R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

THE REPORT OF THE PARTY OF THE

INSIDE

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November 1-15, 1998

Vol. VIII No. 14

FREE ISSUE

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 head-quarters 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?

A CARTOON FOR THE MONSOON



Climate change poses threat

The Global Climate Change **L** 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.

are still looking for water."

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)

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

(Continued on Page 7)

The theme for World Habitat Day 1998 was 'Safer Cities' and several functions were organised in the City in October to mark the occasion and give speakers a chance to sound off on what's needed to make cities safer. The Man From Madras Musings noticed elsewhere in Madras Musings today a report of one such meeting. MMM himself went to a couple more. And though there was much spoken that held the ear fast, much of it also seemed a bit distant from the focus of making a city, leave alone THIS city, safe.

Frankly, MMM is not quite sure what the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) had in mind when it chose 'Safer Cities' as its 1998 World Habitat Day theme. But presumably it was looking at the prevention of crime, the prevention of failures of construction and public utilities, the precautions necessary against natural disasters and the need to make the roads safer. All these subjects were vaguely touched on by relays of speakers, but there appeared to be few solutions suggested. There was much narrated about the past and the present state of affairs. What needed to be done for the future was, sadly, not the focus.

A few views on tomorrow were, however, expressed and they included these:

- The aspirations of the slumdwellers, about 40 per cent in each city, cannot be ignored; they must share in the fruits of a city's growth. "If the city fails to sort out the issue of slums, the slums will sort out the city," warned one speaker.
- Urbanisation needed to be checked and a process of deurbanisation begun.
- The women and children's point of view must be taken into consideration when urban planning is undertaken. There must be greater gender sensitisation of planners.
- Community policing should be encouraged (the example of the 'vigilante' killing of one or two suspected child-snatchers or sorcerers in the suburbs already forgotten).

Whatever the merits or demerits of such suggestions, they were ideas that warranted debate and were, thus, a greater contribution to the various proceedings than such platitudes as "sound urban planning should aim at bringing down crime".

Women in action

Expanding on the gender sensitisation issue, there were a couple of stories told of women's militancy. How much these had to do with the focus, The Man From Madras Musings was not sure. But the stories themselves made a point — that there's only a point upto which women can be pushed, even in our society, and then they'll fight back.

In water-short areas, do the men ever worry about the water problem, the speaker asked. It is the woman who gets up in the early hours when it is still dark to bring back a bucket of water and it is she who stays out well after dark again to bring back the second kudam for the day. And if there is no water available at the public tap, it is the women who demonstrate.

Then she cited the case of several lorries that turned up every night at a dry river bed near a suburban village to illegally quarry sand. The male villagers turned a blind eye to the proceedings, no matter how illegal and environmentally damaging they were. But not the women. After their pleas to the lorry drivers, not to quarry in this particular area, had failed, the entire female population of the village gheraoed the lorries till they got the commitment they wanted. But the illegal quarrying was not the issue; the presence of the quarrying personnel was outraging their modesty when they daily used the river-bed as a toi-

Much else on these occasions was like this; not exactly focussed on safer cities, but the problems of the citizens. Maybe such occasional catharsis is good for all of us, MMM thought after a week of such meetings.

Harry the humanist

m T Sambandam, Editor of The Dinamani and a colleague of Harry Miller for decades, described his friend, whom he never failed to meet for an hour's chat every morning when Harry was an active journalist, as a "great humanist". Jasper Utley remembered the irascible Harry as "an angry old man", always in a rage about the city he loved, a rage that grew BECAUSE he loved the city.

Both views, expressed at the

condolence meeting organised recently by the Express Publications (Madurai), were synthesised, The Man From Madras Musings thought, in some of the poignant incidents recalled at the meeting. Shantha Sheela Nair, IAS, remembered how he would always call her 'Madam Commissioner' in the years she was trying to get him to change his Monday morning heading from 'Madras - City of Neglect' to 'Madras - City of Attempt'. She later became 'Madam Chairperson' throughout her years with Metrowater. Then, on the day after he was buried, when she had returned from a conference in Delhi and had received the news of both his death and her appointment as Special Commissioner, she took the flowers wellwishers had sent her on her

appointment and had gone to pay

her last respects to one who had

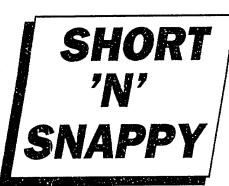
laid the flowers on Harry's grave she had wondered whether he'd be calling her 'Madam Special Commissioner' from somewhere up there — or whether he'd at last get around to 'Shantha'.

Jennifer Arul remembered that he'd never give interviews to anyone but that she had finally, after several attempts, got him to speak for Doordarshan. When she'd rung him after the interview had been screened to find out his reaction to it, he'd grumpily told her that he had no time to look at 'such rubbish'. A couple of days later, she'd taken him a bottle of homemade jam to say 'Thank you' again. And Harry had smiled that beatific smile of his and said, "Thank you. You know, a couple of people have told me they liked your interview".

The Harry stories are legion. MMM hopes they'll become part of a printed collection one day.

Affordable building

couple of points made by the hard-selling Chairman and Managing Director of



HUDCO, V Suresh, at the recent workshop on 'Sustainable Urban Development' (MM, October 16th) might have been old hat for several who attended the sesssion, but they struck The Man From Madras Musings as suggestions the wider public ought to know a little more about.

No Indian town planner had considered the informal sector in urban planning and in many parts of the country even the low income groups were not considered, Suresh pointed out. This was one in quasi-government service talking about others in government service. But if this was a sign of transparency, it's time government organisations got their act together and acted — talking to those they have long ignored, the people, rather than to those attending workshops.

Suresh went on to remind the audience that one of the largest employment sectors in the country survived with little or no training; 21 million construction workers really learnt on the job. What were we doing to improve this

And he urged the use of traditional materials and traditional building techniques to bring down building costs. MMM was intrigued to hear him say that Laurie Baker had designed and built his (Suresh's) house in

kept her on her toes. And as she Kerala at Rs.307/sq.ft. against the prevailing Rs.600/sq.ft. Traditional materials like mud, stone, lime and biomass used by traditional craftsmen would make this possible — and civil engineering and architecture course curricula should be changed to take a closer look at such locally available materials and talent.

It's a pity, MMM felt, that Suresh did not develop these themes further rather than hardselling HUDCO. Will someone spread these words wider?

Not long before Salman Khan

was endangering black buck in Rajasthan, the Prime Minister unwittingly almost endangered the vanishing species in Chennai, The Man From Madras Musings was sad to hear. Fortunately, greater wisdom prevailed in some official circles in Tamil Nadu and the danger was averted. Apparently, the Prime Minister was due on a visit to Chennai and was to visit Kalpakkam from there. A landing ground was to be prepared on the old polo grounds in Raj Bhavan for the three helicopters the Prime Minister's party were to travel in. Helicopters landing and taking off in the midst of a National Park and Raj Bhavan and its campus are very much a part of that Park — are not exactly activities conducive to the good health of black buck and chinkara, no matter they make life easier for Prime Ministers. Fortunately, someone cried foul and the landing ground was built in the Taramani campus of the University. And all ended well.

* The Man From Madras Musings is delighted to hear that Dr B Narasimhaiah, who recently retired from the Archaeological Survey of India, is to be appointed overall supervisor of the restoration of Senate House. At a recent talk in Chennai, Dr Narasimhaiah spoke of and showed the work he had done at Angkor Vat in Cambodia and many in the audience had seen his work at Hampi. There was a general consensus that he was a good choice for Senate House and hat, as in Angkor Vat, he'd do the most with what original materials were left rather than try to recreate the past. He candidly admitted on the occasion that the French, who had started the Angkor Vat work, were critical of what India had done. And there were also others who were critical of his Hampi work. But HE worked on the principle that restoration must use as much of the original material left at the site as possible; THAT was recreating the original, not creating

★ Speaker after speaker, led by Chief Guest Sivasankari, drew attention to one point that Dr Prema Srinivasan had emphasised in her book that was released on

the occasion, Children's Fiction in English in India: Trends and Motifs. And that was the less and less reading children were doing as television lured them from books. But what is the answer in a country where we produce so little children's literature of ANY quality, wondered The Man From Madras Musings silently. Sivasankari's answer was that it was a parental responsibility to switch off the television set and say 'Read' or 'Listen' to the story that Grandmother relates. MMM wishes today's children were as docile as to accept that. His answer to the problem was to get his children on to semi-adult reading early and then on to adult reading, and, in time, he found them getting on to recommended children's reading on their own midst TV watching. They're all grown up — and like MMM read all the trash possible, but they're reasonably educated. MMM wouldn't dare recommend this method to all, but he doesn't think we need worry too much so long as they enjoy a mix of reading, children's books or otherwise, and television. Meanwhile it is time India started producing better reading material for children.

Business briefs

★ The Glaxo factory — all 1 lakh

square feet of it — and its surrounding acres have been lying idle for a couple of years now. The Man From Madras Musings understands that it now has changed hands for around Rs. 24 crore, the buyers being Concorde Motors. Concorde, a joint venture of Tata's and a company of the Jardine Matheson Group, Hong Kong, plans to establish the biggest auto dealership in the South, selling and servicing Telco and Mercedes-Benz passenger vehicles, including the Tata small car, the 'Indica'. The company hopes to sell 50,000 cars in its fifth year of operation, drawing on the marketing experience of Jardine International Motors in Southeast and East Asia. Glaxo factory space will be put to use as showrooms and a fully computerised office, while the vacant ground will be developed as a giant workshop manned by factory-trained personnel. Meanwhile, MMM is still looking for roadspace in Chennai and its surrounds for the present vehicle population, leave alone the population Concorde proposes to add to it.

★ Indian Oil Corporation will shortly begin work on establishing its first refinery in the South, The Man From Madras Musings understands. It is being set up in Nagapattinam where, if the Southeast Asia market improves, it will expand to meet the demands of that market and have a harbour available for that eventu-

-MMM

OUR READERS WRITE

November 1-15, 1998



Harry remembered — I

Tt is with sadness that we heard Ithat Harry Miller had passed. away. We (my wife and I) had been looking forward to meeting him for a chat in January.

We are very saddened at the passing of this scholarly and erudite man who chose to live in India and gave it so much of his life.

We hope the priceless information he possessed, press cuttings, photographs and perhaps paintings and drawings, will not be allowed to be dissipated into oblivion.

> Tom Inglis 18 Caroline Gardens Mid Calder, West Lothian EH53 05X, Scotland, UK

Harry remembered — II

The demise of Harry Miller, **I** renowned photo journalist who made Madras his home though born in Britain, is an irreparable loss not only to Madras but to the entire country.

> C. Lakshmi Narain 11, Kandappa Achari Street, Purasawalkam, Chennai 600 007.

Harry remembered — III

W/e enjoyed very much Harry W Miller's articles in Musings and his photographs which provided us a visual treat. His loss will be felt by all, and Madras and its Musings has lost a valuable contributor.

> Muhammad Ibrahim Kalitullah 20. Habeer Road, Bheemanagar,

Harry remembered — IV

↑ las! Harry Miller, who had **T**endeared himself to all of us by his scintillating articles and photographs, enlivening the pages of Madras Musings and other journals, is no more. Madras Musings and its readers are the poorer for his loss.

> T.M. Sundararaman No. 19, Nallappan St., Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

'India House' — I

T ndia House (MM, September 16th), if memory serves me right, was built by the late C.Rajam, a well-known industrialist of the Thirties and Forties. A beautiful bungalow, it stands at the Junction of Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai (former Edward Elliot's Road) and T.T.K. Salai (Mowbray's Road), across the road immediately after the Music Academy.

C. Rajam spared no efforts or expense to construct it. It was said that he knew very piece of fine Italian Marble or common brick that went into its construction.

C. Rajam is gratefully remembered by the people of Tanjore District as the man who brought electricity to even remote villages through his Kumbakonam Electric Supply Corporation. His other

ventures, like Negapattam Steel and Electric Supply Corporation, redound to his credit. He was also the founder of M.I.T., Chromepet.

After the demise of his son, C.R. Ramaswami, an ardent Congressman, the Negapatam Industrial and Finance Company, is now run by his family members in Rajam House, Greames Road.

The palatial bungalow India House was subsequently purchased by S.S. Vasan of Gemini Studios and Ananda Vikatan.

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

'India House' — II

The building Anna Varki refers to (MM, September 16th) is Sudder Gate and in the Thirties and Forties it belonged to S. Parthasarathi, son of S. Srinivasa Iyengar, eminent lawyer and President of the Indian National Con-

The building which was named India House is situated on Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai at its junction with Cathedral Road and belonged to C. Rajam.

P.S. Seshadri "Vijay Vinayak" 5, Kamarai Avenue, 1st St, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

'India House' — III

India House, near Music Acad-Lemy, once belonged to C. Rajam, who used to run the Royal Mail Postal Transport Service, in Madras. The building was sold in the Forties to either S.S. Vasan, the film producer, or to T K Govindarajulu Naidu, a jeweller.

C.R. Ramaswami, the son of C. Rajam, was the Managing Director, of India Steel Rolling Mills at Nagapattinam and later on Avadi/ Ambatur, near Madras.

> C.A. Reddi, 57, Rundals Road, Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

Medical waste

refer to Dr. K. Gandhiraj's letter Lon 'Crematoria for waste' in MM October 1st to 15.

Medical waste is a serious problem. But incinerators will belch out deadly toxins — dioxins, mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic and toxic ash. Incinerators will create MORE toxic pollution.

Since incineration is unsafe and creates new pollution problems, the World Bank's South Asia Office has recommended against incin eration of medical waste in India and the Bank's State Health Systems Development Project II will build no medical waste incinerators, till they have been assured that adequate safeguards are in place.

In the circumstances, it is advisable to get approval from the World Health Organisation, South Asia Region, World Health House, Indraprasta Estate, New Delhi, for the incinerator unit proposed by problems like here.

Remembering Harry

For those who were not at the Harry had another lifelong fan on his hands. funeral there was a very Harry Miller moment during the service.

The Tamil priest who was officiating, obviously did not know him very well. So he trotted out all his favourite maxims. One of them was RIP, which according to this padre also means Rise if Possible. So he kept leaning over the coffin and exhorting "Harry to Rise If Possible". And I had this vision of Harry leaping out of his coffin and ticking the priest off saying, "It's not possible, will you leave me alone now!"

Harry Miller was not just a journalist who worked at the Express for over 40 years, he was an institution. He was both the sage and scourge of the Express. His fans came to him in large numbers and he had a personal correspondence with a huge variety of people from all over the world. But he could also be a stern critic, scathing in his remarks if he found that anyone had been guilty of shoddy work, whether as a journalist submitting sloppy copy, a policeman on the road, or a politician He was not just strict, he was

ferocious. I remember the first time I met him was when my son Vikram, who was around 12 years at the time, had written a letter to him about the eating habits of an ant-eater. Harry had caught a pangolin and taken pictures of it saving that it would not survive long in captivity because anteaters or pangolins have a very specialised diet. Vikram, who was a great believer in Gerald Durrell's books, immediately suggested a diet of formic acid mixed with milk powder and Harry just blew him up in a letter asking him how he would like to be fed with a mixture of sawdust and worms. But when Vikram trotted off to his house to show him his Gerald Durrell, Harry was so surprised to see that he was just a small boy that he turned the other side of his personality and absolutely charmed Vikram. He introduced him to Pythagoras his

pet python, to Trinky his bracelet snake and, from that moment, Dr. Rajaram, Corporation Dy.

> J Vaidyananthan 16, Anna Avenue Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

Chennai stands for...

Commissioner (Health)

C: Chaos, commotion and cheating by all and sundry. H Heat (weatherwise and

otherwise). E: Environmental pollution and degradation; also Encroachments. N: Noisiest city in the world.

N: Nuisances and nonsense A: Arrogant auto, bus fellows and traffic behaviour. I: Irritating, idiotic and irrational!

NR Murthy 68, Selvan St, Chennai 600 039.

Chennai's problems

W7hy is it that Chennai has so **W** many problems compared with other cities? We have travelled to many of India's big and small cities. But we do not find

He was marvellous with children. A Dr. Do-little when it came to dealing with animals, he was also a populariser of things

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Indian Express finally honoured the doyen of its journalists, Harry Miller, with a memorial meeting on October 24th. Apart from Geeta Doctor's contribution, published here, Rm T. Sambandam, Editor of the Dinamani and once the Express Group's Chief of News Bureau in Madras, probably the person who knew Harry the longest, remembered him as one who brought personalised journalism to the South with his columns on the City and Nature. Shantha Sheela Nair, 1.A.S., who as Commissioner of the Corporation dreaded his Monday column, 'City of Neglect'. remembered how he did finally publish a 'City of Attempt' piece... but with the typical Harry punchline, "For how long?" N. Ravi, Editor of The Hindu, recalled how much he had benefitted from Harry's columns. Your Editor spoke of Harry's total commitment to Madras. And Kiran Velagapudi, the Managing Trustee of the Nisha Yashodara (Miller) Trust sought support for the Trust which had been created to see Nisha Miller through

A suggestion made on the occasion that needs following up, vour Editor feels, is a 'News Photographs of the Year Exhibition' to be held annually on October 5th with a Harry Miller Prize for the 'Best News Photograph of the Year', a Harry Miller gold medal for 'The News Photographer of the Year' and a Harry Miller Award for 'The Best Novice News Photographer of the

as different as astronomy, the cosmos, science travel, the oceans and the different types of

This gift of making the world fascinating for children was what made him a good journalist. He

— Every day the newspapers are full of photos and writeups about the horrifying civic state of the city.

- The Parry's Corner area (where I work) is one of the dirtiest and filthiest in the city.

— Despite a mayor for the last 2-3 vears. Chennai has become more dirty than Singara! Private vehicles have to do a

PUC check, but what about buses and autos and lorries which belch suffocating smoke? — All autos and lorries produce so

much noise. What is the TN Pollution Board doing? — Rainy times, this city becomes a

dirty Venice. — Chennai has indeed gone to the

> S. Vasanthi, Chennai 600 073.

Perambur needs...

Derambur, one of the most important places in North Chennai, needs the following:

was able to take complex issues and make them simple and important to even the most ordinary people. Having been selftaught himself, he had an almost missionary zeal to share his

He felt language should be direct and elegant. That is why he hated shoddy usage. He loathed the journalistic shorthand which used phrases like "tiny tots" to mean small children or "authored" to mean someone who has written a book, or, worse, sentimental clichés, because he knew that shoddy language means shoddy thinking. Anyone who saw him in his office room early in the morning, would find him like a volcano on the verge of erupting. Because he would have spotted at least a dozen or more of these grave errors on the front page... Naturally this did not endear him to many of his colleagues... In fact, he was quite isolated by his immediate colleagues.

But even in his war-house persona he was very effective. He was perhaps one of the first people to draw attention to the idea that citizens too have their rights. He would take on a policeman, a doctor, or a bureacrat by using the enormous power of the written word or a telling picture in the days before television journalism. He was a consumer activist long before it became fashionable. He was an environmentalist and naturalist before his time and I would say that in his own patriarchal way Harry was a humanist. He had come up the hard way, so he knew that others could also succeed if they really tried. He always expected people to do their very best and after that to try a little more. He never stopped learning. He never stopped passing on this knowledge to others. He looked at the stars but remained on earth.

> - Geeta Doctor Harrington Road Chennai 600 031

• A direct bus from Perambur to Tambaram (via Sterling Road, Tevnampet or via Kolathur, Kovambedu) and also from Perambur to Anna Nagar West (via Kilpauk)

• A pedestrian crossing near Jamalia Bus Stand.

 Route boards at Jamalia Bus All these will help the people of

Perambur, a busy area. J. David

11, Hyder Garden 4th Street, Perambur Barracks P.O., Chennai 600 012.

Spearhead change

Vours is a unique magazine. You should spearhead a movement to get back the name MADRAS for Chennai.

> Rev S J Walter Sunder Singh 3/735 Karthi Store Building Bharathi Nagar Ranipettai 632 403

November 1-15, 1998

NEW

The South has always been the Deming prize for Total 1 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-geared 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



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.)

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.

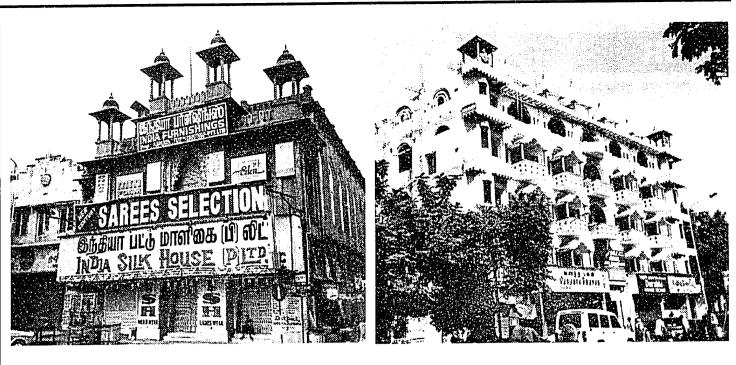
Srinivasan, who is a great admirer of Japanese management techniques, decided to go in for TQM during the late Eighties. The commercial vehicle industry was going through a slowdown then, as it is now. The Deming prize crowns the decade-long efforts at Sundaram Clayton.

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 asteners 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

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 needless to say, quality.

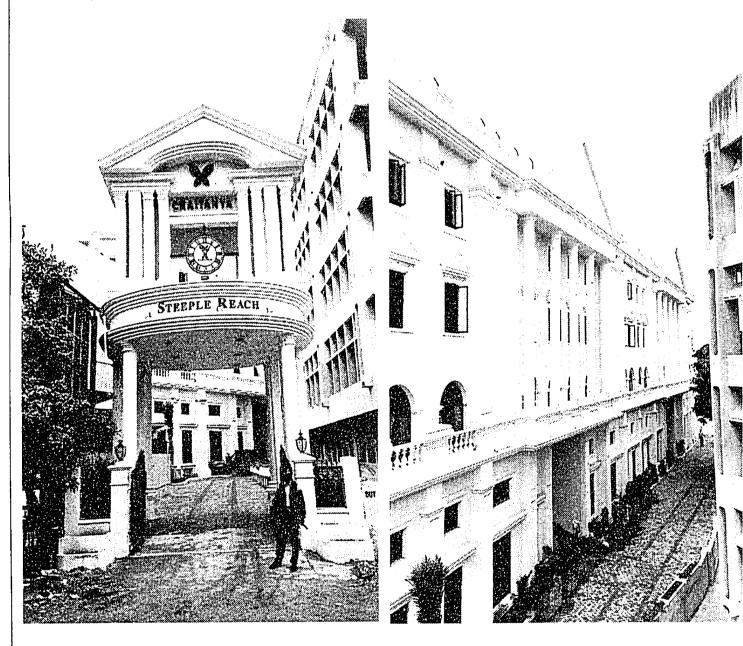
It can honestly be said after these achievements that Chennai has become the leader in the quality movement in

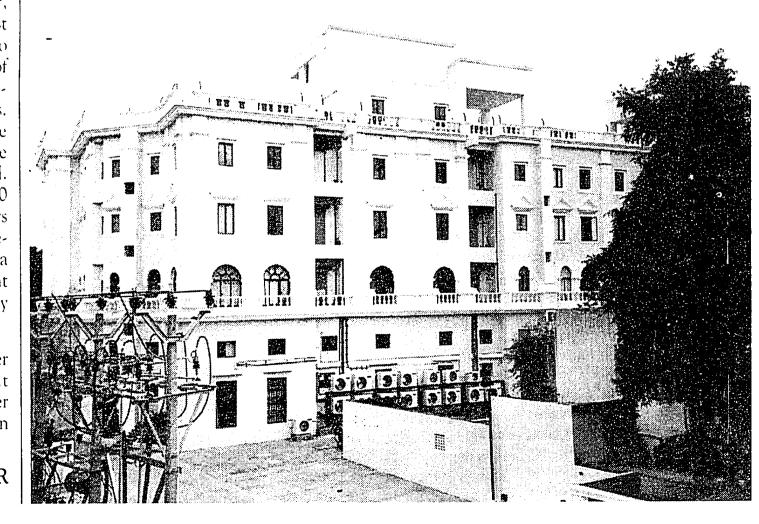


Our OLD (above) is a building in Jaipuri style, much of its beauty hidden by the signboards of its occupants. The building was built around the turn of the century by the Anjuman Trust, which was created in 1885 and which, in 1904, began running an Industrial Training Institute here. The Institute moved round the corner, into the Viscountess Goschen Hostel, and the India Silk House occupied the Jaipuri-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 Jaipuri architecture found in this building are reflected in a newer building (above right), a commercial highrise that has been in the building in Advar for the past couple of years. Apart from the pavilions, another Jaipuri

feature are the sheltered balconies — but the garish colours of the building, ...& THE THE preferred to the traditional pink, rather spoil the whole effort. Nevertheless, **OLD** preferred to the traditional pans, rame, span the attempt to use a traditional style in modern highrise is an interesting

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.)





Slow murder!

The deadly story of vehicular pollution in India

Conomic growth, it is now Liwidely 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 airpollution 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 tailpipery 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 even if a new technology is vehicular pollution before the introduced, it will take 15-20

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 crassly materialistic middleclass 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.)

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 pwer plants; from vehicular sources; and those from husehold sources.

years to make an impact?)

emissions wree insignificant.

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

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

• 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

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.)

poor vehicle maintenance; and non-existence traffic planning

They are the fall-outs of vehiclar 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

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

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 disgorged, oxidise and photo-oxidise further. So, nitric acid in the exhaust fumes gradually converts to nitrogen lioxide, which joins oxygen and ultraviolet radiation to form photochemical smog.

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.

And Indian cities are greyer for

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

These emissions are high on ronment and forests (MEF) SPM (suspended particulate looks askance at the petroleum matter), 90 per cent of which is ministry which turns to the directly respirable. And the CPCB which cannot control tiny PM-10s have insinuated themselves into the lungs and lives of hundreds of thousands of children now suffering from to... are much above the national air quality standard for urban.

Thousands of tonnes (mt) of into urban skies in India, straight from the exhaust pipe, making our cities the most cially declared in April 1996, polluted in the world. With almost all our vehicles emission-inefficient, the exhaust from Indian vehicles contains more CO and HCs, because some of the petrol remains

pollution because that's the job of the surface transport ministry, whose ads impel you

process of revising vehicular emission norms in India has been a progressive watering pollutants are huffed every day down of expert recommendations, becoming less stringent with time. The standards offiturned 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 redesign engines to upgrade tech-

manufacturers do not use this system. Also, emissions are in part. The larger truth is bronchitis. Diesel, high in In April 1996, the govern- maximum when a car engine pollution caused by vehicles. sulphur content, is also behind ment notified emission control rumbles into life. On the other high SO, concentrations that standards for vehicles. But the 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 pro-

air and fuel is consistently

maintained which is again

possible only if a closed loop

airfuel ratio control system is

Unfortunately, most Indian

introduced.

vide 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

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

— (CSE/Down to Earth

by Anju Sharma & Pratap Pandey

an increasing trend of acute emission norm recommenrespiratory infections among urban inhabitants, like bronchitis, oedema of the lungs, ischaemic heart diseases and dust allergies.

responsibility for vehicular pollution in India.

The surface transport ministry urges you to get your car checked and makes you guiltridden. The automobile industry, slings it at the government, and hands you a catalytic con-

Public health officials report nology since the first set of dations were made. Its single contribution to solve the crisis has been the catalytic converter which the Supreme Court made mandatory in the But no one is willing to take 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 verter. The minister of envi- chemically correct mixture of

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., or Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., Burea 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

Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN is on holiday this fortnight and our questions this fortnight are from the recently held Ad Club — The Hindu Business Line Quiz '98. They are published here courtesy of Headline, the newsletter of the Advertising Club, Madras.

Ishwar Prasad, Kiran Koshy and Madhusudan (of O & M) won the Ad Club's Business Quiz 1998. HT A's Team 'A' finished runner-up and Corn Flakes were third.

Suresh Kumar (TI Cycles) was the Quizmaster. Some of his questions were:

- 1. According to A & M Magazine, who is the second highest ad spender in India for the year 1996-97?
- 2. To which company does the brand name JEEP belong?
- 3. Name the industrialist who also became India's Finance Minister?
- 4. Who is the Chairman of the Global Trust Bank?
- **5.** What is the name of the 800cc car to be launched by Daewoo Motors?
- 6. Name the book by Arthur Hailey on banking business?
- 7. The logo of this stock exchange reads, "The Native Share Stock Brokers' Association - 1875". Which one is it? 8. What do the letters EID in EID Parrys stand for?
- 9. Who was the man behind Hotmail — the e-mail service on Internet sold to Microsoft?
- 10. About which company is the book Changing Focus by Alice
- 11. "I think there is a world market for about 5 computers.' Who made this statement?
- 12. "I give the talkies six months more." Which famous person said this in the 30s only to change his opinion in the 40s?
- 13. For which international cosmetic firm is the current Miss World, Diana Hayden, going to endorse a hair colourant?
- 14. With whom did De Beers, the world's largest diamond company plan a joint venture for diamond prospecting in India?
- 15. Just as Blue Cross is associated with animals, what is Yellow Cross for?
- 16. The new worldwide slogan of Nike is "I can". What is it in Asia
- (except India)? 17. Just as there are 'white goods', radios, TVs and electronic goods
- 18. Whose baseline is 'Home is the Key'?

are referred to as?

- 19. For whom was David Ogilvv's famous and longest advertisement (6000 words) written?
- 20. Who was the 'Businessman of the Year, 1997' selected by Business India?

(Answers on Page 8)

Now it can be

This piece is, in the best tradition of spy stories, entiled 'Now it can be told' because it genuinely does involve intrigue and dark plots of international stature, and all revolve around a single innocent number I was for some years connected with - my Post Office Box Number in Madras.

It all came back to me when received a letter addressed to that box number from an old friend in England with whom I had not been in touch for a very long time. For reasons that will become apparent as you read this. I cancelled that box number several years ago, and this correspondent was among the few unaware of it. It's a tribute, by the way, to the excellence of our postal service that though the box number facility was terminated so long ago, any letters still addressed to me at the number are always faithfully delivered at my home. Elsewhere in the world they

would probably be scrapped. Several years have elapsed since these events occurred and I am assuming, correctly I hope, that I am not transgressing any laws of this or any other country, such as Britain's Official Secrets Act, in publishing the following account. I was once called upon to sign Britain's Official Secrets Act, though at the time I was only a very lowly information officer in the U.K. Government's inches by eight, laminated in Central Office of Information in London.

Many readers of this journal will remember that for several years I wrote popular weekly columns for the Indian Express, one called 'A Madras Diary' (though it seldom contained anything directly concerned with the city) and another called 'Madras — City of Neglect', which, as its title suggests, was concerned with nothing else. The popularity and effectiveness of these columns, particularly the last named, engendered considerable correspondence from readers. Two days every week had to be set aside for answering readers' letters, and apart from the very few abusive ones I received, I think I can say with some pride that none went unanswered, however trivial they might have been.

Less welcome, though, were the numbers of uninvited and unexpected people who would call on me, sometimes at my office, sometimes at my home. Usually my office attender or my servant at home would come and say there was someone wishing to see me. When asked for his name and the purpose of his visit, the reply almost invariably was that the

visitor wouldn't give his name or state his business and wished only to see me for a few minutes. Unfortunately, most of such visitors were no more than nuisances, and the frequency of such visitors increased to a point where they became a source of considerable irritation.

I was watching television one lunch-time when one such visitor turned up at my home. As usual, this one again refused to state either his name or his business, but when in mild

My visitor was a soft, quiet young man, who explained that he had no wish to worry or upset me, and that he had no

waited at all.

India himself. Evidently my

caller was no ordinary police-

man but a senior CBI man.

the bearer the right to enter

and if he wished to search any

premises he cared to, and here

was the bearer of these impres-

sive powers standing humbly

on my doorstep. I told my serv-

ant to ask him in, hurriedly,

and when he appeared, I apolo-

gised for keeping him waiting

and asked why, in view of the

document he carried, he had

• Shortly before Harry Miller passed away, leaving a void in Madras that is Chennai, he caught up with his contributions to Madras Musings and sent us a few stories (including this one) and several ideas for stories he'd like to do. These will be published in Madras Musings from time to time. — The Editor. reason or desire to impose the

anger I told my servant to insist either that he should say what he wanted or go away, I was told that this caller was a policeman. In that case, I told my man, ask him for his identity document, if any. The servant went away and presently returned with an identity document such as I have never seen before and hope never to see again. This was the most impressive calling card I'd ever encountered. It was a document measuring about six plastic, with a heavy seal and

powers his identity document endowed him with. He assured me that I had no cause for alarm but that he was engaged in investigations concerning an international conspiracy involving Interpol, which he did not wish to divulge but thought I might be of some help to him. When I asked what I could possibly do to help in such matters, my visitors produced a slip of paper on which were two names. He asked me what I knew about those two people, and I was able to give him an bearing the signature of no less honest reply in one word —

One Man's Madras — HARRY MILLER'S

nothing. Both the names seemed to be Indian but they were certainly not South Indian, and I had never heard of Moreover, the document gave them before. The officer then explained that they had somehow been using my Post Office Box number for clandestine communications, but he was obviously reluctant to give me more details. After a quiet inconsequential conversation and a cup of coffee he left.

> There was more to it than that, though. Some months later I received through the box office number a letter from Nigeria. Now I have never been to Nigeria nor have I knowingly ever met a Nigerian, yet the writer of that letter evidently knew a great deal about me. Nigeria is one of the world's most important producers of crude oil, and the letter offered me a huge quantity of what the writer described as "best Nigerian light crude" for what he said was a very low price, though naturally I am not well informed on such matters and had no idea whether he was telling the truth.

The writer went on to say that he knew I was not a wealthy man and did not have anything like the amount of money required to buy the oil. On the other hand, he believed I knew several people in this country who not only did have such large amounts of money but who would probably have been delighted to have the

(Continued on Page 8)

The solution is simple. Say

It is time we began to call a Lhalt to the ubigiutous plastic bag. The popular carrier bag is made of high or low density polyethylene, the most harmful of the various types of plastic. And tonnes and tonnes of this material are dumped every day in our landfill sites and unauthorised garbage dumps, exposing us to the dangers of toxicity and clogged sewage.

India is one of the world's argest consumers of plastic. Our consumption, which stood at 2.8 lakh tonnes a year in 1990, rose to a staggering 21 lakh tonnes in 1995. We have blindly duplicated the throwaway culture of the developed world, without any of the safeguards that go along with it. And so we have a rapidly escalating problem, not only with plastic bags, but also with car batteries, pencil cells and fluorescent tubes, which at this moment are probably contaminating the ground water below the very homes which were responsible for dis-

carding them.

'no' to plastics. Carry shopping bags made of biodegradable materials with longer life, instead of accepting plastic packets from every shop. Don't throw plastic in places where it has no business to be; parks, zoos, pavements, market places and picnic spots. If you must use plastic, make sure it is not coloured. There is a law against the use of coloured plastic bags as they are made with toxic colour granules that are damaging to humans. Plastic wrapping around garbage is the worst way to dispose of it; try and throw away your garbage

regularly and simply wash and disinfect your own bin. There are better alternatives to plastics. The old-fashioned jute bags and earthern pots need to come back in use and we need to use more bags made out of recycled paper and cloth. The change doesn't cost much, certainly not anything at all when you think of the potential health hazards of plastic packaging. Sorting of garbage into

biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste at the household level is a very important step forward and could go a long way towards remedying the waste problem. What Madras needs is an

active campaign against plactic bags. A simple "no" to a shopkeeper who offers you a plastic bag and a refusal to purchase goods if there is no other alternative, is the only way to spread awareness and to make sure that people start changing their careless attitude towards plastic waste. Campaigns in schools must be initiate to catch potential plastic-users and correct them when they are young. Protests against such injustices as the USA being allowed to dump its plastic waste in landfill sites in India, need to be made. We simply have to wake up and stop this mindless damage to the land and water surrounding our city. After all, it is going to

— Kavita Milner

What Stuti promised

Cruti, 15 years old this year, Owas started by Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman and his brothers, P.N. Sundaresan (a veteran sports journalist) and P.N. Venkatraman (banker) with the assistance of a few other members of the family and some friends.

An ardent music enthusiast. with a deep interest in Carnatic, Hindustani and Western classical music, as well as in jazz, Pattabhi Raman did not have any intention of starting a magazine when he returned to India in 1980 after 25 years in the U.S, where he had studied for his doctoral degree in economics and served the UNDP as a senior official for 14 years. He had a background in journalism he had written about music and dance even in the early Fifties — but it was not the ink in his blood that inspired him to start Sruti. He was actually prompted to do so when, over three years, his observations led him to the conclusion that Indian classical music, as well as dance, was beset with several problems which did not seem to bother anyone else. He felt that there was a need for a magazine to arouse the consciousness of the fans.

Pattabhi Raman elaborated the reasons for starting Sruti in a statement titled We Care And We Believe which was carried in the inaugural issue of

Sruti. It said, among other

We care about the present state and the future of Indian classical music and dance. We care about our great tra-

dition and the need to harness

its riches to meet the challenge

of the changing times. We care about the musician, the dancer, the guru and the many others who have a vital role in the preservation and development of these fine

• EDITOR'S NOTE: Much of what Pattabhi Raman then wrote could be said of Madras Musings too in a different field. Small journals like Sruti and Madras Musings do care for their subject of focus and believe they can do something to improve them. But getting results is a long, slow process. Congratulations, Sruti for keeping at it.

We care about the men and the women, the old and the young, who seek enjoyment, and possibly solace too, in classical music and dance and by so doing, provide vital support to

We care about quality in performances, equity in management, acuity in appreciation and good taste all around.

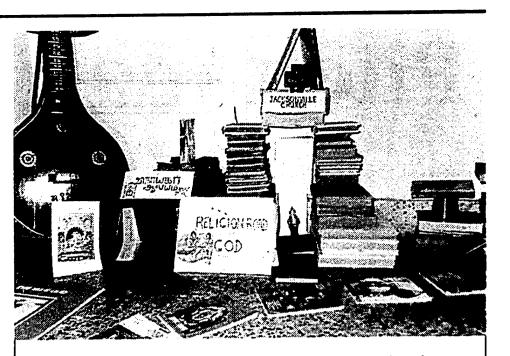
And we care too about the viability of the economics of classical music and dance.

We believe a new and unique medium is needed to gather news and prepare interesting and informative articles on classical music and dance and those involved in it, based on careful investigation of facts, and to present them in a style which is immensely readable and easily understood by the lay person.

We believe the time is now to mobilise opinion and action in support of efforts aimed at promoting excellence, preserving valued traditions and encouraging innovation and adaptation.

We believe there is an obvious case for developing greater mutual awareness and a more dynamic interaction in the fields of music and dance among the peoples south of the Vindhyas who share a distinctive cultural heritage, and among the peoples of the South and the North.

And we believe there really is a demand for an alternative to the present state of music and dance criticism, an alternative that focuses on providing guidance on the proper enjoyment of classical music and dance to those who patronise it, on the basis of a systematic and constructively critical approach to the evaluation of performers and performance. — (Courtesy: Sruti).



'Religion Road', part of 'The Book City' that Dr Suresh Sethuraman arranged for kolu. Another part of the 'town' was the archaeological excavation site (below, right), with an archaeologist's tools scattered about the site. (Photographs: RAJIND N CHRISTY).

A kolu of books

It was a kolu with a difference. Books of the 19th and early 20th Century, NOT dolls, were

This walk in 'The Book City' started through a gateway of books and followed a circular road beyond.

The first step was a 'Children's Corner' with children's books, games, charts, audio cassettes and stationery used as decoration. The next stop was the 'Science Salai', with books on astronomy, among other subjects, the feature. The third stop was 'Mathematics Marg' and featured mathematics books and equations.

At the 'Religious Road' stop there were a veena and a Vinavakar temple built with books on Thanjavur paintings, the Bhagavad Gita, books on Hinduism and cassettes of invocation. By the temple was a church formed with the New Testament and other Christian text and with a Santa Claus inside.

At 'Literature Lane', works from Shakespeare to R K Narayan were arranged chronologically. The 'History Highway featured charts and historical books. An American history tome sported a beach hat, a book on South Indian history wore a traditional South Indian silk turban.

The seventh stop, 'Archaeology Avenue', featured books

Name

on archaeology arranged in an archaeological site together with equipment required for excavation - scarping knife, binoculars, calculators, mini-weighing machine etc. Wood fossils, palm leaf manuscripts and drawings of the site provided the em-

The goddess Saraswati on a pedestal, with a typewriter as its base, stood like a beacon midst all these scholarly tomes.

Dr Suresh Sethuraman, an archaeologist, used about 1000 books to create this kolu with the help of schoolchildren from his Adyar neighbourhood.

Having seen the novel arangements at many book exhioitions abroad, he had asked himself, 'Why not a kolu of books?' And the neighbourhood responded enthusiastically with

- Rajind N Christy

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IDEAS FOR A STILL SAFER CHENNAI

Medical College and Research

(Continued from Page 1)

driving. Fish-cart traffic too would be regularised, he told the meeting.

K Sumathi, an advocate, stated that a police station was no longer a place trusted by the people and wanted confidence in the police built up. She urged parents to consider having their daughters taught karate as a means of selfdefence against eve-teasing.

Hospital waste comprises 85% solid waste and 15% infectious and hazardous waste. If these are mixed, they are a health hazard, warned Dr Kalpana Balakrishnan, Head, Environmental Health Engineering Cell, Sri Ramachandra

Institute. Transporting such waste without safeguards is detrimental to the health, she stated and urged hospitals to adopt strategies and acquire hitech diagnostic and surgical equipment to solve the hazardous waste problem. Stricter enforcement of penalties and training of health workers to be aware of health hazards, were solutions she suggested.

She also drew attention to the fact that syringes, bottles and other disposables were often recycled, endangering pa-

S Subha, a journalist, suggested that the entire vehicle population in the city be divided up and painted in seven.

on the road each day of the A R Santhakumar of the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Anna University, pointed out that non-maintenance of

different colours, with vehicles

of one colour alone permitted

buildings will bring down their life by about 15-20% and regular maintenance was, therefore, necessary. He also felt that wood, material that can be propagated,

should be used more in construction, particularly as cement and steel would became extinct one day. Government, he felt, should relax its ban on wood for construction and encourage its propagation.

Pitch-making in his blood

It was while he was Physical 1 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, 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. Subramaniam, now 93 and still going strong. G KRISHNAN recently met 'Subbu' and went down memory lane with

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

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; S. 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. 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.

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

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.

> (To be concluded next fortnight)

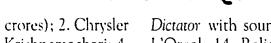
NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

(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.



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