

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Vol. XV No. 17

December 16-31, 2005

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

'Baaz' swamped India and Sri Lanka to win by 3 days and 2 innings!

Don't say it!

Bit much, don't you think?

You stand in queue, buy your ticket, dismissing those ominous puffs of white in those distressing INSAT pictures as mere printing mistakes.

And what happens?

The heavens, displaying a want of consideration for the poor human that borders on the...er...inhuman, open up. The world is awash, like the game and you. You don't even get a glimpse of your heroes.

You squish, squelsh and slosh your way home, telling yourself that that's life.

A while later, you, with praiseworthy optimism, are back in queue – for another ticket.

As for those INSAT pictures?

Huh! Planted in the dailies by idle, fiendish minds, you declare. And...

The heavens open up again, cackling wildly with even greater vigour.

Your sports heroes, albeit a different lot, remain unseen.

You have lost both money and patience. To top it all, you now don't know what to do with all that energy and adrenaline you had set aside for prolonged bouts of cheering, vigorous clapping and brisk quarrelling with misguided souls who have erroneously occupied your seat.

You then begin to wonder.

How come the powers-that-be forgot that this has been the officially designated Monsoon Season for your part of the world for ages?

And – have you inadvertently stumbled upon The-Word-That-Serves-To-Unlock-The-Heavens, bringing relief to a thirsty land?

Ccrrrii... Shhh!

Haven't you had enough?

Ranjitha Ashok

Parking woes — no end in sight?

(By Shobha Menon)

Consider the following statistics:

- Vehicle population in Chennai is increasing at the rate of 8% a year. Vehicle ownership, at 4 vehicles/100 persons in 1981, has risen to about 30/100 persons in 2001 and to around 40/100 persons in 2005.

- The motorised vehicle population in 2005 is over 18 lakh (including around 12 lakh two-wheelers). The city also has around 14 lakh bicycles, besides a large number of non-motorised vehicles.

- The predominant Intermediate Public Transport (IPT), auto rickshaws, increase at the rate of 15% a year and currently number about 40,000.

- Other forms of IPT have been increasing in recent years. They include shared vans, call taxis, share autos, institutional vans/buses etc. There are also a large number of trucks, buses and cars from other districts and States that come to the city for various purposes.

ALL of them require parking spaces at different destinations, BUT the road space as well as space allocated for parking has more or less remained constant over the last three decades!

A two-stage parking study for the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) was undertaken recently by the CMDA. The first stage (from February 2003 to September 2004), undertaken by M/s. Wilbur Smith Associates, an Engineering Consultancy firm, focussed on the problems of parking across the CMA and then offered a comprehensive parking policy

on the basis of best practices followed within and outside the country. Says Dr. Valsala C. Nair, the firm's Executive Vice-President, "Parking Management has become a serious issue. Considering the present trend in vehicle growth and travel pattern, this problem will become too difficult to handle in future unless the city has a Parking Policy supported by strategies and projects to meet on-street and off-street parking demand."

The study – which covered 27 critical areas, major industrial areas, educational and religious institutions, bus and rail terminals with respect to on-street parking, and parking complexes maintained by private sector with respect to off-street parking – showed that the total parking demand in the city is of the order of 13,000 Passenger Car Equivalent (PCE) against a supply of 5,100 PCE. For instance, supply in T. Nagar is 794 PCE against a demand of 2151 PCE. Supply in Parrys is 704 PCE against a demand of 4426 PCE. Loss in road capacity due to haphazard parking

(Continued on Page 7)



The oldest surviving railway station in the country and the first to be built in South India, the Royapuram Railway Station has recently been restored by the Railways. That the building was restored and put to use, instead of being pulled down, is something Madras Musings must congratulate the authorities on. But may we point out that buildings built in the Classical style were always lime-washed white or cream, never RED which was used only with government buildings of a later, more imperial age, when Indo-Saracenic became the official architectural idiom? Seen here are the front (above) and rear views of the restored building. (Photographs by V. RAJESH.)



Dress code :

Punishing victims, not the offenders

(by N.S. Venkataraman)

Student speakers at a recent Smeeting organised by Nandini Voice For the Deprived, a Chennai-based NGO, discussed the issue of dress code for women college students and pointed out the need for choice among the younger generation. They believed that the problem of harassment of women was not so much due to their dress as to the mindset of the men.

They also stressed that the Indian culture believed in diversity and the prescription of a uniform code was contrary to this tradition.

The student speakers pointed out that the young students themselves understand the need for a proper dress sense for different occasions and the problem is not so much the dress as how it is worn. Even

the so-called traditional saree or salwar-kameez can be worn in an undignified way. The reasons for increasing crime against women have to be found elsewhere rather than being laid on the girls or their clothes.

Professor Susheela Kaushik, formerly of the University of Delhi, pointed out that women being made the victims of this

(Continued on Page 6)

MADRAS
MUSINGS

wishes all its readers
A Very Happy
and Prosperous
New Year

City in law

— Whose Chennai is it?

At the Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) the questions pertaining to "Who does our city belong to?" and "Who is our city meant for?" have been asked almost daily over the years. It has come to the view that the planning, design and development of Chennai excludes several segments of the population, mostly those who are disadvantaged in some way.

A meeting to discuss 'Whose Chennai is it' that CAG recently organised urged the participants to consider the following:

City and citizenship are connected through the ownership of a property. City planning and laws assure privileges to the owners and protect ownership and, through this, construct the idea of outsiders and encroachers. However, in the functioning of the city, it is the people in slums who live on the roadside and who subsidise city living. They supply cheap labour in the form of gardeners, watchmen, janitors and maids. However it is this group that is displaced when it comes to envisioning and implementing development projects. Does the law define city as a community of landowners? How does it recognise the contribution of marginal groups? Connected to this issue is the shifting language in legal judgements. From the earlier socialist understanding of the role of the marginalised in the city there is an increasingly neo-liberalist view of ownership, market and profits.

Recent city Acts and Directives have mandated the removal of cattle to ensure a beautiful Chennai. Earlier attempts were made to remove fishermen and fishing nets from the Marina. Does this promote an idea of place that is exclusive? Does this mean that the city is a socially and economically exclusive entity

where animals and professions like cattle-rearing and fishing are considered incompatible and unacceptable? Is this conception an antithesis of what a rural place is? Does it assert that pollution caused by excessive vehicle population and loss of life incurred through other tragedies of urban living is agreeable, while the presence of cattle and fishing is not? While trees are favourably viewed what role do animals have in the habitat of a city? Does the law increasingly privilege city over rural? For instance, it is said that water supply for drinking purpose must be privileged over irrigation. This allows projects to use water from irrigation tanks for drinking water supply in cities, while overlooking agricultural use.

Connected with this is the need to understand what an urban space is. Is it a functional space that allows for only specific activities? How would city laws negotiate the demand for street space by travellers and groups who want to take out death processions or political rallies? Does the law envision a sanitised street that privileges vehicular flow over other forms of traffic?

Planning and laws are about controls and restrictions. It allows for growth through the idea of controls. On the other hand, recent envisioning of cities as gateways of global flows has led to many ad hoc and liberal incentives. While the laws remain centred on controls, the incentives are about the discretionary powers of the State. Is this a reason for increasing conflict between those who suffer lesser controls and those who enjoy discretion? Does this ambiguity erode accountability in city governance?

In a companion piece, alongside, Sriram V. looks at how the discussions went. — (Courtesy: CAG.)

What can anyone do for 'Citizen C'?

The seminar on 'Whose Chennai is it anyway' could not have been held under more appropriate circumstances. The Image Auditorium where it was held was marooned in the middle of a great sea and citizens of all types (we learnt that they were divided into two types, B and C) were seen wading through the waters in order to reach the venue. Once in a while, a car would whiz past, spraying everyone with the best of rainwater.

Inside the compound, the watchman gently informed those who had driven up that they would have to park on the road and not inside the compound. The two great mantras of Madras that is Chennai — 'Visitors, kindly park outside the compound' and 'No parking in front of this gate' — applied here as well. So I watched cars lurching into the dark waters and several Citizens A emerging from them (these are the car-owning types) and wading to the venue. Ah! Rain! The great leveller.

Inside the auditorium the audience was arranged in two concentric ovals. The inner circle held students of the XI Standard from The School, KFI, which is an institution that has taken efforts to encourage its students to appreciate the city and its heritage. These children not only took copious notes throughout the programme but also asked serious and thought-provoking questions of the speakers.

The outer circle held the speakers and it was then that I realised that the seminar had not attracted anyone as an audience from the citizenry. Perhaps the rain held them off or, perhaps, it was sheer apathy. There was also no one from the CMDA, which is arguably the most answerable body for most of the city's present ills. Three or four councillors of the Corporation had come, but with most of the proceedings being in English with translations being done in sketchy Tamil, their interest can only be termed as tepid.

The meeting, organised by the Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), began with Rohit Mistry of the Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation, dwelling on developments on the roads in and around the IT corridor, the efforts to decongest Kathipara, Padi and Madhya Kailash intersections and also certain other prominent bottlenecks in the city. Amongst the questions be faced, many pertained to the

lack of infrastructural development in the older parts of the city, namely the North, which is nobody's baby.

Subsequent speakers dwelt more on the problems of those living on the periphery of the city's civic infrastructure, namely the slum dwellers whom nobody wants but on whom all depend for many services. Aptly named 'Citizen C' by Bharath Jairaj of CAG, the problems facing this group when it came to providing them civic amenities in their present locations and the problems of relocation they face when Citizen C is often banished to some distant spot on the outskirts from where he/she can never travel to work, were highlighted by many. The city, said Jairaj, was now becoming a showpiece

● by SRIRAM V.

to attract Citizen A (the rich investor, the IT whiz kids) and to, incidentally, benefit Citizen B (the middle class who will thrive in the new industries) and to harm Citizen C whose interests nobody want to represent. Debi Goenka and Lalit Batra spoke about the problems faced by similar groups in cities such as Mumbai and Delhi.

Ultimately what emerged was a lack of consensus on what was to be done with Citizen C. Some speakers urged that Citizen C be allowed to remain where they are, with infrastructural developments being provided on the spot. But does this not mean the regularisation of unauthorised shanties, on whom the Corporation has turned a blind eye for so long? This question raised yet another, namely, if the CMDA can periodically forgive the sins of the builder lobby which flouts all rules and then pays a

fee to 'regularise' the plans, why can't the same be done to the shanties? Yet another group argued that allowing people to stay on in slums is not the way to proceed. They ought to be given alternative accommodation and alternative job prospects as well. Clearly, there was no one solution to the issues facing Citizen C.

What of Citizen B? He faces issues of narrowing footpaths, lack of parking space and living in buildings that flout all fire safety norms. Who is to answer these? What about buildings that have already been built bending these rules and how are these to be corrected? After all, paying a fee and regularising what should not have been done does not mean that all residents will be safe in case of fire. On public transport, it was pointed out that all the flyovers were meant for car owners, yet they constitute a small portion or road traffic. Buses which rarely use the flyovers, use the roads below which, having become narrower, slow them down further, thereby increasing commuting time.

Citizen A? Well he is the luckiest of the lot. Reminded me of the story of the man who went to Heaven and found it dull and asked God if he could see how it was in Hell. So God sent him down and there he found Hell to be a happening place with parties and festivals and the Devil to be friendliness personified. He went back and applied for relocating to Hell. God allowed him to go. On arrival he found the place had changed and was full of torment and wailing, with the Devil cracking the whip. On enquiry he was told that earlier he had come as a tourist, whereas now he was a full time resident and this was the real daily scene.

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

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For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

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

OUR READERS WRITE



Japanese air raid

Regarding the only air raid by the Japanese on Madras in October 1943 (MM, November 16th), I was one who visited the actual place where the bomb fell. And that was on the eastern side of railway line near Fort St. George Station and close to the Muthuswamy Iyer Bridge. I could see a big crater on the road leading to the Fort St. George gate.

I was told by the policeman posted near the place that four persons sleeping under the bridge were injured. Another bomb fell north of Beach Station without causing any significant damage.

Dr. M.S. Jayaraman
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I Cross Street, Nandanam
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Preserving memories

I have been a resident of T Nagar from 1938. I used to boast that it was heaven on earth, with so many huge trees lining its main roads, quietude after sunset, shady Pandy Bazaar, lovely Venkatanarayana Road with a canopy of leaves provided by its trees, a sophisticated society and, above all, the general ambience. Three decades ago I never missed an opportunity to take a stroll in Pandy Bazaar with my friends around noon time in December. Coconut oil used to be in a frozen condition from November through March. Gusts of mist would blow out of your mouth in the mornings! All these are gone now! Yes, the beauty of T.Nagar is gone for ever and it is not the best of places to live in any more.

Magnificent residential buildings with well laid out gardens have been destroyed make way for flats. This is inevitable and will go on. With the disappearance of these buildings, the ambience and the beauty of the streets/roads are also vanishing. The flat promoters can help the cause of heritage by video and still photographing the entire street on which they plan to build before their crowbars go into action. This will not cost them too much and they'll be doing heritage a service if they make a copy available to an organisation like INTACH to preserve in its archives.

S. Rajagopalan
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T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017

The PWD's role

The recent heavy rains have resulted in extensive dam-

age to life and property. It is also clear we have wasted precious water by letting it drain into the sea. Tanks, reservoirs and lakes have breached at several places. What is the cause of all this?

It is clear that over the years, tanks, reservoirs and lakes have not been properly desilted and bunds strengthened and maintained by the P.W.D. and other departments involved.

It is important to emphasise that maintenance of tanks, reservoirs and lakes a continuous process and requires proper planning and prompt execution. Till about three decades ago the job of the Chief Engineer of the PWD was a very prestigious assignment. His task was to look after the water requirements of the farming community. He had to come up with every possible irrigation scheme to assist the farmers and ensure economic use of water resources. Tamil Nadu had the good fortune of the services of several great Chief Engineers who had excellent engineering skills.

The recent calamity should make the Government strengthen the PWD.

Dr. Shanker Dev
KYLAS
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T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017

What we are losing

"How my garden grows!" (MM, December 1st) took me back to my younger days when I maintained a kitchen garden in our backyard, growing radish, avarai, brinjal, cluster beans, lady's fingers, ashgourd, bittergourd, besides coconut trees and three varieties of plantains, namely *mondhan*, *peyan* and *poovan*. While the first variety was for curry purposes, the second was for its fruit and leaves and the third was for fruit and chips. For puja purposes, I grew flowers like *sangu pushpam*, balsam etc.

I had experimented with cross pollination of flower plants, crossing white *sangu pushpam* with blue ones, different balsam flowers and red, white and yellow andhimandaaras. The results were quite startling! Adhimandaara is so crossed used to give flowers of various hues; in a single plant itself you could see red, white, and yellow with dots on them. The balsam plants would also give similar flowers.

The main point is no artificial manures were used. Since we had cattle, their manure would be used, while periodically digging the earth to turn

the soil. There were earthworms which helped these plants and trees.

Gardening is a very useful and satisfying hobby. It can also be a lucrative one if a person is commercially minded. Unfortunately, as the cost of lands escalates, the city is losing its garden space to buildings and we are losing our privilege to observe and enjoy nature in its pristine beauty.

T.M. Sundararaman
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The Monsoon effect

After the dreary experience of facing scorching sun, parched land and the acute scarcity of drinking water for over three years, the residents of Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu heaved a sigh of relief thanks to the copious rains that fell in the early weeks of the monsoon. Lakes, reservoirs and tanks overflowed and groundwater level rose appreciably. There seems to be no fear of water scarcity for the next year. So far so good.

However, it is disconcerting to see that too much water has flowed under and over the bridges to merge with the sea due to lack of planning. Apparently the authors of RWH scheme have not cared to draw up a master plan to save flood waters in a big way. They could have constructed check dams across rivers wherever possible and also created lakes near the banks of rivers with canals connecting them.

The city of Chennai has a number of uncared for old lakes in the suburbs, like Korattur, Ambattur, Porur, Chitlapakkam

etc. which could have been enlarged, deepened and renovated so as to gather rainwater and supplies from streams. Will the authorities contemplate doing this even now?

* * *

In my letter on heritage sites (MM, December 1st) the name **Kumbakkara** has been erroneously printed Kambakkara. This waterfall is situated near Periyakulam on the way to Batlagundu.

M.R. Pillai
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The mofussil experience

I refer to Ranjitha Ashok's informative article on the subject of mediation (MM, December 1st). I do not agree with her observation, "Mediation is still a very new concept in India".

The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, under Order XXIII Rule 3, makes available the possibility of settlement of a dispute even after the filing of the Suit when it is proved to the court the claim has been adjusted wholly or in part by any lawful agreement or compromise. In most cases pending in courts in the mofussil, lawyers representing the parties always endeavour to resolve the dispute through amicable settlement.

Even before the Tamil Nadu Legal Services Authority Act 1987 came into force, Legal Aid and Advice Boards with the district and taluk committees were established in some States including Tamil Nadu, based on Article 39-A of the Constitution of India. In the mofussil panel lawyers of the Board were entrusted with the work of go-

Car-bon warning!

The vehicle population in Tamil Nadu went up from 30.66 lakh (1996) to 65.91 lakh (2003) and is projected at 79.0 lakh (2005), with 80% being two-wheelers. This works out to 12.7% having private vehicles in Tamil Nadu. If we assume a figure of 10% for India's entire population, there are 103 million vehicles.

While the U.K. is working on developing modern cars to reduce emissions (MM, December 1st), we in India have diesel price lower than petrol, unlike in other countries. The result is more vehicles are run on diesel, causing more pollution.

Some time ago, a hydrogen-fuel powered autorickshaw made its debut at the annual convention of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. Bajaj Auto Ltd of Pune and Energy Conversion Devices of Troy, Michigan, worked together to create the vehicle. USAID provided \$500,000 for the project. It such projects as these take off, they could mitigate climate change.

Fortunately, most cities in India have LPG for cooking, thereby reducing use of firewood and also reducing pollutants.

As regards vehicle pollutants, this has been controlled in New Delhi by making all heavy vehicles to run on LNG which is pollution-free. Why this system has not been adopted in other cities, even though India produces a huge amount of LNG, is something I fail to understand.

The Chief Minister's initiative to give pedal cycles to over 6 lakh students, spending Rs. 110 crore, is one way to reduce pollution and improve health.

India still lives in its 7 lakh villages, where most households use faulty kitchen chimneys, causing a smoke hazard which does more harm to health even promoting cancer, than anything else. Very little is being done in this direction.

Indian agriculture still depends for traction on the bullocks and when this changes to diesel oil, more pollution will be on the way. Yet India's cattle population of 250 million can produce enough Methane gas to substitute the entire cooking gas and petrol requirements if we can only tap it. The Gas Research Station at Ajitmal, Etawah district, U.P., states one cow can produce 500 kg of dung which can produce methane gas equivalent to 225 litres of petrol.

Similarly, trees like neem, karangi, ratanjot and jojoba could yield 2 to 2.5 tonnes of biodiesel – 15.4 million hectares would yield 38.5 million tonnes of diesel.

The sugar industry could also yield huge volume of Ethanol.

These are all areas we should be looking at on a war footing.

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(Also see Page 6)

ing through the petitions given by the parties, sending notices to the parties against whom complaint was made and in all cases trying to mediate between them for the settlement of the claim. Camps used to be conducted in villages and towns by the Legal Aid and Advice Committee and if both the parties were present, mediation would be suggested to resolve the dispute.

This has been going on not only in the mofussil, but also in Chennai. We have a legislation called The Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996 (26 of 1996), under which an arbitrator, on being approached by the parties, could decide the claim by passing an award. According to a recent decision of the Madras High Court, when there is an arbitration agreement, the Court under Section 8 of the Act 26 of 1996, should refer the parties only to arbitration.

P.S. Subrahmanian
'Muruganadi'
F-4, Kannika Nivas
7, Varadachari Street
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A Rs.2.50 stamp, please

To affix a Rs.2.50 stamp on a private inland cover, we have to purchase THREE postage stamps – 2 one rupee stamps and one 50 paise stamp. By doing this, we are wasting time and the postal authorities are wasting enormous stationery. To minimise this waste, why doesn't the postal department print a postage stamp of Rs.2.50 value?

S.S. Ramanathan
R-12, 65th Street,
10th Sector, K.K. Nagar West
Chennai 600 078

The creator of the Mavur legend

In 1911, a boy from Tanjore aged 21 went to Calcutta to make good. He became a journalist, worked with Reuters, edited important newspapers in Bengal, owned them, became a legislator, industrialist, politician, publicist and leader of men. Such was the career of Sir R. Srinivasa Sarma.

I like any man who builds himself, the man often known as 'self-made'. Sir Srinivasa is one such. With vision, courage and capacity for hard work, he attained fame and fortune. But his success has not affected him. He is humble to one and all, brutally frank in his ways and magnificent in his deeds. The good that he has done will live long after Sir Srinivasa leaves us.

Sir Srinivasa is an 'independent' in politics. His sojourn in England for long and his close association with the cream of European society would not allow him to come into the orbit of patriotism such as Congressmen uphold. A realist by nature and shaping, he is every inch Constitutionally-minded in political matters. Some have dubbed him a 'loyalist', because he would not be an agitator of a virulent type. In fact, he is against noisy agitations, terrorist activities and gunpowder politics. In Bengal, he helped Sir John Anderson in the latter's campaign to reduce the evil of terrorism. With all that, I do not know of a single act of Sir Srinivasa in politics which went against the best interests of our country. I can think of scores of instances where his good work both in India and England proved to be of great service to India.

As a Reuter's correspondent, Sir Srinivasa made a mark. His brilliance in Fleet Street was well established soon after his reaching England in 1912. This contact he established very early in life went on growing year after year. In his recent visits to England, *The Times* directors often entertained him, something which they have never done to any Indian journalist so far. Then, as the editor of *The Bengalee*, a paper founded by the late Sir Surendranath Banerjee, Sir Srinivasa's reputation was high. Now, as the editor of that fine weekly, *The Whip*, he is serving Bengal and India well.

Sir Srinivasa for a time managed many industrial concerns in Bengal. Though an artiste, he has a shrewd business instinct in him. For a few years, he sat in the

● **Recollections of Sir R. Srinivasa Sarma, described as the 'Mystery Man of Mavur', recently caused a great deal of interest and debate. In two articles here, one culled from his journal *The Whip*, and the other a profile which appeared some time ago in the local Press, we present a picture of a man who was much in the news in his time.**

Central Legislature at Delhi and contributed a good chapter to the deliberations of that great legislative body. He was the whip of the Independent Party in the Assembly. He proved himself a fine debater and a talented speaker on the floor of the House. Even his speeches before the East India Association and in public lecture halls in England were well received by his audiences.

When I called on him at Mavur, his country residence, his manner of living impressed me. As soon as my automobile stopped at his porch and I got out, a lad of ten in livery came up to me, conducted me to a sitting room and took my card in. In another ten minutes, Sir Srinivasa's secretary led me to the study-room where an air-conditioning apparatus was at work. Looking at his shelves of books, the flowerpots, and the comfortable cushioned chairs, I noted his fine artistic taste.

We talked of Sir Srinivasa's trips to Europe and the people he met. He was the first Indian to fly to Europe when Imperial Airways introduced its England-India service in 1929. In Italy he



Sarma's 'reading room' in the middle of the Mavur Tank, as it is today. Note the walkway from the house in the foreground and the Dakshineswar Temple in the background, left.

met the Pope and Mussolini. In Turkey, Sir Srinivasa met Kamal Pasha, in Egypt, he called on Nahas Pasha, the then Premier.

Turning our train of conversation to his knighthood, we talked of the special investiture King Edward VIII held in Buckingham Palace, to knight Sir Srinivasa. Here is that story from Sir Srinivasa himself:

"I was in England then and one day when I was sitting at the National Liberal Club, a telephone message from Buckingham Palace arrived. I was summoned to go there immediately and I went.

"I found the King wearing a lounge jacket and flannel trousers. He received me, shook hands, and bade me near a stool. I knelt down and the King invested me with the knighthood.

"As I left the King, Mr. Baldwin entered and a few hours later the news of the monarch's abdication was flashed across the pages of newspapers."

Amongst friends, Sir Srinivasa is a brilliant conversationalist, full of wit, and in his presence you get entertained. Men of all castes and creeds, political beliefs and party spirit, come and crowd at Mavur and enjoy Sir Srinivasa's hospitality.

Sir Srinivasa is a rare type of South Indian. He earned and spent money like a Wall Street banker. Generosity is the one outstanding quality in him. His twenty servants of the household have been presented with many acres of paddy fields as a gift from him in appreciation of their services.



The 'Dakshineswar Temple' in Mavur as it is today.

Yes, Sir Srinivasa is a type of man whom we can safely call a 'Citizen of the World' and a good citizen too!

N. Perumal in *The Echo* (a Madras weekly) dated 2.11.1941

* * *

With Sir Srinivasa Sarma's politics I have no sympathy. In fact, I am sorry that a person so talented, so resourceful and so dynamic, should have chosen to be on the wrong side of the fence. As a journalist, however, he has many distinctions to his credit. He is the first Indian journalist to be knighted – and at such an early age. Personally, knighthood has no attractions for me. In my view, knighthood and journalism hardly go well together, and it is, therefore, that you do not find, even in England, the editors of the best English newspapers, who have worked their way up in the profession, accepting any title. But, considering that many veteran journalists in India have cherished such distinction, and have not received it, there is special merit in Sir Srinivasa's achievement in the relative. He is the oldest among nominated members in the Assembly and has been abroad more times than any other Indian journalist. The number of celebrities he has met during these foreign trips is greater than what any of his Indian or European colleagues can claim.

J.N. Sahni in the *National Call*, Delhi (1937).

* * *

It was soon after receiving his knighthood that Sir Srinivasa espied a rural spot eight miles from the town of Thiruvavur and decided to develop it, so that he might spend his last days there in peace. A few years later, he used his fortunes made from journalism and business enterprises to turn it into a small village of fifty souls. And he brought with him a little bit of Bengal, when he called it MA-vur, installed a Kali Temple, and called his own home *Kali Koti*. With its vast gardens, swimming pools, shower-baths, air-conditioned rooms, tennis courts, billiard parlour, radio-sets, portly home of Sir Srinivasa Sarma is modelled on the lines of the country residences of the English peerage and he lives here like one of them. With one difference, however: he never misses a day's worship at the Kali Mata Temple either at Mavur or in Calcutta.

To his other distinctions, he has added one more, namely that he was the only Indian to be invested Knight by a King with his own hands on the eve of his abdication, when he became temporarily a commoner himself. British and American papers specially mentioned this act of consideration for an Indian by the departing King.

Following the ceremony, the King had a quarter of an hour's chat with Sir Srinivasa, talked

Shortly after Srinivasa Sarma came to Calcutta to begin his career, he one day visited the renowned temple at Dakshineswar. And there, a power suddenly seized him. From that moment, he was a devotee of Kali. And when he created a beautiful village and a magnificent home at Mavur, he also wanted to erect a shrine for his Patron Goddess on an elaborate scale. It became a reality in 1941, modelled on the same lines as the famous Dakshineswar Shrine.

Amidst coconut palms and a green carpet of paddy fields, across the road and opposite Sir Srinivasa's residence, is this magnificent structure rising towards the sky. With its pillars and domes built in artistic style, its colour scheme worked in green, and light and dark blue, and its domes shining brightly in their coat of aluminium paint, the temple presents something new and distinct in South India. The flooring is of white marble and the steps are of granite. There is a massive door made of ebony at the entrance to the sacred sanctum where on a marble dais is placed the image of the Goddess Kali, in appropriate colours of black, green, gold, red and white. The image was made in Calcutta, an exact replica of the one adorning the temple at Dakshineswar.

Here people perform their morning *bhajan* meticulously. Men and boys, young and old, their forehead smeared with holy ashes in white and red *kum kum*, all clad in saffron clothes and wearing chains with pendants with a miniature portrait of the Goddess, sing melodious songs in praise of the Mother, songs specially composed by a great musical genius of the South. As this morning worship went on, even the passing bullock-carts on the road stop, the pedestrians stand still, and watch the impressive spectacle.

At an average, about thirty visitors from all parts of India come every day to Mavur to visit the shrine. And they tell strange stories of rare blessings conferred on worshippers here. Successive Governors of Madras have visited Mavur. There are anecdotes about their visits too. It appears that Sir George Stanley, while visiting Srinivasa, got a telegram intimating his appointment as acting Viceroy. Sir Arther Hope similarly got intimation of his extension of office of Governor of Madras and, lately, Sir Archibald Nye, while spending a few hours here visiting the shrine, got the news of his selection as Britain's High Commissioner in India.

'A Pilgrim' in the *Orient Illustrated Weekly*, 12.9.1948.

(From a booklet published by *The Whip*.)



Sir R. Srinivasa Sarma.

From Agraharam to Buckingham Palace

1905 was a landmark in India's political history. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, took the fateful decision to partition Bengal. The whole of India in general and the people of Bengal in particular viewed this imposing of a measure much against their will as a provocative challenge. A country-wide agitation was launched against British rule.

A 17-year-old Brahmin schoolboy in Thanjavur became fascinated with this agitation. He was then studying in the matriculation class in the Kalyanasundaram High School. He collected some fellow students around him and infused in them the spirit of the new political awakening in the country arising from the partition of Bengal. Srinivasan was his name, though in family circles he was fondly called Doraiswami. In later life, he became famous as Sir R.S. Sarma. I shall refer to him only as Sarma.

Sarma was born in 1890 in the Pudu Agraharam in Thiruvavur, on the banks of the Cauvery, the eldest son of a District Registrar, Ramaswamy Iyer. His mother, Lakshmi, died two years after his birth, leaving yet another son, Nagarajan, and a daughter. Ramaswamy Iyer moved from town to town in South India on official duty and he took with him his little children. When he died in 1900, his brother-in-law Kannuswamy Iyer took charge of them.

Kannuswamy Iyer did not take to Sarma, because his zeal for political information led him to lose interest in his studies.

When Sarma switched to the Thiruvavur High School, he continued his political activity. When the newspapers announced the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Lion of Punjab, Sarma organised a student procession through the streets of Thiruvavur. The youthful leader made a thundering speech in English for 10 minutes.

Soon school disgusted him. He failed in the matriculation examination year after year. He had, however, developed as a fine public speaker and by his 16th year had read Macaulay's *Essays*, Sheldon's *Impeachment of Warren Hastings* and Pitt's *Parliamentary Debates*. He also, while still in his teens, was friends with all types of political personalities, amongst them even a famous anarchist of the South, Nilakanta Brahmachari, who was implicated in the Ashe Murder Case at Maniachi.

In 1908, he left Thiruvavur to

live with his sister Kannamma in Thiruvallur. He joined the Mission High School there, failed the matriculation examination again, then joined Wesley High School in Royapettah. When his sister died in 1910, he got his uncle to sell his share of the landed property in Thiruvavur, settled his dues in Madras and left for Calcutta in 1911.

Calcutta had caught the imagination of Sarma even in his boyhood, because most of the famous political leaders of the day were from there. Moreover, Sarma admired the revolutionaries of Bengal who indulged in violent acts in the name of patriotism. He was, however, to bitterly denounce them as terrorists, in later life.

● A profile by
V. SUNDARAM
IAS (RTD.)

Another reason why he longed to be in Calcutta was his clear understanding that a man of talent like himself could find a variety of opportunities in life only in a big city like Calcutta.

In Calcutta he met the famous anarchist Prof. Jitendralal Banerjee, who introduced him to Surendranath Banerjee, the great statesman and editor of the *Bengalee*. Sarma joined Banerjee as a proofreader on a pay of Rs.15 a month. Within two or three months, Banerjee, impressed by Sarma's talent, promoted him as Sub-Editor of the *Bengalee*. Soon, Sarma gained the friendship of eminent men in Bengal like Chittaranjan Das, Rabindranath Tagore and Motilal Ghosh.

In 1914, at the request of Anne Besant, Surendranath Banerjee sent Sarma to work for *New India* in Madras. As he could not get along with B.P. Wadia, the Theosophist in charge of the paper, Sarma went back to the *Bengalee*.

In 1916, he joined the Associated Press news agency (Reuters) and his contacts with influential people in Calcutta increased. When the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 were announced, Sarma borrowed money from his friends and went to England. Lord Sinha, who was then Under Secretary of State for India, introduced Sarma to Sir Edwin. Sarma called on Sir Edwin, then campaigned for the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in the columns of *The Times*, London, for almost six months.

On his return to Calcutta, Sarma worked as Editor of *New Empire*, an evening newspaper. He soon made it a very popular. Sarma attended the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920 and was the guest of the English Governor.

In 1922, he joined G.D. Birla's industrial organisation as a General Manager of Garden Reach Jute Mills in Calcutta on a fabulous salary of Rs.5000 a month. And he began to flourish in cash.

In 1929, Lord Irwin the Viceroy nominated Sarma from Bengal for a seat in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi. Sarma found himself the leader of what was called the Central Party, a small group in the Assembly. About his party, he once

boasted that it was "the best organised and the most disciplined in this House to which I have the honour to belong." He said on another occasion that his party's policy every time was "for conciliation and responsive co-operation with the government" and that it never stood "for abject servitude to government or blind obstruction for obstruction's sake."

Between 1929 and 1934, India witnessed terrible times due to the intense internal political agitation set off by the Congress. Sarma, espousing law and order, courageously spoke his mind, at times upholding the Government viewpoint, at others speaking against the government, as he did on the Salt Bill. He studied his subjects thoroughly before speaking, was brief and brilliant.

Years later, in March 1936, while participating in a discussion on the budget he had to make some significant remarks

about repressive laws in the country with particular reference to Bengal. He pointed out that in Bengal, Governor Sir John Anderson had sympathetically ordered the release of many terrorist-detenues, but then, the gratitude he got for it was a revolver attack on him at the Racecourse in Lebong. Then, prophetically, Sarma spoke his mind on the shape of things to come, saying, "I think that even in independent India, these repressive laws will find a place in the statute book, as in the statute book of every country in the

world." We now know that such a prophecy has indeed been fulfilled.

As a consequence of the Round Table Conference sessions, when the Government of India Act of 1935 came on the anvil, Sarma thought that it would be advantageous to start a weekly newspaper. He started *The Whip* in January 1934 and found it welcomed by everybody in India and England. Two years later, he was knighted on the recommendation of Sir John Anderson.

In 1943, the Government of India, as part of its war-effort, decided on a Mission of Indians to be sent to the United States to tell the Americans what was being done in India for the war. Sarma was its leader and in the U.S. he met President Roosevelt. On his return to India in 1944, he started a magazine for the East Indian Railway, a venture that became a great success.

In the general elections of January 1952, Sarma contested from the Thanjavur parliamentary constituency, opposing R. Venkataraman (the Congress nominee). He was supported by the Dravida Kazhagam leader E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, who took the platform along with Sarma during the campaign. The DMK and the Communist Party also supported him. Despite this support, he lost by about 4,000 votes. This defeat caused him deep sorrow, and he left for Calcutta, saying that he had no wish to live in South India.

He passed away peacefully without a struggle on September 27, 1957 in his beloved house in Mavur. Rajaji, in his tribute, said, "His activities and optimism were examples for even those who did not like him. He was on good terms with some officials, and, so, people thought that he helped Government against the Congress. I believe this was not true."

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current affairs questions are from the period November 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Who is the new President of Sri Lanka?
2. Teenagers Ratul Chandra Rabha and Rituparna Boro are the recipients of which prestigious National award?
3. Whose record did Sachin Tendulkar better to become the most capped ODI player of all time?
4. According to a global ranking by Forbes, which athletic achievement was ranked the greatest of the last 150 years?
5. Who bested Roger Federer to win the season-ending Masters Cup in China recently?
6. What is the name of the Israeli PM Ariel Sharon's new centrist party formed on November 21st?
7. Who won the Santosh Trophy, the symbol of supremacy in National football, after a gap of 15 years?
8. Bihar has a new Chief Minister after the recent elections. Name him and his party.
9. Name Microsoft's video gaming console that made its much anticipated debut on November 22nd.
10. Name the BRO employee from India killed by the Taliban in Afghanistan leading to global condemnation.
11. Vai. Mu. Kothainayaki is considered the first woman to pen what genre of writing in Tamil?
12. Which freedom fighter and a great educationist from near Coimbatore was called 'Aiya'?
13. What was Carnavalli V. Krishnaswamy, a Manchester-trained engineer of the Corporation of Madras, the first to start in India in 1924?
14. Name the Rs. 717-crore World Bank-aided scheme for the rural poor launched by the State Government recently.
15. Which MP from the State is the present Union Minister of State for Railways?
16. Name the forum for free speech recently formed by P. Chidambaram's son and Kanimozhi, daughter of M. Karunanidhi.
17. Name Nagesh's film production company in the comedy hit *Kaadhalikka Neramillai*.
18. Where was the third elephant rejuvenation camp held recently?
19. On November 20th, a plaque was unveiled in Ooty to mark what distinction?
20. In which places has the Chennai Corporation council on November 22nd approved the building of a new flyover and a compost plant?

(Answers on page 8)

Droughts, floods, storms...

The unusually ferocious floods, droughts and storms we have seen across the world in recent years show all too clearly how vulnerable we are to climate extremes and how devastating they can be. Scientists believe that such natural disasters will become increasingly common as climate change exerts its effects on our planet.

Climate change is caused by increasing levels of certain 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere. Such gases as carbon dioxide and methane trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. It is a similar process to the way glass in a greenhouse traps the warmth of the sun. As these greenhouse gases increase in concentration, they trap more heat and the planet as a whole warms up.

Carbon dioxide is produced in vast quantities by our increasingly energy-hungry global society, mainly as a result of the increasing use of fossil fuels such as oil and gas. This has ensured that the Earth has already warmed over the past century by 0.6 degree C. And the increase is accelerating. Over the coming century, our planet is expected to rise in temperature by between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees C.

Climate change will affect the world in extreme and unpredictable ways. It will also impose major costs on our global society, its environment and economy. For example:

- Food production could be reduced as increasing temperatures, droughts and floods hit the world's main agricultural regions.
- Rising sea levels threaten the existence of some small island states and many of the world's great cities. This will put the lives of millions of people at risk. Coastal environments will also be put under pressure, or destroyed completely.
- Tropical diseases could become endemic in temperate countries.
- Mass extinctions of plants and animals could permanently erode the quality of the planet's main ecosystems. This will further reduce their ability to adapt to a changing world.
- Global instability and conflict will intensify as nations compete for increasingly impoverished natural resources.

Nations around the world have agreed to take action to halt – and eventually reverse – global warming through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Central to this convention is the Kyoto Protocol,

How do you fight the changing climate?

which commits many nations to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. Developed nations have agreed to reduce their emissions by 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels by 2010.

The Kyoto Protocol is seen by the UK as only the first step in reducing the impacts of climate change. Emissions may have to be reduced by 60 per

• by A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

cent to halt climate change. The UK has a domestic goal to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2010 and aims at reducing emissions by 60 per cent by 2050.

The UK has developed and begun implementing a far-reaching programme to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Central to the programme is a commitment to produce 10 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2010. The UK is blessed with an abundance of sites for harvesting energy from the wind and waves.

The potential of wave-power alone is phenomenal. Globally, the seas could provide more than twice the world's energy needs. If just 0.1 per cent of the energy in the oceans could be harvested, global energy needs would be supplied five times over.

The UK is investing heavily in developing marine energy, wind-generated electricity and solar energy, and in developing energy crops which can be used to replace diesel and other fossil fuels.

Transport is one of Britain's biggest emitters of greenhouse gases. For this reason, the UK

Government and devolved administrations are spending around £180 billion over the next decade on improving public transport and reducing road congestion. Together with its European partners, agreement has been reached with car manufacturers to improve fuel efficiency in new cars by 25 per cent by 2008-09. The production of more energy-efficient domestic appliances is also being encouraged.

Strict environmental targets for all government offices and buildings are being set. Tough energy efficiency targets for



local authorities, schools and hospitals are also being set.

Agriculture is a major greenhouse gas emitter. For this reason, better countryside management is being encouraged to ensure that less energy is required to produce food. Farmers are also being encouraged to conserve and enhance woodlands to soak up carbon dioxide.

Some see reducing pollution as a drag on the economy, with ordinary people paying the economic price for only very small environmental benefits. History, however, teaches us to see it as an opportunity.

We see increased energy efficiency as a chance to lower costs to business and households. New environmentally technologies can open up new job opportunities for people. Improved transport means business can function more efficiently. More energy-efficient cars improve the air quality in our cities. The benefits of reducing carbon emissions are huge. (Courtesy: *Global Warning: An overview of the UK and the Environment*, issued by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.)

Dress code : Punishing victims, not the offenders

(Continued from page 1)

dress code was a way of keeping the women suppressed and not allowing them to express themselves. It is an issue more of male control and a part of patriarchal power game. Prof. Kaushik also mentioned her recent experience in Jordan when she was denied entry to a mosque since she was considered to be "indecently dressed" in a saree; obviously the dress code could differ from region to region and generation to generation. She said that during all her international travels and attending international conferences in all parts of the world, she always wore a traditional saree as she felt more comfortable with saree irrespective of what others thought. According to her, dress is a matter of personal choice and should be left to the individual's wisdom.

Prof. K.S. Lakshmi, Principal, Meenakshi College, said that the dress code has never been an issue. As only a very small percentage of students dress in an unacceptable way, it

is not advisable to enforce a code for all students. She also pointed out the utility value of cell phones. As only a very small segment of the students misuse it, there is no need to discourage the use of cell phones amongst students. According to her, the introduction of modern technology in every sphere should be encouraged.

Prof. Nirmala Prasad, Principal, M.O.P. Vaishnav College, felt that dress code was necessary to maintain the academic environment in educational institutions. Such a dress code was required for reasons of discipline and in order to prevent distraction of the students. However, this could be brought about by a persuasive method in which the students can be made to understand that improper dress is not appropriate to the learning atmosphere and a college environment.

Prof. Eugene Pinto, Principal, Queen Mary's College, said that the dress code issue is one largely related to students belonging to the middle and up-

per income group. In her college, the dress code was not an issue at all.

Parveen Sultana of Basheer Ahmed College for Women, who was compering on the meeting, offered several citations from Tamil literature to show that a dress code is not a subject of recent origin.

The meeting concluded with the view that many such women's issues need to be resolved by treating the issues as social issues and addressing the males, particularly the male students in the age group 17-22, to sensitise on the rights of women and the need to adopt a healthy attitude towards women. Enforcing a dress code for women amounted to punishing the victims rather than the offenders.

Many participants felt that such meetings, where one could listen to the views of women students and women professors, should be held more frequently, particularly in colleges where the male and female students, parents and authorities could be addressed.

PARKING WOES

(Continued from page 1)

ranges between 15% and 60%! The study has recommended evolution of off-street parking standards for various activities that would ultimately become part of the Development Control Rules of the Master Plan for the CMA. Short-term strategies and solutions for managing parking problems have also been drawn up, including the use of parking meters and development of automated multi-level parking systems.

Dr. T. Anantha Rajan, an expert in Urban Systems Development, says, "In Singapore, with a population of around 3 million, the Urban Redevelopment Authority manages a total of 64,000 parking spaces (both on-street and off-street). Sydney city, in Australia, has 4000 on-street parking spaces available during office hours and increases it to 6500 after office hours. It is time Chennai city has a comprehensive parking policy supported by parking standards for different land uses with a suitable agency to administer the parking policy evolved."

He recommends that the following key issues merit careful consideration while working out strategies and projects of Parking Management System.

On-street parking

- Priority to be accorded for traffic movement on arterial and sub-arterial roads; access requirements to take priority on collector and local roads.
- Elimination of parking at all times as a long-term strategy in arterial roads.
- On-street parking restrictions on local streets.
- While deciding on specific street parking locations, due consideration be given to loss in road capacity.
- Provision of sidewalks while planning to eliminate conflicts between pedestrians and moving vehicles.

Short-stay parking

- Short-stay parking be located in proximity to trip destinations and protected from long-stay parkers.

Parking in residences/buildings

- Public spaces are a public resource – primarily for movement of vehicles and not for parking.
- Sufficient parking facilities must be made available within residential premises or at off-street locations for long-stay parking.
- In flats and high-rise, additional parking facilities over and above the residents' requirements must be provided to meet parking demand of visitors (or

off-street parking places provided).

- Public institutions, commercial complexes, theatres and restaurants advised to provide off-street parking for employees, customers, etc.

Heavy-vehicle parking

- Overnight parking of buses, trucks, omnibuses, tourist buses, vans, lorries, etc. on the carriageway must be discouraged by enforcement action against those who don't provide off-street parking place for the parking of such vehicles during the night.

Parking at transport terminals

- Commuter parking to be provided at railway stations by the authorities to facilitate

commuters adopting the park-and-ride concept.

- Convenient parking in rail, air and bus terminals

Intermodal Transfer Facilities to provide convenient intermodal transfer facilities at railway stations, transport terminals, etc. to bring down use of private vehicles.

Multilevel Parking facilities (ramp type and mechanical) to be planned and developed at suitable locations.

- Off-street parking sites to be identified in all Zones of the Corporation and municipalities.
- BOT concept to be encouraged in building facilities.
- Units to conform to strict design standards.
- Units at bus terminals/depots in CMA at ground level for transport corporation usage.

The price of parking

Judiciously devised parking pricing can help in more efficient use of parking facilities, address specific parking problems, ensure that parking is available for intended users, reduce total parking requirements, and provide the required cost of maintaining associated facilities.

Provision of public transport facilities that are efficient, accessible, and affordable, effective land use planning that reduces the use of private motorised vehicles and introducing area licensing (that restricts entry of private vehicles) could also help. But, he concludes, "An effective institutional structure is necessary to implement such a parking policy with the co-operation of all stakeholders. But till the time a proposed Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority is formed, the activities connected with parking management may have to be taken care of by agencies like the CMDA, Corporation of Chennai and municipal agencies."

The Chennai City Traffic Police (CCTP) is the main agency for parking enforcement. On the road, parking places are identified by Traffic Police and notified by the Chennai Corporation, which has entrusted the management of paid parking lots to TEXCO (Tamil Nadu Ex-Servicemen's Corporation). Hurdles the CCTP faces in parking enforcement include the large volume of violations and the vast area it has to monitor – 1800 km of road length. Low penalties also offer no effective deterrent against unauthorised parking. The lack of clear demarcation – signage and road markings – also results in confusion.

But, says K.C. Mahali, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), "We are actively pursuing different strategies to handle the issue. But our biggest problem, I must confess, is arguments with the violators that create unnecessary confusion whenever the Traffic Police impose fines. Every road-user must understand the need to co-operate in this disciplining exercise." As for complaints of corruption, he says, "When in doubt, every road-user who is charged with an offence can ask for the Traffic Fine Chart from the person who has charged him, check before paying the stipulated fine, AND ask for the receipt for that same amount."

Official sources at the CMDA meanwhile confirm that the proposed parking policy is awaiting Government approval. Meanwhile, immediate implementation of simple on-street parking measures at eight critical locations is on the anvil at an estimated cost of Rs.1.71 crore, within the Traffic and Transportation component of the TNUDP III and to be implemented with World Bank assistance.

A multilevel parking complex proposed at T. Nagar includes a bus terminal at ground level, three floors of parking above the terminal, and two floors of commercial space above them. Also, detailed bankable projects for medium- and long-term parking solutions are to be planned in the second stage of the study AFTER acceptance of the first. By which time, with the current rate of increase in parking demand, will any of these solutions have their intended effect?

S.M.

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.

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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:

Monkey Business

The 'monkey trapping' on the IIT campus a few weeks ago, when at least 20 monkeys were caught over two days and taken away, based on complaints from some residents, has raised many issues. Says Susy Varughese, an irate animal lover, who lives on campus, "The bonnet monkeys are the native wildlife of the area. As social and free-ranging animals, trapping them greatly disturbs their attitude towards human beings. They become even more aggressive. Most of the wildlife on campus are highly stressed at the moment due to the continuous rains in the recent past and are looking for food. There should be better ways of handling the problems they posed."

That the monkeys were 'a nuisance' to the Vanavani schoolchildren, as the Chief Security Officer thought, is not a valid reason to relocate them from a reserve forest lying within the close boundaries of a National Park, feel animal lovers. Says Dilip Veeraraghavan, who also lives on campus, "This is certainly an unusual situation. But assuming that removing a few monkeys will 'solve' such issues only shows lack of awareness of the behaviour of these animals. Why not plant more fruit-bearing trees and provide sufficient waterbodies so that the animals do not stray into unsafe territory? It is only their basic insecurity that makes them aggressive. They are actually the locals, and we the encroachers. We need to have a greater eco-sensitive approach and respect their space."

A senior official in the Forest Department says, "Based on the Security Officer's com-

plaint – of monkeys snatching food and troubling children on campus – the wildlife authorities took the action they were expected to. Those monkeys that were 'causing menace' have been relocated in Reserve Forest areas in Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram. The whole process is very scientifically done. After we catch the animals, we transfer them to bigger cages and then gradually introduce them to a bigger social group in a large enclosure. Thereafter, groups of about 30 monkeys are released into the reserve forest areas."

● by
SHOBHA MENON

The official adds, "The monkeys that 'caused menace' were from the campus. The fact is the IIT campus has a greater monkey population than the GNP itself, because the animals come into the campus in search of food that is actually directly/indirectly provided by the residents." And why do they become aggressive? "Initially, a child or adult may feed a monkey he sees close by. The next day, the monkey comes back for more food. If it is not provided, it may either snatch at you or chase you for food. And thus they've become a 'nuisance'."

"It is time we understand that these are wild animals. Don't look them in the eye and DO NOT feed them. They'll find other means of food. If we had more people who understand that animals too need their space, such conflicts will

not arise. But the public are more concerned about a few mangoes or coconuts they may forfeit to them. Immediately a hue and cry is raised about nuisance-causing monkeys, either with the wildlife authorities or with the media."

However, a senior official in IIT's Administration Department feels, "This campus is primarily a student/faculty residential campus. Since it adjoins a National Park, we are committed to support wildlife. All our actions therefore have to take into consideration both the people and animals on campus. But when a question of safety and security arises, people will come first. We understand the borders are porous and such conflicts will happen. Currently under scrutiny are plans to build a dining hall for the children and to create an awareness of proper dining habits, ensuring a minimisation of such conflicts in future."

Shekar Dattatri, wildlife filmmaker, however, is "appalled by the callous attitude of the guardians of the wildlife that lives within the campus. Having taken over a pristine fragment of precious dry evergreen forest, they have been steadily turning it into a concrete jungle and treating the wildlife that lives there as pests to be exterminated."

The latest incident, involving the cruel capture of monkeys, is only one in a long list of 'attacks' on wildlife over the years. Yes, monkeys can be a bit of a nuisance, but the way to tackle this is to study their behaviour and see to what extent modifying human habits can reduce the conflict.

Dates for Your Diary

Till January 20: An exhibition of toys titled *The Magic Factory*. The students of the MCF Arts Management Internship programme present an interactive exhibition of traditional and contemporary Indian toys. The exhibition will be enhanced with workshops, demonstrations and loads of fun time activities for children. (At DakshinaChitra.)

Till December 20: *Sublime*, a group show of abstract paintings. (At Apparao Galleries.)

Till December 20: *King Arthur and his Nights*, the Little Theatre's annual Christmas pantomime. (At Museum Theatre, 3.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.)

December 21: *Buzz* at the British Council. Music: DJ Bobby Friktion, UK. (8.15 p.m.)

December 22: *Dylan Thomas – a portrait in prose and poetry*. (At Amethyst, 7.00 p.m.)

December 22, 23 and 27: Anita Ratnam's dance presentation *Arya Tara*.

Arya Tara is divided into two sections. *Arya* contains slokas

and songs on the Great Goddess. Anita Ratnam's ensemble will present two short items along with three solos by them. *Tara* is an edited version of a full-length solo operatic performance called *Seven Graces* she had premiered earlier this year. The work is inspired by the legend of the Buddhist goddess Tara and her many manifestations. (At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, YGP Auditorium, and Gana Vihar, respectively, 7 p.m.)

December 24, 25 and 26: YLC Holiday Workshops at the British Council. **24th:** *Ceramic work* for 5-9 year-olds, **25th:** *Watch them at work* 10-14 year-olds, **25th:** *Eyecare* for the age groups of 5-9 and 10-14 and **26th:** *Star trekking* for 5-9 year-olds. For details call 4205 0600.

Till December 25: Display and sale of Christmas tree ornaments made of papier mache, glass, chennapatna, wood etc. and a wide range of toys, gifts and decorations. (At the Craft Shop, DakshinaChitra.)

December 26: Zubin Mehta directing The Bavarian State Orchestra. (At Music Academy.)

Till December 26: Recent work by Rekha Rao, daughter of famed artist K.K. Hebbar. (At Forum Art Gallery.)

Answers to Quiz

1. Mahinda Rajapakse; 2. The 'Bharat Award' for bravery; 3. Wasim Akram; 4. Roger Bannister breaching the 4 minute barrier in the mile; 5. David Nalbandian; 6. Kadima; 7. Goa; 8. Janata Dal (United)'s Nitish Kumar; 9. Xbox 360; 10. Ramankutty Maniappan.

* * *

11. The first detective story in Tamil; 12. T. S. Avinashilingam; 13. The first radio broadcasting service; 14. 'Pudu Vaazhvu' scheme; 15. R. Velu; 16. 'Karuthu'; 17. 'Oho Productions'; 18. Theppakadu in Mudumalai sanctuary; 19. The dedication of the NMR as a World Heritage site; 20. Flyover between Indira Nagar and CPT Road (Taramani) and Kodungaiyur, respectively.

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