

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Land of the poor: for ever?
- Power peddling
- A forgotten battle
- Heeding the public
- Cricket the winner

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FREE ISSUE

February 16-28, 1999

## 'No demolition' order sought

(By a Staff Reporter)

Madras Musings' story of February 1, that the Life Insurance Corporation of India had requested the tenants to quit its *Bharat Insurance Building* forthwith, as the building was "unsafe" and "could not be repaired", has had the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) seeking Government intervention in the matter. INTACH has requested Government to advise the Corporation of Chennai not to issue demolition permits, if sought, for about 100 listed buildings and to seek the advice of a Heritage Building Safety Committee before issuing such permits.

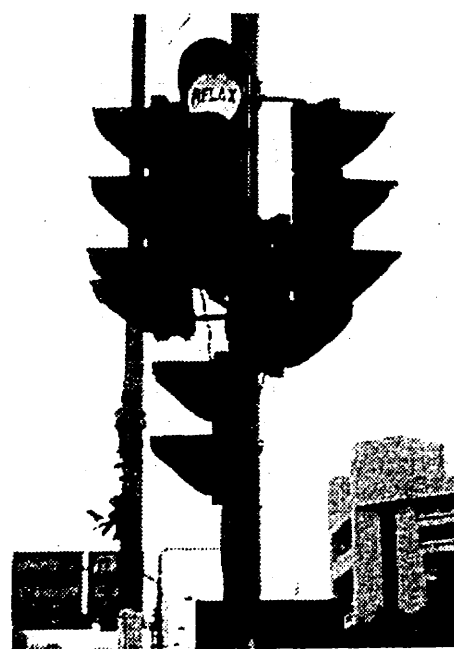
In seeking this interim action, while the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority frames new development rules in respect of listed Heritage Buildings and the Government legislates a Heritage Act, INTACH wants to ensure that at least the hundred or so most important Heritage Buildings in the City are not threatened — as the *Bharat Insurance Building* is — while the new rules and regulations are being drafted. The CMDA is processing its new rules and these are expected to be in the books in the next couple of months. As soon as the rules are in place, the Heritage Act is likely to be drafted and, *Madras Musings* learns, is likely to be legislated by the middle of the year.

Meanwhile, INTACH has submitted a list of about 100 buildings to the Government, including the 42 the CMDA had included in its Master Plan for the City, for inclusion in its interim advice to the Corporation. *Bharat Insur-*

*ance Building* is one of those on the list. INTACH has also suggested that an interim Heritage Building Safety Committee be formed with a technically qualified representative from each of the following organisations: the Corporation, CMDA, PWD, Archaeological Survey of India and INTACH. Until such time as the new CMDA rules and the Heritage Act are in place, INTACH would like Govern-

ment to ensure that the 100 or so buildings INTACH seeks protection for in this preliminary exercise are not threatened with demolition before they are examined by this expert committee and certified as being "unrepairable for safe use".

The Government, *Madras Musings* learns, is likely to look favourably on INTACH's appeal and take action very shortly.



● Now that was exactly the advice your Editor needed to be offered these past couple of weeks, but no one offered it till he himself spotted it on the RED at the Connemara junction while heading South. Inquiries revealed that the Police are offering the same advice at several other junctions in the City. Your Editor hopes this bit of psychological control is also offered in Tamil. (Picture by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

## Madras could do with help

Exports of Real Madras Handkerchief to Nigeria, Benin and Togo earned foreign exchange to the tune of Rs.21.8 crore in 1997-98. But that market could grow substantially — if government assisted the producers and the exporters improved their marketing.

The Real Madras Handkerchief (RMHK, as it is referred to by the trade), is an embroidered cotton cloth, 8 yards long, 36 inches wide folding to the size of a large handkerchief.

The 'Real' was added to distinguish the Indian product from the Japanese look-alike and copies from English textile mills that began to appear in the market at the end of World War II. 'Madras' refers to the old Presidency, for the weaving is done in Chirala (Andhra Pradesh) and Malabar.

It was only in the early 70s that the Indian RMHK exporters became aware that the market was the Kalabari people of Nigeria. Earlier, the cloth had been purchased by a city-based British company headquartered in Manchester and the exporter did not know where the consignment of embroidered cloth was headed.

Today, a single piece costs anything between Rs.200 to Rs.1,000 depending on the amount of work done on the cloth. Some of them are heavy with zari, sequins and bead work. Checks and heavy borders are also popular.

'Injiri', or Indian Madras, holds a special place in Kalabari life as a symbol of a person's life from womb to tomb. It is stated that one cloth of particular significance to the Kalabari for a few hundred years is the handwoven cotton of plaid or check design from India that has various names — Indian (Continued on Page 9)

## Tamil Nadu draws up development plans

"The Tamil Nadu Government is planning to take over Tuticorin airport for further development of traffic," disclosed M.S. Srinivasan, Industry Secretary. The outlay for upgrading the airport and improving its infrastructure would cost anything between Rs.150 and Rs.170 crore, he stated. This the State Government can afford.

It may be recalled that the Centre has recently cleared the Sethusamudram Canal project. When implemented, this would increase traffic at Tuticorin port. This in turn is expected to generate higher demand for air traffic from Tuticorin.

Meanwhile, the decision to build Chennai's second international airport on a BOT basis has been taken. According to Srinivasan, tenders would soon be floated for interested private parties.

Speaking about the progress of the hitech park at Nanguneri, he said that 2000 acres of land had been acquired and a company (name a secret)

registered. The environmental impact assessment is being carried out by IIT, Chennai. The Rs.700 crore project will be implemented by the joint venture company floated by TIDCO and two US-based companies namely, Broadacre and Infac.

Watson M Laetsch, Breakthrough Solutions, a part of the

● by V Jagannathan

Infac group, told *Madras Musings* that Infac would be taking a 51% stake in the new company's equity and would "later, scale it down in phases". TIDCO will take 11%. Laetsch also said that the park would be a unique one and the developed plots would be marketed globally.

To facilitate free flow of traffic once the park comes into existence, the two-lane national highway linking Tuticorin and Nanguneri would be converted into a four-lane highway, Srinivasan stated. "Whether the road

would be built by Government or by a private party with toll facilities is yet to decided," he added.

According to Srinivasan, TIDCO is slow pedalling its iron ore mining and pelletisation project slated to be located in Salem and Tiruvannamalai owing to the bad state of the user industry. TIDCO was supposed to have started scouting for a private party as a partner in January 1999. According to the project estimates, about 450 million tons of iron ore deposits are available for mining in Salem and Tiruvannamalai. The feasibility report for the project to be promoted by TIDCO in the associate sector was done in 1996 by MN Dastur & Co., metallurgical consultants of repute.

The investment plan was to set up iron ore mining and beneficiation plants at Tiruvannamalai (1 million ton) and Kanjamalai (2 million tons) and a pelletisation plant with a capacity of 1 million ton, at an outlay of Rs.800 crore.



# Destined to remain the land of the poor

Early in January, *The Man From Madras Musings* had heard Gurucharan Das, long a Harvard-nurtured voice of private enterprise, assure the members of the Madras Book Club that they had to wait just fifty years to see poverty eradicated throughout India. Free enterprise would ensure that miracle, he had predicted. Scarcely a few weeks later, MMM heard another Book Club speaker, also with Harvard connections, inform the members that India was destined to remain a land of the poor. And young Siddarth Dube, journalist and author, also took the name of free enterprise to justify his scenario, in this case accusing Jawaharlal Nehru of NOT using free enterprise to bring about prosperity.

What Dube accused Nehru of was NOT redistributing the land at Independence. The zamindars were in disarray at the time, Dube stated, and Nehru had a glorious opportunity to put real socialism to work by redistributing the land among the peasantry, he added. By not going in for land reforms, Nehru condemned the tillers of the land to poverty, Dube charged. With every Government in the Nineties disregarding the poor and with no land reforms, therefore, likely, the poor of India will only increase and the gains of liberalisation will be hijacked by the non-poor, Dube predicted.

Two things, however, struck MMM during the course of the evening. The first was Dube's latest book, the occasion for the evening. *Words like Freedom*, a subaltern history that looks at three generations of a Dalit family, might well "bring alive the ugliness of poverty", but to judge by what was said that evening does also reveal the progress the family has made in the last fifty years, producing the first graduate in its history. There has obviously been progress — and MMM contends that progress has been eaten away by population growth, not landlessness.

When a lady in the audience brought up the issue of the problems posed by population, Dube seemed to hem and haw a bit, but ended up stating that population is not a major issue, that other countries have greater problems vis a vis population and the ratio to land and food supply. Because others might have a greater problem, it does not make ours any less. Particularly when we have the largest number of the poor in the world, numbers many times in excess of the poor in any other country. When the Dubes of the world point out that India has more poor today than its entire population at Independence, they ignore the fact that today's poor have been begat by yesterday's to whom Government has not reached out with family planning measures.

## Curbing population

*The Man From Madras Musings* goes along with Gurucharan Das and agrees that

there has been a tremendous upward mobility since Independence and that the purchasing class today is substantially larger in numbers and percentage than the same pre-Independence class. That the poor have grown perhaps even faster has been entirely due to the Centre passing on the family planning buck to the States... and many States paying only lip service to their new charge. Lack of land has nothing to do with this growth of the poor population.

In fact, if Nehru had parcelled out the land, he might well have seen a bigger population explosion, with even those who had curbed their families producing larger ones, uncurbed, to meet the requirements of any land that had been given to them. Such land reforms could have caused other problems for the beneficiaries as well. To till the land they would have had to borrow money — and a couple of bad monsoons could well have had them handing over their land to the moneylenders. After all, we're talking about an era long before bank financing and non-repayment of those loans becoming a way of life!

Indeed, MMM agrees with Dube, there are many things that will keep a large part of India's population poor for a long time to

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

come. But handing over land to the tiller would not have prevented the growth of poverty; that could only be ensured, MMM is inclined to think, if the slowly growing cake is shared among a population kept smaller, be it richer or poorer, than one allowed to rampantly grow.

## Next Prime Minister?

It wasn't the best organised of functions that *The Man From Madras Musings* has attended. The attraction was former Finance Minister and current leader of the Opposition Manmohan Singh, who was being given an award for the contribution he had made to the Indian economy.

Several who had attended the function made it quite clear they were only there to greet Manmohan Singh and were not particularly interested in anything else the organisers had to say — particularly their requests for more orderly behaviour. That focus resulted in complete chaos at the end of the function, when the former Finance Minister was virtually mobbed by a crowd that had come well prepared to garland him or wrap a shawl around him or press flesh with him.

This adulation, however, would appear to have some significance. For, during the function, former President R Venkataraman and a couple of others, who took their cue from him, appeared to see — at least, in hope — the country's next Prime Minister being Manmohan Singh. Those who had come prepared to felicitate him

had apparently sensed this mood earlier and were one with it. "Manmohan Singh for Prime Minister", both 'mob' and 'dignitaries on the dais' seemed to be in unison on.

Speaking of 'mobs', many in the audience seemed to agree that the photographers on the dais were one. Both still and video cameramen occupied every inch of space on the proscenium, from one end to the other. And they would not move away at any time during the proceedings despite the pleas of both audience and organisers. The result was that few in the audience saw the proceedings. This is a growing trend — and it's time, MMM feels, the photographers' association or the journalists' association as well as newspaper and TV station owners decided that they ought to give audiences not only a break but also a little courtesy.

## Still waiting

When *Madras Musings* started nearly nine years ago, one of its first stories was the need for a major trade fair and exhibition centre in what was then Madras. Since then, *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard of various plans and different venues for such a cen-

tre in the City, but nothing seems to have concretised. In fact, the trend in what has now become Chennai is to use the Nehru Indoor Stadium for this purpose and not for what it was intended. An aside that arises from that is: "No wonder Indian sport is in the state it is, when sporting facilities are used for trade fairs and business conventions, not sport!"

Be that aside as it may be, MMM was reminded of this state of affairs as much by the latest Leather Fair occupying sports space as the news from Bangalore. Looking back at what *Madras Musings* had said over the last nine years on this subject, MMM finds that there have been several 'beware's' that Bangalore does not steal a march on the 'Gateway to the South'. But the latest news appears to indicate that that is exactly what has happened.

MMM read the other day that the "India Trade Promotion Organisation and the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board have decided to tie up with an international expert for their proposed world class permanent trade fair complex in Bangalore". MMM hears that the two Indian agencies have signed an MOU for this purpose and have agreed to put up Rs. 10 crore equity each. They are, it is reported, set to acquire 50 acres of land in Whitefield for this purpose.

ITPO had long talked to the last couple of Tamil Nadu Governments about such a project for Chennai. The move to Bangalore, MMM feels, comes as a result of no action being taken fast here on the various ideas

discussed at several meetings. Are we then going to let Bangalore steal a march on Chennai? If it does, it might be getting ready to becoming the new 'Gateway to the South', an aerial one.

## An overseas view

This column's remarks last fortnight about what puts expats off Chennai and the recounting above about how a trade fair complex might slip away from the City, finds an echo in the remarks of an Italian who heads, in South India, Inditalia, a trade promotion organisation set up by half a dozen Italian chambers of commerce to forge links between business organisations in the two countries.

Piero Carletto, *The Man From Madras Musings* recently read, had told the Madras Management Association house journal that "due to protectionist trade policies, exorbitant customs and excise duties, the difficulty to acquire reliable business partners as well as the general bureaucratic miasma, the Indian market has still not excited the Italian business world". The report adds, "Living and working in South Asia is tough for many Italians. Linguistically they are at a disadvantage. And psychologically,

the rampant overpopulation, lack of Western consumer goods and quality amenities, as well as a host of 'subcontinental evils' loosely labelled 'vast cultural differences' make this experience confusing for many."

No wonder we keep losing business as well as trade centres!

## Coastal development

Kerala bids fair to take on Goa in beach tourism. And with its inland waterways and game sanctuaries as additional off-beat attractions, it has much more to offer the holiday-maker than Goa and so, could well overtake it. *The Man From Madras Musings* mentions this in this column because Tamil Nadu, with an even longer coast than the Kerala and Goa coasts put together, has long fought shy of coastal tourism, but is now beginning to talk about it.

Kovalam has long been Kerala's No. 1 destination, even though it has not maintained the standards necessary to make it a winner. Now it's looking at putting those standards into place in Bekal in north Kerala, where it wants the hotel majors to develop seven beach resorts, each on land of about 40 acres. Taking a cue from this, there is talk once again of Tamil Nadu looking at the beach tourism it had spurned in the Seventies and Eighties. Areas south of Mammallapuram, Marakkanam, Cuddalore, Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) in particular, Vedaraniam, Mandapam and

Colachel are just waiting to be developed.

Tamil Nadu's commitment in the past to cultural (particularly temple art) tourism had put these on hold. Now, coastal zone regulations might affect these plans. Such regulations, MMM holds, are absolutely necessary in urban areas where every lung needs to be protected in an environment becoming more and more overcrowded and overrun. But in wide open rural areas, there is no reason why carefully monitored, environment-friendly tourism can't be developed. If the controls are kept in place and they are strictly IMPLEMENTED, such coastal development through tourism could prove a bonanza for a State like Tamil Nadu where we have miles of coast and beaches aplenty. Opening out a few for strictly controlled tourism will do more good for the State than going strictly by the rulebook.

## In brief

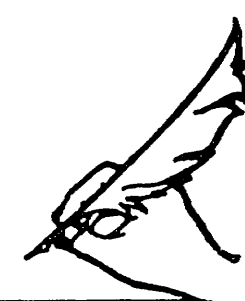
★ Raju Sethuraman, born in Karaikkudi and brought up in Madras, knew little English and had less money in 1985 when he decided to seek his fortune in New York. He began that quest as a trainee dark room helper in a photographic studio. Seven years later he started his own photo lab... and, today, operating out of his own five floors he hauls in something over \$15 million and is considered a top flight photographer on the American scene. But what fascinated *The Man From Madras Musings* most about Sethuraman's story is his 'side' business. *Savitri* in Greenwich Village, MMM hears, is the best South Indian restaurant in New York, made so by a Taj chef from Bangalore. MMM wonders whether Chettinad cuisine is on the menu.

★ Questions are being asked, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, as to why the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association is not keeping its promise (following a unanimous resolution) on naming one of the MAC Stadium's stands the Ram Singh Stand. MMM has a question himself to TNCA authorities: Why has nothing in the stadium been named after Buchi Babu, 'Father of Indian Cricket in Madras'?

★ The State Health and Electricity Minister, Arcot N Veerasamy, promises that in 2002 Tamil Nadu will have the greatest amount of surplus power of any State in India! No doubt, that healthy position would have been brought about by the healing touch he is able to generate through his ministerial links. Meanwhile, *The Man From Madras Musings* now wishes he'd take some remedial action to ensure that MMM does not have to work in the dark or the gloom of low voltage all the time these days. A little bit of current cure would be a lot more useful to Chennai citizens than powerful promises for the future.

MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE



### Create reservoirs

I fully endorse the views expressed by B. Gautham (MM Jan 16th) regarding the need for fresh reservoirs. After 1947, when the Poondi reservoir was created, no serious attempts have been made to construct more such reservoirs to meet the evergrowing needs of the City. On the other hand, it is regrettable that the existing good lakes are sought to be filled up.

It is reported that 'Thangal'lake, which serves the needs of citizens in and around Ambattur is being filled with garbage. There also seems to be a proposal to construct an office complex in the filled-up lake. The very idea of filling up a good lake is preposterous. Why not develop this lake as an additional reservoir to store the excess rain water every monsoon instead of draining the most precious water into the sea?

This year nearly a year's supply is stated to have been wasted like this. It is time serious attention was paid to creating more reservoirs and desilting, deepening and cleaning the existing lakes without trying to fill them up and convert them into housing plots etc!

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

### CR, not Gandhi

In announcing its new avatar, the *New Indian Express* has wrongly stated that the *Indian Express* was started at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi some sixty years ago. It was Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, of Salem, founder-editor *The Tamilnadu* who converted his paper as the *Indian Express*. Since he could not run it, for financial reasons, he sold the paper to Sadanand, who later founded the *Free Press Journal* in Bombay. When Sadanand decided to close down *Indian Express*, it was at the instance of C Rajagopalachari that Ramnath Goenka, a businessman, took it over to further the interests of the Indian National Congress in South India, even after he had told CR that he knew nothing of journalism.

The *Indian Express* was run by Ramnath Goenka first at Mooker Nallamuthu Street, George Town, Madras, and its then editor was the late K. Santhanam. When the house in which the *Indian Express* was burnt down, it was shifted to 100, Mount Road (now rebuilt as *Kasturi Centre*), thanks to the late K. Srinivasan of *The Hindu*. *The Hindu* had shifted from here to its new building on Mount Road; Srinivasan not only rented the building to Goenka, but also left behind some of *The Hindu*'s old printing presses so that Goenka could recommence the *Indian Express*. The *Indian Express* shift to *Express Estate*, Mount Road is another long story.

C.A. Reddi  
57, Rundalls Road  
Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

### Why not change?

It is quite some time since 'Madras' gave way to 'Chennai'. Why not change your newspaper's name from *Madras Musings* to 'Chennai Sentiments' or something like that?

S. Raghavan  
Ranga Flats  
33, Gangai Amman Koil Street,  
Valasarakkam  
Chennai 600 087.

Editor's Note: Our 'brand name' is *Madras Musings* and we will go along with it, thank you. But Madras that is Chennai is always referred to as *Chennai*.

### Highway beauty

I am not able to agree with your objection to the elevated road alongside the sea. It is quite possible

### Remembering the trams

I think K Sampath's memory is playing him tricks (Round Tana II, MM, December 16th).

We lived on Lloyd's Road (1935 to 1942) and I remember taking the tram, opposite the Officers Association hostel to Parry's. My school St Mary's was in Armenian Street.

If memory serves me right, there was a tram service from Mylapore to Pany's (with a feeder service from San Thome to Luz). And the Mylapore to Pany's service travelled right through to Parry's after surging right past the traffic signal in front of Central Station. Here it met the smaller tram service from Vepery (Purasawalkam) to its terminals past the harbour at Royapuram. There was also another route from Triplicane to Washermanpet, which came from Pycroft's Road, past Bell's Road to Mount Road. And here, I think

to add to the beauty and serenity by such a highway — without any compromise on environmental factors. And, it is only fair you give a try and not shout — particularly at the outset. Environmentalism should not hinder positive progress — through innovations and technology advancements.

K. Srinivasan  
20/9, Azinagar Main Street  
Kodambakkam  
Chennai 600 024

Editor's Note: Please see page 5.

### Loving Chennai

*Madras Musings* regularly provides its readers with a vast spectrum of news and views on Chennai complemented by rare photographs. I can assure you that your efforts make me love the city in spite of the disappointing environment.

P.S. Srinivasan  
12, First Main Road  
Kamaraj Nagar (W)  
Thiruvanniyur  
Chennai 600 041

### Calculating PLF

'Energy-A Bag of Wind' in MM, January 1st, needs certain corrections in respect of technical information.

Normally, PLF is calculated with respect to the energy produced by any plant, in a given period of time, which could be a year or a month. It is the ratio of the energy produced in the given period to the product of the name plate capacity of the generator and the total number of hours in that period.

To illustrate, if a windmill generator of a name plate capacity 500 kW produces total energy of 8.76 lakh units only, then it has a PLF of 20 per cent, as calculated below:

8.76 lakh units (500 kW x 8760 hours), which is to be multiplied by 100 to arrive at the percentage. In this case the result is 20 per cent. It may be seen that the kW capacity of the generator above cannot determine the PLF.

Another interesting feature is that there is a microprocessor control mechanism available in the market which will enable the windmill to obtain zero drawal of power from the grid. In view of the penalty

(not too sure) a pointsman, in or near Elphinstone Talkies, put it on the track that ran past Island Grounds, Central Station and on to the signal (before Ramakrishna Lunch Home) turning left, past Ambi's Cafe to Washermanpet.

I don't think Round Tana existed when we returned to Madras (from Calicut and Vizag) in 1935. But it was certainly there when we first arrived in Madras in 1929. Can any of your readers put me right? I have fond memories of taking a small tram which swayed behind Ice House Road, then let us off near the Canal from where we sprinted into the Chepauk ground to see Vinoo Mankad, go down on his knees, to square out Well and reach his century. This was sometime in January 1938.

K.N. Prabhu  
53, Ocean View  
Dunayee Road  
Colaba, Bombay - 5.

being imposed on the windmill generators, for abnormal power drawal from the grid, an awakening has, of late, dawned and this issue is getting solved.

S.R. Krishnamurthy  
Retd. Member  
Tamil Nadu Electricity Board  
4B, Abhinaya Apartments  
41 First Avenue  
Shastri Nagar,  
Chennai 600 020.

### Telephone wait

There is inordinate delay in the provision of telephone connections in some parts of Chennai.

In the Madhavaram exchange area, people have been waiting years for a connection. Even temporary connections do not come in time. It is common practice for the equipment to be installed and the connection not given — for weeks together. The poor applicants are forced to make repeated appeals.

One senior executive of a 100 per cent EOU told the writer that even for such export-oriented units, where incentives are being given by

the Government, telephone connections do not come in time.

At a time when the Chief Minister has identified power and roads as the major thrust areas for foreign investment, the fact remains that foreigners who invest here will not get the basic facility of a telephone connection if they happen to be in a less privileged area of Chennai.

And for the common man who cannot afford OYT, a telephone connection is still a life-long wait — that too in an era when the CM is speaking of Internet booths!

P.S. Sundar  
Skandam, Reilly Compound  
Coonoor 643 001

### Moles on MM's face

MM of December 16 and January 1 were sent to me here by my son in Madras.

Your usually blemishless paper has errors unworthy of you in two straight issues. In the December 16th issue, the article 'Four Generations of Dentists' by Mrs. S Rajagopal was atrociously proof-read. If it was at all!

Then in your January 16th issue, you have been straight enough to clarify that 'Glamorous' should have been 'German'.

The most glaring mistake of calling *ghatam* a *midangam* has been overlooked.

These errors are moles disturbing the handsome face of MM.

The sad demise of Anjaneyulu will be an irreparable loss in the true sense. I had occasion to talk to him praising his 'Between You & Me'. I missed the column after this absolutely unassuming writer stopped writing.

K.S. Kandaswamy  
162/A/77, Lake Gardens  
Calcutta 700 045.

### Travelling paras

The last two paragraphs in the article on 'Kilpauk Nostalgia' written by K. Sukumara Menon are actually the opening paragraphs of the next article on *Claybrook* which now houses the Rajaji Vidyashram. An unfortunate oversight on your part.

Sreekumara Menon must be wondering how these lines had crept into his account of his bungalow in Orme's Road and its surroundings now and then!!

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

Editor's Note: We've been experimenting with a new production routine — and the errors mentioned in this letter and the one above are the sad consequences. We hope the routine will improve in this issue.

C.A. Reddi also adds to our concerns. He writes: In my letter (MM, January 16th) under the heading 'Schedule English', for 'tight' read 'eight'.

### Splendid interior

Re my story on *Bharat Insurance Building* (MM, February 1st) the semi-vaulted interior of the Bradma office is studded with star- and hexagonal-shaped mirrors affixed to the ornamented wooden ceiling. This kind of ornamented ceiling can be seen in the Main High Court buildings too.

Rajind N Christy  
Anna Nagar West  
Chennai - 600 040.

## Ramanujan and 'Crynant'

Some time during late winter or early spring in 1920, while staying in Crynant, Ramanujan (the mathematician) complained to his mother that the 'Cry' in that name seemed inauspicious.

Komalatamm went to Namberumal Chetty, the owner of the bungalow (as well as of a small railroad) and a friend of Sir Francis Spring. Omitting Ramanujan's real reasons, Komalatamm told him her son needed a quieter place. Namberumal obliged, and Ramanujan was moved a little down the road to Gomitra, which means something like 'Friends of Cows', a reference to Krishna. (Source: R. Kanigel's *The Man Who Knew Infinity*.) Gomitra has been pulled down.

Raja Kalidas  
P O Box No.62, Kodaikanal

C A Reddi, adds: When Ramanujan stayed at Crynant and Gomitra, he seems to have remarked in jest that the time had come for him to quit (die) at once (Chet-put — pronounced *chut-put* means, in colloquial Tamil, 'at once').

Namberumal Chetty used to build big bungalows on Harrington Road and rent them out only to European tenants and the house would be named after the first tenant's name. There is a Krishna Temple in Crynant built out of wood; and a priest from Triplicane permanently lives in the temple premises to do the daily poojas even now. There was a temple tank, which was filled up some years ago, according to the late Mrs. Vatsala Ramachandra, who lived in Crynant as a widow, and died in it.

Ramanujan the mathematician did most of his work on *Moc c Theta* functions while at *Crynant* and *Gomitra*.

### How second-longest?

At a Chennai Corporation meeting, a Councillor stated that the Marina was the world's second longest beach. News items in the city's newspapers make the same claim. For how long are we going to perpetrate this stupid myth?

How does one define the length of a beach? And what is the length of the Marina? If we were to define a beach's length as the distance a person is able to walk unhindered from one end to the other, then the Marina can be considered to stretch from San Thomé Church to Anna Samadhi/Napier Bridge. Even considering a liberal definition, the beach can at most be considered to stretch from Foreshore Estate to Madras Port.

There are hundreds of beaches all over the world that are longer! Any widely travelled person will attest to this.

B. Gautham  
122, Wallajah Road  
Chennai - 600 002.



# Power peddling

*For a greener, healthier city*

Indian cities are among the most polluted in the world. The main sources of the air and noise pollution affecting the metros are the petrol-powered two and three-wheelers. There are close to 18 million petrol-powered two-wheelers and about 1.5 million petrol and diesel-powered three-wheelers in the country and their numbers are rising at the rate of 15 per cent a year. Besides being a major health hazard, these vehicles are guzzling huge amounts of petrol and diesel for which the country has to pay dearly in foreign exchange.

In these circumstances, it is time to look at the electric cycle-rickshaw which stands out as a non-polluting and silent form of transport suitable for urban areas. Work done at the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) at

sign takes a heavy toll on the health of the rickshaw-puller. The rickshaw has hardly changed since it was first introduced in India in the 1930s and 1940s. The gearing and the mechanical advantage of the pedal are very poor. Hence, the rickshaw-puller has to exert a lot of energy even while climbing a slight slope. The braking system is also obsolete. There are only front brakes in a rickshaw, hence, while going downhill at a high speed, braking produces a catapult effect. Similarly, the seating arrangement is very uncomfortable.

Rickshaw manufacturing is conducted in the unorganised small sector without quality controls. Designs vary with the cities in which they ply. There is a need to improve the existing rickshaws and ensure qual-

ity control in their manufacture. The electric rickshaw could provide some of the answers to these shortcomings. They could also give dignity to rickshaw-pullers, who are at present treated as members of the lowest rung of society. Moreover, electric rickshaws can also increase the income of the rickshaw-puller as he can ply his vehicle for greater distances in one day.

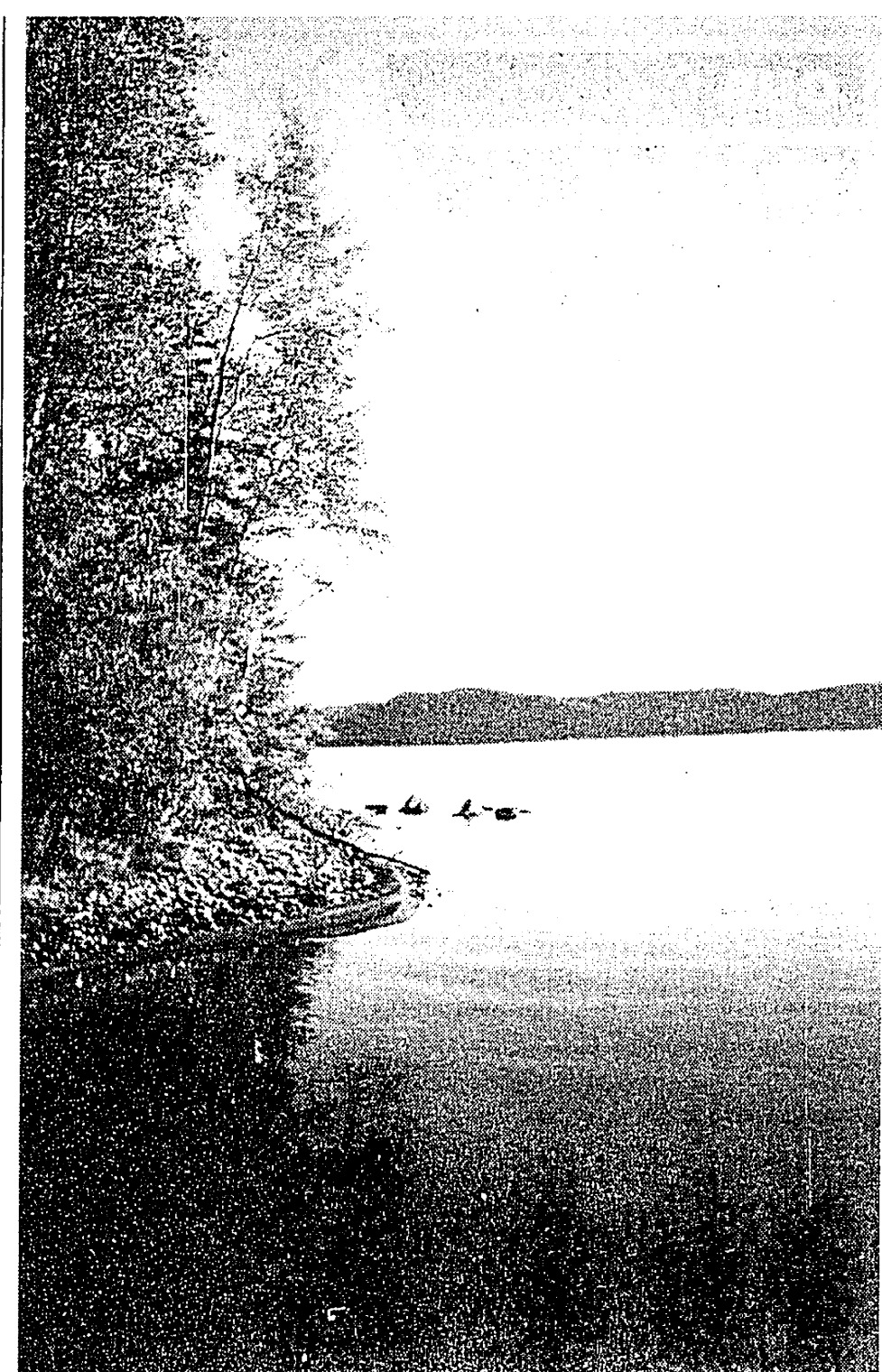
Even petrol-powered two-wheelers can be replaced with pedal-assisted electric bicycles. In 1997, the Japanese companies Honda and Yamaha sold 200,000 such bicycles. These bicycles give a mileage of about 30-40 km at a speed of 20-25 km/hr in a single charge. However, the cost of the electric bicycle is US \$1,500 (about Rs. 65,000) which is prohibitive for India.

Government should make it mandatory that in congested areas in big cities only electric rickshaws, improved models of existing ones or bicycles should ply. Parking facilities should be made for these modes of transport. This decision may also spur new research and manufacture of such rickshaws. A similar policy decision by the state of California, USA, has forced the Detroit automakers

to start manufacturing electric cars. More research is required to develop better and more efficient electric motors. Importing battery and motor technology could enhance the introduction of electric rickshaws in India.

Loan facilities at easy interest rates should be made available to the buyers.

A policy decision by the government on the introduction of electric rickshaws and bicycles would be a concrete step towards making a greener and healthier India. — (CSE Down to Earth Features.)



One of the thousands of lakes in Canada... and in the colour original it is a blue that can only be envied by those of us used to seeing the almost dry muddy bottoms of natural as well as man-made waterbodies.

## In the new El Dorado

God was sitting and busily creating, when Archangel Michael came over and asked him what he was doing.

God: 'I'm creating a new planet.

Archangel: So what else is new? You've already got 7 of them.

God: But this one is different, it's called earth and I have put life on this planet and I have created tremendous balances on earth. See that? That's North America and all the people there will be rich and have lots of food to eat. And to balance them I created South America where the people will be poor and suffer from natural disasters. And see that? That's Europe where I have put a whole mass of white people and to balance them to the South, I have created Africa, where I've put a whole mass of black people!

Archangel: Hmm. And what's that?

God: Oh! That's my favourite - India! I have given them the most beautiful mountains, lakes, rivers, beaches and forests. Their people will be poets, artists, philosophers, saints, Nobel Prize winners, their impact will be felt all over the planet...

Archangel: Hold on, Hold on. What about the balance, the balance?

God smiled in his infinite wisdom and said: Wait till you see the neighbours I've given them!

\* \* \*

That was my opening in a half hour speech to the Synod of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario in Canada on post-nuclear India during a month I spent in Canada in my capacity as a board member of Presby-

• by Mithran Devanesen

terian World Services and Development, one of the many caps I wear, this time as a rousing ambassador for 'Roofs for the Roofless', a rural integrated project started by my father, the late Dr Chandran Devanesen, and now headed by my mother, Savithri Devanesen.

Canada is the new El Dorado of the Western world. Thousands of Indians have made it their home, as it's a land of opportunity and more easy-going, more informed and globally aware than its neighbour, the United States of America. It's the world's second largest country (somebody correct me if I'm wrong) and one of huge open

spaces, rich in minerals, forests and agro-products. Nowhere is the size of the country more evident than in Manitoba. This is prairie country, flat grasslands that stretch for miles from horizon to horizon.

With the vault of heaven above you, something you cannot fail to notice — no wonder it's called 'big sky' country. In Winnipeg, the capital, I stood at the corner of Portage and Main Streets, the windiest (and some claim coldest) place in the world. Distances are irrelevant here — I was driven 300 km to Brandon where I conducted a drama workshop and driven back to Winnipeg in the same day! Driving time each way 2½ hrs!!!

While enjoying a high standard of living, Canada is increasingly getting involved in global issues and strives very hard at creating a Canadian identity and not being swamped by its neighbour, the USA. It used to be said that when America sneezed, Canada caught the cold! Not any more; Canadians have come to terms with multiculturalism, and Toronto is still one of the safest cities of the world.

While East Indians (Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Indians and Bangladeshis) still continue to

(Continued on Page 9)

## Four pages from the past

*An Englishman visits a battlefield on the anniversary of a decisive battle*

# When the world was caught between the jaws of death

It is not a place that's featured in any modern guide-book and yet, by all accounts, it was the site of one of the most decisive battles in Indian colonial history.

In the 18th Century, the British East India Company and the French fought three wars in south India, known as the Wars of the Carnatic. The first was a victory for the French, the second was a draw, and the third, including the Battle of Wandiwash (Vandavasi), saw outright victory in the series going to the British.

Today, the battlefield shows no sign of the bloody events of January 22, 1760. Where footsoldiers and cavalry once shot and hacked at each other, where cannons smoked and roared and wreaked havoc, there are now fields of rice, mustard-seed and sugar-cane. And that's as it should be.

But there are still traces of the fort of Vandavasi in the town itself. Where sentinels



The tunnel in Wandiwash Fort is barely visible today.

French and the British to defend their trading interests. (Others were built by the Dutch and the Danes). The strongholds all had in common the fact that they either controlled major land routes or protected trading harbours.

\* \* \*

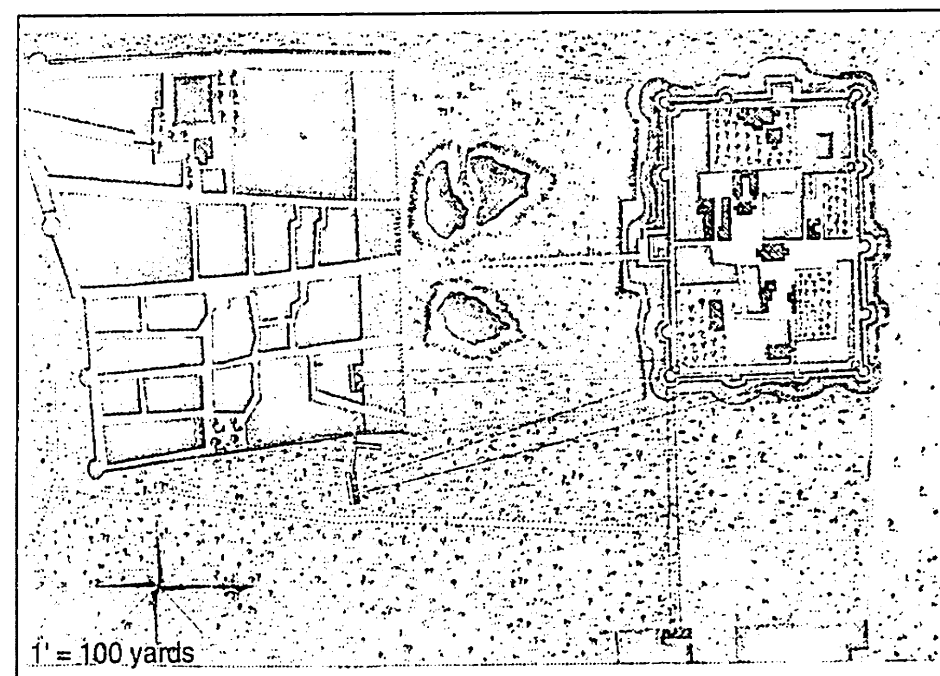
The Third War of the Carnatic was in reality part of a wider struggle between the old European rivals — the Seven Years War — at the end of which the French had lost their possessions in Canada, their claims in Europe ... and their last chance of extensive colonial territory in India.

So why was the Battle of Vandavasi so decisive?

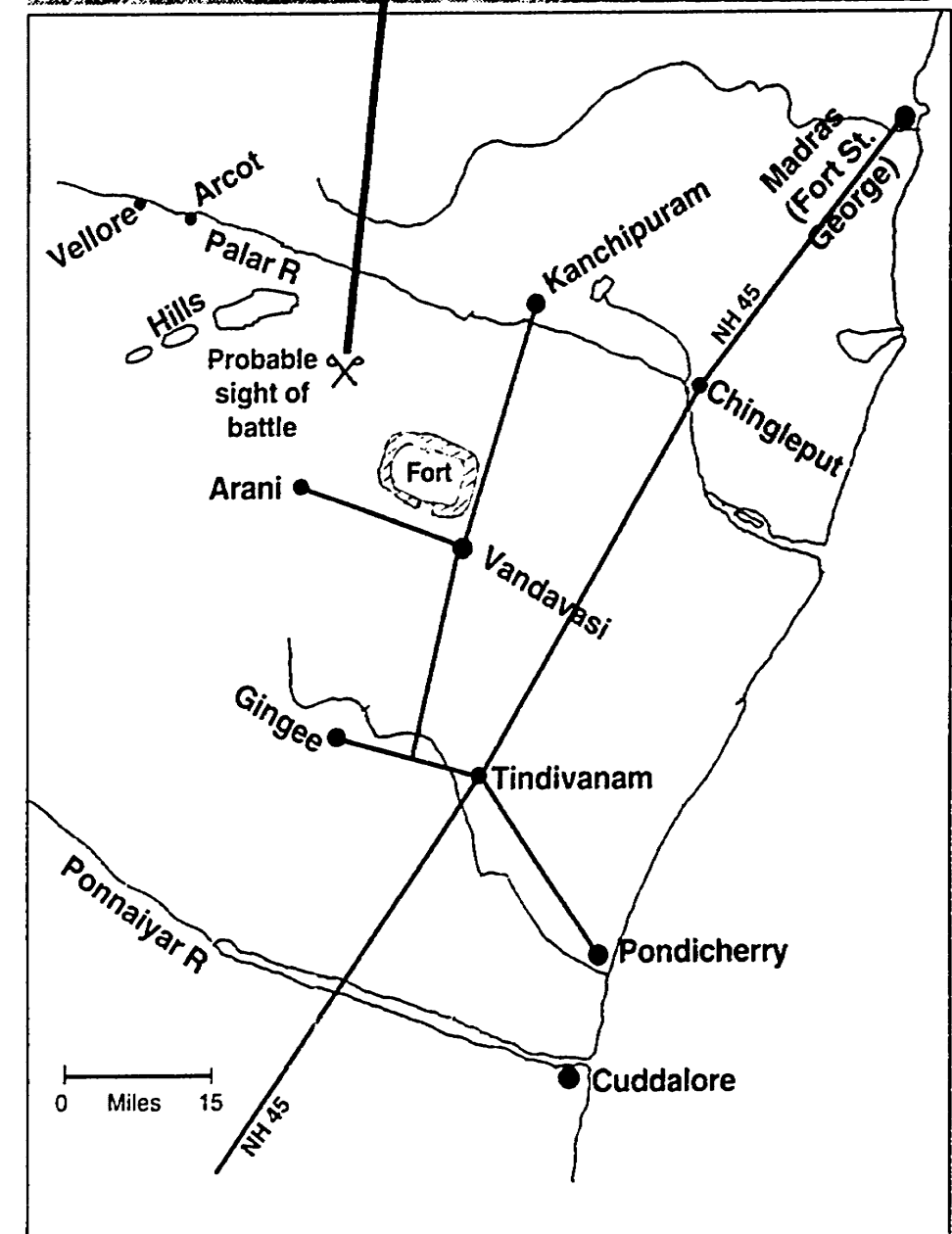
One surprising feature of

these early struggles was that so few European soldiers were involved. We are talking only of a few thousand men at most on either side. One result of this was that both powers chased each other about the Carnatic without the numerical strength to hold strongholds and at the same time meet the enemy in battle. In the end, they resorted to recruiting the assistance of native princes, even if this meant becoming involved in local feuds and rival claims to thrones. Yet, strangely enough, Vandavasi was the only battle in this war, after the initial cannonade, to have been fought by European forces alone with no Indian involvement: the allies on either side stood and watched as the French and British tried to kill and maim each other.

The sequence of events that led up to the battle was not unusual. The British had earlier in the month taken the fort and the French were now in the process of trying to take it back. The British had to watch that the French didn't sneak behind their backs and once again attack Madras, and the French, for their part, had to keep an eye on their main stronghold of Pondicherry. But



An old plan of Wandiwash Fort and, below, what's left of its walls today.



The probable site of the Battle of Wandiwash seen in photograph and map. (Map and all photos by author.)

the situation had changed elsewhere.

Three years earlier, at Plassey, Clive had ensured Company supremacy in Bengal. Likewise, north of the Carnatic, following the battle of Masulipatnam, British forces were in total control of what is now Andhra Pradesh. The French fleet was in Mauritius and the British fleet had mastery of the Coromandel coast. As a bonus, the French commander, Lally (of Irish-Catholic descent and fiercely anti-British), against the advice of his able subordinate, Bussy, had withdrawn the bulk of his forces from the Deccan in order to launch a mass attack on Madras.

Lally's siege of Madras failed, due to dwindling supplies and the arrival of the British fleet and he had to withdraw his ragged and underfed forces.

It was at this point that he realised his dilemma; only Gingee, Pondicherry, Karaikal and one or two other isolated strongholds remained in French hands; Vandavasi had recently been taken by the British. There were now only a few French-occupied islands in a British-ruled sea. There was no hope of any reinforcements or

extra supplies. In desperation, Lally decided to recapture Vandavasi.

He reckoned without the skill of the recently-appointed British commander in the Carnatic, Col. Eyre Coote, who chased after Lally and the French army with the result that on this fateful 22nd January, the British were in the Fort of Vandavasi, the French were camped in the plains nearby giving siege, and the main British forces were on the advance.

Eyre Coote's plan was to force the French to choose either to divide their forces by maintaining the siege on the one hand and meeting the advancing British on the other or to break off the siege altogether, thereby giving the defenders a chance to attack the French from the rear.

Bussy advised Lally to keep his army intact, but Lally insisted on dividing the French forces. Coote slowly moved forward until his forces faced the French lines, with the mountain on his left and the fort on his right. The battle began.

The French cavalry attacked first but was driven off by the British guns. The French guns replied but were too far off to do any damage to the British

(Continued on Page 8)



# When the public were heeded...

Government of Madras, Public Works Department, Railway Branch No.924, Ry., 11th May 1903.

G.O. No.2195 Ry., dated 24th December 1902.

**ABSTRACT** — Communicating to the Agent the sanction of the Secretary of State to the estimate, amounting to Rs.14,91,907 for the construction of the Marina Loop of the South Indian Railway and a telegram from the Government of India sanctioning an expenditure of Rs.9,200 on the final location survey during the current year.

From the Chairman, Madras Trades Association, to the Consulting Engineer for Railways, dated 25th March 1903.

**ABSTRACT** — Protesting against the construction of a railway along the Marina.

From the Chairman of Public Meeting of 1st April 1903 to the Secretary to the Government of Madras P.W.D., Railway Branch, dated 5th April 1903.

**ABSTRACT** — Forwarding Report of the Proceedings of a public meeting held at Madras on 1st April, 1903 to consider the proposed construction of a railway along the Marina foreshore.

From the Secretary to the Government of Madras, P.W.D., Railway Branch, to the Chairman of the Public Meeting held on 1st April 1903 dated Madras the 5th April 1903 No.119 R.M.

I am to say that Government have decided to reconsider the matter, and that in referring it to the Government of India, a Report of the Proceedings of the Public Meeting will be transmitted as you request.

From the Consulting Engineer for Railways, to the Agent, South Indian Railway, dated 4th April 1903 No.1555.

I have the honour to inform you that in view of the strong public feeling that has manifested against the construction of a railway along the fore-

**O**ur open letter to the Chief Minister (MM, January 16th) on the building of a highway in the sky along a Marina alignment brought us an unexpected response shortly afterwards. Apparently, this was not the first time such an alignment had been thought of for a transport project. A Marina Loop Line for the South Indian Railway had been proposed exactly a hundred years ago and seriously looked at in 1902.

The construction of this line along the Marina was even then strongly opposed by the Chamber of Commerce, the Trades Association, the Press and the public, and Government accordingly decided to withdraw the project. In communicating its view to Government, the Chamber said that, with the exception of a reference to the Municipal President, the public had been kept in ignorance of the scheme until it was on the point of being launched and after considerable expenditure had been incurred, and it submitted that in matters of such importance the opinion of the public ought to be ascertained at an early stage. The plan was then given up.

The suggestion was made again about 15 years ago when the MRTS looked at the same alignment. At that time, the correspondence on the 1902 project was pulled out from the Archives and more environment and public-friendly railway planners withdrew the proposal, without the public even knowing about it.

That 1902/03 correspondence has been made available to Madras Musings by a retired senior railway engineer and we congratulate him on his public-spiritedness. Madras Musings wishes there were more citizens like him concerned with our city, Madras that is Chennai.

We publish excerpts from that correspondence today.

— The Editor.

shore parallel to the Marina. Government have decided that the whole question shall be reconsidered.

Will you be so good as to stop all expenditure on the Marina Loop project until a decision has been arrived at?

From the Agent, South Indian Railway, to the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras, dated 7th April, 1903, No.351.

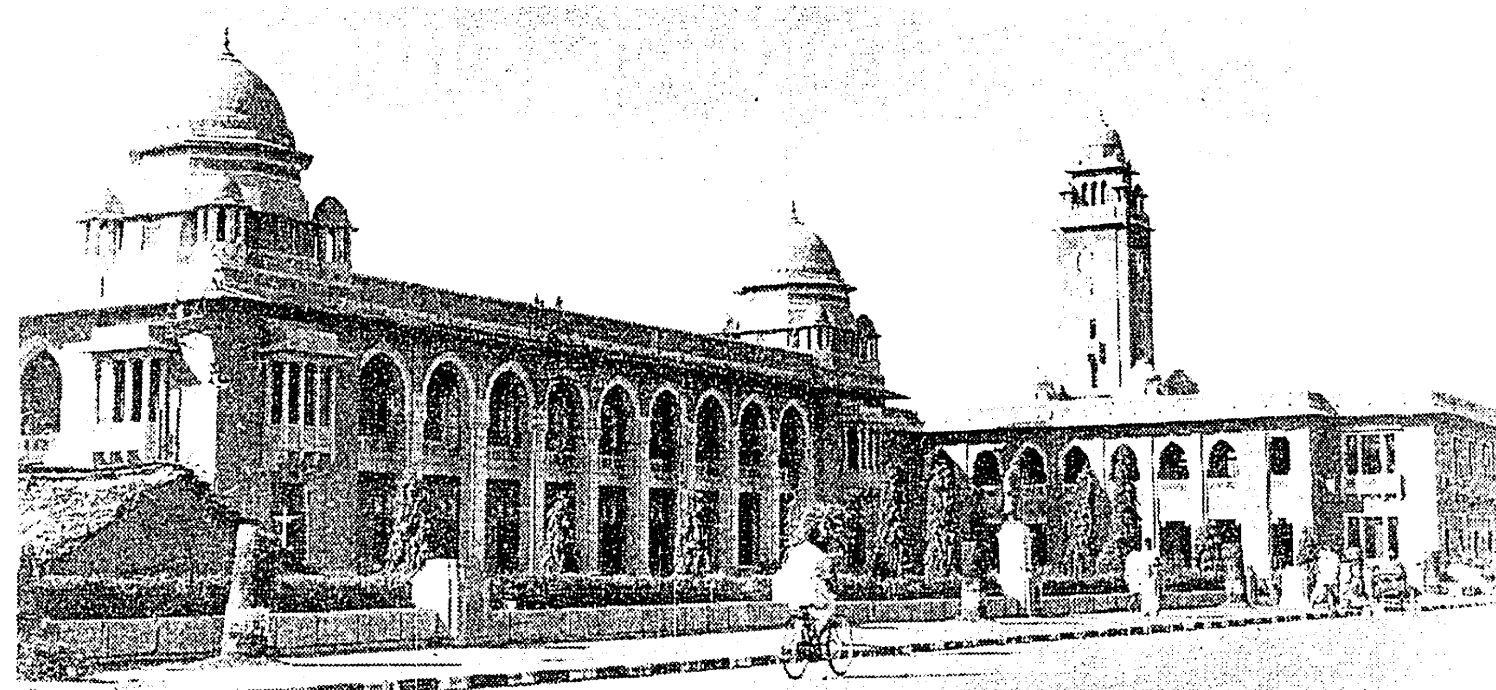
With reference to your letter No.1555, dated 4th April, I have the honour to inform you that orders have issued for the stop-

page of all work in connection with the Marina Loop.

The public opposition offered to the foreshore alignment of the Marina Loop is, I think, largely due to ignorance of the reasons which led to the adoption of this route. There is also, of course, a very natural objection to interference with the free use of the seashore in front of the Marina, but I think this interference would prove in reality far less than is popularly anticipated. As in most projects of general utility it is not possible to evolve a scheme which will please everybody...

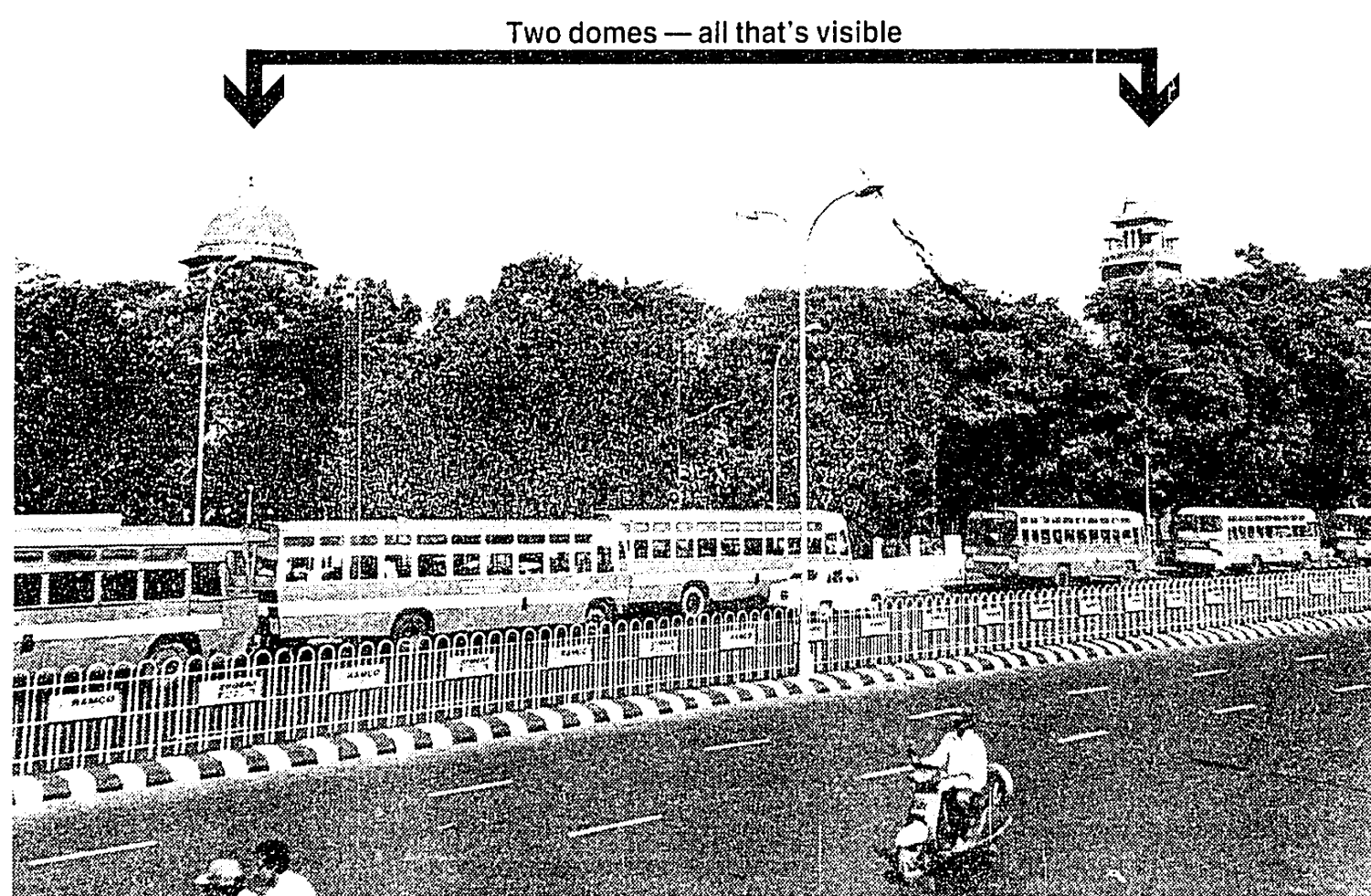
If after full consideration of conflicting interests involved, the public of Madras are not prepared to withdraw their opposition to the foreshore route, the project cannot be of much value to them, and had better be abandoned. I trust, however, a more just view of the disadvantages of the Marina alignment may be taken and that a railway which this company has supported far more in public interests than its own may not have to be given up...

It may not be out of place to refer in this letter to the various objections raised at the Public Meeting held in Madras, on April 1st, to protest against the present sanctioned alignment of the Marina loop. The public seems to consider that a railway on the foreshore would ruin the Marina, affect the general health of Madras, cause the greatest inconvenience, and tap but little traffic. I think when it is realised that the line from the Presidency College to the Beach station will be practically on the level of the ground, it cannot be considered a great disfigurement of the landscape. The fencing can be almost concealed by shrubs and practically nothing but passing trains will be visible. I do not quite understand how the health of Madras will suffer from a line along the foreshore, and one would think that a high bank cutting off the sea breeze from the eastern portions of San Thomé and Triplicane would be far more objectionable. The inconvenience caused by the interruption of unrestricted access to the foreshore is undoubtedly a grievance. At the same time matters can be greatly improved by giving numerous overbridges and if these be of ornamental design, they would in no way be objectionable from an aesthetic



Our OLD we owe to that retired Railway engineer who sent us the fascinating correspondence we feature in our centrespread today. It shows the handsome office block and clock-towered library of the University of Madras photographed in 1957, twenty years after they were first built. When the Marina Loop Line was suggested, those objecting to it had only Senate House, Chepauk Palace, Ice House and Police Headquarters in mind when they worried about the line affecting the Marina view; they had not even dreamed of this splendid block of buildings that helped enhance the solitary splendour of Senate House.

But in the post-1957 era, someone appears to have felt the evil eye should not fall on such a handsome block of buildings and so we have the trees of today, our NEW, completely cutting off the view of the University buildings. Now this journal is a staunch advocate of tree-planting, but it also advocates a bit of sensibility and sensitivity when landscaping. Trees with low foliage and a flora hedge were what were required here, NOT this bit of wild growth that's become an impenetrable screen, doing exactly what the Marina Loop Line might have done! (Our New by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



point of view. A route on the sea side of the Marina is certainly not to the advantage of the railway and must be prejudicial to traffic. At the same time I do not think serious loss will result, as the traffic between Mylapore and Triplicane, which will be most affected, is never likely to be large...

Note on the history and present position of the Project by Mr. H.L. Shadbolt, Officiating Consulting Engineer for Railways. Dated: 21st April, 1903.

The first idea of the scheme for a loop line appears to have arisen from a petition submitted by certain inhabitants of Madras some seven or eight years ago in favour of a suburban railway in the direction of Mylapore. About this period the railway authorities were beginning to realise that, for the effective handling of suburban traffic, it would soon be necessary to have a second track between the Beach and Pallavaram or Saidapet. It therefore suggested

itself that this second track might take the form of a loop following an independent route instead of merely running along the existing line.

It will be convenient, at this point, to indicate the various routes that are referred to in this note A, B, C, and D. Line A starts from Saidapet and runs eastward till it strikes the sea beach near the rifle butts at San Thomé, and then runs along the foreshore direct to the Beach station. Line B starts from a point on line A at Adyar just west of the Buckingham Canal, runs along the west side of the canal to Chepauk, crosses over the Cooum on to the Island and runs along the east shore of the Island, then crosses the north arm of the Cooum and the Mount Road to a junction with the existing Railway at Fort station. Line C is a short link starting from a point on line B near the Grant Duff Bridge at Chepauk crossing the wide part of the Cooum and the main road

(northern continuation of the Marina) and joining line A on the sands opposite the southern end of Fort St. George. Line D is a short line leaving line B at Barber's Bridge and running just south of Elliot's Road to a point on line A on the sands...

In 1898, the Agent, South Indian Railway, referred the matter to his Board forwarding a map showing Route B and D as possible alignments that might be investigated. The Consulting Engineer informed Government that these investigations were proposed and opinions were recorded by the members of the Government that there were strong objections to a line passing along the Marina. The investigations were then commenced by the Railway Engineers.

While they were in progress it was found that the Military authorities had objections to a line passing on the sea face of the Lighthouse Battery. It was not until these objections were removed that the Consulting

# ... and a railway along the Marina was rejected

Engineer found himself in a position to take the orders of Government on the subject.

In September 1899, he pointed out that the proposed line is intended to be a regular suburban passenger line not generally used for goods trains. The passengers likely to use it are residents of San Thomé, Mylapore and the Luz, such as lawyers and vakils for the High Court or the Collector's Court, clerks for the offices at Chepauk, offices at the Fort or the offices in town, students for the colleges at Chepauk or the Senate House, and others. The two alignments were compared in parallel columns as below:

Via Marina	Via Canal
a) A cheap line as it is low down on the ground.	a) A very expensive line. As level crossings are to be avoided, it must be carried on a high bank throughout.
b) Only one level crossing or bridge over the Marina, south of the Police office.	b) Ten or twelve road crossings, of which one over the Mount Road near the Fort Station must be on the level. The others must be in the form of underbridges.
c) Passengers for the Fort served by a station at the gates.	c) Fort only served as at present by a station half a mile away.
d) Does not touch the racecourse on the Island.	d) Interferes with half-a-mile of the racecourse.
e) Lends itself admirably to help the Cooum improvement by the construction of a bridge with sluices for regulating the flow at the mouth.	e) Cannot assist the Cooum improvement.

It was further pointed out that the foreshore alignment would not spoil the Marina for carriages as horses soon get accustomed to trains, and that trains would be separated from the road by the strip of garden; while on the other route trains suddenly running overhead at bridges would terrify horses to a

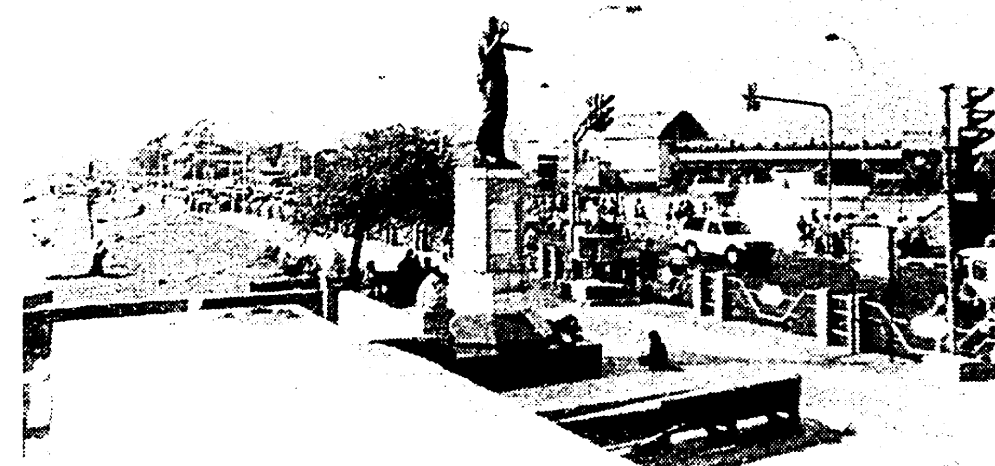
much greater extent. On aesthetic grounds there need be no objection as the railway would be low down out of sight concealed by a hedge, and the two or three passenger stations would be built in a good style of architecture so as not to be eyesores. The interests of the children and others who use the sands, as well as the fishermen, would be amply provided for by judiciously located crossings either in the form of subways or overbridges. It was, therefore, asked that permission be given to adopt the Marina route and arrange for a detailed survey and estimate.

Before this permission was accorded it was suggested that the Municipality should be consulted, which might be done by a demi-official letter to the chairman. The papers, together with the map, were therefore sent to the then President who returned them with the remark that there was no doubt about the Marina route being the better of the two, one objection to the canal route being that it was intended to adopt that line for the proposed drainage main...

These orders were then communicated to the Agent, South Indian Railway, with instructions to investigate the four routes... and to note as follows: 'The chief points to be observed are that the crossing of roads on the level is strongly opposed by the Municipality and must, if possible, be avoided; that the rail level of the Beach line must be taken at such a distance outside the Marina road kerb-stone all along, that the second or outer line hedge will form the inner fence of the railway and this will have to be planted all along, at the same distance from the road, where now absent; that a sufficiency of crossings must be given for existing fishing and other interests, to the Beach, that Beach stations must be so designed as to be ornaments and not eyesores.'

Plans and abstract estimates were received in March, 1900...

The more accurate information now obtained made it evident to all concerned that routes B and C were quite impracticable and need not be further considered. The alternative now lay between routes A and D and between a high level and a low level line on one of these two routes. In September 1900, the Consulting Engineer forwarded



...And that memory moved the Metro too

When the Chennai Metro (at whom it would seem an accusing finger is being pointed!) was planned nearly 15 years ago, a Marina alignment was suggested. Fortunately better wisdom prevailed and a Buckingham Canal alignment was finalised, though in the first stages that wisdom was clouded a bit, opting for a centre-of-the-Canal alignment and making that waterbody of no use to anyone, least of all to beachers. Be that as it may, the alignment chosen enabled the Metro to be separated from the Beach by, as seen in RAJIND N CHRISTY'S picture today, lawns, pavements, Kamarajar Salai, the Presidency College cricket ground and another road. That's left the vestiges of Chennai's once-handsome skyline still on view, though the Metro stations are a rather disruptive influence in that view.

The whole of the papers to the President, Madras Municipal Commission...

The Consulting Engineer accepted the views of the President and forwarded a copy of his note to the Agent, South Indian Railway, asking that, if the Agent also accepted these views, he should now prepare a complete single project with self-contained plan and estimate for a line by route A, high level, so that this project in a complete form might be laid before Government for approval.

When the project was ready it was found that the cost of a high level single line would be 15 lakhs and of a high level double line 19 lakhs. Careful estimate was made of the probable traffic, on the basis of receipts at stations on the existing line between Beach and Saidapet and it was found that there would probably be sufficient to pay a dividend of 3 per cent on the cost of a single line... The Agent was (therefore) prepared to advocate the construction of the Marina Loop.

The real question at issue is whether the loop lines construction is of sufficient advantage to Madras, and to the particular sections of the community likely to make use of it, to outweigh the undoubted disadvantage of locating it alongside the favourite public promenade...

The whole matter was then submitted to Government (in August 1901) and... it was added that a double line rather than a single line was preferred and should be sanctioned if possible.

The Home Board of the South Indian Railway... gave as their opinion that the line should, in the first instance, be constructed with a single track, but that formation and bridge should be constructed for a double line.

The Government of India accepted this view and asked that the estimate might be revised accordingly. This was done with the result of bringing it up to a total of Rs.15 lakhs.

In December 1902, intimation was received that the Secretary of State had sanctioned the estimate and that an allotment of funds would be available...

During the early part of the current year, however, there has been an expression of public feeling adverse to the construction of the line. The objection generally speaking is against a railway being constructed along the Marina at all, but from many of the statements made at the Public Meeting of 1st April, and on other occasions, it is evident that there is considerable misapprehension as to the precise nature of the proposal...

The real question at issue is whether the loop lines construction is of sufficient advantage to Madras, and to the particular sections of the community likely to make use of it, to outweigh the undoubted disadvantage of locating it alongside the favourite public promenade...

Order No.924, Ry., dated 11th May, 1903.

Copies of these proceedings will be forwarded to the various public bodies of Madras and to the Press, in order to explain the present position of affairs and to ascertain whether, with a full knowledge of the facts of the

(Contd. on Page 8)



## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the period January 16th to 31st. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

- Name the three eminent personalities (one posthumous) who were conferred the Bharat Ratna recently.
- Who is the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra?
- To which pair did India's Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes finish runner-up at the Australian Open?
- Which bravery award of Tamil Nadu was conferred on 28-year-old Velmurugan, 12-year-old Suguna and 13-year-old Kavitha?
- Name the Australian missionary who was burnt alive, along with his two sons, in Orissa recently.
- Who was the official Guest of Honour at this year's Republic Day Parade?
- The new VC of Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University is...
- According to a poll for Collins English Dictionary, what was the top 'buzz word' for 1998?
- For what 'most innovative and unique tourism project' has the Indian Railways been given the 1997-98 National Tourism Award?
- Why was Gul Panag in the news recently?
- What bizarre world record did Geoff Smith of Mansfield, England, set recently?
- Who is the recipient of the 1998 Jnanpith Award?
- What new facility has the VSNL started offering its Internet subscribers recently?
- Which contingent was voted the best at this year's Republic Day Parade?
- Who are the new Australian Open singles champions?
- Near which public place was a statue of Mother Teresa unveiled recently?
- The third Super-Deluxe bus service in the city runs from...?
- Against which 'dangerous predator' did the Corporation of Chennai launch a high profile battle on January 28th?
- Which two Bharat Ratna winners were conferred honorary doctorate degrees by the University of Madras at its annual convocation recently?
- Which two hospitals in the city are to be made 'university hospitals' under the Dr. MGR Medical University?

(Answers on Page 10)

# When the people were heeded

(Continued from Page 6)

case, the predominant feeling is in favour of constructing or abandoning the proposed Marina Loop Railway.

(True Extract)

E.I. Shadbolt,  
Offg. Secretary

(Editor's Note: Several technical details mentioned by Shadbolt have been left out in this excerpted version.)

Chamber of Commerce, Madras, 22nd May, 1903.

To this Secretary to the Government of Madras.

Public Works Department,  
Railways.

Sir,

With reference to G.O. No.924, Railway dated the 11th instant, and the accompanying papers, which give the history and describe the present position of the Marina Loop Railway project of the South India Rly, I have the honour to inform you that the members of the Chamber are unanimously and very strongly opposed to the construction of a line on the foreshore, as they consider that it would irretrievably ruin this public and popular pleasure ground and health resort.

While, possibly, contributing to the convenience of a few, it would be an abiding nuisance and eyesore to the very large number of people who daily re-

quent the Marina and the sands, the Buckingham Canal alignment having been rejected as impracticable, the Chamber has no hesitation whatever in urging the rejection of the two alternative proposals.

It appears from the papers printed with the Government Order that, with the exception of the reference to the President of the Municipal Commission, the public was kept in ignorance of the scheme until it was on the point of being launched and only when considerable expenditure had been already incurred. The Chamber would respectfully urge that in matters of such importance an opportunity should be taken of ascertaining public opinion at an early stage.

I have, &C.,  
H. Scott (Chairman)

From the Chairman, Madras Trades Association to the Secretary to Government, W. Dept., Rly. Branch, dated Madras 26th May 1903.

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks receipt of G.O. No.924 Ry., dated 11th May, 1903, forwarding certain papers explaining the reasons which led to the adoption of the Marina Loop Line...

## Caught between the jaws of death

(Continued from Page 5)

infantry while the British artillery, better positioned and more accurate, began to exact a heavy toll on the French infantry. The two sides advanced amid heavy musket fire followed by bayonet charges. Soon the ground was littered with the dead and dying while all around, men were engaged in hand-to-hand combat. As a contemporary Indian account says, somewhat poetically, "...the decline of the world of life continued till the setting of the sun, and the world was caught between the jaws of death".

Finally, the French began to withdraw and the British halted to regroup. At that moment, a direct hit on a French ammunition cart killed or wounded more than 80 men causing their withdrawal to become a retreat and then a rout, with

the British troops in hot pursuit. The French army in India, as a result of this battle, was no longer a sustainable fighting force.

At the end of the day, Bussy had been captured and Lally had retreated in some disorder to Pondicherry, which itself fell the following year after the British had picked off the remaining forts one by one. The British lost about 65 men in the battle and the French about 600, and with it their hopes of a French empire in the East.

In 1783, after the Mysore Wars, the fort at Vandavasi was abandoned and blown up.

In modern Vandavasi, close by a temple wall and partially hidden behind some railing usually draped with washing, there are a cannon and plaque commemorating the action and they are all that is left of

The papers have been carefully considered by the members of the Association and they are of opinion that, notwithstanding the facts as now explained, the construction of the proposed line would interfere with the free use of the seashore, would ruin the Marina and would be of questionable advantage to those sections of the community who would be expected to make use of it.

For these reasons, the members of this Association see no reason to alter their attitude of unanimous and strong opposition to the proposal...

From the President, Municipal Commission, Madras, to the Secretary to Government, P.W.D. Dept., Ry. Branch, Dated 2nd June, 1903 No.135 G.

With reference to G.O. No.924, Ry., dated 11th May, 1903, regarding Marina Loop Line...

The Commissioners, feeling alive to the several difficulties pointed out by the Government in running a line over... the Buckingham Canal, regret that they are unable to withdraw the protest entered by them against the taking of the line along the foreshore of the Marina.

Order No.1199, Ry., dated 20th June, 1903.

In view of the strong and general expression of public feeling that has been manifested against the construction of a railway running alongside the Marina, Government have reconsidered the whole case and have decided to withdraw the project.

The Government of India will be addressed.

C. Dove Wilson  
for Offg. Secretary.

## An archival lesson

The Sampradaya archives gives a glimpse into the various traditions of South Indian music. Among these traditions is dance music, i.e. the music that accompanies dance forms of the South, namely Bharata Natyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohini Attam, Kudiattam and so on.

Among its collection is the music led by the great Ellappa Pillai during a dance concert. Listening to the music, its grandeur and depth, the listener feels the sad contrast with present-day dance music. Today, we have freelancers everywhere, and no committed vocalists, nattuvangam performers, mridangists and so on. Whereas earlier it was unthinkable that anyone but the guru should conduct the nattuvangam, today we rarely find gurus discharging this func-

tion. Free-wheeling artists move from one rehearsal to another, especially during the hectic season when many performances are crowded into a few days, and can do no better than barely manage to pull off the show.

With earlier music, of which a sample is available in Sampradaya, it was a different matter altogether. The guru, the vocalist and the mridangist would usually form a permanent team with the dancer and would be available for rehearsals. They would be thorough with the repertoire and this itself made for half the success of the concert.

Young dancers today could learn much from recordings such as the one mentioned, to see what effect such music could have on their performances. (Courtesy: Sampradaya Newsletter)

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# Sruti sets up resource institute

(By A Staff Reporter)

The Sruti Foundation is establishing The Subbulakshmi-Sadasivam Music & Dance Resources Institute (SAMUDRI) to safeguard archival materials and undertake development and dissemination of resource materials in the field of fine arts, especially in regard to music and dance.

SAMUDRI will be an autonomous wing of the Sruti Foundation and will have five functional divisions:

- Archives and Library (A&L), specialising in the performing arts;
- Learning Resources Centre (LRC), which will produce, with the cooperation of a network of individual experts and institutions, various kinds of materials for use by teachers-learners in different streams, as well as guidelines, methodologies, etc., to improve performance aspects.
- Centre for Creative Interactions (CCI), which will undertake research and development, as well as related training activities, aimed at promoting higher aesthetic standards in artistic events. For this, it will organise creative interactions among and between musicians/dancers and others involved in artistic events and disseminate

the ideas which may be developed through specific interactions. The CCI will also assist the other functional divisions of SAMUDRI in organising and conducting interactive teaching-learning activities and orientation programmes, including training workshops.

● Centre for Cultural Orientation (CCO), which will undertake programmes aimed at providing cultural orientation to young Indians, especially, and also to teachers, corporate executives, Indian and foreign tourists, foreign study groups, and so on. It will also plan and develop prototypes, guidelines and materials for similar efforts at other places. Most importantly, CCO will initiate and conduct a pilot project aimed at finding ways and means of ending the alienation of urban Indian youth from their cultural heritage.

● Research Studies & Documentation Centre (RSDC), focussing on the historical, sociological, economic, developmental and other aspects of the performing arts, especially the evolution of music and dance, and the contributions of individuals and groups to the arts. (It will incorporate the RDC which

at present functions as a division of Sruti Foundation.)

SAMUDRI will have its own infrastructure in Sirdavoor, a village on the Old Mahabalipuram Road, 10 km before Mamallapuram. The necessary buildings with state-of-the-art technical facilities will be built on a 1.5 acre campus. Until its buildings and facilities are in place, SAMUDRI will function from the Sruti Foundation headquarters in Chennai.

Besides the main building, which will house its five divisions, a grand hall and a gallery, SAMUDRI will have a separate theatre for the presentation of cultural orientation and educational programmes; a scholars' eyrie with accommodation for visiting scholars and workshop participants, guest houses, and quarters for senior staff and maintenance personnel.

SAMUDRI will have a Board of Overseers, consisting of eminent citizens, and an Executive Board which will include the Director-General of the Institute and a nominee of the Chairman of the Board of Overseers. Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman, Managing Trustee of the Sruti Foundation, will be the first Director-General of the Institute.

SAMUDRI was inaugurated formally on February 12th.

## Mumbai's Music Academy rises Phoenix-like

Ever since a fire had gutted the auditorium eight years ago, the members of the prestigious Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeeta Sabha — Mumbai's equivalent of our Music Academy — could not pass the premises without heaving a sad sigh at the sorry spectacle of the silent monument and yearn for the good old days. Many had fretted over the delay in its revival and wondered if it would ever be back in action as one of Asia's largest auditoriums, resounding to South Indian classical music and dance, not to mention speeches.

Therefore, it was gratifying that the Shanmukhananda Hall was once again ablaze with lights

and thronged by art enthusiasts and the glitterati dressed in their finery. Ever since the Sabha celebrated the 'grihapravesam' of the renovated hall in January, it has been the hub of activity for many other organisations that hire its premises. For instance, the auditorium was a bustling scene of activity when the glittering Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Puraskar function of the Sangit Kala Kendra, Mumbai, was held there. Shanmukhananda Sabha itself is waiting for the formal inauguration by the President of India before featuring its programmes there — Courtesy: Sruti.

— K. Subadra Murthy

## Madras could do with help

(Continued from Page 1)

Madras in the US and England, 'George' in Southern Nigeria, and Injiri or Real India among the Kalabari.

Every Kalabari individual owns at least one wrapper of Madras. Family trunks contain Madras from ancestors for use in ancestral functions.

When European intermediaries would no longer provide the India-Africa link, West African traders began to import directly from India in the late 1970s. Today many Indian families deal only with RMHK.

(Courtesy: Nina Varghese, in Business Line.)



One of the works on display at the Cholamandal-Spencer's art show at Spencer Plaza, where every offering is priced between Rs.1,000 to Rs.10,000. A note for this third show, distilling the experience of the first two, at Cholamandal and Pondicherry, says:

Larger paintings and sculptures do call for additional powers of a kind in the artist. Rubens, for example, delighted in the opportunity they gave him to "Wade in Paint". Large works of art certainly create a greater impact on the viewer. But he can rarely hope to own them and enjoy them in the quiet of his home. The price and the size are in the way for the majority of people.

Modern Indian artists have been equally negligent about the right of all people to own original works of their artists. They themselves suffer popular neglect and only an infinitesimal part of the population, the rich, can have any truck with them and their work. Small sized pictures and sculptures, if priced low, can reach a larger art loving public and eventually help create a genuine boom for art. Art is certainly not for the rich alone.

Keeping in view this idea, these small format shows of paintings, sculptures and drawings (not to exceed 2' x 2' and sculptures not to exceed 2 feet height including the pedestal).

which you can withdraw and shows life as it is.

Sasha Waltz was born in 1963 in Karlsruhe, Germany and worked in Europe and the USA. (At Music Academy, 7.00 pm. Entry by passes from MMB.)



February: 'Artist of the Month': K Ravishankaran. A well-known photographer, he displays his photos of dancers and musicians. (Max Mueller Bhavan.)

Till February 19: Kritische Grafik der Weimarer Zeit (Critical Graphics of the Weimar Period). The exhibition depicts the contradictory nature of a period that lasted only 14 years but still became a legend. These graphics are like documents of the mood of their time, the 'Golden Twenties'. (At the Lalit Kala Akademi.)

Till February 20: DakshinaChitra's 'Vasanth Visha', a spring 'Festival of Crafts' sponsored by the Development Commission (Handicrafts), Government of India, provides a special occasion for children to see the unique crafts of south India: Pith Toys; Leather Puppets; Wooden Toys; Basketry; Bellmetal; Stone carving; Papier mache; Raja-rani dolls; Tribal Crafts and Kites and stuffed toys.

Till February 21: 'The Heritage of Chennai' Exhibition organised by INTACH, with schools, colleges, other institutions and individuals vying for prizes in written, pictorial, model and live sections. Over 500 exhibits from over 60 institutions, enabling visitors to get a cross-section of views on what in the City is seen as the heritage of Madras that is Chennai. (At Senate House, University of Madras, Marina from 11.00 am to 5.30 pm every day.)

February 21: Allee der Kosmonauten with choreography by Sasha Waltz. This bit of dance theatre, with video images replacing the scenery on stage, tells a family story. Three generations meet and are to be seen in couples and group situations. The hectic activity of big city life in the outer world contrasts with the apartment which is like a little personal island to

February 22: 'Blind Conformity', a lecture by Professor Ivan Harting, Director of Development, World Wildlife Fund, UK. (British Council, 4.00 pm.)

February 23-25: Environmental Film Festival Video Screening (British Council, 11.00 am and 3.00 pm.)

Till February 24: A small format art exhibition organised by Spencer & Co. and Cholamandal Artists' Village. (At Exhibition Centre, Spencer Plaza Phase II, 11.00 am - 7.00 pm daily.)

Till February 25: An exhibition of paintings by Dhiraj Choudhury. Has held over 75 solo exhibitions in major cities of India and 12 one-man shows in Europe and USA. In 1976 lone participant at Geneva with Miro & Dali. (At Artworld, 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.)

February 24: Madras English Association discusses '20th Century British Poetry'. (British Council, 3-5 pm.)

February 26: Contemporary dance performance by Padmini Chettur. (At Alliance Francaise at 6.30 pm.)

March 5 and 6: 'An exhibition of Contemporary Indian Paintings'. The exhibition will be followed by an auction, conducted by Bonham's of London, on Saturday, March 6, 1999 at 7.00 pm. Details for entry to the auction: at exhibition venue or call Meenakshi Meyyappan at 4942985 / Fax: 4934543. (At the Clive and Duplex Halls, Taj Coromandel - 5th: 10 am-7 pm; 6th: 7 pm.)

March 13: 'Guild of Service (Central)'s International Evening Fund Raising Programme' with entertainment. Tickets from Guild of Service (Central), 28, Casa Major Road, Egmore. Tel: 8261279, 8263685 & 8268328 at Taj Coromandel, 7 pm to 10 pm.



# Cricket wins yet again

The Chepauk Test, as usual, offered value for money after all the initial tension about whether or not the match would take place, a concern caused by the machinations of Bal 'Breakpeace' Thackeray. It was an absorbing encounter throughout, with the result unpredictable for the most part, though the cricket on view rarely scaled great heights. The poor Pakistani batting in the first innings was matched by a couple of ill-judged verdicts by the umpires. Anil Kumble bowled well enough, his line a distinct improvement over his recent track record, but he will be the first to admit that his six wickets were earned by no more than accurate — and seldom hostile — bowling. Venkatesh Prasad must be even more delighted and surprised by the returns he enjoyed in the second innings, well as he bowled. He was perhaps aware that his position in the team was in danger if he did not do something spectacular, for, in the second innings, he bowled without inhibition for the first time in a long while. His shoulder still seems to trouble him, and on quite a few occasions, especially in the first

innings, he appeared slower than Kumble. Srinath bowled brilliantly in patches and always without luck, his figures scarcely doing justice to either the effort behind his bowling or its high quality. Perhaps, a consistently fuller length and the acquisition of a genuine yorker will make him luckier.

Sachin Tendulkar produced a near replica of his unbeaten 155 against the Australians last year and he brought India

• by V.

**Ramnarayan**

within an ace of what would have been a most remarkable victory — after the first five wickets had gone cheaply in the second innings. The last Test match at Chepauk too had been a most entertaining one, with some high class batting and bowling — and, unfortunately, some erratic umpiring, yet another parallel to be drawn with this Test against Pakistan. On both occasions, Sachin had charged the bowling in a predetermined manner in the first innings, only to pay the penalty, and made amends most assiduously in the second. Only this time around, his ap-

proach for the major part of his innings had been rather more attritional, with only occasional flashes of his customary brilliance in strokeplay. It must be the slowest innings he has ever played. His record of three centuries in three Test matches at this venue — the only other Test he figured in here, was washed out — suggests that he likes batting here, something for the Tendulkar partisan, meaning just about everyone, to cheer about.

Nayan Mongia's batting in the second innings was a revelation. His 152 against the Australians a couple of years ago, and numerous spirited batting displays in both versions of the game notwithstanding, the dapper wicketkeeper had rarely given evidence of the steely resolve, positive attitude and cool head he exhibited in this match. His 52 was a top class effort worthy of a frontline batsman, and the manner of his dismissal, holing out when on the brink of victory, was the only blemish in a near flawless display. Unfortunately for India, his example was to be followed soon by Tendulkar, a mere 20 runs from the target.

This has happened so often in Indian cricket, this failure to finish a task begun well and executed well until almost the very end, that it seems more and more imperative that our players seek help from experts in psychological counselling and motivation, to get rid of what appears to be a huge mental block. Like Arjuna at Kurukshetra, whose consultant did a fair job of instilling the killer instinct in him!



R.K. Raghavan. Will he now find time for cricket?

there was not even a whisper of manipulation of votes and rigging. Not even the severest critic dared question his verdict. Every candidate seeking election used to be treated with utmost courtesy and dignity when he called on him for his support.

Raghavan played cricket in his school and college days. His enthusiasm for the game was such that he took the time and trouble

## TN cricket personality heads CBI

R.K. Raghavan, I.P.S., recently elevated to the land's highest office in the police service, Director of the CBI, has long represented Kamyuth, one of the oldest cricket clubs in the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association. At a time when proxies are the order of the day, vitiating the atmosphere in the annual general meetings and giving free rein for factions, Raghavan chose to steer clear of squabbles, attend AGMs and exercise his vote. A firm believer in democracy, he spared his precious time acting as chief polling officer and ensured that

to pass the umpires examination conducted by the TNCA. Even while performing his onerous duties as D.I.G., he made himself available to umpire league matches. He has a thorough knowledge of the laws of the game which helped a great deal when he was a commentator of first class matches. He interviewed visiting cricket stars for AIR and TV and the programmes were marked by their depth and liveliness.

He plays tennis regularly to keep himself fit. — (Courtesy: Straight Bat).

R. Ramachandran

Watching Saqlain Mushtaq in action was to go back a couple of decades in memory. Many old timers were agreed that the Pakistani off spinner was the best of his kind they had seen after Erapalli Prasanna. He obviously follows Sir Garfield Sobers' prescription for spinners, in fact, all bowlers, that they should put 100 per cent into every delivery they bowl. Saqlain seems to believe he can get a wicket each time he runs up to bowl. Because of the excellent momentum and height he gains in his run-up and delivery stride, he invariably lands the ball where he wants it, and because he gives it a genuine tweak, spins it more than most. He bowls a wonderful wrong 'un, as every informed TV viewer knows, but he is a winner, more because of his attitude, than his bag of tricks. He does a better

demolition job of the tail than most spinners I have seen. A role model for young spinners, except perhaps for his tendency to appeal excessively and theatrically.

And, finally, what can you say about the Chennai crowd, except to repeat for the umpteenth time that it filled your heart with pride once again? In a magnificent display of cricket knowledge and the sporting spirit, the Chepauk audience gave the Pakistani team a standing ovation the likes of which they might never have experienced elsewhere, especially after pipping the home team at the post in such a dramatic fashion. As Javed Miandad said in a chat with the Press, cricket crowds all over the world, including those in Pakistan, can learn a lesson or two from Chennai's wonderful spectators.

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Pt. Ravi Shankar, Prof. Amartya Sen and the late Gopinath Bordoloi; 2. Narayan Rane; 3. Jonas Bjorkman and Patrick Rafter; 4. Anna Gallantry Award; 5. Graham Staines; 6. King Birendra of Nepal; 7. Dr. Ananda Kannan Kanagasabai; 8. Millennium Bug; 9. Running of the Fairy Queen; 10. She is the new Miss India-Universe; 11. Being buried in a coffin for 142 days; 12. Girish Karnad; 13. Home

Page facility; 14. The Madras Regiment; 15. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (men) and Martina Hingis (women).

\* \* \*

16. Saidapet bus stand; 17. Tambaram to Avadi (PP 70); 18. Rats!!; 19. C. Subramaniam and Prof. Abdul Kalam; 20. The Kilpauk Medical College and Royapettah Hospitals.

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