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MADRAS MUSINGS

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Dreams of power

(by Venkatachari Jagannathan)

Energy — a bag of wind!

It 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.

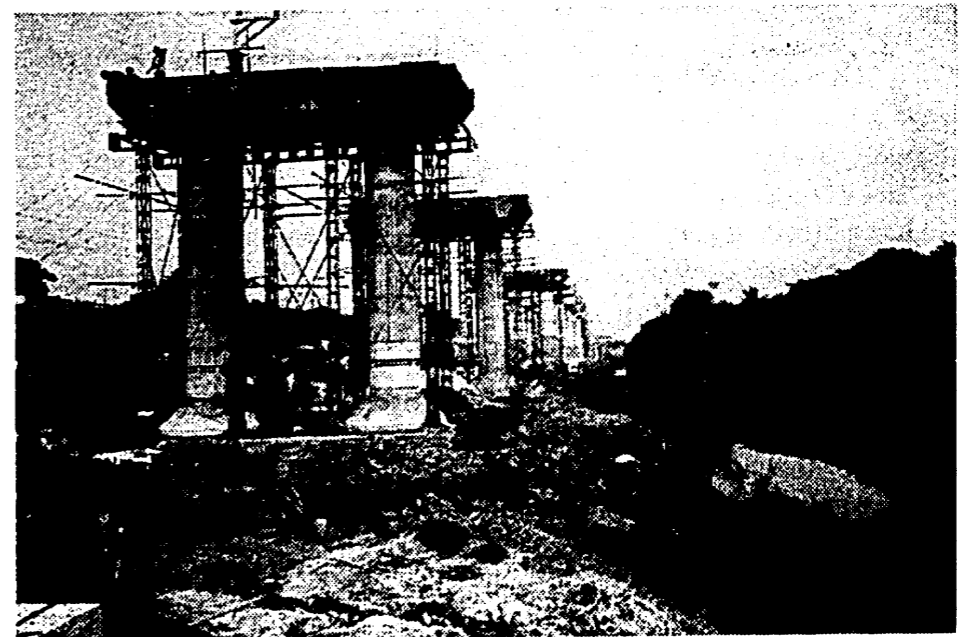
Even as the State and Central Governments announce new power projects for the State, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) is embarking on a refurbishment and modernisation (R&M) programme of its existing thermal plants. R&M is a low-cost and easier option for capacity increase. At an outlay of Rs.40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

tional 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 the road leading to Taramani.

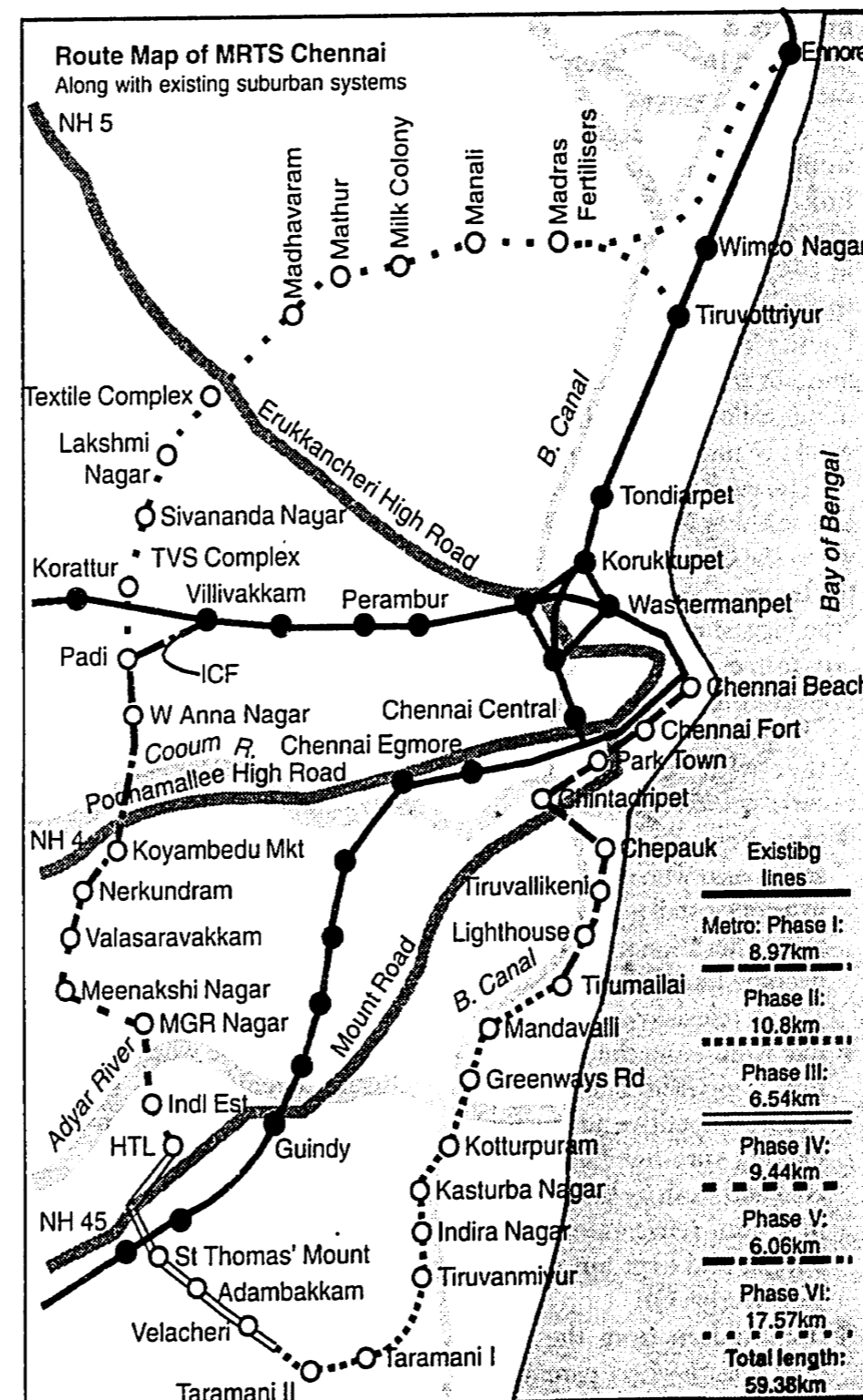
The wild growth alongside the Buckingham Canal has been cleared from Mylapore (Tirumailai, according to the Railways!) to Tiruvanmiyur for the

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 Government has begun. According to the MoU under approval, gov-

(Continued on Page 6)



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 Chennai's transport problems, PROVIDED the proper road transport linkages are simultaneously made.

NOSTALGIA

Kilpauk memories

(Continued from last fortnight)

Kilpauk was stirred by a few notable events in the 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 Jawaharlal 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 session is said to have inspired the

founding of the Madras Music Academy.

A plethora of lights, colourful feasts 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 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 significance was the inauguration by

the State Governor, Sir 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 it.

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



The statue of Capt. G Srinivasa Murthi, 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.

DREAMS OF POWER

(Continued from Page 1) 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), Man-chalar, 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 bagasse. 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-naphtha fired project promoted by the Apollo Hospitals group, for instance, has achieved financial closure.

The working group on power set up by the State Government 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 three-member State Electricity Regulatory Commission to fix a new

power tariff. The Board is also considering restructuring itself and dividing generation and distribution between two different organisations. The Texas Utilities Co., Texas, with which an agreement has been signed, is expected to advise the TNEB on these matters.

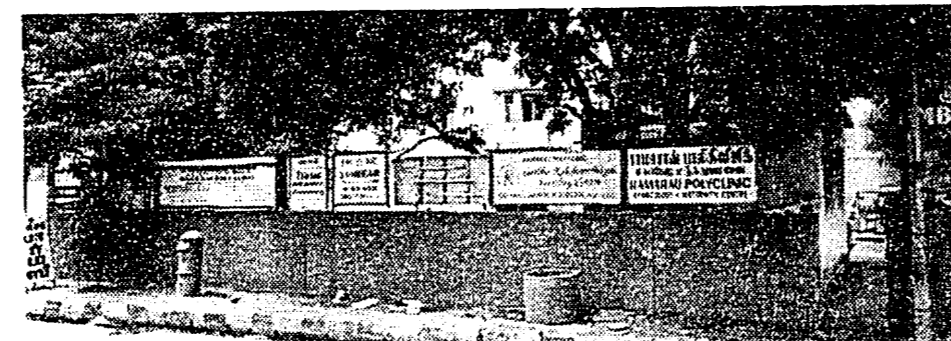
The State, and particularly Industry, looks forward to the dreams becoming something more concrete.

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 Tiruvottriyur, 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 for the work to be taken up in



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 N CHRISTY.)

Chennai. What causes me the deepest anguish is the vandalism in the garb of development that has caused the total annihilation of a whole cluster of mango groves and the tank in Landon's Gardens. Tears I must 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 has all the modern amenities,

flats, high-rise structures, theatres, cateries et al., accompanied by noise pollution and congestion. One change, however, I welcome, and that is the total disappearance of open lavatories and manual scavenging, a veritable curse we had to suffer in those days.

Kilpauk is no longer the passionate mistress I used to adore in those gone by. Yet she lurks still, a few pockets in the central part, areas that are less noisy and far more quiet than most parts of the city they now call Chennai.

—Octogenarian who, of course, contributed last fortnight's piece too



The congestion on the Chetput overbridge today.

the Tiruvanmiyur-Taramani-Velachery 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 Velachery are surface stations. Bus terminals are planned close to Chintadripet, Triplicane, Tiruvanmiyur and Velachery 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 lengthened. Phase I, Chennai Beach to Tirumailai, an 8.97 km stretch was commissioned in 1997. About 6.22 km on this stretch is

Rajind N Christy

The sound of music in Senate House again

A couple of bemused bats rudely woken from deep sleep 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, dying out before the evening's entertainment began. Rotating spotlight stands occasionally caught the hues of once-magnificent stained glass windows and threw soft flushes of colour on special landmarks of architectural grandeur. Lighting 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.

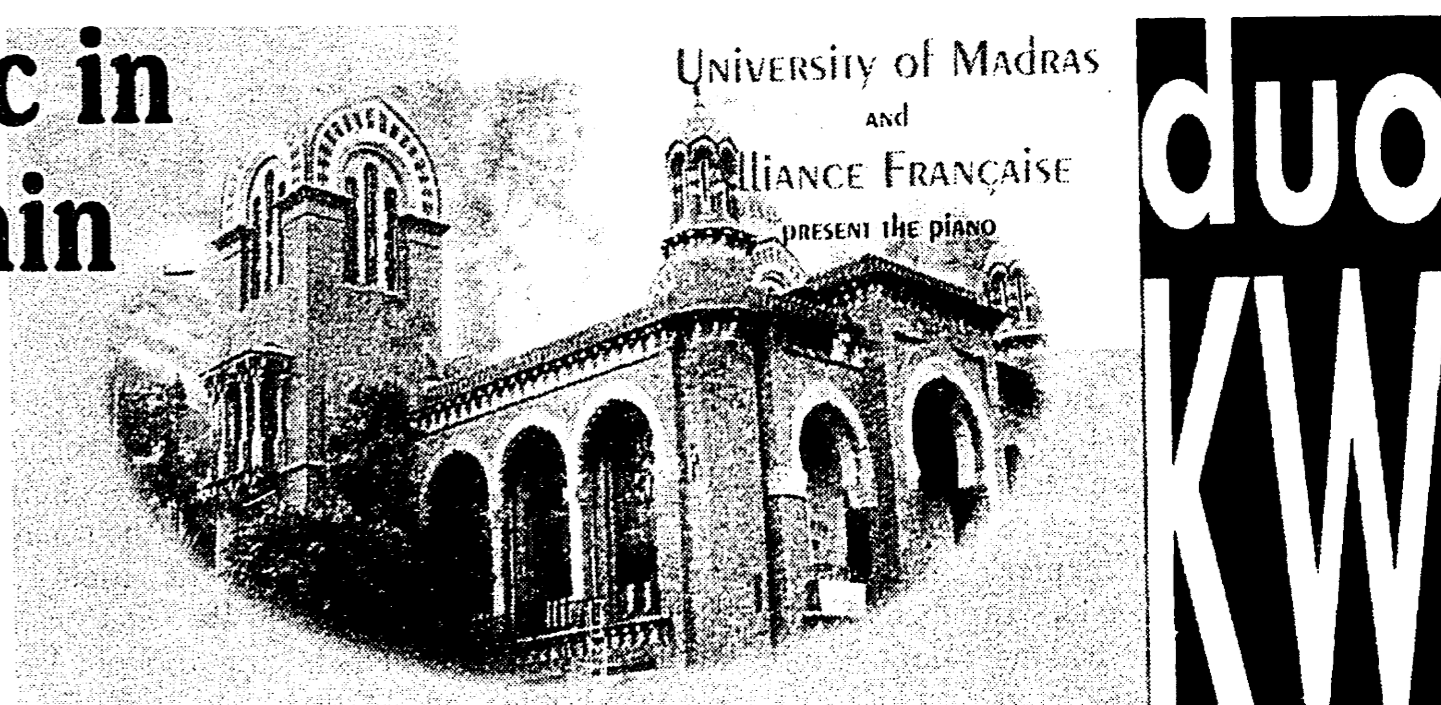
From the back of the hall in University's Senate House, whose need for restoration has often been discussed in these pages, it looked like a stage set for high drama. And drama it was as this 1879 building came alive again after many years of disuse. In what was once one of the most splendid halls in Madras, there was an audience again!

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 the detail which needed to be restored as soon as possible. It is only the acoustics and the temperature within the hall in summer that might be in question.

As for the acoustics, a public 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 taken.

Seated in the first half of the hall, the side near the stage, I could not detect any echoing or aural distortion of any other sort; in fact, the high ceiling seemed to add an extra dimension to the sound. But as I walked back towards the front door, however, the sound became gradually fainter and fainter after passing the midpoint of the hall.



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

EDITOR'S NOTE: The French duo KW, Clara Kastler and Hubert Woringner, have been playing together since 1985.

These two nationally acclaimed pianists from Aix en Provence, France, were in Chennai as part of a rather unusual tour of India and Southeast Asia.

What makes the tour unusual is that the two artists have chosen to use a four-wheel driven vehicle and haul their Steinway concert pianos in a specially prepared trailer to wherever they are playing. This

is in order to be certain to have at their disposal, wherever they give a recital, two instruments of high quality and of identical sensitivity. (Often concert halls do not have two excellent pianos.)

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 ever, played.

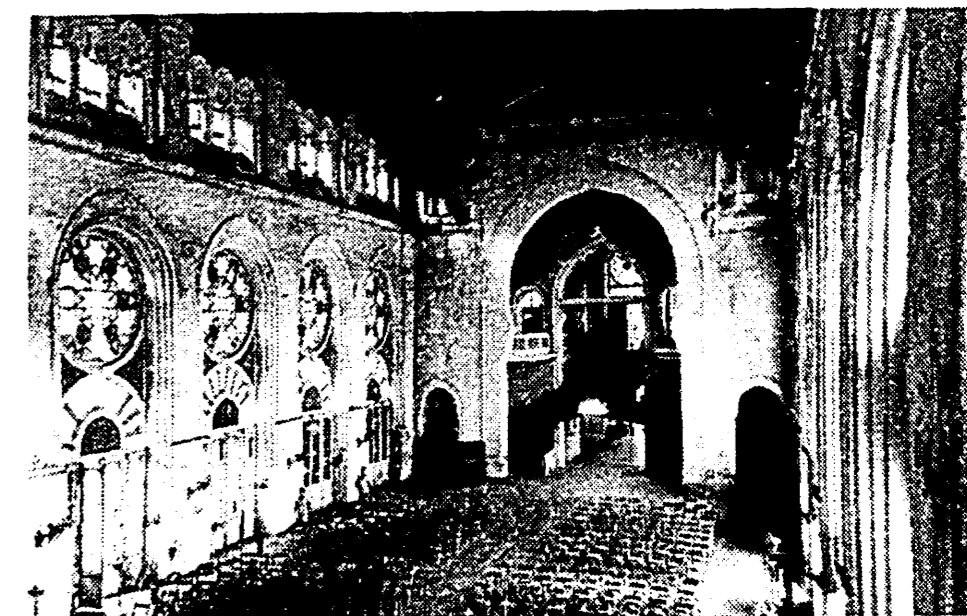
...& THE NEW

THE OLD...

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 peek at the room behind the dominant fretwork decoration above the stage he found a large room that was leaking, 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 Francaise and the University of Madras (though they might have preferred more comfortable chairs).

A concert in a virtually derelict hall is certainly an imaginative gesture 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 planned. A separate Senate House Fund is likely to see a greater response to Vice Chancellor Manoharan's appeal, Madras Musings feels.



Two in the steps of Anand

Aiming to follow in the 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 players 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 Jonathan 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

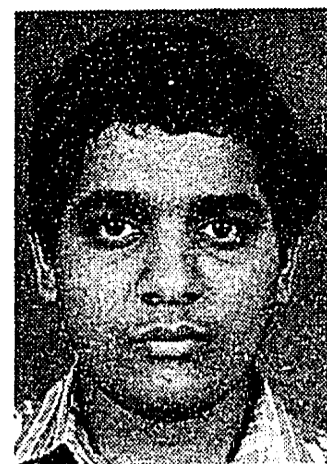
strengthen his claims for a GM title," says Krishnan on behalf of his son, who is the silent type. Fortunately for the family DSQ Software Ltd., came to their rescue in 1998 and sponsored Sashi's trips to Spain, UK and Elista.

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 2500 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



S. Vijayalakshmi

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 Maharashtra's Pallavi Shah, India's best in the tournament.

Playing on the top board, Vijayalakshmi 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

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 Tuli; 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 Yadav.

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



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