R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MUSINGS

(by Venkatachari Jagannathan)

INSIDE

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January 1-15, 1999 **FREE ISSUE**

Dreams of power

Energy - a bag of wind!

Vol. VIII No. 18

Tt is officially claimed that Tamil Nadu has the potential to generate 2000 MW power by harnessing wind. If that be the case, what is the necessity for the State/Central government to put up new projects at a cost of about Rs.5 crore/MW of new capacity as against Rs.1 crore to erect a windmill of similar capacity? It will even work out cheaper if an equivalent amount is additionally spent to evacuate the power from wind farms.

That the wind power route is not being taken is because the ground level picture is quite different from the tall claims being made. The total installed wind farm capacity in Tamil Nadu is 711 MW, of which the TNEB's share is 19MW and the private sector's 622MW. However, the average plant load factor/ power generation is around 20%! In other words, only about 142MW is being generated at an investment of Rs.711 crore, which works out to Rs.5 crore per MW. This would require an investment of Rs. 10,000 crore to generate 2000 MW of wind power, particularly as the velocity of the winds depends on vagaries of the nature.

It is also now found that windmills in many areas are drawing power to swirl their blades instead of generating it. This is when wind velocity is low. With vast tracts of scarce land needed to erect the windmills, there is an immediate need to look at the cost-benefit ratio of windmills, instead of unquestioningly accepting the claims of the supporters of wind power.

— V.J.

Even as the State and Central Governments announce new power projects for the State, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) is embarking on a refurbishment and modernisation (R&M) programme of its existing thermal plants. R&M is a low-cost and easier option for capacity increase. At an outlay of Rs.40 lakh, an additional generation

of 1 MW can be obtained, as

against the Rs.5 crore needed

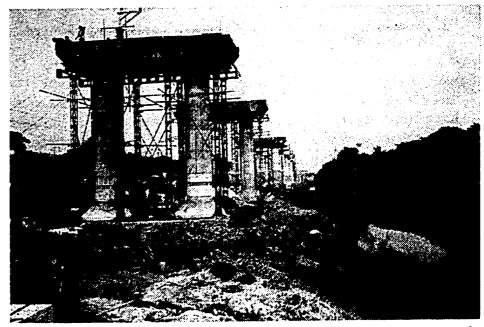
to install such capacity afresh.

It is learnt that the TNEB will soon issue an equipment purchase order to Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) and Skoda for its Rs.230 crore R&M work at the Ennore thermal plant. Studies are also underway for similar R&M work at the TNEB's 2x210 MW plants in Tuticorin. Both projects are to be funded by the Power Finance Corporation. "R&M projects will get priority over finance for private power projects from the PFC," says Director (Projects), Dr. K.K. Govil.

Given the fact that most thermal plants are more than 25 years old and that the average plant load factor is just 68.5%, life extension programmes assume importance. According to one estimate, there is a real threat of derating/shutting down 13,000 MW generating capacity by 2000 AD, if life extension work is not carried out on time. Such R&M/life extension programmes offer business opportunities worth Rs.3805 crore for equipment manufacturers.

Meanwhile, Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, the Union Minister for Power, recently announced a 860 MW hydel station at Hogenakal, to be built across the Kaveri. He also announced the setting up of a two-phased 2500 MW National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) project at Cheyyur. The first phase will feature a 1000 MW, coal-fired plant in three years, the second

(Continued on Page 6)



Work goes on, at its fastest pace ever, on the MRTS Phase II on the banks of the Buckingham Canal in the Taramani area. When complete, it is to be hoped there will be space for dredgers to move and bring new life to the Canal (as has been promised by the authorities so many times). (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Metro work picks up pace

Work progresses at a rapid pace on the second phase of the Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) along

ages are simultaneously made.

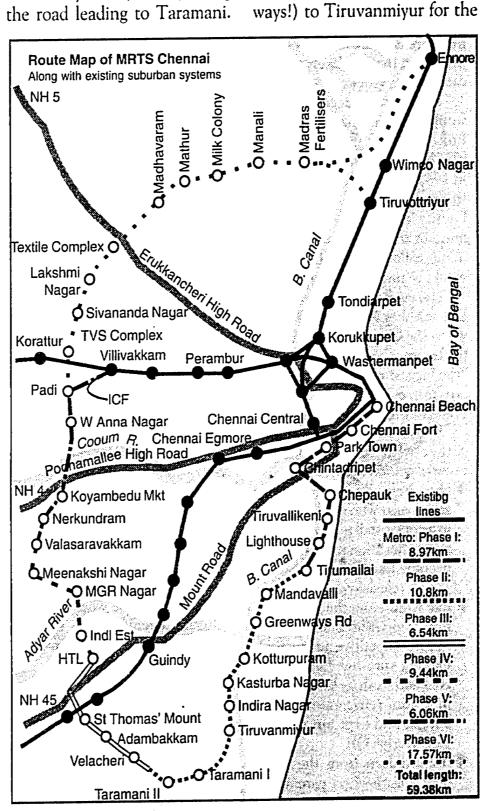
The wild growth alongside the Buckingham Canal has been cleared from Mylapore (Tirumailai, according to the Rail-

MRTS pillars to be raised on the banks. Thereafter, the alignment deviates to the west, passing through land owned by the Directorate of Technical Education, Anna University, University of Madras, the Airport Authority and private parties.

The 10.8 km stretch of Phase II, from Mylapore to Velacheri will, it is estimated, cost Rs 733 crore to be shared by the Railways and the Government of Tamil Nadu in the ratio of 33: 67. The 7.58 km of elevated structure will have 686 pre-stressed concrete box girders with spans from 18m to 36m, weighing 150T to 320T each. This phase of the project will be completed by March 2002, it is expected.

The alignment of the last leg of Phase II, Taramani I and II, had originally been planned to pass through university-owned land. The Madras University has objected to the alignment cutting through its campus as its research activities would be disturbed by the vibrations of the passing trains in addition to the ambience of the campus being lost. Several joint inspections and discussions with the university authorities, CMDA and Railways to sort out various issues for the alignment have been held and final approval is awaited from the State Government. The land acquisition elsewhere by the State Govern-

9.44km Phase V: 6.06km Phase VI: 17.57km Total length: 59.38km Over 50 km still to go before the MRTS, now less than 9 km complete, will provide the City the badly-needed ring railway that MIGHT solve ment has begun. According to Chennai's transport problems, PROVIDED the proper road transport linkthe MoU under approval, gov-(Continued on Page 6)



Tt was delightful to find such Loptimism about the India of the 21st Century as The Man from Madras Musings heard expressed in the days leading up to a bad year bowing out. That these views came from two sectors that had a particularly bad 1998, the business world and the Police, was particularly heartening. The only cloud on the horizon was the pessimism of MMM and others of his ilk, not all prophets of doom but, rather, those who have had dreams and been disillusioned by the ground realities.

The one to kick off this season of joy and goodwill was the policeman. In the past year MMM has met a large number of senior police officers at one forum or another and has been pleasantly surprised to find them well-educated, well-read, articulate, humane, tolerant and passionate about their work. And AIGP Prateep V Philip, the latest MMM listened to, was one of the best of a good lot. But whether his dream of a 'Friends of Police' movement will succeed even locally, leave alone nationally and globally as he has already begun to dream, is something MMM puts a big question mark to, no matter how good and

necessary the concept is. Philip's movement started in troubled Ramanathapuram District when he asked the Press to record his need for volunteers to help the Police in their daily work... to offer community policing, particularly night patrols; help prevent crimes; initiate anti-vice campaigns; offer victims assistance; assist with processions and traffic mobility; promote civic responsibility; provide information; and establish a greater people-police rapport. He received 20,000 of the district who were not involved in either a criminal or civil case — the criteria he had laid down. Most thought this was a new job opportunity; when they found it was purely volunteer work, for an arm-band and a cap, many lost interest. But Philip was able to raise a volunteer force of 1000 before he was transferred out of the district. The more recent troubles in the district would appear to reflect a fading out of the movement or a lack of effectiveness, but that is only MMM's jaundiced view.

Spreading message

Not long afterwards, at a Police Officers' Conference presided over by then Chief Minister Jayalalitha, Philip presented his case for 'FOPs for COPs'. FOPs is rather an unfortunate acronym (a dandy, an affectedly fashionable man, generally giving the impression of thinking more about himself than others, is certainly not what is wanted!). Be that as it may, the Chief Minister ordered the movement to get underway and even the sceptics in the Force complied. With changes in Government and, more importantly, the routine transfers of Superintendents, who were in local charge of the movement, the

movement has had its ups and downs. Today, it works in pockets; Philip wants those models to be replicated. The Man from Madras Musings, like others, is at a loss to suggest how that can be successfully done. Idealism alone is not

As MMM has often enough stated in the past, there not only has to be the political will but a way to ensure sustainability also found for anything to succeed in this part of the world. Meanwhile, MMM wishes Philip's pockets all success.

Eradicating poverty

The second optimist The ▲ Man from Madras Musings heard was at a rather unusual forum, the annual Indian Review of Books lecture hosted jointly by IRB and the Madras Book Club. The speaker was author, playwright, corporate executive and business consultant Gurcharan Das, who instead of talking about his literary efforts or the Indian literary scene, chose to talk on the theme of a book he is writing, the new emerging India. And that turned out to be a look at the economic scene in 21st Century India. And what an optimistic look

that was! Draw a line through Kanpur and Chennai and poverty would be eradicated, everywhere west of the line by 2025 and east of the line by 2050. MMM is not very sanguine about Das's geographical view — for that line would also include much of Madhya Pradesh and the whole of Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir to the West of the line and even if MMM bought Das's argument never would these three areas figure in the West and the South that are likely to eradicate poverty quicker.

This road to success, Das felt, applications from Indian citizens would willy-nilly happen if you get educated and the trained. Relinked to the global economy which Manmohan Singh ensured in 1991, Das's first landmark date in modern Indian history. And having changed the country's mindset and put it on the international roller-coaster, Das felt we would be unable to get off.

The even more important date Das felt was November 7, 1998, when the Government "liberated the Internet" setting in motion the "the biggest revolution in India". No more would we have to reinvent the wheel, Das stated.

These two phenomena together with the Indian entrepreurial spirit, like...

- the boy Raju in Maraimalainagar who works part-time in a coffee-stall to pay for a computer education so that he could become like 'Billgay' whom he saw on television.
- like Kum-Kum the small Delhi flower-girl who made sure she had a competitive advantage by making sure her flowers were cool and fresh by keeping them in a mini-refrigerator she had bought and kept out of public
- gaze nearby; OR • the children from the village near Aligarh whose parents took them out of their village school and put them in a nearby 'English school' even if it cost them Rs.35 a month each...

would ensure India's certain progress out of poverty in less than fifty years. (Though China, Das warned, would always be 15 years ahead of us!)

Explosion ahead

Despite 189 million being killed worldwide in the 20th Century. more than ever before in history through man's inhumanity to man, and a substantial portion of these deaths being in India, the 20th Century has seen the individual's lifestyle improve everywhere, even in India. And things will only get better in India, Das felt. The 15% Indian middle class of 1991 had added nearly 10 per cent since then and would reach 30% before long. An affluent 20%, the economic ideal middle class 60% and the 20% who will need support are what he sees India reaching between 2025 and 2050. You are going to see the middle class explode in numbers, he was

The population growth would not affect this, because the growth rate had fallen from 2.2% to 1.7%. Greater education facilities were accelerating the rate of progress.

SHORT SNAPPY

And the growing investment — "the recession is only temporary; investment will come back again" — will create new jobs for the member, he said, every one per cent growth created 1.5 million NEW productive jobs. And remember that despite the recession we have grown 5% and not at the traditional 3 or 4 per cent; it was because we were growing at 7% that we have felt the drop to 5%; things look gloomy only because our expectations are belied.

Indeed the future is bright. Gurcharan Das was convinced.

The other view

Not so convinced were many who listened to this optimism. Particularly when, after 50 years of Independence, Das was still talking of a new "emerging India"! Many felt closer to the story Gurcharan Das began with in order to turn it upside down. It was a delightful story, but The Man From Madras Musings was one who thought it closer to reality than the Das view. The story, Das narrated, was

about this little boy... What's 'business', he had asked his father one day. Son, said his father, I go out every day, make some goods and sell them. That's business and the money earned is our capital. I give that capital to mother and she looks after us. That's management. The maid who helps her is labour and your baby brother is the future.

A few weeks later, the baby was screaming and when no one came to attend to him, his elder brother went to investigate and found his baby brother had wet his nappie. When the boy went to wake his mother he found her fast asleep. And when he looked for his father he found him with the maid. And so the boy climbed back into bed muttering, "Management is asleep, capital is exploiting labour and the future

MMM is inclined to think so too, when management plays the numbers game. Take those popuation growth figures of Das's. They look an improvement because the Southern and Western states have done something about populations. The Central Government has done nothing — Family Planning is low priority for many years now — and the States where its vote banks are show the traditional 2.2 per cent or MORE birth rate. On the education front, standards are going down, down, down... and are going to slip further as more States began to offer education in the vernaculars without adequate facilities to implement such dreams. The result will continue to see a brain drain and a shortage of competent people for work locally, particularly in administration and politics. And Das did not look at all at the law and order situation, the crimes against society that are being created, holding up all progress, linguistic and religious chauvinism and local wars that were dissipating the talents of

even the able. B Vijayaraghavan, a former Civilian and now as then one who always said it as it was, minced no words in his summary, and MMM observed an audience enthusias tic about his views. He could not share Gurcharan Das's optimisim

- he had probably associated with the politicians more than Das and was certain they would not let go;
- the country needed infrastructural development not a middle class wanting more consumer products;
- large tracts of rural India were not being looked after (he should have added, "and untended cities would only choke with migrants") and remain in abject poverty, and
- implementation and sustaina bility are totally lacking.

As Vijayaraghavan stated in conclusion, perhaps a wider debate was necessary. For that to be successful, everyone would have to let their hair down, MMM

In brief

★ Wellesley House in Fort St George, where Wellington had lived while he learnt his soldiering, partly collapsed over a decade ago. And with too many authorities having an interest in the Fort and its monuments, they

have not been able to get together to restore the protected heritage building. Now The Man from Madras Musings hears, admittedly NOT on the best authority, plans are being made to pull it down and a request to Delhi has been made on these lines. Please tell us this is not so, someone!

* The Man From Madras

January 1-15, 1999

Musings hates being late anvwhere. In fact, he's been known to be one week early on some occasions! So why is it that on the one occasion in recent times when he's been only three minutes early, getting there at 9.27 a.m. by the Music Academy's own electronic clocks, that's the one occasion the organisers thought of starting their function at, he estimates, 9.23 a.m.? Serve MMM right for forgetting what all the dignitaries remembered; there's at least one person in Chennai always impatient to get on with the action. That was an experience rather different from the one at Senate Hall, used for the first time in years for something more interesting than exams. There, Chennai time was kept... and the action started 40 minutes after the scheduled time. A pity that the patron of the occasion arrived just in time to see the candles flickering out and lost all opportunity of savouring the atmosphere that had once again brought Senate Hall to life.

Business briefs

★ Chennai, The Man From Madras Musings hears, is to get a major one-stop tourism complex before long, on Wallajah Road. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation is planning this large complex with information centres about the various States, central reservations, travel booking counters, restaurants, tourist-oriented shops (like ones selling handicrafts, handloom textiles, maps and tourist books), an auditorium for short tourist films and cultural performances, an art gallery, banks and exchange facilities, and even lounges and restrooms. MMM only hopes that maintenance will NOT be at the same level as at other TTDC facilities. Kept spick and span and all aglitter, it could easily turn out to be one of the attractions of the

★ TI Cycles is introducing a cycle to make cycling, particularly incline-climbing, easier. 'Hercules Top Gear' will come equipped with five-speed gears from Japan that will make cycling a pleasure. The Man From Madras Musings understands that over 8000 children in Chennai were offered trial rides, their opinions sought and many a feature suggested incorporated in the bicycle. MMM is also told that 'Cyclinics' have been established in nearly 150 towns with over 400 persons in them who have received training on the gear mechanism.

— MMM

'Save the island'

January 1-15, 1999

READERS

WRITE

OUR

Uurther to the excellent article 1 'Threat to island?' (MM, December) by Rajind N Christy, it should be pointed out that though there has been sea erosion towards the south of Ennore, the casuarina plantations (which provide firewood) act as a barrier to erosion. Eroding of the beach has already begun at the site of the Port construction and the coast adjoining it may worsen and also spread northwards. Any industries coming up will certainly pollute the air, the canal and the sea by their discharges. The area already suffers from pollution caused by the factories in Ennore, Tiruvottriyur and

The sand dunes (rather mountains) in Kattupalli are about 20 to 40 feet in height and this topography should be of special interest to

the students of geography. The late Kanchi Sri Sankaracharya who camped at Kattupalli for about six months during 1966 described this island as being like Kerala with its greenery, its plantations, birds and domestic animals grazing in the field and pointed out that though very close to the city it was without any pollution and did not suffer from the noise of trans-

The Government should preserve this island as nowhere within 100km of the city can we experience such a serene atmosphere.

> K.S. Hemanth Kumar 171, Luz Church Road Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

EIA taken

D egarding the 'Threat to Island', **I** (MM, December 1st), due care has been taken by the authorities concerned in respect of EIA studies. I can vouchsafe for this as a retired officer of TNEB. However, the concern expressed in the article has to be carefully considered. S.R. Krishnamurthy

(Retd. Member Generation, TNEB), Flat 4B Abhinava Apartments H, First Avenue, Shastri Nagar Chenani 600 020

Rainwater harvesting

WJe refer to the articles on **VV** rainwater harvesting in MM, November 16th.

We have since 1994, put in place in all our housing complexes, an efficient rainwater harvesting system that operates silently and efficiently, with no human intervention. More recently, we found that the traditional dug well when integrated with this system, not only caters to the quantitative water needs of the residents but also invariably provides water of quality superior to that drawn from borewells in the same premises.

We have also recently introduced in several of our complexes. a simple in situ process for treatment of waste water from bathing and washing of clothes. The purified water, comprising 50% of the water used, is ingested into the soil, recharging the groundwater table thereby. The process requires no

ing more about our system and about water in general can write to us for a free copy of our booklet ti-Soil strata in Chennai tled "Self Reliance in Water — The

The following are the soil characteristics and the scope ▲ for dug wells in various parts of Chennai based on the findings where Alacrity complexes are located.

 Alwarpet-Mylapore: Sandy stratum, very favourable for dug wells (20-25 ft deep). In occasional cases where clayey layer is encountered, depth needs to be increased by bores in the wells.

 Anna Nagar: Largely composed of silt (30-40%) and clay (10-15%) but dug wells of 25-30 ft yield quality water in satisfactory yield. In eastern and western fringes, soil tends to be more sandy.

 Ashok Nagar: Largely sandy. In some areas, clay and sile predominate, but even in such areas, dug wells (25-30 ft) yield satisfactory quantity and quality.

 Ayyanavaram: Sandy, favourable for dug wells. • Chetput: Sandy to very sandy. Favourable for dug wells.

 Gandhinagar: Mostly sandy and favourable. Very silty (55-75%) and clayey (20-70%) in some locations.

 Gopalapuram & Lloyd's Road: Sandy, favourable for dug wells. • Kasturbanagar, Bhaktavatsalam Nagar & Nehru Nagar Moderately sandy to sandy. Favourable for dug wells.

• Kilpauk: Sandy. Favourable for dug wells.

 Kodambakkam: Mostly sandy. Occasional cases where sil (35-40%) and clay (40-50%) predominate, but deeper dug wells

Mandavelipakkam & San Thome: Very sandy. Dug wells (15-20 ft) are very productive.

 Mahalingapuram: Clayey in some areas, sandy in others. Wells in both yield good quality and quantity.

Nungambakkam: Sandy.

• R.A. Puram: Sandy to very sandy.

• Saidapet (Srinagar Colony): Largely silty (27-80%) with clay (13-18%), but wells (25-30 ft) yield good quantity and quality. Shastrinagar: Very sandy.

(40-50%), but wells are productive even in these areas. • West Mambalam: Silty (38-45%) and clayey (40-50%) but deeper wells (25-30 ft) are productive.

T. Nagar: Largely sandy. In some areas silty (20-40%) and clayey

(Courtesy: Alacrity Foundations Pvt. Ltd.)





The statue of James George Smith Neill in Wellington Square, Ayr, Scotland (on right), and the identical statue in the Madras Museum (and with the face in close-up) on left. (Madras photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY, Ayr photograph by Dr Reg Wright, former Head of the British Council in Madras.)

> When we were last in Madras (a year ago) MM helped me track $oldsymbol{W}$ down the statue of Neill which used to stand at Connemara Circle. Following MM's advice, I sought out the Curator of the Government Museum who arranged for me to view and photograph the statue.

At the time I realised it was very similar to a statue in Ayr, which is where Neill went to school (and which is where I now live). Having since taken a look at the statue in Ayr, it turns out that the statues are exactly alike. Not only is the statue itself the same, but also the plaque on the plinth, though my photo (above, right) does not show this so clearly. Likewise the wording, with this exception — "Madras Army' on one, reads as "Madras Fusiliers" on the other. (I suppose this change just might be related in some way to the organisational changes in the army that were taking place in 1859, but I'm not very well up on military history). There is one other minor difference — the date recorded on the back is 1859 (Avr) and 1860 (Madras), not surprising since the mould was cast in London and, I suppose, subsequently shipped out to

I mention all this not because it has any great historical significance but rather because you might find it of curiosity value.

R.E. Wright Crasnton Lodge 2 Chalmers Road AYR KA7 2RQ

EDITOR'S NOTE: The pictures above left were taken in th Museum by RAJIND N CHRISTY recently. Neill's reputation during the Mutiny was a bloody one and many an Indian in Madras wanted the statue to be disposed of as scrap soon after Madras got an 'Indian Government'. But C Rajagopalachari, the Presidency's first Prime Minister, had a sense of history and had the Neill statue confined, in the Museum, where it now languishes, more often than not draped and out of sight.

Turbanned dignity

Alacrity Experience'.

chemicals or power and hardly

These measures offer scope for

self-reliance in water to the extent

of 75 to 80% of the needs of the

complex without depleting the wa-

ter table. Those interested in know-

Indukanth S. Ragade

15, Thirumalai Road

Chennai 600 017

Alacrity Foundation Pvt. Ltd.

Vice-Chairman

needs any maintenance.

otable omissions in the article ('Turbanned intellectuals') (MM December 1st) are Sir M. Viswesvarayya, one of the greatest of engineeers of yester year, who lived upto his 102nd year, and the creator of Library Science, S.R. Ranganathan. I well remember his lecture in our school where he had recounted his experience in London when an English child had wanted to know the name of his headgear but would not ask him out of politeness. Instead she looked it up in the dictionary and found the word 'turban' but mispronounced it as 'toorban' which he corrected.

Many lawyers, teachers and officials wore turbans till the late 1950s. No doubt, turbans added dignity not only to the individuals but also to the office held by them. Perhaps that was one of the reasons for their upright character and honesty. I believe even now we may come across turbanned individuals of the Bar in the High Court chambers.

T.M. Sundararaman No.19, Nallappan Street Chennai 600 004.

Prostitution of the art Dattabhiraman's advice to young

musicians, not to give a performance on the concert stage unless and until they are equipped to do so (MM, December 1st) is, I am sure, advice to 'raw' musicians. If it is to up and coming or promising youngsters of the middle order, think his advice may be unfair.

Young musicians need sufficient audience-exposure to get adequate proficiency in music, especially during prime time. This experience is acquired over a period of time and only on kutcheri platforms. They can shape well and become adepts only with encouragement and opportunity. It is like a young and talented cricketer playing Test matches and shedding all his faults and nervousness to become a Tendulkar or an Azharuddin.

Ariyakudis and Semmangudis were not 'finished products' from the beginning. Given opportunity and time, they matured into models for others. So also, if young and talented musicians are ungrudgingly given opportunities on concert

platforms, they are bound to get 'equipped'. To expect them to come fully 'equipped' to the concert platform would be to put the cart before the horse

M.K. Chubby Raj 'Sai Niketan' Flat No.403 No.12, Lock Street Kottur Gardens Kotturpuram Chennai 600 085.

A watt saved...!

If late, sodium vapour lamps (in street light fixtures) are allowed to burn indiscriminately in broad daylight. What a collossal

The Corporation should set up an energy audit cell which should follow the dictum: A watt saved is a watt gained metaphorically.

It is of most importance that we talk of conservation of energy, this should be accorded priority.

> R.K.Sridharan 2, East Circular Road Chennai 600 028.

MADRAS MUSINGS January 1-15, 1999 January 1-15, 1999 MADRAS MUSINGS

Quizzin with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V.RAMA-NAN'S questions are from the fortnight December 1st to 15th. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Which popular wordgame, celebrating its 50th year, is to be redesigned for better appeal?

2. Who is the director of the controversial film Fire?

3. Name the child prodigy who recently broke a world record by passing the Bachelor of Science examination of the age of 11 years and 2 months and becoming the youngest to do so?

4. What was the name of the biggest exercises conducted by the Indian Army in recent times that concluded recently?

5. Who is the new president of Venezuela?

6. What is the UK Government's showcase project to mark the year

7. What was the name of the mascot at the 13th Asian Games held at Bangkok?

8. Who has been chosen for the Latha Mangeshkar Award instituted by the Madhya Pradesh

9. Which famous playwright's statue was recently opened in London?

10. Who has been elected the new mayor of Bangalore?

11. What is the name of the museum that is to display the weapons used during before and after the legendary battle of the Mahabharata?

12. The Police Training Academy of Sao Paulo, Brazil, has included whose teachings as part of its training programme?

13. For which language has the world's biggest dictionary been published recently?

14. Which famous personality has been recently shifted to the Central Jail at Beur in Patna District? 15. Who won the 1998 Castrol 'Young Cricketer of the Year' award? * * *

16. A commemorative stamp to mark the centenary of which institution was released in the city recently?

17. Which city-based academy promoting the fine arts was earlier called The International Academy of Arts?

18. A Tri-Services motor rally commemorating the golden jubilee of which institution was in the city recently as part of its nationwide tour?

19. Who won the recently concluded Sportstar National B women chess championships held in the city?

20. What info is now available over the telephone for residents of the city dialling the number 499 7370?

(Answers on page 8)

THE CULTURE SEASON STILL IN FOCUS

Herr Pesch's passion, Carnatic Music

'ndia exasperates me... I have Ltried escaping from it many times, but I have just not been able to escape from Carnatic music..." says Ludwig Pesch, the German musician who is an intrinsic part of the Carnatic music scene.

Consider his contribution to the city: Student and performer of Carnatic music on the flute; a founder of Sampradaya (a music archives setup) organiser of unusual and exciting seminars at the Max Mueller Bhavan and elsewhere on performing spaces and playful aspects of music; advocate of natural voice coming through without the aid of the microphone; founder of Sittrarangam (the Little Theatre) at the Island Grounds; author of books on Carnatic music for people who wish to understand its techniques better; and documenter and photographer of the folk traditions of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.

Pesch's latest contribution has been his 'The Illustrated Companion to South Indian Classical Music', published by rupted poetry on this French Oxford University Press and released at the Music Academy this Margazhi music season.

I first met Ludwig in the midseventies, when he was photographing Kalakshetra productions. Then I saw him in some

• by V.R. Devika

very high-class performances, at private flute concert by T. Viswanathan, an M.D. Ramanathan recital etc. Over the years I began to appreciate his catholic taste, his meticulousness, the background material he always prepared. He was well prepared when we met the day after the release of his latest

Ludwig first heard Carnatic music on French Radio in Germany in 1976. He was a teacher in a music school there, played the Church organ and also turned out with some rock and jazz bands. He loved to listen to the sessions of uninter-

station. One day, he heard on it Carnatic vocal by Ramanathapuram Krishnan. The music, he remembers, gave him goose pimples! "I had never heard anything so stirring", he recalls, "It was the music I had been searching for all my life. Something I could put my teeth into. Something difficult and challenging Something that broadened my horizons. Creative music bound

The next day, he went to the library to find out more about the music he had heard. He also got the address of Kalakshetra there, gave up a lucrative job at the school of music and all the comforts and regularity of living in Germany, and left for Madras. At Kalakshetra, he became a disciple of H. Ramachandra Shastry and learnt Carnatic music on the flute. Rukmini Devi Arundale suggested he get an ICCR scholarship to continue his Carnatic music studies. And so Ludwig came back to learn

"My guru accepted me as an apprentice. It was quite amazing that right from the beginning he asked me to sit with him on the dais and play with him! He took me to family weddings, his concerts in Tirupati, even the Tyagaraja festival at Tiruvayyaru".

Fascinated by the immense musical experience of his teacher, Ludwig began to interview him to document his life so that future generations could benefit from Shastri's incredible knowledge". As part of the documentation, he also copied the photographs of his teacher that the family had.

It was on one such trip to Triplicane that he bumped into another foreign music student. Michael Nixon from South Africa, a veena student of Savithri Rajan, was coming out of a meeting with Dr. S. Ramanathan. Ludwig pulled him into his autorickshaw and they began talking about what they were doing. Thus was born the idea for Sampradaya, the musical archives of rare forms of Carnatic music. They decided to interview and record the music of some of the greatest musicians alive and asked people to deposit any rare recordings they had. They were scoffed at, of course.

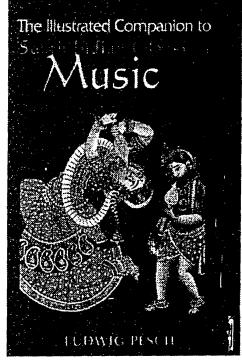
were looking for was antiquated, out of vogue and that people would be bored by them. But the famous musicians who came to mikeless concerts organised by Island Grounds. Enthusiastic Sampradaya understood the value of what they were doing. Many musicians who were written off and were not popular were recorded for the Sampradaya archives. Max Mueller Bhavan gave its premises freely and helped to re-

Ludwig

flute and

Sundaresan

Pesch on the

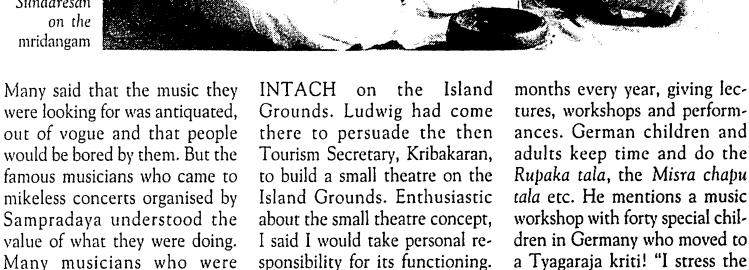


The cover of Ludwig Pesch's latest

Ludwig also agonised over

the unaesthetic presentation of Carnatic music. He wondered why such an organised and disciplined music was always presented in ugly auditoria with not a single aesthetic touch. So he made a study of performing spaces, starting from the Tiger Cave on the East Coast Road. He also organised a national seminar on performing spaces at the Max Mueller Bhavan and presented a prototype small theatre, inspired by the Kalakshetra Theatre which, had in turn been inspired by the traditional koothambalams of Kerala. The small theatre concept was welcomed by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi, but no one came forward

the envirnoment pavilion of



Kribakaran, happy that IN-

TACH would be involved, gave

the go ahead right away, but

stated that the building had to

be within the Rs. one lakh that

he could sanction. We agreed

and Shahriar, the Iranian archi-

tect, Ludwig, the concept man,

and I, the cultural activist got

down to work on the labour of

love we called 'Sittrarangam',

the small theatre. The theatre

proved to the cultural world that

something small could be aes-

thetic and accepted. Unfortu-

nately, the location was wrong

But it was a beautiful space and

we have had memorable per-

formances there. A mikeless

concert by Voleti Venkates-

warulu is still fresh in my

memory. We did a concert every

would be the only person in the

audience! But there were some

great performances from Kudi-

yattam to Carnatic music to..

Those were busy days.

Ludwig was always there to give

solid support to the perform-

ances. INTACH could sustain

Sittrarangam for eight years.

Today, the theatre is in a state

of disarray. If the Government

can replicate it in the Govern-

ment Music College grounds on

Greenways Road it, would be a

great thing for the cultural scene

Ludwig, inspired by an essay

by Herman Hesse organised a

symposium two years ago at the

Max Mueller Bhavan on the

playful aspects of South Indian

classical melody and rhythm. He

gave a demonstration of the way

he introduces the Carnatic tala

system and rhythms to German

children. He and Sundaresan,

the mridangist of Kalakshetra,

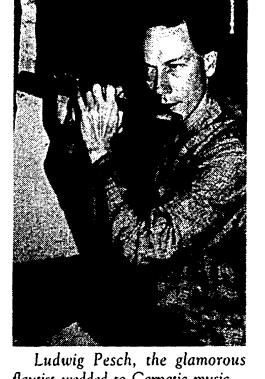
now tour Germany for two

any theatre.

in Chennai.

day for two years. Sometimes

ances. German children and adults keep time and do the Rupaka tala, the Misra chapu tala etc. He mentions a music workshop with forty special children in Germany who moved to



flautist wedded to Carnatic music.

rhythm and melody not the great traditions of India. This antiquated but great tradition is becoming trans-cultural."

"Carnatic music is portable. It does not require any apparatus. IT is only necessary to have the courage to try it. You may go wrong in sruti.. to start with, but you'll eventually get its right,' Ludwig Pesch says of his passion.

Competing to discover Chennai's Heritage

(By our Education Correspondent)

In August 1998, Madras Musings reported that its Editor had Lcalled for the Heritage of each district to be compulsorily taught in the schools in the district. The steering committee of INTACH, Tamil Nadu chapter, was addressed on the subject soon after - and they promised to examine the subject further before going to Government with concrete

INTACH's subsequent discussions of the subject revealed that what needed to be taught as Heritage at the district level was not very clear Let's discover what the children and their teachers feel is their Heritage, it was felt. And so was born the idea of a competitive exhibition focussing first on Chennai and then, if successful, on other districts. Entires for the exhibition, it was hoped, would provide ideas for the next stage; namely, what should go into text books if the subject is introduced in schools.



Entries are now being invited for the exhibition Entry forms may be obtained from INTACH's office (1 Second Street. Wallace Gardens, Chennai 600 006) and must be submitted before January 11th. Entries will have to be submitted by February 9th. Judging will begin the next day and not long afterwards the prize-

winning exhibits and the better entires will be on public view. They might later form the nucleus of a permanent exhibition if a suitable site can be

The exhibition is open to teams and individuals from schools, colleges and environment clubs. Entries could be in literary form, pictorial form, drama or dance form, or as 3-D models. There will be prizes fror each of the four categories, all of which can focus on man-made heritage, cultural heritage, natural heritage, arts and crafts heritage or any other aspect of heritage the participants would like to consider. Entries may be in Tamil

To ensure maximum participation, INTACH is offering LIMITED reimbursement of expenses to Corporation, Government and Aided

INTACH believes that the competition will lead to an "increased awareness of Chennai's tradition and cultural" among the city's citizenry.

 Last fortnight we featured Airrelu, whose skills in making Bharata Natyam costumes are sought by the leading dancers.

This fortnight, Dr. Arudra who, shortly before he died, wrote the piece on the Aiyyelu, records the master-tailor's views on dance costume making

Talking about art of attire-

making, Aiyyelu says:

The pyiama type costume is very popular.

We make dresses with attached or separate pallu-s. A pallu draped on the left shoulder and a back piece which covers the hip are now commonly used with the pyjama

Other varieties are:

• The pyjama with a fan and a blouse tucked in.

• The pyjama with a big fan, a tucked-in blouse with attached pallu and a small fan.

• An old-type pyjama with a vertical border running down each leg and a big fan in the middle, a

short blouse, a pallu tucked in and covered by a back piece worn over the hip.

Greeting cards are much fewer this Season. One of the more attractive

ones your Editor received featured this duotone montage of young Indian

and British musicians who will feature in the Indo-British Young Musicians

Concert Series the Council has underway (November '98 through March

'99) as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations. This talent will be showcased

Madras Musings

wishes all its readers

A VERY HAPPY PONGAL

in 26 concerts and four workshops during this five-month period.

 The pyjama with three fans and a separate choli. (The choli for children has a fan).

• The pyjama with short and long fans, the second fan reaching down to the knees.

• Another type of pyjama which has three or even four borders running across at intervals between the hip and the ankle, with a wavy step fan which is short on one side and long on the other.

• There is still another type which is somewhat loose around the legs like a dhoti. It does not have a back piece; but has a kachcham or 'taar' at the back.

Nowadays, cut and stitched sarees are usually used. The sixyard saree with a border stitched vertically in the centre of the pleats is

The nine-yard saree is rarely used these days. Earlier, the nineyard saree was cleverly worn like a saree costume and sometimes the pallu was worn in what is called a 'cycle kattu'. It was tucked in at the waist on one side (as ladies do while riding a cycle or a two-wheeler) and the pallu was then opened out and the other and tucked in at the other side to form a kind of rounded fan in front. The nineyard saree was also stitched with the kachcham.

Previously there were blouses with puffed sleeves. Now, the preference is for short or long sleeves with heavy borders. A short blouse is preferred when the dress contains a pallu. Sometimes a pleated brocade chestband is also worn on the blouse which is tucked in at the waist. Another type is the choli with elbow-length sleeves with zari borders and the special feature is the 'vonki' stitched on the sleeve with a zari border. Choli-s usually have he back upon whereas these dresses with the pallu have the front open and can be fastened with

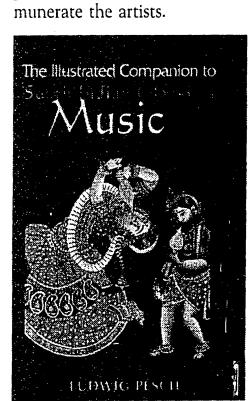
There are two ways to stitch a saree costume. One way is to cut and stitch it according to the required design. In the other, the six-

vard saree is not cut-up, but is stitched at the waist and the pallu. On removing the stitches and a few hooks and string tapes, the saree can be restored to its original plain form. What is commonly used nowadays is the stitched saree with frills, a separate blouse and a sepa-

There is also a saree-skrit type of costume with or without a vertical border running down the centre of the frilled fan in front, a 'back piece' around the hip, and with a separate blouse and pallu. Then there is another type with borders on both the sides in front, with the pallu cutting across as in a regular saree, with separate blouse and a back piece.

A costume will last for 10 or 15 full programmes. If the material selected is good and if the costume is maintained well, it would last

The cost of stitching a costume is somewhere in four figures. But the world of Aiyyelu is full of admirers and satisfied customers. — (Courtesy: Sruti)



One summer afternoon in 1987, I was doing a workshop in

Kilpauk memories

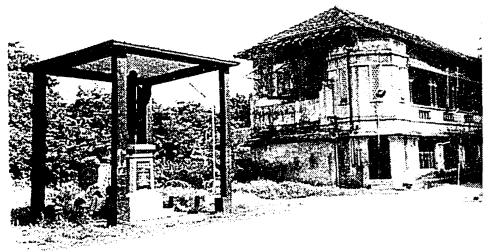
(Continued from last fortnight)

ilpauk was stirred by a few Twenties and Thirties. The Indian National Congress, presided over by Dr. M.A. Ansari, held its sessions in 1927 in the sprawling Spur Tank grounds, bordering Kilpauk. Pandit lawaharlal Nehru, on his first visit to the city, was the star-attraction. As part of the Exhibition, held alongside, was a rope railway from Spur Tank to Chetput, the first and only time we saw a rope railway in action in the city. This Congress ses-

founding of the Madras Music the State Governor, Sir

A plethora of lights, colour-Notable events in the ful festoons and fireworks, thrilling the spectators at Hyde Park Gardens, proclaimed the inauguration of the Hospital for Indigenous Medicines, a pet-child of the Raja of Panagal, the then Chief Minister.Today, Kilpauk Medical College and Hospital has it. taken its place. Elders would recall an even more glittering splash at Hyde Park a few years earlier, in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales.

Another event of signifision is said to have inspired the cance was the inauguration by



The statue of Capt. G Srinivasa Murti, dedicated Principal of the Government School of Indian Medicine, is now in the Kilpauk Medical College campus. KMC succeeded to what was called Hyde Park Gardens, which was the first campus of the School of Indian Medicine. The statue was unveiled by Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar.

phase would see a gas-fired plant. The latter will, however, depend on the establishment of the LNG terminal at Ennore. According to him, 1000 MW will be Tamil Nadu's share of electricity from this project. The Centre, however, has not announced the State's share from the proposed 2x1000 MW Kudankulam atomic power project.

Apart from these mega projects, there are several other dreams of power in the State. The State Government is expecting the private sector to put up small hydel plants at Kodavanar (10 MW), Manchalar, Bhavani Barrage I and II (6 MW each), Marudanadhi (5 MW) and Tirumurthi Contour Canal (1.3 MW). The TNEB's 30 MW Parson's Valley hydel project and the 7.5 MW Sathanur hydel project are expected to go on stream this year.

The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) partnering the Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) plans to generate about 250 MW by firing baggasse. Seven sugar mills have been identified for such cogeneration.

Private sector initiatives in respect of seven projects, with a total capacity of 995 MW, are likely to firm up in 1999. The

Pillaiperumanallur 330.05 MW natural gas-cum-naptha fired considering restructuring itself

Hospitals group, for instance,

power set up by the State Gov- an agreement has been signed, ernment has projected an annual load growth of 10%. According to Chief Minister Karunanidhi, if all the proposed projects (central/state/ private sector) go on stream as planned, the State would add another 6000 MW capacity by 2007. The installed capacity is 6916 MW (5076 MW in the state sector, 1841 MW being

from Central projects). Tamil Nadu's per capita power consumption of 430 units is higher than the national average of 335 units. The TNEB ranks high in respect of other parameters also. For instance, its average plant load factor (PLF) is about 72.3% (national average 68.5%), line loss 17% (22%) and unit cost of generation 192.28 paise (207.34 paise).

Of the power generated in the State, 26% is distributed free and domestic supply is subsidised to the extent of 50%. After taking line losses into consideration, only about 50% of the power available raises any real revenue. Government has decided to form a threemember State Electricity Regulatory Commission to fix a new | for the work to be taken up in

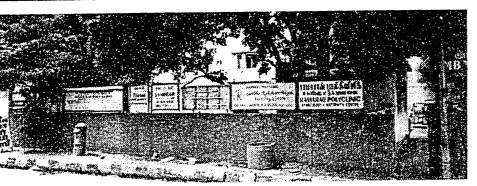
Frederick Stanley, in early Thirties of the suburban electric service between Beach station and Tambaram via Chetput. I don't remember if initially it was confined only to the Egmore-Mambalam stretch and extended later to Beach and Tambaram in stages. But Chetput was always served by

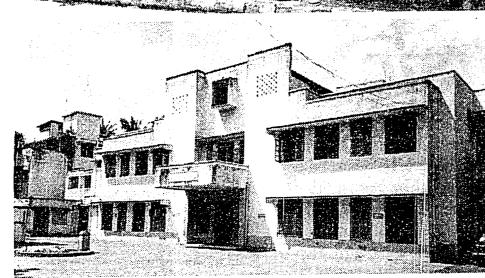
The opening of the Chetput Bridge, which brought Kilpauk close to Nungambakkam and beyond and the emergence of a new colony, at Shenoy Nagar and later, at Anna Nagar put paid to all Kilpauk's dreams of being an area calm and serene beauty. Traffic to and from these colonies along Poonamallee High Road, the Chetput Bridge conveying another flood of traffic onto Poonamallee High Road, and at the other end another wave of traffic through the Kilpauk Garden Road on the northern side of Kilpauk, today ensures chaos and noise pollution.

Kilpauk has also not been able to resist in recent years the onslaught of cement and concrete jungles which had already engulfed other parts of

power tariff. The Board is also project promoted by the Apollo and dividing generation and distribution between two differhas achieved financial closure. ent organisations. The Texas The working group on Utilities Co., Texas, with which is expected to advise the TNEB

> on these matters. The State, and particularly Industry, looks forward to the dreams becoming something more concrete.





Dr Rama Rau's Clinic still continues in Kilpauk. Within the walls is its General Nursing Home and Diagnostic Centre which was opened by the Premier of Madras, C Rajagopalachari, in 1939. (All pictures by RAJIND

tres, cateries et al., accompa-

congestion. One change, how-

ever, I welcome, and that is the

total disappearance of open

ing, a veritable curse we had to

Kilpauk is no longer the pas-

sionate mistress I used to adore

in those gone by. Yet she lurks

still, a few pockets in the cen-

tral part, areas that are less

noisy and far more quiet than

most parts of the city they now

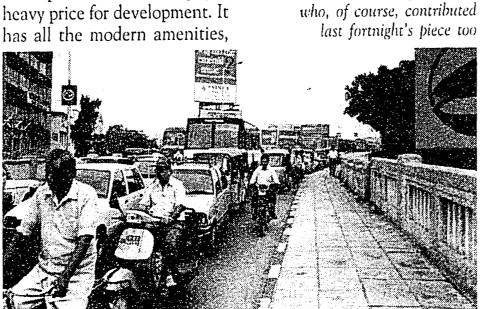
— Octogenarian

suffer in those days.

call Chennai.

Chennai. What causes me the flats, high-rise structures, theadeepest anguish is the vandalism in the garb of development nied by noise pollution and that has caused the total annihilation of a whole cluster of mango groves and the tank in Landon's Gardens. Tears I lavatories and manual scavengmust shed for the total disappearance of verdant groves and lush foliage that once dominated the scene. Alas, I cannot see a single woodapple tree (a prized possession of Kilpaukees once), nor a single mango, lemon or guava tree. This is indeed the greenest city for they used to be found in plenty in every bungalow in those days.

Kilpauk has had to pay a heavy price for development. It



The congestion on the Chetput overbridge today.

Metro work picks up pace

(Continued from Page 1)

ernment land will be handed over by the State Government on lease at a nominal value, whereas private lands will be acquired by the State Government and compensation paid from the project cost. About 3.5 hectare of Airport Authority land and 34 hectares of private land have to be acquired, officials state.

About 2500 encroachers residing on the Tiruvanmiyur-Velachery stretch will have to be evicted. About 175 families have been rehabilitated at Tiruvottrivur, and 250 families will be relocated at Tondiarpet. The remaining families will be shifted in phases before April 1999, says the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. These bottlenecks have to be cleared

the Tiruvanmiyur-Taramani-Velacheri stretch.

Of the nine stations in this phase, Mandaveli, Greenways Road, Kotturpuram, Kasturba Nagar, Indira Nagar, Tiruvanmiyur and Taramani I are on the elevated stretch. Taramani II and Velacheri are surface stations. Bus terminals are planned close to Chintadripet, Triplicane, Tiruvanmiyur and Velacheri stations; other stations will have bus stops close by for commuters to transit. The platform will be 280 m long, to handle 12-car EMU trains. When these are completed, the 210-m platforms in Phase I will be

Phase I, Chennai Beach to Tirumailai, an 8.97 km stretch was commissioned in 1997. About 6.22 km on this stretch is elevated on 602 pre-stressed concrete box girders of span 18 m to 30 m and weighing 150T to 280T. Six-car EMU trains with two motor coaches run at 10minute intervals during peak hour, providing 113 journeys during weekdays. Work is underway providing roofs over the platforms, escalators and lifts at these stations. Floor space for shopping and office complexes, besides parking and approach road facilities are a feature of these modern stations. A computerised reservation counter will shortly be opened at Tirumailai, say Railway officials.

Phases III, IV, V, and VI (as indicated in the map) will be taken up over the next few years and eventually provide Chennai a ring railway.

Rajind N Christy

MADRAS MUSINGS January 1-15, 1999

The sound of music in Senate House again

couple of bemused bats Trudely woken from deep sleen winged crazily to and fro a few times and then having become accustomed to an audience, fell silent. Flickering candlelight on the walls cast a shortlived romantic glow, dving out before the evening's entertainment began. Rotating spotlight stands occasionally the detail which needed to be caught the hues of once-magnificent stained glass windows and threw soft flushes of colour on special landmarks of architechtural grandeur. Lighting tion from behind picked out the details of the immense semi-circular wooden tracery behind the stage and behind the hall. Amidst all this magic, two strong spotlights focused on the figures of the two performers dressed in black, each seated at a black Steinway concert grand piano, ready to perform.

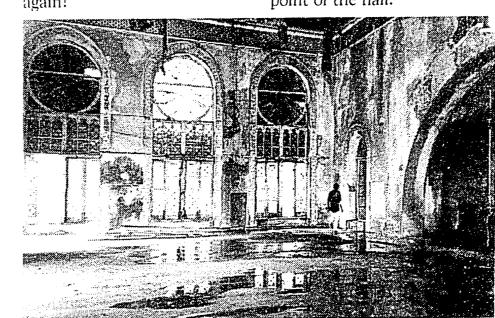
From the back of the hall in University's Senate House, hall, the side near the stage, I whose need for restoration has often been discussed in these or aural distortion of any other pages, it looked like a stage set sort; in fact, the high ceiling for high drama. And drama it seemed to add an extra dimenwas as this 1879 building came alive again after many years of walked back towards the front disuse. In what was once one of door, however, the sound bethe most splendid halls in Madras, there was an audience fainter after passing the midagain!

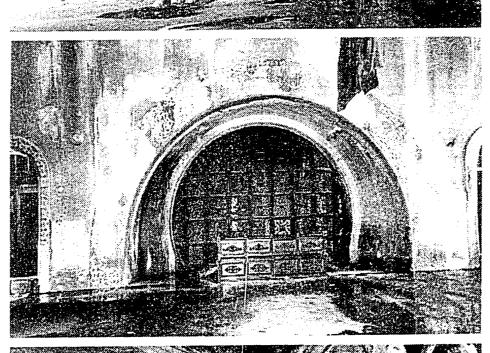
The hall was the venue for a two-piano recital by the celebrated duo KW from France who were on a concert tour of India and Southeast Asia. Seeing the interior of Senate

House for the first time, this writer was completely overcome by the magnificence of its dimensions, by the beauty of restored as soon as possible. It is only the acoustics and the temperature within the hall in summer that might be in ques-As for the acoustics, a pub-

lic address system should easily take care of lectures, speeches, etc, however large the audience. It is for such uses as theatre, dance and concerts when only the natural acoustics of the building should be relied on, that expert help should be Seated in the first half of the

could not detect any echoing sion to the sound. But as I came gradually fainter and point of the hall.









The attractive cover of the invitiation to the K W duo's concert at Senate House.

The imagination runs riot. wonder whether the solution would be a portable round wooden stage, constructed in been playing together since of high quality and of identical segments that would fit together, placed in the centre of the hall with the audience seated round it. A modern adoption of an old concept Chennai as part of a rather which has many names, including Theatre-in-the-Round or Southeast Asia. Arena. That is for the experts to decide, but I am looking forward to a solution and more chosen to use a four-wheel such activity in Senate House. Let's all get together and bring Steinway concert pianos in a it alive again.

THE OLD...

French duo KW, Clara Kastler and Hubert Woringer, have

claimed pianists from Aix en Provence, France, were in unusual tour of India and

What makes the tour unusual is that the two artists have drive vehicle and haul their specially prepared trailer to - Anna Abraham wherever they are playing. This ever, played

EDITOR'S NOTE: The is in order to be certain to have at their disposal, wherever they give a recital, two instruments sensitivity. (Often concert halls These two nationally ac- do not have two excellent

Another special feature of their concert-tour is the choice of repertoire. They have chosen only pieces originally written for two pianos by composers from Bach to the contemporaries. The purpose of this unique project is to make music for two pianos known in places where it is seldom, if

...& THE NEW

Our OLD and NEW this fortnight focus yet again differently. RAJIND N CHRISTY's pictures of the OLD (the three on the left) capture the sorry state Senate House and its famed Hall are in, on the inside. Taking a beek at the room behind the dominant fretwork decoration above the stage he found a large room that was eaking, the effect damp had had on the walls, and damage caused near the roof by the plaster falling off.

His NEW, on the other hand, reveals that even if no repairs have been carried out, merely the act of putting the building to meaningful use could give it new life. In the pictures (on the right) the hall is a vision with light streaming through its stained glass windows and tall doorways as it awaits an audience entering from the main

entrance at the rear; the hall positively glows as lights and candles light it up; and then the moderate audience settles in to listen to the KW Duo, presented by the Alliance Francise and the University of Madras (though they might have preferred more comfortable chairs). A concert in a virtually derelict

ture to draw attention to its state and to seek public help. Vice Chancellor Manoharan should be congratulated on taking this first step but he must come to terms with a couple of facts of life. PR and publicity are not enough; there must be visible evidence that work on restoration is underway. Now that he has appointed a coordinator for the project, an eminent restorer of the archaeological, the Vice Chancellor should start releasing whatever little funds originally turned up for this work so that Dr. Narasimhaiah can get started on it, at least to the extent of protecting the building and preventing it from getting worse. Secondly, Dr Narasimhaiah should become the spokesman of the project and spell out its needs based on the expert committee's recommendations. And, most important of all, a separate fund must be created for Senate House use with all necessary tax exemptions; supporters of the Senate House project will offer aid only to such a fund, NOT to the coffers of the university. Particularly after some of the collection from colleges and students in the past went into the general fund and not for Senate House as had originally been blanned. A separate Senate House Fund is likely to see a greater response to Vice Chancellor Manoharan's appeal, Madras Musings







Two in the steps of Anand

iming to follow in the 1 footsteps of World No.2, Chennai's Viswanathan Anand, are two young chess players, also from Chennai, who have made rapid strides in Junior chess and are making their presence felt in the international scene. They are International Master Krishnan Sashikiran and International Woman Master Vijayalakshmi Subbaraman.

Making their debut in the Chess Olympiad at Elista, Kalmykia, a republic of Russia, in September-October 1998. Sashikiran emerged the country's best player with 8.5 points out of 11, with seven wins, three draws and one defeat. India finished 33rd with 28.5 points. Sashi played on the fourth board and missed a medal on his board by just half a point. Sashi says he gained a lot of experience playing there, but complained that the atmosphere was not suitable for chess. "The hall was small and we weren't allowed to enter other halls to watch the top olayers play."

In the World Junior Chess tournament held in Kozhikode recently, Sashi finished seventh scoring 8.5/13 with five wins and seven draws. His lone defeat in the second round by Ruud Janssen from Holland affected Sashi's performances in the next four rounds, but he then bounced back to finish India's best.

Sashi, a Twelfth Standard student, won his first GM norm in the British Open at Torquay earlier in 1998. He finished sixth in a strong field of GMs there. He was in winning positions against GMs Nigel Short and Ionathan Speelman before drawing with them. He also drew with GM Matthew Sadler.

Immediately after the Torquay tournament, he finished second behind GM Jim Plaskett in Hampstead, scoring 10.5/15. He missed gaining his GM title here by one point.

Sashi's parents, both employed in nationalised banks, encouraged him to play chess from a very young age to keep him occupied when they were away at work. He picked up the game watching his father play at the club level. He played and analysed games with elders, including former National 'B' players. His father, Krishnan, coached Sashi, an only child, in theory and encouraged him to think on his own so that he would learn from his mistakes. "An eagerness to learn from mistakes makes one a better player," Krishnan explains.

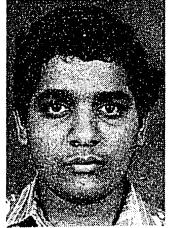
Krishnan has devoted all his spare time to his son's chess and the family have spent much on Sashi's foreign trips and the computers he needs for training. "Without sponsors it is very difficult for Sashi to participate in higher open tournaments abroad where he could earn more ELO points and strengthen his claims for a GM title," says Krishnan on behalf of his son, who is the silent type. Fortunately for the family DSQ Software Ltd., came to their rescue in 1998 and sponsored Sashi's trips to Spain, UK and Elista.

Sashi spent half an hour with V. Anand at the latter's house in 1997. The World No.2 analysed some of Sashi's games and suggested he work with the advanced chess software 'Fritz'. "Anand's board vision is very deep. His analysis of 30-40 games in 20 minutes even without a chess board is amazing. You can only admire his skill, not acquire it," enthuses Krishnan.

When I asked Anand, who was on a short visit to his parents' home in Besant Nagar recently, how he assessed Sashikiran, he said, "He is the most promising player in India. He is playing so well that he will become a GM in the next one year. But I do not want to make long-term predictions and put him under pressure."

Sashi's ELO ratings will cross 2.500 when the new list is released this month. He aims to reach 2600 and become a GM in next two years. "After becoming a GM, it is how far you go from there is important. You need to play tougher and higher rated players in many tournaments," says Krishnan, who is making long-term plans for his son, who will be 18 on the 7th.

While Sashikiran had a satisfactory tournament in Kozhikode, India's highest rated woman chess player S. Vijayalakshmi, 19, did not do as well as expected at the Olympiad as well as in the Juniors. Captaining the country's women's team in the Olympiad, she



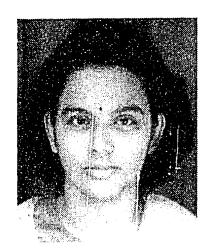
K. Sashikiran

led India to its best finish in the last decade, 15th with 22.5 points. Considering that most of the countries who finished ahead of India had WGMs and India none, and that there was tougher competition after the split of the Soviet Union, this was a creditable performance. But with five wins and two draws, she finished with only 6/ 10, half-a-point behind Maharashtrian Pallavi Shah, India's best in the tournament.

Playing on the top board, Vijavalakshmi suffered two shock defeats, to a Polish girl and a Cuban, before playing true to her ability.

Viji, an IWM since 1995 and a holder of two WGM norms, expected to earn a WGM title at the Olympiad, but half a point prevented her from achieving it. That half point also proved crucial in the team championships. Recounting her maiden experience as captain of an Olympiad team, she feels "the pressure on the captain is enormous for you choose who play on the different boards in matches, and the choice often makes the difference between a win and a loss. But for that it was good experience. All of us staying together in a cottage and dining together and supporting each other was great fun and helped our morale a lot."

In the World Junior championship, Viji's show was even more disappointing. She came seventh, scoring 8/13. She had her chances of winning a medal but consecutive defeats in the 10th and 11th rounds did not help at all. She also lost a



S. Vijayalakshmi

chance of clinching the WGM title norm. She got her a WGM norm in the Commonwealth women's chess tournament in December 1996 and her second norm in the Anibal open chess at Linares in January 1998. But the forthcoming open tournaments in Spain — Ubeda and Linares — followed by the Goodricke and Commonwealth tournaments, give her the opportunity to become the country's first WGM by March 1999.

An IM norm holder, Viji has been playing in men's tournaments and has fared creditably. She defeated India's second GM, D. Barua, in the Goodricke at Calcutta in 1998 and has beaten strong GMs like Jim Plaskett of the UK in the Commonwealth and Mikhail Kobalia of Russia in Linares. Her ambition is a men's GM title.

The B.Com final year (correspondence) student complains that there is not enough tournaments in India to give women chess players greater opportunities to improve their playing standards. She works in Indian Airlines as an accounts and audit superintendent, and the airline does support her to the extent possible.

When I asked Anand for his views on Viji, he said he had not followed her games closely and, hence, did not want to comment, but felt she was making good progress. Viji's two younger sisters, Meenakshi and Banupriya, are also chess players moving up in the rankings. Together, they could be a formidable Indian team in future.

G. Krishnan

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Scrabble; 2. Deepa Mehta; 3. Tathagat Tulsi; 4. Shiv Sakthi; 5. Hugo Chaves; 6. The Millennium Dome; 7. Chai Yo; 8. Ilayaraja; 9. Oscar Wilde; 10. K H N Simha; 11. Sri Krishna Museum at Kurukshetra; 12. Mahatma Gandhi; 13.

Dictionary of the Dutch Language; 15. Jyoti Prasad Yadev.

Conntmara Public Library; 17. Kalakshetra: 18. National Defence; 19. Saheli Barua; 20. Information regarding traffic-related subjects.



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