

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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● Chennai Heritage agrees on pioneer project

Tiruvanmiyur Tank first study

(By A Special Correspondent)

Chennai Heritage, having received 80-G exemption, is looking forward to greater funding from corporates to enable it to undertake other heritage and environmental activities apart from helping bring out *Madras Musings*. At a recent meeting of the Chennai Heritage Board it was decided to fund as its first project a study of the ancient Tiruvanmiyur Tank and its environs.

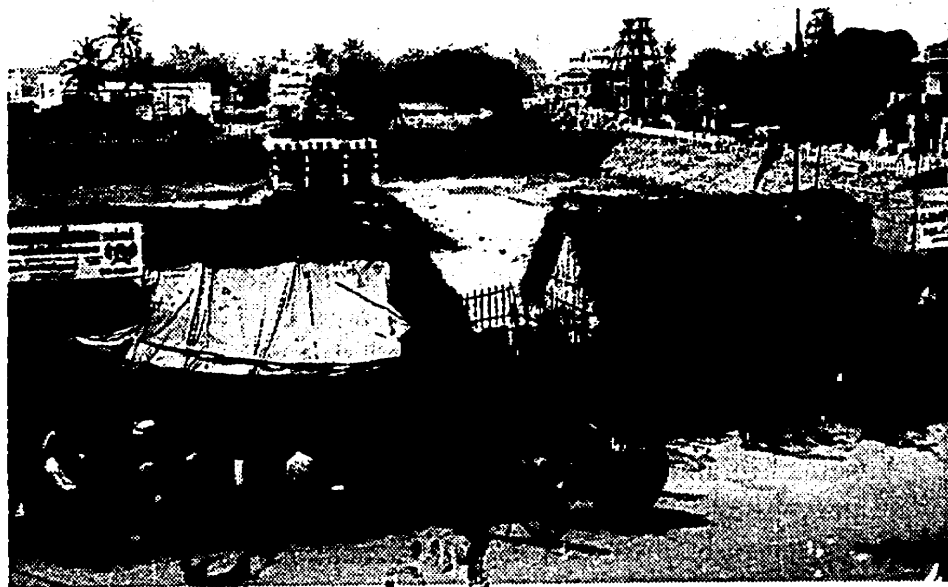
Chennai Heritage will use surplus funds that accrue, after meeting the cost of *Madras Musings* (circulation now 13,000) to help meet the cost of studies, seminars, workshops, exhibitions etc. that have their focus on Greater Chennai's heritage and environment. Requests for such as-

sistance should be sent to Chennai Heritage (260A, TTK Road, Chennai 18) and should be accompanied by a detailed project report. The project report that accompanied INTACH's request for help to study and draw up plans for the improvement of the Tiruvanmiyur Tank area is published below.

Such studies will on completion result in a report to Chennai Heritage on what needs to be done, how it should be implemented and a detailed costing. Chennai Heritage will pass on the project to the authorities or to anyone coming forward to implement the plan or might even try to raise the funds and undertake the project itself. It will also ensure

that adequate publicity is given to the report in order to make the public aware of a particular heritage area that needs preservation and restoration.

To enable Chennai Heritage fulfil its commitment to the heritage and the environment of the City, it seeks financial support from cooperate institutions as well as proposals for projects (as listed above) that need support from Chennai Heritage. It looks forward to a two-fold response to this appeal. All corporate supporters pay Rs.1 lakh a year in quarterly instalments during each financial year. Would you like to join Chennai Heritage's supporters or do you have a proposal for Chennai Heritage?



The clutter around the dry, misty tank bed in front of the Tiruvanmiyur Temple.

Halt to work at Senate House

(By The Editor)

The Man From Madras *Musings* was first with the news that the Syndicate has new plans for the restoration of Senate House. It apparently has no time for the Technical Committee appointed by Professor Sathikh, the former Vice Chancellor who initiated the idea of restoring the historic building, or the Committee first headed by Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah, and in more recent times by M A Chidambaram, which was to raise the funds for the project and ensure proper reuse of the building.

The Syndicate looks forward, it would seem, to government being forthcoming with the funding and organisations like the Central or State Archaeological Surveys, the PWD, and Government Housing and Infrastructure Corporations being forthcoming with whatever services and skills they can offer. The Archaeological Surveys may have restoration skills in varying degrees — you should hear the gossip, as a result of infighting, on the lack of skills being displayed in one or two restoration projects the Surveys are at present undertaking! — but certainly the other departments don't have even these skills. In this context, merely in order to go by

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The letter

University of Madras
No. F. 7/Bldg/SH/99

Centenary Building,
Chepauk, Chennai 600 005.
Dated: 5th July 1999

From
The Registrar i/c.,
University of Madras
Sub: Renovation and Conservation of Senate House Building — Reg.
Ref: Your letter dtd. 12. 5.99.

With reference to your letter cited, I am to inform you that the minutes of Technical Committee meeting held on 12.3.99 was placed before the Syndicate at its meeting held on 16.4.99 for its approval. The Syndicate has resolved that the consideration was deferred for want of clarification on awarding of work to Private contractors. The Syndicate has also resolved that the work of conservation and renovation of the Senate House be entrusted to Archaeological Survey of India or other Government agencies. Further the grant from the Government of Tamil Nadu be requested and the funds collected for renovation of Senate House will be spent only after the approval of the Finance Committee. I am, therefore, to inform you that the starting of above work is not possible at present. All consultancy services are also deferred already.

Registrar i/c.

Copy to Dr. P. Sivalingam,
Chairman, Technical Committee.

Places for people

Recovering urban space in Tiruvanmiyur

Issue

● A city is a mosaic of many bright chips. Engineered both by want and greed, city growth at times destroys its own fabric. Buildings that represented collective memory, spaces that sustained a particular way of living and complementary relationships between the built and the non-built are lost in this process. The objective of this programme — *Places for People* — is to recover places in Chennai that had and still have the potential, importance and value as urban spaces and rededicate them to the residents of the neighbourhood and the City. The recovery will be in terms of environment, ecological relationships, spatial use, heritage value and public use. The residents and users of these places will partake of the benefits of this programme

through their active participation.

Project

● INTACH has identified, to begin with, the temple precincts of Tiruvanmiyur. Tiruvanmiyur was once an important temple-centred settlement with a history dating back to the Bhakti period. After it was agglomerated with the expanding Chennai metropolis, it lost its independent status as a settlement. At present, this coastal neighbourhood is one of the most sought after housing precincts. The temple precincts in Tiruvanmiyur acts as an important node and provides many important services to the neighbourhood. The project intends to focus on this precinct, which contains two important tanks, a large open space in front of the

temple and the streets that surround the temple. The tanks are in disuse and their edges are occupied making them inaccessible for the public. The space in front of the temple is chaotically organised, undermining its potential as a public space.

The project aims to renovate the tank, organise the activity around the tank and the space in front of the temple, release the tank edge for public use, improve the aesthetic quality of the space and organise traffic in this area. Through this, the temple tanks and the temple precincts will be recovered as major urban spaces for the better use of the residents. This programme will not attempt any beautification through dislocation of people. On the contrary, it will involve

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Who cares about the City's citizens?!

On Friday July 23rd, a goodly gathering had assembled by 6 p.m. in a hall on Marshall's Road to hear what promised to be a very interesting lecture. But what struck *The Man From Madras Musings* as curious was that almost each one appeared to be looking for a friend who had promised to come but was now missing. At 6.30 p.m., the scheduled time for the meeting, they had still not turned up. And there was one more person missing. The speaker! At 7.30 p.m., the organisers finally heard from the speaker. He'd left Anna University at 5 p.m. but had got caught in a traffic jam that had resulted in his just reaching Nungambakkam from where he was calling. At this rate, it would take him another hour to reach the venue. So could they organise something on the morrow?

Later, MMM was to hear stories of others caught in that traffic jam, the worst in some years. A woman in an advanced state of pregnancy. An ambulance with a seriously ill patient. Passengers heading for the airport to catch flights. A businessman from abroad who was in Chennai only for the night and who planned to discuss a joint venture with local businessmen. All of them were held fast in that jam not because of the traffic on Chennai's roads but because of the insensitivity of politicians who claim to offer the people leadership. What they created that day with their procession was sheer anarchy. Any self-respecting politician reviewing the inconvenience he had caused the citizens of a city would bow out of politics in shame. But catch that happening in Tamil Nadu!

In fact, those responsible for the procession have been backing out of the responsibility and have been passing the blame on to others. Namely, the Authorities, political or otherwise, who, they say, "deliberately" withheld adequate bandobust in order to create just this situation and cause public reaction against them! It's time all political parties realised, whether or not others are trying to sabotage their efforts, their decisions to hold processions, rallies, public meetings etc. on the thoroughfares of the city and in public 'lungs' create situations where some part of the public or other is bound to be inconvenienced. And if an inconvenienced public angrily votes against them they should have no cause for regret.

Frankly, MMM advocates support from the public to only those political parties that do NOT inconvenience the citizenry, who do not hinder traffic, who do not paint the walls of the City red, who don't deface walls, lamp-posts, gates and other roadside property with posters, flags and bunting, and who do not blast our ears with their loud-speaker-enhanced oratory. They should, on the other hand, be permitted to buy as much TV time as they want — and use the

'idiot box' as their only means of persuading the public. But will that happen? MMM is certain that no party will voluntarily impose such a code of ethics. The Electoral Commission's 'big stick', then, is the only solution. But will this Commission do an Al-Seshan? Will it go further and ban all political processions and rallies? Will it insist on political meetings only in hired, enclosed halls? Will it prohibit streetcorner platforms, like the one in Mylapore that is favoured by several politicians and which is raised at the intersection of two Mada Streets and two narrow feeder lanes every few months, completely blocking the Mada Streets' traffic for hours on end? Will it call a stop to loudspeakers not only on such platforms but wherever else they are used by politicians except in hired halls?

Somehow, MMM doesn't think that will happen. And politicians will continue to pollute the city's atmosphere in a variety of ways. A pox on all their houses, is all that MMM can wish as yet another city-polluting electoral campaign gets under way — not for their political views, of which more the merrier, but for what they are doing to the citizens' comfort with total indifference and disregard.

held where senior zonal railway people and NGOs involved in conservation can meet and draw up guidelines for both identification of heritage landmarks that need conservation and for conservation techniques that need to be followed. THREE, a zonal railway heritage identification team should be formed and, following the guidelines evolved in TWO, should identify within a year what it assesses as being necessary to conserve. FOUR, local heritage committees, comprising historians, conservationists, architects etc. together with Railways personnel, should be formed to examine the proposals made in THREE and make their recommendations to a central zonal council formed at zonal headquarters to reassess and prioritise the various proposals made in THREE. The Railways could begin conservation work based on this prioritisation, with the work to be monitored in each State by the headquarters and State committees.

When it comes to the South, however, MMM has no doubts about what should be the first bit of railway heritage to be preserved. The Royapuram Railway Station, naturally! This was the first railway station to be opened in South India and the second

be individual projects in their local areas that corporates could help support. MMM looks forward to an enthusiastic response to the presentations from delegates from all over the country.

Speaking of corporate interest in heritage, the Standard Chartered Bank has been one of the leaders of the movement in Mumbai, setting an example by restoring its buildings in splendid fashion. Sadly, it has renovated its main building three times in Madras and made it unrecognisable with the last effort. It however did pay some attention to its Royapettah branch where it did tend well a rented building out of Madras's past. With its own commercial priorities resulting in this branch office moving into a tasteless highrise, the old Royapettah branch building has become a threatened structure. Its owner, MMM hears, plans to sell it to a developer — and another little bit of Chennai's architectural heritage will vanish unless the developer shows some sensitivity. MMM understands that this state of affairs would not have happened if the Bank had not decided to move. Would a little more attention to heritage than to commerce have left Chennai one of its more beautiful build-

ings midst a jungle of congestion? Such questions are ones, MMM hopes, corporates would spend a little more time thinking over in the future.

★ Michael Herridge is a history buff and when he took his High Commissioner, Sir Rob Young, to Simpson's during the latter's first visit to Chennai recently, the two spent more time poring over Simpson's 150-year old records and coach designs than on talking about improving the Indo-British commercial partnership in the future. Simpson's is one of the few old commercial houses in the City that has a fairly comprehensive and well-maintained Archives. It's an example, MMM feels, other major corporates in Chennai, even the newer ones, should follow. Apart from the Archives what impressed the visitors, MMM was told, was the wooden panelling of Simpson's offices and the solid wood and leather furniture out of another age.

★ Chennai Online was, till recently, the only Chennai-focussed website — and it claimed a wide 'readership'. That 'circulation' will now be challenged by www.chennaiishoppe.com which was launched in the last week of July by an Indo-British collaboration. The idea, however, germinated with the work a German student did on Chennai while spending a year with Broadgate Technical Services (India). There are listings, but the shoppe part has still to take off. *The Man From Madras Musings*, however, was happy to find an echo of *Madras Musings* in the rest of the content, a sign that the media in the city are beginning to pay greater attention to Chennai's past, present and future. The rather attractive site was launched by singer Unnikrishnan whose own website was designed by Broadgate.

Business briefs

★ Leading the Citizens' Run this year was a contingent from Ford India. And its message was clear: The Ford 'Ikon' was on its way. Ikon is the car Ford India has specially developed for the Indian market and it is targeted to be on the Indian roads by the end of this year. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands. Three versions are being planned; an economy version, a standard petrol version and a diesel version. Ford, MMM hears, hopes to make a big impact with the Ikon, engineered as it has been specifically for road conditions in India and other similar markets.

★ More and more Indian institutions are tying up with educational institutions abroad to provide Indian students with 'foreign qualifications' while studying in India. *The Man From Madras Musings* finds. The Institution of Civil Engineers, UK, is planning to work with Larsen and Toubro's ECC to establish a training scheme in Chennai, EEC's home base. Another group setting up an educational institution in Chennai is the

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OUR READERS WRITE

Polluting the sea

Madras Musings deserves our thanks for publishing (MM, June 16th) a portion of the order of Justice Kanakaraaj of the Madras High Court dated 9.3.1994. The Judge stated that the High Court or Supreme Court would entertain from anyone a public interest petition relating to the protection and improvement of the environment. A member of the North Arcot District Legal Aid and Advice Committee and I were requested by the Tamil Nadu Legal Aid and Advice Board, at the direction of the Tamil Nadu Government, to visit places affected by tannery effluents in Ambur and the adjoining villages. During our visit we noticed the worst environmental and health hazards caused by the effluents. Hundreds of acres of wet cultivable lands had been destroyed and pollution-free potable water was not available. After examining several persons we filed a report on 18.2.1985 suggesting immediate closure of tanneries and discontinuance of the issue of licenses issued for setting up new tanneries. Copies of our report were given to the Vellore District Collector in person besides being sent to the Central and Tamil Nadu Governments. Since no action was taken I filed a Public Interest Litigation Writ Petition in the Madras High Court in 1987 for direction to stop the issue of licenses to tanneries and for their closure where they had caused 'worst pollution and environmental hazards'. The High Court of Madras admitted my writ; but did not pass any interim orders. The writ petition is still pending.

After forming a voluntary body, called the Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum, I filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court in 1991. The Court in 1996 issued directions for the stopping of issue of further licences to tanneries, fixed the time limit for setting up effluent treatment plants and ordered payment of compensation to affected parties. Even before the final judgement several interim orders were passed by the Court directing the Tamil Nadu Government to provide potable water and medical treatment to the people in the tannery belts. The directions are still on paper and have not been implemented.

In your news story it was pointed out that five acres of valuable lands were to be 'erased' in order to construct a memorial to the late Dr. Ambedkar. In the case of places affected by tannery effluents, the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Research University Centre in Vellore reported in 1992 that more than 82,000 acres of wetlands were destroyed with the likelihood of additional destruction of such land in the years to come. What are the Central and Tamil Nadu Governments doing to meet these environmental problems?

The Chairman of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) told the Press in Chennai on June 23, 1999, that the tannery effluents that could not be treated would be taken from different places in Vellore District

through a 250 km pipeline along the banks of the Palar River and drained into the sea near Chennai. He stated that the project would cost Rs.225 crore to which the tanneries would contributing Rs.2.25 crore, the balance to be met by the Central and Tamil Nadu Governments.

If the tannery effluents are let into the sea, the entire aquatic population will be annihilated and the fishermen will lose their livelihood. Besides this, there will be the most nauseating smell emanating from the sea.

P.S. Subrahmanian
Honorary Secretary
Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum
Vellore 632 009.

Back to 'Madras'

At last, thanks to the efforts of Dr. B. Ramamurthy, the name of Madras Medical College, which was changed to Chennai Medical College, has been restored to its original form, by which it is known throughout the world.

In the same manner, I request the State Government to change the name of Chennai back to Madras. The name 'Madras' is well known throughout the world and has unique historical importance. In fact, for a long time, any South Indian was known as a 'Madras' by his north Indian colleagues.

The Madras High Court, it must be noted, has refused to change its name and continues to be known as the Madras High Court.

It is time also that some important roads of historical importance get back their original names in the interest of preserving the culture and history of the places.

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

Cleaning up heritage

I am sure you read the article about laser cleaning of historic buildings that appeared in the Science/Technology Supplement to *The Hindu* of July 15th.

Now that a portable and cost-effective laser (Lama) has been developed, INTACH, MMM and all heritage buffs could persuade the authorities to adopt this technique of laser cleaning for all our historic buildings, including temples, churches and mosques (and perhaps the Bharat Insurance building to start with).

As a first step, INTACH could find out more details of this technology, including price, availability etc.

K.N. Raghavan
7, Rams Apartments
13C, 3rd Sea Ward Road
Valmikinagar
Chennai 600 041.

His separate nation

Sir C.P. (MM, July 1st) can be equated to Rajaji in greatness,

The songs of Maa Mayilai

The Man From Madras Musings (MM) July 1st, Randor Guy, Dr. Nanditha Krishna and others interested in bringing out a book on Mylapore might be interested in the following information.

Many puranams were written several thousand years B.C. Of these, 18 *Maha Puranas* are important. Amongst these earliest ones, the *Brahmandapuranam* is one in which Mayilai Nagar has been mentioned. Ten chapters are devoted to Brindarany Kshetram wherein Mayilai Nagar as Mayura Nagaram has been described in detail. According to this, the boundaries of Mayura Nagaram are:

- the present Fort St. George in the north
- the Bay of Bengal in the east; and
- Eakkaduthangal (Saidapet) in the west.

Thus, Mayura Nagaram encompasses Tiruvallikkeni, Mylapore, Royapettah, Gowda Math, Saidapet, etc. Each and every part of Triplicane and Mylapore are described in detail in the *Brahmandapuranam*. A harbour also existed and overseas business was conducted through it perhaps in the fashion of Poompuhar. A detailed underwater study off the coast may confirm this.

There is a road by name Mayilapooran Street opposite Gowda Math even today. The origin and background of this may be probed further.

The puranam also describes a few ponds — one is the present Triplicane temple tank, the second was the Aaratha Kuttai, which existed till 1946, gradually got reduced in size and now has become the Nageswara Rao Park, the third is the Sri Kapaleswarar temple tank, and the fourth is the Sukrakulam aka Chitrakulam.

The puranams narrate that Sukracharya was the Rajaguru of King Bali, who performed a great

yagna and penance to achieve Indra's position. To prevent this, Lord Vishnu took Vamana Avatar and approached the place of the yagasala. King Bali welcomed Vamana and promised to fulfil his wishes. Lord Vamana asked for a three foot place from the king and the king wanted to fulfil his promise religiously.

In the process of stopping this, Sukracharya lost one of his eyes. To restore his lost eye, Sukracharya came to Mayilai Nagar and performed penance under a tree on the banks of a tank. Pleased with his penance, Lord Siva came along with the Lords Vishnu and Brahma and restored Sukra's eye-sight. The tank thereafter became known as Sukrakulam. At the request of Sukracharya, Lord Siva stayed on in Mayilai and was known as Velleeswarar (Velli refers to Friday or Sukravaram — Sukracharya the Lord of Friday. Even today, on the eighth day of the annual ten-day festival of Sri Velleeswarar of South Mada Street, this episode is re-enacted on the banks of the Chitrakulam.

Lord Krishna, after the great war of the *Mahabharata*, came down to the South, selected Tiru Allikkeni and sought the permission of the presiding deity, Lord Narasimha (Alagiya-singar) to take rest there as Lord Parthasarathy. This has been narrated in the 5th and 6th Centuries AD by the *Vaishnavite Alwars*. Of the first Alwar-trio, Sri Peyalwar was born near a lotus pond (allikeni) by the Parthasarathy temple. He had a big garden (Nandavanam) and used to offer *tulasi* leaves, flowers and garlands to Lord Parthasarathy and Narasimha daily. He sang Tamil hymns (*prabandhams*) in praise of the gods. In the eleventh poem of the third *Thiruvandadi*, Tiruvallikkeni has been mentioned. One of his disciples (*sishya*) by name baktisarar, later known as Thirumazhisai Alwar, in the 35th poem of the *Nan-*

mugan Thiruvandadi refers to Mayilai as Maa Mayilai, i.e. big Mayilai. From these *prabandhams* it may be deduced that Thiruvallikkeni was part of Mayilai Nagaram.

Subsequent to this, the great warrior-turned Vishnu bhakta Kaliyan alias Thirumangai Alwar (8th Century AD) devoted ten poems in the Chapter 2(3) of his *Thirumozhi* to describe Mayilai, Tiruvallikkeni and Lord Parthasarathy. In each of the poems the words Thiruvallikkeni and Mayilai appear, further confirming the existence of Maa Mayilai during this period.

Some of the greatness of Mayilai is given in the *Sthalapuranam* published by the Sri Kapaleswarar Temple Devasathanam. According to this, Lord Rama, along with Lakshmana, worshipped Sri Kapaleswarar while on his way to Sri Lanka. Thirugana Sambandar brought back to life the dead Enbai from the bones collected and preserved by her father Sivanesa Chettiar in Mayilai. He describes Mayilai as Maa Mayilai in his ten poems on Poompavai's *Thirupathigam*. Apart from Thirugana Sambandar, Thirunavukkarasu and Sekizhar have also sung in praise of Kapali and Karpagambal of Tirumayilai.

One of the 63 Nayanmar, Sri Vayilar, was born and lived in Mayilai. Thatchi Arunachala Mudaliar describes Mayilai as Viri Porzhil Thiru Mayilai in ten poems in his *Sri Karpaga-valli Ammai Pathigam*.

I am sure the above information may be useful to interested people and may be included in the proposed book on Mylapore apart from memories of the past 500 years.

K. Sampath
3, Karthik Flats
13, Nallappan Street
Mylapore
Chennai 600 004.

but for some of his daring and controversial actions during his life time.

How can the old timers forget about his declaration of Travancore as a separate nation?

S. Raghavan
Ranga Flats (1st Floor)
33, Gangai Amman Koil Street
Valasaravakkam
Chennai 600 087.

Helping pedestrians

'Some answers to our traffic users' written by B. Rabin-drath (MM, July 1st) deserve the attention of higher-ups in our government.

May they also consider the following suggestions:

The Mahalingapuram intersection near IOB and the road leading to Ayyappan Temple and Kamdar Nagar is a dangerous, accident-prone spot. Although a traffic policeman is stationed there between 8.30 and 10.30 a.m. and 5 to 7 p.m., he is not in a position to control the traffic.

I suggest that an automatic signal, manned by pedestrians, be considered at this junction. As in Singapore, pedestrians who cross may operate the signal which, after a few minutes, will get switched off automatically. The signals should be East West.

A similar installation would also help at the pedestrian crossing on Venkatnarayana Road near TT Devasthanam. TTD authorities can sponsor the installation here.

K. Ramanathan
Vice President
Kamdar Nagar Civic Exnora
62, Kamdar Nagar
Chennai 600 034.

Ecology and demolition

The ecology of a building site is disturbed as soon as the site is cleared of vegetation. As the building comes up, the ecology will change and will stabilise only after the completion of the building. The debris of the demolition will also cause pollution and by doing so the

site will not regain its initial ecology.

The quarrying of raw materials for the construction as well as the manufacture of different inputs will affect the ecology of the places where the processes are taking place.

The building bylaws are not concerned with the ecology. They have been formulated for the convenience of the inhabitants regarding ventilation, public health point of view etc.

During the construction of the building the natural resources in the form of materials, ecological cost, manpower etc. are consumed.

The building bylaws need to be enforced before the commencement and during construction and not after construction.

S.N. Mahalingam
Chartered Engineer
P.No.64-A, S.B. Colony II Street
(Kalamegam St., Extn.)
Kamarajapuram
Chennai 600 073.

Will Kerala beat T.N. to heritage legislation?

Is Tamil Nadu, which was the first state to look at a heritage acts to be left behind by other States? Kerala hopes to become the first Indian State to introduce heritage laws to apply across the entire state.

For those who have lamented the steady destruction of Kerala's beautiful wooden houses and the general lack of care displayed towards sensitive heritage zones, hope is in sight with Kerala's plans to introduce a heritage act in the state.

that film shooting was disallowed from then on.

It is encouraging to note that even though the master plan for the heritage legislation will be ready in just six months, certain curbs are to be introduced in sensitive zones with immediate effect. For instance, no high rise construction is to be permitted in the vicinity of the Mangalavaram bird sanctuary that lies in the heart of Ernakulam. Developers have been told to submit designs that

● by Kavitha Milner

The Government of Kerala has allowed itself six months in which to frame and enact the legislation and to identify heritage sites and structures which require government protection. The act will come into existence not a moment too soon; there has been much heritage vandalism in Kerala in recent years. The insensitivity of government officials led to a triple-arched gateway in Thiruvananthapuram Fort being pulled down in order to widen a road. They also allowed films to be shot inside the Padmanabhapuram Palace. During one such shoot, the film unit broke an 18th Century granite couch into three pieces. Several antique Chinese jars were also broken in the palace. It was only because of violent objections by pro-heritage people

are in harmony with the local landscape.

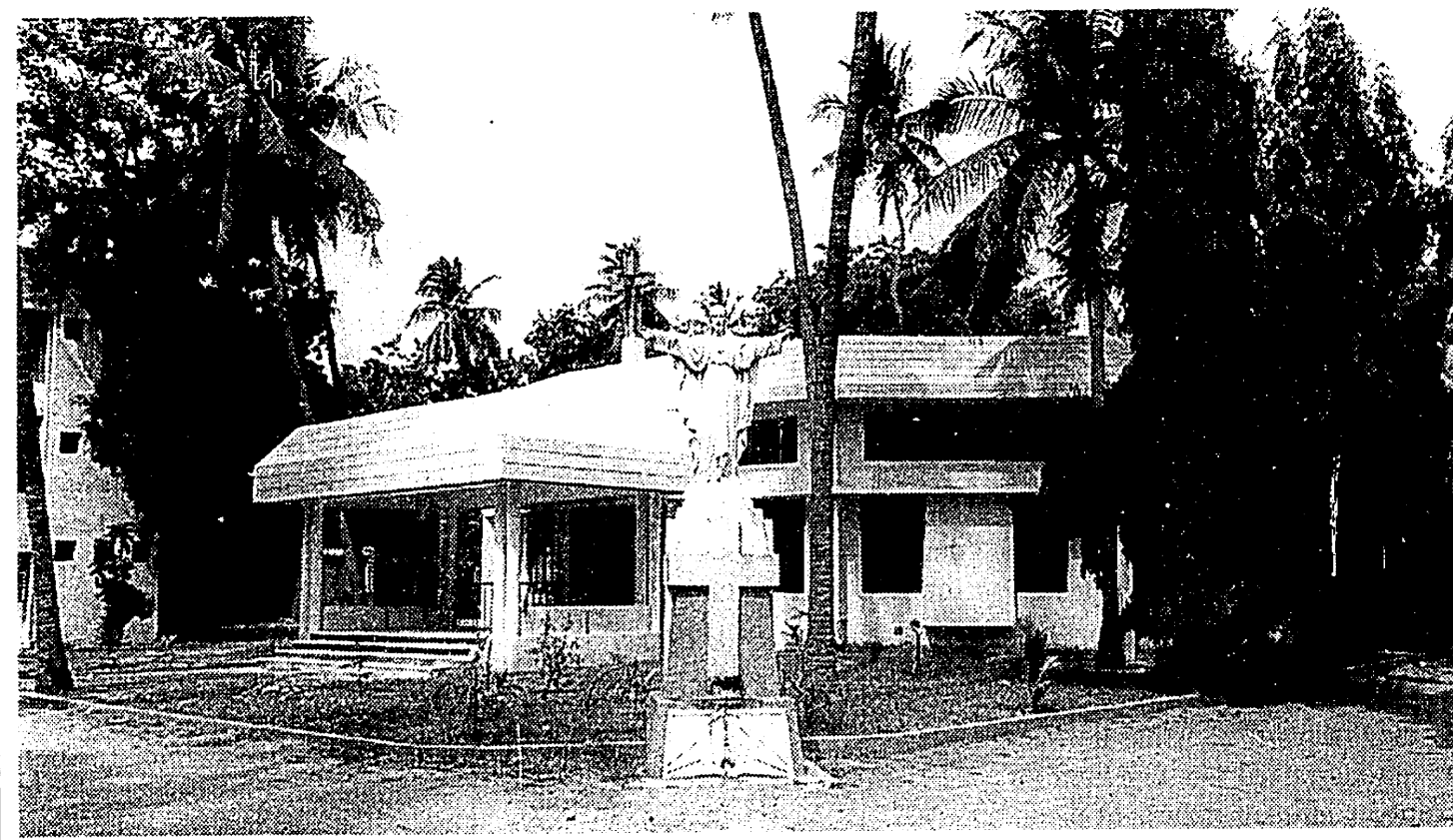
This has sent out the message that the authorities are keen on protecting both the natural and cultural sites in the area. How successfully the Act will be implemented remains to be seen, needless to say, but there is no denying that it is a big step forward in the right direction in a country which has so far only had heritage regulations at the individual city level in only a few cities and that too rather ineffectually.

Today, there are only 84 sites and structures in Kerala which are under the protection of the State Archaeology Department, and about 40 under that of the Archaeological Survey of India. In effect, the majority of Kerala's heritage sites require protection — and



Destruction of heritage in Chennai is not confined only to those who do not know any better or who have no sense of history. In the last couple of years, the Roman Catholic Church, said to be one of the most learned institutions in the world, has been as guilty of such destruction as any other authority in the City/State. Two churches, part of the early fabric of Madras and an important part of its history, have been destroyed in the last few years — destruction carried out almost stealthily with no discussion with public, parish or heritage organisations. The Portuguese Street Church in George Town was pulled down first and a bit of tasteless construction raised in its place. Even more unimaginative construction is our

NEW this fortnight which has taken the place of the OLD on Madras Church Road, San Thomé. That OLD (above), which was pulled down almost overnight in 1997, was an even more historic church than the one in George Town. In fact, Madras could well have owed its name to it. The beginnings of the OLD were in a shed of worship in a five-acre wooded grove and this shed was converted into a church by the Madeiros family (the Madras) and consecrated in 1576. The Church of the Mother of God (Madre de Deus — Mae de Deus), Jesuit associated from 1587, was restored, expanded and refurbished by the French in 1748. That was the OLD in Dhyanu Ashram that was pulled down to make for the NEW, an eminently forgettable bit of architecture. Within are granite flooring and plastic moulded chairs; mercifully, the ancient altar with its wooden embellishments remained. (Text and photograph by RAJIND N. CHRISTY.)



urgently — before any more traditional timber houses and incomparable waterfronts disappear for good.

With the proposed act in place, the distinctive, wood anchored Chinese fishing nets of Kochi and the agharams of Ernakulam stand a much better chance of surviving into the next century.

Lists of sites and structures requiring protection are to be drawn up in the next few months with the help of the local people, who will also, through the gram panchayats,

be responsible for implementing the provisions of the act. Once these lists are drawn up, they will be reviewed or ratified by heritage experts or organisations such as INTACH. In fact, these experts will be consulted throughout the listing process, as local people tend to overlook a number of buildings and precincts of prime heritage value while considering only monumental structures.

Want to muse with MUSINGS?

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 Greames 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.

● *Ponniyin Selvan* to mark Kalki centenary

Short of funds, but they play on

They still haven't found the full funding for their epic presentation of *Ponniyin Selvan*, but 'Magic Lantern' did not want their much-rehearsed 55-member cast to lose interest while waiting for manna from donors, so they decided to go ahead with this epic celebration of the birth centenary of 'Kalki'. And so it will be on with the play in Chennai in August — and if the funds roll in this *avant garde* presentation will be taken to the streets of Tamil Nadu.

This is the first time that *Ponniyin Selvan* is being performed in any form.

R. Krishnamoorthy, born in Puthamangalam, Thanjavur District, joined the freedom movement in 1921 and was jailed several times by the British. It was during his first imprisonment that Krishnamoorthy started his writing. In 1923, he joined *Navasakthi*, an important Tamil magazine of the era run by the freedom fighter Thiru Vi Ka. His first book, *Saradaiyin Tamram* was published in 1927, a year before he left *Navasakthi* and assumed the pen name 'Kalki'. Soon he began working in close co-operation with Rajaji and was again imprisoned in 1930. The next year he became the editor of *Ananda Vikatan*, still among the most widely read Tamil magazines.

Kalki's first serial, *Kalvanin Kadali*, started appearing in 1937, followed a couple of years later by his first screen play *Tyaga Bhoomi*, a landmark Tamil film which spoke of the freedom struggle. Soon after leaving *Ananda Vikatan* in 1941, Kalki was imprisoned for the third time. Later that year he started his own magazine, *Kalki*, which has enjoyed great popularity ever since. In the



Arul Mozhi Varman aka Ponniyin Selvan

years that followed, he wrote novels such as '*Sivakamiyin Sapatham*', the dialogues and lyrics for the film *Meera* and the serial *Alai Osai*, a story based on the freedom which started appearing in 1948. In 1950 the first episode of *Ponniyin Selvan* appeared in *Kalki* and almost trebled the magazine's reader-

historical romances reveal a deep understanding and appreciation of Tamil history and culture.

Ponniyin Selvan is the last and greatest of Kalki's nine novels. The legend of *Ponniyin Selvan* became assimilated into the popular consciousness. *Ponniyin Selvan* has since then enthralled successive generations of readers and the extent of its popularity can be gauged from the fact that it continues to mesmerise people of all ages and varied backgrounds even today.

A monumental work, the story unfolds over 2328 pages. The novel was written in five parts, each part complete in itself, yet linked to the others in a seamless tapestry. It is a cleverly woven tale of historical fact and conjecture. In it Kalki takes a penetrating look at the



Kundhavi and Vanthiya Thevan in Magic Lantern's stage version of Ponniyin Selvan.

sonal gain; where duty, honour and integrity are more important than the acquisition of power. In Kalki's story, each character has his or her own dignity, there are no villains or heroes, emphasising perhaps that in this strange drama of life, circumstances make heroes or villains out of each one of us.

The story starts nearly a thousand years ago. The Chola kingdom is ridden by strife as the death of the ruling King Sundara Cholan draws near. Of his two sons, the elder, Aditya Karikalan, the crown

Treasury, is the leader of conspiracy to put Madurantakan on the throne. Pazhuvettarayar's wife, Nandini, is conspiring to eliminate Sundara Cholan and his sons with a group of Pandya assassins who are bent on avenging the death of the Pandya King Veera Pandyan at the hands of the Cholas. A counter plot is instigated by Aniruddha Brahmarayar, the Prime Minister, Sembiyan Madevi, the mother of Madurantakan, and Kundavai, the daughter of Sundara Cholan, to keep Madurantakan from ascending the throne. However, the people's choice for king is Ponniyin Selvan, who is revered for his humility, magnanimity, and prowess as a warrior.

The novel's climax is marked by vivid images — the mysterious murder of Aditya Karikalan, the ritual suicide of Pazhuvettarayar and the crowning of Madurantakan as Uttama Cholan. *Ponniyin Selvan's* heroism in sacrificing his claims to the throne in the greater interests of peace and order finally restores stability to the Chola kingdom.

In exposing the political motives of the rulers and revealing the effect these have on the ruled, *Ponniyin Selvan* has an amazingly contemporary flavour. There is a universality to its characters and situations that makes us see our present political scenario reflected in it. However, its unshakeable optimism, idealism and emphasis on the values of truth, fairplay and honour force us to take a searching look at ourselves and examine those values that perpetuate a system based on the shameless pursuit of power through the denial of justice and the subjugation of the powerless. In Kalki's characters we see our shadows, on the surface sting yet weak within; subscribing to the blind faith yet wavering in our personal beliefs; dominating yet misguided by the powerful; idealistic yet willing to sacrifice our honour at the altar of power, fame or recognition.

August 6th Premiere

To mark the centenary year of 'Kalki' R. Krishnamoorthy, Magic Lantern is bringing to life some of the best loved characters of Tamil legend and history. Kalki's epic novel *Ponniyin Selvan* will be performed as an open air spectacle for the first time. The play will be a gift to the people of Tamil Nadu and the millions of die-hard *Ponniyin Selvan* fans. The performance will premiere at the amphitheatre of the Y.M.C.A. College of Physical Education, Nandanam on August 6th and will be staged on the 7th and 8th

as well. Donor passes are available at the Alliance Francaise.

The Magic Lantern Trust comprises trained actors, dancers and artists who have a combined experience of more than one hundred productions in classical and contemporary theatre and dance — including work with established companies like the 'Koothu-pattarai' and the Chandralekha group.

Magic Lantern was started in 1993 and registered as a Trust in 1998. Its objectives are to stage, promote and support theatre arts and artists. Its endeavour has al-

ways been to take theatre to the people. Towards this, the group has brought different kinds of theatre, involving traditional and contemporary styles, to a wide cross-section of the audience.

Magic Lantern's activities over the last five years have included seven stage plays, creating puppets for stage and television, set design, a radio play, readings of popular works in schools, sponsorship of visual and plastic arts/artists, and lighting design for a number of productions.

ship. The serial novel ran on till mid-1953. Kalki died in 1954.

Kalki's popularity as a novelist is unrivalled in Tamil literature. His political writings, stories, essays and critiques have captured the popular imagination over the years. His

political imperatives of the Chola period, the emergence of power brokers and their use of intrigue and manipulation to further their interests. In the midst of such turbulence runs a strong idealistic vein, where loyalty matters more than per-

prince, is in Kanchipuram building a golden palace, hoping his father will come and stay with him. The younger son, Arul Mozhi Varman, also known as 'Ponniyin Selvan' (this name comes from a popular myth that he was rescued from drowning by the River Kaveri herself, when still a child), is in Sri Lanka with his army quelling the rebellion there. Also waiting in the wings is Madurantaka Thevan, the king's cousin, whose father had abdicated in favour of Sundara Cholan.

The novel chronicles the journey of Vanthiya Thevan, the warrior-emissary of Aditya Karikalan. On his journey, he meets an array of characters who mirror the political and social concerns of time. Pazhuvettarayar, the Controller of

Halt to Senate House work

(Continued from Page 1)

unrealistic Government financial procedures, did the Syndicate have to stop the little progress that has been made in the last few months?

Madras Musings is certain that if the Syndicate's plans — as enunciated in the letter published on page 1 — are gone

through with, work on *Senate House* will not only be delayed but will also be done in a manner not true to heritage conservation. It's time all concerned with *Senate House* and its heritage challenged the Syndicate's proposal and brought back expertise that would ensure a model heritage job.

Meanwhile, an accounting

of all money collected and received for the restoration of *Senate House* is warranted. This money flowed into the General Fund of the University and some of it went into toilet repair — but not the toilets of *Senate House* which remain cesspools opposite the office of the University's Public Relations Officer!!

Kerala's vanishing heritage

(By A Staff Reporter)

Among Kerala's heritage structures, traditional timber houses are disappearing at the rate of ten a day, according to heritage activist Radha Shekhar, convener of INTACH's Thiruvananthapuram chapter. These wooden houses — tennon and mortise constructions that do not have a single nail in them — are so ingeniously designed that they can be dismantled and re-assembled without great difficulty.

Purists frown at the fact that these houses have been plucked out of their original environment and replanted elsewhere, but heritage buffs draw consolation from the fact that these

houses still exist as houses and have not been chopped into bits of furniture. Moreover, they still stand within the sylvan confines of Kerala...

In Colachel (Tamil Nadu) a monumental pillar, which marks the site where the then Maharaja of Travancore defeated the Dutch in 1741, is being used as a cricket wicket by local boys.

A couple of old synagogues in Cochin, including the Black Synagogue, have been demolished in the last decade. And though the White Synagogue still stands, it is neither listed nor protected.

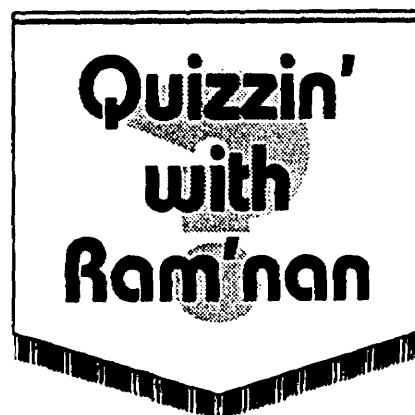
The trustees of the 400-year-old Cheruman Mosque, the old-

est Islamic shrine in Kerala, have built a garish new building right next to it...

In many towns and in the backwaters, the bungalow-scapes that were in harmony with the natural surroundings are now giving way to jarring cement-concrete structures...

Some fisherfolk have started to anchor the Chinese fishing nets in cement posts rather than in wooden ones, which are expensive.

Requests to Government to provide them with wood at a subsidised cost to help maintain the original character of the contraption, has been made.



(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period July 1 to 15th. Of them questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai and questions 13 to 20 to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Whom did the Indian duo of Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi beat to claim the doubles crown at Wimbledon on July 4th?
2. What rare species of lion, abandoned in a circus, was rediscovered recently?
3. Name the eminent author, creator of the Corleone family in fiction, who passed away recently.
4. One of the most viewed and respected symbols of America was removed from the endangered list in that country recently. What?
5. Name the main assault party which captured Tiger Hill on July 4th.
6. Name the rogue trader, instrumental in bringing down one of the biggest banks in 1995, who got his freedom recently.
7. The diamond jubilee of which famous movement which started in Madurai on July 8, 1939 was observed recently?
8. Name the stylish batsman of yesteryears and doyen of Hyderabad cricket who passed away recently.
9. Name the popular actor nicknamed 'Jubilee Kumar' who died recently.

* * *

10. What FM radio programme to aid commuters was relaunched on July 1st?
 11. Which Chennai-based person was one of the four winners of the first U.N. Vienna Civil Society Award instituted to honour outstanding contributions to fighting global crime and drug abuse?
 12. Which noble institution in Chennai got back its old and prestigious name after a concerted effort by many concerned?
- * * *
13. Which shrine has Siva in his manifestation of Fire?
 14. What distinction do Tamil Nadu cricketers Balu Alagann and S. Vasudevan hold?
 15. Where would you find the Marmalong Bridge in Chennai?
 16. After whom is Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) named?
 17. Which famous Vaishnavite teacher was born in Sriperumbudur?
 18. Which literary work deals with the story of Kannagi?
 19. In the days of the Raj, which delicacy was called 'hoppers'?
 20. After whom is the main observatory at Kavalur named?

(Answers on Page 8)

A dancer to remember

For as long as Indian dance stays alive, Indrani Rahman will live on, and for as long as the world appreciates beauty through the dance, Indrani's achievements in the world of dance will shine like a beacon of light. Her dancing and her beauty have been lauded throughout the world. Her life, career and accomplishments deserve detailed documentation and analysis. But here, I would like to focus on the wonderful human being that Indrani was.

Indrani and I met in 1949 in Madras at the School of Arts where I lived, and of which institution my father, the late D.P. Roy Chowdhury, was the principal. With rapport between us developing instantly, it was the beginning of a long and enduring friendship that lasted till she passed away.

She knew that I was studying Kathakali with Guru Gopinath at the time but she kept insisting that I study Bharata Natyam as well... Since I was not sure what I wanted to do, she went to my mother and spoke to her, and within a few days had convinced me that I should definitely study with Chokkalingam Pillai, her guru. I did study with him but found his style too rigid, and later studied with Kanchipuram Ellappa.

Indrani and I would have long discussions about dance and dancers over cups of tea or glasses of lemonade in the School of Arts garden. She was always trying to find ways and means to help those dancers who were less fortunate. A case in point: some years later, when I became a choreographer for dances in the movies, she decided that film dancers were grossly exploited by producers and decided to call a meeting of many of the dancers, so they could form a union, such as we have in the United States. We met at Guru Gopinath's home. Her mother, Ragini Devi, and Guru Gopinath had danced together and she therefore enjoyed a good social relationship with him. It was a valiant attempt on her part, but unfortunately most of the film dancers, too scared of losing their jobs, did not want to stand up against the powerful producers. So, not much came of that meeting.

Time passed, and Indrani went on to study Kuchipudi and later, Odissi and Mohini Attam, and I went on with my dance company and performance.

ances. Periodically we would see each other's shows if they were in Madras. I remember taking my entire company to see her perform at the Museum Theatre. It was a thrilling experience for all of us. I greatly admired her *angasuddham* in the Bharata Natyam *adavu-s*. Her *abhinaya* was exquisite. Her *tillana* was mind-blowing. It was perfection!

Indrani in turn saw me and my company perform at Raj Bhavan for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. She was always honest with me. She praised my dancing to the skies, but was a little less than happy with my costumes. "Bhaskar, you should tone it down," she said. I wish I had listened to her then for, later, Martha Graham, as well as some New York critics, would reiterate what Indrani had said. Another one of Indrani's traits: she was honest and blunt to a fault, if she thought her honesty would help someone. She was also very protective of her friends and those whom she liked. I have seen her change from the

of India. And thanks to her, Odissi found a home in the U.S.

She had many adventures during her many tours of the U.S. Once, when she and her troupe were travelling in the South, they were refused service in restaurants because they were dark. Indrani took it as a challenge and threatened to cancel the rest of the tour. The U.S. Government did not

● One of India's greatest classical dancers died earlier this year, hardly remembered in this city where she had learnt her art and performed frequently. Madras Musings offers this belated tribute to her — from yet another who graduated to the world's stage from this city.

want an international scandal and publicly apologised to Indrani. Subsequently she performed for President John F. Kennedy at the White House...

● by Bhaskar Roy Chowdhury

gentle, beautiful woman that she was, to a tigress with eyes flashing fire, because someone had made the mistake of saying something uncomplimentary about one of her friends. I thanked my lucky stars that I was her friend!

In 1955 I left for America to study Modern Dance, and eventually formed my all-American dance company and settled in New York city. Indrani got married to Habib Rahman, and had two wonderful children.

For a few years we lost touch with each other, and then one day, when I was returning to New York after a six-month tour of South Africa, I saw a familiar face on the plane. There could be only one person who could look that beautiful and poised seated in a crowded plane. Of course, it was Indrani! It was a joyous reunion. For the rest of the trip we filled each other in on all that we had been doing during the preceding few years. She had fallen in love with Odissi and was determined to promote that dance-form throughout the world. She and her company were on a U.S. tour sponsored by the Government

In the later years, a dark cloud enveloped Indrani when her husband fell from a building and broke his spine. Doctors did not expect him to walk again. Indrani nursed him back to almost complete health, staying at the hospital 24 hours a day; she was called 'Seeta' by the hospital staff. She was that devoted to him.

After much debate, and some persuasion from her family in New York, which now included daughter Sukanya, Sukanya's American husband Frank Wicks, her two grandchildren, and her son Ram Rahman, and yours truly, who had by now become almost family, Indrani moved to New York. She found a cosy apartment and from there worked tirelessly promoting talented Indian dancers. A few who performed on New York stages due to her were Leela Raja, Ramli Ibrahim, Raja and Radha Reddy. Later her husband joined her in New York.

When I fell off the stage and broke my back and was at the Rusk Rehabilitation Institute for seven months, Indrani was there whenever she could find time, helping to make my life a



Indrani Rahman, one of the 'greats'.

little more comfortable. Since she had helped her husband recover from a similar accident in India, she knew the do's and don't's of what to do with a victim with a spinal cord injury. Unfortunately, in my case, the injuries were too severe and I became a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair to this day. Indrani and Habib became constant visitors to my fourth floor walk-up apartment after I got home, and many a wonderful time we had. It was a common remark among our mutual friends: "Get Indrani and Bhaskar started, and no one can get in a word edgewise." I must admit we did talk a lot.

A helping hand to controversy

It is such a pleasure to be back with "A View from the Wings" in Madras Musings. I missed it so much, when work made me take a holiday from the column.

Viewing the art world from the wings has its pains and pleasures. While there is pleasure in the proximity to the artists and art forms, there is often pain in getting too involved. As in a recent controversy in the Tamil theatre world.

'Voicing Silence' is a theatre group that was founded to help the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Tarmani present issues pertaining to women. Mina Swaminathan, ever enthusiastic about issues concerning children, women and rural folk, had asked Mangai to direct the project. The group presented plays on issues like female infanticide in areas known for the practice and encouraged the audience to voice opinions on the issues.

Voicing Silence's latest play was *Avvai*, a new look at the saint poet *Avvaiyar*. Author Inquilab discusses many *Avaiyars* in it, from the traditional old woman favoured by a patriarchal society to the *Avvai* from the Sangam literature period who broke patriarchal rules and loved life.

The group was on its way to Trichy for a presentation of *Avvai* when the minibus belonging to the Foundation in which they were travelling col-

lided with a stationary truck. Many of the actors suffered injuries, and all were dazed by shock. Archana, a young Bharata Natyam dancer, however, kept her cool and got them all to the nearest hospital.



A Christian priest running an organisation for the welfare of landless labourers gave them a spontaneous donation and helped them in the hospital. The M.S. Swaminathan Foundation looked after the initial medical expenses of the 12 injured.

J. Amaidi Arasu, one of the actors, however, was seriously injured and needed several surgeries followed by prolonged treatment. As the foundation could not help with the funds for this, a fund-raising campaign for his treatment was launched by Mangai. She, her husband Dr. Arasu, Mina Swaminathan and others went around with a begging bowl. They received small and large donations, the others put up street plays and collected small change. And Apollo Hospital waived the hospital charges in view of the fact that the injured

actor was a research fellow of the Tamil Department of the University of Madras and had few resources.

The money collected was enough to pay for the essential treatment. Amaidi Arasu needed and to get him rental accommodation in Palavakkam for the period he needed to recuperate. His family moved from their village to care for him and some of his University friends also stayed with him. The money collected also enabled telephone and television facilities to be made available to him.

Once, he had recovered, there was a suggestion that the remaining money be made into a trust for the needy in the theatre. Others however, demanded that the remaining money be given to Amaidi Arasu. The dispute turned ugly, particularly with a caste element introduced in it through anonymous notices.

Money, all of us know, can make and break friendships. While we can rejoice over the fact that many people did rise to the occasion and offer help when it was needed, the question of the security and safety of freelance artists also needs to be considered. And we need to look at how funds collected from the public are administered and distributed. It is a thought which strikes me about the Kargil collections too.



Mrs YGP's surprise

The annual day celebrations of the Padma Seshadri School has always sprung a surprise. Mrs. Y.G. Parthasarathy has vast human resources and she uses them to the great advantage of the school. Professional musicians, recording studios, costumes, producers, lyricists, dancers and many others help her. So the School's annual day puts thousands of children on the stage and has all their dialogue recorded earlier to free them from the use of microphones on stage. There is free movement all around and the children give of their best, performing like professionals themselves.

The surprise at the annual day this year was the indomitable Mrs. Y.G.P. appearing on the stage in the role of *Avvai* (on right in picture). Wearing a wig and emoting to the songs of K.B. Sundarambal, she caused quite a sensation. The young *Muruga* on stage with her, a student, was quite unfazed and played his role quite uninhibitedly.

Tank study

(Continued from Page 1)

and benefit from the participation of the users.

As a first step, a proper study and documentation of the area is to be undertaken. This study phase will be for a duration of 10 weeks and will be handled by two groups one focussing on the physical and the other the anthropological. This will culminate in an overall plan for the temple precincts and specific projects for implementation will be identified. The total cost of this study phase would be Rs. 75,000.

Physical component

● The issues in terms of buildings and tank restoration, activ-

ity reorganisation with respect to movement and spatial configuration, accessibility to tanks and other spaces and environmental linkages will be identified. The study and proposals will be presented in the form of drawings done to suitable scale, photographs and three dimensional drawings. The report will culminate in a larger urban recovery plan, and in it specific implementable projects will be identified.

Anthropological component

● The study will collect information on commercial, religious and recreational activities. An interview schedule/questionnaire would be used to collect information from shop owners and vendors. Specifically the study would look at the permanency of the structures put up, tenancy, span of their existence, whether owners/vendors are migrant or local, number of persons working in shops, hours of business etc. A separate questionnaire would be used to collect information from others who use this urban space for religious, recreational and other activities. Here the emphasis would be on purpose, duration (daily/weekly), perception of the conditions of the space, constraints etc. Key informant interviewing would be used, apart from other aspects, to reconstruct the usage pattern of this urban space during the past 50 years, the gradual development, crowding, congestion etc.

Observation and visual documentation (photographs) would also be utilised to study space usage — space in front of eastern entrance, vegetable shops along the temple tank and side roads. The data collected would bring out daily, weekly and seasonal variations in usage pattern.

— MMM

MORE BUSINESS BRIEFS

(Continued from Page 2)

Shriram Group, MMM hears. Teaming with a Malaysian promoter and Ceylinco, the major private player in insurance in Sri Lanka, Shriram plans to set up management institutes in Chennai and Colombo which will interact with their partner's schools in Malaysia which have several UK tie-ups. And this, MMM thinks, is just the beginning.

★ The Park Sheraton, being extensively renovated, is in the process of getting an incongruously pedimented car porch totally out of proportion to the rest of the building. "No comment", says Chairman T.T. Vasu, who in the early 70s had got the project started as the Adyar Gate Hotel, a dream before its time. The *Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to read "an estimate" of Vasu in the *Industrial Economist*

recently, on the occasion of his "retirement from TTK & Co. on 30 June". The TTK Group owes its growth to eldest brother T.T. Narasimhan, who dreamed the dreams of a visionary and envisioned the age of consumerism in India fifty years ago, and T.T. Vasu, the youngest brother, who implemented those dreams and set up the factories that were needed to make those dreams come true. One of those factories set up in the Fifties and Sixties was that of the London Rubber Company, the first condom-manufacturing unit in India. Vasu's impish sense of humour MADE the *Industrial Economist* story when he recalled his problems in setting up LRC; "The Finance Minister (TTK) was a widower, the Health Minister Dr. Sushila Nayyar was a spinster and the Planning Minister Dr. Ashok Mehta was a bachelor. How was one to impress on

them the imperative for a condom project?" LRC is now TTK-LIG and is the largest condom manufacturing unit in India and one of the largest in the world.

★ The Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Pact is still to gather the steam that had been anticipated when it was agreed on. As *The Man From Madras Musings* had pointed out in this column some time ago, India changing its mind on tea, rubber and garment imports had something to do with the slowdown. More confident of business between the two countries growing is the Hatton National Bank, Sri Lanka's biggest private bank. The Bank recently opened an Overseas Representative Office in Chennai — entirely to handle commercial activities — and at the opening MMM was told that an application for a banking licence would be made to the RBI very shortly.

The Hatton Bank, a century-and-more old British Bank in the Island's tea-covered highlands became Sri Lanka owned about 40 years ago. Since then it has taken over the business of Chennai-supervised National Grindlays Bank and the Mercantile (once, of India) Bank. Narrating this was Rienze T. Wijetilleke, Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Bank. More interestingly, sports journalists in Chennai missed an opportunity, for Wijetilleke is the Chairman of the interim committee looking after Sri Lanka's cricket affairs while the Board of Control's affairs are in court. He has appointed five subcommittees to study various aspects of what's gone wrong with Sri Lanka cricket in the last couple of years, MMM was told, and action on their reports should help improve matters.



Till 22nd August: Artist of the Month: Kota

This is Kota's first one-man show in India even though his works have been featured in group shows before in India and he had a solo exhibition in Austria. Kota was born in 1962 in Madras and holds a diploma in visual communication; he specialises in black and white and learnt the technique from an American photographer, Craig Theisen. He has worked with the Integration Forum Vienna on various projects on racial harmony and other public service campaigns. All the works shown here were shot in Vienna and two of them, 'You are blond, you are OK' and 'You have a tan, you look gorgeous' were exhib-



Kota

ited as part of the Integration Forum's project. Kota is currently working with an advertising agency in Chennai.

August 6: MTC Productions and The Madras Players present the Premiere of Mahesh Dattani's *Seven Steps Around the Fire* commissioned by BBC Radio 4. *Seven Steps* is a murder mystery 'whodunnit' which

proved to be so popular that BBC has asked for a sequel! The stage version has been adapted designed and directed by Mithran Devanesen. (Not recommended for persons below 16 years).

The Arangham Dance group will also premier on the same occasion a new work titled *Ta-Ki-Ta-Tease*, choreographed by Anita Ratnam. Donar tickets are available at Landmark, Red-E-Food Court, and at the venue. Proceeds from the evening go to the Kargil Relief Fund. Also on sales will be various marks of art and sculpture. (At 6.30 p.m., at the Museum Theatre).

August 10: The new sufferings of Young Werther (colour video, 6.50 p.m., Max Mueller Bhavan).

Ulrich Plenzdorf's novel became one of the most talked about works ever published in the former GDR. It is a worthy companion to the classic it parodies and parallels, Goethe's *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, which made its author famous overnight. This programme is part of the 250th birth anniversary celebration of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

August 20: 'Goethe as a Natural Scientist' by Prof. Dr. Dieter Beck, 5.30 p.m. Max Mueller Bhavan. Goethe's interest in nature and his pre-occupation with the Natural Sciences were manifold. His scientific activities were in the fields of Mineralogy, Geology, Botany, Comparative Colour-Theory, Anatomy, Morphology and Meteorology.

The lecture by Dr. Beck will be followed by the film "The light, the darkness and the colours." Light and darkness, for Goethe, are inseparable: only their interplay create the colours.

Pointing the way to sportsmanship

Whatever happened to sportsmanship? In the Australia versus West Indies match in the Cricket World Cup, Australia deliberately played slowly (in the process, inviting boos from the audience) to try and help the West Indies increase its net run rate and, thereby, get into the Super Six at the expense of New Zealand. Without any compunction, the Australian captain said, "We're here to win". Perhaps what was left unsaid was 'by hook or by crook'. To make the situation worse, the New Zealand captain said, "(If we were in their position) we'd probably do the same!" That New Zealand had the last laugh is another matter.

This phenomenon of not putting forth one's best (so as to 'dilute' the margin of victory or simply throwing away matches) is not confined to cricket alone. In the Football World Cup, team A will deliberately lose to B so that C is denied a berth in the next stage. This phenomenon can be observed only when matches are played on a round robin basis. In a knock-out tournament (like Wimbledon) if you lose one match, you can contact your travel agent to take the next-flight home.

It should be remembered that just as we have 'letter of the law' and 'spirit of the law', so do we have 'rules of the game' and the 'spirit of sportsmanship'. In both cases, the latter takes precedence over the former.

Another problem can arise in round robin tournaments — an anomalous situation that occurs not infrequently. This happens when say, team A beats B, B beats C and C beats A making it

difficult to rank the three. In the World Cup, this occurred in both Groups, with three teams scoring six points each tying for the second place. However only two can make it to the super six. We have to take recourse to another method of evaluation, in this case the net run rate.

It may be argued, and perhaps rightly so, that the slow playing by the Australians was not self-motivated but induced by the method of evaluation. In other words, the Australian team was not the 'culprit', the evaluation method was to ensure that teams do not intentionally play poorly and to resolve the kind of anomalous situations described above, the points system itself may be modified.

At present a team gets a uniform two points for a win, irrespective of the margin or extend or victory. Surely a win by 100 runs (the winning team batting first) or a win by eight wickets (the winning team batting second) is more creditable than a win by 20 runs or two wickets. The points awarded to the win-

ning team must reflect the nature of the victory. A variable points system like the one shown in the table below might be considered. Such a system will ensure that every team puts forth its best to get the maximum points possible.

Runs	Win by Wickets	Points
1-25	1	1.0
26-50	2-3	2.0
51-75	4-5	2.25
76-100	6-7	2.5
101+	8-10	2.75

The points system/evaluation method must bring out the best in every team in every match (be it cricket, football or any other sport). Surely such a system can be designed. If not human inequality is at stake.

Variations may also be considered. Just imagine awarding penalty points for bad behaviour — arguing with the umpire, using profanity, etc. We can be certain cricketers will turn gentlemen overnight. Now that's sportsmanship!

B. Gautham

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Paul Haarhuis and Jared Palmer; 2. The Barbaray lion; 3. Mario Puzo; 4. The Bald Eagle; 5. 18 Grenadiers; 6. Nick Leeson; 7. The Gandhian leader A. Vaidyanatha Iyer leading harijans into the Meenakshi Temple; 8. M.L. Jaisimha; 9. Rajendra Kumar

* * *

10. 'Traffic Bear', the broadcast on traffic regulations; 11. Ms. Shanti Ranganathan of the T.T.

Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation; 12. Madras Medical College

* * *

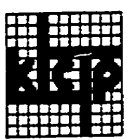
13. Tiruvannamalai; 14. The only two to lead Tamil Nadu to victory in the Ranji Trophy tournaments; 15. Saidapet; 16. Mamalla Narasimhavarman, the Pallava king; 17. Sri Ramanuja; 18. Silapadhikaaram; 19. Aappams; 20. Vainu Bappu.



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