

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Someone here to see you... says he is from 'Planet' Pluto!

Ninth rock from the sun

Look what these Science guys have gone and done to poor Pluto.

Where do they get off, swanking around, demoting an entire planet so casually, like they're doing a spot of proof-reading on some Universal Page?

They're calling this a "triumph of science over sentiment", and point out that "science always self-corrects eventually", setting aside strong emotions.

Really?

Did anyone ask Pluto how he felt? In a trice, he's gone from being the enigmatic, outermost planet of the solar system to being referred to as a 'dwarf planet' – which is so politically incorrect on so many levels, you don't know where to begin.

This decision is sure to cause rumblings in various worlds, like the astronomical toys and artefacts industries, and for encyclopedias, planetariums, school textbooks, and science projects.

As for astrology, well, we have apparently scored, as this view endorses Indian mathematical and astrological treatises going back, they say, to Aryabhata and Varahamihira.

So there's a slight touch of "Huh, we've always known this" in the Madras air – which is always gratifying.

Astrologers from other corners of the globe have taken the "What's in a label?" stand, opting for business as usual.

But still – somewhere out there is a planet with a broken heart, suffering a distinct 'Et Tu, Earth?' feeling.

Rumour has it that a celebrated canine, belonging to an even more celebrated Mouse, isn't too happy either.

Ranjitha Ashok

Two forgotten twinings

— Will we revive the Halle, Denver links?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Madras was forty years ago twinned with Halle – whose connection with Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg of Tranquebar (Tranquebar) are well-known – and with Denver, Colorado, USA, 25 years ago through the Indo-American Association, Madras, spearheaded by the late Dolly Simon. What has happened to the two twinning relationships? When a scholar from Germany, Matthias Frenz, recently wondered about the Halle-Madras twinning, the following facts emerged:

The first visit of a delegation of the Corporation of Madras to Halle was in June 1961. Mayor Munuswamy led the team. Although Halle sent a draft of a treaty to Madras immediately after the visit they did not receive an answer.

The treaty of friendship between the towns was, however, signed on July 15, 1967, when another delegation from Madras came to Halle. The internal annual report on the international activities in Halle for 1967 states: "From 7.7.1967 to 16.7.1967, the Lord Mayor and 6 members of the town council of Madras were guests of the town council of Halle, having been invited by the German Association of Towns and Villages and the GDR. The result is particularly reflected in the treaty of friendship that was signed on 15.7.1967. We were informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that all members of the delegation had given their impressions and experiences during their visit to be press in Madras... Of particular interest is the report of Mr. Krishnamurthi (a trade union official and lawyer). In a series of articles, he wrote objectively about many problems, experiences and impressions.

"In order to strengthen the relationship between Halle and Madras, information brochures

about the development of the GDR were sent to the members of the delegation.

"For the world exhibition that will take place in Madras in 1968, the Lord Mayor and the members of the town council [of Halle] have been invited to Madras.

"Regarding the ties between Halle and Madras we have to say that we have not received any message besides a letter of thanks shortly after the return of the delegation to Madras, – neither in reply to the information brochures and the accompanying letters

– nor in reply to our formal greetings sent on the occasion of the 280th Inauguration Day Celebrations of the Corporation of Madras

(Continued on page 7)



The Francke Foundation, Halle, above, and the Corporation of Madras, below.



Tamil Nadu best in governance

(By A Staff Reporter)

Tamil Nadu is a clear winner on Good Governance in the 4th annual ranking of States recently announced by *India Today*. It, however, has not moved up on the count of overall ranking – it remained fourth among the 20 large states reviewed. However, what is heartening is that within the rank, there has been a marginal increase in its percentage points. Punjab, is ranked first, Kerala second and Himachal Pradesh third. Tamil Nadu scores over Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka, three other states that were strong contenders for the 'best State' title.

The study has been done on the basis of 10 parameters. Tamil Nadu is ranked second in Law and Order, third in Agriculture, third in Primary Health, fourth in Primary Education, fifth in Infrastructure, seventh in the Consumer Market, eighth in Investment Environment and tenth in Budget and Prosperity.

There is a separate rating for the five States of South India. Pondicherry emerges the winner, scoring first position on all the counts. However, that may not be an entirely fair rating, given the advantages of the small size of the Union Territory. Tamil Nadu ranks third overall among the Southern States. It scores second in Agriculture but ranks third on most other counts. Obviously, Tamil Nadu has some catching up to do, with Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala scoring better in many of these areas. Tamil Nadu has been ranked the most urbanised state, with 44% of its population in urban areas.

In terms of domestic savings and investments, Tamil Nadu comes up tops, with the highest credit deposit ratio in the country, 105.4, which means Rs. 105.4 is invested for every Rs 100 deposit received. However,

in terms of growth rate of gross domestic product, it is Karnataka which is first with 7.25% followed by West Bengal at 6.75%, Gujarat at 6.72% Himachal Pradesh at 6.35% and Tamil Nadu at 6.33%.

So what does the State suffer from? Tamil Nadu ranks 13th overall when it comes to growth in physical capital which is defined in terms of growth in households electrified and the availability of all-weather roads. In this, Gujarat emerges as the clear winner with over 59% of its villages having roads wider than 18 feet and all 18,000 villages soon to be electrified under the Jyotigram scheme. However, the percentage growth in village electrification is not a correct indicator for Tamil Nadu as it already has 100% electrification in villages as stated elsewhere in the same study.

(Continued on page 2)

Shanghaiing of the city's heritage

Shanghai is the buzzword today in Madras that is Chennai. *The Man from Madras Musings* had wondered in these columns a few weeks ago whether the city shouldn't change its name to Chenghai to match these ambitions. After all, changing of names is hailed as a placebo for all ills in our country. A recent news item, for instance, states that Zero Point, the place where waters from the Krishna River enter Tamil Nadu, will soon be called Entry Point in all official records. In the early days of Krishna water, when little or none of it made it to Chennai, wags had stated that the place had been named Zero Point to indicate the level of water there. But that is apparently not so. As long as water keeps reaching our city, MMM feels, they can continue calling it anything. But that is by the by.

Shanghai, which is upheld as a role model of sorts for development, unfortunately also appears to be the role model when it comes to systematic destruction of heritage. An article in a recent issue of *Reader's Digest* caught MMM's attention. According to it, "The arrival of Western style capitalism poses a bigger threat to the city's architecture than communism ever did." Do readers of *Madras Musings* get a feeling of déjà vu? There is more to the article. Conservationists in Shanghai, according to the feature, have to fight against not only "rampant economic development, but also China's political culture and the deep-seated ambivalence felt by many Shanghaiites about their colonial past." Not everyone in the city apparently feels the same way about the architectural treasures. Sounds familiar?

The biggest legacy of the colonial past in Shanghai is the area known as 'The Bund', which fronts the waters, rather like our own Marina. In the 1990s it was decided that leaving aside ten buildings on The Bund, all others were to be torn down and replaced by highrises. Newspapers remained indifferent (what's new?) and those that did comment on it wrote in fulsome praise about the new development. It was left to Professor Ruan Yisan, of the Tongji University, now considered the father of the heritage movement in the city, to lobby hard and finally get 25 buildings pro-

be, minus heritage and all. But Shanghai still has wide roads, organised traffic systems and very clean and smooth pedestrian walkways. Does Chennai have that? There are also spot fines for public littering and nuisance. Does Chennai have that? There are penalties for causing noise pollution too. Does Chennai have that? Do those who talk of making a Shanghai out of Chennai have the political will to make these changes FIRST?

FOOTNOTE: Coming back to Chenghai, that name really cannot be considered, as Chengalpattu is already referred to similarly.

office he occupied demanded some respect and so he ought to have been given that.

Yet, if newspaper reports are to be believed, slippers were thrown at him, there was threat of physical violence, he was booed and jeered at, and there was an attempt to even wrest his briefcase from him as he stepped into his car on his way home. Who was guilty in the mob of non-teaching and teaching staff that surrounded him, *The Man from Madras Musings* does not know. Sadly, there was little attempt by other academics and officials to stop this melee.

(sounds rather like 'The House That Jack Built', does it not?).

The only sliver of open space next to the Lily Pond Complex is a parking lot. MMM has long nursed hopes that when the *Victoria Public Hall* is finally restored (if and when it happens), this will be the parking lot in which patrons for events at the Hall can leave their vehicles. But, alas! the Metropolitan Transport Corporation, according to reports, is eyeing the place. It has submitted a proposal to take over the space and make it the bus terminus for the area. Their complaint is that the front of the railway station, where they operate from now, is not suitable as it poses a great traffic hazard to pedestrians. MMM's views are that MTC buses are traffic hazards, no matter where they enter or exit from. The MTC would do far better to sensitise its drivers to traffic conditions.

In the meanwhile, MMM has an alternative suggestion. The prison, which is located just in front of the station complex, off the Stanley Viaduct – now reincarnated as an overbridge – is supposed to shift out to Puzhal. Why can't the CMDA look at developing the space occupied by the prison for an underground car park with facilities for a bus terminus as well?

Indeed, there are many claimants for the space and MMM understands that the General Hospital and the Railways are also competing for it. But what is really needed is a large enough car parking area with underground passages to the railway station, *VP Hall*, *Ripon Building* and the *GH*. Is anyone listening?

— MMM

SHORT ' N' SNAPPY

tected instead of the original ten. So what about the 180 odd buildings of Chennai that *Madras Musings* and its Editor have been lobbying for, for years? As West Bengal Governor Gopal Gandhi recently said in a speech, even if these buildings were designed by Europeans, all the artisans who worked on them were Indians. So why obliterate their work?

Just as in Chennai, it is not only the European buildings that are under threat in Shanghai. The native Chinese buildings are being wiped out at a faster rate than the European buildings. Once again, a similar situation prevails in our city.

Taking everything into account, the Shanghaiing of Chennai appears rather complete. We need to follow only the road map and there we will

Goodbye – 5-star style

He stepped down last month from the high office he held. He is a man of great learning, has several patents to his credit and is looked upon with respect in the academic world. During his tenure he worked towards making the commencement of the 150th year of the five-star University he headed a memorable occasion, and the celebrations he and his team organised were inaugurated by the President of India, no less. The event also saw the rededication of a wonderfully restored heritage building within the university campus, whose restoration he had spearheaded. All this, *The Man from Madras Musings* feels, would be enough and more for a Vice-Chancellor to be given a warm send off on the day he retired. Even if none of these was to his credit, the very

Worse, there has been no condemnation of these sad events by those inside and outside the university (like the Press) after the event. Is this the way a five star university treats a vice-chancellor on the day he retires? MMM wonders whether the Madras University's dons realise what kind of image this event must give them in the public eye, in parents' eyes – and in the eyes of those who will come one day to review their institution's five-star status.

Carving up Lily Pond

The pond is long gone and there is a shopping mall – if anyone can give it such a description – in its place. Yes, *The Man from Madras Musings* is talking about the Lily Pond that once existed next to Moore Market that once existed next to Central Station

Rs. 200 crore to beautify the City

(By A Special Correspondent)

The State Highways Department has allotted Rs. 200 crore for the construction of bridges, footpaths and centre medians in the city during 2006-07. The Highways Department will also take up construction of six grade separators, one road overbridge and four river bridges at an estimated cost of Rs. 51 crore.

A policy note of the department tabled in the Assembly said the Chennai Metropolitan Development Plan for 2003-2006 had envisaged 184 different works for traffic and transport improvement in the metro at an estimated cost of Rs.603 crore. Of these, 49 works at a cost of Rs.20 crore had been completed. Five roadworks 13.5 kilometre in length, at a cost of Rs. 5.5 crore, and other works such as construction of bridges, footpaths and centre medians at a cost of Rs.25 crore are underway.

TAMIL NADU BEST IN GOVERNANCE

(Continued from page 1)

In the growth of human potential, Tamil Nadu ranks second after Andhra Pradesh, with a 3.4% increase. This is defined as growth in share of graduates to total population and growth in share of 26 to 40-year-olds in population.

It is, however, in the area of governance that no state comes anywhere near Tamil Nadu. The study attributes this to several factors. Firstly, it states, Tamil Nadu, with its large number of cities and major towns, has been able to withstand the effects of large-scale migration from villages very well. The presence of large-scale industrial clusters, like those in Tirupur and Salem, has been able to generate employment and support. The absence of any territorial segmentation,

unlike in Andhra, the study feels, has resulted in all-round development.

The study commends the Civil Services in Tamil Nadu and states that it is the most well-trained and disciplined in the country and quotes a former IAS officer who says that most IAS recruits would like to have Tamil Nadu as their State for service. The panchayats in the State, says the study, play a vital role in the State's functioning and this is one reason why Tamil Nadu won over 35% of the first-ever Nirmal Gram Puraskar awards instituted by the Union Government to honour village-level institutions.

The labour force in the State, with its work culture and relatively less number of days lost in strikes, has also contrib-

uted to the State's good ranking. The police force too has thrown up a surprise. Tamil Nadu has a record of 82% of cases registered in police stations being closed. Recovery of stolen property stands at 64.2%, the highest in the country, with several other states not even crossing single digits. Gender sensitivity in the police force, with a large number of women in the service and also the credit for having the first all-woman commando force, has come in for appreciation. Other factors in favour of the State include high literacy, good spread of electric power and the mid-day meal scheme in schools.

The state obviously has a lot going for it. Let us count our blessings. But we could still do better. — (Source: *India Today*.)

OUR READERS WRITE



Damarla connection?

As a person keenly interested in Madras and its history, I have often come across the name of Damarla Venkatadri, the then local chieftain of the Vijaya Nagar empire with his headquarters at Damal near Kanchipuram. I hail from the same general area of the present Kanchipuram-Vellore Districts, so Damal Village is of interest to me.

I have heard of a Damerla (also spelt as Damarla) Rama Rao, a painter of some standing in the previous generation, lived in the Andhra coastal area. His paintings are still occasionally exhibited. He had a brother D. Venkata Rao who was a lecturer in English in the Government Arts College at Anantapur. I worked in the same college for about ten years after Venkata Rao. He had endowed a prize for English creative writing for the students of the college which had to be awarded every year. I held a test for this purpose in 1948 and hence my knowledge of Damarla Venkata Rao's name.

Is there a connection between this Damerla (or Damarla) Venkata Rao and Damarla Venkatadri who granted the strip of sand to the British?

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Chennai 600 090

The monsoon wait

The monsoon has played havoc in every state that has experienced it so far.

In a month's time, Chennai will, hopefully, have a good monsoon too. Are we ready for such a heavy downpour?

Are the authorities getting their act together?

This is a wake-up call for all resident associations to prepare and learn from the experience in other States by:

- 1) Doing rainwater harvesting in every home, and
- 2) Having soak pits on the roads.

The Corporation on its part should check the cleaning of stormwater drains and the state of cyclone shelters.

It has become common for citizens to throw up their arms and blame the authorities whenever a disaster strikes. Let's get together and do our bit.

Kamla Ravikumar
41A, Beach Road
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Chennai 600 090

Decongest Chennai

During the past two decades, disproportionately large investments have been made in many large manufacturing units, modern infra-structural facilities, I.T. sector and institutions of higher education in and around Chennai, we all know. This trend continues – but with the creation of more and more job opportunities in Chennai, population pressure grows and more congestion results.

This Chennai-centric policy needs urgent review. At present there are many new industrial and manufacturing projects on the anvil, to make vehicles, auto components, radial tyres, mobile phones etc. Instead of locating them near Chennai, these projects could be set up in the Trichy-Madurai belt. First priority may be given to create technology and industrial parks at Trichy, Madurai, Salem and Tirunelveli to promote IT and ITeS industries. Tidel Park II, now planned for in Chennai, could be set up in Madurai. These steps will create employment opportunities in the dis-

Of approvals and demolitions

I am again distressed and forced to write on the demolition of buildings for want of approval.

1. On commencement of construction of a building, the local environment/ecology gets disturbed. The disturbance continues during the period of construction and only stabilises after the completion of a building (either housing or commercial). The material with which the building was constructed, raw materials/manufactured materials or components, affects the environment/ecology at different places of their origin. It can be shown that for one square metre of a building, more or less the equivalent of one hectare of forest is destroyed.
2. Any area planned for development should have infrastructure such as roads, water supply mains and sewage to support the functional requirement of the proposed structure. Plans for construction of structures need to be approved based on the infrastructure available at the location. For example, I believe that T. Nagar was planned for one or two-storey bungalow-type construction, enclosed by a compound, garden, etc. and infrastructure was provided accordingly. I

presume construction of multi-storey structures was not foreseen. A detailed review of the approval accorded to buildings since the inception of T' Nagar will throw more light on the circumstances leading to the approval of multi-storey structures. The rules seemed to be framed/altered/modified arbitrarily.

3. Anybody can perceive in a building movement of air that comes in and goes out. Can we call that 'a building breathes'? If yes, the building has life. So demolishing a building, old or new, with all its attributes of architecture that enhanced the beauty of the locality, amounts to extinguishing a life.
4. The completed building does not cause any further damage to environment or ecology of the locality but demolishing it causes local pollution, noise, dust, etc. and pollutes the places where the debris is disposed of.
5. Unapproved building construction should be stopped in the initial stage of construction itself, not after the building is completed.

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Chennai 600 073

tricts and reduce migration of people to Chennai.

Of the two new technological universities proposed, one may be located at Madurai, to promote technology and industrial research in the southern region. A new medical and health university may also be created in Madurai.

J.W. Thomas
9, Ritherdon Road
Chennai 600 007

Name checks needed

MMM, on July 1st has in his comment 'What is in a name?' highlighted a very important issue of public interest. Not far from Besant Nagar is Kasturba Nagar named after Mahatma Gandhi's consort Kasturba.

Kastur was her name and 'BA' is added as a mark of respect. It really means 'mother'. But most signboards in the area show it as Kasturi Bai Nagar.

It is time now for the Corporation to look into such mutilations and write the correct names after proper checking and verification.

R.V. Chandramouli
(I.A.S. RTD.)
B/2, Ramanalaya
21, First Crescent Park Road
Gandhinagar, Adyar
Chennai – 600 020

Restoration...

Madras Musings can take justifiable pride in the restoration of *Senate House* (not to say *Freemasons Lodge* and the I.G.'s Office).

But for its sustained efforts and pleadings, it is certain *Senate House* would not be the same as what it is today, notwithstanding the sesquicentennial celebrations of the Madras University this year.

It is heartening that slowly the importance and preservation of the City's heritage build-

ings are being realised. But more could be achieved if a 'Heritage Act' is brought into force without anymore delay.

When I read the restoration processes followed for the *Senate House* I could not but feel sorry for the way in which the Madras Art Gallery and its compound walls have been repaired (not restored, please note the difference).

A word about the 'restoration' works done by the ASI. One look at the 'Keralanthakan Thiruvayil' of the Sri Brihadeeswara Temple of Thanjavur would suffice to note a most shoddy attempt at restoration. In the name of restoration, the stucco images on the tower have been altogether obliterated. While one half of the tower shows the ancient stucco images, the 'restored' parts are conspicuous by the absence of these figures! While the 19th Century *Senate House* demanded so much care, how much more care should have been bestowed on the restoration of this 9th Century temple.

* * *

... & freedom

I am surprised at the quite unwarranted outburst of Reader K. Balasubrahmanian (MM, September 16th). It would have been better if he had restrained himself from casting aspersions, for the simple reason that we have been writing frequently on matters of public interest, preservation of heritage, and nostalgically recalling the 'good old days', which are quite harmless, but very informative and interesting (and he being a septuagenarian, they might even interest him, so we would think).

As to a person residing in the place of his choice, it is not clear what prevents him from acquiring any property he desires wherever he likes. How can

others help him in that? Let him take solace that Nallappan Street, Mylapore, begins with a Slum Clearance Board apartment complex on Mosque Street where the people he mentions live.

I am glad to say I have acquired many 'pen friends' of lasting value through the columns of *Madras Musings*, readers who have found my letters interesting enough to comment on.

As for reader M. Sethuraman, I would like to say that whatever we feel strongly about, we cannot help writing about it. I am very sorry he is trying to restrain our fundamental right of freedom of expression.

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

READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** 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

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

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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

Back to the village, back to a restored home



The facade of the restored house.

A nanthakrishnapuram. For a small village that's quite a mouthful. On the banks of the Tambraparani River, 7 km from the Tirunelveli railway station, the village consists of a single street of 20 houses and a few huts to one side. The river flows past lazily on one side and emerald green rice fields border the otherside as far as the eye can see. To relieve the emerald green are few exclamation marks in the shape of palm trees and many punctuation marks in the shape of herons and the occasional peacock.

"You can't ignore the family deity," said a host of shocked relatives. So Anusha and I were forced to visit the temple enroute to our honeymoon in Kodai. In the few hours we spent on a hot day, we visited the temple and rested a while in my ancestral home that's more than a century old but was renovated in 1916. We headed off to Kodai. However, the cool airy spaces inside the house and the overwhelming sense of tranquillity we experienced were hard to come by in noisy, commercialised and hot Kodai. We must have a vacation home in the village, we decided. By the fifth visit in a year we said... why not? We decided to get the house repaired and needed a local contact. Friend Krishnan was an able conspirator and soon had a contractor visiting us. Zipping into the village in great style, he sniffed around the simple 1700 sq ft house and told us the best thing to do was to raze it to the floor and build a new one. "I can even import the best marble for

you," he said as the final clincher. Shuddering at this, we bid him goodbye. Our next choice, Rayan, was a man of few words and after a careful scrutiny was confident of doing a good job. Once bitten twice shy, we reminded him that we wanted as much of the old stuff as possible retained, be they the old black switches or the brass taps. He nodded that it was fine and we bid goodbye.

A few days later Rayan sent the plan over, this went back and forth and with a budget of a

● by
PRADEEP CHAKRAVARTHY

lakh, work commenced. The work status went back and forth with several "What's the status?" calls. If the initial estimates were conservative so were our estimates of the number of trips to be made for supervision.

With the preparatory work in progress, we did a trip to the village and found that if we did need "the old *aghararam* house" look, we had to do some rather unusual purchases. Several old switches were beyond repair and



The restored, refurbished hall.

we had to search for the old black ones. Three panels for the old wooden door had to be found. And the lock which once had a key that was almost a foot long needed replacement. This apart, there was the challenge of incorporating two small bathrooms into the house without altering the original plan.

A room past the kitchen was split into two narrow bathrooms and we only needed to buy the fittings. Enter "Bhai", a wizened old Muslim who ran a salvage shop. Amidst a large yard of woodwork from houses his team had demolished, we salvaged all the switches, taps and even a 6-foot chest at ridiculous prices. Avoiding the scores of pet rabbits and hamsters in his shop, we did a tough bargain and in the

end had an ancient Chinese pickle jar thrown in as well. Replacement for the door jambs, and two doors for the bathroom that came for the price of one new teak door came from Karaikudi. Marimuthu was an old hand in this and over the phone he sized up the situation and was even able to send us a lock with a 10 inch key cheaper than a new lock.

The work now began in earnest and in a few weeks, the house was done. The front door had a sensitively restored look

with the three new panes and the lock with a key that was heavy enough to remind us of the weighty responsibilities of maintaining the house. Personal effects were stored in the 6-foot chest that would have surely been the inspiration for many a mystery story. Old glass lamps and fans from the 1960s gave the hall with the 13 feet ceiling a beautiful look especially in the evening. The walls were left bare save the few Ravi Varma



The village (above) and the street where the house (below).



methods as well as recycling things salvaged from other houses had not only helped us forge friendships but were also easy on the purse as well as aesthetically pleasing.

At the end of six months, we

the woodwork must be good and most important you must have the commitment of staying there for at least one weekend every two months. Anusha and I have done this and, perhaps, in our own small way we have contributed to the preservation of a small part of our heritage.

In fact, so impressed had my father and his brothers been with the change and the commitment, that they have agreed to fund a change of the flooring too... just simple terracotta tiles with the central part of the room decorated with the art nouveau tiles in the old style. But that is another story.

NOTE: Old houses in all villages are easy to come by, but you need a reliable contractor to tell you how much of the wood needs to be replaced.

Proximity to a nearby town is important. Tirunelveli is well connected by overnight trains to Madras and is only 15 minutes from the village.



The well and the rear space.

The hawking issue

Is there a solution fair to all?

THE PRELUDE

- Consequent to a 'beautification' drive in 1996, the Corporation obtained court orders to evict the pavement vendors/hawkers in all other areas.
- Hawkers obtained stay orders from the Court.
- Justices J. Kanagaraj and V. Natarajan of the Madras High Court instructed the Corporation to issue the licences and relocate the hawkers.
- The Corporation appealed to the Supreme Court. It appended 184 stay orders that the vendors and hawkers had obtained previously. The GCSTA filed an interim plea.
- On December 7, 1998, the Supreme Court told the Corporation that the Mazoomdar ruling for hawkers and vendors in Delhi could settle their dispute.
- The Corporation of Chennai then appointed a three-member, high-level team to implement the scheme modelled along the Delhi lines.
- Towards the end of 1999, when the GCSTA filed a petition in the High Court, Justice Abdul Hadi was appointed by the Corporation to frame a scheme.

Murugan, 36 years old, is a hawker who sells handkerchiefs (he was in screen printing earlier) in Ranganathan Street, Mambalam. Of his daily earnings, around Rs. 150, daily raids in the locality (that last sometimes upto 2½ hours) amount to a loss of at least Rs. 50. And every time a case is registered against him, Rs. 100-150 is paid as fine (no receipts, of course). Relocated some years ago to another place, he eventually returned because of low earnings at the new site.

Sugana, a 32-year-old single mother with two children, sells flowers in a busy market area. At the time I interviewed her, she was also selling earthen deepam-s. Her initial investment was Rs.10,000. She pays Rs. 600 a month (of the Rs. 3000 she makes) in bribes. About ten years ago, when her mother was a vendor, there was a row of 350 shops, each with a bench. But this was razed, apparently on Supreme Court orders. A relocation expense of Rs.1000 was never received.

According to the Greater Chennai Small Traders' Association (GCSTA), there are about 1,10,000 hawkers in Chennai! Most lead a similar existence. The only licensed hawkers are those authorised by the Corporation of Chennai (charging Rs. 90 per month) in two areas – Burma Bazaar where 900 trade in goods, and Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Road (Esplanade), Ratan Bazaar and the port area, where 794 licences have been issued.

According to the Hadi Scheme announced in 2000, 49 zones in Chennai were declared as no-hawking zones (all places exclusive of these were beyond city limits). When 60,000 letters of grievance were collected by the GCSTA from the affected hawkers, the scheme was reconsidered. In September 2002, a committee headed by Justice J. Kanagaraj met representative hawkers across all 10 zones, and submitted a revised scheme on January 30, 2003. It stipulated: explicit zone-by-zone consideration of existing hawkers, demarcated alternate places, licences and photo IDs, and unauthorised hawkers to be

summarily removed without prior notice. On April 6, 2006, the Madras High Court unveiled a 'comprehensive' scheme for rehabilitation and regulation of hawkers in Chennai. Calling for issue of ID Cards and removal of unauthorised hawkers, the Bench, comprising Chief Justice A.P. Shah and Justice Prabha Sridevan, also stated that the process of identification, wherever it was not done, should be completed by the Court-appointed Implementation Committee. All enumerated existing hawkers who would be allotted earmarked space in markets should apply for and obtain licences from the Corporation for the specified areas from June 30th onwards, it ruled. In the event of the death of a licenceholder, a legal heir could apply for licence with photo ID card. Five per cent of the area was to be earmarked for the handicapped and disabled. The scheme was not applicable to mobile vendors selling vegetables, flowers, fruits and dairy products.

But the sheer size of the problem means that the process of

implementation itself, 'within six months', is a very optimistic view. Two fundamental questions are: How best can hawkers be accommodated in already congested spaces? And how, in emerging urban areas?

In Phase II, a Committee headed by Justice J. Kanagaraj is to "carry on inspection of remaining areas/streets in the city of Chennai and frame a further scheme for specifying the hawking zones, within six months." Those hawkers who have already been evicted and who have court orders to consider them under the scheme will be considered under this phase. It has also been made clear that the first scheme does not cover hawkers at Marina and Elliot's Beach, who are to be dealt with separately. Also, mobile vendors – though they will be issued photo IDs.

Says Justice Kanagaraj, "This is a problem peculiar to developing countries — with large populations that require many ways to earn a livelihood. Some years ago, the High Court was flooded

include bunk shops, cobblers, hawkers on the Marina and Elliot's Beach, mobile vendors etc."

Another solution suggested is, "Let hawkers vend their wares wherever possible and pay a fee to the Corporation which will earn needed revenue. After a point it will be self-limiting. In planned urban areas, in newer satellite towns, hawkers should be allocated areas."

Says Kavitha Krishnakumar, from the Citizen's consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), "It is clear that the scheme is looking at hawkers as small traders and at models in Singapore and Malaysia where the hawkers are housed in plazas and consumers go there to shop. But street vending is a demand-driven natural market and it is difficult to curtail it to plazas. However, it is true that this trade would become very organised and recognised, and this scheme would prevent any kind of harassment of the vendors/hawkers. How fair and objective the suggestion that allotment of the shops would be done 'on a nomination basis by the Corporation' will be, is still in question. And also hawking plazas are totally against the concept of the natural market; it is quite unlikely that the public would walk up to a plaza to buy

"By consulting pedestrians, residential welfare/hawkers' association, shopkeepers, etc., the AC can come up with a plan that is best for the area. The court can then make the Corporation and its local bodies implement the plan – making the footpath wider, delineating the areas for pedestrians, removing encroachments from footpaths, give properly marked space on footpath and appropriate area, take local traffic flow into consideration, divert traffic, make streets one-way or traffic free, and so on," says Cherubal. "The process may not be easy. But no harder than one-man or committees doing all this for all the areas in a city like Chennai."

A senior judge feels, "The only redemption is if you can take a strict stand, with police help. But political parties are afraid of the opposition that will arise... so what's the point? Without strict enforcement, the implementation cannot succeed. With neither the Government nor the Corporation desirous of change, it just means that where some hawkers are removed, others will come in!"

Sujatha Muthayya, also of the CCS, who had carried out a survey on hawkers in Chennai a few years ago, raises the following questions, "The hawker issue is just one of many that the city administration needs to look at. (Continued on page 7)

A point of view
by **SHOBHA MENON**

by writ petitions from hawkers, shop owners, and kiosks. Many even went to the Supreme Court. Which was the reason for the successive committees. Phase II will proceed after we get some more clarifications." The current Implementation Committee consists of Chairman Justice Ramamurthi, CE General, Corporation of Chennai, Joint Commissioner, Police, Law and Order, Town Planning Officer, and will operate from the Ripon Buildings.

The hawkers claim that they have been allocated very small spaces by the Corporation in the proposed areas. Karunanidhi, General Secretary of the GCSTA, feels that the recent judgment is "a very positive step for hawkers, and a landmark judgment in the whole of India. 5000 licences were to be issued by end July, and the rest in Phase II. Where they obstructed traffic flow and movement, they would be relocated. But what do we do about the big shops that have encroached on the pavement? Also, the current process of authorisation on the basis of the hawkers' list available at the time of the Court's stay order ten years ago doesn't match the existing scenario. There is need for a totally inclusive scheme –

SOME KEY LESSONS

(from an all-India study by CCS researchers)

- There are huge numbers of hawkers in urban areas, fulfilling some of the economic needs of various sections of the population.
- A great percentage of their economic surplus ends up in the pockets of law-and-order officials.
- Urban plans do not provide for hawkers; where they do, they are not implemented.
- Insecurity over a major 'factor of production' – the space they use – affects hawkers most; they are therefore unable to invest in expanding their business.
- With the space used by street vendors paid for by tax-payers money and designated for other uses, a public good is being used for private use and a rent is being charged by those who have not invested in the public good. This is a diversion and deprivation of the tax-payer's rights.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period September 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Name the Australian conservationist killed while filming on September 4th.
2. The 44th of this mathematical oddity was discovered on September 4th and verified a week later. Name it.
3. Which country's economy came on top of a list of 175 economies as the most business-friendly economy in the world in a survey conducted by the World Bank's IFC?
4. Name the parents of the first male heir born to the Japanese Imperial Family in more than 40 years.
5. Which country's archaeologists claimed that they had found underground pyramids near Luhansk that are older than those at Giza?
6. Who was awarded the 2nd Millennium Technology Prize for his work on blue and white LEDs?
7. Name the town in Nashik District where a bomb blast killed 37 persons on September 8th.
8. What record did Roger Federer set when he won the U.S. Open in addition to the Wimbledon earlier in this year?
9. Where was the 14th NAM Summit held recently?
10. What did Mahatma Gandhi do for the first time on September 11th, a hundred years ago?
* * *
11. Which edifice in Chennai rises up to 155 feet from the ground and has an imposing sanctuary of 62 x 33 feet?
12. What is the claim to fame of Bulusu Sambamurthi in Madras politics?
13. Which German was instrumental in founding IIT Madras and the Neyveli Lignite Corporation?
14. What is the new name of the film *Emden Magan*?
15. On whose short story was AVM's *Oriravu* (made in 1951) based?
16. If you wanted auto spare parts, which locality near the Gaiety Theatre would you go to?
17. Who is the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras?
18. What did the initials stand for in the great M.J. Gopalan's name?
19. Travelling by the MRTS towards Beach, which station will come after Tirumylai?
20. How many 'stations of the cross' are there on the way to the summit of St. Thomas' Mount?

(Answers on page 8)

The Express Story

— and then vintage Goenka

There have been as many as three books in the last couple of years on Ramnath Goenka, the founder of *The Indian Express*. The first was the coffee table book, *Ramnath Goenka, a life in black and white*, by grand-daughter-in-law Ananya Goenka. Then followed the B.G. Verghese biography *Warrior of the Fourth Estate*, reviewed in these columns (MM, February 1st, 2006). Now comes a compilation of letters, put together by T.J.S. George, titled *The Goenka Letters, Behind the Scenes in the Indian Express*, published by EastWest Books (Madras). 'The Marwari of Madras,' as your reviewer likes to think of Ramnath Goenka, would not have been amused at such extravagance.

The book is a collection of letters written to, and by, Goenka over the period 1950-1989. They cover a wide spectrum of subjects, ranging from charity to family matters to politics (and intrigue), to fine arts, to sport and to business, which largely meant the *Indian Express* but there are also some that deal with the Indian Iron and Steel Company. They bring to light the multitasking personality that Ramnath Goenka was. There are 135 letters in all and through them the reader can see the number of irons that Goenka had in the fire at any point of time. The blurb on the rear cover of the book puts it better — it speaks of his keeping many balls in the air at the same time.

George's introduction briefly sums up the history of the *Indian Express* up to India's independence. The paper was the brainchild of Varadarajulu Naidu, a man from Salem who set up practice as a doctor in Tirupur. A passion for indulging in public activity saw him setting up the paper *Prapancha Mitran* in 1916. As George puts it, "The readers were pleased with it — and the Government was offended", a statement that can be made about the later *Indian Express* as well. Naidu was tried and his defence was conducted by C.Rajagopalachari. But Naidu received a sentence of 18 months' RI. Coming out in 1919, he plunged into politics once more and earned the title "Tilak of South India" for his forceful advocacy of boycotting foreign goods. In 1920 he began a weekly called *Tamil Nadu*, the *Prapancha Mitran* having been suppressed by the Government. The paper and Naidu disagreed with the Civil Disobedience Movement and so the magazine went into a decline by 1930.

The launch of a new Civil

Disobedience Movement in 1932 provided a fresh opportunity for Naidu and he decided to venture into English. It was a time when *The Mail* represented the rulers and *The Hindu* (as it still does) the conservative Indian element. The choice of name itself was unusual, for there had been no *Indian Express* prior to Naidu's paper. There had been a *Daily Express*, but just as Naidu was deliberating on acquiring the name, it was bought by that purveyor of "yellow journalism", Lakshmi-kanthan. So Naidu decided on *The Indian Express* and launched his paper on September 5, 1932.

The new editorial team, headed by K. Santhanam, selected on the basis of recommendations from C. Rajagopalachari among others, got to work from October 15, 1932. *The Indian Express*, which until then had been priced at one anna was sold at half that price, in a bold, innovative measure. Soon, a companion newspaper in Tamil, *Dinamani*, was begun. The title was decided by means of an open competition announced in *The Indian Express* and two men from Madras, one from Mylapore and the other from T' Nagar, shared the honours for suggesting the name. The prize? Rs 10, not a



The first page of the first issue of Varadarajulu Naidu's Express. Note the Tamil crest.

Within two months the paper changed hands. It was acquired by S. Sadanand who, according to George, was the "original genius of Indian publishing". He had in 1925 set up in Bombay the 'Free Press Service' which aimed to "report Indian events through Indian eyes". Between 1930 and 1932 he also circulated cyclostyped sheets styled 'Free Press Bulletin', which made his service popular. He decided to found his own paper in 1930 and set up the *Free Press Journal* which was soon much in demand. Sadanand, keen on having his paper published simultaneously from six centres, came in contact with Naidu and had by mid-1932 acquired *The Indian Express* as his paper for Madras.

small amount then. *Dinamani* was released on September 11, 1934, to coincide with Subramania Bharati's birthday. With an easy style in Tamil of everyday usage rather than a high flown literary language, *Dinamani* soon became the paper of choice. It also helped that its price was half that of the then leading Tamil daily, the *Swadesamitran*. An interesting rivalry commenced between the papers. The *Swadesamitran* put up posters claiming that it had been founded even before the Congress, responding to which the *Dinamani* put up its own posters entreating readers not to trust an old hag but to read a paper that was lively and young.

Enter Goenka. He had already made a name for himself



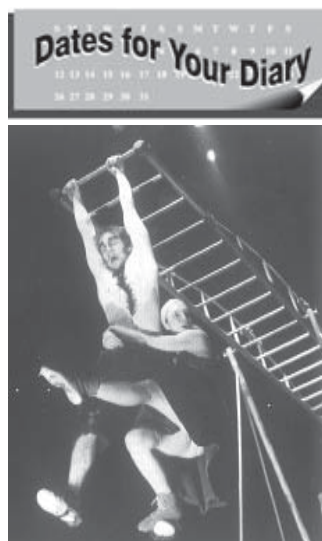
The cover of the book.

in the city and had also served as a member of the Madras Legislative Council. Sadanand, who was ever in need of money to finance his media dreams, borrowed from Goenka who gave the loans against shares in Free Press of India (Madras) Limited which owned the *Indian Express*. By October 1936, the loans had grown to an extent that Goenka began to demand either repayment or be allowed to take over the newspaper. Sadanand demurred and in a desperate move locked the offices at Mooker Nallamuthu Street to prevent Goenka from taking possession. Goenka filed a complaint with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate who, on October 26th, confirmed an order allowing Goenka to take over the publications. Thus, The Marwari of Madras also became the media baron of the city.

The author states that Goenka was singleminded about the running of the paper. Nothing else mattered to him. He got Pothan Joseph, a celebrated journalist from Delhi's *Hindustan Times*, to join the *Express* as editor. Later they were to fall out. In August 1938, Goenka launched *Andhra Prabha*, soon to be billed as the largest circulated Telugu daily. In 1940, a major fire ravaged the group's Mooker Nallamuthu Street premises and it looked as though it was curtains for the fledgling media group. But in a classic example of old Madras courtesy, rivals of the group came forward to help. The *Swadesamitran* made its press available and *The Hindu* also sold a press to the *Express*. In addition, *The Hindu* made its premises at 100 Mount Road available to the *Express*. Goenka moved to Mount Road and the rest of the story is well known. The letters begin sometime after this.

The letters cover a variety of interests. There are letters from godmen and to godmen. There are letters from politicians seeking favours. M.S. Subbulakshmi's husband T. Sada-

(Continued on page 7)



October 5: *What are you leaning on?* by Meli Melo Cie with Tania Malaquin, Jeremie Mallard, Sebastien Peyre, Gwenaelle Roue et Amaury Roussel. An acrobatic and playful mixture, featuring a woman tightrope walker, two jugglers and two tightrope walker/jugglers who defy all laws of gravity. It's circus blended with theatre and dance. (At the Music Academy 7.00 pm. Passes from Alliance Francaise.)

October 9-20: *Chithiram*. Paintings by Babu. (At the Alliance Francaise.)

October 13-15: *Lire en Fete*. Three days celebrating books. This year's theme is "A city, a book". Reading, films, book delicacies book presentation and book exchange and games organised by Book Monster. (At Alliance Francaise)

October 15: *Similia*, the Guitar-Flute Duo. This appropriately named duo from Quebec, Canada, are twins, Nadia (flute) and Annie (guitar). They created *Similia* in 1998. (At Alliance Francaise, 7 p.m.)

Till October 30: Advertising in Germany, a Roster exhibition. On 36 tables, this poster exhibition documents the development of advertising in Germany. (At, Goethe-Institut-Max Mueller Bhavan.)

VINTAGE GOENKA

(Continued from page 6)

sivam appears to have been a regular correspondent and the 1966 tour of MS, culminating in the concert at the UN, is in particular chronicled in detail. There are letters concerning family matters, there are letters fighting perceived and real injustice from the Government. There is a private letter to Gulzari Lal Nanda which inexplicably is also circulated to many others. There are letters explaining the *Express*' position during the Emergency. There are moving letters from various dignitaries condoling the death of Goenka's son. And, finally, there are some letters that show Goenka's frustration at the way in which the Janata Party evolved and dissipated.

In short, it is all vintage Ramnath Goenka. No holds barred.

— Sriram V.

Two forgotten twinings

(Continued from page 1)

"We will in 1968, in due course, prepare a Halle-Madras committee with the support of the trade unions. According to our information, the easiest way to gain influence in Madras is via the trade unions."

The next visit of a delegation from Madras to Halle (6 members) took place from 5th to 11th August, 1968. Halle spent 13,371.81 marks on this visit.

During a visit of a delegation from Halle to Madras from 14th to 23rd June 1969, the Lord Mayor of Halle, Pflueger, gifted a fountain to Madras. This fountain is a copy of the fountain found in the periphery of Halle. On December 12, 1969, the pumping machinery was sent off by Deutrans to Madras. The total value was 40,634.35 marks.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the GDR (October 1969), the Halle authorities invited Lord Mayor Vellore D. Narayanan and council members to Halle. Among the delegates was "the leader of the DMK faction in the town council, Mr. Muni-swamy, the leader of the Congress faction in the town council, Mr. Kuppuswamy, the councillor for the health services, the leader of the Muslim League

faction in the town council, Dr. Kalafathalla, and the councillor for finances, Mr. Thanigachalam... Mr. Kuppuswamy, who had come the second time to the GDR, stated that the 'Halle fountain' that was given to Madras as a gift would be inaugurated in Madras in the coming year. For the inauguration ceremony, the Corporation of Madras but invite the Indian Prime Minister, Ms Indira Gandhi."

EDITOR: *Madras Musings* would be very glad to hear from the Corporation of Madras about (1) what has happened to the 'Halle fountain', and (2) whether the Corporation plans to revive the twinning relationship with Halle in the 40th anniversary year, 2007.

The Denver-Madras affiliation on a people-to-people basis was worked out in 1982 and in 1984 the formal announcement of the twinning of the sister cities was made. Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver in 1998 invited the then Mayor of Chennai (Madras) to visit Denver in 2000 for the Sister Cities International Convention. But nothing came of that at the time. Will there, next year, in the 25th year of the linkage, be new moves to revive the bonds between the two cities?

The hawking issue

(Continued from page 5)

— How much time and energy will it get?

— What about those hawkers in the list who no longer are in the business, have died, moved to another city, etc? Will the permit to hawk be tradable? Can it be inherited?

— The solutions are all top down approaches. Will arbitrary decisions made by one or few add to the chaos?

— Since the basic framework for a dynamic solution is absent, does it mean going back to the courts if there are violations/problems in these areas?"

Early this year, Chennai was the venue for a meeting of 150 representatives from the four southern states under the banner of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). The Association called for the implementation of a national policy on urban street vendors and to chalk out a campaign plan that would put the policy in election manifestos and public consciousness. The national policy — formed with the participation of street vendors, police personnel and local body administrators among oth-

ers — forbids the removal of hawkers and vendors in the name of 'beautification' schemes and insists they be considered an integral part of the city and its economic life.

On the National Policy on Street Vendors, Kavitha feels, "This system only requires a vendor to register himself or herself with the local body, and not licensing. The Policy also refers to no hawking zones in the city which clearly demarcates zones where vending as a business cannot take place. Also to possibilities of having timings for vending business, i.e., during peak traffic hours, there cannot be any vending etc."

While the deliberations continue, the protagonists, the self-employed traders who occupy urban space but who meet market/societal demands, continue their struggle to make a living on the streets, **while constantly under threat**. How much longer will it be before their livelihood issues are looked into with sensitivity and fairness while acknowledging the crucial role they play in delivering services in urban areas? It is time that hawking be seen in an entirely different light.

Subscriptions and contributions

• Since Volume XIV, No.1 (April 16, 2003), *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 2005-06 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

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• 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 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.

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.....

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

Date: Signature:

When Madras took to basketball

Basketball was invented in December 1891 by Canada-born Dr. Naismith, a theologian on the faculty of the School for Christian Workers (the international YMCA training school now known as Springfield College in Massachusetts. Naismith was spurred by his colleague, Luth Gulick, to formulate a game which would keep the students fully occupied during the severe winter which prevented them from playing their favourite sport, football.

A football, a peach basket and a ladder to retrieve the ball every time the ball entered the basket was the equipment which Naismith used in the backyard of the School. He formulated the first 13 rules of the game. The rest is history, for this game is now played in 205 countries involving 200 million people.

For Naismith, it was not merely an entertaining game, but a philosophy to bring people together. He describes his motives in designing the game as a desire that sportsmen should dedicate all their hearts and strength to an activity in which team sport will strengthen human relationships.

In 1893, France had adopted the game of basketball. The game was introduced in China in 1894. The first organised competition in basketball was in 1904, when at the Olympic Games held in St. Louis, five teams took part in an exhibition competition. The Buffalo (N.Y.) German YMCA scored a 39-28 win over Chicago Central YMCA. The International Amateur Basketball Association

was formed in 1932 in Geneva at the International YMCA School of Physical Education.

In India, a Duncan Patten is stated to have formed the first team of basketball and introduced this game in 1894, just three years after Naismith invented the game. The game owes its popularity to the YMCAs and the American missionaries. It took deep roots in three Presidencies and in the Punjab.

Basketball was being organised under the aegis of the Madras Olympic Committee with C.C. Abraham as President. The competitions were organised by the YMCA Madras for clubs in Madras Province and teams from Bangalore and Hyderabad took part. In 1950, I witnessed the basketball event at the Madras Olympic Games in which Wesley Guild from Secunderabad and Krishna Union from Bangalore took part, besides the teams from Madras,

● by M.S. Venkataraman

President, Ace Basketball Club, who has been associated with the game for 56 years

It was, however, Harry Crowe Buck who formalised the game as well as those other sports known as Olympic sports in those days. The rules were codified and edited for all the games and the YMCA Calcutta brought out a publication annually which was popularly known as 'Buck Rules'.

In Madras, as elsewhere, the game was controlled by the Olympic Association. The first National Basketball Championship (inter-state competition) was introduced in 1934 in New Delhi as part of the National Olympics. The competitions were held every two years till the games at Bombay in 1950. The Basketball Federation of India was formed in 1950 during the Bombay Olympic Games and C.C. Abraham of the YMCA College of Physical Education, Saidapet, was elected as the first President.

prominent among them being Central Polytechnic (earlier christened as the Panagal/Thyagaraya Club), Cross Wings and Super Warriors.

Consequent to the formation of the Basketball Federation of India in 1950, the State Olympic units were advised to form State Basketball associations. The Madras State Basketball Federation was formed in the latter half of 1950 with C.C. Abraham as President, C.A. Abraham, Physical Director, Madras Christian College, as Treasurer and Hubert Dhanraj as Secretary.

In 1953, C.G. Viswanathan, who was Personnel Manager, Parry & Co., was elected President of the Madras State Basketball Federation, with Hubert Dhanraj continuing as Secretary. In 1953, Ted Arnold (deputed by the YMCA in the

USA) joined the faculty at the YMCA College, Madras, as a basketball and swimming lecturer. He took a lot of interest in coaching basketball players till he left Madras in 1955 after his tenure at the College.

In 1954, the State Federation organised the first City League tournament with T.V. Srinivasan (an alumnus of YMCA College) as convener. The annual State Championships were held at the YMCA Saidapet (now Nandanam).

In early 1956, I felt that for the game to grow the headquarters had to be shifted outside the portals of the YMCA and Hubert Dhanraj concurred with me. K. Narasimhachari, then Physical Director of Law College, supported my efforts. It was around that time that Fr. Arulswamy, who was principal of Loyola College, was elected as President, S. Padmanabhan (popularly known as 'Jump Ball' Paddu) as Secretary, T.V. Srinivasan, Physical Director of Jain College, as Jt. Secretary, and S. Narayanan, Physical Director of Loyola College, as Treasurer. Later, E.P. Royappa, IAS, PWD Secretary, was elected President, with S. Padmanabhan as Secretary and T.V. Srinivasan as Treasurer. The IX National Basketball Championship was held in

Chennai in 1959 at the newly-laid, concrete courts at the Egmore Stadium (the present Hockey Stadium).

It was in 1951 that the Madras State Basketball Federation was formed and the Golden Jubilee should have been celebrated in 2001 and not five years later.

The game taking root in India and spreading was due to the efforts of H.C. Buck, who channelled his efforts through the YMCAs. Besides the Madras YMCA, the YMCAs at Kottayam, Calcutta, Bombay and Bangalore helped to popularise the game in the country. It is unfortunate that neither the Madras Basketball Association nor the Basketball Federation of India remembered the pioneering efforts of H.C. Buck, the father of Physical Education and Olympic games in India. I am happy that the YMCA, Chennai, annually conducts a Buck Memorial Competition.

I look forward to the day when a statue is erected for Harry Crowe Buck opposite the present YMCA premises in Nandanam on Anna Salai. His name is etched in the minds and hearts of thousands of Physical Directors who passed out of the Colleges of Physical Education throughout the country.

Answers to Quiz

1. Steve 'Crocodile Hunter' Irwin; 2. The Mersenne prime; 3. Singapore; 4. Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko; 5. Ukraine; 6. Shuji Nakamura; 7. Malegaon; 8. He became the first man in tennis history to win the two titles three years in a row; 9. Havana, Cuba; 10. Launch a *satyagraha*.

* * *

11. The Basilica of the National Shrine of St. Thomas; 12. He was the Speaker of Madras's first elected legislative assembly which met in the University of Madras' *Senate House* in 1937; 13. Gerhard Fischer; 14. *Em Magan*; 15. C.N. Annadurai; 16. Pudupet; 17. S. Ramachandran; 18. Morappakam Joysam; 19. Lighthouse; 20. Fourteen.

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