

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

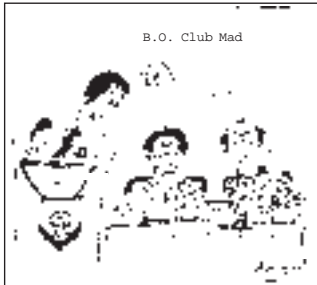
MUSINGS

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Vol. XV No. 11

September 16-30, 2005

Rs. 5 per copy
(Annual Subscription: Rs. 100/-)

Our guest speaker for today is ...
er... Sorry, I didn't ask you earlier, but
can I have your name, please?!

To "Er..." is human

The speech is dignified, measured, delicately sprinkled with urbane bon mots, making it all the more tragic when the speaker gets the name of the Chief Guest completely wrong. Immediately, bits of paper fly hurriedly back and forth; whispered conversations buzz hoarsely over mikes believed to be closed, while the Chief Guest gazes at the ceiling. The flustered speaker corrects himself over the Chief Guest's name, making the latter blush, feel foolish and, inexplicably, slightly embarrassed by his own real name.

The speaker isn't through, though. Spirit broken by his Chairman's glare, he swiftly proceeds to outdo himself, topping his performance by dropping the "momento" (!) on the Chief Guest's foot, and sneezing into the presentation bouquet.

Painful.

Speech-making is clearly not for everyone, especially introductory speeches which insist you remember a zillion things.

Like, who exactly is this Chief Guest? What's he or she really done? Exercise caution here. Describing learned tomes of quiet academicians as 'best-sellers' could lead to the accusation that you are being sarcastic and funny at your Guest's expense.

And why exactly are you "gathered-here-upon-this-occasion?" To pay homage to your Founder-Member, or eulogise about the new canteen?

Note: Shuffling, throat clearing, coughing, and watch-watching in the audience increases in direct proportion to length of speech.

The age-old "Be prepared" is probably a safer route than the "I speak - therefore I speech-ify" one.

Ranjitha Ashok

It's gridlock ahead,



unless...

The Madras that is now Chennai has numerous Centres of Excellence in education and innovation. Its world class information technology facilities are sought by MNCs and investors. But there is unanimous agreement by all concerned that this very positive side has certainly not been matched by the quality of its transport infrastructure.

Those who discussed this drawback of what is considered a modern metropolis did not quite describe the scene as "chaos"; that might not have been considered a parliamentary word in a seminar titled 'Transportation in Chennai - Challenges and Solutions', organised by the Alumni Centre of the College of Engineering, Guindy. Instead, as is said in parliamentary parlance, the seminar addressed some relevant issues and their challenges. These included the City's exponential growth in vehicular traffic, all-pervasive street parking, declining share

of public transport and lack of co-ordination among various governmental agencies.

The existing situation was presented thus:

- MTC's fleet strength of 2773 buses (in 2004) operates on 537 routes and carries 36 lakh passengers a day. But overloading is as high as 150% in certain routes as supply is grossly inadequate.

- The number of goods vehicles in Chennai has increased from 6,671 in 1980 to 32,629 in 2005 and includes transport for manufactured goods (15.5%), building materials (9.9%), industrial raw materials (9.2%), perishables (9.1%) and parcels (8.5%) and about 2000 water lorries.

- Between 1984 and 2005, the total number of motor vehicles in the Chennai Metropolitan Authority (CMA) area has increased from 1,44,282 to 16,74,185 with a 50% growth rate per annum; the number of two-wheeler riders has grown at the

rate of 65% per annum, from 87,000 in 1984 to 12,66,114.

- An average of about 425 new vehicles is put on the roads every day without corresponding increase in motorable road space. Congestion on roads has increased sevenfold for the period

1984-2004, going by the measure of number of registered vehicles per kilometre of road.

The problems

- Almost all roads have riding surfaces of poor quality, inad-

— THE EDITOR

(Continued on Page 6)

Manali's challenge: groundwater governance

The Manali industrial area not only provides one of the worst examples of groundwater pollution, it also raises such pertinent points as the need for education in environmental values to effect changes in sustainable development.

The groundwater in the 800 hectares that are in the Manali industrial area in eastern Tiruvallur District, is "polluted in all respects" with its salinity higher than drinking and irrigation standards. The town has, in fact, been identified as the worst polluted area by the groundwater wing of the Tamil Nadu Public Works Department. Aruna Sivakami, Professor, Politics and Public Administration, University of Madras, who has been fighting the threat to agriculture and human health arising from industrial pollution in the North Arcot District, has made a detailed study of the area and her findings appear in a recent publication, *Paradoxes in Issues of Water Governance*.

The study, which covers Manali's urban, suburban and rural zones as well as the sea, clearly shows that the chief sources of water pollution are sewage and other wastes, industrial effluents, agricultural discharge and waste from chemical industries, and thermal and nuclear power plants. Another common primary source of water pollution is the discharge of untreated or partly treated sewage in water bodies due to the improper sewage-handling processes of municipal bodies.

For years, Manali (home to several major industrial units, like Madras Fertilizers, Madras Petrochemicals, and Madras Refineries, and numerous smaller factories) has had groundwater polluted by effluents dumped on the roads as solid wastage dumps, which enter the sewers or groundwater, stormwater drains and stagnate or even enter the Buckingham Canal. Manali's groundwater has also been contaminated by intrusion of dirty water from the Buckingham Canal and seawater from Minjur. The town, thus, suffers from four sources of pollution – from wastewater generated from industries, seepages from the Buckingham Canal, saltwater intrusion from the sea due to depletion of aquifers in the area, and indiscriminate human settlements.

Drained by rivers such as the Araniyar and Korattaliyar, the area receives rainfall from both the monsoons (annual rainfall is 1211 mm). Considering the

high density of industries and of people living in and around Manali, the area has a surprisingly large number of ponds, which get filled during the monsoon, but go dry post-monsoon. Other than the Mettur Lake water, the dug wells, bore wells and ponds form the principal sources of water for most of the villages. Pond water is the source of water for washing, bathing and drinking (human and cattle). The ponds are important sources of fish for people of the locality. Sivakami's study reveals that aquatic and terrestrial beings of the Manali coastal zone are now being exposed to much heavier loadings of air-borne nutrient chemicals, acidic and toxic substances, growth and climate-altering chemicals than ever before.

● by
SASHI NAIR

Although no systematic study or analysis of the effect of water pollution on the flora and fauna of Manali has been conducted, a case study of the Manali and Madhavaram *jheels* carried out by the Tamil Veterinary University indicates that the migratory bird population has reduced drastically.

In spite of rainwater harvesting, groundwater levels across the country are rapidly depleting. Storage reservoirs are going dry and drinking water is becoming more toxic and poisonous. And non-availability of potable drinking water is now a serious problem. In most developing countries, including India, most of the underground sources of drinking water, especially in the outskirts of larger cities and villages, are polluted.

Health and sanitation are the concern of the local authorities. For example, the control of pollution associated with chemical fertilisers and pesticides as well as due to domestic sewage, is the responsibility of the local authorities. However, more often than not, the local body is unable to do what is necessary due to various reasons. The true goal of development, Sivakami writes, should incorporate environmentally sound and sustainable development and the greatest challenge is that of re-orienting the institutions, attitudes and infrastructure built during British times.

Public awareness about using groundwater judiciously is essential. Education in environmental values and rigorous disciplining and training the

present and the coming generations will go a long way to help. It requires a strong, determined, educated, vigilant and responsible public, properly trained in matters of governance, to raise their voices against all sorts of pollution.

Sivakami points out that since local governments are incapable of dealing with the situation, citizens must find ways and means of reaching potable water to the residents and saving the environment.

She urges the Government to adopt stringent pollution-control measures and punish offenders. The Pollution Control Board must be given powers to carry out economic assessments and it must insist on the operation of effluent treatment plants and the stoppage of dumping solid wastes into streams. Factories that do not adhere to these rules must be ordered closed.

Government should also invite voluntary and non-governmental organisations and international experts to suggest ways of conserving biodiversity in the Manali area, Sivakami says. 'The lakes, *jheels* and ponds have to be deepened, cleaned and protected from human encroachment too.

Monitoring Manali

When the Supreme Court passed orders in the landmark case concerning the management of hazardous waste in the country, it gave special directions to involve the local community in hazardous waste regulation and management. Empowered by this October 2003 order (www.scmc.info), the Supreme Court Monitoring Committee (SCMC) on Hazardous Waste has appointed Local Area Environment Committees (LAECs) in regions where the problem of pollution from hazardous waste is of significant concern.

'One of these regions is the Manali Industrial Area, which houses several major petroleum refining, petrochemical and related heavy chemical industries, most of which belong to the 'red' category (highly polluting).

Historically, Manali was a vast wetland area and supported a very dynamic ecosystem, including that of playing host to several bird species. From the late 1960s, when the first industry, Madras Refineries Limited (Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.) was set up, the area has been subjected to increased pollution loads, leading to both air and water contamination. Being hazardous industries, the quantity of solid hazardous waste generated is another major area of concern. Given the situation, the SCMC deemed it fit to constitute a LAEC for Manali.

The LAECs have a very clear mandate: to report violations and interface with the community, workers and industry to regulate environmental pollution in that specific region. The committee has also been bestowed with powers to recommend closure of any non-complying/polluting industry.

By frequently visiting the area (day and night) and by conducting a range of consultations with the local community and its representatives, the LAEC has been able to successfully monitor pollution incidents, such as odours and gas leaks, illegal effluent discharge, excessive air pollution due to flares, and open dumping of hazardous waste and sludge. The LAEC recently recommended the closure of two units that were functioning without proper consents and employing crude and polluting techniques. The committee is now having one-on-one meetings with the industries in the area to systematically address the pollution concerns raised by the local community.

The LAEC can be contacted through any of its members and further information on LAECs can be had on <http://www.scmc.info/pages/laec.htm> — (Courtesy: *The Public Newsense*, the journal of the Citizens Consumers and Civic Action Group.)

A future for the Adivasis

The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2005 which reaches out to the Adivasi communities is considered to be a significant response of the Government to the plight of this neglected community. Its objective is to make tribals active protectors of the forest, while strengthening their livelihood possibilities. It has, however, become a subject of major debate.

Some feel the Bill has generated more heat than light, largely because of misreading of the provisions. The *Hindu* cited the economist Mihir Shah, who lives and works among the Adivasis of the Narmada Valley. He is of the view:

"Adivasis in all regions of India (barring the North-East) live in enclaves. This very distinctive enclavement is a result of a long-drawn-out historical encounter, which led to the aboriginal inhabitants of India being driven, over centuries, further and further away from the alluvial plains and fertile river basins into what have been described as the 'refugee zones' – hills, forests and dry areas. What is worse, recent studies indicate that economic development in India has aggravated in-

ter-regional disparities and concentrated poverty and distress, especially in pockets.....They have also been flashpoints of violent protests, a reflection of the Adivasis' intense disenchantment with the national mainstream.

A key to understanding this violence is the adversarial relationship between Adivasi communities and the Forest Department. As many experienced forest officials concede, its field officers are not equipped to be protectors of the forest in either orientation or capacity. At the same time, there are instances of Adivasis, deprived of their traditional rights of access and forced by compulsions of endangered livelihood, engaged in clearing the forests. The result – violent encounters that only deepen the distance between adversaries. Times of relative peace see the operation of a licence-quota-permit raj of the forest guard, disallowing access for even rudimentary needs of the Adivasis such as fodder, fuel and housing timber".

Police lathi-charging tribals for any protests against the State Governments only compounds the problem.

The Bill is perhaps reasonable from the humanitarian point of view. It is not just about handing out forest land, but about regularising tribal encroachment. The Bill recognises "the right of forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes to forest land under their occupation for habitation or self cultivation for livelihood needs... provided further that the rights to forest land in no case would exceed 2.5 ha. per nuclear family". It clarifies that this right is "subject to the condition that such forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes have occupied forest land or acquired forest rights before 25th October 1980, which date is formally recognised in the National Forest Policy 1988. So there is nothing new or alarming in the proposed Bill.

Conservationists and all sensitised people have always known and emphasised that the only way to protect our forests and regenerate forest resources is to involve Adivasis, and through giving them a sense of ownership. While the Bill bestows 13 rights on the Adivasis, it also imposes responsibilities, e.g. ban on hunting, land usage

(Continued on Page 8)



Parking woes

Now that the Chennai authorities have decided to earmark places for parking as an initial step towards solving the parking woes of Chennaiites, I offer the following suggestions/comments:

- The authorities should strictly enforce the regulations concerning parking facilities in residential/commercial buildings. This is not being done. Many commercial complexes rent/sell even the basement meant for utilities/parking.
- Similarly, residential complexes do not provide space for visitors' vehicles, as required by the regulations. "Visitors' vehicles not allowed" is the proclamation on the front gates of most complexes.
- Conversion of residential into fully or partly commercial area should not be permitted. Due to indiscriminate commercialisation, many calm residential areas are now crowded with vehicles, and home-owners are put to considerable inconvenience. The roads in T. Nagar are a classic example of this and many of the owners have moved out to the suburbs.
- Construction of highrise with commercial complexes on the ground floors and even in the basement should be stopped. The new buildings which have added to the parking and other problems on Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Road, Radhakrishnan Salai and St. Mary's Road are prime examples. It appears that the authorities are concerned only with the road-width while granting approvals without assessing the impact on the environment and the infrastructure available.
- Public places, like marriage halls, cineplexes, supermar-

kets, sabhas, hotels, educational institutions and hospitals, do not have adequate parking space. I wonder how they get the necessary clearances from the authorities.

I believe that all the stakeholders – the lawmakers, the administrators and the public – should cooperate in laying down, enforcing and obeying the rules. As it is, it is extremely difficult to park vehicles – be it a place of business, entertainment or residential area. It is high time we rectify the situation and made Chennai different from the other Metros. I further suggest:

1. Levy of "Entry Fee" in commercial districts of the city, as in Singapore, London;
2. Introduction of point-to-point luxury buses, as in Mumbai;
3. Encouragement of use of public transport by school-children, as in Bangalore, and ensuring that educational institutions charge only a reasonable fare for use of their buses;
4. Sharing of private vehicles by owners with friends/neighbours;
5. Introduction of share-taxis, as in Mumbai.

Srinivasan Pattoo

Bayview Apartments
22(19), New Beach Road
Thiruvanniyur, Chennai 600 041

Wedding hall norms

Wedding halls have sprung up like mushrooms in the city and now we even have multistoreyed complexes where 3 or 4 weddings are celebrated simultaneously. What are the norms and regulations that govern the siting and construction and maintenance of these halls?

In particular, I raise the following points:

1. Car parking facilities: Is it adequate enough so as not to cause disturbance to the traffic in the adjoining public roads and streets?
2. Is there provision for lifts?
3. Fire fighting requirements: Is there adequate water storage (exclusive) available in the premises along with sufficient access for fire tenders in the event of an emergency? Are there escape routes for the crowd?

S.P. Sankaranarayanan

F-7, Prithvi Apartments
104, Kali Amman Koil Street
Chennai 600 092

Rajam the artist

V. Sriram's two-part article 'The century-old home of musicians and artists' made delightful reading. He tells us about S. Rajam in the concluding part. Understandably, the coverage is mostly on the talents and achievements of Rajam in the field of music.

There is another facet to Rajam as mentioned in the ar-

Punishments never forgotten

September 5th, Teacher's Day, has come and gone without much ado. During the day I recalled, as I often do, two of my teachers who still live in the hearts of their students – if the students are living!

Time was, that is in the 1920s and 1930s, when teachers were much feared as *rakshasas* by students. They moved about with a cane in hand, ready to wield it on their wards at the least provocation. Regular caning was practised in daily prayer meetings in full view of the entire congregation of students and teachers without any bother for its repercussions on the minds of the receiving students.

Although many schools in those days controlled their pupils with undue firmness, there were a few in Chennai where corporal punishment was meted out minimally. I was fortunate in studying in two such schools. Upto the Third Form, that is Eighth Standard, I studied in a school that was on Tiruvottiyur High Road. It went by the long name of 'Sir Pitti Thyagaraya Chetty Hindu Secondary School'. It has now grown into a college – the Thyagaraya College. In this school, punishment by caning was the prerogative of the Headmaster alone. A teacher, at worst, could make an erring student stand on the bench.

The class monitor saw to it that students did not become unruly in the absence of the teacher. He noted the names of students who broke the peace when the teacher was not present and gave the list to the teacher on his arrival. The teacher either berated such students or sent their names to the Headmaster if further chastisement was needed. The Headmaster had a specific time for each class. The monitor took such students at the appointed hour and lined them in front of the HM's room. The HM would call the students in, one by one, for punishment. A cane about a metre in length was kept in a corner of the room to deal with the boys. As soon as the boy came

in, the HM would take the cane in one hand and hold the boy's hand in the other. The monitor would hold the other hand of the boy's hand. The HM would use the cane on the rear of the boy. The number of cuts depended on the severity of the offence as reported by the teacher. The HM refrained from hitting the palm of the boy's hand, as he felt it might spoil the boy's handwriting! Mind you, the only witness to the caning was the monitor!

From Fourth Form (9th Standard) till the SSLC class I spent in Madras Christian College School, then located at the Esplanade end of Linghi Chetty Street. The HM at the time was the legendary Kurivilla Jacob. He was also English master in my SSLC class.

At MCC, the students were chastened by the teachers by 'detention'. Which meant the student was made to stay in the Library after school hours till the close of the Library. During this stay the teacher might ask the erring student to do the homework which he had not done, Or he might ask him to commit to memory a certain passage or poem. If nothing else, the student might be asked to write an imposition. During school hours, the HM spent much of his time on rounds with a cane hidden in the sleeve of his coat. But I never saw him using it. He walked with rubber-soled shoes which did not make noise. In the absence any footfall, none could anticipate when or where he would appear. Sometimes he stood at the entrance of a classroom or unobservedly came and sat on the last bench, observing the progress of the lesson. This kept both the teacher and the student always on their toes.

Those were years when discipline was paramount in schools. They were years never forgotten.

M. Sethuraman

Sankrithi, 6, Second Cross Street
Mahalakshmi Nagar Adambakkam, Chennai 600 088

ticle but not elaborated on, and that is his contribution as an artist. It is unfortunate that his genius in this field is not widely known or sufficiently recognised.

As an artist he has a strong line and a distinct style. He did not follow the then popular Bengal School but developed his own method of stylistic depiction of the human figure, perhaps influenced by the Ajanta frescoes and Pallava sculpture.

His talents were recognised by S.S. Vasana and, in the 1930s, the *Ananda Vikatan* Deepavali issues carried his paintings regularly.

He has not been interested in commercially exploiting his abilities as a painter. Moreover, he seems to be shy and self-effacing by nature. He does not appear to have published any albums or held any exhibitions to publicise his work. No wonder, he has not received the acclaim due to him and his art.

Fortunately he is with us (at 41, Nadu Street), continuing his artistic activities in spite of his age. Some knowledgeable person or agency should come forward to appraise his works, bring them to the notice of the public and preserve them for the future.

T.V. Kalyanasundaram

4H, Suraj Tower, 128, L.B. Road
Thiruvanniyur, Chennai 600 041

English... & the economy

Reader Chubby Raj's letter (MM, August 16th) on 'Indigenising English', the Prime Minister himself unwittingly gave an example of Indian English recently when he said that he 'bowed' his head in shame over the aftermath of the Indira Gandhi assassination when several hundreds of Sikhs were killed in New Delhi. One never 'bows' his head in shame, one 'hangs' it. Remember the song, 'Hang down your head Ton Dooley, hang down your head in shame'... But I suppose we Indians cannot help it since 'we are like this only'... (to quote a former PM, Deve Gowda)

* * *

Reader D.V. Subramanian's letter 'Yesterdays Meals – II' (MM, August 1st) on the purchasing power of the rupee

in the Good Old Days (GOD) made me wifful. Back in 1968, soon after coming out of Presidency with a M.A. in English, I was engaged as Associate Professor in English at the Institute of Commercial Practice, Taramani, on a princely salary of Rs. 575 per month.

In keeping with my newfound status I bought myself a sturdy second hand Austin A-40 for Rs. 4250 and used to drive from Kondithope to Taramani and back, since petrol cost Rs. 5.80 a gallon (almost 5 litres)! Now with my present car I can afford to use it only for 3 days a month. For the remaining 27-28 days of the month, I have to use my scooter – because the economy has gone up in smoke, sorry, gas.

C.G. Prasad

9, C.S. Mudali Street
Kondithope, Chennai 600 079

READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more handwritten letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i-s' and crossing the 't-s'.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

THE EDITOR

OUR ADDRESSES...

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For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

On editorial matters: The Editor, MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

THE EDITOR

History speaks to those who listen

When you come to the end of the book *Brahmins and Bungalows – Travels through South Indian History* by Kavita Watsa, one thought overwhelms you – we, in this country, have a capacity to take both our history and our heritage for granted in a manner that borders on the criminally negligent and ignorant. Kavita's is a passionate effort to try and change that attitude of ours.

The book, the author's first, is published by Penguin India, and is described as a 'tribute to her own backyard' – an area that stretches from Sriranga Pattana, Mysore and Bangalore to Kerala and Goa, moves on to the Coromandel Coast, then the temple towns of Hampi, Mamallapuram and Thanjavur, and ends with a lyrical epilogue on Kodaikanal.

Her chapter on Madras, with its accent on Fort St. George, or "Madras's forgotten fort", as she calls it, is a local heritage-connoisseur's delight. She visits the Fort, where the present-day Secretariat of Tamil Nadu is housed, on a typical "disgustingly hot day", falling completely in love with it, even as she mourns the fact that Fort St. George's "immense significance" is overlooked. It is equally tragic that there is no reminder of Francis Day, Member of Council of Machilipatnam, his superior Andrew Cogan, both of whom founded the Fort, and the dubash, Beri Thimmappa, who helped in their negotiations with the local authorities. The Fort, resounding with names like

A big 'Thank You' to 6 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.8.05 and 15.9.05, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

— Chennai Heritage

K.P.A. Ananda Raja	50
G. Kothandapani	100
R.C. Natarajan,	
New Delhi	100
R. Ramamurthy	100
S.Vijayaganesh	100
T.S. Subramanian	400

Clive, Wellesley, Warren Hastings, Elihu Yale, is quite often dismissed, says Kavita, as a mere emblem of colonialism, but is really so much more than that. For it is here that the "prototypes of every system greater India would later adopt, from surveys, communication, and administration to education, medicine and the military" were moulded.

Today, the Fort, instead of being a historical treasure trove teeming with guided tours, is besieged with crumbling buildings, dust, grime and pollution. She is scathing over the lack of maintenance, showing the lethargy and an almost disparaging lack of interest in both history and its significance. While "half a dozen signboards, erected no doubt out of a grim sense of duty by the ASI," merely announce the presence of heritage sites, including the various ways in which one might be prosecuted should any-

• by
RANJITHA ASHOK

one be tempted to tamper with the structures, nowhere is there any attempt to provide any information about the buildings. Apparently, armed guards also show a tendency to be suspicious of people wandering around, showing "any interest in a subject as wickedly intellectual as history". Kavita states that weeds have a better chance to stand and stare, appropriate symbols that stand petty guard over the buildings, "until they fall down by themselves".

One signboard, in particular, states that the museum houses antiquities of the "colonial" period. It is unfortunate that, soon afterwards, Kavita and her cousin, while walking back to their car, chanced upon, among the debris in a defused garage, a "large white commode, complete with broken flush tank, lying stricken on its side," causing the cousin to remark that "evidently, we're still in the colonial period," much to Kavita's chagrin.

Kavita then takes you on the Temple Trail, filled with facts, humanised by her own experiences and thoughts. Mamallapuram's great rock-cut temples "bear their 1300-year-old carvings with a still and heavy patience" and brood over what Kavita describes as "an extraor-

inary village about thirtyfive miles south of Fort St George", whose population today is a motley one of modern-day stone cutters, their students, eccentric European budget travellers, local fishing communities, and ubiquitous tourists, giving rise to an entire segment of locals catering to their needs. Mamallapuram was a second capital of the Pallavas, a port from which "many deep laden argosies set forth" with merchandise and emigrants, "eventually to carry the light of Indian culture over the Indian Ocean".

The famous Shore Temple was the first Pallava structure to be constructed out of dressed stone, and has for over a thousand years withstood the buffeting sea on one side, and drifting sands on the other. Today, the narrow streets that run close by reflect a symbiotic form of life, with "recorded jazz playing softly

in eating shacks owned by locals." Kavita sees the village as a "cheerful place" with its people accepting life's vicissitudes with great equanimity, even as they cater rather obviously to tourists.

Kavita chooses to travel to Thanjavur in May, when the South is traditionally under "a naked and relentless sun". Yet, despite the heat, muttonous taxis, and a bottle of water that empties itself in an act of deliberate hostility, displaying the "impertinence of inanimate objects," she immediately recognises in Thanjavur a "town of rare nobility", bearing an air of culture and antiquity about it. At first glance, Thanjavur's 'Periya Koil', the "great thousand-year-old Brihadisvara Temple" rises "like a mountain," with its stunning proportions and "rust-gold rock carvings," left thankfully unpainted, slightly unnerving in its simplicity, in its rejection of everything limiting or mediocre, and "giving off a wrenchingly evocative glow in the late afternoon sun." Built by the mighty Rajaraja Chola to commemorate the achievements of his royal line, dedicated to Lord Shiva, it retains its "magnificent spirit and physique" even today, a "living breathing giant of an edifice."

It is a fitting tribute to the



Cholas who, by the early 11th century, ruled over an empire that stretched from coast to coast in the South, and included Ceylon, the Maldives, and the maritime state of Sri Vijaya, which comprised the Malayan peninsula and parts of present-day Indonesia. The temple, says Kavita, is also a tribute to a time of prosperity, agricultural and imperial achievements, and effective administration under the Chola rulers. Her descriptions of the temple and its environs instil in anyone who hasn't seen the temple a desire to rush off to Thanjavur immediately.

Her book ends with a nostalgic account of holidaying in Kodai, a summer habit of many families in the South. But much that is moving has fore before this.

The book showcases Kavita's unique ability to turn a phrase. She draws emotional responses with her writing, bringing visual and tactile experiences to the reader, as she walks them through every journey.

Kavita showed a distinct predilection to dreamily wander even as a child, resulting in her being admonished by a long-suffering aunt with a "You really are a nauseating child" when she was all of seven. She begins her book with her experiences of living in Mysore in the 1970s. Sunday mornings meant visits to Srirangappattana Fort with Hugh Warren, a "mottled old Englishman". The young Kavita for years thought of Tipu Sultan, the ruler associated with the fort, as "an old man who lived in his fort on the Cauvery, leading... a peaceful, retired life," not realising that more than 200 years had gone by since his death.

Her descriptions are compelling – Kerala's landscape is a 'great, rippling, rocking sea of green'; the elegance of the fort

and palace at Padmanabhapuram, with its "shiny black" original flooring, made from a "combination of charred coconut shell, lime, egg white and vegetable extracts", and tiny Devbagh, an island near Karwar, where Kavita chose to usher in that stands sentinel over the ruins of a grand two-storeyed palace, that Srirangapattana has "the air of a place that is trying to soldier on in an age when neither romance nor refinement finds appreciation.", over which hovers the ghostly image of the Tiger of Mysore, the Sultan who

stated that "he would rather live two days like a tiger than 200 years like a sheep."

She juxtaposes this poignancy with the present-day noise and bustle of touring schoolchildren, bored, distracted, their heads filled with 'lessons' from a teacher who clearly hasn't bothered to do his own homework. How carelessly we treat our history!

Kavita knew Mysore at a time when "both royalty and Residnet had vanished", but whose legacy still lingered, like the "melancholy strain" piped by an "unseen bugler." As someone familiar with Mysore thus portrayed, you doff a silent cap at this masterly description. She bemoans the "crassness of a modern administration that pays so little attention to historicity," when she describes the ruins of old houses and bungalows, where children grow up "blithely kicking stones past historic fortifications."

Kavita's reminiscences of the Bangalore of the 1970s make for a nostalgic lump-in-the-throat experience for all who grew up in Bangalore in the same era, (as I did). It is true that liberalism was in vogue there long before the economic revolutions of the nineties. The 'old Bangaloreans' (I'm afraid we old-timers do make that distinction between us and those who came later, along with the glitzy pub-culture) will be in utter sympathy with her lament: "... this sort of change was skin to someone going somewhere in a hurry, knocking down a living creature on the way, and disappearing, whistling insouciantly."

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and palace at Padmanabhapuram, with its "shiny black" original flooring, made from a "combination of charred coconut shell, lime, egg white and vegetable extracts", and tiny Devbagh, an island near Karwar, where Kavita chose to usher in that stands sentinel over the ruins of a grand two-storeyed palace, that Srirangapattana has "the air of a place that is trying to soldier on in an age when neither romance nor refinement finds appreciation.", over which hovers the ghostly image of the Tiger of Mysore, the Sultan who

Kavita is blessed with a very perceptive eye, enabling her to go beyond the obvious, easily recognisable beauty, or the arch, slightly self-conscious, cuteness endemic to all 'tourist spots'. In her travels through Goa, battling with bouts of disillusion over "Goan fish curry" that tasted nothing like what she had expected, she identifies the "mild eccentricity", as opposed to the images of Goa's tourism fold lore, preferring the "quiet and happy craziness, the sort that defined the real Goa... the real thing." She succeeds in tapping into Goa's true spirit.

Kavita speaks of Pondicherry, "a country within a country", with its three-hundred-year-old French Quarter. Her description of Tranquebar provides a fascinating, compassionate insight into its history, where she "feels sorry" for Dansborg Fort, symbolic of ambitions fated never to be realised.

One fascinating nugget: In 1706, there arrived in Tranquebar the first Protestant Missionary in India, Bartholomaeus Ziegenblag, and it is to him that credit goes for having revived a process "that had lain fallow since the Portuguese abandoned it at the end of the previous century" – printing.

Both Pondicherry and Tranquebar represent the ambitions of the great maritime powers of Europe, who opened trade with the East, their merchant-like dealings transforming into dreams of Empire-building.

In-depth research into both social and political history jostles with impressions and soul-filled responses in Kavita's writing.

The book is also filled with tiny vignettes, laced with affectionate humour, regarding her family, like her grandmother, who "learnt how to drive a car in Chitradurga, of all places" and managed to run the District Collector, who was "bicycling placidly" into a ditch.

This is a book that douses architecture with emotion and life, infuses buildings, ruins, dwellings, temples and forts with the thoughts and spirits of those who built them, of the history that touched them, of the lives lived within them.

And when you come to the end of this book, there is something else that equally overwhelms you – an immense pride in your heritage and nation.



Manali House – as it looked in 2001.



Manali car park is what Manali House has become.

Requiem for two musical landmarks

October 2001. Picture me perched unsteadily in a rickshaw, clutching a list of addresses and a cell phone in my hand on a hot Saturday afternoon. I had gone to George Town in order to plan the route for a musical heritage tour of the area, which I had committed to conduct choosing the Music Season that year. I did not know if the landmarks existed and, indeed if they did, I had no means of physically identifying them as I had no pictures. To assist me, all I had was a list of addresses that had appeared in the music chapter of the Madras Tercentenary Volume published in 1939. Since then, door numbers had changed at least three times.

The rickshaw-puller was most sceptical about my finding any of the locations. But find them I did. There was the Bunder Street home of Kovvur Sundaresa Mudaliar where Tyagaraja stayed, the Gokhale Hall on Armenian Street, the Patnam Temples on Devaraja Mudali Street, the Tiruvannamalai Matam Hall on Nattu Pillaiyar Koil Street where a musical duel had once been fought, and

Paidala Gurumurthy Sastry and Ramaswami Dikshitar, the father of Muttuswami Dikshitar. His home at No. 63, Govindappa Naicken Street, was a veritable hub of artistic activity.

On his death, his son Venkatakrishna (d 1817) took on the mantle of patron and liberally supported musicians and dancers. Ramaswami Dikshitar composed in his honour the longest song in Carnatic music, *Natakadi Vidyala*, which is set in 108 ragas and talas. Ramaswami Dikshitar also used the name 'Venkatakrishna' as his signature in all compositions.

From the song *Natakadi*, we learn that Venkatakrishna Mudaliar had a famed dancer by name Narayani in his retinue. It was due to the encouragement given by Venkatakrishna Mudaliar that Ramaswami Dikshitar's sons, Muttuswami Dikshitar and Baluswami Dikshitar, learnt how to play the violin from musicians in Fort St. George, and then adapted it to Carnatic music. In 1975, the Mudaliar home played host to Chidambaranatha Yogin, a seer who was well versed in music as well. He took Muttuswami Dikshitar under his wings and the latter accompanied him to Benares. The Yogin taught Dikshitar all the music he knew, then presented him with a

Pachaiyappa's Hall which once served as a venue for the Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj. But my prize findings were Manali Muttukrishna Mudaliar's town house on Govindappa Naicken Street and the house of Veena Dhanammal on Ramakrishna Chetty Street. The walk that year was a big success and it has been repeated every year since. When I do the walk in future, I will, sadly, find neither there. Instead there will be those ubiquitous and tasteless '1 plus 3s' raised on the rubble of these two heritage homes.

Manali Muttukrishna Mudaliar (d 1792) was the Chief Merchant of the East India Company under Governor Pigot. It was he who had funded in part the construction of the Chenna Kesava and Chenna Mallikeswara Temples on Devaraja Mudali Street, after they had been demolished at their earlier locations in Old Black Town where the High Court stands today. Mudaliar was a great patron of the arts and in his time had invited and honoured composers such as Arunachala Kavi, the author of the *Ramanatakam*,

veena in Benares before his death. Dikshitar returned to Madras in 1799.

His father and brothers had not been idle in the meanwhile. Venkatakrishna Mudaliar had been hosting Muddu Venkatamakhi, a descendant of Venkatamakhi, the 16th Century author of the definitive treatise on music, the *Chaturdandi Praksika*. Ramaswami Dikshitar on learning that a copy of the treatise (of which only four copies had survived) existed with the descendant, wanted to possess it. Muddu Venkatamakhi was, however, not keen on parting with it unless he was sure of the recipient's musical stature. Ramaswami Dikshitar's younger sons, Chinnaswami and Baluswami then sang the song *Nanu parikshincha ela* and the visitor was impressed. He gave them the manuscript and departed. When Muttuswami Dikshitar returned from Benares he made this work the basis on which he composed all his songs, the first of which was composed at Tiruttani, not far from Madras. He also composed songs on the Heruvotriyur and Triplicane temples. Besides,

to ensure the easy learning of the violin, he provided Sanskrit lyrics for several of the airs played at Fort St. George, including the British National Anthem. The Dikshitar family left Madras in 1801.

The Manali family also maintained *Srinivasa Nilayam*, a sprawling hostel for indigent students to stay in and pursue their education in Madras. This was located opposite *Manali House*. A platform in the middle of the house used to serve as the Vasantha Mandapam to which Chenna Kesava Perumal would be brought each year for the Vasantha Utsavam and be entertained with music and dance. This practice has since been stopped owing to congestion on the road. For those romantically inclined, there is a legend about a secret passage leading from this hostel all the way to Mudaliar's country home in Manali.

The country house, called *Meddai Thottam*, which survived for long complete with a swimming bath boasting blue tiles imported from England, has long since made way for a Kalyana Mandapam.

August 2005. I am once again in a rickshaw, just to assure myself that the streets that form part of my George Town walk are still navigable. I am scheduled to conduct the walk once again this year in connection with Madras Week. It has been more than a year since I had visited this part of the city. My heart races as the rickshaw takes me closer to *Manali House*. Imagine standing once again in the place where so much of musical history was written. The house had been in ruins when I last visited it. Perhaps the Manali Charities had renovated it by now?

My heart almost stood still as I looked at what there was opposite *Srinivasa Nilayam*. *Manali House* ought to have been there, but what I saw was a parking lot with galvanised iron gates. Parking fees for cars and two-wheelers were painted in garish colours on the wall. *Manali House* had vanished. All that remained of its grandeur was the size of the parking lot which indicated how big the mansion once was. I could also see the outlines of the various levels and staircases from the marks on the side walls. In its heyday it truly must have been an impressive mansion. What is to be the fate of *Srinivasa Nilayam*, I do not know. There were signs of an exhibition of some sort happening there. In case it has changed hands and is going the way of *Manali House*, it will be *tabula rasa* for the great Mudaliars of Manali and their musical associations.

Sriram V.

(To be concluded)

New hospitals' outlook on biomedical waste disposal

There are 317 Government and 1,835 private hospitals in Tamil Nadu, generating 20 tonnes of waste a day, including eight tonnes of infectious waste, at an average of 2.5 kg of waste per bed. This waste has long posed a grave threat to the environment and to public health. Years of neglect and indifference by authorities brought the issue of the disposal of biomedical waste to crisis point in mid-2004 when newspapers and news channels reported finding human parts in a Municipal Corporation truck. The resulting furore galvanised the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) into action.

The TNPCB contacted CAG and Toxics Link and requested them to help implement an effective biomedical waste management system in Government healthcare Institutions (GHCI). The operation began with a complete waste and instrumentation (equipment) audit of 18 GHCI in Chennai. The audit revealed the pathetic state of many institutions where even garbage bins and bags were not available. To deal with the immediate crisis, CAG and Toxics Link developed some emergency measures, which could be implemented instantly.

The short-term solutions concentrated on: segregation; disinfection; sharps (anything that can cause puncture, e.g.

needles, scalpels, blades, etc.) management; solid waste and plastics. By making use of the existing, but completely unutilised Hospital Maintenance Fund under the State Government Health Department, the hospitals were able to procure basic waste management equipment like liquid disinfectants, needle destroyers, etc. The hospitals were instructed in crucial safety and waste disposal measures in each of the priority areas. The Corporation of Chennai was asked to dedicate a special, closed vehicle to collect hospital waste.

● by A Special Correspondent

The team then tackled the long-term issue of how to ensure continuing implementation of these measures. It was realised that unless every stakeholder in the hospital, every ward boy, every nurse and every doctor recognised the importance of waste management, the effort was bound to fail. But with more than 5000 employees, this was a herculean task. A two-pronged approach was decided upon – to train all the staff of the hospitals and to create an ideal hospital that could serve as a model for all other hospitals to follow.

CAG, along with TNPCB and Toxics Link, trained personnel from all 18 Government

hospitals using a Train the Trainer technique. Through this technique, appropriate core groups were selected from each hospital and educated and instructed in the setting up of waste management systems. These core groups in turn conducted training for the rest of their staff.

CAG identified one government institution, Stanley Medical Hospital, and worked intensively and extensively with it to convert the hospital into a model institution for other hospitals in the State. By January 2005, every single staff member at Stanley had been trained and given hands-on training experience.

Today, Tamil Nadu has emerged as a model State in biomedical waste management with the establishment of modern composite common biomedical waste treatment and disposal facilities (CBWTF) for private medical institutions. As a long-term measure, a common disposal facility is being planned by the State Health Department in consultation with the TNPCB for GHCI. Currently, CAG is partnering TNPCB in conducting training programmes on biomedical waste management in private and public hospitals throughout the State. – (Courtesy: *The Public Newsense*, the journal of the Citizens Consumers and Civic Action Group.)

Taken for a ride by builders

There has been a massive increase in the number of apartment buildings over the last couple of years. But few of us bother to take action against inconveniences and illegal building practices, many of these buildings having been built in flagrant violation of building laws and consumer interests.

Recently CAG was approached by Mrs. Prabha who had a complaint against a builder/developer. Her family owned a large plot of land and had approached a developer to construct flats under a joint venture. The developer had explicitly agreed to build the flats according to the terms and requirements mutually agreed upon.

But when Mrs. Prabha went to inspect the construction, she found that in her apartment, the built-in area was much less than what was agreed upon. The builder had simply not adhered to any of her requests. She immediately brought all the facts to his attention. He reassured her that the changes would be taken care of. But within a week he had broken the walls of a bedroom in her flat, added the space to another flat, and sold that flat! This was totally illegal and in direct contravention of the terms of the agreement as well as the approved building plan sanctioned by the CMDA.

Mrs. Prabha was furious and approached the Corporation Commissioner, informing him of the violation of the CMDA plan. Luckily she had the documents to support her statement. The Corporation supported her claim and did not issue the 'No objection order' for providing the water and electricity connections. Far from addressing the issue, the builder began threatening Mrs. Prabha with dire consequences if she did not withdraw her complaint, counting on intimidation to achieve his ends.

At this point Mrs. Prabha contacted CAG, who made several attempts to resolve the issue amicably, But the builder did not respond. Finally CAG advised her to send the builder a legal notice and subsequently file a suit in the District Consumer Redressal Forum where the case is now in progress.

Many builders rely on the fact that buyers of apartments do not meet till they move into the apartments. By then the damage is done. With some adjustments to common space, like corridors and lobbies, and sometimes adjustments to one person's apartment, selected apartments are enlarged, and sold for a higher price, while owners of the 'adjusted' apartments will still pay for the number of square feet they assume they are occupying, it is in the interest of the apartment owners to visit the construction site and get to know their future neighbours. Building laws are among the most commonly flouted in our city. Put a stop to this. (Courtesy: *The Public Newsense*, the journal of the Citizens Consumers and Civic Action Group.)

– A Special Correspondent

(Continued from page 1)

equate pedestrian space, poor lighting and lack of properly designed interventions.

- Additional MNCs and IT companies in the vicinity of the CMA will certainly increase the number of car owners in the area and add to its traffic woes. Mushrooming finance companies providing easy finance for motor vehicles also escalate the problem.

- Travel speeds have reduced to 15-20 kmph in major roads along with considerable hold-ups in junctions. Reduced efficiency of movement and increased congestion negatively affect the environment. Emission from nearly half the vehicles in the City exceeds the permissible limit.

- Both bus and rail develop as competing modes rather than being complementary. Inter-modal transfers from bus to rail and vice versa are generally absent or underdeveloped. The sprawling suburban development without adequate facilities has also placed considerable

Gridlock ahead, unless...

demand in favour of private vehicles.

- Adhoc use of the carriageway and pavements for utilities and an ill-maintained drainage system, inadequate enforcement of traffic rules, and lack of road sense among road-users are common. Conflict between fast motor vehicular traffic and bicycle and pedestrian traffic has reduced both road capacity and safety.

Various measures have been taken up to improve and strengthen the transport system in CMA in the past. None of these has kept pace with the increase in travel demand. Now major rail and road investments are proposed, but whether these has cost schemes will improve the scene in the future is something no one is willing to foretell.

Recommendations

At the conclusion of the seminar, expert committees recommended the following:

Mass transportation

- MRTS rail corridor extension from Velachery to St. Thomas

Mount should be taken as top priority.

- For the proposed Metro Rail corridors, priority should be given to the North-South corridor from Tiruvottriyur to Airport.

- To meet the urgent need for additional buses, private participation, as in Delhi and Bangalore, should be considered. Special airconditioned private buses on selected routes could attract private vehicle users to public transport.

Road development

- Provision for a Mass Transit System (Bus or Light Rail Transit) along the IT Expressway corridor should be planned.

- Road capacity augmentation on high-density road corridors by way of providing elevated highways wherever justified should be considered.

- Provision should be made for Mass Transit System (Bus/Rail), as part of development plans for new major roads in the CMA.

- Pedestrian footpaths of minimum width of 1.5 m should be

provided on all major roads and should be maintained free of encroachments.

Parking

- Multistoreyed parking facilities should be provided at major activity centres (e.g. Bus terminus at T. Nagar, Broadway bus terminus, Govt. Estate - Anna Salai, Vadapalani bus terminus, etc.).

- Parking standards should be revised taking into account growing vehicle ownership.

- Suitable parking policy and parking laws should be made operational at CMA level.

Traffic management

- Advanced Area Traffic Management techniques should be adopted rather than going for mere individual intersection improvements.

- Wearing of helmets by two-wheeler riders should be made mandatory.

- Speed-breakers should be planned and provided as per IRC guidelines.

- Traffic rules should be strictly enforced to bring down road

accidents in the CMA. Use of advanced technologies in detecting traffic violations should be encouraged.

- TV and other media should be used effectively to educate the public on road safety.

Co-ordination

- A Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA) should be constituted early. An advisory committee as an adhoc body could be formed immediately, with senior officers at decision-making levels.

It should become a Co-ordinating Authority with functions covering the following aspects of all public transport modes in the CMA.

- Frequency of services and route rationisation/feeder buses.

- Fare structure, including common ticketing.

- Planning and monitoring projects.

- Financial issues like funds mobilisation, disbursement and subsidies.

Left unfair was the thought that if most of these suggestions were too implemented the city could be careering towards catastrophe.

Shobha Menon

Quiz Master V.V. Raman is on holiday. His column will resume on his return.

What a view!

Like two truant schoolchildren we peeped into the open gate and let out a sigh of relief! It was 7.30 on a Sunday morning and we were outside the Anderson Church on N.S.C. Bose Road. We were here on a slightly dubious mission and even though the Church is for believers and sinners, we didn't want to be caught in our caper when service was going on. Fortunately, there seemed to be no early service on Sundays. In fact, the main door of the Church was firmly shut.

We went into the verandah and looked around. No one was in sight. Usha and I looked at each other. I said, "Shall we?" and nodding her consent she said, "Take out the photograph and keep it in your hand." We mounted the steps to our left.

This was the second time within a month that we were at the Anderson Church on a Sunday. The first time, we arrived here around noon after finishing a major portion of what we called our Pattinam Paar trip. We had parked our car outside the Church, had crossed the road to the High Court and walked back the way we came. We wanted a good view of the YMCA building. From the car, only the Ramakrishna Bhavan and the many shops beside it were visible. You don't get to seeing the YMCA building which actually is a splendid four-storey structure with a highly decorated façade in the Jaipur style. What a contrast between the top



Anderson Church on NSC Bose Road. (Photograph: USHA KRIS.)

camera bag held in front of me, the more agile Usha leading the way, we came up to the level which had those four small windows that we had gazed at from street level. Another set of outstanding views of the High Court and surrounding areas was there for us to behold. From this height we

We got a spectacular photo of the High Court framed by the window. But the remaining background was black – dramatic in its own way, but not what we wanted. We just had to go back and take another photograph.

So, there we were again in the Anderson Church verandah. We had decided to show this photograph and explain that we needed to re-do it. We climbed the stairs. The door on the first floor was open. We knocked. We called out. Once. Twice. No sign of any human activity. We grinned at each other and went up the stairs. That breathtaking view again! Usha captured the image, this time with a digital camera. We could immediately see that we had got our photograph. Thrilled, we walked down the stairs and into the verandah. We stood there for a few minutes, jubilant. A man came into view from behind the church. We told him that we had needed a photograph of the church and had come to take it. We thanked him and left.

We were ravenous and Ramakrishna Bhavan was closed. But a Hot Chips and Fast Food place on N.S.C. Bose road, quite close to the Church, was open. We decided to take a chance. Self service, clean, tasty idlis, pongal, dosai and sambar and superb coffee — all for just 48 rupees. Can anything beat that?

● by **PADMINI VISWANATHAN**

three floors and the commercial activity on the ground floor.

Walking back to Anderson Church, we went in. The Church has a quaint, slim, tall steeple above a hexagonal bell tower with long open arches. Above the bell tower are these small windows with inverted 'V'-shaped tiled-sunshades. We wondered what the view would be like from there.

There was no one in sight. To the left of the verandah was a flight of steps. We assumed that these would lead to the steeple. We walked up the narrow spiral stairway for a couple of storeys and came to the bell tower that had a wooden floor. What a view of the High Court! What was that? An angel holding up her hands to the heavens on the roof of a building. We must check that out later.

From this level there was a small dilapidated, narrow wooden staircase going up. Grazing my shoulders on the wall all the way up, with the

could even see the coal piled high in the open in the harbour.

Standing up there and looking out we saw the tallest dome of the High Court, with the old lighthouse peeping out beside it, framed by the window of the Church. The tall rafters rising up to the centre of the steeple framed the window in turn. This was a photo op that left us both speechless. Carefully taking out the camera, Usha took the picture with glee. What a view!

Cobwebs in our hair, grime on our shoulders but absolutely ecstatic, we walked back down the stairs. We were rudely awakened by the voice of a woman asking us, "When did you go up?" She was standing at a doorway that we hadn't even noticed on our way up. She seemed annoyed that we hadn't taken permission. But there was no one anywhere, we said. We told her that the church had the most amazing steeple, thanked her and left.

Subscriptions and contributions

● As readers are already aware — and hundreds have responded positively — we have no other alternative but to price *Madras Musings*. From April 16th (Volume XIV, No.1), *Madras Musings* has been priced at Rs.5 a copy, ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/-. Please make out your cheque only to 'Chennai Heritage' and send it, together with the COUPON BELOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or C/O LOKAVANI-HALL MARK PRESS PVT. LTD., 122, GREAMES ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs.100 covers only a part of our costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essential for Chennai Heritage and *Madras Musings* to play a greater role in creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDITION TO your subscriptions.

If in the coming year Chennai Heritage receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep *Madras Musings* going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2004-5 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings*, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

— The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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Senate House Conservation Fund

● The Senate House Restoration and Management Trust appeals to all alumni of the University of Madras and heritage lovers everywhere to contribute to the Senate House Conservation Fund which the Trust is managing for the purpose of restoring *Senate House* to its old glory by December 2005 and maintaining it thereafter in the same condition. Cheques should be made out to the Senate House Conservation Account and sent to the Registrar, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005. Contributions are eligible for benefits under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Dear Registrar,

I am pleased to enclose a cheque for Rs. as my contribution to the restoration and maintenance of *Senate House*. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

I am an alumnus/alumna/heritage lover and wish the project all success. My college was

Date: Signature:

A TNCA dream comes true

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association's long cherished dream of having an academy of its own has at last come true. To say it is a step in the right direction is to state the obvious.

Cricket academies may be a dime a dozen in the country. But one run by an association for whom funds should not be a problem, has the word 'success' written all over it. And given the TNCA's reputation of organising everything in a thoroughly professional manner, there is little doubt that the programme will achieve its goal of tapping talent at the local level and then giving it the best of facilities, equipment and professional help as it takes the long, hard road to stardom and hopefully an India cap.

Tamil Nadu's representation in the Indian team over the years has not been in keeping with its talent and part of the reason has been the lack of proper guidance at the right time. To cite just one but by no means isolated example: some 15 years ago I had a chat with the former Indian pace bowler T.A. Sekhar. He told me how lucky the youngsters today were to enjoy the facilities and technical education obtainable at the MRF Pace Foundation, of which he has been the chief coach for many years.

There is little doubt that Sekhar himself would have benefited from a systematic training programme when he was young and aiming to play for India as a fast bowler. In the mid-1970s, he was a member of the Madras University team

that regained the Rohinton Baria Trophy in 1975-76. Sekhar, then not yet 20, was quick and he continued to bowl pacy deliveries for some years after that. Many of my journalist colleagues and I were convinced that, given his height, physique and pace, he could play for India. But he also tended to be erratic. At this stage of his fledgling career what Sekhar lacked was the proper guidance that a professionally run academy would have given him. This is the kind of lacuna that the TNCA academy will help fill.

The Academy promises the kind of infrastructure, coach-

● by
PARTAB RAMCHAND

ing and training facilities that would put it on par with the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore. As V. Srinivasan, President of the TNCA, said at the inauguration, "The TNCA will not spare any effort in making the academy the best in the country."

The Academy will have both indoor and outdoor nets. It will also have a dormitory swimming pool, gymnasium, conference halls and a pavilion. There will be modern video equipment for analysis, computers and a library. The Academy is to be located at the MAC B ground, next to the TNCA Club.

The coaches appointed are of high calibre and their wards are sure to benefit from their in-

struction. The former Indian cricketer W.V. Raman is the chief coach. Besides being a good cricketer, Raman is a qualified coach having completed a course in Australia some years ago. He is also a deep thinker of the game, as those familiar with his newspaper columns would have observed. The other coaches are Peter Fernandez, M. Venkatramana, Diwakar Vasu, Bharath Kumar, M. Sanjay and T.S. Mohan – all eminently qualified – and they have been given specific roles while looking after the various aspects of the game. For a start, 20 boys in the Under-13 category have been selected and these boys were presented caps and Sanjay selected the boys who undoubtedly will be keen to do well as the first trainees of an ambitious project.

Foot note:

Trainees (Under-17, 19 and – 22) will undergo training under a Yoga Instructor and Physical Trainer.

The TNCA is in the process of finalising plans for the TNCA Academy building with the assistance of a well-known architect. The Academy should be fully equipped and commence its activities in full swing by April / May, 2006.

In due course, the TNCA hopes to start cricket academies in district centres too.

While coaching plans for the Under-13, have already got under way, two of selected boys in age groups of Under 15, 17, 19 and 22 will commence one after another during the next couple of months. (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)

Dates for Your Diary

September 23-26: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed by The Macademised Shakespeare Company and produced by Masquerade, as a bit of Kollywood and *Koothu*. Welcome to Shakespeare made easy and fun. Shakespeare for dummies. (At Alliance Francaise, 3.15 p.m. & 7.15 p.m.)

September 25th: A celebration of Dussehra. The theme of the festival is Shakti and Sringer (Power and Beauty).

The tradition of arranging Golu will be highlighted during the festival. Golu displays of dolls can be seen in the heritage houses of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka (at DakshinaChitra).

September 30 – October 21: *Harshavardhana*, a play in French, written and directed by Jawa-

harlal. Translation by Leela Nagaraj. Turning back the pages of Indian history to 606 AD. (Alliance Francaise, 7 p.m.)

Till September 20: *Oil on Canvas*, an exhibition by Brimada Raju (at Vinyasa Art Gallery).

Till September 24: *Metal Relief Work*, an exhibition of paintings and metal relief work by Gita (at Lalit Kala Akademy).

Exhibition of Rathin Kanji painting (at Art World).

Till September 25: Display and sales of Lambabi embroidery and crafts (at DakshinaChitra).

Till September 26: Exhibition of the work of Basuki Dasgupta (at Prakrit Gallery. Continues in Mukti Centre from September 28th to October 3rd).

Till September 30: The light and shade effect in paintings by Usha Devi (at Vinyasa Art Gallery).

An exhibition of A.V. Ilango's *Utsav Series* (at Forum Art Gallery).

A future for the Adivasis

(Continued from page 2)

strictly for livelihood and not commercial exploitation, protection of catchment areas and wildlife, sustainable use of forest land and produce, etc...A key provision is the conversion of forest villages into revenue villages, a long-standing demand of people in authority who have faced problems while carrying out developmental work.

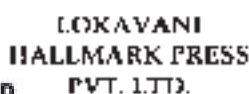
The main objection raised against the Bill is that it will hand over 74% of the forest cover in India to 8% of the population (*Adivasis*). The right to allot this land, to be jointly registered in the name of a male member and spouse, rests with the *gram sabha*. The Indian Forest Service Association has boldly made its view known: "If the collective leadership – intellectual and political – have decided to barter the natural heritage of the country for narrow

goals, no one can save the future generation of our country from catastrophe".

The proposed decision to split and transfer the subject of Forest from the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MOEF) to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA), to the extent it relates to the rights of Scheduled Tribes living on forest land, is being challenged in the Supreme Court on grounds that it would severely impact an already precariously balanced ecology. It is feared that the arrangement is impractical; if implemented, there would be division of responsibility. The door would be opened for land and timber mafia to manipulate the simple tribals, and grab their forest land and natural resources.

In this context, the entire draft, rectifying a historical wrong may be re-written. (Courtesy: INTACH Virasaat)

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