

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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New life for old buildings?

(By The Editor)

There is a new stirring in the tiny world of heritage conservation in Chennai. It is still early days, but the first rustles of a new wind, heard soon after the Police Headquarters building was inaugurated after restoration, are now being heard a little more clearly.

● That work is to begin shortly on the main hall of the original block of the Connemara Public Library has already been reported in these columns. (MM, October 1st.)

● That the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras is committed to restoring *Senate House* seems indicated by his recently expressed determination to appoint B Narasimhaiah, as overall supervisor of the project. Narasimhaiah, who retired recently from the Archaeological Survey of India, led the Indian team during the last three years of its work on

the restoration of the main Angkor Vat temple in Cambodia and had earlier helped in the restoration of Hampi.

● With Suresh Krishna now Chairman of the Trust in charge of the Town Hall (*aka* Victoria Public Hall), we can look forward to that small step he took in restoring a part of this building while he was Sheriff of Madras becoming several large steps in the ensuing months. A study that the postgraduate students of the School of Architecture, Guindy, have done of the Town Hall may just help those steps being taken earlier than later to restore this building as the premier theatre of Madras that is Chennai.

● The Southern Railway, *Madras Musings* hears, is getting ready to renovate its headquarters and, happier still, if we heard it right, it is beginning to

look into the possibility of restoring the Royapuram Railway Station, the City's first.

● Then there's *Ice House*, which in its avatar of *Vivekananda House* has been gifted to the Ramakrishna Mission who have expressed a commitment to its restoration — once they settle all issues with the Tamil Nadu Government on the terms of the gift.

● There's talk of *Gove Building* (VST Motors headquarters on Mount Road and built originally as Simpson's automobile showroom, *Cuddon Building*) being restored. While the old Madras Club building in *Express Estate* is still the subject of speculation while its surroundings are being cleared: Is it to be made a heritage hotel or not? And there has been a study made of the General Post Office building with a view to restoring it, if only the GPO and the Telegraphs can get together on the idea.

If a start is made on these, perhaps the authorities concerned may take a cue from the work and begin thinking of the restoration of *Chepauk Palace* (above all), *Government House*, *Ripon Building*, the High Court, the buildings in Fort St. George, the State Bank of India's Main Branch and several others.

Meanwhile, we are glad to hear a proposal in draft form for a Heritage Act has gone from the Department of Town and Country Planning to the Government. *Madras Musings* looks forward to Chief Secretary Muthuswamy, who first got work on the draft proposal underway, now taking the draft to its culmination. May we expect the Act to be enacted in the next few months?

(Continued on Page 7)

Ideas for a still safer Chennai

(By A Staff Reporter)

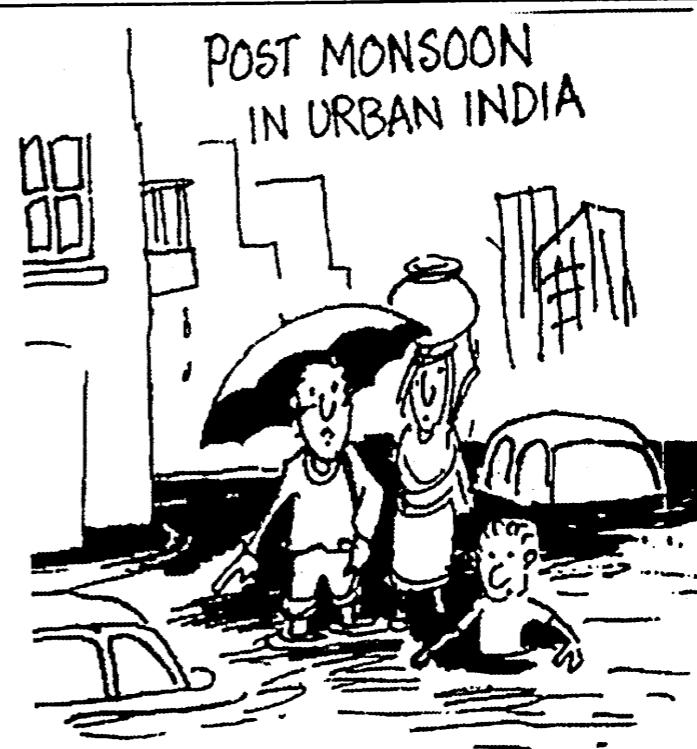
Chennai is a safer city than Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi, most of the speakers appeared to agree at an 'open house meet' organised recently by the Indian Institute of Town Planners, Tamil Nadu Chapter, to mark World Habitat Day, 1998. But each of the speakers had suggestions to offer to make Chennai a still safer city.

In metros with increasing populations, the crime rate too increases. But this has, fortunately, not been the case with Chennai, where the crime rate is down, said K Sekar, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traf-

fic), Chennai. Crime, however, existed, particularly in North Chennai. Community policing would help tackle the problem partially, he felt.

Speaking of the traffic scene, where 18 categories of traffic from cattle to humans, use the Chennai roads, the situation was still manageable though improvement was needed. Using cellular phones while driving had become a fashion and, soon, the law will be amended to discipline those who use cell phones while

A CARTOON FOR THE MONSOON



Courtesy: Down to Earth Feature Service

Climate change poses threat

The Global Climate Change is affecting people and the environment. Monsoons have become unpredictable. Global warming is a concern. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in 1996 that this is a consequence of our burning fossil fuels and destroying forests. The report warned that the effects of these could include rising sea levels as ice caps and glaciers melt, the extinction of species, increases in drought and hunger and the spread of disease.

Governments need to start seriously thinking about how we can move away from fossil fuel burning.

- Promote Alternative Sources of Energy (Wind, Solar Power etc)
- Encourage Public Transport; and
- Halt deforestation

J. Vaidyanathan,
(Hony. Secretary General)
Tamil Nadu United Nations
Association
16, Anna Avenue,
Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

NOTE THESE FACTS

- The ten hottest years on record have occurred since 1980, including 1997 which was the warmest year in the Northern Hemisphere in at least 600 years. The first half of 1998 has had record global temperatures.
- Over the last century, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 25%, the level of nitrous oxide by 19%, and the level of methane by 100%. These are the three major global warming gases produced by the burning of fossil fuels.
- Since 1900, the Earth's average surface temperature has risen between 0.3 and 0.6 degrees C. By 2100, it could rise by as much as 3.5 degrees C, a shift in temperature comparable between today and the last ice age.
- Melting ice caps and glaciers should lead to a sea level rise up to one metre by 2100. This would drown entire nations, and radically alter the world map.
- Scientists say the world needs to cut the emissions of global warming gases by between 50% and 70% just to stabilise the level of gases in the atmosphere.

(Also see page 5)

The quality of leadership

The South has always been described as conservative. This image is no longer true. Yes, the southern businessman still remains conservative, loath to project himself. But the things he has been doing are far from conservative. Take the case of TVS Suzuki. Their recent launch of TVS Spectra, the fully in-house developed state-of-the-art, four-stroke, four-gear scooter in Delhi was a spectacular event. It was world class, with the American illusionist Franz Harary making the scooter levitate before an audience of over 30,000 in the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

Delhi citizens were also treated to a magnificent fireworks display. It was such a blend of Indian and international. The fireworks were from Sivakasi and the technicians were from America.

This could very well be the first time an Indian company has put in so much thought and expense at brand building. The TVS name had to be established in the Delhi and other North Indian markets where scooters sell most. Delhi is not likely to forget the Spectra launch in the near future.

The TVS group was seen years ago as old-fashioned and inward looking. A lot of the TVS companies broke out of that mould quite sometime ago. Venu Srinivasan of TVS Suzuki has shown that he is as growth-oriented and daring as the best in India. TVS Suzuki, after some starting troubles, has never looked back and is today the Number Two, just behind the formidable Bajaj in the two-wheeler industry. Srinivasan has now moved into Bajaj territory by launching a scooter.

The other recent feather in Srinivasan's cap is the award of

the Deming prize for Total Quality Management (TQM) to the brakes division of Sundaram Clayton. Sundaram Clayton, another TVS company Srinivasan manages, is a near monopoly manufacturer of air braking systems for commercial vehicles.

Srinivasan, who is a great admirer of Japanese management techniques, decided to go in for TQM during the late Eighties. The commercial vehicle industry was going through a slowdown then, as it is now. The Deming prize crowns the decade-long efforts at Sundaram Clayton.

What is so special about the prize? It is one of the ultimate awards which can be given to a company by the Japanese. It recognises a company's achievement in distinctive performance improvements through the application of company-wide quality control. How prestigious the award is can be understood by the fact that Sundaram Clayton is the first Indian company to receive the Deming prize and only three companies outside Japan have received this prize.

The other TVS company which is also charging ahead of others in the quality race is Sundram Fasteners, the leading manufacturer of industrial fasteners in the country. Its chairman, Suresh Krishna, has always been obsessed with quality. Under his leadership, after six years of hard work, the company has bagged the TPM award from Japan. This is also another exclusive Japanese award for Total Productivity Maintenance.

Sundram Fasteners is the second Indian company to receive this award. However, Sundram Fasteners is the first and only Indian company to become a dedicated supplier of radiator caps to the US automobile giant, General Motors. For the second consecutive year it has been named the 'Supplier of the Year' by GM. The company is one of 170 chosen from 30,000 suppliers from around the world. To become a 'Supplier of the Year,' a company has to fulfil stringent parameters of price, delivery and needlessness to say, quality.

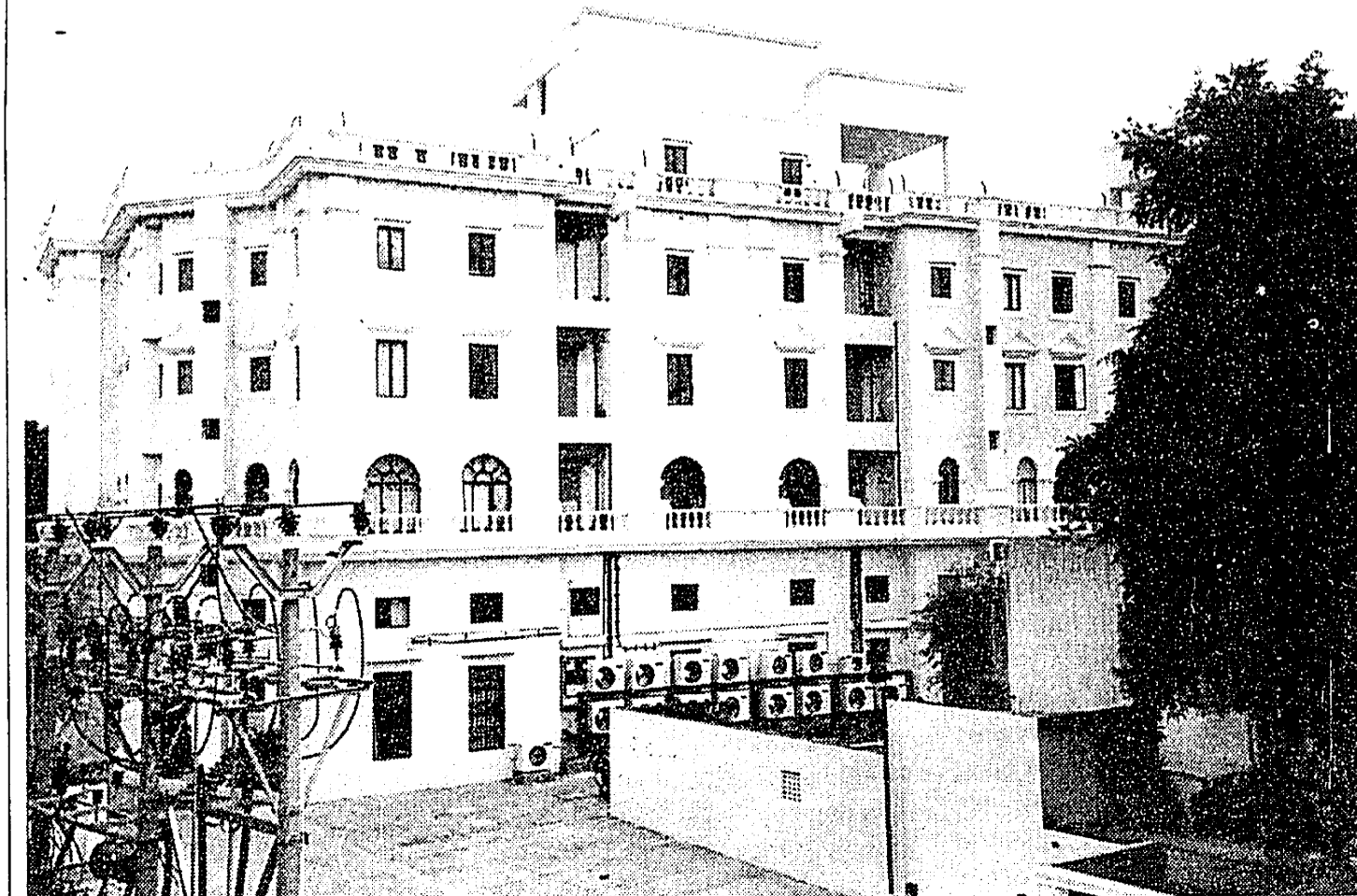
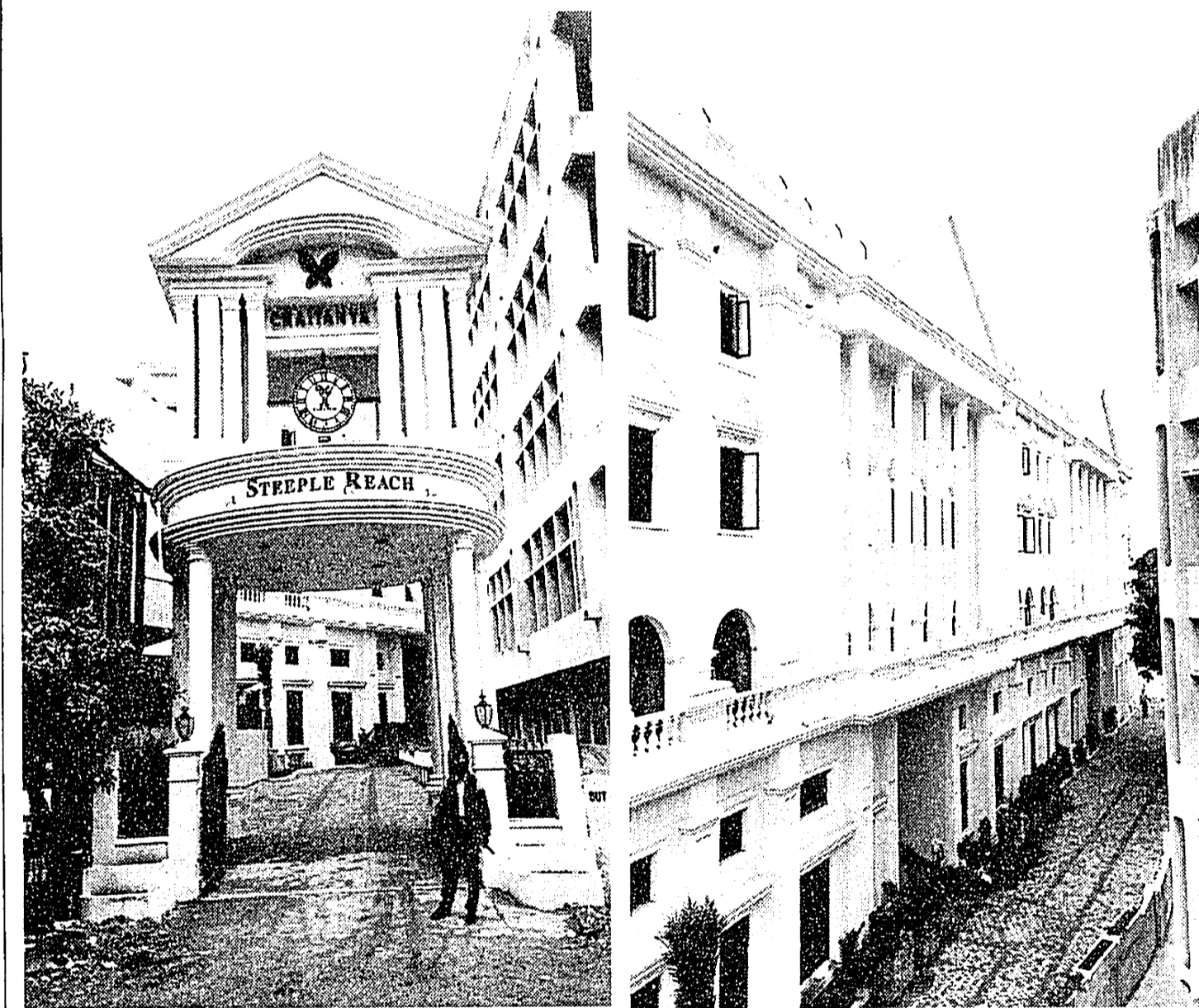
It can honestly be said after these achievements that Chennai has become the leader in the quality movement in India.

—SR



Our OLD (above) is a building in Jaipur style, much of its beauty hidden by the signboards of its occupants. The building was built around the turn of the century by the Anjuman Trust, which was created in 1885 and which, in 1904, began running an Industrial Training Institute here. The Institute moved round the corner, into the Viscountess Goschen Hostel, and the India Silk House occupied the Jaipur-styled building in 1947. On the first floor there used to be the renowned India Coffee House 'tiffin-room' till it closed down in the 1960s and provided additional space for India Silk House. The domed roof-top pavilions of Jaipur architecture found in this building are reflected in a newer building (above right), a commercial highrise that has been in the building in Adyar for the past couple of years. Apart from the pavilions, another Jaipur feature are the sheltered balconies — but the garish colours of the building, preferred to the traditional pink, rather spoil the whole effort. Nevertheless, the attempt to use a traditional style in modern highrise is an interesting experiment.

On Cathedral Road, however, our NEW goes back to reflect the Regency style of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Chaitanya's Steeple Reach is entered through a gateway cramped by adjoining highrises, but which attempts to make a statement with its pediment, pillars, and clock. Through the gateway is the main building (seen below from the front and, still further down the page, from the rear). Balustrades, pillars, pediments and arches recall an age of bygone European splendour in an 80,000 sq-ft building that is occupied by two software majors. Spiral staircases embellish the interior and landscaping is planned for the garden space. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Such vehicular pollution is part of everyday life in Chennai. (Photograph: RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Slow murder!

The deadly story of vehicular pollution in India

Economic growth, it is now widely recognised, creates environmental problems. This nexus needs environmental management built on two principles. The balance principle and the precautionary principle. So the state, while promoting growth, must use its regulatory and fiscal powers in the cause of environmental harmony. And, the second principle demands that this balancing action be taken before the environmental damage begins and not after.

Among a host of environmental misdemeanours — crimes, really — the dramatic rise in air pollution in most Indian metropolises over the last decade is a direct result of an inefficient state, both in terms of balancing responsibilities and precautionary actions. Delhi and Calcutta are already among the worst polluted cities in the world. Others are rapidly deteriorating. As urban India braces itself for a wonderful, oxygen-less 21st Century, I ask the question: Where does this pollution come from?

In many cities, vehicular air-pollution is the key culprit.

During the high summer of 1995, I saw a large number of cars line up in the heat to get their emission levels checked. This tailpipe struck me as a little imbecilic; as if only vehicle maintenance was at the heart of the problem. This was not the key policy measure industrialised countries took to reduce air pollution.

And at a dinner in Washington DC, Vineet Nayyar, formerly chairperson of the Gas Authority of India, had told me, "Anil, your biggest problem is the quality of fuel that state refineries are supplying the cities. Strangely, none of you environmentalists seems to be taking up the issue."

In that June heat, my first reaction was that, as an environmentalist, I must issue a press statement urging Delhi's citizens to refuse to get their tailpipes checked unless the Government gets its act together.

After former environment minister Maneka Gandhi adopted the environmental gimmick of checking tailpipes in 1991, everybody has found it a great publicity stunt to force citizens to get their cars checked and happily place the blame for pollution on the carowners.

Since then, I have been led into many questions in a search for an angry and fitting reply to such harassment, one that would place the many un-

known twists of the problem of vehicular pollution before the public.

Is it because we produce cars that should be banned the moment they leave factory gates? Or is it because no one is really planning ahead to meet the traffic needs of our cities? Could it also be that we have a classically materialistic middle-class which will stick to its aged vehicles and refuse to phase them out, as happens in most Western countries (so that



Such vehicular pollution is part of everyday life in Chennai. (Photograph: RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Through the smokescreen of vehicular pollution

The air circulating in Indian cities is daily turning a little more noxious.

Because chimneys visibly rent the skylines in the country, it is natural to point an accusing finger at industry. They are to blame — but only in part. The larger truth is pollution caused by vehicles.

Vehicular exhaust, the product of fuel combustion in the engine, is a potent cocktail of chemical compounds like carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), oxides of sulphur (SOx), and unburnt hydrocarbons (HCs), which once disorganised, oxidise and photo-oxidise further. So, nitric acid in the exhaust fumes gradually converts to nitrogen dioxide, which joins oxygen and ultraviolet radiation to form photochemical smog. And Indian cities are greyer for it.

Vehicular pollution is most inefficiently monitored in this country. Studies that exist often do not contain information on particular pollutants. This has a dangerous implication. It means vested interests, such as the automobile industry, have a readymade escape route when it comes to owning up responsibility. They can carry on slow murdering.

A comparison between different sources of pollution (industries, power plants) in urban areas shows that emissions from diesel vehicles are assuming dangerous proportions.

even if a new technology is introduced, it will take 15-20 years to make an impact?)

What is also clear is that vehicular pollution is a created problem, not a 'natural' one. If you look at the total emission picture in the 1950s or 1960s, you would see three types of emissions. Emissions from industrial sources, including power plants; from vehicular sources; and those from household sources.

● Shouldn't we in India start demanding the right to clean air? Isn't it time we called for an end to vehicular pollution which is gagging our cities? We need to get together now to force the government to take note of bad vehicular technology, poor fuel quality and non-existent traffic planning, among very many other issues. We need to do this not only for our health but that of our children. For when we vote, we invest in trust. And when norms are flouted, an entire polity is held to ransom.

The energy market changed, especially in the 1960s and 1970s; as kerosene and LPG made their way into kitchens, smoky firewood and coal went out. By the 1980s, these emissions were insignificant.

In 1991, Parliament passed the Air Pollution Act, precisely to take care of industrial and vehicular pollution. It is easy to take care of industrial pollution. Numerous technologies exist to help reduce factory pollution. Or, pollution controllers can relocate factories (never mind if that spoils a greener and cleaner locale, and harms settlements near the relocated plant.)

But what of vehicular pollution? A city is stuck with its vehicles. It lives with them. Cars have to be tamed to cut down on pollution. This is the toughest part of urban air control.

Vehicular pollution is a combination of bad vehicular technology; poor fuel quality;

poor vehicle maintenance; and non-existent traffic planning.

They are the fall-outs of vehicular standards having been passed from one committee to another, and generously diluted, of the dirt the ministry of petroleum and the Bureau of Indian Standards lets through in the fuel you use and of the poor metropolitan traffic management in India.

What should we do? I think we can get the industry to respond more than the disinterested, incompetent and corrupt governments. If making money while destroying the environment can be defined as an environmental crime, then wouldn't it be fair to launch a campaign that describes certain eminent industrialists as India's Environmental Criminal Number One, Two, Three... Such a campaign would greatly hurt corporate images. —

(CSE/Down to Earth Features)

Anil Agarwal

ronment and forests (MEF) looks askance at the petroleum ministry which turns to the CPCB which cannot control pollution because that's the job of the surface transport ministry, whose ads impel you to...

In April 1996, the government notified emission control standards for vehicles. But the process of revising vehicular emission norms in India has been a progressive watering down of expert recommendations, becoming less stringent with time. The standards officially declared in April 1996, turned out to be even more watered down than three earlier sets of recommendations, starting from 1991.

The industry, on its part, has been begging for time to re-design engines to upgrade tech-

air and fuel is consistently maintained which is again possible only if a closed loop airfuel ratio control system is introduced.

Unfortunately, most Indian manufacturers do not use this system. Also, emissions are maximum when a car engine rumbles into life. On the other hand, a converter needs some warmth, functioning effectively only when exhaust temperatures range between 250-850°C. Converters require unleaded fuel which the public sector refineries manage to provide in short supply.

Moreover the quality of fuel used in the country is deplorable. It is bizarre, but the agency which manufactures fuel is the agency which is its own watchdog. To wit, the petroleum industry is dominated by public sector companies like Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., or Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., Bureau of Indian Standards specifications for premium quality control are compulsory for 140 other industries. But not for this one.

So at the heart of vehicular pollution lies the unforgivable failure of governance. The failure to imaginatively guide urban growth; the failure to rise above piecemeal solutions; the failure to own responsibility for past blindnesses and legislate, even controversially, for the future.

— (CSE/Down to Earth Features)

● by Anju Sharma & Pratap Pandey

Public health officials report an increasing trend of acute respiratory infections among urban inhabitants, like bronchitis, oedema of the lungs, ischaemic heart diseases and dust allergies.

But no one is willing to take responsibility for vehicular pollution in India.

The surface transport ministry urges you to get your car checked and makes you guilt-ridden. The automobile industry, slings it at the government, and hands you a catalytic converter. The minister of envi-

nology since the first set of emission norm recommendations were made. Its single contribution to solve the crisis has been the catalytic converter which the Supreme Court made mandatory in the four metros in a 1994 order.

A catalytic converter is placed near the exhaust pipe in cars to chemically convert engine emissions into environmentally benign gases. Indian automobiles are fitted with three-way converters but they work efficiently only when a chemically correct mixture of

Dates for Your Diary

November 29: The Spastics Society of Tamilnadu's Annual Dinner Dance, 'A Christmas Dinner'. Donation cards at Rs.400 each available with Poonam Lalchand (8272947), Madeleine Leone (4340824) and Meenakshi Meyyappan (4942985). (At 8.00 p.m. at the Trident Hotel.)

Pitch-making in his blood

It was while he was Physical Director of Presidency College, from 1930 to 1960, that P R Subramanian, "Subbu" to everyone, prepared the first turf pitches in Madras outside Chepauk. Till then, the Madras Cricket Club's grounds in Chepauk were the only grounds with turf pitches and all the big matches in the city were played there.

When a Ranji Trophy match was to be played at Chepauk and rains rendered the pitch unfit, it was decided to shift the venue to the first turf pitch laid in Madras outside Chepauk. It was by Subbu at the Marina grounds of Presidency College. "All the cricket officials were surprised at the quality of the pitch that was got ready within three hours," Subbu recalls. "All the players had nice things to say about the pitch." Subbu was also invited to prepare the turf pitch at the then Corporation Stadium, now renamed as Nehru Stadium, where Test matches were played from 1954 for more than a decade before going back to the MCC grounds.

Subbu recalls with pride how he laid the Corporation Stadium pitch. "The Europeans only Madras Cricket Club used to treat Indians as dust. They took away the lion's share of the profit and gave lit-

tle to the Madras Cricket Association. The MCA was searching for an alternative venue and approached me for help. The Corporation Stadium was a shallow pond. With the help of the Chief Engineer of the Madras Corporation, M Meeran, I filled it and made the ground suitable for the conduct of international matches. I prepared Ten turf pitches and selected the best among them

● In the last few weeks there have been several references in Madras Musings to the sad state the Marina grounds of Presidency College are in, and many readers have recalled the splendid condition they were once in. Responsible for their excellence was P.R. Subramanian, now 93 and still going strong. G KRISHNAN recently met 'Subbu' and went down memory lane with him.

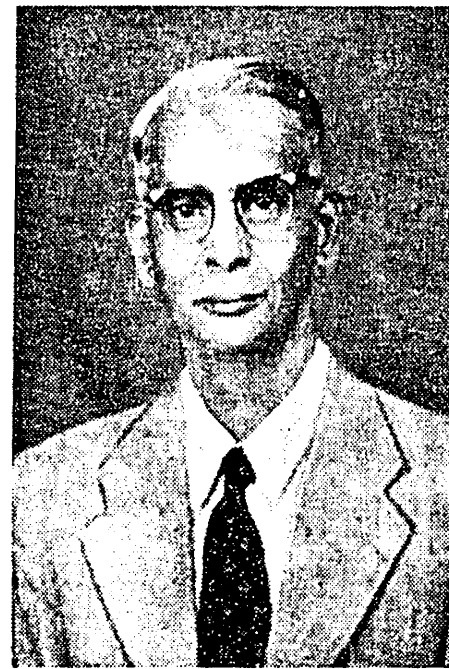
at the centre for the MCA. That, made possible the Associations shift of base to the Corporation Stadium".

Subbu was one of the founders of the Madras Cricket Association in 1930. P Subbaroyan, in whose memory the present library is named at the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, was a Minister, and he called for a meeting of the Madras Cricket Club, the

Madras United Club and the South Indian Athletic Association. Subbu was one of those present on the occasion. Their deliberations led to the MCA coming into existence.

"Preparing a good wicket for cricket was in Subbu's blood," wrote former Vice President of TNCA, V Pattabhiraman in a souvenir released in 1976 to commemorate the services rendered by Subbu to sport. Evidence of this was the pains he took to prepare the turf pitches at the Marina grounds. "The Marina ground was four feet higher on the eastern side than the west. I levelled the ground by tilling it before the rains, and after the rains the sand from the higher end went to the lower end and, thus, the ground became level", explains this forgotten expert in pitch preparation. He marked eight squares at the centre of the ground and dug each square one foot and filled them with different types of soil and with different proportions of earth and clay and rolled them fine. The then Secretary of Sport, C K Krishnaswamy Pillai, a keen sportsman himself, engaged 10 bowlers and made them bowl on all the newly prepared pitches to test their behaviour. To his delight, every pitch was a perfectly laid down strip. "I chose the centre pitch and developed it," remembers Subbu.

His advice on preparation of turf pitches was sought not only in Madras but also outside it. M Chinnaswamy requested him to prepare the wicket at the present M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore, but Subbu had to refuse as he could not stay away from Madras for



P R Subramaniam, 'Subbu' to all, when he was Physical Director, Presidency College, and considered the South's best ground-maker.

Indians would also have to use the pitch after the opponents and the conditions would be the same or worse, he felt. Lala was dumbstruck by my advice, laughs Subbu.

Among Subbu's many sacrifices have been his refusal to take up any office with the MCA (later the TNCA) "Had I concentrated only on cricket umpiring, I'd have umpired in Test matches, but my interest in preparing turf pitches gave me greater satisfaction", explains Subbu, when speaking of why he kept out of all other aspects of cricket.

Cricket however, was not Subbu's only love. Sport was.

long. The present curator, G Kasthurirangan, who is an expert on grass, took over the pitch preparation in Bangalore.

Not only was Subbu an expert in turf wicket preparation, he was also a good coach and umpire. He also trained many up and coming players and umpires.

Subbu recalls his contribution to the career of C D Gopinath, who played in eight Test matches in the fifties. A marker, Munnuswamy, used to bowl to Gopinath during his practice sessions at the Marina grounds. A leg-spinner who had the right build and height, Munnuswamy was taught the finer points of the art of leg spin by Subbu. "The MCC used his services whenever touring sides visited Madras and in one of the practice sessions, he claimed the wickets of Sir Jack Hobbs, Bert Sutcliffe and Andy Sandham," remembers Subbu.

Going down memory lane, Subbu recalls an incident during a Test match at the Corporation Stadium when Lala Amarnath advised the captain, Ghulam Ahmed, to use a heavy roller and break the pitch so as to make life difficult for the opponents. Subbu advised against the use of a heavy roller; the

(To be concluded next fortnight)

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

(continued from Page 6)

opportunity of making so much more. Since I am a British citizen, I thought it prudent to send the letter to the British Deputy High Commissioner in Madras. He returned it saying, quite rightly, that this was a matter for the Indian police, not him, and added the absurdly banal remark "...but you do lead an interesting life, don't you, Harry!".

I had in fact already sent it to the Direct-General of Police in Madras, who was a personal friend of mine, but heard no more of the matter. The mystery remains: Who were those two men my quiet but important visitor named, and what nefarious business were they up to? Who was that Nigerian who wanted to sell me his black market oil, and, most of all, how did that Nigerian know so much about me — my name, my post office box number, my financial status and my friends?

I never did find out.

Answers to Ad-Quiz

1. ITC (173 crores); 2. Chrysler Corpn.; 3. T T Krishnamachari; 4. Ramesh Gelli; 5. Matiz; 6. Money Changers; 7. Bombay Stock Exchange; 8. East India Distillers; 9. Sabeer Bhatia; 10. Kodak; 11. Thomas Watson, Founder-IBM; 12. Charlie Chaplin (finally made The

Dictator with sound in 1942); 13. L'Oreal; 14. Reliance Industries; 15. Road Safety; 16. 'I Dream'; 17. 'Brown goods'; 18. Alacrity Housing; 19. WWF — World Wildlife Fund; 20. Anil & Mukesh Ambani.

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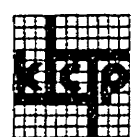
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