give up car travel nor can the vehicle manufacturers. But why can't they provide more comfortable means of transport for the public by improving technology? Bus technology must be changed; bus chassis must be developed instead of continuing to develop lorry chassis for bus use.

- The India traffic mix does not exist in the West. We must therefore NOT look to the West for solutions. We must look for solutions to suit our conditions. Congestion is part of our lifestyle. So let us make congestion more orderly by calming traffic and getting it to move slowly but more smoothly. The time differences between such movement and fast movement in an urban area over a short distance will not be all that much.
- Mobility can be ensured only by giving pedestrians and cyclists segregated inner lanes that ensure their safety and providing a third dedicated lane for high capacity buses. Cars, two- and three-wheelers etc will find their own level in the fourth, outer lane.

- Pollution can only be reduced when all cars are fitted with catalytic converters, use of clean fuels is made possible through out the metropolitan

area, four-stroke engines are introduced for 2-and 3-wheelers, and hybrid buses are developed that will, in congested areas, run on electricity.

Looking at safety

We in India always go for the multicore scheme to solve problems when inexpensive schemes are available, Mohan thundered and *The Man From Madras Musings* cheered. MMM's solution to most of the problems the seminar looked at was to instill a greater sense of discipline through a mixture of the big stick and practical education. Mohan's approach appeared to be to live with the existing conditions but implement simple inexpensive solutions that will help solve the problems even partially.

Pointing out that death on the roads in Delhi increased sharply around the Asian Games time in 1981-83 when wider roads and an increased number of flyovers both encouraged speed, Mohan showed an intriguing contrast in 1984-86 when there was the Maruti boom, yet fewer road

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

deaths. "Congestion is the best thing in the world. It slows down traffic and fewer die," Mohan advocated, how much of it said tongue-in-cheek being left to each individual's perception. Curiously, his figures for the present economic recession also indicate fewer deaths; fewer people are taking out their vehicles, he argued. But then he went on to say that 70% of the deaths in India were caused by trucks and buses. All these different stances needed some sorting out, MMM felt.

All these deaths, however, raised the question of safety. And Mohan offered simple solutions for these. Such as:

- Paint all bicycles yellow, in the factory itself.
- All motorcyclists and two-wheelers should keep their headlights on at all times, even during the day.
- Helmets are a part of the motor vehicle laws of the country. Insist on them.
- Reduce maximum speeds permitted on the city roads for cars alone.
- Segregate pedestrians and cyclists.
- Don't allow free left turns.
- Put speed governors on all buses and trucks. (Presumably these will permit higher, governed speeds once outside metropolitan limits.)
- Don't permit hangers-on at bus entrances and exits.
- Redesign bus fronts and

three-wheelers. The fronts of European buses cause fewer deaths.

There'd be at least 25 per cent fewer deaths on urban roads if these measures were carried out, Mohan was confident. Perhaps Mohan and the Chennai Police need to meet, it struck MMM.

Mohan's final point concerned what is generally called the "hawker menace". Don't oust the hawkers, he advocated. Their presence ensures less crime and greater personal safety, he felt, because it was in their interest to protect their turf and the safety of those who used it. In fact, if pedestrian pathways and cycleways were developed, they would in fact need service stops every so far and hawkers would be the best to provide the service. No pedestrian, he claimed, ever suggested the moving of hawkers; it's only those who used cars who did. In fact, what the pedestrians want removed are the subways — unless they are kept clean, protected 24 hours and serve as shopping and food malls as well.

Ever there was a cat that had been set among the pigeons, it was Mohan, felt MMM. He certainly had the younger, non-articulate part of the audience astir.

Slowing down

The enormous over-runs in the case of the two Metros already partially developed in the country came up for discussion during the 'Sustainable Cities' symposium at the Max Mueller Bhavan Land acquisition, funding difficulties and, above all, the low output of the labour have contributed to enormously expensive schemes becoming even more costly. With lack of parking facilities at many of the stations, with several stations and their environs not developed, particularly in Chennai, and with no coordination at all with the surface transport authorities, these white elephants are becoming whiter, still again particularly in Chennai. Even if one day they run to full capacity in both Chennai and Calcutta, the huge losses they have already suffered and the losses they will continue to suffer by providing user-friendly rates for tickets can only eat a hole into the railway budget, it strikes *The Man From Madras Musings*.

★ Shortly after Spencer's 100th year came to end, there also ended an era in the history of the company. *The Man From Madras Musings* records with regret the passing away of John Oakshott in England. John Oakshott, who was the last of the Oakshott family to have worked with Spencer's, was the great-grandson of Eugene P. Oakshott, who bought out his partner J W Spencer in 1882 and made J W Spencer & Co. in 1898 Spencer & Co Ltd. From then till 1974 there had always been a member or kin of the Oakshott family working with Spencer's. John Oakshott remained a small shareholder even after he left the company.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

MMM is not advocating

superfast trains for India, but can't our existing trains and tracks be got to perform to maximum capacity? What we don't need is slow trains to nowhere!

In brief

★ Even as Spencer's held its 100th AGM, two other Madras companies began their 100th year. McDowell's of Madras celebrated its 100th birthday with a glossy introduction to its Annual Report, featuring its executives and products rather than its history. The minimal historical information *The Man From Madras Musings* was able to find amidst all the colour was that the Company was founded sometime in the late 19th Century by Angus McDowell who conducted an import business. McDowell & Co, Madras, was incorporated in 1898 with a capital of Rs. 8,00,000, its principal shareholders being A.M. Hooper, G.D. Coleman and G.A. Ruppell. The company's major imports were wines, spirits, cigars, food items and tea. McDowell's 'Miss India Tea' appears to have become a favoured brand in time, when tea became a major plantation crop in South India. MMM regrets that there's even less information than this about the other company which celebrated its 100th birthday recently. Be that as it may be, MMM wishes both McDowell's and Curzon & Co, the furniture makers who have long specialised in library furniture, a Very Happy Birthday and may they celebrate many more.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

★ The magic of neem has been revealed again — this time in Udhagamandalam, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told. The JSS College of Pharmacy there, working on a Defence Research Development Organisation sponsored project, has apparently, produced a neem-based contraceptive cream and a neem-based anti-fungal cream. The contraceptive is said to be free of side-effects — and if that is found to be indeed so after meticulously monitored trials, India might well have an answer to the threat population poses it year after year.

— MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Hopes for sense

Even if there is no address written, which is deliberate, my suggestions (MM, September 16th) make sense and that is why you have even wasted space in replying to my letter. You mention that MMM is not published to find fault with any and everything. Then, what is it printed for? To sing about all the faults and nonsenses of this city for which it can both get national and international award without any competition? Most of your readers thought at least here is an outlet to address the ills of this wretched city. I hope good sense will prevail upon MM and you will publish more ills/problems.

R. Lakshmi
Chennai.

Editor's Note: Still with us, Lakshmi, we're glad. And we're glad too that you have faith in us addressing the ills of Madras that is Chennai. That we will do in our quiet way.

Shocking criticism

I was astounded to read R. Lakshmi's letter (MM, September 16th). I'm one of your many supporters and write to say (as I should have, in the past, at least once a year) how much I enjoy going through MM twice a month. No other magazine carries some of the things you do — like the space reserved for Nostalgia.

Mini Krishnan
Editor

Macmillan India Limited
21, Patullo's Road,
Chennai 600 002.

Wants it better

I fully endorse the views expressed by reader R Lakshmi, (MM, September 16th). The fact that she has been your reader ever since its beginning shows her interest in Madras as well as in *Madras Musings*, which you cannot afford to ignore.

It is obvious that Lakshmi is appreciative of the good work you are doing: she only wants it to be better.

L. Krishnamurthy
1876, C.N.K. Road, II Floor,
Triplicane, Chennai 600 005.

Wholesome reading

As a regular reader of *Madras Musings*, I find it improving from year to year, providing good and wholesome reading material for young and old alike. Thus, I was surprised and pained to read Lakshmi's letter to the Editor. The paper covers practically all aspects of Madras, old, new, civic and environmental issues, ways and means of improving our city, not to mention coverage of culture, architecture, sport and the arts. I therefore eagerly await my copy every fortnight.

Mrs. S. Rajagopal
No. 15, Rutland Gate IV Street,
Chennai 600 006.

(This ends this correspondence — THE EDITOR)

A Principal goes "gay"

• The following are excerpts from a printed letter which its recipient passed on to The Editor recently. We publish them (exactly as printed in the original) as a reminder of the state of education in our country and of the attitude of people seeking public office. Written by an M.A., M.Phil., and the head of an educational institution, anonymity, we are sure you will agree, is necessary.

As I am seeking NOMINATION TO THE SENATE from the Academic Council of the famous UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS I take pleasure in placing on your reverential table my academic accomplishments backed by a very rich and coveted teaching experience to justify my plea to vote for me.

I have put in nearly thirty one years of Collegiate teaching experience. As a colourful feather adorning my cap to glory I am heading the Department of Economics for more than twentyfive fruitful years.

I assumed the most prestigious office of the Principal of XXXXX College from June 1997 and in which capacity enriched by the greetings and good will of Exalted-Selves like your most Revered-Self I am serving the noble cause of higher education to the best and utmost satisfaction of my superiors.

politics? If so how far? Let readers ponder and answer this question?

Dr. V P N Nambiyar
AA-131 Shanthi Colony
Chennai 600 040.

A love of books

V. Sundaram's remarkable collection (MM, September 16th) reflects his passion for books.

Whenever I think of him I remember an episode in the late Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's life. When the noted philosopher went to the USSR as Indian Ambassador, he asked for a double bed. He had gone alone and the diplomatic staff were a little puzzled. The next morning, they found the Ambassador using one bed, while the twin was full of books. Yes, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan took his books to bed, read them there late in the night and slept with them. Such

His triple code of conduct (the three D's) — namely Duty, Dignity and Discipline — is an example of political wisdom and sagacity.

Do they exist in present day

A suggestion for ACME

A former Vice-Chancellor writes:

You have written in agony about ACME. There are many revival methods that can be applied to ACME.

In our city we have quite a few former Vice Chancellors who will be ready to help gratis. Together they can inject strength into ACME and make it see the light of day. Of course, only if ACME wants our help.

Dr. K. Venkatasubramanian founder Vice Chancellor, Central University, Pondicherry, Dr. V.C. Kulandaiswamy, former VC, Anna University, Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, former VC, Anna University, Dr. S.

Muthukumar, former VC, Bharathidasan University, Trichy, Dr. T.C. Mohan, VC of Annamalai University, Dr. Vasanthi Devi and Dr. Jeya Kothai Pillai, former VC of Mother Teresa University etc. etc.

This is a team that can get much from Fort St. George or South Block, Delhi, as they have no axe to grind and their requests cannot be easily turned down. Also, some of the Ministers are our old students.

I am sure if the Vice Chancellors unite in this cause, they can help get ACME off the ground. But only if ACME wants our help!

In August, 1994, I was elected to the Academic Council, University of Madras, by a huge margin. And in September, 1997 once again I became a member of the Academic Council by virtue of my Principalship. As a dynamic member of this august body I do have my active participation made in the deliberations with unsatiating enthusiasm. Never do I forget to uphold the well defined academic standards and to strive in the best interest of the teaching community.

As Student Secretary of the Planning Forum and the Economic Association of YYYYY College and as a faculty member and Director of the Planning Forum of XXXX College I organised most excellently well several Plan exhibitions and numerous Socio Economic Surveys.

I place on record with pride my laudable services as the Secretary for

As valid proof of my command over the subject concerned I had the unique opportunity of presenting a paper at

people who love books, as if they are their own kin and kin, are the real salt of the earth.

Dr. K. Venkatasubramanian
Former Vice Chancellor,
Central University, Pondicherry.

ACME's offerings

We appreciate your concern for the delay in allotment of land to ACME (MM, September 16th).

But to set the record right, we wish to advise you that apart from offering short-term courses and seminars, ACME is now offering a unique Executive MBA programme in collaboration with the Open University Business School of the United Kingdom.

ACME-OUBS Executive MBA is a three-year programme by distance learning, for working managers, based on active learning, using high quality multimedia material, with a high level of tutor support. It is for those who are over 27 years of age, graduates in any discipline from a recognised university and with at least 5 years of executive experience.

The supported distance learning process pioneered by the Open University of UK, combines academic excellence with work place relevance.

We already have a total of 60 students with us in three batches and a fourth batch of 40 students is scheduled to commence by November 1998.

S. Ramachander Director
Academy for Management
Excellence

(A Division of IFMR)
30, Kothari Road,
Nungambakkam,
Chennai 600 034.

Editor's Note: No matter how good the Open University Course offered

Blessed with the gift of the gab I could deliver special lectures at Colleges

I lifted the YYYYY College Prize for Economics twice

I go gay in penning my selection by Dr. Malcom Adises-hayya, the then Vice-Chancellor, for the Common Wealth Academic Scholarship, to pursue my Ph.D., in Economics.

My paper on 'The Role of Small Scale Industries in the Economic development of Japan and India' was published by the Department of Economics, YYYYY College. And my report comprising the Socio Economic Survey of slums in Madras was published by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

In the light of these academic achievements I appeal to you, in all humble terms to strengthen my candidature by exercising your franchise in my favour. And on my part I assure you, Sir, of my sincere services to the noble cause of higher education.

Your benign Vote in the Nomination from Academic Council to Senate is but a passport to academic excellence.

.....
.....
.....

is, that was not the prime purpose of setting up ACME. That something happened to that purpose along the way is the concern of MMM and MM.

Once so green

I refer to the observations made in *Madras Musings* about the present state of the Marina cricket ground. As an old student of the Presidency College, my memories are of a lush green ground which was the venue of several first class cricket matches. But I also remember a grass tennis court was once prepared on this green patch.

We were preparing to leave for Lahore to play the Inter-university tennis finals against Punjab and the match was to be played on a grass court. We the members of the Madras University team, mentioned to the Physical Director of the Presidency College, Mr. P.R. Subramanian, or Subbu as he was popularly known, that we would be at a disadvantage as we were not used to grass and the switch from clay to grass would definitely affect our performance. Subbu, ever helpful to sportsmen, came out with a brilliant idea. He said he would lay a grass court for us on the Marina ground. Subbu knew every blade of grass on this ground and prepared for us a court on which we practised for a few days before we left for Lahore for what turned out to be the last Inter-University final before Partition.

It saddens me today to see this barren field which was once one of the greenest playing arenas of Madras.

P.S. Seshadri
"Vijayar Vinayak"
5, Kamaraj Avenue,
1st Street, Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

Vale, Harry...

It was a dull, dreary grey, drizzly morning, much like a morn in the Swansea (Wales) where he was born, when Harry left his cottage in the Boat Club area for the last time. But as his friends bore him out of St Thomas' English Church, San Thomé, the sun came out and as he was laid to rest on that October 6th morning in the Quibble Island cemetery it was a typical Madras sun that blazed in all its glory and Harry must have smiled as he heard the echoes of "It's warm, isn't it?"

It was that warmth of Madras as much as anything else that had brought Harry Miller to the City in 1947. Over the next fifty years, almost all of which were to be spent here, Madras became Home to Harry. Significantly, Harry never considered India his home; Madras was India and India was Madras as far as Harry was concerned. Few who have cared for Madras have cared for it as passionately as Harry Miller.

His sensitive photographs of the City and its surrounds, of its people and places, its flora and fauna, his picture stories of this 'City of Neglect', his gently instructive pieces on the 'wildlife' of Madras, his friendship with 'Mountroadwallah', N S Ramaswami, and their collaboration on 'A Madras Diary' and 'Coral Strand' have all, over the decades, attested to Harry's passionate relationship with Madras. Part of that, he and Ramaswami, passed on to me when, arriving in Madras in the late Sixties, discovering Madras was just a part of my job. I owe much to them both for kindling my greater interest and concern for the City. Ramaswami I little knew, but in those early 'Aside days and then later Madras Musings' days, Harry and I became acquaintances with common interests and, then, friends with much in common, particularly expressing love of a particular subject, like Nature or the Environment, History or Madras, through storytelling.

Harry was a born storyteller and friends and acquaintances alike will remember always those evenings Harry used to hold court on the river-facing verandah of the Madras Club, martinet-like Member-Secretary of which he was for years. There, he'd help them forget the mosquitoes as he narrated story after story for hours. In the last few years, as his health became worse, late evenings on the verandah were out; early evenings in the Bar, however, were in with Harry pecking away on his laptop at his 'One Man's Madras' or a monthly book review for the prestigious

Times Higher Education Supplement, London, or a piece for some other journal abroad, but ever ready to courteously pause and relate yet another story if an early-comer stopped to say 'Hello' and ask about his health.

Almost all his life Harry's life had been affected by his lungs. Swansea 75 years ago was not the healthiest of places, especially for the lungs. Harry left school and church and choir when he was in his early teens and went to sea with the merchant marine. Sailing in the Atlantic convoys during the early days of the War, Harry discovered how frail life was. When his ship was torpedoed and he found himself in the water and then in a lifeboat awaiting rescue, the chill did little for his lungs. And then, when he was *The Hindu's* man in Pakistan, he was stricken with TB. He recovered, left Pakistan but lived the rest of his life with respiratory problems that in later life made an oxygen cylinder a permanent companion for emergencies. To Harry, it was just a nuisance, not a life-threatening problem.

Leaving the Merchant Navy when the War ended, Harry turned to journalism. And when, after Independence, he heard *The Hindu* was looking for a person to represent it in the new nation of Pakistan, he applied. After a spell in its London office, Harry landed in Madras at the end of September 1947 to make closer acquaintance with the paper. Two years and the 'consumption' followed in Pakistan and Harry came back to Madras.

Late in 1949, he and G Parthasarathy, then Assistant Editor of *The Hindu*, flew to London. On the same classless Constellation were Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his three-man team. Harry had been given by someone in *The Hindu* office in Madras "an ancient and rusty old Roliflex camera". With that he took his first photographs ever — of Nehru on the flight. It's a story Harry's told in *Madras Musings* some time ago. In London with *The Hindu*, he spent most of his time helping 'G.P.' transfer some of the Reuter's/A.P. facilities to the newly established Press Trust of India, which was to represent in London. Not long afterwards, Harry went into hospital when his lungs worsened. On recovering, Harry and *The Hindu* parted company when he needed to go to warmer climes and Harry joined the *Express* and came out to Madras. Madras was to become his India and his home.

It was the free hand that Ramnath Goenka gave him at the *Express* in Madras that helped Harry develop his photographic skills, nurture a fascination for nature and transform himself from a reporter to a storyteller. With his ability to learn new skills, whatever his age, his inborn talent and his love of adventure, he was able to become an outstanding photographer known far beyond the boundaries of India. Self-taught on fauna and flora, he was to be elected a Fellow of the Zoological Society and become an authority on fauna invited to review books on the



One of Harry Miller's favourite pictures: Harry Miller with Queen Frederika of Greece. Harry's worldwide list of friends included the Dalai Lama, members of the Greek and Spanish Royal families, and renowned science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke. (Harry had sent this picture to Madras Musings a few weeks ago to accompany an article he planned to write.)

subject for the most prestigious publications in the world. And as a storyteller he gave much pleasure to millions but, sadly, was disappointed with his local publishers whom he felt had not done their best by his delightful *A Frog in My Soup* and his early autobiography *Climb, Boy, Climb*.

In his Foreword to the first book, Arthur Clarke wrote about 'Miller of Madras', "I am not likely to forget my first visit to Harry Miller's residence, nearly thirty years ago. It was a miniature zoo (in what was then a completely rural area, the village of Thirumullaivayal — the Field of Jasmynes — Ed.). Among his many pets was a magnificent python: when he draped it round my neck it seemed to weight at least a hundred pounds."

"Since then I have visited Harry many times (usually under less traumatic circumstances) and I've always enjoyed seeing his splendid photographs and hearing his fascinating stories, many of which may even be true. He has an unparalleled understanding of India.... There must be few westerners who can match his

knowledge of this endearing and sometimes infuriating country...."

So say all of us, I wouldn't say to all of that, for Harry's India was Madras which he found endearing and with which he was often infuriated for not always being endearing. And that's why we will always remember him as Miller of Madras, a man who cared for the City.

It was Miller of Madras that his hundred or so friends said farewell to that early October morning. As voices raised in hymn and organ struggled to find unison, Harry, in that curmudgeon act he often slipped into, would have said, "That's Madras!" When he was lowered into his grave in Quibble Island, he would have infuriatedly muttered, "Do I for ever more have to watch over the desecration of this once-beautiful sanctuary, the Adyar River Reserve?" And as "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" was intoned and each of us said our last farewells to him, he would have smiled and said, "At last I'm a part of Madras forever".

Vale, Harry.

S.M.

A STOCK STOCK EXCHANGE

It is a stock exchange not lathered by the fluctuating Senses. Nor are there bulls, bears and those strange animals called FI's running amok here. Nevertheless, it is an exchange where several blue chip companies have had themselves listed to trade their stocks! Though no shares are traded here, takeover deals are also clinched here.

Welcome to JNN MaTeX Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, or simply MaTeX. But what is MaTeX? S. Yogeshwaran, Director, explains, "MaTeX is the country's first material stock exchange. Member companies can list their non-moving inventories and get a lucrative price for them." In these days of recession, holding excess/waste inventory is a costly affair. And disposing of it is also a difficult proposition.

It is here that the two-year-old MaTeX comes into the picture. For an annual member-

ship fee of Rs.22,500, companies can list their non-slow-moving stock or even their finished goods at the exchange. As all the members are computer-linked, any one in need of such items can contact the seller through MaTeX and clinch a deal.

Explaining the system, Yogeshwaran says that once an organisation becomes a member, any material, equipment and even spare capacity that it wishes to dispose of are classified and coded and entered in the on-line directory. "We have about three lakh items in our directory, which is available to members as hard copy or floppy diskettes. It can also be accessed through our on-line communication facilities," Yogeshwaran states.

While the identity of the seller is kept secret, he is informed at once of all enquiries received from other members. It is then up to the seller. "Our

role is merely to bring together the prospective buyer and the seller. The price negotiation and other terms and conditions are decided by the parties themselves. Our commission is 2.5% of the deal value," Yogeshwaran amplifies.

According to him non slow-moving inventories are not actually junk. Even goods in packed condition have been sold through MaTeX. He recalls a recent transaction when a public sector organisation was unable to find a buyer for some brass tubes it had bought in 1976 and which were lying in their original pack. "Whenever the company advertised for their disposal, it got abysmally low offers compared to the market value. But when the item came on our network, the brass tubes were sold for 70% of the market value. Naturally both parties to the deal were happy". Similarly, in another case, a pharmaceutical com-

pany was able to dispose of its brand new 500kva transformer through MaTeX for a price very close to the original cost.

Some corporates take the opportunity offered by MaTeX not only to dispose of their inventories, but also for even bigger deals. They try out this exchange to get out of loss-making lines. It is learnt that a south-based textile mill has offered its entire plant for sale through MaTeX!

MaTeX today has around 350 corporate members. The company has an MOU with the Indian Institute of Materials Management for analysing, classification and codification of goods offered on its network. MaTeX has eight domestic branches, all located in the industrial cities, and one in Dubai. Future expansion is to be on a franchisee basis.

Venkatachari
Jagannathan

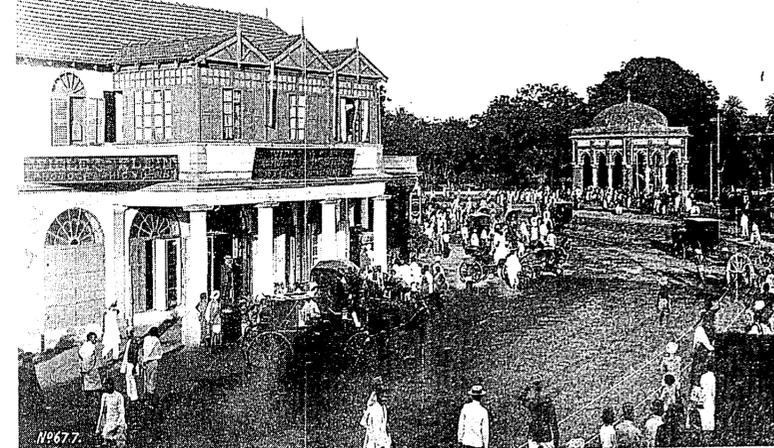
NOSTALGIA

Growing up on Ellis Road

We came to Madras in 1929, then travelled by a bandi from Central Station to Ellis Road, just off Mount Road, where father and chosen a one-storeyed house. It was close to the Mount Road Post Office where he worked and not far from St. William's on Peter's Road, a Jesuit institution run by Irish nuns. It was affordable for a growing family of five.

In those days, Madras was like a small town; its furthest boundaries did not extend beyond Adyar to the south, Royapuram to the north and Vepery to the west. We lived in the heart of the city and life flowed all round us. In front was a Muslim Colony and quite often we could hear the call of the Muezzin.

I used to be fascinated as well as dismayed by the sight of ebony-dark, strong sturdy men, heaving and straining, their muscles glistening with sweat, as they struggled in the noon-day heat to pull handcarts, heavily laden with coal, firewood and other goods. That was in the Thirties. In the late



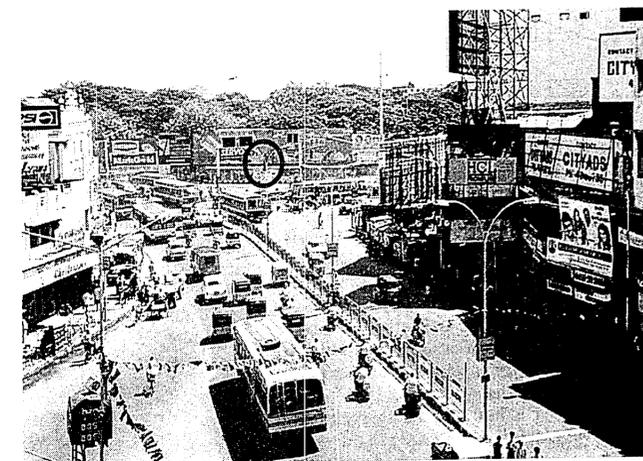
THE OLD...

...& THE NEW

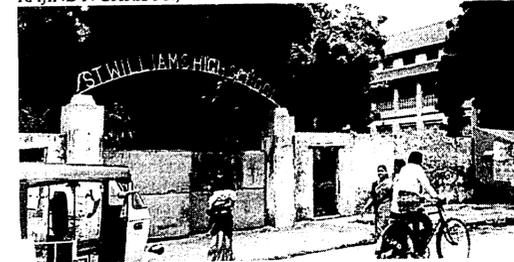
Our OLD (above) is of what was — and is still, by some — called 'Round Tana'. This picture of the horse-and-carriage days in Madras (around 1900 — before the first car arrived around 1904 and after the trams started plying, 1895) shows Round Tana on the right and Wiele and Klein, which became Klein and Peyerl, on the left. Round Tana, a 40-foot square shelter with a fountain in it was contributed to the City by the Maharaja of Vizianagaram around 1900. It was as famous a landmark in its time as Parry's Corner. The Wiele and Klein home (first floor) and studio were, in 1919, converted into the Venkatapathy Naidu building, that still survives (the tall white building, to the left, in the NEW).

The NEW is of the same area today, Anna's Statue (black circle) having taken the place of Round Tana. There was a long time gap between Round Tana being pulled down during the 1940s — the development of an underground air-raid shelter had something to do with it, it is stated — and the statue being erected in the 1970s.

The other vintage picture (below right) is of Whiteaway, Laidlaw's department store (on left) in a slightly earlier period, (note the uncovered fountain bottom left) when 8-anna Sales (as remembered by Prabhu) were very popular. Across from it is D'Angeli's Hotel, which became Bosotto's, then Airlines and is now a rabbit's warren of shops and a major Bata showroom. The OLD in this view shows Mount Road as seen heading away from Government Estate; in the view above, it heads towards that beautiful estate, which surrounded Government House. (Photographs: The OLD, courtesy Vintage Vignettes collection; the NEW, Rajind N Christy).



Ellis Road as it is today (above) and St. William's High School on 2 Peter's Road, Royappettah.... places with memories for K N Prabhu. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



ing Christ Church school. Not far off from there was a four-anna eight-anna store (Wrenn Bennett's) for cheap toys.

Right across the road, just opposite our drawing room window was a butcher's shop. As a child I was fascinated and also repelled by the sight of the carcasses strung up by the butcher and the regular clip-clop of his carving knife as he chopped the mutton for his customers. Occasionally, a horny old ram would amble down the road, spreading its rank odour through the neighbourhood. The cries of the vendors added to the symphony of street music... the curd seller crying *O, thairroo* in a high falsetto... the long-drawn *Kathiyoo* of the knife grinder who drew quite a crowd round him to watch him at work even as the sparks flew from the grindstone.

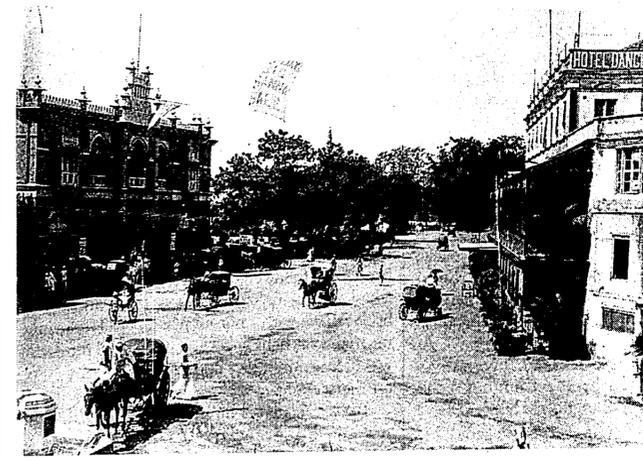
The restaurants were patronised by Tommies with their forage caps worn at a raffish angle. Everyone, from a police inspector to a railway ticket collector and station master was white-skinned, Anglo-Indian or domiciled European.

Not far from where we lived was Cinema Popular, which screened silent films. For a price of four annas you could

see Elmo Lincoln in the role of Tarzan. Talkies had yet to come and at the Elphistone there was an orchestra in the wings above, which played in tune with the theme of the film. At Cinema Popular, the interval was taken up by a song and dance show as a bejewelled painted woman went through a performance which was popular with the masses who cheered and whistled as she shuffled about the stage.

There were few cars around, most of them Baby Austins. The tram car was a popular mode of transport. It was economical and fairly dependable. The trams travelled at a fair speed, especially after they had passed Round Tana and got on to the highway stretching from Mount Road past *The Hindu's* office, where on the evening of September 4, 1939, I saw the alarming poster: "England declares war; subs sighted off Madras", past the Island ground where the British played rugby and up the Stanley Viaduct on to Central Station.

Before the Stanley Viaduct was constructed in 1938, there was a level crossing. The gates had to be closed to let local trains go by. The Viaduct made (Continued on Page 6)



Quizzin' with Ram'nan

Quizmaster V.V.RAMA-NAN'S questions are from the period September 16th to 30th. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.

1. A Beatles song lyric recently fetched a world record price of \$111,500 at Sothebys. Which song?
2. Which much hyped U.N. Treaty became a global law after Burkina Faso became the 40th State to ratify?
3. Which spacecraft became the first one to be recovered three months after it lost contact with its controllers and spun aimlessly in outer space?
4. Name the former Malaysian Deputy P.M. whose arrest sparked protests in the country.
5. Which country recently claimed its fifth Federation Cup, the women's equivalent of the Davis Cup?
6. Name the fastest woman sprinter in history who passed away on September 21st.
7. Whose record did Sachin Tendulkar beat to become the highest scorer of ODI hundreds?
8. Who is the new German Chancellor after 16 years?
9. Who is the recipient of the prestigious Gandhi Prize for 1998?
10. What path-breaking decision did the Marylee bone Cricket Club take on September 28th?
11. Who regained the World Professional billiards title at Ahmadabad on September 30th?
12. What famous four-hour 'film' went on sale, on videotape, in the U.S. on September 21st?
13. Who became the first industrialist to be nominated to the Board of Governors of SEBI?
14. What incident in the village of Narapada in M.P. on September 22-23rd triggered a nationwide shock?
15. What famous nine-year old edict was officially lifted by the Iranian Government recently?

(Answers on Page 7)

Masked Magic

It's indeed a strange quirk of fate that the word 'person' is derived from the Latin 'persona', which means 'mask'. In modern usage, however, person and mask are opposites. The mask is meant to hide the identity of the person who wears it. On the other hand, it may also reveal his true identity. A person may actually feel free to express himself when hidden behind a mask.

In India, masks are inextricably bound with the tribal way of life. Masks in every conceivable medium, be it clay, metal, wood, matting, gourd, papier mache, pith or cloth, are employed in ceremonies relating to fertility, family and community wellbeing, theatrical play; initiation, marriage propitiation and invocation of spirits and deities and a variety of rituals.

Almost all across the tribal belt of middle India as well as in many areas in the South, the mask becomes a vessel into which the deity pours out her spirit. The person who wears the mask loses his own identity and becomes temporarily a vehicle of communication for the spirit. The mask or mohara, through which the deity speaks, is made of brass in the Kulu valley of the western Himalayas. Metal masks of Panjuri or the pig deity, of Huli Devaru or tiger bhuta, and of Jumadi bhuta, are commonly made and sold in Karnataka, where they are integral to the propitiation of bhutas, the spirit deities of a regional ancestral cult.

In many areas of Bihar and

Orissa, dancers wear the Chau mask in the spring festival in honour of Nata Bhairava, the fearful dancing form of Siva, while in other festivals it is dedicated to Ardhanariswara, the composite form of male Siva and female Shakti. These clay masks covered with gauze and paper and painted in pastel colours in highly stylised features, depict various human emotions in addition to representing animals, birds, celestial beings, demons, ascetics, warriors, court dancers etc. and are important adjuncts of the Chau dancer's costume.

In tribal India, masks are found among the Gonds, Pardhans and Baigas of the

central provinces and among the Konds, Bhuiyas and the Murias. The Bhuiya masks are intended for divination before the annual hunt while the Kond masks are connected with their past practice of human sacrifice. The Muria masks are worn by boys enacting short themes from daily life, while the Gond masks are worn for dancing during weddings. The Baiga mask is worn by young men during the Chhetra festival, after the harvest and the beginning of the New Year. Begging for grain from house to house and dancing outside the Mahadeva temple with these masks at night are an important feature of the festival.



How are we to explain mankind's fascination for masks? Is it the inscrutable nature of the masks themselves, the promise they hold of worlds beyond worlds, of faces inside faces? At a time when the click of a mouse suffices to bring the whole world into your home, masks are a reminder of that still untapped, uncharted and elusive territory — the human mind. — (Courtesy: Manasthala Newsletter)

The Man behind the Mask

As a new building comes up, a familiar sight on a wall. Its bulbous eyes gleam wildly, its tongue sticks out in blood thirsty frenzy and you hastily avert your eyes. The purpose of the *drishti bommai*, the mask that wards off the evil covetous eye has been served.

In Royapuram, near the famous Vadivudayamman temple is a man named Arumugam who moulds these *drishti bommais* in a design that has come down through the years.

Arumugam is a master craftsman recognised by the All India Handicrafts Board and specialises in *papier mache*.

People seek him out with old and new designs; orders come from the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan and Poompuhar, and he's currently making figures to sell at C.P. Art Centre at a forthcoming exhibition. Keeping him company

are the *pavai vilakkus*, so popular with visitors from Malaysia and Singapore; the Andals with resplendent hairstyles, pensively holding aloft parrots; a myriad Ganesas, triumphant and overpowering, all given a sleek wood finish; the Rams, Sitas and Laxmans standing together in perfect harmony; the blindfolded figure of justice, usually seen in Tamil movies — and the newest addition, the Statue of Liberty. A rather incongruous member of this lofty circle is the *drishti bommai*.

Though the easiest to make of the lot, the *drishti bommai* is not turned out in great numbers. The pulp is rolled out like a thin chapati, pressed into a single plate-like mould, covered with paper and allowed to set. Once dry, it is sand-papered and quickly painted in lurid shades of red, pink and yellow. Even fifty or sixty can be made in a day, if

someone requires so many. But Arumugam stolidly refuses to make any if no one has placed an order. Why block my capital, he asks pragmatically.

Arumugam's wife and two daughters help him out as much as they can. His elder daughter Geeta is also an accomplished artist, doing water colours of gods and goddesses and aspiring to learn oil painting. Together, their creations speak of hours of patient toil, painstakingly gluing countless ornaments on to elephants and gods. Call it *drishti or nazar*, *pooh-pooh* if you want to, but certainly there's a grandeur about this simple man which must be the focus of envious eyes. And all those *drishti bommais* he turns out so effortlessly must be doing their bit to ward off the evil eye. — (Courtesy: Manasthala Newsletter)

NOSTALGIA

(Continued from Page 5)

for smooth running of the trams but in the process it left a painful mark on me.

While the construction was going on I had to change trams at either end of the bridge and walk through the narrow passage meant for pedestrians. While doing so I was twice caught in the rain and drenched to the bone. Being film crazy I bunked class to watch matinee shows of *Pygmalion*, on three successive days, captivated by the snappy Shavian wit and the acting of Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller. I had to pay dearly for my sins, for I had an attack of bronchitis followed by pleurisy. I had to take my Senior Cambridge exam with a porous plaster round my aching back. This was before antibiotics appeared on the scene.

I was a regular commuter to school by tramcar. The

monthly season ticket from Mylapore to Parry's was Rs.7.50 and it covered any number of trips.

Madras was to see many changes in the years to come. The snuff coloured Round Tana was demolished. It was a safe haven from which, perched on my father's shoulders, I saw the man in top hat with a Passing Show cigarette appear on the electric sign post not far from P & Orr and Sons. There was also an advertisement for White Horse whiskey which was turned off and on — as if by magic.

A couple of years in Calcutta and Vizag, followed. We then returned to Madras in December. We had gone up a stage in life and lived in a nice big house in Triplicane. We were just in time for the month of *Margazhi* and the bare-bodied *bhajan*-singers. It was an auspicious homecoming.

K.N. Prabhu

LARGEST PLANT

(Continued from Page 1)

Rod Reardon, "The project's magnitude and the unique conditions of Chennai demanded that the project team find innovative methods to apply proven technologies in order to achieve a high water quality and extend the area's limited water resources. These studies led to the selection of biological aerated filters for nitrification, lime clarification coupled with two-stage filtration for polishing of the nitrified effluent, and reverse osmosis for removal of dissolved material."

With construction underway, the industrial water production facility is scheduled to be completed in October 1999. When completed, the Chennai industrial water supply facility will be the largest in the world.

The design capacity for the facility is 100 mld — almost five times larger than any similar facility now in operation.

The reuse of municipal wastewater for industrial purposes will help Metrowater protect its groundwater supplies and provide a source of revenue for operation of the facility. In turn, the local industries will benefit from the creation of a reliable and very high-quality water supply that will allow them to continue operations during times of drought. This will both improve efficiency and reduce the operating costs for plant operations, it is expected.

Chennai's innovative water reclamation and reuse programme exemplifies the country's commitment to growth, says A. Neysadurai, CDM senior vice president and project manager.

— Alicia Burke, CDMNews



Balvir Singh ploughing his way to the championship in the TAFE tractor-driving competition.

A journey overcoming all handicaps



The team that successfully undertook the 'Expedition to Himalayas on Wheels'. In the centre, on his specially constructed bike, S Venkataraman, and flanking him, Jai Kishan, S Krishnamurthy (the team leader), J Venkatesan and E Manivannan.

(By A Staff Reporter)

S Venkataraman, who has 80% loss of mobility in his lower limbs as a result of Polio, recently travelled 1,032 km from New Delhi to Leh in just five days, riding a self-designed three wheeler (a converted Bajaj M-80)! Venkataraman, who works in the Customs, at the Air Cargo Complex, Meenambakkam, was one of a five-man team that made this adventure trip, which included crossing Taglang-la at 18,000 feet. Taglang Pass is the world's second highest motorable road.

To ensure uninterrupted fuel supply, the 'M-80' was fitted with an additional petrol tank. That, together with the weight of the large framework for the side wheel and the heavy luggage carried on the framework reduced the performance of the engine by nearly 30%. Yet Venkataraman determinedly handled roads that were steep, bumpy and slushy and long non-stop stretches of 260 km and 385 km.

The others on the trip were S Krishnamurthy, a Southern Railway Senior Auditor and the team leader, on a Suzuki Max-100, and J Venkatesan, a Chennai mechanic on a 22-year-old Rajdoot, Railwaymen

was on to Leh via Taglang-la. At Leh, on August 15th, they hoisted the national flag at a Kendriya Vidyalaya and started back the next day.

The whole journey, a private celebration of the Golden Jubilee Year of Independence, was sponsored by Castrol India Ltd., Chennai.

Ploughing a path to prizes



Vasantha Devi, the lone woman tractor driver in the TAFE contest.

It was a competition with a difference. But it was every bit as gruelling and challenging as a sports event. *Krishni Ratna* was organised by Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd. to test the tractor-handling skills of full-time farmers to whom a tractor was an essential part of their lives.

In the all-India final held at Madurai, the first prize of Rs.50,000 went to Balvir Singh of Bhatinda (Punjab). Manhar Vittalbhai Patel of Anand (Gujarat) was awarded the second prize of Rs.25,000. And Guntur's Munnagi Venkat Rama Reddy was third (Rs.10,000). Receiving a special award was Vasantha Devi a woman farmer from Erode. A member of a farming family, she was as comfortable handling tractors as many of her male counterparts, but could not qualify for the zonal finals.

The contest began with competitions in 43 centres throughout India. The winner and runner-up in each centre qualified for the zonal finals at Ajmer (North), Cuttack (East), Anand (West) and Mysore (South) and the top three finishers in each zone entered the all-India final at Madurai's Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. No farmer from Tamil Nadu finished

among the South Zone qualifiers.

The twelve finalists faced five tests. The first was the ploughing contest. Each farmer was given a 30m x 10 m piece of land and asked to plough it, each using an identical tractor. The quality of land opening, the straightness and uniformity of depth of the furrows, the level of the field, and the time taken were all judged and he who ploughed the maximum

• by G. Krishnan

portion of the land with proper usage of the tractor finished ahead of the others. Time was not a real criterion, but on an average, a contestant took 13½ minutes to till the plot.

The second test was to assess the manoeuvrability of a driver using the trailer-tractor combination. Here, the operator started from the centre of a 50 x 100 sq.ft bit of land and had to tract make a figure-of-eight with his tractor. How perfect the 8 was and the time in which it was made were noted.

There were negative marks for crossing the boundary or if a wheel touched the trailer while making the 8.

The third test was 'implement hitching'. Here, the participant had to back his tractor

up to an implement, such as a tiller, disc plough or mould board plough, and insert the lynchpins and latch the implement to his tractor. The fastest was judged the winner. The normal time taken for hitching an implement ranged from 60 to 90 seconds.

The last two tests judged the finalist's knowledge. In the memory contest, the competitors were shown ten tractor parts, then asked to list them from memory. A quiz completed the competitions. Vijayakumar Browning, Deputy General Manager (Product Promotion), TAFE, felt the contestants were least comfortable with these four tests. If a practical test, like showing them the tractor parts fitted wrongly and asking them to correct the situation, had been given, would have suited them better, felt Browning in retrospect.

Having made a beginning, *Krishni Ratna*, which derives from the ploughing competition which are well-publicised and well-attended events in American and European farm countries, will be an annual affair with more and bigger prizes in the future. The company also looks forward to more women participating.

TRAFFIC PLANS

(Continued from Page 1)
Chennai has been languishing for years.

- Rapid advances in information technology and communication systems could be exploited to the maximum to minimise the need to travel. One of the long-term decongesting measures

could be redefining the Chennai Telephones' jurisdiction by extending it up to Maraimalainagar in the south, Arakkonam in the west and Gummidipoondi in the north so that the availability of local call facilities would induce industries and the population to fan out from the city-hub.

Answers to Quiz

1. 'Hey Jude'; 2. A ban on landmines; 3. Soho, sent up to observe the sun; 4. Anwar Ibrahim; 5. Spain; 6. Florence Griffith-Joyner (or Flo Jo); 7. Desmond Haynes; 8. Gerhard Schroder; 9. Ramakrishna Mission; 10. Admit women as members; 11. Geet Sethi; 12. The Clinton testimony in the Monica Lewinsky case; 13. Kumaramangalam Birla; 14. Rape of three

nuns; 15. The *Fatwa* to kill Salman Rushdie.

16. S. Ramasubramaniam; 17. R.K. Nagar; 18. Zoo Club; 19. The platinum jubilee function organised by the Tamil Nadu Film Producers Association to honour Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi; 20. UCO Bank.

Determined to reach the top

She looks just another 12-year-old girl studying in 7th standard. She fools around with children younger than her at Chennai's Lady Andal School, and is shy and quiet with her elders. But once she enters a squash court, she is a different person, a champion in the making. That is Joshna Chinappa who shot into lime-light after winning the Singapore and Hong Kong junior open squash tournaments in one fortnight earlier this year.

Now ranked number one on the Asian under-14 circuit, Joshna made her debut in the national championships as a ten-year-old in 1996. That same year, she entered the final of the national junior tournament (under-14 category) and repeated her performance in 1997, ending up as runner-up to Mumbai's Rhea Bhandari on both occasions.

While other sportspersons, mainly cricketers, play squash to keep fit during the off-season, Joshna stretches, jogs and skips a thousand times every afternoon after school to stay trim and excel in this tiring game. As these lines were written, she was training for the junior nationals to be held Delhi in October and she intended entering the competition in both the U-14 and U-16 categories.

Joshna accompanied her father Anjan Chinappa, a former State player, to the squash courts from the time she was two. Watching him play, she picked up the racket game and was ready to enter the court by the time she was eight. She now trains with her father at

the Madras Cricket Club courts. He is her coach, mentor, guide, guardian, friend. "Till now, whatever I knew about the game and whatever experience I had, was adequate for her training. Now she has reached a level where she has to look beyond working on the basics of the game. We are looking for a proper coach to assist her," Chinappa says.

Joshna was the lone girl from India at the Singapore Junior Open. Calm and composed, she defeated competitors from Singapore and Malaysia, including the top-seeded Malaysian girl, before clinching the title. "The competition was more intense in Singapore than in Hong Kong," says Chinappa. Joshna was seeded Number 3 in Hong Kong. She lived up to her seeding and beat her opponents with ease.

Joshna did not seem particularly elated after the twin victories. Her father explains, "She never looks back. She takes each of her victories just another game and changes into her nightdress, watching television and falls asleep, the win forgotten."

Recalling her Hong Kong victory, Chinappa says what impressed him most was her maturity. To test her mental strength, he sent her alone to the tournament assuring her that she would be looked after by his friends there. "If her maturity level went up one step after the Singapore tournament, it was up ten steps after the Hong Kong success," feels her father. That is what made the Chinappas Anjan and

G. Krishnan meets two under-15-s of promise



Twelve-year-old Joshna Chinappa, now with international age-group titles to attest to her talent.

Sumitha, think of squash as a future for that talented daughter. Johna herself seems to be sports-smitteen, watching all the sports channels on TV — not MTV or the cartoon network.

She is focussed on being a top-ranking player in the world and then wants to turn professional.

Joshna is all set to enter the seniors grade even in her early teens "and that is what matters most", says Chinappa. "You try to be a national champion at 12 or 13 to make a mark in the world stage today" he explains. He is confident his daughter will become the senior national champion in the next two years and dreams of her making the world top ten before long.

With a disciplinarian mother, an encouraging father who has access to most squash associations even outside India and even more encouragingly sponsors taking interest in her, Joshna has the backing she needs. But even as she hones her skills with determination, she has not lost sight of the fact that squash is a game to enjoy.

When not on the squash court, Joshna plays basketball for her school and participates in other school activities such as quizzing and dramatics. Her hobbies are stamp collecting, singing and reading *Enid Blyton*. Doing all that is also part of the fun.

Tour improves 15-year-old's game

In the Indian Under-15 cricket team that visited England, to play three three-day 'Tests' and two one-day Internationals besides three other games, was Chennai's Srikanth Akkiraju, an XI Standard student. And his performance bodes well for the future.

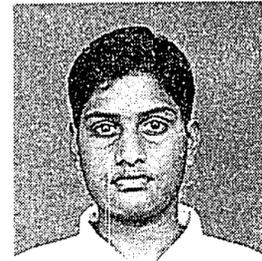
Playing in two of the three 'Tests', he scored 15, 61 and 44 not out in the three innings he played. In the lone one-dayer he was chosen for, he made 30 as India clinched the one-day series 2-0. The hosts won the 'Test' rubber 1-0.

A right-handed opening batsman who builds his innings slowly and has the ability to stay at the crease for long, Srikanth's selection came after his good performance in the Vinoo Mankad national Under-16 championship. His score of 57 against Maharashtra last season won him a place in the trials in which 50 vied for places in the U-15 team.

Selected as one of the 30 probables for the camp in Ludhiana, he won the selectors' nod by scoring well in the practice matches.

A cricketer's education is incomplete without a trip to England, Srikanth realises after the tour. He considers himself a much improved player after returning from the UK. "The experience there was totally different with the ball swinging more than in India." He learnt to stay at the crease and see the new ball off and went for his shots after the ball became old.

While the England juniors are managed by the England



Chennai's lone Under-15 cricketer to tour England with the age-group Indian team: Srikanth Akkiraju, a patient batsman.

Cricket Board, the India U-15 is not recognised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India. It is a Schools Games Federation India team.

Though the Federation is recognised by the Government of India, lack of Board recognition makes a lot of difference. In England, the young cricketers are groomed for the future by the ECB. Talented boys graduate to the next higher grade/age category. How many of the India Under-15 players who won the Lombard World Cup two years ago play first class cricket in the country today?

Srikanth, a late beginner in the game, is coached by former Tamil Nadu cricketer Abdul Jabbar and plays for a third division team in the TNCA league.

His father hopes Srikanth will do well enough to represent India under-19 in his first year in college, two years from now. How much this Don Bosco pupil gained from his learning tour to England may provide the answer to that wish.

G. Krishnan

More 'SPORT' on Page 7

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



Amalgamations Group

APCOM
Apcom Computers Ltd.



Ashok Leyland



A V Thomas
& Co. Ltd.



Bank of Madura Ltd.

DuPont Nylon

EIH ASSOCIATED
HOTELS LTD.

HDFC

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

Rane Group

SANMAR

The Sanmar Group



Sundaram Finance
Limited

FOODWORLD

Spencer &
Co. Ltd



Sundram Fasteners
Limited



The Taj Group
of Hotels



Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd

TVS-SUZUKI

TVS Suzuki
Ltd.