

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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## A cleaner Chennai in 2000?

*Corporation to privatise part of clean-up*

(By A Staff Reporter)

### Landmarks of the City

With the printer's devil at work, there were two major omissions from INTACH's list of 'Landmark Buildings' last fortnight. The Victoria Public Hall (the Town Hall) and Raj Bhavan-Guindy Park were inadvertently dropped by him. He was also at work elsewhere: The Old Jail should have been teamed with Bharati Women's Arts College, Government House should have been supplemented with the Government Estate campus and it should have been Ice House NOT JCC House.

Apart from these, the following buildings, precincts etc are noteworthy ones among the many brought to our attention:

1. Ashley Biggs Railway Institute
2. Binny & Co offices
3. Chesney Hall
4. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court
5. Cornwallis Cupola
6. Government Press
7. Kasturba Women's Hospital
8. Kilpauk Medical College
9. King Institute
10. Madras University Examination Hall
11. Memorials at Observatory
12. Mental Hospital
13. Pachaiyappa's Hall
14. Police Commissioner's Office
15. Railway Hospital, Perambur
16. Stanley Medical College

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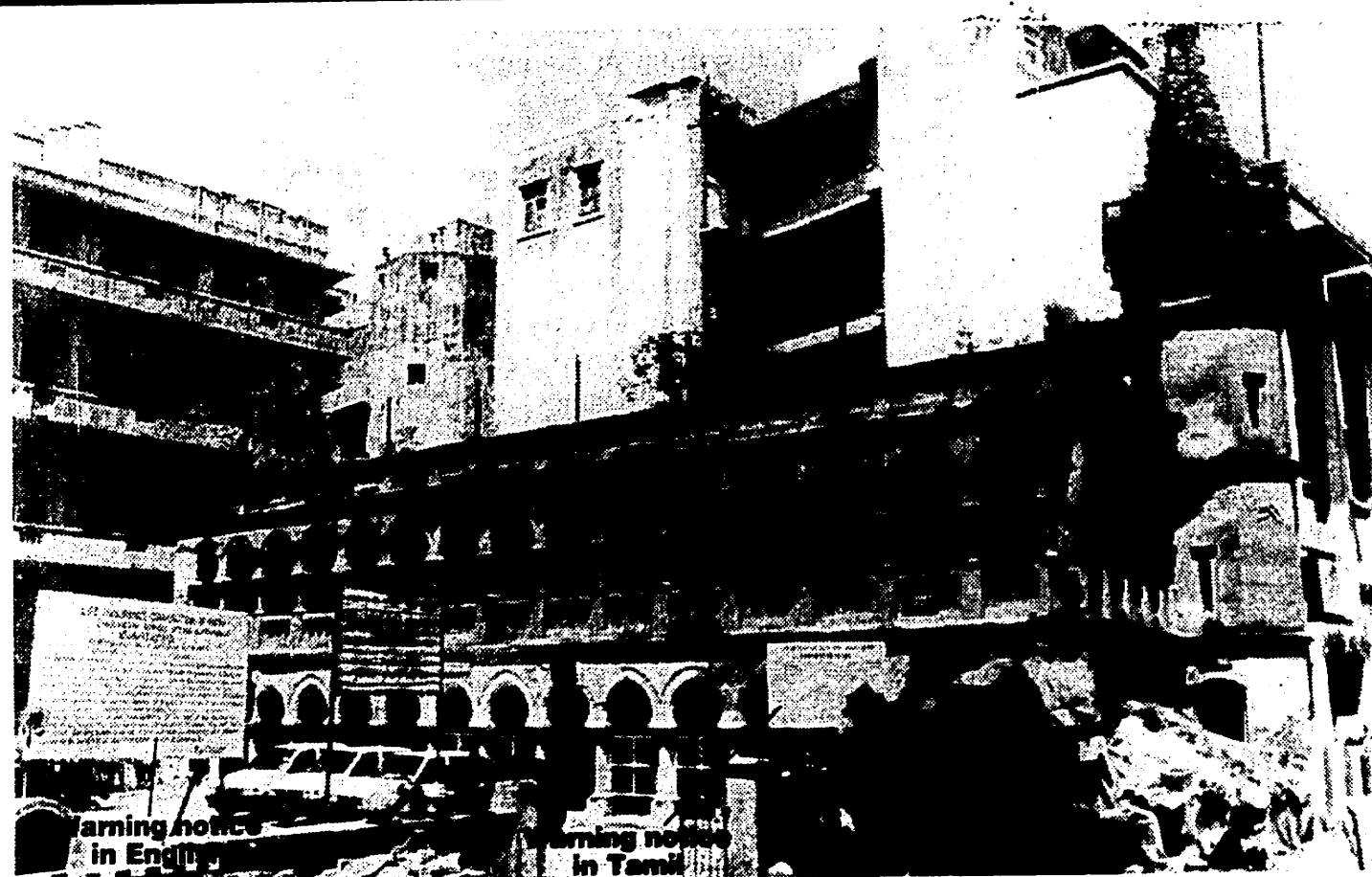
Over 50 major residential wards in the City, where about 2 million people live, are targeted for clean-up in 2000 as the consequence of a privatisation exercise for the collection and disposal of municipal solid waste, Madras Musings learns. It is understood that the Corporation will be entering into a contract for this with Singapore-based CGEA Asia Holdings Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of CGEA France which in turn is part of the \$40 billion Vivendi group, whose core business is public utilities.

CGEA's Rs.40 crore Chennai project will utilise state-of-the-art collection and compacting trucks, mechanical sweepers and over 1500 street-cleaners whose uniforms are expected to brighten the cityscape. This team will tackle about 750 km of road a day and expects to clear about 950 tonnes of garbage and 150 tonnes of construction debris during that period.

The garbage collected will be taken to a dumping site in Perungudi and will be used to generate electricity in a 15 MW power plant that Energy Development Ltd. of Australia will be setting up there.

Among the areas to benefit from this exercise will be Mylapore, Triplicane, Adyar and T'Nagar.

CGEA, which helps 4000 municipalities worldwide and handles 25 million tonnes of waste generated by 30 million people in these localities, will, through its Singapore company, enter into a seven-year



It's one of the richest organisations in the country, is the Life Insurance Corporation of India. It's also one of the biggest owners of real estate, particularly of heritage buildings. It's an organisation that could demonstrate what a model property owner's role should be and how heritage could be restored and passed on for posterity. But unless it's pushed, the LIC seldom plays this role well.

In Chennai, it's still unable to make up its mind on what to do with the Bharat Insurance Building — and even as it is mulling over that poser, it has decided to indicate to the public that it is having similar doubts over another of its buildings in Chennai. RAJIND N. CHRISTY's photograph shows the LIC's English and Tamil notices expressing similar sentiments about this building as it has in the case of the Bharat Insurance Building. The building featured here is all that is left of the original buildings of the Madras Christian College and School, which used to be located on NSC Bose Road, in those days Esplanade Road, stretching from Parry & Co. till Anderson Church which was part of the campus.

What's left of the building, now a warren of lawyers' offices, is not visible from the main road; you have to go down a way on Linghi Chetty Street to see it. Nevertheless, it is worth preserving as both early 20th Century Indo-Saracenic and as a memorial to all those who passed out from it to serve the country in a variety of distinguished capacities. Madras Musings looks forward to the old boys of the School and College leading the call to the LIC to restore the building and preserve it for posterity. (Also see Column 1 on this page.)

## A commitment to think about civic issues

(By A Staff Reporter)

Since at least a couple of readers feel we should not refer to certain types of organisations as NGOs, shall we, till they come up with a better description, call them Peoples' organisations (PO)? The newest peoples' organisation in town calls itself the Chennai Think Tank.

Its welcome features are the youth of its members — about 25 at present — its regular meetings and its intention to

discuss various issues that affect life in Chennai and speak out frankly on them. It's an approach that might be expected of the older citizenry, but here is one group of young men focussed on trying to find answers to some of the problems we face in Chennai.

Founded by Paul Prathap Jayaraj, Chennai Think Tank has a membership that is in its 20s and 30s and is composed almost entirely of professionals.

headed by former Chief Secretary T.V. Anthony, had some time ago recommended that those who litter the roads be fined. The Corporation in turn had suggested the introduction of this salutary measure to the State Government. Is this another recommendation that has been pigeon-holed?

Jayaraj himself is an HRD man in a private organisation and his fellow-members are doctors, lawyers, engineers and business executives. This wide representation has resulted in the group focussing on widely varying subjects. Their views are then conveyed to the proper authorities. They also disseminate their views in the media and hope that the media, by offering them space or time, will help to stir the authorities into remedial action.

Amongst the issues the Chennai Think Tank has recently raised are these:

- The high mark-up on certain essential medical items (200-350%) like surgical cotton and disposable syringes and needles.

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contract with the Corporation of Chennai. Renewal will be reviewed at the end of the time. If, however, the Corporation meanwhile replicates the CGEA exercise in the rest of the city, it should be able to take over the core area too in seven years.

**TAILPIECE:** An advisory committee of the Corporation,



# Whither tourism in Tamil Nadu?

'Visit India Year' (1999) didn't get Tamil Nadu tourism — or Indian tourism, for that matter — growing any further than what might in this case too be called the Hindu rate of growth. In fact, troubled Sri Lanka continues to, proportionately, do better than India. *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders why India, with all its wealth of tourist attractions, continues to lag way behind as a tourist destination.

Internal tourism in the country may be alive and kicking — though even in that area the bulk of the traffic is pilgrim traffic and not economy-building spenders — but when you talk of a tourist destination what is generally meant is a place which attracts the foreign tourist spending international hard currency. And India gets precious few of those if you eliminate business travellers and NRIs taking holidays at 'home' or pilgrimages. Why?

Too much emphasis on five-star tourism and the glories of the past, catering only to the rich and the educated tourist is one explanation. Lack of good accommodation — with five-star levels of cleanliness — at the budget level is another reason. Lack of any kind of acceptable accommodation at back-of-beyond places like Tarangambadi, Pichavaram, even places like Kanniyakumari — and, worse still, the hassle of trying to reach such places from Chennai or Madurai or Tiruchi. Government's unwillingness to work with people in other sectors who know their tourism onions. Government legislation that's often unrealistic. And now, there are those do-gooding organisations in which deference to readers Gautham and Tharu MMM will henceforth call Peoples' Organisations (POs). Their enthusiasm for saving this country's resources from foreign and investors' perils often strike MMM as being a throwing-the-baby-out-with-the-bathwater exercise.

It was therefore in the fitness of things that the Max Mueller Bhavan recently organised a two-day symposium on 'Tourism, Theory and Practice'. With the debate rather over-loaded with speakers from Green-obsessed POs, the few with any sympathy for tourism of any sort were rather overwhelmed and the discussion got rather derailed, focussing more on environmental issues. However, in the rather repeated use of the new mantra, ECOTOURISM, MMM saw some hope in a meaningful dialogue being established on tourism in the future. Perhaps what Government needs to do when discussing and drawing up plans for tourism areas is to have Government and private sector interests, experts in tourism and representatives of POs and the local inhabitants on the planning and monitoring committees, instead of creating situations leading to later confrontations.

## We the destroyers

Much of the discussion at the Max Mueller Bhavan

symposium centred on the threat to the environment that plans aimed at tourism development posed. The POs were convinced that much of this development would be hijacked by environment-unfriendly developers no matter what the good intentions of the tourism promoters, government or private, were.

Two points strike *The Man From Madras Musings*. In India, greater damage is done to the environment in tourist areas by the domestic traveller than by the tourist from abroad. The sad state of Mamallapuram or Kanniya-kumari or Madurai, or even Chennai, with sheer vandalism defacing the wonders of the past and making a mess of the facilities of the present, are entirely due to the domestic tourist and the citizenry. Why don't the POs play a greater policing role in such cases, taking on the lumpen elements in the population, rather than tilting at windmills of presumed environment-pollution by the investors?

Secondly, in a country which has the best laws in the world and the worst enforcement, is it necessary to oppose tourism merely because we are unable to implement laws that ensure tourism that is eco-friendly? Such opposition is what MMM sensed on several occasions during the symposium. For the record, MMM's acquaintance with tourism in Sri Lanka and the Maldives and hearsay about the state of tourism in several similar coastal destinations indicate far less damage to the coastal environment than what our indigenous coastal sharks are doing all along the coast of Tamil Nadu and the other coasts of India. There may be threats to society — but that's a different story and certainly one the POs were not overly concerned about.

## Tourist architecture

A notice about the annual convention of the Indian Institute of Architects' Maharashtra chapter landed on the desk of *The Man From Madras Musings*, during the MMM symposium. It was most appropriate not only because of its timing but also because the subject to be discussed at the Convention (October 23rd) is one after MMM's heart: 'Tourist Architecture (of Maharashtra)'.

The issues to be raised at Aurangabad — a tourist centre if ever there was one — are relevant not only to Maharashtra but to any part of India, indeed even to the world. Readers would do well to look at the following issues in the context of Chennai and the rest of Tamil Nadu and ask themselves what they can contribute in these terms to the State. The issues include the following:

- Is the present day architecture for the tourist relevant to the context, or does it reflect the fads and fancies of the major urban centres?
- Should there be any contextual relation between the character of the place and architec-

tural design? How do we establish this relation?

- Are we harping on the 'traditional architecture' theme a bit too much? Has it become a burden for the architectural practice? Does this burden of contextual relevance suppress anticultural creativity?
- On the threshold of the new millennium, how much of history are we carrying forward with us?
- Are architects sensitive to the problem of deterioration of the quality of environment of major tourist centres today?
- What is the role of the architect in the conservation of the existing tourist places?
- Should we be content with renovations, design of landscape and graphic signage or should we be joining the 'Save our Environment' movements that the architectural conservationists seem to be campaigning for?
- How do we define the line of control?

## Books in the mire

*Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, a seven-volume effort by E Thurston, came out in 1909. Nothing as comprehensive has been done in India since then — until *The People of India* project was launched on October 2, 1985, with Dr K S Singh, at the time the head of the Anthropological Survey, its Editor-in-Chief, guide and moving spirit.

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

The project planned to profile all the communities of India state-wise and bring out 43 volumes, comprising a National Series — looking at the Indian scene in toto under several heads — and the State Series, which will devote one or more volumes to each State, detailing ALL the communities in the respective States. *The Man From Madras Musings* who saw the publications on Pondicherry, Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobars and had a glimpse of the other South Indian texts did not find much progress having been made since Thurston's invaluable contribution. In fact, Thurston was the most frequently acknowledged source for much of the material in all the volumes.

Be that as it may, MMM was looking forward to all the State volumes — particularly the South Indian volumes — filling space in his library before the Millennium, but it would seem he is doomed for disappointment. The problem is the usual one: babus stepping in where angels fear to tread.

The Tamil Nadu volume, comprising 1800 pages and three volumes, featuring 364 communities in the State, was MMM understands, printed in 1997. It apparently cannot see the light of

day in the market because the publishers and the sponsors, the Anthropological Survey of India, cannot agree on a price. This inability to agree on a price is because of babudom's inability to understand what a manuscript has to undergo before it appears as a well-produced book of literary and informative merit, and that in that lengthy process costs of raw materials can increase substantially. Until this pricing problem is settled, the other volumes in the State Series are also likely to be delayed. And so Indian sociologists will continue to remain deprived of a valuable database.

When, oh when, wonders MMM, will bureaucracy decide to change its ways and help make life easier and more friendly in India?

## Golden memories

When TI Cycles celebrated its Golden Jubilee recently it was also celebrating the sinking of roots in India of the first joint venture after Independence for the manufacture of a product. Recognising that the success of the company that begat the bicycle revolution in India could not have been possible without the participation of its partners, customers and shareholders, it honoured them by giving a representative of each the opportunity to speak on an occasion where the main address was by another from a pioneering Indian industrial family, Rahul Bajaj. An industrial ambience is what the Murugappa Group has always preferred to a political or bureaucratic one. And the speakers on the occasion were in keeping with this philosophy.

The three representative voices emphasised another aspect of this philosophy: Namely, an industrial house's best friends and heartiest well-wishers are its customers, partners and shareholders, even if one of them is its biggest rival.

Representing the partners was R J M Fisher, Vice Chairman, TI Group, UK. Though TI UK is now out of the bicycle business, it has never severed its links with the Murugappa Group. Today, it may have only a 4 per cent stake in a company where it once held 60 per cent, but that has enabled it to constantly exchange ideas and seek help and advice from the Murugappa family on any business it wants to do in India. So good was this relationship that when the Government of India insisted that foreign partners should also offer Indian partners the ownership of their brands, TI UK had parted with the Hercules, Philips and BSA brands to TI India for £5 each, payable to charity. Those were the days when there were values in business, *The Man From Madras Musings* couldn't help but think nostalgically as the story was narrated.

The representative of the 21,200 shareholders was a particularly good choice, MMM felt. Andal Damodaran is not

only one of the country's leading figures in the world of social welfare but as far as TI's is concerned is the grand-daughter of its founder-chairman, Sir Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar. It was Sir Ramaswami, at the time an internationally known statesman, who brought together the Murugappa family and Tube Investments of UK, who had a cycle-manufacturing subsidiary, in a pioneering industrial partnership in the New India. She recalled the close ties the two families have had for over 75 years. Happy though she was with the returns she was getting, she hoped the future would see shareholders happier still.

The nicest gesture of the evening was when 'Hero met Hercules'. The 'Hero' of the evening was Brijmohan Lal Munjal, Chairman of the Hero group and a late-starting competitor who overtook 'Hercules'. Munjal, doyen of the bicycle industry, remembered that he would not be where he is today if it had not been for AMM Murugappa Chettiar encouraging him to switch from smalltime component manufacture in Ludhiana to largescale bicycle manufacture. He may be a competitor today, Munjal said, but that competition was also made possible by TI supplying him, on time always, the tubes and chains his bicycles and motorcycles require. He is today TI's largest customer and his competitor remains his best supplier! One thing that he did not mention — nor was it recalled by anyone else during the evening — was the lead role Murugappa Chettiar played in persuading Delhi to adopt a more rational policy towards licensing in the early days of the industry when the Licence Raj prevailed. It brought in competition — but Murugappa Chettiar's priority was the country's needs.

## In brief

★ Earmarked by the Tamil Nadu Government as Special Tourism Areas are Mamallapuram-Muttukadu, Kanchipuram and, *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to hear, Tarangambadi. MMM would be even happier if Pulicat, Pichavaram and the Mandapam areas were also given this status. But for such a designation to mean anything, air links — including helicopter services — would have to be established and the highway links would have to be improved many-fold.

★ For years *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard talk about the need for a direct Egmore to Central rail link. The present link is a circuitous 11 km route. A 2.5 km route has now been proposed, aligned along the Buckingham Canal and the Cooum River and crossing Poonamallee High Road and the suburban railway lines on new overbridges. MMM understands that this urban infrastructure improvement can be completed in three years if the work starts immediately. The present estimated cost is about Rs. 80 crore and that may be the fly in the ointment — the Railways wants the State Government to share the cost of the project 50:50. Will Government be willing?

— MMM

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Further handicaps

School-going children in the state who are handicapped face a pathetic situation.

Every year, the Tamil Nadu government issues free bus passes valid for the academic year to all normal schoolgoing children through their schools. However in the case of schoolgoing handicapped children, the Government does not do so.

To get a pass, this is the travail-laden procedure that has to be followed:

- At the beginning of the academic year, the handicapped child has to get a *bona fide* certificate from the school concerned.
- That certificate has to be shown at the Office of the Social Welfare Department, which endorses it for a free bus pass.
- After this, parents have to go to the City Transport Office to obtain the pass. At that time, parents have to show their handicapped children in person to officials at the Transport Office. And if they are satisfied, they issue a bus pass for a month.
- Every month thereafter they have to go to the City Transport Office and get the pass renewed. The old pass has to be handed over at that time.
- This happens only from August to March every year. For April, they do not issue bus passes though schools remain open till the end of April. Thus such children get passes for only eight months!
- The bus pass is such that the handicapped child has to get it ticked during every trip by the bus conductor. Imagine the stress put on the handicapped schoolgoing child.
- When normal schoolgoing children are issued yearly bus passes through their schools every year without any difficulty, why are handicapped children harassed as detailed above?

This issue has been drawn to the attention of the concerned departments, schools and NGOs. But nobody bothers to look into the matter.

S. Rajagopal

Triveni House, I Floor  
27, Eswaradass Lala Street  
Triplicane  
Chennai 600 005.

## A railway connection

Many of your readers have not been aware that there used to exist a railway line from Mayavaram (Mayiladuthurai) to Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) some twenty years ago. The Town Station at Mayavaram and the Tranquebar Railway Station must have since been demolished and the railway tracks encroached on by hut-dwellers. I wonder if the S.R. (old SIR) office has a photograph of these two stations in its archives?

C.A. Reddi

57, Rundalls Road  
Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

## Worthy remembrance

The article "A mastermind who built big — Sir Arthur Cotton" by A Mohanakrishnan (MM September 16th) was superb. But for Sir Arthur Cotton's efforts our country would not have been so prosperous and rich in agriculture as it is now. India should be grateful to Sir Arthur and readers to Mohanakrishnan for drawing our attention to Sir Arthur's contribution.

K.R. Dandapani

Spl. Gr. Dy. Collector (Rtd.)  
18-1-702 (A), Bhavani Nagar  
Tirupati 517 501.

## Non-drab letters

Little did I expect that my letter on NGOs (MM, August 16th) would elicit a response (MM, September 16th). It was sheer non-misery reading Thomas Tharu's non-serious, non-tragic, non-drab letter. May his tribe non-decrease!

B. Gautham

122, Wallajah Road  
Chennai 600 002.

Editor's Note: Together with this letter came another from Reader Gautham, addressed to *The Man From Madras Musings*. It read: Ha! Caught you! Please refer to your column in MM, September 16th, page 2, column 3, lines 24-26 wherein you state 'perhaps the first non-governmental organisation'.

Now some questions that are going to hit you below the belt. Ready? Do you read MM? Do you read MM regularly? Do you read MM thoroughly? Do you read every word of every issue of MM? Please refer to MM, August 16th, page 5, columns 1 and 2 wherein you will find an explanation of the silliness and absurdity of the use of the acronym 'NGO'. "Should the term be used to refer to these organisations to describe who they are or what they are not?"

## 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 Greaves Road, CHENNAI-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.

# New laws needed for organ gifting

Organ harvesting in India can be made only when the person is 'brain dead'. Donation of organs on death by any living person is not yet law in India. In some countries, there is a clause called 'consent presumed', which would mean that in case of any death, the organs can be legally harvested unless there is specific mention to the contrary. This clause will be marked on documents like passports, driving licence and ID cards. This is what we need in India, where many people die for want of organs.

The illegal trade in organs, however flourishes even in Madras! You may not believe it, but the police dispose of many unclaimed bodies from the mortuary in Madras at regular intervals as there is no storage space in mortuaries even today. A law to use these cadavers can save many lives. I have been reliably told that the anatomy departments of some medical colleges do not have sufficient cadavers for demonstration purposes in classes.

The list of usable parts of the body should include heart valves, skin, bone joints and quite a few others too. The time lapse between death and removal, storage, transportation

and time limit for transplantation play a large part in the success of this endeavour.

My father, Dr. P. Krishnan, who is still with us, had many years ago wanted his body to be donated on his death for anatomical research and demonstration purposes. (His was the second case in Tamil Nadu. The first was one K.K. Srinivasachari in 1987). This he achieved through a long and tortuous legal procedure lasting many years. He won the writ petition, which allowed his body to be sent to the Madras Medical College on his death. It is to be used for dissection only after removal of legally transplantable organs, which include the eyes. L.S. Johar, the film actor, and S.L. Kirloskar, doyen of the industrial family, had similarly donated their bodies on death for anatomical research and demonstration purposes. Perhaps, Maharashtra has a different law.

I wanted to go one step further. I wanted to donate all my usable organs on my death. I approached the courts in 1994, but my case was thrown out. I got a favourable order in 1998 from the Madras High Court, after spending quite some money on legal expenses. People can now donate their organs while alive,

citing my case. I have asked a few people to do so and they are doing it. My body, in all probability, will be the first body in Madras to be willed by a living person, for transplant of all usable organs/parts.

One Era Chandrasekhar, a social service-oriented person, who runs *Udhavum Ullangal* in Vellore, has arranged for the harvesting of organs from many donors (only when brain dead) and unclaimed bodies in Vellore. However, in the case of unclaimed bodies, deterioration of the bodies renders total harvesting impractical. He has also collected a list of people who want to donate their organs on death.

I would be happy if more people react to this message and donate their body for transplantation of organs. I can help them with details of my case. I will also be happy to address any group on this subject, anywhere in Madras and the suburbs. I would also like to hear from readers writing to give me more information on the subject or correcting me in case any of the information I have given is wrong.

Ejji K. Umamahesh

63 M.G.Ramachandran Road  
Kalakshetra Colony  
Besant Nagar  
Chennai 600 090.

Someone must take the initiative, the lead to get rid of this inanity. Can there be a better person than MMM?

MMM's reply: Would be delighted to take the lead if you give me an alternative 'word' that everyone will accept.

## Save electricity

Electricity is generated from precious resources of nature. These are gifts of Mother Earth and will not last forever. Therefore we need to conserve electricity.

Our parents who valued this source of energy used to advise us when we were young to "SWITCH OFF FANS AND LIGHTS" when we moved from one room to another. Mothers today generally fear to advise their children to switch off unnecessary lights and fans lest they hurt the feelings of their wards. They should emulate their mothers and educate the household staff also not to waste electricity.

There should be a time in the evening, say after sunset, to switch on the lights. Where reading is not done, lower wattage bulbs should be used. A bright reading light should be used only where reading and writing are done. The iron should be used to the minimum extent possible.

An analysis of household gadgets and the number of units of electricity they consume should be circulated in each flat complex so that electricity could be conserved.

No street light should be switched on before 6.30 p.m. in Madras. It is often found that in order to go home early the man in charge switches on the street lights

as early as 5.30 p.m. when the sun is still blazing. With the street light of no use until it gets dark, this wastage should be stopped; sodium vapour lamps consume more current than conventional street lights.

Bharat Hiteshi

3/4A, Gandhi Nagar  
11nd Cross Street, Periyar Street  
Palavakkam, Chennai 600 041.

## Madras memories

The article, 'One Enchanted Evening' (MM, August 16th), was so well written that it made this old Madras realise what he has missed by settling in Bombay. It reminded him of his youth when you could take in a *pattu kacheri* at Suguna Vilas Sabha or Rasika Ranjani Sabha after a day at Chepauk watching M.J. Gopalan and the late Ram Singh, with the bonus of lunching on potato *bondas* and *badaam halva* at Coimbatore Krishna Iyer's on Pycroft's Road. Those were the days, for there was also food for thought provided by talks at the various halls by C.R., Sir Sivaswami Iyer, K.S. Ramaswami Iyer, Ailadi Krishnaswami Iyer and a whole host of luminaries.

The article on Waran of Presidency College (MM, September 1st), reminded me of his 'discovery', Waran's Pump, which, with a sketch, was part of a lesson on vacuum pumps in our physics text books. It was the practice then to abbreviate names. One of the best wicket-keepers India had was S.V.T. Chari, short for Thiruvengatachari.

There was also a politician by the name of S.M. Fossil, anglicised

version of Fazal. He was short and stocky, but he had a vibrant voice which held his audience. He dressed in pyjamas and sherwani and wore a fez. *The Hindu* carried an item stating that S.M. Fossil was among the speakers. *Punch*, in its 'Charivari' column, carried the item with the comment, "Apparently in India fossils speak".

K.N. Prabhu

53, Ocean view  
Dumayne Road  
Colaba, Bombay 600 035.

## Why charge extra?

The Cheran Express is more often than not late — late by almost an hour to reach Chennai or Coimbatore, yet passengers are being charged an extra 'super fast' charge on their tickets. Why charge more and earn the wrath of the passengers?

Of late, the train is mentionably dirty. In some compartments, the toilet floor is practically sinking; feel your feet going down once you step on the toilet floor. The western toilet is the worst — it is not totally western, in that there is no toilet paper, no cover and no hygienic conditions.

On one recent occasion passengers complained of bed bugs infestation of the berths in the Cheran Express. The authorities had to spray insecticides before letting the train proceed.

The travelling public deserve better.

P.S. Sundar

"SKANDAM"  
Reilly Compound  
Coonoor 643 101.



• *Looking back on the elections*

## Easier voting, but a troubled conscience

Being an intelligent and patriotic citizen of India, I was bothered the whole week before I had to cast my vote with two major aspects of voting in India. The first, of course, was whether my name had been included in the voters' list. The second, and the one which is a matter of conscience, ideology, and to some extent self-interest, was whom to vote for. These problems may seem very trite to the party savants and intellectuals, the psephologists and the political matchmakers. But, believe me, intention and effort are not good enough if you are a citizen with a conscience and an intelligent one to boot.

even as a sub-text in this article. It deserves main text status.

The good news notwithstanding, my anxiety neurosis did not diminish. I wondered how I would know the location of the polling booth where I had to vote. Again my assistant had an answer: "They will come and issue you a card with all these details. They might have come already. Since you are out of the house most of the time, just tell the watchman to collect it on your behalf." I did not ask her who 'they' were. Nor did I have much faith in this helpful suggestion. However, I instructed the watchman to collect this 'valuable'

• by

**Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan**

I do know that I had gone and registered to be included in the electoral list. But, unfortunately, I was not in town when the photographing for the issuance of electoral cards was going on. An opportunity missed is indeed an opportunity missed forever. I can't blame anyone else in this matter. Had I been patriotic enough, I would have kept aside all other work and waited for the 'photographing event'. I didn't or couldn't. So, I worried throughout the week whether I would be given a chance to vote.

Actually, in these matters I find that consultation with my assistants in household chores is the best way. They are closer to the electoral apparatus than petit bourgeoisie like me, because their concerns are more basic, such as who would give them a better deal with food, clothing and shelter. So, they keep a close watch on electoral politics. When I consulted one of my assistants, she, very knowledgeably told me she would "check it up with the people concerned". I did not ask any further questions. And in an hour or so, she came up with the definite answer that my name was in the voters' list.

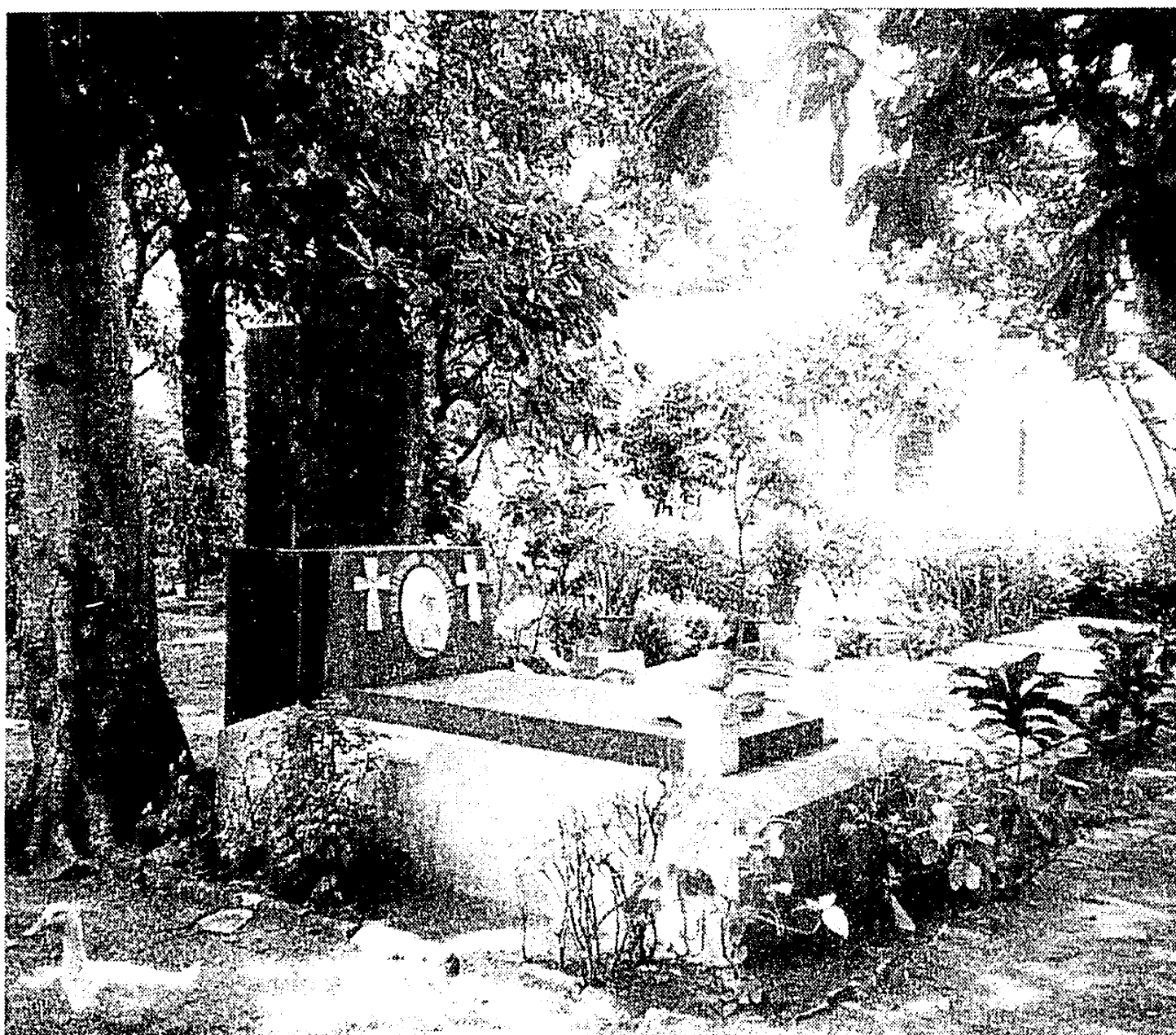
She also gave me another useful piece of information. All the people who had been issued with a ration card would automatically be included in the voters' list. I had obtained a ration card after many heroic efforts. That is an entirely different story, which I can't include

card. In the afternoon, when the watchman actually came with a card with all instructions on the voting, I couldn't believe my eyes. But, of course, the card was not from the electoral office; but from one of the parties and had the party symbol printed on one side. Well, even if Seshan's much praised electoral machinery was not interested in my seemingly insignificant 'individual' vote, the party candidate who stood for the election was.

That was my second eye-opener on the subject. On voting day, I dutifully went to the polling booth, a local school, expecting all kinds of turbulent events, crowding, ballot snatching, long queues and inability to find my name in the register. I was pleasantly surprised to see how efficient the whole apparatus was. I just went and showed my card, one man identified my name in the register, hollered it out to two other people, one of whom issued me a nondescript slip. I presented this slip to another man, who put the indelible ink on my left pointing finger after which I went to the booth. There I witnessed the most significant miracle of the century. For me, it had a greater impact than the last solar eclipse of the millennium.

Voting had been simplified and computerised. There was a list of the names of candidates, about 16 or 17, six or seven of

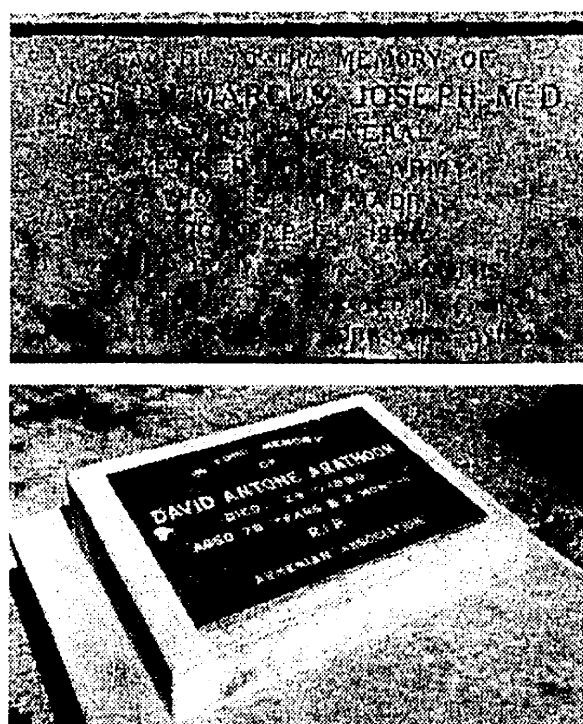
(Continued on Page 6)



Our OLD and NEW this fortnight are both old. The OLD (above) is the beautifully tended 18th Century Armenian Cemetery by which the Armenian Church, Armenian Street, was consecrated in 1772. Aga Shawmner Sultan, the leader of the community at the time and the chief donor of the church, his wife and the Rev Haratham Shimavonian, the Editor of the first Armenian journal in the world, founded by him in Madras in 1794, are buried here.

Our NEW is a comparatively well-kept cemetery that came as a surprise to your Editor. When two German women 'discovered' it a few months ago and mentioned it to your Editor, they enjoyed chuckling "Now we know a place in Madras you don't," when he had said he had never heard of a second Armenian Cemetery. Indeed there is one — and this one was established in 1862 (according to the date on the entrance pediment) next to the St Andrew's Cemetery on the Island Grounds, across the way from the St Mary's Church and War Graves Cemetery. The inscriptions on the earliest tombstones here are not decipherable; the earliest recognisable is that of Joseph Marcus Joseph in 1886. He was the first Armenian to join the Indian Medical Service (in 1852) and rose to become Surgeon General.

The most recent burial here was in 1990, an Arathoon. There is an Arathoon Lane in Royapettam. What, we wonder, is the connection? There are around 40 tombstones in the cemetery, whose tending is supervised by Michael J Stephen, who looks after the Armenian Church now. — (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY).



Out of the pages of the past

## MILTON in Madras

Milton's daughter Deborah married a weaver named Abraham Clarke on 1 June 1674 in St Kevin's Clarke Dublin. She had ten children, seven sons and three daughters. Of them only her son Caleb and his youngest daughter Elizabeth had children. Caleb sailed for Fort St George "in the East Indies, where he married and had two sons, Abraham and Isaac."

On a visit to Madras, I decided to pursue the documentary evidence for the presence of Milton's descendants there in the 18th Century. I had by way of preparation consulted French's *Life Records*, which records a series of baptisms, marriages, and burials: 2 June

climbed the steps to the Curator's office on the top floor. The registers were taken from a large metal cabinet and placed on a desk underneath a fan that slowly stirred the air.

Two aspects of the registers became immediately obvious: the first was that they were parchment rather than paper; the second was that the entries from October 1680 to September 1739 were written in the same neat hand. These were clearly not original parish records, but rather a letter transcription. In fact the transcription had been prepared in 1739 by Alexander Wynch, then a little-known nephew of the garrison chaplain, but eventually to become Governor of

(A 1738 reports states that) Abraham "came to England with the late Governor Harrison, but returned again upon advice of his father's death". The governor of Madras was Galston Addison, whose name may have been misremembered as "Harrison"; if so, young Abraham must have returned to England as a young child, because Addison died in 1709. Was the journey with Addison connected with the visit of Galston's younger brother Joseph to Deborah Milton shortly before his death in June 1719? Did Abraham spend ten years in England before returning to India on hearing of his father's death?

The second volume of the Fort St George register (which was not transcribed by Wynch) records the death of a soldier called Abraham Clark on 5 September 1743. Was this Milton's great-grandson? The entry appears in a list of entries recording the burials of soldiers; none of the entries refers to relatives. It is possible that Clark enlisted in England with a view to securing a passage back to Madras, but there is no evidence beyond the burial register to support this hypothesis. — (Courtesy: Milton Quarterly, U.K.)

Madras. The paper records had been succumbing to the climate of India, so Wynch had prepared a durable parchment copy, for which he was paid a fee of 50 pagodas. French's transcriptions (from photographs) proved to be accurate, but he overlooked one relevant entry, the burial of Mary, the wife of Caleb Clark, on 26 January 1715/16.

The normal recourse of scholars faced with the loss of original parish records is the ecclesiastical returns to the bishop. But in which diocese was eighteenth-century Madras? The answer, for purposes of ecclesiastical administration, is London, and in due course I went where I should have begun, to the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections, where I was able to consult the Ecclesiastical Returns for Madras (N/2/1)...

A proliferation of Clarks in Madras in the 18th Century makes it increasingly difficult to identify Milton's descendants in the records.

The eventual fate of Issac and Abraham Clark is not known. Issac simply disappears from the records, which suggests that either he moved elsewhere or he died between 1746 and 1749, when the records are incomplete because Madras was occupied by the French. Abraham Clark, Milton's great grandson is similarly shadowy.

## A search for roots

— And a Creole Princess

From time to time *Madras Musings* receives inquiries about people out of Madras's past. Most of these are from relatives trying to trace their ancestors and their history. A recent inquiry, one of the most intriguing ones *Madras Musings* has ever received, provided the following facts:

Gustaf Adolph von Streng was born in 1765 in Stralsund, and died in 1813 in India. He learnt carpentry and at 14 went to sea as a ship's carpenter. He travelled to India and China. Later, he became a businessman.

In a long letter home he wrote that he had married a lady whose surname was van Meppen. He had a daughter by her called Frederike Caroline von Streng. She was born on April 26, 1802 in India. Frederike married a Protestant priest and died early, after giving birth to a daughter.

After his wife's death in 1804 or 1806, Gustaf Adolph von Streng married again, this time to an extremely beautiful and rich Creole lady with the surname D'Ormeux. She was the daughter of an Indian prince whose European ancestor was a French nobleman with the name D'Ormeux. From this marriage they had two sons. One died very early, the other was born in 1807 and named Philipp D'Ormeux von Streng. In 1820 his mother was poisoned by her slaves and part of her jewellery taken by them.

Philipp D'Ormeux von Streng was given to an English family whom he hated. During his childhood he grew up in the harem of his mother so that he learnt different Indian dialects. When he came of age he joined the Indian English army as an officer. On coming of age his royal properties were returned to him.

He went to Germany to visit his grandfather. He returned to India and then went back to Germany in 1844 with a wife, whose name was Mary Craffert. She was a daughter of the well-known, though notorious General Craffert. They talked a lot about their property on the Coromandel coast, in and around Madras, about castles in the city and countryside and cave temples below which the coffins of their ancestors lay.

The couple adopted a little son called Philipp around 1844. He was to study in Germany till the age of 10 and then come to India. Shortly before his 10th birthday he died.

Philipp, on his wife Mary's death, married a less noble lady. He became a baron and later lived in London. In the 1880s he died in London and left his money to the Anglican church.

It sounds a fascinating story — and mystery. *Madras Musings* has been unable to crack it. We wonder whether a reader somewhere can come up with some answers.

— The Editor

## LONELY BOER GRAVES IN MADRAS

When Britain went to war against the Boer Republics — the South African Republic (Transvaal) and Orange Free State — a century ago, in 1899, the resources of the Indian Empire, human, animal and material, were drawn upon to the maximum. However, unlike in other expeditions, 'native' Indian troops were not deployed on combat duties, out of deference to racial sensitivities both in Britain and South Africa.

Another little-known aspect of the involvement of the British Indian Empire in the Boer War was the lodging of more than 9000 Boer prisoners of war in various 'camps' all over

• The Boer War began 100 years ago this month. This story recalls a sad Madras connection.

India. It was only after the hostilities ended in the field and 'guerrilla war' began that it became apparent that Boer citizen combatants, described as 'Burgers', had to be sent abroad in large numbers, as the 'concentration camps' in South Africa could not safely hold more, in a 'nation at war for its survival'.

POW camps were set up in St Helena and in Ceylon. The British then turned to India. The first batch of 500 Boer

POWs arrived in Bombay on April 23, 1901. They were dispatched and lodged in the old Fort at Ahmednagar, which was later used to lodge Indian freedom fighters under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Ahmednagar was chosen for its dry, healthy climate, similar to that of the Transvaal. Bellary (now in Andhra Pradesh) and 'Trichinopoly' were the other two stations which received the initial batches. However, the numbers soon went beyond the capacity of these camps and sites were chosen in Punjab (Ambala & Govindgarh), Uttar Pradesh (Bhimtal &

(Continued on Page 7)



## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period September 15th to 30th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai and Questions 13 to 20 are general questions pertaining to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Name the satellite, dedicated exclusively for astronomy, which Indian space scientists are planning to launch in the new millennium.
2. Which Indian artiste has been awarded the coveted National Heritage Fellowship of the U.S. Government?
3. In which case, regarding misappropriation of funds, has the 'Big Bull', Harshad Mehta, been convicted and sentenced to 5 years RI?
4. Name the Indian author and this author's work shortlisted for the Booker Prize this year.
5. Who recently pledged \$ 1 billion, the biggest such gift, to higher education?
6. Name the 'Dream Girl' of Tamil cinema of yesteryears and star of such films as *Chandralekha* and *Manohara* who passed away recently.
7. According to National Readership Survey V, which is the most sought after publication in the country, having a readership of 94.54 lakh?
8. The oldest musical instruments, some 9000-year-old flutes, were recently discovered in China. Of what were they made?
9. Who is the new coach of the Indian cricket team?

\* \* \*

10. Which leading blood bank in the city became the country's first ISO 9002 certified blood bank?
11. On which road was Chennai's (and probably India's) first 'exclusive' lane for cyclists inaugurated recently?
12. What endurance record did Chennai's Sundeep Kumar set on September 25th?

\* \* \*

13. What was the new capital of the Cholas built by Rajendra-I, the successor to Raja Raja Chola?
14. According to legend, who founded the city of Madurai?
15. What is the Siva deity at Rameswaram called?
16. Pichavaram is known for which type of forest?
17. On which river is the dam at Sattur built?
18. Who are the Trinity of Carnatic music?
19. The Manchester of the South is the sobriquet for which place?
20. In which film did the prolific composer Ilayaraja make his debut?

(Answers on Page 8)

## The Miller Menagerie

# Cleopatra the doyenne

One Christmas, when I was about seven years old, daddy Miller called me into his study. "Sing that Christmas carol about Mother Mary's donkey, Nisha," he said. "Daddy, you're going to give me a donkey for Christmas," I said excitedly. "No, Nisha," he said. Anyway I sang the song. I only remember two lines now:

*Little donkey, Little donkey,  
With your heavy load...*

Despite Daddy's denial, I guessed that my parents were going to give me a donkey for Christmas. And sure enough, next morning, there was a lovely, soft-eyed donkey for me in the courtyard. Around the donkey's neck hung a letter which said, "My name is Cleopatra. I am only a poor old donkey, but if you love me and treat me nicely, I will love you too and let you ride on my back. Happy Christmas!"

Cleo had a saddle and bridle — but I was after more exciting entertainment than this. I took her saddle and bridle off, because I wanted a bare-back ride.

At our house, in Tirumullai-vayol 'The Frogs', we had many animals, including civets, mongoose and snakes. It was a big house and had a huge garden around it. In the middle of the front garden there was a pond, surrounding which were many fruit and flowering trees and shrubs. Two of these were guava trees which were short and had low branches. And do

you think Cleo was going to let me ride on her back? You can bet not! She waited until I was properly seated on her back, and then promptly dashed under the guava trees. As the branches were low, I was brushed off her back. At the time, I was only a little girl who got a few scrapes to cry over, but now whenever I think of it, I marvel at Cleo's intelligence — after all, she was only a donkey.

Months passed, and Cleo became lonely. So a kind servant of ours, who was very fond of us children, brought me another donkey as a gift, so that

ing for Daddy to come back from work. Mummy was very worried about Daddy driving through the dark and rainy night. Now, in those days, there was a thing called an earthing pipe outside a house with a wire attached to it. Remember I was only a little girl at the time, so I may be wrong. But as I understood it, the earthing pipe was to attract lightning so that the house would not be struck. That night, our live-in cook had left his *chappals* beside the earthing pipe under the wire. Apparently when he went to get them, Cleo, who was wander-

wards, Nefertiti and I sat on Cleo's grave and mourned together.

Soon, Nefertiti too left us. As Cleo had died, we no longer needed a companion donkey, so we took her to where there were some donkeys in and left her there.

### A NOTE ON DONKEYS

Donkeys, in general, belong to the ungulate order (hoofed mammals). Ungulates are found wild everywhere except Australasia. However, some are found wild in Australia, having escaped from exploration parties. Some wild ones still exist in India. When we decided to let Nefertiti go, we let her loose among wild donkeys outside our village.

There are two groups of ungulates — the odd-toed ungulates and the even-toed ungulates. Of the former only six species survive today. These include horses which are fast, tapers which are shy and retiring, and rhinoceroses which are big and armoured. These only have one or three toes on each foot, which is why they are called odd-toed ungulates. Donkeys are also of this order. Even-toed ungulates are deer, giraffes, cattle, camels, sheep, antelopes, pigs and hippopotamuses.

There are two species of donkeys — the Asiatic wild ass and the African wild ass. The African species is the ancestor of the domestic donkey.

● by Nisha Miller

Cleo would not be lonely. Now Daddy told me that Cleo was named after an Egyptian queen called Cleopatra who was famous for her beautiful nose. So when the next donkey arrived they named her after another beautiful queen called Nefertiti. During the day I would feed the two donkeys from my hand and they would follow me around. At night, they would both be tied to the trees in a little eucalyptus grove which we had in our garden.

One night, however, Cleo refused to be tied up by the Irula tribal boy whose duty it was to do this. That night it rained heavily and Mummy, my brother Robin and I were wait-

ing about there, kicked him away from the earthing pipe which apparently gives electric shocks during wet weather. As she kicked him away, however, her hoof touched the earthing pipe and she died of the electric shock. The cook came running in, calling out, Amma, Amma, Cleo is dead. Then he told my mother how Cleo had kicked him away from the earthing pipe. I burst into tears and wept bitterly. Mummy even considered calling the doctor to give me some medicine to calm me down.

We buried Cleo in the garden beside one of the many *nellikai* trees that abounded in our garden. For days after-

## VOTING — AND A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE

(Continued from Page 4)

them 'Independents' and their symbols clearly indicated against their names. There were blue buttons against each name. All you had to do was choose your candidate and press the button against that name. A red arrow was reflected on the screen with a beep sound. Then the man standing next to the booth told me, "Enough". That's it. I had finished voting for the Lok Sabha elections. I just could not believe it. It had taken me precisely ten minutes. Exchanging of telephone books takes more time (twice I had to go back without achieving the great task because the first time they told me that the time was up, the second time that there was no stocks).

The only problem for me in this whole exercise was whom I should vote for. Don't laugh. It is a major problem. All my training as a student of history

and politics tells me that I should vote for the 'party' which will be able to deliver the goods, and herald in a new India without poverty, social inequality, religious disharmony, corruption in high places, inefficiency in governing and many such negative phenomena. But past experience has proven that there is no party which pays serious attention to these objectives. They don't even achieve what is stated in their own manifestos.

So, I am not at all sure that I can entrust my political objectives to any party. But, I have to vote or, at least, register a negative vote to show that I care, that I am a responsible citizen. So, I began to wonder who among these candidates I respected as an individual. Who could at least continue the *status quo* and not plunge the country into further degeneration? But, unfortunately, the individual I wanted to vote for and his/her party had allied

with another party whose ideology I abhor. Look at the mess I was in... did I vote for not having a certain party at the helm because of ideological differences or did I vote for a limited aim such as having an individual whom I respected? Do you think voting is a simple process? They have simplified the apparatus and made it user-friendly, but they have done nothing to ease the conscience and make simple a politically correct decision in the matter of voting.

Now, I can't even grumble — about my name not being included in the list (what a grave omission) or how tedious the whole procedure is (standing in the sun for hours and then face a dubious procedure including ballot papers). I have all the comfort that I can hope for in a 900 million people democracy which, even now, is a better working democracy than most high-flying developed democracies.

But I have a serious moral and political problem: Whom do I vote for? Call me a sceptic with no definite political will, for that is what I am. What I want, nobody can give. So I settle for what I can get, what I think is a reasonable solution to the present crisis with the full conviction that at best it is a compromise. Can any of you help me regain my respect for myself and my judgement?

## Landmarks of the City

(Continued from Page 1)

17. St Mary's Cemetery
18. St Mary's Co-cathedral
19. St Thomas' Mount Cantonment
20. Subramania Bharati's home
21. Taluk Office, Saidapet
22. Traffic Commissioner's Office
23. Women's and Children's Hospital

# Letter-perfect in the Gita

(By A Correspondent)



Gudimella Kalyana Ramaswaroop

A ten-year-old boy recently held spellbound for two hours a packed house at the Andhra Social & Cultural Association Hall, Chennai. They had all come to witness Gudimella Kalyana Ramaswaroop, a 6th Standard boy from Enkoor, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh, display his mastery over the *Bhagavad Gita*.

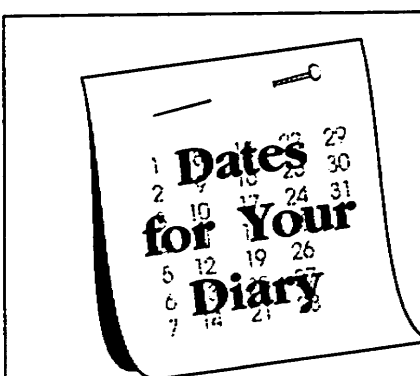
This charming 'Balakrishna' faced a barrage of questions on the *Gita* from eight eminent Sanskrit scholars. He did not fail once. There are, of course, many who know the entire *Bhagavad Gita* by heart. But Ramaswaroop's mastery's different.

Give him the first word of any verse (*sloka*); and he will recite the rest perfectly. If the number of a verse in a particular chapter is given, he recites it in a trice. Or if a verse is recited, he identifies its number and chapter.

At 25th *Bhagavad Gita Ashtavadhanam* in Chennai, Ramaswaroop performed six more feats. A scholar said just a part (*pada*) of a *sloka* and he recited the full *sloka*. Another person mentioned the last letter of a verse and the boy, without hesitation, recited the various *slokas* beginning with that particular letter. When a scholar asked him how many verses begin with the letter 'a' in the first chapter, he unhesi-

tatingly gave the total number of such verses and recited them too! The most difficult task followed. He was asked to identify the letter in a particular foot in a specified verse in a chapter. Sanskrit verses have four feet and the majority of the verses in the *Gita* have eight syllables in a foot. For example, he was asked to name the fifth syllable in the second foot of the 65th verse in the second chapter. Pat came the reply: the syllable "Pa".

Ramaswaroop also knows the meaning of nearly 300 *slokas* in the *Gita*. He explains them with the authority of a preacher. He also showed his talent in yet another way. The eight syllables of a particular foot of a particular verse were written on small bits of paper and handed to him, in jumbled fashion at intervals of about ten minutes. He looked at each slip only once, then, at the end of entire programme, recited the entire verse after mentally assembling the eight syllables together.



A Satish Sharma picture of Australian 'informality'.

Till October 20: A Photography Exhibition 'Australia: Portraying a Nation', a multi-layered

graves with the remains of Boer POWs. These include 26 in Tamil Nadu, as follows: two in St Mary's (on the Island), four in the Wesleyan Cemetery, Madras, seven in Trichinopoly, six in Wellington and seven in Kaity.

T G Ramamurthi  
(in *Umbutu*, Delhi)

### List of graves in Madras

IN FORT ST. GEORGE		Died on
1. Beneke, Jacob Philip	15 yrs	16.04.1902
2. Beukes, Cornelis Johannes	59 years	24.04.1901
IN THE WESLEYAN CEMETERY		
1. Hoffman, Abraham Carel	24 yrs	22.03.1902
2. Stoop, Jacobus Johannes	24 yrs	08.03.1902
3. Van Tonder, Andries Johannes Jacobus	20 yrs	08.03.1902

Editor's Note: We have not been able to trace any of these.



One of Sakti Burman's exhibits at his exhibition 'Uncertain Legends'.

photographic exploration of Australia and Australian society by an Indian photographer, Satish Sharma. The exhibition is the first bilateral project of its kind. (At the Lalit Kala Akademi).

Till October 24th: "Uncertain Legends" an exhibition by Sakti Burman who has lived in France for over 25 years. He has developed an allegorical representation that is a combination of the east and west. He uses oil and acrylic in a marbled effect. His techniques is painstakingly detailed.

He has exhibited extensively in Japan. — (At the Apparao Galleries.)

October 22: 'Of verse and lilt — The traditional English folksong: an introduction' — A programme with David Hill, poet and freelance ELT consultant from Budapest, Hungary. A range of illustrative and thematically-linked songs, both on record and presented live by the presenter, will be followed by a short discussion on each link. (At 6.30 p.m., British Council, Chennai.)

October 29: Creative Writing Workshop organised by the Madras English Association (at 3-5 p.m., British Council).

October 30: 'Wildlife Conservation in India', an illustrated talk by D.T. Sundaramoorthy of the CPR Environmental Education Centre (at 6.30 p.m., British Council).

October 30: The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu's fund-raising Diwali Dinner will feature the Madras Players in the comedy "PICASSO at the LAPIN AGILE" (At 6.00 p.m., at The Trident).

October 30: A Bead Workshop organised in DakshinaChitra at 2, Venkataraman Street, T.Nagar, Chennai-600017 (Tel: 8280460). This attractive craft, practised in Chettinad, will be demonstrated and taught by Jamuna, a master

craftsperson. The charges will be Rs.300 a person, which includes the cost of lunch and materials.

October 31: Mohan Foundation (Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network), a charitable, non-profit trust started by a group of professionals, both medical and non-medical, to spread awareness about organ donation, holds a ceremony to honour families that gifted organs to the needy. Each of these families, even in the face of great tragedy, has taken the lead in showing the way. One of them is a young college girl called Suchitra Sudhakar. She lost her father some years ago and then her mother passed away in a road accident last year. She donated her mother's organs. Another person who will be present will be John Andrews from the USA. His mother, Loretta Andrews, was visiting Chennai, when a bus fatally knocked her down. She had made the decision to donate her organs a long time ago. She, not only carried a Donor Card but had also expressed her wish to donate on her U.S. driving license. Saplings will be planted in memory of each of the organ donors and marked with a plaque. (At Loyola College, 4.00-6.00 p.m.)

November 1-14: Exhibition of paintings by Babu Xavier. (At Apparao Galleries.)

November 2: "Painting with words — Contemporary British poetry based on paintings": David Hill talks of the trend amongst British poets over the past 45 years to use paintings as their source of inspiration. This is in direct contrast to the previous century where painters used poems — Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, for instance — as a source for their paintings. The presentation will offer an overview of seventeen poets with the source paintings for their poems projected in full colour. A discussion follows (At 6.30 p.m., at British Council).



# Time we revived Gopalan Trophy

The *Corner Flag* was in Colombo recently for the release of a history of Sri Lanka cricket, *The Janashakthi Book of Sri Lanka Cricket* by S S Perera with whose production he had something to do. He took the opportunity to campaign in the best *Corner Flag* style for the revival of a contest that finds significant mention in this anecdotal record of the story of cricket in the Island.

The massive volume (656 pages), which should be in South Indian bookstores in a month or so, pays significant attention to the Gopalan Trophy contests between Madras/Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. This series as well as the tours of Ceylon by State Bank of India teams led by Hanumant Singh and Ajit Wadekar — in those days when the SBI had virtually an All-India team — had much to do with Ceylon cricket improving and reaching major league international standards, S S Perera, the Island's leading cricket recorder and statistician, has stated in the book.

The Gopalan Trophy matches, played annually on a home and away basis from 1953 to 1983, came to an end when Sri Lanka became a Test-play-

ing nation and its standards had progressed beyond the provincial level of the game in Madras. The *Corner Flag* advocated in Colombo that the tournament could be revived in a slightly different format to enable Sri Lanka to unearth a regular supply of talent for its 1st XI. Alternatives he suggested included Champion Colombo club vs Champion Madras club; Colombo versus Madras (the teams selected on the basis of birth in the respective cities, now that many born elsewhere play in the two cities); Tamil Nadu vs a Sri Lanka Board President's XI; or Tamil Nadu vs. Sri Lanka 'A'.

The *Corner Flag* had earlier made similar suggestions to R B Alagunan, C D Gopinath and U Prabhakar Rao, all of whom had played in the series, trying to get them to push Tamil

Nadu into action. Sri Lanka's Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai, Suhita Gautamadasa, another cricket buff, has also expressed his keenness in reviving the series. It's time the TNCA and the Sri Lanka Board got together on this series which had done much for cricket in both territories.

With the Presidency matches and regular internationals during Pongal Week now distant memories, it might be an idea to revive these exchanges as part of the Pongal Week celebrations, particularly as the festival is celebrated on both sides of the Palk Strait. Will the TNCA take the lead? The *Corner Flag* is certain that Deputy High Commissioner Gautamadasa would gladly offer his good offices if they were needed.

— The Corner Flag

## Kumaran storms into the national eye

T Kumaran recently did what few pacemen from Tamil Nadu have done. He took ten wickets in an explosive burst of fast bowling in the Irani Cup match and helped the Rest of India beat Karnataka convincingly. Madras Musings, a long time champion of this talented and fiercely committed young bowler, has often lamented the lack of recognition it has been his and his fellow Tamil Nadu quick bowlers' lot to suffer. In fact, one of Kumaran's team mates once told me that *Musings* was the only publication to advocate his — and his State colleagues' — cause.

I was witness to a magnificent spell of pace bowling by Kumaran in the Buchi Babu final last year, when he defied the odds by generating pace and coaxing movement out of a perfect Chepauk batting strip after V B Chandrasekhar and S Suresh had put on some 150 runs for the first wicket. He created a sensation by grabbing four or five wickets in a matter of minutes, a performance that should have set the stadium abuzz with excitement, only there were not even the proverbial two men and a dog watching. From a generation of so-called cricket lovers addicted to watching one-day internationals in the time between TV commercials and nothing besides, that was entirely to be expected, but what was really unforgivable was that there was apparently not a newspaper reporter present to mention Kumaran's sterling deeds in his dispatches. Or if one was present, he must have stepped out for a cup of tea, because the next day's press reports glossed over the spell in a sea of predictable batsmen-oriented adjectives.

It has been Kumaran's good fortune this season that former Tamil Nadu paceman T A Sekar, who assists Dennis Lillee in the MRF Pace Foundation, recently became the South Zone representative in the national selection committee. Kumaran turns out for the MRF team and attends the Foundation. Imagine what might have been the young aspirant's fate had the selectorial spot gone to someone who did not watch him on a regular basis and so did not know what a good bowler he is. Unfortunately, this is more the rule than the exception; players often languish because they don't even get a look-in. If there is a system whereby the national panel is assisted by others who watch cricket in every part of the country and highlight outstanding new talent, then the results are hardly visible.

With the leading newspapers and other media concentrating on matters of earthshaking importance like Sachin Tendulkar's back and who should be the Indian team's next coach, the Kumarans and Maheshes have to be content with the publicity they receive from limited circulation publications like Madras Musings. An example of such media apathy was the year-long silence by almost the entire tribe when the selectors kept their faith with the likes of the unfit Vinod Kambli while ignoring the claims of performing young players like Vijay Bharadwaj. Imagine again what might have happened to Bharadwaj if Kambli had made a big score in the final match of the Toronto cricket festival and not got out for 26!

V. Ramnarayan

### A COMMITMENT ABOUT CIVIC ISSUES

(Continued from Page 1)

- The high cost of application forms and prospectuses for colleges, making it difficult for poorer students to purchase more than one or two. Apart from this, there is the expense of travel to different towns for tests and inter-

views. And the clash of interview and test dates has also to be negotiated.

- The best way to tackle corruption in the public service.
- How to reduce road accidents.

Suggestions in respect of all these have been made to the right authorities, but the response has been minimal. Undaunted, the Chennai Think Tank is determined to keep plugging away. Sounding off continuously may one day make the voice of this small peoples' organisation heard, they feel. Well, that's the way *Madras Musings* went about it, and we do believe we are occasionally heard nowadays, almost ten years down the line.

### Answers to Quiz

1. Astrosat; 2. Zakir Hussain; 3. The Maruti Udyog Limited case; 4. Anita Desai for *Fasting, Feasting*; 5. Bill Gates for minorities' education; 6. T.R. Rajakumari; 7. *Daily Thanthi*; 8. The hollowed wing bone of a red-crowned crane; 9. Kapil Dev.

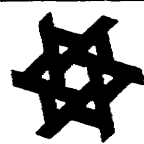
\* \* \*

10. Jeevan; 11. On E.V.R. Periyar Salai; 12. Swam non-stop for 30

hours (at the Velachery athletics complex).

\* \* \*

13. Gangaikondacholapuram; 14. Kulasekhara in the 6th Century BC; 15. Ramanathaswamy; 16. Mangrove forests; 17. Pennar; 18. Saint Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri; 19. Coimbatore; 20. Annakili.



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