

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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● *Another heritage building under threat*

'Conservation' or 'renovation'?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Another heritage building in Tamil Nadu appears to be under threat. The Main Hall of the century-old Kodaikanal Solar Observatory, a world-renowned institution is being 'renovated' to celebrate the Observatory's centenary this year, say Observatory officials. Changing the basic structure of the building to build a modern auditorium may be 'renovation', but it is not 'heritage conservation', says a concerned conservationist who knows the Observatory well.

"Such 'renovation'," he says, "is objectionable. It should be an article of faith to protect heritage buildings rather than treat them as if they were temporary sheds. It only shows insensitiveness on the part of administrative authorities." His charge appears to be supported by the ground reality; the entire roof of the Main Hall has been removed, its floors have been dug up in several places and its walls await transformation.

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage's Tamil Nadu Chapter has echoed this concern. P.T. Krishnan, the Trust's local Convenor, says INTACH is not against renewal, but restoration for even new uses must be done by following basic conservation principles. And those principles are best known to the Archaeological Survey of India, the few specialists in the South who have been trained abroad and the experts working in INTACH's half a dozen conservation institutes. Have any of them been consulted on this 'renovation' and, if so, are the principles enunciated by them being followed? That is the key issue, Krishnan feels.

The official viewpoint of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, under whom the observatory functions, is that "nothing is being destroyed; in fact, every effort is being made to preserve the original look of the

building and its historical significance". The rub is that a 'lookalike' may be a reconstruction, not a restoration. Which is why, with Tamil Nadu now seriously

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The Main Hall at the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory with its roof off as "renovation" work gets underway. But is this "restoration"? wonder the critics, concerned about the future of this century-old building. (Photograph courtesy Frontline.)

Timeframe for response ordered

(By A Staff Reporter)

A signature campaign by the Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), which gathered over 2000 signatures in the state has led to a Government Order which instructs all government departments to respond to citizens' letters within a specified time-frame.

The order states:

- A time limit of one week for giving acknowledgement and one month time for giving final reply shall be prescribed, excepting those items for which time has been statutorily provided
- In cases where one Department requires a "No Objection Certificate", from another Department for processing a matter, if no reply is received from latter Department within 30 days, the former Department may process the matter on the presumption that the latter Department has no objection on the matter for Departmental proposal, as per rules.
- A time limit of three months shall be prescribed for giving final reply to private persons.

The order also prescribes an acknowledgement form with an identity number and date to "help locate the relevant papers in office at a later time".

Citizen's Charters need improving

At the end of May 1999, there had been some progress, slow though it may have been, towards formulation and implementing of Citizens Charters in Tamil Nadu. Amongst those Government departments that had developed Charters, there is "a definite move towards accountability on the part of the service provider", according to the Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG). Nevertheless, several departments had not formulated Charters and those that had, needed improvement of their Charters, a CAG appraisal found.

Of more concern, says the CAG, was the fact that there is no perceptible mood of urgency in formulating a Charter. Many of those that had brought them out have no idea if the Charter is being implemented, or what purpose its creation has served. The general attitude seemed to be, 'The Charter has been published because it had to be published'. The front office of every government department, which is the interface between the public and the department, also displayed a lack of knowledge of the Citizens Charter. Few officials at the reception

counter in all departments visited knew what a Charter was. "They all had to contact either the Joint Secretary or the Under Secretary to know what a Charter was, if it was available, and if it could be distributed to a member of the public."

The Departments that have released their Charters are: Adi-Dravida and Tribal Welfare; Agriculture; Fisheries and Animal Husbandry; Consumer Protection; Food and Cooperation; Energy; Forest and Environment; Finance; Health; Information and Tourism; Labour; Municipal Administration and Water Supply; Revenue; Rural Development; Social Welfare; Electricity; Horticulture; Tamil Nadu Electricity Board; and Metrowater.

The Departments that had not released their Charters by the end of May were: Public; Backward Classes; Commercial Taxes; Religious Endowments; School Education; Higher Education; Handlooms and Handicrafts; Home; Housing and Urban Development; Industries; Personnel and Administrative Reforms; Planning and Development; Prohibition and Excise; Small Industries; Tamil Development; and Transport.

CAG's appraisal showed that certain departments had no idea of the existence of a Charter, and while it is a citizen's right to be given a copy of the Charter upon request, there was apprehension on the part of the officials in some departments when they were asked to provide CAG with their Charter. Department officials need to be educated that a Citizens Charter is not a 'secret document', but rather one that informs that public about the Department, mainly on its interaction with citizens; dissemination of a released Charter, without secrecy, is a concept that has to be nurtured, says CAG.

On the other hand, there were some departments genuinely interested in spreading the message of their Charter. The Agriculture Department and the Social Welfare Department were both enthusiastic about letting the public know about their departments. But the Prohibition and Excise Department felt it did not need a Charter as its functions 'did not make it necessary to have one'.

Speaking to *Madras Musings*, Ahamed Kabir, Assis-

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New twist to Senate House restoration

As this column goes to Press, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that the Syndicate of the University of Madras has decided to do away with the Technical Committee that had been formed to study, recommend and oversee all plans for the restoration of Senate House. It has also ordered, MMM hears, termination of all Consultants, all of them specialists in restoration work of this nature. Its hardest blow, MMM gathers, is the termination of the services of the man chosen to supervise the project, Narasimmaiah, formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India and the man who made a substantial contribution to the restoration of several areas in Angkor Wat, Cambodia, under an international project.

The new thinking, MMM understands, is to request the Archaeological Survey of India — or is it the Archaeological Survey of Tamil Nadu that is intended? — to undertake the work. When the restoration project was mooted several years ago, the Technical Committee had asked the ASI to undertake the work, but the ASI had said it did not have enough people even for the work it had on hand. MMM knows of no increase in ASI staff — or of any reduction in its workload, but he wishes the University luck with its approach to the ASI.

Also a part of this thinking is, MMM learns, a decision to approach Government for the funds — estimated at close to Rs.5 crore by the previous Vice Chancellor — for the project. With around Rs.7 or 8 crore available for each of 23 flyovers, many of them unnecessary, there is obviously no shortage of funds with Government. So what's Rs.4 or 5 crore when the Syndicate needs it! The only thing MMM wonders about is the fate of the approximately Rs.1.5 crore that had been collected by the University in the name of the Senate House project. MMM knows that part of it went towards improving the University's toilets (now the Senate House!), which it was not intended for, and the rest was intended to get the restoration work started while more was collected. Since it was collected by a Committee in whose expertise the donors had faith and by a Vice Chancellor who was confident of the competence of the Committee and its consultants, shouldn't the donations be returned to the donors in the event some other body is to take up the work? MMM wonders whether the Syndicate would adopt such a principled stand.

Meanwhile, MMM, who had looked forward to the work on Senate House starting in 1999, now that the University has a new Vice Chancellor, can instead look forward to NO progress till the exchanges of all the official correspondence find their way through the red tape maze to reach some conclusion.

INTACH inputs

While the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Tamil Nadu chapter, has not been particularly successful in getting work on Senate House underway, the central organisation, *The Man From Madras Musings* learns, has been able to make some progress with projects in Tamil Nadu.

The INTACH (UK) Trust has funded Cambridge University's Department of Architecture to prepare a detailed documentation of the antiquities of the sacred town of Kumbakonam. This long-term project will use a host of experts to document iconography, architecture, art, history, literary and social patterns as well as urban development. A major book of record and interpretation is likely to be the outcome of the project.

INTACH's Indian Council of Conservation Institutes has had its Museums Development Cell carry out surveys of four museums in Tamil Nadu and has recommended the actions necessary for their improvement. MMM, however, notes with some concern that while INTACH has established such institutes in Lucknow (the main one), Delhi, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Rampur and Jodhpur to survey museums and prepare action plans for them, provide technical training in conservation techniques and create awareness, particularly through publications, and conserve various forms of material heritage, it has not seen fit to establish such a centre in Chennai. Does it consider the City beyond the pale? At times, as in the Senate House affair, MMM would tend to agree.

Lacking an Institute in Chennai, it was to the Lucknow Institute that the Theosophical Society had to turn for the conservation of several paintings in its collection. Then the Bangalore Institute's help was sought to conserve the 300-year-old mural paintings in the Ramalinga Vilasam Palace in Ramanathapuram. And INTACH's Natural Heritage Division studied and recommended means to augment and conserve water in the spice-growing areas in Tamil Nadu.

All commendable work, but MMM wishes there was an Institute in Chennai to have undertaken such work. Perhaps an organisation like Chennai Heritage should team with the ICCI and work out the modalities of establishing such an institute in Chennai. There are enough antiquities in Tamil Nadu to keep it busy for several generations.

AMICable gathering

When the German-subsidised, Singapore-based Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) held its 8th Annual Conference in Chennai recently, it was a most AMICable gathering of over 150

delegates, more than half of them from abroad. There was a great deal of bonhomie, there were regular exchanges of bon appetits and there were a host of bon vivants. But whether such a friendly atmosphere helped clarify the real subject of the conference *The Man From Madras Musings* is not very sure.

MMM's confusion began with the title — ASIA: Information POOR to information RICH. Interpretable in several ways, particularly because of the capitalisation, presumably what the discussion was meant to be was about finding ways to make an Asia poor in information a continent rich with it and, thereby, make it a major force in the 21st Century. If that was the purpose, the real target audience — the media personnel, the common or garden journalists, the advertising persons, and TV and radio communicators — were all conspicuous by their absence. A few proprietary types from this world of communication were there, but the rest seemed to comprise those from the world of technology and the world of academia. And both seemed to live in ivory towers of their own.

The technical sessions remained technical, the academic

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

speakers droned through prepared papers and communication was minimal. If this was meant to be a preview of the world of communication of the 21st Century, it left even MMM, who has some pretensions of being a communicator, in limbo. It also left MMM with the thought that this world of communication intended to empower the POOR and make them RICH needed more communicators like Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, engineer and academician but an exceptional communicator who can even reach out to the masses, and not those who dominated the Conference. MMM hopes the next conference will see more speakers picked as much for their communication skills as their knowledge or technical skills.

Notable points

Despite a disappointment with the content presented by the speakers at AMIC's conference, *The Man From Madras Musings* found plenty of grain in the chaff was separated.

Dr. Anandakrishnan was perhaps the only speaker who focussed on what MMM thought was the purpose of the conference: empowering the poor through getting them to access information easily. There is a wealth of information available, but its focus must be a greater local content. And it must be in the local language. And accessibility to this information of local concern presented in the local lan-

guage needed to be made easily accessible. There needed to be "better focussed packaging of information" for local audiences, not merely a fascination with the beauty and power of the media the chip has made possible. This, added Dr. Anandakrishnan, was what Tamil Nadu was planning to do on a State-wide scale in the next year or so. Perhaps what the conference needed was a presentation by Dr. Anandakrishnan of what Tamil Nadu planned and how it was going about it.

Professor Charles Elliot of the Hongkong Baptist University saw the teacher becoming "an online consultant" but was concerned about "the dehumanising effect of the computer". Interactive TV, a two-way audio-visual system, however, offered much to the shy student, he felt. Dr. Eric Loo and David Blackall of the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, felt there had been a change of perspective about the web in the last five years. Those seduced by it, were beginning to abandon several aspects of it.

N. Murali of *The Hindu* saw great opportunities of newspapers going into cyberspace, but also saw the print medium surviving in India for a long time to come. He however envisaged a changing approach, with greater prominence for the local scene, a greater focus on lifestyle and a more analytical approach. MMM couldn't help wondering whether *The Hindu* of 50 or 60 years ago might not be the model for this view of the future.

Looking at public relations in the "new media age", Allwyn Fernandes, journalist and media specialist in a public relations firm, saw company websites reaching directly out to the public, bypassing journalists. He also saw a great rumour circuit being developed and a greater scope for offensiveness against customers. It struck MMM that virtually no attention was paid at the Conference to such moral issues as copyright, offensive behaviour, tasteless and pornographic use of the medium, and libel and defamation.

Film-maker Amarnath Jayatilaka of Sri Lanka suggested that AMIC should help create an organisation that would bring all the film industries of Asia together and help them by developing as an Asian Film Marketing Organisation. An echo of this was found in Chennai film-maker S. Krishnaswamy's hope that there would, before long, emerge a television channel devoted to films from all parts of Asia.

Why a special session was needed to discuss 'Women Power in the Workplace', MMM could not figure out. But it seemed to him that more sense was spoken there and a greater down-to-earth view taken than at most other sessions. Tara Sinha, advertising and marketing specialist, saw the dangers of TV making the poor aware of

deprivation, but nevertheless felt the good outweighed the danger. Sushila Ravindranath saw women-threatening issues regularly reported but rarely discussed or followed-up in the media. And they both turned clichetic on the issue of women, career and home: "A daughter is a daughter all her life/A son is a son till he gets a wife"; "There's no career better than being a mother and tending a home"; "A special problem of women in the workplace is they don't have wives!"

The concluding thought at the 20th session was that all this would help Asia become a knowledge society and would lead to it becoming a wisdom society. Whatever happened to the wisdom Asia has proudly claimed over the centuries, wondered MMM.

In brief

★ When Oxford University Press launched the 10th Edition of the Blackall of the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, recently, it had a high-powered panel of earnest speakers to support the launch and even an entertainer or two to demonstrate the worldwide variety of English that the dictionary made its choice from. Looking at the Indian English content of it, *The Man From Madras Musings* found that 'prepone' had at last made its way into the dictionary but that 'airdash' was still a flight away. A large number of Indian words have found a place in it, but while the *Oxford Advanced Learners'* has a special supplement of additional Indian English words, the COD misses out on this. But that the COD was catching up with the world was pointed out by the Editor of *Madras Musings* who received the first copy of the new COD. He recalled using the word 'kitty-corner' in a book he had written and finding a reviewer advising him that he would have benefitted from a copy editor because 'kitty-corner' does not exist and it should have been 'cater-corner' (meaning diagonally opposite). Having used 'kitty-corner' for decades, he had been rather put out by being told his 'ignorance'. But then a few months ago he had been given a copy of Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English and, there, to his joy was 'kitty-corner'. He gave up the COD that he'd been using for years and switched to Longman's dictionary. Now, joy again, he could get back to the COD once more — for at least it's included 'kitty-corner', even if it has to be searched for under 'cater-cornered'!

★ Congratulations to Dr. Ramamurthy, who led the campaign, and to the Authorities who agreed to listen to the campaigners. *The Man From Madras Musings* is delighted to hear that the Madras Medical College will retain its century and more old name and not become the Chennai Medical College. MMM looks forward to many other ancient institutions following this practice; in fact, he looks forward to Government itself suggesting that both Madras and Chennai be officially used, as in the past.

— MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Flyovers-I

There are indeed cheaper and easier ways to move traffic than building a massive network of flyovers. Yet overnight money has been found for this massive project, while roads, pavements and thoroughfares in the city have been languishing for lack of funds.

The proposal to make Chennai a city of flyovers is proving to be a nightmare and a source of great irritation to the citizens of the city. The implementation has been mindless of the citizens, their mobility being greatly hampered and restricted. Not only have stretches in the major main roads been dug up but alternative arrangements for movement of vehicles and persons have not been thought about nor provided. This is particularly so in the case of public transport routes, unannounced terminal points and detours putting the public to great inconvenience.

On some of the major roads where there are schools and religious institutions, digging of the roads for the laying of massive pipe lines for sewerage, power and water, has led to the blocking of entry into these institutions, throwing to the winds the liberty of the people to reach their points of study and worship. Added to this is the fact that the work has often cut off electricity, blocked sewerage, damaged telephone cables and blocked water supply, putting these institutions and residents in these areas to great inconvenience and, above all, increased expenses.

The proliferation of flyovers has also caused fear in the minds of people who feel they might have to part with land, property, houses and buildings without proper notice and without proper compensation to make the flyover scheme work.

Just as action has to be taken to ensure the flyover construction does not inconvenience the public, there is need to clean up confusion over the routes and for greater transparency on the costs.

Geoffery K Francis
27 Ballard Street
Jawahar Nagar
Chennai 600 082.

Flyovers-II

The Mumbai debate on flyovers (MM, June 16th) reveals the arrogant ways in which our govern-

ments, be they State or Central, are functioning. The outburst of Minister Gadkari is not in good taste. But they are the people who hold power. What has gone wrong with our society?

John Venkatesan
19, Desia Colony
Perambur High Road
Chennai 600 012.

Pollution and waste

Samuel Prabhakar's letter on half-bottle saving (MM, June 16th) seems to miss the point that our whole economy, and indeed all progress in so-called modern civilisation, are primarily based on the propagation of waste. Business thrives by producing more than can ever be consumed (of cosmetics or cars or bombs...) and persuading us to buy all that rubbish through slick advertising and marketing. It is apparently sound commercial wisdom to destroy what ever cannot be sold at a profit — which is why starvation and malnutrition must continue while we indiscriminately waste food and amenities through our ostentatious life-styles (not just the 'rich' but all of us moronic middle-class TV-watchers).

If only small bottles are to be served at international conferences, it is not to save water but to reduce the garbage problem. Already, the rich nations have systematically dumped on us their waste-generating technologies (from soft-drinks in plastic bottles or metal cans and foil packing for foodstuffs, to the directly polluting processes in the tanning, foundry, pesticide and other industries) so that we will have to buy their costly waste-treatment technologies. They also contrive to ship their industrial and nuclear wastes to poor nations through devious methods.

I am sure 'the country' will not save a single rupee if the size or shape of water bottles on conference tables is altered in any way.

On the subject of garbage, if any reader can provide suggestions or guidelines on what a person may do with certain hazardous items like batteries, broken glass and fused bulbs/tubelights, old switches and appliances, plastic and rubber items and spray-cans, it may be useful to at least a few who are concerned about the dangers they

Saving electricity

A leaflet issued by the Government of India gives tips on saving electricity. If you publish it, it will benefit your readers.

T. Kaleeswaran
9, VII Cross Street
Mahalakshminagar
Adambakkam Post
Chennai 600 088.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reader Kaleeswaran's enclosure reads: To save up to 70% on your electricity bills

1. Use CFL instead of bulbs.
2. Replace incandescent bulbs with fluorescent tubelights.
3. Replace ordinary chokes with electronic ones.
4. Keep lights and fixtures clean and use light colours for walls.
5. Switch off fans and lights while leaving a room.
6. Replace old fan regulators with electronic ones.
7. Defrost fridge regularly when ice formed is thicker than ½ cm.
8. Cool food sufficiently before storing and opening fridge door frequently.
9. Use irons only after all the clothes to be ironed are gathered together.
10. Ensure proper sealing of air-conditioned space.
11. Clean AC filters regularly to ensure efficiency.
12. Set geyser thermostat at the lowest possible temperature range.
13. Avoid geyser showers.

14. Use washing machine preferably at the recommended clothes-load.

15. Look for ISI mark when buying electrical appliances.

(Source: Energy Management Centre of the Department of Energy, Government of India.)

II

EDITOR'S NOTE: We do not publish unsigned letters or letters without addresses. We however publish the following, which had neither signature nor address, because it makes a point or two that warrants debate. We however hope that some day S. Arumugam will tell us the truth about who he is! In MM, June 16th, you betray your lack of knowledge about the norms of the Electricity Board. You also do not understand the way in which Outdoor Contractors function.

You have repeatedly blamed Outdoor Advertising to be one of the causes for the current crisis. You have got your facts wrong. Over 90% of the illuminated hoardings and neons in the city are switched off by 11 p.m., or midnight at the latest. Secondly, all hoardings on private buildings or land have a separate sub-meter for which the outdoor commissionaires pay a commercial rate.

Enclosed is an article from *The Hindu* (21.6.99) captioned 'Power aplenty but at what cost?' You will now agree that power cuts do not happen because of illuminated hoardings and neons but because of other reasons which are self-explanatory from the article.

pose to humans and quadrupeds at the streetside dumps where such materials are sometimes even burnt.

Thomas Tharu
4-A-7 Kasyap
Nehrunagar Fourth Street
Adyar, Chennai 600 020.

A phoenix-like hoarding

I enclose a copy of the letter received by me from the Additional Revenue Officer, Corporation of Chennai, in reply to several faxes and letters sent to the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai, after I found that a hoarding had again been put up in the place of the two which had earlier been brought down by the Corporation (MM, March 16th).

How could this hoarding be put up as soon as two had been pulled down?

You will see from the Additional Revenue Officer's letter that the Corporation is also trying to fight the issue on a larger scale and has transferred the case to the High Court for disposal.

I look forward to steps to stop this growing menace.

My lone efforts will not succeed I fear and so I ask you to put your shoulders to the wheel along with mine.

I do not know if on your list you have names of officials in the High Court. They should be aware of

your efforts for our city and if they are not on the list please put them on.

Samuel J. Prabhakar
11, Manohar Avenue
Off. Casa Major Road
Egmore
Chennai 600 008.

The Additional Revenue Officer, Corporation of Chennai wrote on June 18th.

With reference to your letter (30.3.99), it is informed that the hoardings erected by — in front of the National Art Gallery was already removed. But again he had erected with Court Stay Order in O.S. No.44/98. The same now has been transferred to High Court for disposal.

The Corporation is trying to vacate the stay order. As soon as it is vacated both the hoardings will be removed. It is also informed that Government is being addressed to declare that Pantheon Road and C.I.C. Road as prohibited area for display of hoarding.

No progress

While perusing all the issues of *Madras Musings* from December '98 to June '99 (they had piled up, as I was away), what distressed me was that the Senate House renovation had made no progress and was in fact, back to square one. How can we allow Senate House to crumble?

While appreciating your eagerness to save public money, it should be noted that your dramatisation of the issue can only cause more confusion than good.

S. Arumugam

The highlights of *The Hindu's* article

● Power managers are quite to blame. From an energy demand of 673 MW recorded in 1989-90, it has gone up to 1,236 MW this year. While the consumption was 3,440 million units (MU) 10 years ago, it was 5,110 MU last year.

● The annual rise in the number of domestic consumers was from 35,000 in the late Eighties to over 50,000 now. There is no control over the use of energy by domestic consumers. A number of new electrical appliances and devices are being utilised by them.

● With the advent of multi-storied apartments everywhere, consumption has increased phenomenally.

● The expansion of the transmission and distribution (T&D) network has not been in tune with the creation of new energy sources.

● The EB is short of meters, of transformers, of conductors, of manpower, of vehicles.

● The EB gets very little cooperation from other service agencies. Newly-laid cables, for instance, are damaged severely when earth is dug up for the fly over scheme. Transformers on the roadside are used as public toilets.

While in the U.S. Chennai was always referred to as Madras by people from India as well as the Americans. In the U.S. they have names like Madras, Salem, Moscow — names borrowed from other countries. Many older people asked what happened to our "Bleeding Madras" kerchief so popular once upon a time. Has it become 'Bleeding Chennai'?

As for your suggestion of introducing heritage in the curriculum, that is the only salvation. Children are taught History in a most uninteresting way. The study of heritage, its importance and a sense of history are things lacking in our curriculum.

Anna Varki
9 Central Street
Kilpauk Garden Colony
Chennai 600 080.

A cola a day?

Coca Cola and Pepsi compete with each other to sponsor the official drink for cricket teams. Why can't they serve other sections of society? For example, the traffic personnel in Chennai city toil in the burning sun. Why can't the two companies supply free drinks for policemen on duty? They can issue them coupons for which they can get a free cold drink a day.

J.N. Manokaran
Post Box No.1125
Chennai 600 010.

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If you would like to be put on *Madras Musings'* mailing list, just fill in the form below (use block letters/type) and post it to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd, 62/63 Greaves Road, MADRAS-600 006.

Name

Address

Note: Overseas postage extra. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Gulf: Rs. 375/year. US & Europe: Rs 425/year. Cheques payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

In the audience... with Vasanthi Sankaranarayan

A statesman remembered

An eminent statesman of yesteryear was recently remembered in Chennai. The occasion was the release of the book *Sir C.P. Remembered* written by his granddaughter Shakuntala Jagannathan, retired Deputy Director General of Tourism. The late Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, in his time affected the political, social and educational spheres of India and, in particular, South India. The book touches on these, but is basically a personal memoir.

During the function, which was held at the hall of C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation, Shakuntala announced that the royalties from the book would be donated to The Saraswathi Kendra Centre for Children with Learning Disabilities, a constituent of the CPR Foundation. It was also announced that a well researched, historically authenticated biography of Sir C.P. was being prepared.

There are two questions which may be asked on such an occasion. If a historically researched biography is being brought out soon, why such a book at this time? Again, if a granddaughter writes on her grandfather, and that too such a famous grandfather, how objective and authentic would it be? Shakuntala has answers for both these questions. Her intention was to write a book on her grandfather, a beloved person who had been a role model for her and as such it was written in such a manner that the

end product was reader-friendly, whereas a historically authentic biography, by its very approach, would only interest academicians and serious minded people. To the second question, her answer is, while she had not been entirely objective about her grandfather, because of the emotional ties she had with him, all the facts given in the book are authentic, supported by documents.

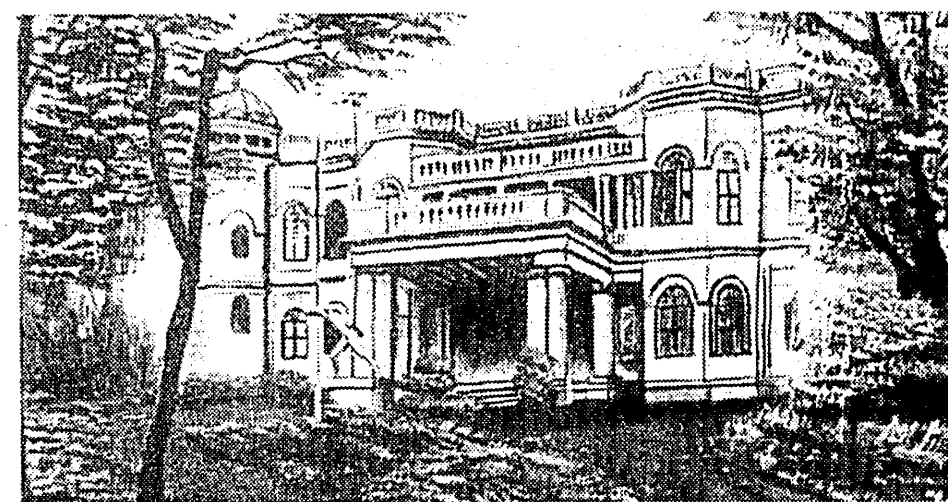
I had come to know of Sir C.P. while I was studying in college. To me, Sir C.P. has always been a controversial figure. All the good qualities of the man had been overshadowed by the stress on his dictatorial traits as Dewan of Travancore. Being a Keralite, I am more familiar with the somewhat propagandist views of the Left parties which have a great influence in Kerala politics.

While there must have been some truth in what they said about Sir C.P, I do not think that they have been entirely just in denying him any good

qualities at all. In fact, his good qualities have never figured in any of the discussions or writing from Kerala. This is grossly unfair and one-sided, especially when research proves that he was a great visionary and a generous man on many counts. The time has come to evaluate this man on the basis of facts available and produce an account which is impartial, unbiased and historically true. Shakuntala's book may have been lenient to him; however, it has paved the way for a re-evaluation of a man who played a great part in India's pre-independence and post-independence history.

One of the qualities of Sir C.P. which I find admirable is his vision for India as a modern, independent country and the steps he took towards building it. His role in the building of the dams at Mettur, Pykara and Bhavani is worth mentioning. Again, his participation in the

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The Grove, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar's house came up in an 80-ground plot his father had purchased at the corner of Eldam's Road and Moubray's Road in 1875. There was a small house in it that still survives as an office. Work started on the palatial main house a decade later and the family moved in in 1886. Built in a style that might be described as 'Mylapore Indian Modern', this was one of the first homes in Madras to have attached baths. Madras terraced, it also has a pillared courtyard within.

Typical of 'Mylapore Indian' were the windowed bays and the balustrades.

Our OLD are two pictures, a painting of the building in the early 20th Century and a photograph of the building taken in the 1920s. The discus thrower is clearly seen in both as is the building, tree cover having not yet come up. Our two pictures that are the NEW show the building completely hidden by tree cover in the picture taken from the same angle as the OLD and better seen, as unchanged, with the discus thrower in the right bottom corner, when captured from an angle.

That tree cover is spread through much of the garden that gives the building its name, with many of the trees over a hundred years old. At the height of summer there is often temperatures ten degrees cooler in the house than outside because of this tree cover. (Photographs of the OLD from the family collection and the NEW by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Celebrating 10, discussing democracy's pitfalls

Started in 1989, the Madras Book Club has through the decade maintained a low profile and a rare informality. It does not have an office or office-bearers who are elected annually to conduct its business — which is discussion on books, led by the authors themselves or other booklovers. The Book Club meetings are always held at the Connemara in the evenings. There is at least one meeting a month, occasionally more. The membership subscription is Rs. 300 a year. But even that is not very religiously collected. I became a member only two years ago and have been impressed with the informality, non-partisan quality and democracy of the organisation.

To mark its tenth anniversary it was befitting that it invited T.G.S. George, the well-known journalist, to discuss 'The Pitfalls of Democracy' with its members.

George, who began his career in S. Sadasanand's *Free Press Journal* in 1950, worked for International Press Institute, *The Searchlight* (Patna), the United Nations (New York) and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong) before becoming the founding editor of *Asiaweek*. At present he is an adviser to the *New Indian Express* (South) and writes a column that is thought-provoking as well as humorous.

On this occasion, George, after a very brief introduction,

invited the audience to ask questions which would give him an opportunity to talk more on the subject. This enabled the audience to have a participatory feeling in the discussion. George had answers for all the questions asked and his own viewpoint came out clearly in the discussions.

At a time when democracy in India is going through a disturbing and bleak period, George felt that in spite of all the drawbacks in India's political system and governance, it is perhaps one of the few countries where democratic practices were still very much in evidence. He praised the common sense of the people at large and their capability in

choosing a government they wanted.

This does not mean that India's system of governance is without its faults. For that you have to blame the politicians, their shortsightedness and greed in amassing power and wealth. I liked his analysis of the party system in the country. We, the people, do not really have a choice in the matter of voting with regard to the major parties in existence. There is Congress with its power politics, dynastic rule and corrupt practices or the BJP with its own agenda of religious dogmatism. The Third Front, all the Socialist and Communist Parties of India,

and discerning citizen, has failed miserably in offering a solution. The Third Front is fragmented and the chance of it governing the country seems remote. Looking at the alliances that the Left parties are making on the eve of election, it seems that, somewhere along the line, they have lost track of their ideals. George felt that Proportional Representation or the Right to Recall may be better forms of government for India.

When asked why there has been no revolution in India, he suggested that political, social and economic conditions have to worsen more for a revolution

(Continued on Page 7)

A hundred years of watching sunspots

The Kodaikanal Solar Observatory is a hundred this year. An internationally recognised institution, it had its origins in the Madras Observatory set up in the 1780s.

S. Muthiah, writing in his revised new edition, *Madras Rediscovered*, records:

Several notable discoveries were made over the years at the *Natshathira Bangala* (Star Bungalow) in Nungambakkam. Among them was the first modern astronomic discovery by an Indian — the discovery of the variable star named *Reticuli* by Chinthamani Ragoonatha Chary in 1887. The observatory's brightest era was undoubtedly that period, 1861-1891, when Chary worked with Astronomer Norman Robert Pogson, whose Scale of Magnitude to measure the brightness of stars only added lustre to all the minor planets and variable stars he discovered. Another illustrious incumbent here was Thomas Glanville Taylor (1831-43), whose *Madras Catalogue*, the first southern hemisphere catalogue, listed the positions of 11,015 stars and formed the basis of the British catalogue. But long before Taylor and Pogson and Chary there had begun the pioneering venture that was recognised the world over.

It was in the garden of his nearby Egmore house that William Petrie, a Company servant from 1765, pursued his hobby of gazing at the stars, using a brass Dollond telescope. It was only after he gifted his private collection of astronomical instruments to the Company in 1789, when he was leaving Madras, that a modern observatory was established. The first modern astronomical records in India, however, date to December 5, 1786 and refer to the longitude of Machilipatnam. Petrie's private observatory had provided a reference meridian for Topping's coastal survey and led to these historic jottings.

The date commemorated in the Nungambakkam centre is 1792. This date marks the move from Petrie's house to these premises — and the establishing of the first official ob-

servatory in modern India. In the garden is a 10-ton, 15-foot tall commemorative granite pillar. The name on this pillar, unveiled by Governor Sir Charles Oakley in 1792, is, however, not Petrie's but Michael Topping's.

Topping, the Chief Marine Surveyor and described as "the first fulltime modern professional surveyor in India", had arrived in Madras in 1785 and, from the first, worked with Petrie's instruments. He persuaded his friend Petrie to make a gift of the equipment to the Company before he left Madras. He also had to persuade the Government to accept the gift. And Government

by A Special Correspondent

was willing to accept it only if Topping would additionally (he was already Chief Marine Surveyor and was also to become Superintendent of the Survey School which the Observatory tended from 1794 to 1801) officiate as the Company's Astronomer. Topping allowed himself to be persuaded and then got Government to do his bidding. It acquired in 1791 Edward Garrow's 'garden house' — the first European dwelling in Nungambakkam — and let Topping move in. In the grounds of this new residence-cum-office of his, Topping built the Observatory the way he wanted it. And the Observatory was ready to go to work in 1792, the commemorated date. *Garrow's Garden* has a new name now, but it is as the Observatory, and its successor, the Regional Meteorological Centre, that it is best known.

Multi-faceted John Goldingham, who had served as Petrie's assistant, succeeded multi-talented Topping in 1796 and was designated the first official Astronomer. He determined the latitudes and longitudes of several Indian locations, including the first assessment of the longitude of Madras (80° 18' 30"). William Lambton in 1802 started his Great Trigonometrical Survey of India from this location, which is considered the secondary meridian, the meridian

that can be substituted for the prime meridian that is Greenwich. When George Everest completed the survey of India, in 1845, the great meridional arc of India had moved across 56,997 square miles of area from Lambton's start at the Madras Observatory pillar and his 7½-mile Mount Road baseline ending at St. Thomas' Mount.

The giant pillar, on which there was once a 12-inch altitude and azimuth instrument, believed to have been Petrie's and the first in India, has an inscription on it confirming it as the oldest benchmark in Asia. In the RMC campus are four other granite pillars, one dating to 1792 and three to 1860. These pillars were meant for transits and standard clocks. In its early years, the Madras Observatory set the standard time for all India. There are residents of Madras who still remember that a time-gun used to be fired at 8 p.m. daily from Fort St. George. This gun was directly connected to the standard clock in the Observatory. And this clock gave India its Standard Time. But while the clock remained, the Observatory moved.

A more permanent Observatory was built here in



The Solar Observatory, Kodaikanal, now celebrating its centenary. Its equipment may go back almost as long, but its work is considered world-class. (Photograph courtesy Frontline.)

(the post was later renamed Director-General of Observatories), it was decided in 1893

To establish a solar physics observatory at Kodaikanal with the Madras Astronomer Charles Michie Smith as the Director. The Kodaikanal Observatory came into existence on April 1, 1899.

In 1895, the 100-acre observatory site in Kodaikanal was taken over, a road was built to the top of the hill, and material collected for the Director's residence. In October 1895, the foundation stone of the *Summit Hall* (which is today called the *Main Hall*) was laid by Lord Wenlock, the Governor of Madras. In July 1897, Michie Smith laid the north-south line, and in December that year, work on the building

was begun. Then, the foundation for the Director's residence was laid. On moving into his residence in February 1899, Michie Smith's first task was to complete the *Main Hall*, atop the Nadingapuram hill.

According to the official Annual Report for the Madras and Kodaikanal Observatories in 1899-2000, "As soon as the towers for the domes were ready, the Director personally undertook the erection of the domes. As no skilled workmen were provided, he had with his own hands to do all the work that could not be done by a common native village carpenter or blacksmith. This included the driving of some 2,300 rivets. Both the domes were ... completed by December. Before this time, the whole of the buildings had been roofed in, and the laboratory and computer's room were in use."

The two domes of the *Main Hall* house the six-inch solar telescope, which has been in use since 1904, and an eight-inch stellar telescope, which is no longer in use. Another building in the Kodaikanal Observatory houses a spectroheliograph for photographing the sun. It has been in the use since 1912. An inscription at the entrance to the building reads: "In this building, on January 5, 1909, John Evershed made the discovery of the phenomenon of radial motion in sun spots, that is now known as the Evershed effect".

The arrival of John Evershed in 1907 (as Assistant

Director to begin with) heralded the Observatory's golden age. Choosing to come to India, Evershed made Kodaikanal into a world-class, state-of-the-art observatory.

The Kodaikanal Observatory also has a 20-inch telescope, which came in 1912 from Pune when the Maharaja of Bhavnagar Taktasinhji Observatory was closed down, an ionospheric laboratory, a solar tunnel telescope acquired in 1958, and a museum in what was Michie Smith's residence.

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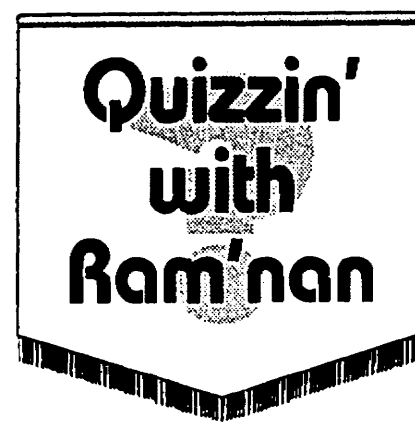
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'Conservation' or 'renovation'?

(Continued from Page 1)

considering a Heritage Act, an appeal has been made by INTACH to the Authorities drafting the Act to stop such 'renovations' to heritage buildings and get the renovators to reach a consensus with heritage conservation organisations on how the work should be carried out.

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics has a glorious opportunity to demonstrate how a model restoration project to preserve a heritage building should proceed. Will it adopt the model route of consultation with conservation specialists or will it adopt the more popular route of building as officialdom pleases so long as the end result looks like something they began with?



(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S question are from the period June 16 to 30. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai and Questions 13 to 20 are trivia questions on Chennai and Tamil Nadu)

1. Simple. Who won the 'Man of the Match' awards in both the semifinals and final of the recently concluded cricket World Cup?
2. What are the terminal points of the 'Souhardya', the 'people's bus' which was inaugurated on June 19th?
3. Who is Sophie Rhys-Jones?
4. Where in Mumbai was the *bhoomi puja* for the world's first cable-stayed sea link held on June 22nd?
5. Name the teenager who ousted the top-seeded Martina Hingis from the Wimbledon tennis championships.
6. Why is 44-year old Martin Frankel of Connecticut a much wanted man by the FBI?
7. Who are the England cricket team's new captain and coach?
8. Name the high-profile Kurdish rebel leader sentenced to death in Turkey for treason and attempting to break up the country?
9. Who is the richest Indian in the world?
10. Who is the new Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras?
11. What distinction did Chennai Telephones achieve with the replacement of the two cross-bar exchanges at Kellys and Harbour recently?
12. Which famous institution in Chennai is housed in *Dare House*?
13. Which dance form is also referred to as *Sadir*?
14. Name the temple dedicated to Lord Shiva where a pair of divine kites come to feed around noon every day.
15. Under which king's patronage was the Brihadeswara Temple at Thanjavur built?
16. Kombai and Rajapalayam are indigenous breeds of....?
17. What first for a cricket stadium did the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium at Chepauk achieve when it was built?
18. The logo of the Tamil Nadu Government is said to be inspired by the *gopuram* of which temple?
19. Name the 'snake man' who pioneered crocodile breeding and conservation by setting up a farm on the outskirts of Chennai.
20. What is special about the Kurinji flower?

(Answers on page 8)

A redcap leads team to FACT '99 win

Yashwant Saran, who posts quizzes on Quiz Net — an e-group for quizzers on the Internet — led the Chemplast Sanmar team to a Mahindra resort holiday when they posted an easy seven-point victory over *The Hindu* at FACT '99, a quiz recently held at IIT. The margin of victory was surprising considering that Ramanan, quizmaster for *Madras Musings* and one of the best quizzers in Chennai, was one of the members of *The Hindu* team.

Red-capped Saran answered several tough questions which left the other teams stumped. One of these was a question in the audio round. A piece of classical music composed by Tchaikovsky was played and the question was: Which romantic couple was the subject of the music? Without a moment's hesitation, Saran answered "*Romeo and Juliet*" (of course!). Quizmaster Indrajit Gupta of Bangalore was certain Saran's "powers" came from his cap, which was the butt of several comments from the audience.

Though there was a substantial points difference between the first two teams, the difference between the second and third teams was only one point. Mobil Peeves with Rajiv Rai, an avid quizzier from his student days, finished third.

The six three-person corporate teams that made it to the final — Chemplast Sanmar, *The Hindu*, Mobil Peeves, Future Software, Pricewater House Coopers and Mudra — had to get through a preliminary round and a tough semi-final. Forty teams took the written preliminary round and 12 teams qualified for the two-round semi-finals.

During the first round of the semi-finals, I discovered, among other things, that when Lord Siva did not heed Ravana's penance, the latter cut out his lungs and strung a *veena* for the God. And that the name of the household product 'Vim' comes from the Latin word for 'vigour.' Chemplast gained an easy victory in this round and qualified along with Mudra and Pricewater House Coopers.

The second round was a closer match leading to a tie between Future Software and Ramco. However after seven tough 'tie breaker' questions, Future Software made it to the finals in style by instantly answering the final question: What is the connection between Yale University and Madras? Yale got its name from a 17th century Governor of Madras, Elihu Yale, I learnt.

After a fifteen-minute break, the final got underway. The visual and audio rounds turned out to be a cinch, with the participants answering questions even before they could be asked. Saran was one of them. When a picture of Rayfro, the founder of the world-famous fast-food joint, MacDonald's was displayed, Saran named the person correctly even as the quizmaster turned to ask his question. Quizmaster Gupta faltered only for a second, before smartly changing the question to 'Who was the photographer?'. Chemplast Sanmar soon discovered that Gupta was pulling their leg and they got their points.

In the audio round, the teams were asked who the guitarist for A.R.Rehman's '*Dil Se*' was. The answer turned out to be Guy Pratt, Pink Floyd's guitarist. The three 'straight' rounds, following the audio round, were a shade tougher. A couple of the questions left the participants baffled and Quizmaster Gupta had to turn to the audience for a response. One answer highlighted the arrogance of 'Microsoft' who had labelled their competitors 'NOISE'. The full form turned out to be "Netscape, Oracle, IBM, Sun and Everyone else". Another such question was why 'Corretto' and 'Feast' by Walls are called frozen desserts instead of ice-cream. The reason: Because vegetable fats are used instead of dairy milk to make them!

The quiz was organised by CRY for its programme, 'Free A Child Today'. The registration fee of Rs. 3000 a team was earmarked to provide education and healthcare to children.

Archana S Ram

What is a Citizen's Charter?

The concept of a Citizen's Charter evolved from the need for accountability, transparency, and for information from a government department. Inherently, this is a British concept, introduced in 1991 by the then Prime Minister, John Major. Five years later the UK reported its Citizen's Charter being "an unqualified success". However, it was suggested that the name be changed to 'Consumer's Charter as the Charter dealt predominantly with ensuring quality service at the point of delivery.

Thus, the Citizen's Charter is about giving more power to the citizens. It believes in the people's right to be informed and choose for themselves.

In a Citizen's Charter, as ideally envisaged, a service provider describes the steps it has taken to provide quality service and, thereby, provide customer satisfaction. The Charter sets standards and ensures the accountability, openness and transparency of the provider. Ideally, it should also state the responsibilities of the provider towards the citizen, and the steps that a citizen could take if the standards of the service are not met. A Charter must also necessarily contain contact information, details of the various schemes and services that the provider offers, and a detailed complaint redressal procedure. In short, the Charter while being for the citizen and because of the citizen, should also be a source of information about the service provider.

Citizens according to the basic principles of the ideal Charter, should be entitled to expect:

- No secrecy about how public services are run.
- Full accurate information in plain language about the services and choice.

— (CAG)

CHARTER IMPROVEMENTS

(Continued from Page 1)

tant Coordinator, CAG, said the purpose of the appraisal was to draw up a list of minimum requirements that every Charter should fulfil. The CAG evaluated 13 Charters, including two of Central Government Organisations, against a yardstick formulated by the CAG in the absence of a prescribed government format. The parameters, to assess whether basic information was being provided the citizen in each Charter, were divided into eight sections and 31 sub-divisions and were answerable by a 'YES' or 'NO'. The parameters were: Date of Charter; Statement of Service; Documents mandatorily made available to the public; Applications; Information cell, 'Complaint redressal procedure', Charter review; and Readability. An assessment based on the number of 'Yesses' (availability in the Charter) to

- Services regardless of caste, class, race or sex.
- Services to be run to suit the convenience of customers, not the staff.
- Accountability
- Citizen should gain the following from an ideal Charter:
- That he would be heard by the 'man behind the counter'.
- That he can expect and demand courteous and effective service.
- If things go wrong, he knows whom to approach without fear.

The idea: Charter should be simple and should state and describe the services that the service provider is offering. The entitlement of the user, service standards (e.g. Time frames, Quality of service) for information and redressal staff to approach, what to expect from them and where are they located should be mentioned. If things go wrong, whom to contact and what to do to set it right; i.e. procedures and guidelines, should be state. Mention must also be made of what legal rights the citizen has, as opposed to mentioning that the citizen has a 'right' when in fact it is not legally enforceable.

Citizen's Charters are needed in India at the Central and State level because governments are not citizen friendly, have become so impersonal in their approach that they appear unresponsive to the needs of the people, and there is very little public accountability and less transparency. There is no noticeable public participation in formulation of policies by the government. Citizens have not been able to overthrow their passivity and fear — and they do not have the power, knowledge, and initiative to demand better service.

total subdivisions revealed compliance by CAG standards as follows: Revenue (22.58%); Forest (25.80%); Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection (35.48%); Adi Dravida and Tribal Welfare (9.67%); Fisheries (9.67%); Social Welfare (29.03%); Agriculture (38.7%); Horticulture (12.90%); Rural Development (6.45%); Chennai Metrowater and Sewerage Board (29.03%); Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (64.51%); Passenger service of Indian Railways (32.25%); and Life Insurance Corporation of India (9.67%).

CAG intends to send the evaluation report to the respective departments for them to analyse this assessment and make necessary modifications to ensure the success of their Charters. Such charters are recommended in the Government of India for all public and private institutions dealing with citizens.

Fusion as translation

Translation, says Divya Kumar, was conceived as a performance in December 1997 in New Haven, Connecticut. "It is an enquiry into the nature of multiculturalism, into the distinctions between aesthetics and art, and into the distinction between cultures and people," she explains.

Divya is a second generation American, the daughter of a Hindu temple priest in the U.S. The process of growing up in the U.S. brought the need to keep in touch with the culture of India. The mechanical learning of classical Bharata Natyam to keep in touch was not enough. She felt she had to go deeper into the form. She attended the summer workshops conducted by the Dhananjayans of Chennai in Virginia and decided to come to India

to make a deeper study of the South Indian classical dance form. Armed with a Fulbright Fellowship she came to Chennai to learn from Kalakshetra and the Dhananjayans.

Her in-depth study in India and her exposure to western art forms at home made her wonder if it was possible to translate one culture's aesthetic to another's, whether art was the

gree in painting at Yale University, and had trained in the Ceccetti form of classical ballet for six years. He came to Chennai to get a feel of the festival performances last year and to work on *Translation*.

Divya Kumar approached Chitraveena N Ravikiran to compose the music. He "liked the idea conceptually" and got down to composing some

by
V.R. Devika

common denominator of disparate aesthetics. That was when she set about working with ballet dancer Justin Garrick, setting off her Bharata Natyam against his ballet. Garrick was the starting point of *Translation*. He was working for his de-

pieces specially for the project. The idea was to use two violins: one Western and one Carnatic. He composed *Swarakrithi Kamalamanoohari*, a Thodi *raga* of 13 counts without the basic *sa* and *pa* which are the essential notes in Carnatic music. Other pieces were his response to compositions of Western composers. "This was extremely interesting for me," says Ravikiran. "I love to work in multicultural projects, which are a great opportunity to learn." In fact, on June 26th, while *Translation* was being premiered in Chennai, an Indo-Canadian project of his called *Cosmos*, with dancer Lata Pada, was being premiered in Toronto.

Rachel Golub, Western violinist and assistant music director for *Translation*, for her part chose some pieces from well-known Western orchestra compositions. She had also studied Carnatic violin in Chennai.

The find of *Translations* was S Subbulakshmi, a 15-year-old who plays Carnatic music on the violin like a veteran. She is a Class IX student of Padma Seshadri School. With a talented *mridangist* like Vijayaraghavan, the production scored more for music than for dance.

Divya and Justin began the programme as a *jugalbandi*, with Divya dancing Bharata Natyam to the Carnatic violin and Justin dancing ballet to the Western violin. Slowly they began to dance to each other's music and then tried fusing both forms. This was a sedate Act I. In Act II, they both danced to 'Long Tube Trio', a vocal solo composed and performed by Brenda Hutchinson, which sounded like a lament influenced by Australian aboriginal music. Coloured slides illustrated the theme and Divya,



Divya Kumar and Justin Garrick fuse Bharata Natyam and classical ballet to music that's fusion too... and Translation emerges

exchanging her traditional Bharata Natyam costume for a ballet bodysuit, attempted the Bharata Natyam *araimandi*. The body-hugging costume was a mistake for the attempt. So was fusing Bharata Natyam movements, classical ballet and contemporary; neither depth nor coherence emerged.

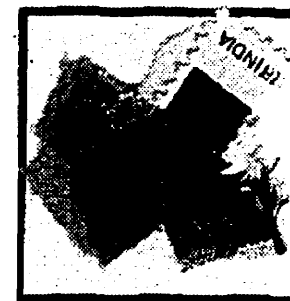
"Multiculturalism is the American catch phrase of the Nineties," says Justin Garrick. But to engage intimately with another culture is to come to terms with the inability of complete understanding of anything outside the self, say the two dancers in unison.

Celebrating 10, discussing democracy's pitfalls

(Continued from Page 4)
to take place. The Middle Class with its self-centred compla-



Till July 24th: "*Trashformations — from Junk to Art*". This exhibition brings you a whole load of trash transformed in a way that you would have never dreamed possible. A note from Manasthala, the arts and crafts centre organising the exhibition, states "We at Manasthala firmly believe in the three R's, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. So we have tried to assemble a collection of art objects fashioned from waste materials..."



This morning's newspaper, scraps from last night's dinner, a piece of mail we have just read, and tossed in the trash. It is simple, the transformation occurs in a single moment in time. Manasthala changes this process by seeing that discarded object in a new way, by reclaiming it as worthwhile, by taking what others reject and making it something else."

ency and its ability to find short-term solutions for day-to-day problems will never feel the need to revolt. In all countries where revolutions have taken place, it is the middle class which has given leadership to the masses. So the possibility of a revolution in the present scenario is remote.

Another point which came up for discussion was the attitude of NRIs towards India. While they cannot be blamed for leaving the country in search of better opportunities and prospects, their calculating, selfish and callous attitude towards the parent country is very evident. George compared the situation with that of Chinese NRIs who always had an emotional attachment to the country of origin and contributed much to the growth and welfare of their parent country.

Finally, in the present juncture, the individual's contribution for the welfare of the country can be only through communicating and conscientising small groups and hoping that they in turn will develop and educate other such small groups. Instead of being cynical and pessimistic, we could all devote our energies towards discussions in small groups and developing a political and social awareness through these groups, he advised.

Nasser Hussain's Chennai links

The Annual Report of the Madras Cricket Club for the year ended August 31, 1986, mentions a certain Nazeer Hussain. Those who were involved in MCC cricket of the time know that it is the name of England's newly appointed captain, misspelt.

Nasser Hussain's statistics for that season (1985-1986) were hardly sensational, though he finished second in the batting averages, behind his captain Arvind Subramaniam (737 runs, average 46.00). His figures read: 9 innings, one not out, 279 runs, highest score 82, average 34.87, two half centuries. He was hardly 18 then, but brought greater intensity to his cricket than his elder brother Mel had when he turned out for the Madras club a couple of seasons earlier. Mel had done well for the Club — in his second season (1982-1983), he had scored 623 runs with an average of 36.65 and taken 21 wickets at 25.86 apiece. He was a happy and popular team man while Nasser, younger than the rest of the team, was more reserved. Even then, he impressed everyone with his commitment on the field and his

serious approach to the game. Mel was a good looking, orthodox batsman, a brilliant fielder, and a more than passable off spinner. He had already played for Essex Second XI when he came to Chempauk. He was a pleasant, likable young man, more talented than his achievements suggest, good old-fashioned English coaching evident in everything he did on the field. Perhaps, he did not get the right kind of breaks, or a Graham Gooch to take him under his wing, as happened in Nasser's case.

The Hussain brothers were both at the time playing competitive cricket in Essex, where they grew up. They would visit India, the land of their birth, during the summer, and play for the Madras Cricket Club while in Madras, their original home town. Their father Jawad Hussain had led the Club's cricket team in the Seventies before the family migrated to England. He had been its Honorary Secretary as well in 1974-75. Both he and his brothers had been keen hockey players too, and played the game with great enthusiasm at the club.

Jawad and his elder brother,

the late Nawaz, had both played cricket for Madras University. Jawad played a single Ranji Trophy match but went to England in the sixties, where he played league cricket with considerable success. His wife and he came back to India and Nasser was born in Chennai in 1968. Jawad led MCC for two seasons, leading it with considerable skill and success. Under his captaincy, MCC narrowly missed winning the Palayampatti Shield for the First Division of the TNCA league in 1970-1971.

Jawad worked for Mohamed Ebrahim & Co., receiving much encouragement for his cricket from Sulaiman and H M Ebrahim of the group, until he moved to England in 1972, according to M Subramaniam, a former State cricketer. Subramaniam played for Madras University under Nawaz Hussain's captaincy and led both the University and Madras Juniors, with Jawad playing under him. Nawaz was involved in a big partnership with A G Kripal Singh for Madras University versus Mysore University, in a match played at Loyola College in the mid-Fifties.

"Jawad's off spin bowling was clever rather than penetrative," both Subramaniam and former Tamil Nadu opener V Sivaramakrishnan remember. Both also have recollections of Nasser and his siblings (there is a middle brother Abbas and a sister Benazir, the youngest, who is a prima ballerina with the Royal Ballet, U.K.) frolicking on the MCC lawns — "they were the naughtiest kids in town".



The Jawad Hussains at the Madras Cricket Club. Their son Nasser Hussain now captains England and started his captaincy with a win over New Zealand first time out.

Arvind Subramaniam recalls Jawad's big hitting in the Lance Cairns mode low down in the batting order. He things he was a 'lucky' captain, besides being one who could get the best out of his team. The late Ram Ramesh — a club mate of Jawad — once told this writer that Jawad, who led the MCC team on a tour of Singapore

and Malaysia in 1972, was a combative cricketer, not above some gamesmanship. P S Chandrasekharan, a veteran who played for Mambalam Mosquitoes — a league team celebrating its 50th year this year — remembers the stylish clothes that Nawaz and Jawad wore. The brothers regularly played hockey, besides cricket.

Most Tamil Nadu cricketers and cricket enthusiasts of the Fifties and Sixties have clear memories of Jawad and Nawaz Hussain, and those of the Eighties remember Mel rather well, but Nasser Hussain's brief tenure here seems to have gone unnoticed. He really blossomed as a first class cricketer only afterwards.

The Hussains are kin of the Prince of Arcot.

V. Ramnarayan

A statesman remembered

(Continued from Page 4)

Home Rule movement and close association with Annie Besant are worth knowing. His role in building the Universities at Travancore, Mysore and Annamalai was substantial. But his greatest quality was his belief in a casteless, secular India. His role in the temple entry movement in Kerala has been forgotten, but it has to be underscored. Again, the fact that his house was open to people from other castes and religions is remarkable, especially since he belonged to an orthodox upper caste Brahmin family. Finally, his courage to take any action, however controversial and problematic, and stand by his convictions is remarkable. Shakuntala's book highlights

all these qualities and, therefore, I think it validates its intentions.

Another quality of the book I find endearing is that it captures the atmosphere of a by-gone age with its own sterling value systems, courage and generosity. To me, to some extent a product of that age, this book brings out the nostalgic memories of people and events of that era.

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Shane Warne; 2. Calcutta and Dhaka; 3. The bride of Prince Edward; 4. Bandra and Worli; 5. Jelena Dokic of Australia; 6. He is claimed to have pulled off the biggest stock market scam, estimated at \$3 billion; 7. Nasser Hussain and Zimbabwe's Duncan Fletcher; 8. Abdullah Ocalan; 9. Wipro's Azim Hasham Premji with a net worth of \$2.8 billion.

* * *

10. Prof. Pon Kothandaraman; 11. All the exchanges in the City are now electronic; 12. EID Parry.

* * *

13. Bharata Natyam; 14. Tirukkazhukundram; 15. Raja Raja Chozhan; 16. Dogs; 17. First all-covered stadium; 18. The temple at Sriviliputtur; 19. Romulus Whitaker; 20. It is said to bloom once in 12 years.



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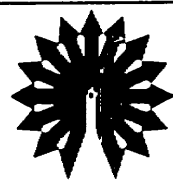
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