

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Why are we only fifth best?

(By A Staff Reporter)

Tamil Nadu attracted total investments worth Rs.138,814 crore in 1998-99 and has been ranked FIFTH in the 1999 *Business Today* - Gallup Organisation Research Project titled, 'The best states to invest in'. It was ranked third in surveys conducted in 1995 and 1997.

Maharashtra, which attracted investments worth Rs.146,809 crore in 1998-99, is still considered the best state to invest in. Gujarat, with an investment profile of Rs.144,373 crore, clinched the second spot. And not surprisingly, Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of the the techno-savvy

Chandrababu Naidu, is placed third, vaulting from its 22nd ranking four years ago. Delhi is in fourth position, its central location holding a lot of promise for investors.

A business-savvy state government and a responsive local administration; good railways, ports and telecom network; adequate road connectivity; and adequate availability of low-cost labour ensured increased investment, even if it wasn't enough to retain the State's pre-eminent position.

The reasons for Tamil Nadu falling in the rankings by two places may be difficult to pinpoint but what is glaring in the

survey is that the State failed to achieve a No.1 ranking on any of the parameters taken for evaluation, under the broad classification of physical infrastructure, quality of governance, labour and social infrastructure. The highest ranking the State received was second, and that too only under a few parameters - for labour availability, management availability and cost, cost of labour and social infrastructure. In contrast, while Maharashtra was ranked first for 'physical infrastructure', Andhra Pradesh came out tops in 'quality of governance'.

The BT-Gallup Survey lists some of the investment incentives provided by the Tamil Nadu Government. These include a capital subsidy of 15-20 per cent of fixed assets for units located in backward areas; a capital subsidy of 20 per cent of fixed assets for thrust sector units - up to a minimum of Rs.15 lakh; power tariff concession for high-tension consumers, ranging between 20 and 40 per cent; exemption from purchase and entry-tax for info-tech units located in the State; and subsidies of up to Rs.1 crore for all mega projects.

In spite of this, only 32 per cent of the respondents in the BT Survey plan to invest in Tamil Nadu over the next five years. Karnataka, with 36 per cent, and Gujarat, with 44 per cent, are ahead on this parameter. Andhra Pradesh, the second-most preferred destination for prospective investors (47 per cent), threatens to dislodge Maharashtra (54 per cent) from the top spot.

If Tamil Nadu has to regain its No.3 position at least, it has to better its performance of 1998-99. That itself seems a tall order considering that the period is generally considered to have been a profitable one for



● The tree-shaded gate on left, next to the Park Sheraton entrance, opens on to a driveway that leads to an art-deco style house (below) that is part of a property long known as Adyar Gate Gardens. The house, in its several acres, now lies empty and makes Madras Musings wonder whether its owners, the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, are planning new development here at its expense. If it is, we hope the Bank will have second thoughts and consider low-level construction that will integrate with the art-deco house that deserves to be renovated as a model of its kind. Or may we hope that the Park Sheraton will cast covetous eyes on it for such development to meet the needs of short-term expats. (Photographs by RAJINDN CHRISTY.)



Why did Ford choose Chennai?

Why did the Ford Motor Company pick Tamil Nadu to locate its sophisticated Rs.86 crore factory, instead of the front-runners Maharashtra and New Delhi? The answer to that question in December 26-January 6 issue of *Business Today* must surely interest many of us.

In a case-study that is part of a forthcoming book, *Policy Competition Among States in India for Attracting Direct Investment* by R Venkatesan, who heads the Industry & Infrastructure Division of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the author examines why.

According to the study, the most important considerations for Ford were the availability of a supplier base, skilled labour and infrastructure, incentives offered by the state government, proximity to the port and availability of cheap land. The least important factor was the proximity to the company's target market. But, in any case, Chennai has proved to be one of the major markets for the Ford Escort.

Answering the NCAER questionnaire on the relative impor-

tance of different infrastructure facilities, Ford's management considered land as the most important factor, followed by power. Water and transport ranked next. In the case of land, the location and nature of title was the main factor. The Tamil Nadu Government was not only able to make sufficient land available at a good location, but also provided freehold ownership, which obviously was preferred to a lease. Also, the location was not very far from the airport and the port.

Other factors that affected Ford's decision included Chennai being a major automobile components supply base, social infrastructure in terms of good schools and colleges, and excellent hospitals, and the TN State Government offering a sales tax waiver for 14 years. Cheap labour, sufficient power and power tariff concessions on a sliding scale for a four-year period, and adequate supply of piped water were the other attractions for Ford.

A.S.R.

A pay-for-use coast road?

(By A Staff Reporter)

Toll collection is expected to begin on stretches of the 165 km East Coast Road connecting Chennai to Cuddalore. The Tamil Nadu Road Development Company Ltd. (TNRDC) will soon call for bids to select the toll collection and the operation and maintenance contractors.

TNRDC, a joint venture between the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) and IL & FS, plans to spend Rs.60 crore on improvements to the road and maintain it to proper standards. Which, it feels, will make motorists willing to pay toll charges. The toll collected will help maintain the road.

TNRDC also feels that the road needs to be made safer for driving by making smoother the road's a large number of curves, some of them worrisome. There are 336 curves of which 272 are in the section upto Pondicherry.

TNRDC has appointed an expert committee to vet the documents and is waiting for the Tamil Nadu Government's nod so far as the concession agreement is concerned. Once this is ready, it will go in for a two-stage bidding process - a pre-qualification stage for toll collection, and operation and maintenance contracts, and then the actual selection of the contractors.

The proposal envisages toll collection only from the junction at Sholinganallur, about 10 km from Tiruvannamur, to Pondicherry city limits, a distance of 110 km.

Two toll stretches are planned between Sholinganallur and Pondicherry. One, a 52-km stretch between Sholinganallur and Palar, and the other 61 km between Palar and Pondicherry city limits. Toll plazas will be built on both these stretches. Concessions for multiple-users are likely.

(Continued on Page 4)

What are they planning for Anna Salai?

The one traffic plan that works in Chennai is the 4-lane scheme on Anna Salai, *The Man From Madras Musings* has always thought. But now, after years of watching it work, and nary a traffic jam on the stretch, except when the processionists take over, the planners appear to be having second thoughts on Prof. N.S. Srinivasan's scheme.

Of course there are problems with it. And of course there are accidents. But if one of the problems is the service lane, why is no attention being paid to it at all by the authorities, why isn't it being made a decent, useable road? And as for accidents, are the accidents being caused by the plan or by our drivers, the more educated of them being the more dangerous?

MMM has never been in a traffic jam on this stretch of road. And if he has had to crawl down service lanes, he has moved at a faster crawl than through the traffic jams that begin immediately after this stretch or which unsnarl themselves only on reaching the stretch.

If there are problems, ways need to be sought to solve the problems, not throw out the whole plan and go back to the mess that was, when anarchy reigned. One thing this 4-lane stretch did was, after a year's rigid enforcement, to bring about a sense of discipline — and more than a modicum of that discipline has remained. What is not needed is throwing away the baby with the bath water; let's remember the most indisciplined elements cry the loudest.

In fact, what is most needed, MMM feels, is the extension of the scheme to Kathipara Junction with regulated traffic lights, as envisaged originally by Prof. Srinivasan. And this is not going to cost the several hundred lakhs being cited as a bogey unless somebody has his hand in the till. What is simultaneously needed is improving facilities on the 4-lane regulated stretch on Anna Salai, not reverting it to the Chennai traffic jungle.

Identity question

Sashi Tharoor, successful author, eloquent speaker and a successful UN administrator came to ring in the Millennium in the country whose nationality he retains and whose passport he carries (besides the UN passport, of course) and was welcomed at several fora in Chennai to express his views on a whole range of subjects. His favourite subject appeared to be the question of Indian identity and he made his own clear by sporting well-tailored jibbas, or kurtas, if you will, with silk veshtis, or mundus, if you will, or pajamas, talking of his retained nationality, even if he lives in New York, and mentioning often enough his faith in Hinduism.

Wearing his heart on his jibba sleeve, expounding endlessly in a plummy voice and responding at

length effortlessly to any and all questions, he struck *The Man From Madras Musings* as being the spokesman India so badly needs in Washington these days (London, MMM understands, will follow whatever Washington says). With Pakistan having such suave spokespersons in Washington, impressing everyone with their grasp of English and their ability to run circles round the Americans with the language, MMM is convinced India needs Tharoor as our P.R. Manager where it most matters.

But MMM is not all that convinced on this question of Indian identity. Not only of Tharoor's but of all of us. At least on the count of longevity. MMM can't help but wonder what the rulers of the Sangam Ages thought their identity was, what the Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas and Pallavas thought theirs were, what the rulers of Vijayanagar and Sivaji thought theirs were, what the Rajput and Sikh rulers thought theirs were... and this can go on and on. Were they all Indians or were they all Hindus? And is Indian and Hindu one and the same? A look at history will raise numerous questions like this, making an Indian identity a continuous question, if you don't accept it as a latter day phenomenon.

Frankly, MMM has always thought the Indian identity has been an imposed one, the creation of India, leading to nationality and passports, a late part of our history. An unimposed view is a view of several different cultural and linguistic groups each occupying its own niche, but most of them linked together at least for the last 2000 years by a common faith. Rather like the people of the different countries of Europe being called Europeans but unable to lay stress on an European identity.

Surely if we have an Indian identity today, it is an identity created after the 18th, possibly even the 19th Century? That more than anything else, MMM feels, gave us the opportunity to listen with special empathy to the roar of the sea all along the peninsular coasts that Sashi Tharoor spoke of as part of his essential Indianness. (One naughty questioner wondered how that sound was different from that of the sea off New York, but then it seemed to MMM, she wasn't willing to let him have the literary licence she often takes.)

Identity & polity

A few days later *The Man From Madras Musings* was at another meeting where a discussion of the Indian polity in the 21st Century veered away and became a discussion focussed on the issues raised by the recent aircraft hijacking. A defeat for India, seemed to feel many in the audience echoing a local news magazine, and we should be ashamed of ourselves; in fact, the Indian identity needed to be toughened,

la la the LTTE, thundered one orator. Indeed, this monthly meeting of a group focussing on contemporary studies has become the venue for many in the audience to express their views on a variety of subjects rather than focus on the day's principal business — the views expressed by the guest speaker.

On this occasion, journalist Mukund Padmanabhan's focus, on government and the Indian people in the 21st Century, got hijacked into a discussion on the hijacking. After several rather emotional outpourings about how the Government had let the country down, a sense of reality returned to the occasion when Padmanabhan pointed out that none of those now shouting that there should have been no release of prisoners had done so during the hijack. In fact, when the families of the hostages were putting pressure on the government, no one but a few Kargil widows had mounted similar pressure on the government not to free the prisoners. The government could have done with such support on taking a hard line, but we prefer to criticise rather than stick our necks out by taking a positive stand.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Padmanabhan also pointed out, the main issue today should not be 'hard state or soft state', it should focus on the inefficiencies that let the hijack happen and continue for so long. There was obviously a systems failure; why aren't we examining that crucial issue dispassionately, instead of being passionate about the consequences of what we let happen?

MMM was intrigued by one in the audience who took the opportunity of a mike-for-all to say his bit on Kargil. As an ex-serviceman he KNEW the Pakistani intrusion could not have happened without the knowledge of India. Therefore, it was all a deep plot of the Vajpayee Government to win the election! By giving the Pakistanis the opportunity to move into unprotected areas and swallow the bait, it gave India the chance to treat this as provocation and attack them! Victory thereafter ensured election victory too. My, my, how fanciful can you get!

Primary promise

When Prof. K. Venkatasubramanian was recently felicitated on being made a Member of the Union Planning Commission, there was a galaxy of doctorates on the dais not only to detail his achievements and congratulate him but also to request him to make India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular a superpower through the

spread of computer education. Chief Guest Dr. A. Padmanabhan, Governor of Mizoram and former Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu, brought the occasion down to earth with a hard look at the greater needs of the country.

While appreciating that Information Technology would grow to great heights and have much to offer, he wondered whether it would in the process offer liberty, equality and fraternity, whether it would meet the needs of the deprived and the depressed? When it comes to dealing with such issues, we are great talkers, not great doers, he stated bluntly.

The Man From Madras Musings was pleased to note that Dr. Venkatasubramanian's mandate is to ensure primary education for ALL in the country in the next five years and that he had been assured there would be no dearth of money for that. There was money for Pokhran, now there's going to be money for basic education too, he said. The Founder Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry Central University and the former head of the Directorate of Education in Tamil Nadu was also determined to introduce an Education Development Index which would focus harder on why students failed rather than those who passed.

MMM hopes that the promise on primary education will be kept by Government as well as those it has commissioned with the task, ensuring that we have started the process of doing rather than talking.

Charity bids

When Vijay Amritraj, a full-of-fun auctioneer, put up for bids a variety of tennis memorabilia at a sumptuous Park Sheraton dinner recently, you would have thought there would have been bidding to match his enthusiasm, especially as the proceeds were for charity. But no, the response was as lukewarm as could be, even though total collections, Rs. 3.54 lakh, topped last year's.

The Man From Madras Musings was surprised that the racquet used by Mahesh Bhupathi in winning India's first-ever Grand Slam title, the French Mixed Doubles, went ONLY for Rs. 20,000 and Paes' Wimbledon doubles-winning racquet went for just Rs. 18,000, even though in both these instances bidding was a little brisker than the norm! The mounted tennis ball that Agassi played for the winning shot at the Atlanta Olympics went for a scarcely bid Rs. 50,000, and the one-week for one, including coaching and airfare, at Nick Bollettieri's Tennis Academy in Florida went for the lone bid of Rs. 75,000.

Motor racing champion Harish Samtani, who made the highest bid for the day, later do-

nated his opportunity to the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association to enable it to send a promising young boy to Florida for coaching. Some topping up in the audience enabled Vijay Amritraj to announce that two boys would be able to make the trip.

A Benz with chauffeur for a weekend's use was not bid for and went on a lone Rs. 10,000 bid only when it was offered for a week. Similarly, a signed jacket, shirt and a hat went for Rs. 10,000 only when lunch with Cedric Pioline was thrown in at the bidder's request.

It may have been fun and the Park may have spread itself out lavishly, but Chennai is obviously not the place where charities are likely to benefit hugely — at least not in public. Not even the players, including those flitting about in their own jets to below par performances, appear willing to help a cause or two. ATP tennis shows, it would appear to MMM, are for Benzes rushing about town loudly proclaiming 'Official Car of ATP Tour', skimpily dressed models making grand entrances, and cigarette promotion. How much the game gets out of it locally, MMM is not at all sure — except, perhaps, the vision of a lifestyle if you succeed.

Island tragedy

With the University of Madras's Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies being less active in organising open seminars and discussion groups after the retirement of Prof V Suryanarayan, it is the Society for Indian Ocean Studies, Madras Chapter, sparked by Prof V Sudarsen, which appears to be taking the lead in organising such meetings. It recently arranged for B S Raghavan IAS (RETD.) and Prof Suryanarayan to share their thoughts on the 1999 Presidential Elections in Sri Lanka, which they had both attended as members of an international observers' group.

With both of them agreeing, by and large, with the group's finding that the election was reasonably free and fair, the thoughts they had to offer were more on Sri Lanka's ethnic politics than on the election. *The Man From Madras Musings* was sad to note the views of both: Raghavan, a newcomer to the Island, was of the vehement view that Prabhakaran would not allow the peace process succeed, while Suryanarayan, an old Ceylon hand, was not too sanguine about the chances of peace either, but felt that some effort must continue.

The Editor of *Madras Musings*, a former Ceylon journalist, who moderated the discussion, wondered if it might not be possible for academics, journalists, former diplomats, lawyers and others of goodwill on both sides of the Palk Strait to informally meet and work out a viable political formula short of separation and try to sell it to both sides. MMM wonders whether the SIOS, a national body, couldn't take the lead in this if the idea is pushed by the local chapter.

— MMM

Looking back: 250 years ago

A skirmish of significance

It is 1746. In Europe, the War of the Austrian Succession has been raging for six years. The principal antagonists, France and Britain, despite the initial reluctance of their trading companies in India, have dragged them into the conflict. The British in Fort St George in Madras and in Fort St David in Cuddalore have been caught totally unprepared for war and faced by a brilliant French commander, Dupleix, in Pondicherry, have lost much ground. The French, in this year, have captured and occupied Madras and the British, on the verge of total defeat, are clinging on by their fingertips in Fort St David. Enter the Nawab.

• by Jaspar Utley

Both the French East India Company and the British East India Company, as well as the Dutch and Danish trading posts, operate in India under the aegis of the Mughal Emperor in Delhi. He, in turn, deals with the foreigners through his viceroy, the Nizam, in Hyderabad and the Nizam's deputy, the Nawab of the Carnatic based in Arcot.

At the beginning of this first of the Anglo-French Carnatic wars, the Nawab had enjoined both parties to stop fighting. The French and the British had proclaimed their innocence while continuing the struggle. The British had complained to Arcot when the French, against the explicit order of the Nawab, had attacked and occupied Fort St George. Nothing is as simple as it seems and there is evidence that the Nawab was well aware of the French plans and had hoped to benefit from the expulsion of the British from Madras. When it became clear that this was not going to happen, Nawab Anwar-ud-din decided to exert his authority and intervene.

He sent his son, Mahfuz Khan, at the head of a 10,000-strong army to take Fort St George from the French just as the latter had taken it from the English. He imitated the action of the French commander, Bourdonnais, and piled huge heaps of earth and bundles against the walls of the fort as a platform for his rather anti-

quoted artillery. His plan of action was to occupy Black Town (now known as Georgetown), to the north of the fort by diverting the waters of the stream that acted as a defensive moat and, at the same time, to occupy and cut off the water supply which came from a spring some miles to the north.

The French were not pleased and sent troops out of the fort and drove off the forces of the Nawab from everywhere except the spring. The following day, they followed up their previous success by sending more troops to attack the Nawab's army between the town and the spring. The Nawab's cavalry, on seeing the

the arrival of the French army from Pondicherry.

At this time, there was no bridge but the river was shallow enough to be forded at several points. Its sand banks have shifted several times over the last two hundred and fifty years but it seems likely that the Nawab's army was stationed roughly where the north end of the Adyar bridge is today and that the French forces approached to approximately the present site of the Theosophical Society.

On October 24, 1746, the French, commanded by a Swiss officer, Paradis, arrived at the river and would have seen on the opposite bank the 10,000-strong army of the Nawab. Reinforcements had been promised from the garrison in Fort St George but there was no sign of them. The French were heavily outnumbered and had no artillery, but nevertheless went on the offensive immediately. Their horses plunged into the



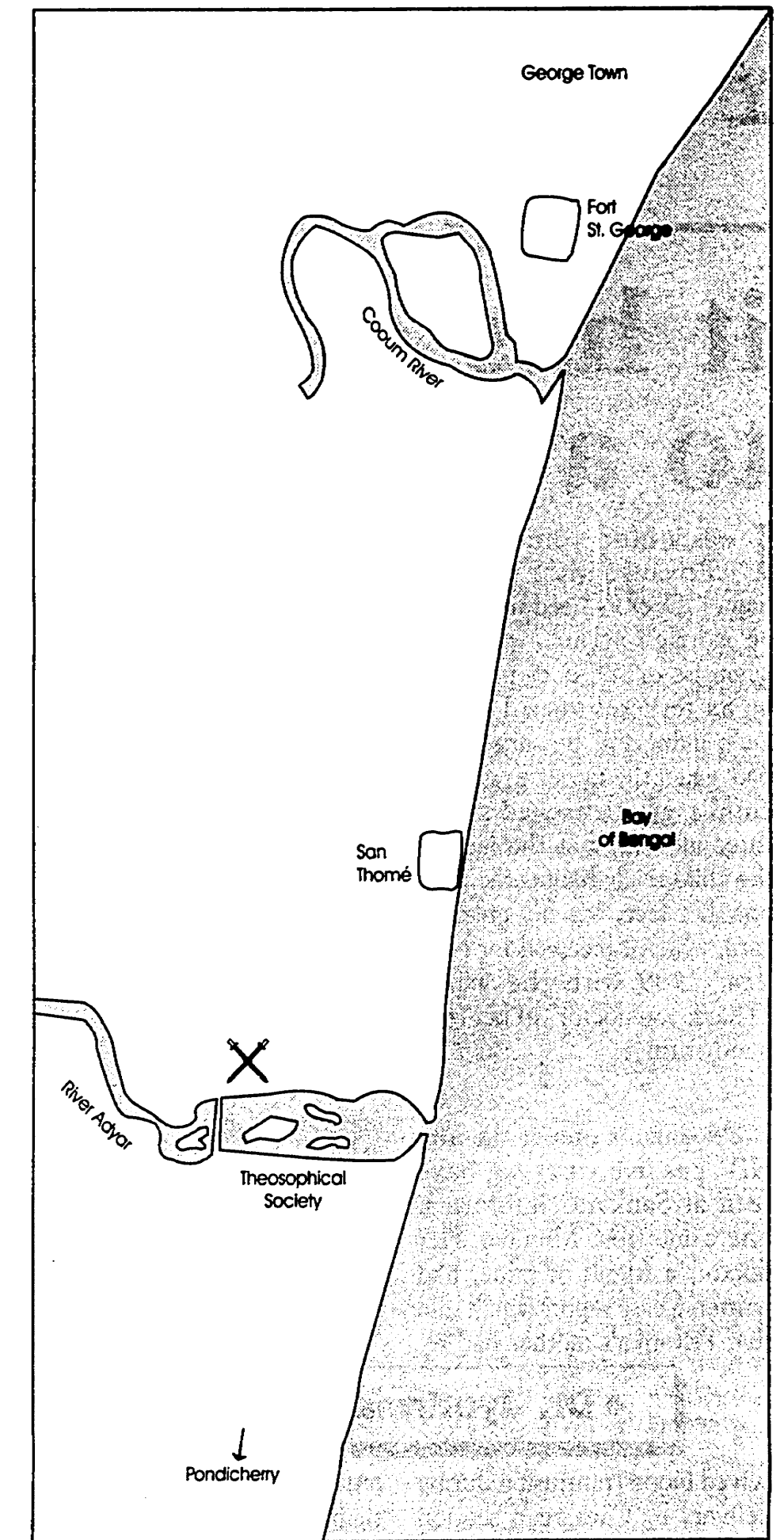
View from Brodies' Castle (College of Carnatic Music) showing the Adyar Bridge (left) and the river shallows.

French threw the cavalry into confusion and eventually they withdrew in disorder, leaving their baggage to be plundered by the French.

Maphuz Khan then ascertained that the French were expecting reinforcements from Pondicherry. Accordingly, he reassembled all his forces and marched to San Thomé, which lay about four miles south of Fort St George. In 1746, this was a separate town and, the Portuguese having long since departed, had a faded charm about it but few defences save the crumbling remnants of its city walls. The Nawab's forces took up position south of San Thomé, on the north bank of the River Adyar, and awaited

shallow waters of the Adyar, while the infantry waded with great discipline through musket and artillery fire to get at the enemy on the bank opposite.

Once on dry land, the French forces continued to advance in good order, firing their muskets and then attacking with fixed bayonets. Astonished and unnerved by the relentless and disciplined French advance, the forces of the Nawab broke up and withdrew in great disorder into San Thomé. There they were pursued through the narrow streets and many were killed before they could escape out of the town westwards. It is said that Mahfuz Khan, mounted on an elephant displaying the great



A map by the author shows where he deduces the battle was fought.

standard of the Carnatic, was one of the first to leave. Eventually, they retreated to Arcot while the French reinforcements having, at last, arrived from Fort St George proceeded to celebrate by plundering San Thomé and slaughtering any remaining troops of the Nawab hiding in the town.

The war continued with Dupleix attempting but failing to capture Fort St David in Cuddalore after an eighteen month siege. In 1748, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ended the war in Europe and thus the war in South India. By this treaty, Madras was restored to the British in 1749 and the scene was set for the next outbreak of war in the following year. This saw the rise of the man who was to prove more than a match for the brilliant Dupleix, Robert Clive. But that is another story.

The Battle of San Thomé was militarily little more than a skirmish and did little to influence the outcome of this First Carnatic War. However, it has great historical significance. On the one hand, it revealed how much the forces of the Europeans had improved in armaments and discipline since they first arrived in India. The numerous land wars in Europe had

led to a number of developments in military training, tactics and strategy which naturally were known to such men as Bourdonnais and Paradis. The forces of the Nawab, on the other hand, had not significantly altered their structure of command nor their training and tactics and still relied on large numbers, supported by elephants and old-fashioned artillery, to crush their enemies by a form of shock tactics. The Battle of San Thomé showed how a smaller but better trained and better armed force could meet and defeat a larger but ill-disciplined enemy.

Equally important, the battle revealed to the Europeans that the strength and power of the Mughals was largely a myth and that, in future, they need not be feared but manipulated or even ignored. This explains why the Second Carnatic War was fought around French and British attempts to interfere with and control the politics of South Indian rulers. It also explains why the trading companies, from this time on, raised their eyes from the attractions of trade and began to look at acquiring territory. It was the beginning of French and British imperial ambitions in India.

AIDS — and what it has done to a child

I was a little worried about Priyanka (not her real name). Doctors need not really be worried about a patient, when he or she does not turn up for review. I knew I should keep calm and be satisfied. I had asked the father to get the child's eyes checked every three months. But the face of the child really haunts me. Not only her face, but her greeting card, which I received for New Year 1999 with the words "Thank you doctor" in her own handwriting.

Priyanka is one of the 185 HIV positive cases we have seen at Sankara Nethralaya. She came from Mumbai. Her doctor, a friend of mine, had written a case report which said that Priyanka's mother had re-

ceived blood transfusion during delivery by Caesarean section and this had resulted in the HIV infection. That was about 9 years ago. No one did routine HIV screening then of blood donated. At that time, nobody knew the magnitude of the problem of HIV infection in India.

When Priyanka was born, her mother was detected to be HIV positive. After contracting multiple systemic infections, she died. Priyanka, however, was well, though she was detected as being HIV positive. In August 1997, she had vitreous haemorrhage in the right eye. She was operated on in Mumbai, but lost her vision in that eye. Now she had developed retinal haemorrhage in the remaining eye with necrosis

in one quadrant. My friend referred her to me. She had cytomegalovirus retinitis, an opportunistic infection, which occurs commonly in the eyes of AIDS patients.

Since Priyanka had not reported for review, I sent a letter to her father.

"Dear Mr.
Your daughter was last examined by us a year back and was operated for retinal detachment due to cytomegalovirus retinitis. Such a condition can recur. It is important that she gets periodic ophthalmic check up. Please get an ophthalmic evaluation done".

I received a prompt reply from Priyanka's father that she was doing well. In fact, her doctors were supposed to write to

me about her progress, but in their busy practice, they might have forgotten. I was ecstatic, when I read the line in the letter, "Priyanka has joined school".

Priyanka is just my daughter's age. Small hands, feet, and an always smiling face. Does she know that she suffers from a deadly disease? What will be her reaction, when she comes to know that she lost her vision in one eye because doctors were not aware of such things about 10 years ago? You may call it misfortune, but will this console the husband who lost his wife, the father who has an ailing child? — (Courtesy: *Eyelight*, the house journal of Sankara Nethralaya.)

WHY ARE WE ONLY FIFTH?

(Continued from Page 1)

the State from the business investment point of view, with Ford and Hyundai setting up shop in the State and investments for quite a few other major projects having come as well. Tamil Nadu will also have to overcome some of its investment weaknesses which have been spelt out by the Survey — large power deficits, high rates of tariff for industry, lowest purchasing power among all the southern states(!), and an overstrained public healthcare system. On the last two counts, the

Survey could well be questioned.

The 1999 *Business Today*-Gallup Organisation Research Project was conducted in the form of an opinion poll among a chosen sample of 107 companies, unlisted transnational corporations and fast-growth companies. Companies were represented by their CEOs. The respondents were spread over Bangalore, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Kochi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Goa, Jalgaon, Panjim, Pune, Satara and Calcutta.

What AIDS can do to the eyes

AIDS, the acronym for Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome is an infectious disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). The AIDS virus usually spreads through sexual intercourse. It can also pass through infected blood. Blood banks now routinely screen donors for HIV infection, so transmission of the virus through blood transmission has become rare.

The AIDS virus, by itself, does not kill, but it destroys vital components of the body's immune system thereby allowing other infections (such as pneumonia, tuberculosis) to invade the body, and cause serious infection that can ultimately lead to death. AIDS is looked upon as a modern plague, and is the first major pandemic of the 20th century.

India has one of the largest numbers of HIV infected persons. AIDS is no longer a disease of the West. The first published report on ocular manifestations of AIDS from India was from Sankara Nethralaya in 1995. Since then we have seen 185 HIV positive cases infection till the second half of 1999. The eye is the most common organ affected due to AIDS. Ocular involvement in AIDS is as high as 75%. Ocular lesions are varied and affect almost all structures of the eye. Patients can have ophthalmic complaints during the early phase of AIDS and this ophthalmic manifestation of the dis-

ease in fact helps in the identification of the primary HIV infection and its associated opportunistic infections.

The ocular lesions associated with AIDS can be categorised into 4 main groups.

1. Non-infectious retinopathy.
2. Opportunistic infections caused by viruses, bacteria and protozoa.
3. Unusual neoplasms, such as Kaposi's sarcoma and Burkitt's lymphoma.
4. Neuro-ophthalmic lesions.

As ocular lesions are the earliest manifestation of AIDS, the ophthalmologist has a very important role in the identification of the primary HIV infection from the suspected ocular lesions in the patients. Such patients can be treated just like other patients, but strict health care regulations should be followed while examining HIV patients to prevent the spread of HIV infection from patient to patient and from patient to healthcare personnel. Early and proper treatment can salvage their vision and improve the quality of life. When operating on known HIV-positive patients, surgeons need to observe additional safeguards beyond the universal precautions. The 'hands-free' technique of instrument transfer from the surgeon to the scrub nurse, from the scrub nurse to the surgeon, is extremely important. This technique, also called the 'no-touch' technique, mandates that neither the sur-

geon nor the scrub nurse handle any sharp instruments at the same time. A neutral zone is designated where sharp instruments are placed and then picked up by the person who next needs to handle them. Double gloving to decrease the risk of percutaneous exposure may also be a useful precaution. In Sankara Nethralaya, two patients, one with retinal detachment, another with senile cataract, were operated adopting precautions recommended by Central Disease Control, Atlanta, and The American Academy of Ophthalmology.

There has been marked advancement in understanding the disease caused by the HIV virus. The new generation of drugs, especially protease inhibitors, can reduce the viral load and prolong the life of the HIV-infected patient. But to find an effective preventive vaccination is the need of millions of people in the world who are at risk.

Our knowledge of many aspects of HIV infection and pathogenesis, including HIV-related ocular disease, is incomplete. Despite the efforts of the last decade, much work still needs to be done before this disease is adequately understood and effective treatment established. HIV will remain a significant concern of ophthalmologists, in the foreseeable future. — (Courtesy: *Eyelight*)

Dr. J.B.

Children targeted to create social awareness

A spin-off of a recent meeting on the deteriorating levels of open spaces in Chennai, organised by Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), has been a tripartite arrangement between the Corporation of Chennai, CAG and school children to form a group to be called Concerned Children of Chennai (CCC). The focus of CCC will be to create social awareness among and teach basic community management skills to school children.

Students in Classes 8 and 9 of five private and five Corporation schools in South Chennai have been chosen for CCC's initial activities. The schools and teachers are committed to supporting the venture, CAG sources state.

From 15th to 25th December 1999, students in all the

participating schools planted and adopted at least thirty trees each both inside their school campus and around nearby localities. The Corporation will provide whatever assistance is required to ensure that the adopted trees are allowed to grow and are not damaged or

removed. This will conclude the activities for this term.

In another part of the programme, children during their Christmas break collected information about the problems faced by five slum areas. This stage of the programme began with five short panel discussions on:

1. Legal awareness — rights and duties of all citizens

2. Basic health and hygiene issues
3. Community infrastructure issues-rights, responsibilities and management skills
4. Career guidance and welfare opportunities
5. Simple eco-alternatives

The direct community activity in the slums was carried out by one private school and one Corporation school teaming up to work in a slum where at least some of the Corporation school children live. This was intended to serve the dual purpose of empowering and creating awareness among children.

If the programme is found to be useful, it will be continued in nearby slums and with other disadvantaged communities by a combination of private school and Corporation school children.

By A Staff Reporter

The 21st Century world State first to standardise Tamil coding

An International Forum on Information Technology in Tamil (INFIT) was recently formed and a core group of experts, representing different sections of the Tamil-speaking world, constituted to motivate competent IT specialists all over the world to innovate and expand IT in Tamil, share capabilities and leap-frog development in a time-bound agenda. Their meeting in Sri Lanka gave a good start to INFIT, according to Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, chairman of the task force for the IT industry in Tamil Nadu.

TamilNet 2000, to take stock of the latest developments in Tamil computing, is to be organised in Sri Lanka early next year, Anandakrishnan added.

Tamil engineers and software specialists, living in various parts of the world, like Singapore, Malaysia, Europe and USA, have been developing word processing and other software applications in Tamil without observing common standards. In a bid to evolve a uniform coding system, the Department of Information Technology, Tamil Nadu, and the TamilNet '99 committee took the initiative to standardise Tamil encoding systems, equivalent to ASCII for English, early this year at the TamilNet '99. Computer experts, educationists and Tamil scholars well-versed in computers put their heads together and standardised a single coding

system that the Government of Tamil Nadu has accepted. This has helped evolve a single keyboard for Tamil.

Anandakrishnan referred to the impact of Gutenberg's invention of the printing machine: "Prior to Gutenberg, there were hundreds of dialects. The evolution of printing led to the survival of only those dialects that were adapted to the printing technology. Most other dialects died. The Tamil language developed extensively only from the 18th Century when it was adapted to printing. Likewise, only those languages that get aggressively into the computer will flourish.

"The Chinese provide an interesting example: the Chinese standardised the code almost 15 years ago.

They aggressively promoted use of the Chinese characters in the computer from the mid-Eighties. In fact, it was difficult to operate a computer in China without the Chinese password to get linked to English! And in just about a decade, this initiative helped expand the use of computers in China massively."

The Centre for Development for Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has been working on a single coding system for all Indian languages and has in fact evolved one for Tamil. But C-DAC appreciated the better inputs put in by the TamilNet and has adapted its coding system, Dr. Anandakrishnan stated.

Networking sought in Guindy, Taramani

The first step in working out 'suitable linkages' in Chennai's 'science district' — Guindy and Taramani — was taken at a recent workshop held at Science City.

There are as many as 60 scientific, technological and academic institutions of higher learning located in this area. The heads of institutions and chief librarians took part in the workshop — 'Networking of libraries among the institutions in Guindy and Taramani areas in Chennai'

— which focussed on the need for cooperative functioning among the libraries and information centres. It deliberated on the constraints in providing common membership for research scholars, scientists and academics to enable them to access other libraries. It also broadly outlined the methods to evolve a network of libraries and information centres to function more effectively. The need to establish linkages with national library networks such as SARNET, INFLIBNET, DELNET and CALIBNET and

Getting at information even in the village

Information provision, long considered the preserve of the librarian, is passing through a few paradigm shifts. One is information retrieval by the end-user direct and another is information handling by non-professionals. For instance, in a cluster of villages near Pondicherry, it is a different type of computerised information service that is provided, not by technically qualified information professional, but by village people, housewives, young persons who are enthusiastic to donate spare time and energy.

In early 1998, the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) pioneered a Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC)-sponsored pilot project to establish Village Information and Knowl-

edge Centres (IKC) at five locations around Pondicherry. The objective was to make the whole system user-controlled and demand-driven with the ultimate aim of empowering the village people and emancipating them from the shackles of a rigid hierarchical, exploitative system.

The villages chosen for their compactness and their being part of an earlier bio-villages project, have different characteristics and needs. The content creation and the design of databases took these differences into account. If, for the fishermen at Veerampattinam, the focus is on the weather conditions and the moving fish density in the sea, for the farmers it is on the prices of agricultural inputs and vegetables in the markets, and for the youth, it is on employment information.

Explaining the benefits, he said, "All software existing in different systems and platforms has been converted into the new system. Earlier, any developer created his/her own fonts and standards; all these have now been adapted to the new system. Thus a fundamental problem has been resolved. One can now enter Internet connecting Tamil developers throughout the world."

Already, farmers in the Punjab are benefiting from the Internet providing vital information on weather and the market. Flourishing co-operatives in Maharashtra are networking villages in the state. The M S Swaminathan Research Foundation has been developing information villages in Pondicherry (training women to become computer literate). All these will expand manifold with the spread of information technology in the local languages.

Anandakrishnan is confident that the standardised codified system for Tamil will gain wide currency in the next year or two. Luckily, the timing of this standardisation is perfect, synchronising with ex-

Even bus timings, emergency medical facilities and auspicious timings are not overlooked.

Sense of ownership of the information system and voluntary work are emphasised in the hope that after the 3-year project period, sustainability is assured. The information centres are networked and connected to the hub in the Project Office near Pondicherry and even farther afield to the MSSRF in Chennai.

In the fast spreading new information scenario, there will be need for varying levels of sophistication in information handling. And even simple methods of retrieval of pre-processed information coming out of computer terminals is as important as information gatekeeping in a sophisticated research centre. — (Courtesy: *MALA Newsletter*.)

panding sales of computers. Some five years ago, the population of PCs in the State was just around 10,000. Today, it is believed to be in the region of 3.5 lakh. Annual sales are now estimated between a lakh and 1.5 lakh. With WorldTel getting ready to start operations shortly, over a thousand villages in the state are expected to be provided with Internet connectivity and capability to use these in Tamil.

We still have a long way to go to make up for time lost. Several technical areas need improving and developing. To this end, the Tamil Nadu government has set up a separate department for information technology. This department has been accessing expertise through a powerful committee and implementing programmes with speed. A budget of Rs.5 crore has been provided. A talented group of specialists has been assembled from the Madras University, MIT, IIT and other specialised institutes. Under Prof. C.N. Krishnan of MIT, Internet development and the mechanics of downloading the voluminous information in Tamil in the Internet world-wide are being pursued.

Anandakrishnan referred to the considerable work done on developing content, technology and e-commerce, simplifying the rather complicated structure of the Tamil language.

The Tamil Nadu Government has been backing all these efforts to the hilt by funding and identifying dedicated specialists. — (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*.)

OUR READERS WRITE



Issues that need taking up

The Chennai Think Tank (MM, October 16th) should think of taking up issues concerning a larger section of society, such as

- Availability of fresh water to every citizen.
- Harvesting rainwater, a large quantity of which at present goes waste.
- Problems of air, noise and water pollution.
- Improving public transport facility.
- So-called development projects that are implemented without taking the interests of the society at large. For example, the construction of flyovers in various parts of the city, construction of stormwater drains etc.
- The problem of apathy among government staff and the lack of efficiency in various government departments dealing with the public.

- Solid waste management — handling of garbage.
- The need for Corporation urinals and toilets for public use in various parts of the city.
- Creating awareness among different sections of the society (including politicians, bureaucrats, elected representatives, judges and the general public) regarding various civic and environment issues.
- Controlling urbanisation, which is on the increase and saving the city from becoming a concrete jungle.
- Setting up of 'watchdog committees' consisting of eminent persons in every locality.

Sekhar Raghavan
D15, Bayview Apartments
Kalakshetra Colony
Besant Nagar,
Chennai 600 090

Pile-driving in Court

Mention of the buildings of Bombay Mutual and State Bank of Mysore (MM, December

16th) brings to memory the controversy over the erection of pile foundation for these buildings. As the huge cylindrical hammer was ramming the ground, the impact began to affect the foundations of the adjoining buildings and the owners of these buildings went to the Court to restrain the construction of the new buildings. Subsequently, the Court ordered that the new buildings be constructed in such a manner that the driving of the piles would not affect the adjacent buildings. It was then that the construction was allowed to proceed. I remember this episode and background of these two buildings.

T. M. Sundaraman
19 Nallappan Street
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004

Trams again?

Madras Tramways Co. was formed in 1874. The trams ran on D.C. (before D.C. the trams were pulled by horses).

The tram fares in Madras were:

Main Lines	Miles	Fare
Royapuram to Egmore	3 1/4	Rs.As.P. 0-1-6
" to Barber's Bridge	6	0-1-9
" to San Thomé	7	0-2-6
Washermanpet to Barber's Bridge	6 1/2	0-1-6

Branch Lines
Broadway to Washermanpet 1 1/4 0-1-0
" to Purasawalkam 2 1/2 0-1-3
Central Station to Elephant Gate 5/8 0-0-6

I would not be surprised if trams are once again seen on the roads as an answer to pollution caused by motor vehicles. Tramways have been revived in Manchester, UK.

We may not see those fares again, but will we follow the lead of cities bringing back trams?

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

Ramachandra's honeycomb

I have seen and read a whole article on Ramachandra (MM, December 16th) written by E. Muses, a Canadian, in the *Mathematics Intelligence*, a German publication but which came out in English. I bought and presented this issue to one of my friends, so I do not have it with me. The article, however, was about a presentation by Ramachandra from New Delhi which one of his admirers had printed and circulated to his peers. Mention was made in the article to his mathematical treatment of the Bee's Honeycomb and how he concluded it was the most economical method to build storage for honey.

This issue of *Mathematics Intelligence*, published in June or July or August 1998, also stated that the admirer of Ramachandra was comparable to Ramanujan's Hardy.

S. Kunjithapadham
'Aditya', Plot No.486
111rd South Main Road,
Kapaleeswarar Nagar,
Neelankarai,
Chennai 600 041.

Siva, Siva!

Two temples near Poonamallee are as old as or even older than the period of Adi Sankara and are sung by such great Saivaites saints as Sekizhar and Kovur Kizhar.

One temple near the Poonamallee bus stand is dedicated to Lord Vaitheeswaran and His mother Thayyal Nayaki. This temple is a replica of Vaitheeswaran Koil. There are three Sri Chakras installed by Adi Sankara in a dark corner. An engineering marvel to be seen only in this temple is sun's rays fall on the main deity at dawn for five days, the 21st to 25th day of Masi.

The other temple, again dedicated to Lord Siva, is situated in Kovur, a village between Porur and Kunnathur. This is a massive temple and is better maintained than the one at Poonamallee. The avenue trees leading to the *gopuram* are a sight to see.

Both temples require immediate attention by both the ASI and the Government.

A Venugopal
VI Annai Velankanni Nagar
Phase-I-Extn.
Madanandapuram
Chennai 600 116.

Details sought

About 20 years ago I saw a letter mentioned that there was a river in Tiruvottriyur area and it covered Vadivudayal Temple, TVT, and also crossed through the present Carborundum Plant. Hence these areas were not affected by water shortage.

Is there a reader who could provide more details?

P K Krishnan
Carborundum Universal Ltd.,
Chennai 600 019.

Mangroves needed

It is worthwhile to note that the recent cyclone havoc in Orissa was partly due to the destruction of mangrove forests on the coasts which gave way to shrimp farms. Tom Spencer, Cambridge Coastal Research Unit, Cambridge University, has correctly observed that mangrove forests would have dissipated the wave energy on the sea-bed had there been a shallow slope. The winds ranging 300 kph struck the coast and reached Bhubaneswar 50 km away from coast. India has lost half its mangrove forests in the last 40 years. Otherwise this would have acted as a shock absorber.

R. Shantha
11A, 11th Cross Street
Indira Nagar,
Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

Tales a statue recalls

The statue of Rev. Dr. Miller (MM, December 16th) was erected on Esplanade Road close to the compound of the High Court. To prevent the pedestal of the statue being dirtied, a small parapet and an ornamental iron fencing in keeping with the High Court compound was erected. It jutted out of alignment of the road border. When more buses began to be stationed at Parry's Corner bus terminus, it became an impediment to smooth flow of traffic. Hence the statue was moved inside the High Court compound and stood there for some years in the company with that of Justice Bashyam Iyengar, but more or less neglected till shifted to the MCC High School precincts in 1985.

When Madras Christian College shifted to Tambaram in 1937, a need was felt for a statue of Dr. Miller there. The College authorities were reluctant to shift the existing statue of Dr. Miller from Parry's Corner as it formed an important landmark. So a bust of Dr. Miller was installed in the principal foyer of the College at Tambaram.

During the Quit India agitation in 1942, some misguided students removed this statue and hid it in the bushes that surrounded the College building. This greatly shocked the college authorities. A meeting of students was called and the Principal, Rev. A.J. Boyd, made a fervent appeal for the restoration of the statue to its rightful place and stated that the perpetrators would not be penalised. He stressed that Dr. Miller was an educationist and did not have any truck with the ruling junta of those days. His impassioned appeal had its effect. The statue was restored back on the pedestal as mysteriously as it had disappeared!

The photograph I enclose with this letter (one of our OLD this fortnight) is of the Dr. Miller statue in the High Court compound. I could not get a better picture as the statue was in the thick shadow of the trees surrounding it. The picture was taken in the late Sixties. As mentioned above, the statue was moved to Chetput, but what happened to the trees?

M. Sethuraman
"Sanskriti"
8, Second Cross Street
Mahalaxmi Nagar
Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

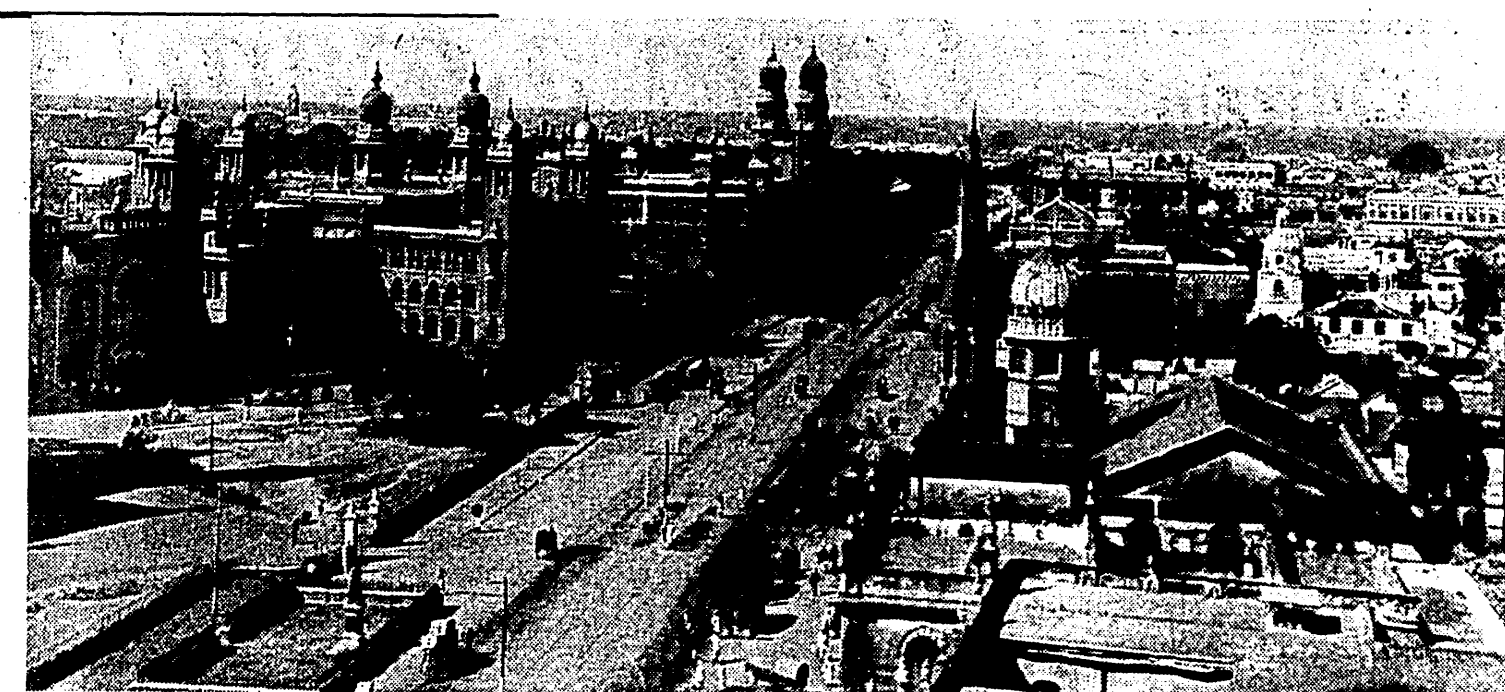
C.A. Reddi, another regular contributor to *Madras Musings*, recalls Miller too, through the words of C.R. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, The Andhra University, who contributed 'A Few Reminiscences' to *The Hindu* of June 28, 1937,

on the occasion of the centenary of the Madras Christian College, an event he described as "the greatest event in the history of education in South India". He writes:

"I passed my Matriculation from the Chittoor High School in 1896. Dr. Miller, probably the greatest of Principals and educational organisers that ever shone on the Indian horizon, had a way of attracting the brighter boys from the mofussil by the award of District Scholarships to be determined by a competitive examination. I may add that Dr. Miller was a great believer in the mofussil youth, who certainly possessed, generally speaking, stronger bodies and saner minds than the somewhat neurotic youth of Madras. I was so fortunate as to win the scholarship for my year.

In my time, Anderson was a living name. The Anderson Hall was a constant reminder of that historic personality, but he was chiefly a name, and not a direct influence. Dr. Miller was the presiding genius, and none could have presided with greater genius. As a judge of youth, he was incomparably the knowingest. He had an uncanny second sight, an instinct which easily and unerringly sifted the grain from the dross. He had a preference for the more spirited lads, that is to say the more naughty who were always making mischief or getting into trouble. I became his favourite over the following episode, which perhaps deserves to be narrated as showing the revolutionary change in values that has since come upon the country.

It was in 1897, I was a fresher and one of the youngest of the freshers. I was a denizen of the Second Students' Home, then reserved for Non-Brahmins. Mr. Tilak had just been sentenced for sedition — the first penal recognition his patriotism obtained from Government — and a senior member had got hold of a photo of Tilak, framed it and put it up in the Hostel Hall, all of his own accord. Soon after, there was a general meeting, at which Dr. Miller presided. He noticed the criminal photo and asked angrily — though it was all, I think, pretended — who had put up that photo there. Not one would reply or own up. So, I the Bengamin, my racial self-respect roused, got up and said — "We all put it up." Dr. Miller grew very sarcastic about 'Master Ramalinga Reddy', and asked if 'Master Ramalinga Reddy' would like to have it as a present since it would have to be removed and as he appeared to be such an admirer of Mr. Tilak; to which 'Master Ramalinga Reddy' retorted that he was rich enough to buy one for himself, if he wanted to, and did not need



The OLD & The NEW

Our OLD and NEW featuring the Madras Christian College and School buildings on Esplanade Road (MM, December 16th) generated the correspondence alongside which focussed on the Miller statue mentioned in the article a month ago. Our OLD and NEW this fortnight illustrate the peregrinations of the statue. In the OLD above, the statue as when erected, the picture from the VINTAGE VIGNETTES collection clearly showing the enclosure jutting into Esplanade Road. Reader Sethuraman's picture, on left, shows the enclosure removed and the statue relocated inside what was then a tree-rich High Court garden. Our NEW (below) are of the original statue at its present location on the MCC HSS campus in Chetput and the bust of Miller in the Tambaram campus. (Photographs of the NEW by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



The Emden and British arrogance

K.N. Prabhu writes:

I send you a passage from *The Last Cruise of the Emden* by Edwin P. Hoyt, based on the chronicles of Kapitän-Leutnant Helmut von Müller who returned home from the long trip. This would point to a small discrepancy in Rear Admiral K. Sridharan's (Retd.) letter, *The Emden episode* (MM, December 16th). The attack was at 9 p.m. but the *Emden*, as Admiral Sridharan points out, raised Madras Lights at 8 p.m.

Incidentally a shrapnel from the *Emden* was embedded in a wall of one of the lower classes (ground floor external right hand corner) of the school St. Mary's where I studied (1938-1939).

There was a time when *Emden* was an epithet of praise — *Avan Emden Saar* — in Madras. During World War II, it used to be Timoshenko, the Soviet hero, who rolled back the Germany in the Ukraine.

* * *

The passage reads:

The captain slowed his ship on the afternoon of September 22. He did not wish to arrive in Madras too soon, for it was to be a night attack. The afternoon was spent bringing in the hammocks and the awnings from the decks and stowing them safely below, out of the reach of fire. The ammunition in the turrets was doubled. The log was secreted in a place off the bridge, safe from shells.

After lunch the officers were called to a meeting by First Officer von Mücke. He outlined the duties and responsibilities of every

officer at his action station and established the chain of command for the future should he and the captain be killed in this attack. The men then took fresh-water baths. If there were to be wounds, the captain wanted the men as prepared as possible to resist infection.

Toward evening the *Markomannia* was detached, and a rendezvous was made. She would be nothing but a hindrance to the *Emden* in such an action and was best sent safely away. They would meet again the next morning if the *Emden* was successful.

At dark the fourth funnel was set. The *Emden* had made sparing use of it in the Bay of Bengal, and no one was quite sure whether the enemy had discovered its use or not. In any event, with the fourth funnel attached the *Emden* did look like a British cruiser and there was a good chance that she could move almost onto the city without detection.

The arrogance of the British was unbounded, the Germans discovered at eight o'clock when the Madras light came in sight. The light was burning brightly, a beacon to any enemy in the vicinity. Of course, there was only one enemy in all the Indian Ocean, and that was the *Emden*, but the crew of the German cruiser found the carelessness of the British both contemptible and in keeping.

Madras expected anything but an attack — so much was apparent as the *Emden* steamed toward the city. The city spread

along the beach for sixteen miles, inland for about eight miles. Throughout, Madras was as brightly lighted as in peacetime; the glow of the lights illuminated the shore clearly and could be seen very far out at sea. The harbour lights burned brightly, showing the installations and particularly the *Emden*'s target, the red-striped white tanks of the Burma Oil Company.

Around nine o'clock, as the ship steamed forward, the captain ordered the men to battle stations and the war watch was resumed. The *Emden* increased her speed and came in at seventeen knots. She still had reserves in case she needed them.

At NINE-FORTY-FIVE (Prabhu's emphasis) the ship reached a point about 2,500 yards off the beach and stopped. The ship's searchlights began to play, to fire and the first salvo cracked out in the night over the starboard side. The first shells overshot the oil tanks and hit the battery on the other side in Fort St. George. But soon the gunners found their aim and flame began to spurt from the tanks. Other shots were fired into a steamer, and still others were sent into the city. In all, 125 rounds were fired. The oil tanks burned brightly, casting light across the city, to match the flashes of the guns on the *Emden*. The British manned their artillery, or part of it, but not a single shot fell closer to the *Emden* than a hundred yards, and most of the men on the ship did not even know that the British guns were firing at them.

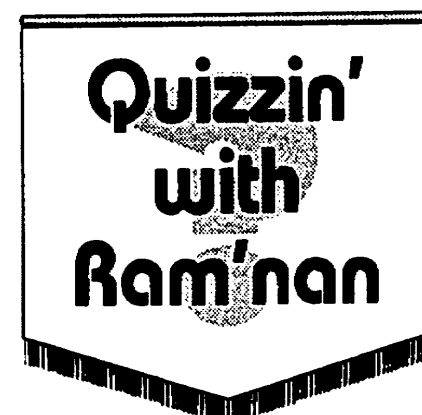
Most of the harbour guns,

however, were unmanned, perhaps because a large dinner was in progress at the Madras Club that night, celebrating the news of yesterday: the announced sinking of Germany's one ship in Indian waters, the *Emden*. The celebrators were in the dining room when a servant padded in to call their attention to the fires burning brightly in the harbour and in the town.

The wind was blowing offshore that night, and this lucky fact probably saved half the town from burning. But as the *Emden* fired her last shot and turned north, the fires were burning brightly enough to suit the captain. He had expended all the ammunition he cared to on this target, and he felt that he had accomplished his purpose, brought surprise to the enemy and destruction to one of his major cities. For one lonely light cruiser this was no little accomplishment.

All night long the fires flamed in Madras. The crew of the *Emden* could see them as the ship reversed her course and turned south again, and when they were ninety miles out at sea the sky was still aglow.

The *Emden* steamed now past Pondicherry, the French Colony south of Madras, hoping to find some ships at anchor there or in the harbour at Cuddalore, but there were none lying in the roads outside. The cruiser moved on to make its rendezvous, with the *Markomannia*, then steamed ahead, eastward, apparently to confuse any watchers ashore. Out of sight of land the ships turned south....



(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period December 16th to 31st. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai and Questions 13 to 20 are general questions pertaining to Tamil Nadu.)

1. In Time magazine's poll for 'Person of the Century', with whom did Gandhi share second place, behind Albert Einstein?
2. Simple. Name the flight number of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane.
3. Which national newspaper celebrated its platinum jubilee on December 16th?
4. Who were recently honoured with Best Parliamentarian Awards for 1997 and 1998?
5. Which place under Portuguese rule for 442 years reverted to China on December 19th?
6. Where was the foundation stone for the prestigious Indian School of Business laid?
7. Desmond Llewellyn, a British actor, died in a car crash recently. For which famous character's portrayal is he remembered?
8. One of the worst oil spills resulted when an oil tanker broke in two and split 10000 tonnes of crude off the coast of Brittany, France. What was the tanker's name?
9. Name the mid-car, aimed at premium segment, launched by Maruti Udyog Ltd. in association with Suzuki on December 25th.

* * *

10. What new facility has been introduced at the Government Museum from December 16th?
11. Where in the city was the 'Rajni-25' theme exhibition held?
12. Which famous historical edifice on the beach-front in Triplicane was opened by the Chief Minister on December 20th after it had been renovated?

* * *

13. In which temple is the lingam called the *Prithivi Lingam*, one of the *pancha lingas* of South India?
14. As the result of ingenious construction, what happens at the Gandhi Memorial in Kanniya-kumari on October 2nd every year?
15. At the confluence of which two rivers does the Sangameswarar Temple, near Erode, stand?
16. How long is the corridor, the longest in India, at the Ramanathaswami Temple in Rameswaram?
17. Which anthology is considered the earliest record of its kind, in the history of Tamil is concerned?
18. Which place with a historic fort is associated with Raja Desingh?
19. According to legend, which bustling place was originally a forest known as Kadambavanam?
20. Who is the popular film personality called *Iyakunar* Sikham?

(Answers on Page 9)

From a mami's world to heritage

"You write it and it is over, it is no longer your property," smiles Mary Hancock, patting her book *Womanhood in the Making: Domestic, Ritual and Public Culture in Urban South India*. She recollects the joy of writing the book. More the joy of meeting the women who became the subject of the book. Many have had their names changed in the book for reasons of privacy. "But meeting these unpretentious women was such a joy and such a revelation," she recalls.

Mary Hancock became fascinated with India when she was doing graduate study in Philadelphia. She had a teacher of anthropology, named Rajan who inspired her to learn Tamil. She had also met Deborah Thiagarajan, who was visiting Philadelphia at the time, completing her doctoral work on *Surya worship in Indian iconography*. And so she decided to head for Tamil Nadu in 1985.

It was quite by chance that Mary Hancock arrived in Madras during the Navaratri celebrations. And she became interested in studying the Smartha women of Madras who combined housework, ritual and social work. Being Jewish, Mary Hancock related to the need for women to combine their artistic embroidery and aesthetic skills with religion and ritual. "Judaism has a similar

home base for ritual activity and expression," she points out. When she saw several *kolu* displays that were original but traditional and combined all these skills of women, she began to interview the women about the religious and ritual activities they practised at home. Learning about them infused life into the objects. Several objects were reminders of family history and legends. She discovered

many dimensions to these activities of the women. Yet, the women were strong, modern persons who pursued careers or did a lot of social work and had a very broad outlook on life.

"I learnt a lot from Mee-nakshi Mami, for instance," remembers Mary Hancock. "Mami was a Srividya disciple, very open-minded and had great enthusiasm for whatever

• by V.R. Devika

A question of belief

• Amongst the greetings the new year brought in was yet another one that struck an extra chord. This one, from Vandana and Vaishnavi of The Banyan Family, featured the following on page 1:



THE THING ALWAYS HAPPENS
THAT YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN;
AND THE BELIEF IN A THING
MAKES IT HAPPEN.

-FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT.

And on page 3 it read:

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO
THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE
BEAUTY OF THEIR DREAMS

The new millennium belongs to people like you who specialise in the impossible. You've taught us that it's the attitude at the start of a difficult undertaking which determines its outcome... That the time is always right to do what is right... That there's no such thing as no chance... That in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles... And that where there is life, there is hope.



Mary Hancock

teaching at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and has recently been given tenure. Her partner, Toby Lazarowitz, has endured quite a bit of movement because of Mary moving around universities. He too is now at the university in Santa Barbara as the Director of Policy, Publication and Analysis. He had been doing anthropological studies in East Timor in 1970 when the Indonesian Government moved in and he had to vacate. Mary plans to give a talk on her experiences in writing the book, at a lecture meeting organised by Ranvir Shah's Prakriti Foundation in January.

Mary Hancock is now working on a new subject for research: 'Heritage Consciousness in Chennai and its relationship to civic affairs'. She plans to study organisations like INTACH, EXNORA and CAG, look at their activities, attend meetings, examine environmental consciousness as related to social movements and how they, in turn, relate to changing economy in South India. She also plans to examine the challenges of liberalisation and the issue of large organisations vs. small local organisations in this context.

The study became possible with a writing fellowship she received. And now the book is out. Mary Hancock is at present

Stepping out

I have just returned after 2 1/2 months of helping with the shooting of *The Return of the Thief of Bagdad* in Rajasthan. The film stars the Telugu superstar Chiranjeevi and Jason Connery (son of Sean Connery) and was shot on location in Udaipur, Jodhpur and in the desert surrounding the town of Jaisalmer. It's being produced by an American company and is directed by a Frenchman who operates out of L.A.

After several days of being on the road on location, I sought solace and comfort at the 'Chucker Bar' at the Ratanada Polo Palace in Jodhpur.

Run by the Royal Family, who were world champion polo players in days gone by, this oasis of gentility, hospitality and genuine care was a welcome relief from the dust and grind of film making. Adorning one of its walls, I found this gem:

Cricket as explained to a foreign visitor

1. You have two sides, one out in the field and one in.

2. Each man that's in the side that's in, goes out and when he's out, he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out.
3. When they are all out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out.
4. Sometimes you get men still in and not out.
5. When both sides have been in and out including the not outs, that's the end of the game!

While I was away, two events took place outside Chennai. The first was Anita Ratnam's *Daughters of the Ocean* which premiered at the Habitat Centre in Delhi. DOC, for short, was based on the book of the same title written by Shobita Punja. Using narrative and dance, the show was pathbreaking in many ways and rose out of intensive improvisation supervised by Krishna Devanandan. While audiences raved, the press was equally full of praise.

(Continued on Page 10)

Through theatre to a future

M Rajesh, a student of Madras Christian College Higher Secondary School, comes third in class. He also scores 93 per cent in Mathematics. What's special about that? Well, two things really. Rajesh, a product of the Corporation Middle School in Chetput, has been able to successfully compete against English medium students. And that has been possible because he is also a product of The Little Theatre, which conducts creative workshops at the Corporation Middle School, helping less socio-economically fortunate children like Rajesh to acquire the skills needed to compete with the best.

Five years ago, The Little Theatre started conducting creative workshops at the Corporation Middle School for stu-

dents of Classes 7 and 8. Apart from classes in spoken English, the children were taught the basics in pottery-making, screen printing, shadow play and puppetry. Drama workshops and 3-D projects were additions in 1999. Classes are

• by
Sashi Nair

held every Wednesday afternoon through the academic year.

Each year, four students — two girls and two boys — are selected by The Little Theatre for sponsorship, from Class 9 up to graduate level, and admitted to the Seva Sadan and the Madras Christian College HS School. The selection is based on a written test in

English and Mathematics, followed by interviews with the short-listed students and their parents. Rajesh, who is now in Class 12, is likely to be sponsored by The Little Theatre for an engineering course at Anna University if he qualifies, as everyone expects him to.

Aysha Rau, the founder of The Little Theatre says, the less privileged children in the City's Corporation schools are as intelligent as their 'convent'-educated counterparts. All they need is a helping hand to help develop their creativity and personality in order to open out a whole new world to them. Her initiative has over the last few years received welcome support from the Chennai Corporation's Education Department.

The response to The Little Theatre's programme from chil-

dren and parents has been so overwhelming that, for the first time, students from the Corporation Middle School, Chetput, put on in 1998 a street theatre production, sponsored by the Chennai Corporation and Pizza Corner. Through cameos, song and dance, socially relevant themes — literacy, a clean environment, healthy habits and thrift — were projected to enthusiastic slum audiences in Dhobigana, Chetput; Makay's Garden, Thousand Lights; Boag Road, T'Nagar;

Jothiammal Nagar, Saidapet; Mallipoo Nagar, Adyar; Pachakkal Veerasamy Street, Aynavaram and Bander Garden School, Perambur. Chennai Corporation Mayor MK Stalin, and film star Suhasini were the chief guests at two of the shows. Annual street plays are planned.

Aysha Rau set up The Little Theatre in 1995. Apart from activities at the Corporation Middle School, Chetput, the group also provides children in the 5-14-year age group, from some of Chennai's elite schools, a forum for extra-curricular activity. Children are taken for excursions and camps, from which experiences they emerge with a much broader outlook to life.

During the past five years, The Little Theatre has gained considerable presence with its Christmas pantomime shows. Several Little Theatre children have acted in these pantomimes which project in the triumph of good over evil.

Little Theatre productions have included *The Little Mermaid*, *Snow White* and *The Travelling Circus*, *The Frog Prince* and the *Royal Catwalk*, *Puss 'N' Boots*, and in 1999, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. The story for each of these pantomimes is specially scripted, with a twist in the tale and a judicious mix of the old and the contemporary. Jasper Utley, Director of British Council Division, turned his skills to scripting *Ali Baba*, while wife Megan took over the direction and brought the house down.

Rau is planning for *Cleopatra*, an all-time favourite, as her pantomime for next Christmas. The terrific response from the children of The Little Theatre and the audience to the pantomimes has also enthused her to plan a musical mid-2000. According to her, the musical has been inspired by a Mahesh Dattani workshop she had attended. All that she is willing to divulge is that the story will be about a poodle befriending a chimpanzee at a shopping mall and both of them deciding to run away together!



Street theatre being performed by the children of the Corporation Middle School, Chetput.

Three additions to The Season

(By A Staff Reporter)



Mylapore Times, a neighbourhood newspaper, took another step forward in December when it launched a website and newspaper for the kutcheri season.

It started the season with *Kutcheri Buzz Guide*, a pocket guide listing the major concerts, profiling the chief artistes and providing a wealth of information for rasikas, students and parents.

Mylapore Times followed this up during the peak kutcheri season, by bringing out a 2-page tabloid sized newsletter every evening called *Kutcheri Buzz*. 3500 copies were distributed at the main sabhas free every evening before the concerts began.

The newspaper became something like the 'official' newspaper of the kutcheri season. The two pages contained a celebrity column, report of concerts, a quiz, snippets on the season's main show and the sideshows.

Next was launched a special website for the kutcheri season, www.kutcheribuzz.com. The site includes photographs, interviews, features, a 'World Stage' providing info/news on Indian cultural events abroad as well as details of the tours and exchange programmes of south Indian artistes, sidelights of the season, a menu bar with data of all main concerts, artistes' pro-

Kutcheri Buzz

Brought to you by MYLAPORE TIMES

Shanti Dance Needs will have its own hall in 2000

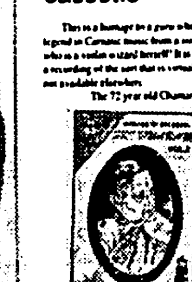
Shanti Dance Needs, a shop in North Madras Street, Mylapore, which caters to the needs of all the dancers, has been busy for some time and will be even busier in 2000. But this year has not been its quietest and busyest due to the renovation of the hall. Last year, when the shop moved to its new premises, the renovation was underway. The hall was under renovation on North Madras Street, Mylapore, is expected to be completed by December 2000. During Shanti Dance Needs, the shop gives attention to the artistes and their needs.

"We do not collect money and there is no membership. The expenses of the shop are met by the artistes themselves," says Mani.



COLLECTORS CASSETTE

Homage to violinist Dwaram - on cassette



files, sabhas, dance and music schools, shops to buy/repair etc. (data compiled for the Guide), a section for ordering CDs/cassettes through a music shop, a 'Window to Madras' providing information about the city, and a column called 'Letter from

Madras' by the site's editor, Vincent D'Souza.

Kutcheri Buzz promises to become a monthly, and may be even a fortnightly, after The Season and the website is here to stay, D'Souza told *Madras Musings*.



Since its beginning in 1975, Shared Experience Theatre has been instrumental in pioneering an exciting and distinctive performance style that celebrates the union of physical and text-based theatre. This is the company's second theatre tour of India. Chennai audiences will find it hard to forget their production of *Mill on the Floss* which they brought here in 1995. (At the Music Academy. Invitations on a first-come, first-served basis available at the British Council.)

February 1: 'A Grand Millennium Concert' by Ustad Zakir Hussain, Kadri Gopalnath, Haridwar-mangalam Palanivel presented by The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu.

Donor cards will be available at The Music Academy from January 26th (At The Music Academy at 6.30 p.m.)

January 18: Poetry reading and a poetry exhibition (At 6.30 p.m. at the Lecture Hall, British Council.)

January 23 (7.00 p.m.) and 24 (3.00 p.m.): Shared Experience's *Jane Eyre* combines the stunning visual imagery and powerful performance style that have become the company's hallmark.

Polly Teale's assured adaptation is grounded in a powerful personal vision of the novel, exposing the bare psychological bones, and has been described as "riveting spectacle".

The Presidency heroes

That English cricketing researcher, M.C. Spurrier, looking for more information on Madras cricketers who had won gallantry awards during World War II (November 16, 1996) recently sent *Madras Musings* a few more names with some details, hoping to get still more. The best-known name in the list is that of **The Hon Sir Arthur Hope**, the 2nd Baron Rankeillour., GCIE, MC, the last British Governor of Madras (1940-46). But since Sir Arthur won his Military Cross during World War I, we presume this assiduous researcher is spreading his search wider.

Sir Arthur, who was related to the Duke of Norfolk, played in several matches for the Duke's XI which always was allotted a touring team's first fixture in England. In the 20's and 30's, he also led a 'Hope XI' in an annual fixture against the Duke's XI. In Madras, Sir Arthur turned out for the MCC and it was indeed a rarity for

the day when he played in first division league matches against teams comprising those he governed.

Sir Arthur was Captain Arthur Hope in the Coldstream Guards and fought in France during World War I. He was wounded in action and mentioned in despatches and was awarded the Military Cross and France's Croix de Guerre.

Brigadier A.L. Shaw of the Green Howards served in India from 1923-36. He was Adjutant to the Madras Contingent, A.F.I. from 1932-1935. An enthusiastic cricketer, he played for the Regiment and represented the Europeans in the Presidency matches of 1934 and 1936 and the Presidency vs. India in 1934. He commanded the 1st Bn. from 1940 and led it during the invasion of Sicily, where the battalion assaulted the beaches and fought their way inland to Catalonia. For his services in the Sicily campaign, he was

awarded the D.S.O. and mentioned in despatches.

Col. W V H Robins, was commissioned into The King's Own Royal Regiment.

He served with the 2nd Bn. in India, in the 1920s and then was posted back to India to join the 1st Bn. in Madras, where he became Adjutant in 1939.

In Italy, during the World War II, he was appointed to command 2nd Bn. The King's Regiment in 1944. It was with 2 King's that he was awarded the DSO, the Battalion having distinguished itself at the Rapido Crossing prior to the final assault on Monte Casino.

He played cricket for Staffordshire as a young man and cricket and football for the Army in the 1930's. He also excelled at Golf and Squash. He played for the Europeans of the Presidency in Madras in 1938 and 1939.

(To be concluded)

Sir Arthur recalled

The last match of the 1936 season against Arthur Hope's XI achieved special recognition with the emergence of the first Arundel Castle cricketing poet laureate, the Hon. Reggie Winn. One of the sons of Lord Headley and St. Oswald, he had been playing occasional matches for the Duke since 1934. On this occasion, he contrived with a fine display of impartiality to incorporate the names of eight of the Hope XI and seven members of the home team in the lines which follow:

*Cricket on the Castle Green,
Everybody very keen.*

*Lovely girls, and charming boys,
Lots of mirth and lots of noise.
Stanyforth, with royal mien,
Bats as if before the Queen.
Cecil never lets us down,
In for life, the silly clown.
Cosmo, keen as mustard still,
Swallows many a bitter pill.
The ball is nestling in a thicket,
Harrow's missed another wicket.
Arthur Hope, the clumsy lout,
Receives the ball upon the snout.
Masterman's a clever bowler,
But he needs the heavy roller.*

*Eldon's like a canny Scot,
When he bowls, he thinks a lot.*

(From *Cricket at the Castle. One hundred years of cricket at Arundel 1895-1995* — by Sir Michael Marshall. Pub.: Boundary Books)

Sir Arthur's contribution to the game in Madras is remembered in *The Spirit of Chepauk*, the story of the Madras Cricket Club, with this anecdote among other records: ... "he never seemed to top 35; Tony Johnstone relates that the joke in cricketing circles was that the time he took to make those runs was the longest he could stay without a chota peg."



Captain AOJ Hope with the ladies at Arundel in the 1930s (above) and Governor Sir Arthur Hope (below) in Madras in the 40s with CP Johnstone and HP Ward (right) at the MCC.



STEPPING OUT

(Continued from Page 8)

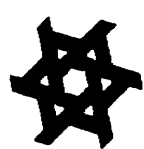
The second was a major art show by Asma Menon at the Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai. Described as one of the best shows to grace the Prithvi Gallery, Asma's work was universally acclaimed by art critics in Mumbai. Amongst her works that drew special attention was a series titled 'Arches' which I had designed for Asma and she had vividly painted on.

As part of Asma's opening, I staged *Laughing Wild*, a one-woman solo piece enacted by Kaveri Lalchand. Chennai and Bangalore audiences will remember it; Mumbai audiences were equally impressed by Kaveri's talent.

So before we entered the pseudo-millennium it was a good feeling that at last we had begun to be recognised outside the confines of our city. Don't get me wrong, I love this city and spent New Year's with the masses on the Marina Beach, dancing, singing and enjoying the sheer togetherness of being amongst the vast hordes of people who cannot afford the luxury of the numerous New Year events, which were all steeply priced, and yet like anybody else had reason to celebrate in the hope that Chennai will nurture and sustain them, and that peace and goodwill will follow us into the 21st Century.

Mithran Devanesen

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