

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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"Hey, do you see that? Those men in khaki are doing what we are supposed to do!"

Soft centre

Well, all this world-well-lost-for-love jazz — the red heart-shaped balloons, the clever, insidious marketing encouraging lavish expenditure — is over for now.

You may go for it, or mutter darkly of cultural invasions.

But it is time to draw attention to a grave injustice committed within the hoopla, against a group of unsung (maybe slightly unlikely) heroes, whose roles have never been acknowledged.

Who? you ask.

Why, our police force, of course.

Now these toughies, worn down by spending all their time chasing misguided citizens or ferrying VIPs, may look like they wouldn't recognise tender passion if it was served to them on a plate, swimming in sambar and chutney... but they do, guys, they do.

Read the newspapers.

No wonder much-harassed couples on the run from parental authority turn to them.

The cops listen, sympathise, and support, in sharp, unfortunate contrast to concerned parents... keeping within lawful limits, obviously.

Then, having gently pointed out the wisdom of allowing love to run its course to irate families, they even conduct marriages and engagements in their precincts.

They may not actually sing "All you need is love..." (Imagination totters a bit at the thought, but they obviously believe it, briefly transforming their distinctly scary stations into safe harbours for love.)

So, the next time you drive nervously past that angry-looking cop at the traffic signal, smile.

For, within that rough exterior, beats a tender heart.

Ranjitha Ashok

What's being planned for our beaches?

(by Vincent D' Souza)

Every now and then, either the State or a private agency decides to do 'something' about Marina Beach. And, of late, Elliot's Beach as well. It is a property that stirs people who turn their eyes on it. The ideas though have generated opposition and controversies. Blood has been spilled on the sands when, in the past, as part of a 'Let us clean the Marina' campaign, the police were challenged by angry fishermen from the *kuppams* that dot some parts of the shore. They did not relish the idea of having their boats removed from the seashore. There have also been moves to promote a Cannes-type neighbourhood on the San

Thomé stretch. Over in Besant Nagar, where Elliot's Beach is, time and again, various clubs have made attempts to lay lawns, plant tropical trees and widen walkways. Now everyone is at it again.

In the past few months, a new set of plans seems to have been drawn up for the beachside. But the plans have been kept under wraps. It required a petition to be filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act to get the details. The petitioner, a resident of a *kuppam*, was curious why surveyors were at work in the Srinivasapuram *kuppam*, a fisherpeople's colony near the MTC bus terminus in Foreshore



Elliot's Beach being cleaned up... and then what's next? (Photograph courtesy: Adyar Times.)

Estate, off San Thomé. Similar work was also happening on the Uroor *kuppam* side, off Besant Nagar.

Saravanan petitioned the PWD, Highways and Chennai Corporation under the RTI Act seeking details, asking the departments to tell him what this work was all about. After much delay, the Highways said that it was planned to have an elevated motorway along the seashore to link Foreshore Estate and the Annai Velankanni Church — Ashtalakshmi

Temple area in Besant Nagar. The State agencies say that at this point of time, only surveys are being carried out and a consultant they have appointed will work out the feasibility. (The old Adyar bridge across the river was the only link along the shore to the Besant Nagar neighbourhood in the past; now, this bridge is in disuse.) That bridge had collapsed a long time ago. Saravanan, who works with an NGO from his

(Continued on page 6)

Concern over future of Senate House

by Sriram V.

It is reliably learnt that historic *Senate House*, which was rededicated to the nation by the President of India on September 5th last year, is facing problems in the completion of the restoration work. The problems are not structural but largely administrative.

The Vice-Chancellor's office has recently made an announcement that the expected quantum of funds that was to be released from a Government Ministry has not come through and that this was going to delay the restoration. The news has come as a bitter disappointment to all those involved in the restoration of one of the best examples of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the city and which in

many ways also symbolises Madras University's 150-year heritage.

The restoration of *Senate House*, for which this journal had long been campaigning, really began in 2002 when the PWD research wing was asked to begin the work and assured that there would be no shortage of funds. An earlier attempt to begin the work in 1993 had failed within a year. A technical committee, which had been set up in 1996, met in December 2002 and began discussing the modalities of the work. In February 2003, a modern scaffolding was put up at a special price by L&T-ECC with the assurance that it would remain in place till the restoration work

was completed. Experts in conservation and restoration from the UK addressed PWD engineers in an effort to sensitise them to the task ahead. The PWD brought in L&T to take up the restoration of the roof which had to be done on a priority basis. In June 2003 the then Vice-Chancellor issued a public appeal asking alumni, corporate houses and well-wishers to contribute towards the Rs. 4 crore that was at the time estimated as being necessary for completing the work. The sudden resignation of the VC notwithstanding, the first phase of the restoration was completed in September 2003.

The arrival of a new and enthusiastic Vice-Chancellor, S.P. Thyagarajan, gave a further fillip to the work in December 2003, with the VC himself promising a group, that met to brainstorm on bringing the building alive after restoration, that the Convocation for 2007 would be held in the renovated *Senate House*. Work on the second phase began in April 2004. With estimates revised by then to Rs. 5 crore, work could not have commenced had it not been for spontaneous financial contributions from the Willingdon Trust, a few corporate houses, and several constituent colleges of the University.

(Continued on page 3)

New steps towards a Chennai Festival

The Man from Madras Musings, echoing *Madras Musings*, has been campaigning for years for a broad-based city festival to take place coinciding with Pongal. The idea was that taking off with the Music Season and followed by the Mylapore Festival, a city-wide cultural event, together with a festival of shopping and dining, could be organised and, thereby, create a month-long Chennai Festival that would attract visitors from home and abroad.

Now, MMM is glad to hear that Chennai Sangamam, an event focussing on major folk art forms, is slated to begin from February 20th and promises to see some major public-private participation in its organisation. Planned as a weeklong festival showcasing art, culture, music, dance and drama, the event has been put together by an NGO, Tamil Maiyam, in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Tourism and Culture Department. The inauguration of the festival will be at the open air IIT stadium and around 400 cultural performances will be held in 60 schools, 20 colleges, public parks, malls, corporate offices and streets. On the cards are Carnatic music performances at non-traditional venues and the showcasing of art forms such as Thappattam, Karagattam, Oyilattam, Mayilattam, Naiyandi Melam, Silambattam, Kalaripayattu and Thudumbattam.

A welcome feature is that there will be no entry fees, thereby making the events accessible to one and all. Funding is expected to come through corporate sponsorship. Another positive aspect is that some of the events will be held in North Chennai as well in prominent parks. MMM has long been recommending the involvement of the forgotten North in the city's happenings and this year's promises appear to augur a new beginning. It is understood that the choice of February for the festival was more out of delays in planning it and that the idea is to make the festival coincide with the Pongal period in future years.

MMM welcomes the idea but, at the same time, would like to sound a word of caution. First, any such attempt must be done with a long-term plan in view; there must be a commitment to keep such events going year after year and NOT abandon them with any change in political dispensation. Neither must a witch-hunt be launched on the organisers every time there is a change of government. That is one of the reasons why MMM has long advocated a peoples' or citizens' festival with minimum Government involvement.

There must also be infrastructural improvements if

such festivals are to be held in public places. A concert in a park or a performance in a street is something MMM welcomes, but not at the cost of causing enormous traffic jams with temporary diversions and last-minute changes in routes. An effort has to be made in the direction of pedestrianising areas connected with the festival through announcements and signboards indicating alternative routes that motorists can take.

Publicity for such events must begin at least six months and not two weeks prior to the festival. MMM takes this opportunity to point out that when the All India Music Conference was planned in Madras in December 1927, announcements concerning it were carried by the city's dailies as early as July that year. Surely, when that event, the mother of all the city's festivals, was in those days planned six months ahead,

or even rules governing one way stretches. Imagine the vista of freedom that this opens up. Rather like some PERT or CPM chart that MMM puzzled over when he was in college, these vehicles always take the shortest route to any destination. So what if it involves stopping other cars or injuring a few passers-by? Last but not least, such chauffeurs are even spared the trouble of hurling abuse at those who come in their way. There are enough acolytes of the politicians travelling in the same vehicle to take care of such minor matters. Ah, what a life!

In his childhood, MMM had once stunned a class teacher by stating that he would like to be a buffalo when he grew up as in his opinion that animal led the most carefree life. But now MMM is wiser and aspires for a higher form of animal life – namely being the chauffeur of a politician.

was horrified to find that both sides of this road, which is remarkably free of encroachments, are being used as urinals to such an extent that a permanent stench pervades the area.

The day MMM was walking through, handkerchief pressed to nose, was also Pulse Polio Day and the hospital was busy with many parents bringing in infants. The Chennai Corporation had obviously thought it had done its bit by liberally strewing bleaching powder all along the way. But can a few cosmetic steps like that solve what appears to be a problem with our entire city, namely that of using any public corner as a urinal?

An acquaintance from abroad had recently commented to MMM that Chennai can truly claim to be an international city the day its citizens give up spitting, urinating and defecating in public. Not all the malls and highrises will get us

Changeable laws

A theatre located inside a mall in the city had problems with permission to screen films, as it was found that the building did not have sufficient parking space for patrons' vehicles. Surprising that this was not discovered when the plan was filed for approval. The happy ending was, however, in sight—at least as far as the mall was concerned—for permission was soon given. *The Man from Madras Musings* wonders what had changed during the interregnum. Had the mall increased its parking space? Or had norms changed? Or is it simply a question of imaginative interpretation? Whatever be the cause, the effect is the same. More traffic jams, more congestion, aggrandisement of the pavement by auto-rickshaws, and untold suffering to the general public.

Reality on the brain

Asked to define Chennai in a phrase, one of *The Man from Madras Musings'* acquaintances said, "Real Estate". In his view, that happens to be the buzzword in the city, as any available space is being looked at only in terms of square feet, fsi, rate per square foot, multiplex, mall, condo, luxury apartment block, IT park and highrise.

This friend, who owns a rather attractive bungalow in the heart of the city and who is very proud of it, states that while earlier visitors used to admire the house, its gardens and general layout, nowadays all that any visitor does is to remark that the land there is worth its weight in gold and that my friend is certainly a lucky fellow to be sitting on so much real estate in the heart of the city. There are some who go further and suggest that my friend would be better off pulling down the house and "developing" the space.

God – at a price

Some temples of the city decided to celebrate New Year's Day rather differently. They proceeded to create a special entrance and charged a special fee to those wishing to avail of it. Now, that by itself may not be too bad, but fearing lack of response, a special prize was also offered. The first 500 people to avail of the special facility would get a silver pendant and a laminated photograph of the deity. The resultant rush had to be seen to be imagined. *The Man from Madras Musings* wonders what has happened to all old worldly values such as piety and prayer? Is God also subject to commercialisation?

– MMM

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

we in this time and age can do a lot better. It is only with such advance planning can tourists be attracted.

However, this is a good beginning and MMM hopes that it is an indication of good things to come for the city that we all love.

Dream job

The best job doing the rounds in Madras that is Chennai is that of being a chauffeur to a politician, feels *The Man from Madras Musings* after detailed study, contemplation and introspection. After all, the greatest causes of stress in our city are the traffic chaos and the resultant road rage. But the politician's chauffeur, no matter how low the politician may rank in the hierarchy, is above all such petty problems.

Firstly, the job involves driving a vehicle that is just short of being classified a bus. That in itself is enough to scare any other vehicle off the road and send cyclists and two-wheeler users into ditches. Secondly, such vehicles invariably come with a flag of some sort stuck to the front which automatically means a free pass at any traffic signal. An added perk is that all policemen automatically salute such vehicles and often manipulate signals so that these vehicles, in case driven by chauffeurs who obey traffic lights, need not halt. Thirdly, such vehicles come with heavily tinted glasses so that none can see if the politician concerned is really inside the vehicle. So even if there is just the chauffeur driving along, he becomes the lord of the road. Fourthly, such vehicles are subject to no speed limits, lanes

A welcome trend

The Man from Madras Musings recently attended a programme at the Roja Muthiah Library which, among all such archival centres in the city, must rank as the friendliest and most welcoming institution for research scholars. This programme involved the inauguration of a centre for research on the Indus Valley Civilisation. The papers of the well known scholar Iravatham Mahadevan form the nucleus of this Centre and, what is more, he will be available to provide guidance to all research scholars working on the Indus Valley through the RMRL.

In MMM's view this is the beginning of a very welcome trend wherein people will come forward to donate more and more material to the RMRL. MMM hopes that more people come forward with old books, diaries, 78 rpm records and other such archival material. Incidentally, the RMRL also digitises such material for a nominal fee, which allows the proud possessors of such items to continue enjoying the content without touching the original that, inevitably, with the passage of time, becomes increasingly fragile.

Public convenience

That is the phrase that first came to *The Man from Madras Musings'* mind when he recently found himself in the vicinity of Victoria Hostel Road, which is the road just behind the Presidency College and which leads not only to the hostel of the college but also to the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Triplicane. MMM

that stature, he was certain, and MMM had to agree. We are truly a long way off.

Urban to suburban

The Man from Madras Musings is quite used to receiving calls from twenty-nothings who these days cover news and events for various television channels and each time MMM is quite amazed at the levels of ignorance of history, heritage and culture that most of them display. MMM is always willing to part with information, but what is shocking is that most of those who call up do not even do some basic reading.

One such incident was when someone from a channel with a tie-up with a leading American news channel called up stating that she had to do a story on the Music Season and the burden of her story was that the *sabha* culture had moved to the centre of the city from the suburbs over the years. MMM was intrigued at what appeared to be a new interpretation that contradicted most writings on the subject and then discovered that what the young lady meant by suburb was George Town, no less! She went on to elaborate that she had found that most *sabha*-s had begun in George Town and had moved to more central locations such as Mylapore, T'Nagar and, hold your breath, even Anna Nagar!

MMM could think of nothing in reply and hung up on the telephone conversation. Many people had referred to George Town as the boondocks but that it was now being interpreted as a suburb may come as a surprise to at least its residents.

OUR READERS WRITE



For better water

Cleaning of waterbodies (MM, December 1st) cannot be achieved even after 100 years if the present strategies are adopted. The authorities should enforce eco-sanitation, treat grey-water at source and use it to recharge groundwater aquifers which will promote groundwater flow towards the waterbodies and generate flow in the rivers.

Underground drainage and centralised treatment of sewage have not been effective in our country in cleaning the rivers so far.

Potable grade public water supply is only a pipe dream. Even now, the quality of water supplied in Chennai is not upto satisfactory levels.

Decentralised potable grade water supply by borewells and R.O. treatment system can be the answer. The water should be supplied in plastic cans at subsidised prices. Non-potable

grade water can be supplied through the existing network.

Industrial waste generated should be treated/reclaimed at the end of each process. This will facilitate recycling, easy segregation for easy disposal.

S.N. Mahalingam
64-A, Kalamegam Street Extn.
Kamarajapuram
Chennai 600 073

Overbridges needed

The execution of the I.T Corridor from Madhya Kailash is commendable. No doubt, users will find it a pleasure to traverse it. But what about the large number of MRT commuters? They will find it extremely difficult to cross the six-lanes once the traffic starts in full strength.

May I suggest that the authorities concerned provide foot overbridges or subways from the MRTS Stations, at Kasturba Nagar and Indira Nagar to the western side of the

new road. A foot overbridge from KB Nagar Station across Sardar Patel Road is also essential. Only provision of foot overbridges will benefit commuters, especially children and elders.

S. Vaidyalingam
24, Second Main Road
Kasturbanagar, Adyar
Chennai 600 020

Guy de pleasant

Sir Guy of Warwickshire is one of the icons of English history. He fell in love with the daughter and heiress of the Lord of Warwickshire. As his economic status was far lower, he participated in numerous tournaments, winning huge prize money and, finally, the hand of his beloved.

Well, if Sir Guy of English history is the stuff of legend, our own Guy of Madras, viz Randor Guy, is stuffed with legends of Madras which he shared with us at P.S. High School auditorium during and as part of last Madras Week celebrations. It was a most enjoyable talk without a moment of boredom and the old world ambience of P.S. High School was just right for the occasion.

One of the anecdotes Randor Guy narrated was how ancient

film companies of Madras employed a "crow shooter" whose job was to fire a country rifle and scare away the crows so that their cawing would not intrude into the dialogues recording. As this crow shooter obviously did it to please the film director I wonder whether this is the etymology of the classic Madras expression, 'crow catching'... seems plausible.

C.G. Prasad
No.9, C.S. Mudali Street
Kondithope
Chennai 600 079

The impediments

Reader M. Sethuraman's thought (MM, December 1st) is a laudable proposition but it is impracticable in a country like ours where politicians and contractors rule the roost.

The impediments are: 1) Sharing of expenditure by Corporation and railways; 2) Getting the plans and estimates sanctioned where there are vested interests; 3) The acquisition of land from private owners who expect high value for their property as compensation for acquisition (in this process they are prepared to go to court to get a stay order to

achieve their end); 4) And if you overcome such difficulties, the building contractors play such havoc through their poor workmanship that the entire structure threatens to fall within a short period of time.

At best we can bale out the water by any means or wait for the summer season to dry it up before the subways can be put to use. (If we are wedded to a demon we have to climb along with it if necessary.)

M. Jayaraman
30/5 Govindan Road
West Mambalam
Chennai 600 033

The bhajan singer

Come Margazhi, my memory goes back to the good old days of the month in the 1940s, when I had the pleasure of joining the *bhajan ghoshiti* of Papanasam Sivan which circumambulated the Kapaleeswarar temple in Mylapore singing choice *bhajan*-s. Papanasam Sivan, a lean, emaciated-looking person, hardly gave any impression of a man with a treasure trove of classical music in him.

M.R. Pillai
H 64/3, Central Avenue
Korattur
Chennai 600 080

A big 'Thank You' to 34 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.1.07 and 15.2.07, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses

— CHENNAI HERITAGE

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Rs. 500: Kadhiresan, Rupa; Dhandapani, V.S.

Rs. 900: Jairaj

Concern over Senate House

(Continued from page 1)

However, the question of what will be done with *Senate House* after renovation loomed large and in order to allay fears, the VC put forward a plan wherein one of the important steps was to form a Trust with University and ex-officio NGO participation which, among other things, would ensure the maintenance and upkeep of the building post-restoration and oversee and manage the place on behalf of its owners, the University of Madras. (Management of buildings by one organisation for another is commonplace worldwide – especially when the latter does not have the expertise.)

With this and other such assurances in place, funds began coming in and work continued apace till most of it was completed in time for the inauguration in September 2006. At that time, all that was left was renovation of two towers and it was

estimated that Rs. 2 crore more would complete the work. A new Vice-Chancellor took over shortly after the inauguration and it was announced by him that all restoration work would be completed by April 14, 2007, after which the building would be available to the public.

However, ever since then, there has been a shortage of funds and the concern over payments for work already done has been reflected in the slow progress with what needed to be done. What is more disquieting is that the Trust, which was supposed to collect further funds and advise on and supervise the maintenance of the building, has not met ever since its first meeting with the new Vice-Chancellor. This lack of interaction with the new Vice-Chancellor has the Trust not only wondering about its status but has brought

to a halt its drive for further funds.

Meanwhile, most worrying is the question: What will happen to *Senate House* post-restoration? The interiors are complete but they are virtually open to one and all without any agency protecting them. There is no maintenance system in place. The smallest act of vandalism can cause immeasurable harm to the work that has happened so far – and such unthinking acts have already occurred.

All this has caused immense unease among the donors, all of whom gave the money on the assurance of good management of the building during and after the renovation. What happens to the Trust that they placed their assurance in? It would not be out of place to point out that two of the NGOs in the Trust represent the leading corporate houses in the city and these corporates might well be wary with dealing with the University after this experience.

At the same time, the University must ask itself whether such a beautifully renovated building can be operated without any guidelines. When are these guidelines to ensure protection of a heritage building to be put in place, all those connected with heritage have already begun asking.

Madras Musings hopes that all this will be sorted out soon and the restored *Senate House* preserved in the manner it should be.

OUR ADDRESSES

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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

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

The Madras Jews...

(by A Special Correspondent)

Over the last 2000 years, five distinct groups of Jews have made India their home. The earliest were those now known as the Cochini Jews of Kerala and the Bene Israel of Maharashtra, their origins more part of legend than history today. Then came the Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal – and a few from elsewhere in Europe – who fled the Inquisition in the 16th Century and became the White Jews of Kerala. And still later there were the Baghdadi Jews who fled persecution in West Asia or sought new opportunities and arrived in India in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries to become a significant business community in Bombay and Calcutta. The fifth group is the most recently recognised Jewish community of them all, the Bene Menashe of Mizoram and Manipur who claim to be descended from the Menashe, one of the ten Lost Tribes.

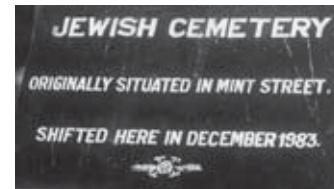
Apart from these groups there was a small group of Sephardic Jews who, fleeing the Inquisition, put down roots in Britain, Holland and Germany and then arrived in India in the 16th Century to dominate the diamond and coral trade. These Jews of Iberian stock were known as the Ashkenazi Jews and they first settled in Goa, a territory they had already been trading with. As British commercial success grew in India, they moved to Madras in the 17th Century and helped London become Europe's foremost centre of the trade in uncut diamonds in the 18th Century; Amsterdam by then was the leading cutting centre.

Jaques (James) de Paiva was the first Jewish diamond merchant to arrive in Madras. He settled in Black (George) Town, just north of Fort St George, in 1686. It was exactly a hundred years later that the last Jewish merchant, Moses de Castro, left Madras.

Within five years of de Paiva settling in Madras, with wife and servants, five other Jewish merchants made the city their home. They were Isaac de Porto, Francis Marques, Bartolomeo Rodrigues, Domingo de Porto and Alvaro da Fonseca. Others followed, like Rodrigues Salvadore, Isaac Abendana and Marcus Moses. But the community always remained a very small one, as may be gleaned from the fact that between 1686 and 1786, when India had a monopoly of the supply of rough dia-

monds, "there were only very short periods without at least one Anglo-Jewish diamond merchant in Madras." All these merchants, however, no matter that they prospered in Madras, were in fact only agents in India of the big London diamond houses. They might have been kin of those who owned the London firms, but they were certainly not their heirs. Nevertheless, it was in Madras that such families as the Marcus Moseses, the Aaron Franks and their kinsmen Henry and Abraham Salomons, who were known as the Franks-Salomons family, and the Samuel de Castros made their fortunes.

These merchants had close ties with the East India Company's Council in Madras, particularly the Governors. For



The plaque (above) in the Jewish Cemetery (right) that's a corner of the Lloyd's Road burial ground.

instance, Isaac Abendana, a Dutch Jew, was Governor Thomas Pitt's adviser in the Governor's private diamond business and played a significant role in the acquisition and cutting of the legendary Pitt (Regent) Diamond that helped give England two Prime Ministers. And Jaques de Paiva's widow Hieronima not only bore Governor Elihu Yale a son but was also his partner in business, merging the Paiva diamond business with Yale's own diamond trading. The Paiva fortune had a lot to do with the Yale fortune that in a small way led to the Collegiate School of Connecticut becoming Yale University.

The Jews of early Madras exported the diamonds of Golconda and imported, from



their fellow Hebrew merchants, silver, rough coral and polished coral beads, and pearls. So it was that the quarters of these coral-dealers in north Muthialpet, the eastern half of 'Black Town', came to be known as Pavalakkar Theru or Coral Merchants' Street (*pavalam* (T) = coral). Curiously, the Jews were succeeded in later years on this George Town street by the Nagarathar, the money-lending Natukkottai Chettiers who to this day maintain a choultry in this crowded and dirty street that little reflects its former prosperity.

The Jews had a burial ground in Peddannaickenpet, the western half of Black Town, and until a municipal school came up in more recent times on its site at the north end of Mint Street, a portion of the cemetery, long out of use, could be seen. But while the school was being raised in 1983, the tombstones in the cemetery were removed to the Lloyd's Road cemetery near the Marina and there, approached through filthy surroundings, they have a corner to themselves, looked after by one of the only (Continued on page 5)

...and India's

Judaism and Christianity, Asian religions born on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, spread first to other Asian countries, like what are today Iran and Iraq. From these lands they travelled to parts of the west coast of India, the south of Ceylon and the Coromandel Coast that had from the times of Solomon traded with West Asia.

The Legend of the Thomas who Doubted, the Apostle of India, is an article of faith on both coasts of South India. Thomas, the legend has it, travelled in an Arab dhow chartered by a Jewish merchant, Habban, and found Jews already settled in Cranganore, a little north of Cochin on the southwest coast of India. Indeed, the Jewish tradition is that the Cochin Jews date back to the times of Solomon, long before Christ, and claims that they traded with the port of Ophir – believed to be Cranganore (or Kodungallur) in today's Kerala. More generally accepted is the view that the first Cochini Jews settled on the Malabar coast c.72 CE after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem.

In the synagogue in Cochin are two copper plates recording a local ruler's grant of land in Cochin to the Jews. The plates are undated but are estimated to be of somewhere between the 4th and 10th Centuries. Such dating of the plates precludes them being references to the land the synagogue stands on. The synagogue, known locally as the Pardesi (Foreigners) shrine, dates to 1568 and rebuilding in the late 17th Century. Jew Town in Cochin, where it is sited, is itself dated to 1567. Marco Polo spoke of Jewish settlements in South India in 1293.

The reference to 'Foreigners' is significant. The Cochini Jews have over the centuries been divided into three separate groups: The oldest of them, the Malabari or Black Jews, of Yemeni or Babylonian (Iran-Iraq) origin, date anywhere from 500 BCE to 500 CE and initially married locally but then amongst themselves. The Brown Jews were those who toiled for the Malabari Jews and, in time, became converts. The 'foreigners' were the Sephardic, or White, Jews, who fled Europe during the Inquisition in the 16th Century. They may be of alien appearance, but they found sanctuary in the land of the Cochini Jews.

At their peak, between the 17th and early 20th Centuries, the Cochini Jews numbered 3000, about 500 of them White Jews. Migration to Israel has reduced their number to less than 200 today, most of them White Jews.

The Sons of Israel, the Bene Israel, claim descent from the Jews who escaped persecution in Galilee in the 2nd Century BCE, but it is generally accepted that their numbers only grew with those who fled Islam's growth in the 7th and 9th Centuries in Iran-Iraq. Like the Parsis, they settled in villages from Surat in Gujarat to Ratnagiri, south of Bombay along the Konkan (Maharashtra) coast and, over the years, became an indigenised middle class. In the process, they virtually became an Indian caste (oil merchants), and, except for continuing a few Jewish traditions, virtually cut off from Judaism.

The Judaic revival of the Bene Israel is dated to sometime between 1000 and 1400 CE. Around the 1750s, they migrated in small numbers to Bombay and Calcutta, where they sought government, particularly military, or mercantile service in British establishments. The Bene Israel have been the largest group of Jews in India. They numbered around 30,000 at their peak. Today, migration has reduced their numbers to less than 5000, most of them in Bombay, particularly its suburb Thane, and on the Konkan coast. They are divided into two groups – the majority being Gora (or White) Jews, who claim both parents to be of Jewish origin, and the Kala (or Black) Jews, descending from mothers who were not Jewish.

The Baghdadi, or Middle East, Jews, the third major group of Indian Jews, were rich traders from Baghdad, Aleppo and Basra. They spoke Arabic and settled in Surat and Bombay between 1770 and 1870. Many of them later moved to Calcutta, Rangoon and Hong Kong. The best known of them were David S. Sassoon, who arrived in Bombay in 1832 and became one of the world's richest men in the 19th Century, Eleazar Kadoorie, who was made a peer and became known as Lord Elly, and Emmanuel Belilos, all of them to later make fortunes in Hong Kong.

The Baghdadi were successful businessmen, who brought their families as well as Jews from other Arab countries to India. Many of the Baghdadi Jews ran small businesses, like textile shops, confectionery and grocery stores and restaurants. But there were many who were significant figures in the Indian economy, particularly the textile industry. The wealthy Baghdadis were renowned for their philanthropy – and the Sassoon name survives in Bombay in many a public building.

The Baghdadi in the 1940s numbered about 10,000, but today there are less than a hundred of them in India, mostly in Calcutta. Once, Calcutta was home to around 5000 Jews, most of them Baghdadi, who followed in the footsteps of Shalom ben Aaron ben Obadiah ha-Cohen, a Syrian Jew, who came to Bombay in 1789 and moved to Calcutta ten years later.

By the 19th Century, the Baghdadi Jews had established a chain of trading establishments from Shanghai to London. Their main trade was diamonds, opium, indigo, cotton yarn, silk, piecegoods, gold leaf, precious stones, ivory and coffee. But the community also produced several notable professionals.

Between the late 19th Century and the early 20th Century, the heyday of the Raj, several Jews arrived in India from Britain, to serve with the Government, or as refugees from Germany. But these migrants remained a niche group, cut off as much from the Indian Jews as from the rest of India, and most of them migrated after Independence. Today, there are less than 5000 Jews in India, most of them Bene Israel, but many of whom have contributed significantly to the country. In Madras, however, few remember there was a Jewish presence not only in the city but also in the Municipal Corporation. But while they were here, they wrote a significant chapter in the commercial history of Madras.

On the occasion of the 100th death anniversary of the founder of the Theosophist Movement, K.V.S. KRISHNA recalls...

The early years of Olcott

It was 17th February, 1907, writes Annie Besant: "We sat quietly beside him, an occasional long breath taken, till 7.15 a.m. A shiver ran through his body, two minutes later he was gone. The three Masters to whom he had been the nearest during his life, and his old comrade, H.P. Blavatsky, were there in the astral presence, and at 7.27 HPB said: 'The cord is broken'. He was free."

The new President-elect, in funeral oration, read the Colonel's last message, signed in his own hand on February 2nd. He said, among other things, "To my beloved brothers in the physical body: I bid you all farewell. In memory of me, carry on the grand work of proclaiming and living the Brotherhood of Religions."

* * *

Henry Steel Olcott was born on 2nd August, 1832, the first child of Henry Wyckoff and Emily (nee Steel). Olcott believed that he probably descended from Bishop John Alcock, a favourite of Henry VII, who in 1496 founded the Jesus College, Cambridge.

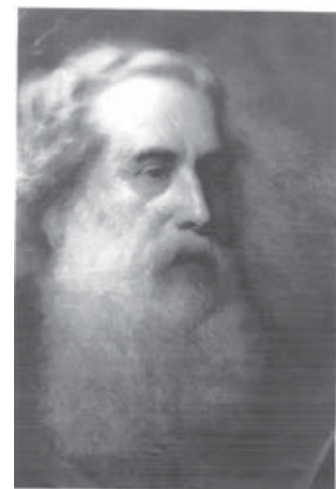
Due to his father's business failures, Olcott, then 16, left the University, his education incomplete. He was untrained for any profession. His maternal uncles Edger, Isaac and George Steel were farmers in Elyria, Ohio. In 1848, Olcott joined them in share-farming a 50-acre plot. His parents had brought him up by strictly orthodox Presbyterian principles. His uncles introduced him to spiritualism. At the farm, Olcott studied Dr. E. Mesmer's

THE MADRAS JEWS

(Continued from page 4)

two Chennai families with Jewish connections.

The tomb of Jaques de Paiva was one of the four that remained in the Mint Street cemetery. It is, however, no longer to be found at Lloyd's Road, where there are the tombstones of two other Hebrew diamond merchants, Solomon Franco (1763) and Isaac Sardo (1709). The old site was last used in 1964, Esther Cohen's tombstone at the new



Henry Steel Olcott painted by Lakshmi Krishnamurthy.

books and he helped a neighbouring farmer's daughter undergo a dental procedure made painless by his mesmeristic passes. In later years, Olcott successfully helped more than 8000 patients in India and Ceylon. When his mother died, it was with prayers on her lips that "her wayward son, Henry, would return to Christian fold".

After a course of study at the model farm of Prof. J.J. Mapes, near New York, Olcott was appointed Assistant Editor of the professor's magazine *Working Farmer*. Two years later, with the help of a legacy, he started a School of Agricultural Science. He introduced new crops and published a book in 1857, *Sorgho and Imphee*, which went through seven editions and was recommended as a school text. His second book, *Yale Agricultural Lectures*, was published in 1858. He next went on a professional tour of Europe to report on agricul-

tural schools in Europe. When his agricultural school closed due to financial constraints, he was back to square one.

Olcott next became Agricultural Editor of *The New York Tribune* and correspondent of the *Mark Lane Express*. He wrote an article, 'How we hanged John Brown', about an activist who was trying to get slavery abolished by violent means. That was on December 2, 1859. Olcott's articles in support of abolition of slavery were putting him in such serious situation that if he was caught in a city in the U.S. South, he faced the prospect of being lynched and not put in a jail cell.

On April 26, 1860, H.S. Olcott married Mary Eplee Morgan, the daughter of Rev. Morgan, the Episcopal Church, New Rochelle.

When the Civil War began, Olcott volunteered for action in the field and became a Signal Officer. Malaria and dysentery landed him in hospital. In 1862, he was appointed to investigate corruption in the Army of the Union (the North). He found much corruption in the Army and the Navy, with millions of

The Olcott contribution

- He helped establish 206 schools, with 20,000 students, in Ceylon, and the Harijan school in Adyar.
- He and Blavatsky became the first 'white' Buddhists. To him, Buddhism was a philosophy and not a creed.
- Olcott consolidated Oriental learning by establishing the Adyar Library and spread the message of Universal Brotherhood.
- He was the first to introduce 'cremation' in America. He and Blavatsky were cremated. He was decked with an American Flag and a Buddhist flag when he was cremated in Adyar.
- In his lifetime, he gave 4000 to 5000 speeches, reaching out to 5 to 6 million people all over the world.
- He made Adyar the Mecca of Theosophy, with its branches all over the world.

– K.V.S.K.

The 'Float Festival' Olcott recorded

On the 19th occurred the annual "floating festival" at the Mylapore temple tank, and we went to see it. It is a very striking picture of Indian national life. Symbolically, it typifies the floating of Vishnu on the face of the waters at the beginning of a Manvantara or new cosmic period. The ascending steps on the four sides of the tank, which mount from the water's brim, are lit up with *chirags*, or clay lamps; and the small temple at the tank's centre blazes with light, while its white stucco of chunam is turned into the semblance of old ivory by the soft light of the silvery moon. On a raft of catamaran fishing-boats, that has been prepared by the coast fishermen as an act of time-honoured feudal service, the temple idol has been placed in a small pagoda covered with glittering tinsel. Its hereditary attendant Brahmins, naked to the waist, but with two white cloths, one wrapped about them from the waist downward, the other folded into a strip and laid across the shoulders, chant *slokas*. Standard-bearers wave their quaint banners. Devadasis, or temple nautch-girls, sway before the idol in graceful motions. Coloured fires of all bright hues blaze at the corners of the raft. Musicians waken the echoes with their strident sounds, and the floating raft is poled seven times around the tank, in the presence of a vast multitude of dark-skinned people who watch it from the bank, the disturbed water reflecting back, while the shining splendour of the earthly lamps and fires, and the silver radiance of the moon and stars far up in the blue vault. Anything more picturesque in the way of a human festival would be hard to find. (From Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, 19.1.1886.)

dollars involved. The US Government, in recognition of his contributions, promoted him to the rank of Colonel. Mary Olcott was proud of Henry's achievements and her father Rev. Morgan used to preach the righteousness of the Northern cause from his pulpit.

On April 14, 1865 Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, was assassinated. Olcott and two other colonels were appointed to a committee to inquire into whether there had been a conspiracy. Three years of investigation completed, Olcott resigned and was complimented for "zeal, ability and uncompromising faithfulness to duty". He then embarked on an entirely new career.

In 1866, he obtained a job in a law office, studied dedicatedly and was admitted to the Bar in New York in 1868. He was then appointed Secretary and Director of the National Insurance Convention, where he simplified the rules, which were published in two huge volumes. He also built up a thriving law practice with clients like the United States Treasury, the New York Stock Exchange, the Corporation of New York City, the Panama Railway, and the United Steel Manufacturers of Sheffield, U.K.

In 1870, Olcott went to Britain and met world-famous occultists. On his return to the U.S., he took to journalism to get over the monotony of legal practice. For a while, Olcott was a Drama Critic for the *New York Sun*.

Mary Olcott was a conservative, orthodox, church-goer. She feared spiritualism, free thought and new 'heresies'. Their differences ended in a divorce, which was rare and frowned upon in those days. Mary Olcott married

again, a southerner named Cannon.

In July 1874, Olcott met H.P. Blavatsky at the Eddy farm House in Chittenden, Vermont, when investigating spiritual phenomena. Olcott was a correspondent for the *Daily Graphic* and his articles had many readers.

* * *

When Olcott met Madame Blavatsky, she said to him, "I was afraid that Colonel Olcott might drag me into one of his articles." She was assured, "You need have no such fear on that score, Madame. He won't mention you unless you permit it. I can assure you of that, because I am Henry Olcott at your service!" That service lasted her lifetime. After several visits to the Ghost's Farm and sensational articles in the *Daily Graphic* the Colonel returned to New York in November 1874. In 1875, Olcott experienced several occult phenomena.

On 7th September 1875, a group of 17 gathered to hear George Felt's lecture, 'The lost canon of properties of the Egyptians'. The audience were impressed. Olcott suggested that a society be launched for occult study. His slip of paper was handed to W.Q. Judge, who in turn gave it to Blavatsky, who already had secret orders from the Mahatma to 'establish a philosophical religious society' (Blavatsky met this Mahatma, a tall Hindu, in August 1851, when she was 20 years old).

On 18th September 1875, the committee resolved that the society should be called the Theosophical Society. On 17th November 1875, the Theosophical Society was formed with H.S. Olcott as its President, its Corresponding Secretary H.P. Blavatsky and W.Q. Judge as Counsel for the Society.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period January 16th to 31st. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. For how much did Tata Steel acquire Corus in the biggest deal by an Indian company outside India?

2. Archaeologists recently discovered prehistoric hut sites at Durrington Walls. They are said to be the dwelling places of the builders of which famous site in Britain?

3. On January 17th, the minute hand of the 'Doomsday Clock' moved how many minutes closer to midnight, the fateful hour?

4. India recently became the sixth nation to successfully recover a satellite from space. Name the satellite.

5. Name the Nobel Laureate whose latest work *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* has angered many for its title and other sentences in the book.

6. Which much-anticipated product's global launch commenced with the launch event in Auckland on January 30th?

7. Who are the new Australian Open tennis singles champions?

8. 276 passengers and 28 crew of which famous carrier were sickened by the highly infectious norovirus recently?

9. Whom did Shilpa Shetty beat to win the controversial *Celebrity Big Brother* show on January 28th?

10. In one of the biggest business shockers, which legendary car-maker reported record losses of \$12.7 billion?

* * *

11. Which National-award winning actress/director was born Asha Kelunni?

12. In which hill range is the Kiliyur Falls?

13. Complete the sequence: *Ezhuthathikaaram, Sollathikaaram,*

14. For his translation of which work did Kannadasan win the Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize in 1980?

15. What was created by a Royal Charter issued on December 30, 1687 on the advice of the Chairman of the East India Company, Josiah Child?

16. In Madras cricketing lingo, what is *gappae*?

17. Name the French general who captured Fort St. George and Madras before the British regained control through the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

18. What was the present Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi's constituency when he was elected an MLA for the first time in 1957?

19. In 1996, when the names of Districts in the State were changed, what did Pasumpon Muthu-ramalinga Thevar District become?

20. Near which city/town in Virudhunagar District would one see Sanjeevi Hills?

(Answers on page 8)

When I was a first-year student in the University of Madras, the Hindi textbook had a lesson titled *Transfer*. The main character in the short story, a Railway employee, does long stints of duty in remote places. Consequently, he becomes a total stranger to his children who grow up in one comfortable and convenient place without him; even his wife becomes distant, with the passing years. When this breadwinner retires and goes back to live with his own family, he is in some sense bereft. He had done all the right things – according to the *dharma* of the householder – so what kind of denouement was this?

We too left the poor man alone in his inexplicable alienness; there was no discussion following the reading. Actually, there could have been no better group to offer him commiseration. Of the sixty or so students in the class, a few had picked Hindi simply as a matter of choice. Like the protagonist, our fathers had transferable jobs. The so-called national language has always been a safe bet for children

A Madrasi in Bihar

whose parents expected to move within India during their career. Except in rare cases, all languages are taught equally soullessly in schools, as if the well-chosen pieces of literature mean nothing; they are simply 'lessons'. If we were sometimes moved by the words, it was an unintended effect.

But *Transfer* was the story of

Later, realising that it was the summer capital of Bihar, they said: "In that corrupt State, a man in your position can make a fortune."

Father had to learn the meaning of *gherao* first-hand when he dealt with powerful unions, whose members would literally surround him and not budge till he showed some sem-

● Looking back with VIJAYSREE VENKATRAMAN

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our lives. Some of us knew the situation in the plot from another perspective – that of heartless kids who could not relate to their father any more despite being the beneficiaries of all his sacrifices. When Father got a difficult posting, our extended family could not place the town in a map of India.

blance of giving in to their demands. However, the general public tends to view even responsible government positions as 'cushy' jobs. Giving up was not an option because, like all fathers, mine was determined to provide for his children's future.

Meanwhile, what of our stay in Bihar? The afternoon flight would bring us our daily newspaper from Calcutta. Frequent power cuts meant that we would often sit down to unromantic candlelight dinners. We are humans, not machines, our neighbour, another veteran of bad transfers, reminded us with good cheer. Apparently, we don't need electricity to function.

Like good schools elsewhere, mine made sure I realised how lucky was I to get admission there. After some days of being given the run-around, I made it to class – a week late – and settled into a routine of doing homework by petromax lamps. Being the newcomer was difficult in so many other ways. Being nicknamed Madrasi was the least of my problems. In my case, there was no arguing with the geographical correctness of the term.

Now, when I see big green trucks waiting outside school

gates, I feel that army children have it easier. Overall, their families have a much better support system to cope with the constant transplanting. If children of Defence personnel show up in the middle of the academic year, the nationwide Central schools will take them in, no questions asked. But here is a question for school principals. When civilians are transferred, do they not also move?

Defence or diplomatic circles – if they operated in such towns – might have called Bihar a 'dangerous posting'. Yet, this is where my father battled on alone. The reason we left was simple – not even the locals studied in the place beyond high school. Bihar has not been known for its academic institutions since Nalanda. We moved back to the safety and comfort of our hometown. While it is hard to imagine this in the Internet era, keeping in touch with friends in different cities, or even your own father, was not easy.

Are transfers so terrible, you ask; were there no bright spots in the capital of present-day Jharkand, or at the other postings? Well, I can now boast that the dashing Dhoni and I went to the same school. More seriously, the biggest perk is that transfer does not let you remain a frog-in-the-well. India, and indeed the world, is a far bigger place than you can possibly imagine. There is much to learn from diversity, and not all of it can come from books.

If the institutions involved handle transfers with some sensitivity, such relocations could be a more rewarding experience while we live it and not just while looking back. People, who are rooted in one place, don't always understand what it means to be transplanted. But these are more enlightened times; India and the world are both shrinking. As we Madrasis get ready from October to March for the temporary migrants from all over, we should bring the red carpet down from the attic.

Efforts underway to save a palace

The Nagercoil Chapter of INTACH has successfully put a stop to the construction of a girls' hostel in the front yard of the Eraniel Palace in Kanniyakumari District after communicating with the District Collector. The Kanniyakumari Dewaswam Board and the Panchayat Union supported the INTACH action.

Such an addition would have completely marred the beauty of a 16th Century Palace, apart from nullifying the efforts being made by the Tourism Department to revive its past glory. One of the landmarks of this palace is the *Vasantha Maaligai*, intricately carved from a single stone standing on a base of 8' x 5' granite. The palace stands amidst three acres of land surrounded by the Valliyar River. It has an ancient *Marthandeswar* Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.

The Principal Commissioner of Archaeology, Chennai, following INTACH's report on the Eraniel Palace, sent a team of engineers, an archaeologist and a photographer a few months ago to evaluate what was necessary to preserve the palace. Restoration work is expected to commence shortly, with the District Administration contributing Rs.25 lakh. There will also be some funding by INTACH. (Source: INTACH Visarat)

What's planned for our beaches?

(Continued from page 1)

kuppam residence, has sought more details on this transport project and suggested that citizens and residents should be consulted.

Meanwhile, a month ago, the Chennai Corporation sent its earthmovers to Elliot's Beach. When the machines began to level sand dunes and humps, a group of residents objected to this action. They said that the civic body did not have the powers to disturb such natural expanses which fall under the coastal regulation zone limits. The civic body says that this work was part of its effort to

'beautify' Elliot's Beach. When the earthmovers moved out, one machine was left behind to sift the sand of rubble and plastic waste.

Earlier, the zonal office of the Chennai Corporation (in Adyar) had called for a meeting of its officers and heads of local NGOs to discuss the 'beautification project'. S. Satyanarayanan of Exnora was among those who attended the meeting. He says he was horrified to see the plans which included a list of fancy additions like lamps, walkways and lawns. Says he, "We want the beach to be what a beach is. Just clean

sand and unpolluted water. There is no need to do anything more on the shore or away from it." *Adyar Times*, the neighbourhood newspaper, has formally requested the officer who heads the zone to share details of this project because such details are never shared voluntarily. There has not been any response so far (as of February 12th) to two letters of request.

Social activist Nityanandan says that Saravanan of Uroor *kuppam* has filed another RTI Act petition with the PWD and the Corporation seeking details on this Elliot's Beach project. This was filed 20 days ago. "The

Corporation and PWD are some of the worst departments when it comes to sharing information on such public issues," says Nityanandan. "So we give ourselves at least 60 days' time before we can actually pursue such sensitive issues."

Meanwhile, people like Saravanan and NGOs in the South Chennai area plan to rally the support of people who use the beach and *kuppam* residents to debate these issues. "We want to ensure that the community's views are heard and their ideas accommodated in such projects," says Nityanandan.

What's needed for better heritage management?

INTACH organised a Heritage Management Seminar in New Delhi where Harvard- and Stanford-educated Chief Guest Jyotiraditya Scindia, a young Member of Parliament, stated that the imperatives of heritage conservation and socio-economic development could – and must – co-exist, notwithstanding the stresses of globalisation. He pointedly added that the massive development taking place on the Ridge and the Yamuna riverbed in Delhi is indicative of how the obsession to make Delhi a global city is compromising its ecological heritage.

Apart from management of heritage sites and tourism, the focus of the seminar was on specific issues like human resource development, urban renewal and fund-raising, all critical facets of contemporary heritage management. The highlights of the Final Recommendations were, in brief:

- Listing of heritage, both tangible and intangible, and classifying their importance are essential for managing their conservation and must be carried out in consultation with all stakeholders.
- The listed buildings/areas/zones must be inscribed in the statutory Development/Master/Zonal/Area Level Plans which control development of the city and due reference should be made to UNESCO/ICOMOS resolutions, National/State laws, and INTACH Charter for Conservation of Unprotected Architectural Heritage and Sites in India.
- The objectives of heritage management must invariably lead to improving the

First principles of heritage management

A set of powerful "First Principles" to guide urban heritage conservation has emerged over the past two decades and has been validated through professional practice across the world. Many have arisen out of a uniquely Asian physical and socio-cultural space. The pre-requisites for appropriate and successful conservation have been stated in brief as:

- Collective mapping of cultural space, its hierarchies, symbolic language and associations.
- Tangible cultural expressions deriving their origin, value and continuing significance from intangible cultural practices.
- Authenticity, the defining characteristic of heritage, is a relative characteristic to be found in continuity, but not necessarily continuity of material.
- Conservation process succeeds when histories are revealed, traditions revived, and meanings recovered in a palimpsest of knowledge.
- Appropriate use of heritage is negotiated, resulting in a life-enhancing space.

quality of life of the inhabitants and the environment of the area. It may require new tools of urban planning which do not a priori 'freeze' development activities in the proximity of heritage buildings/areas/zones.

- Visions and strategies for effective heritage management entail detailed engineering for each site, coordinated inputs from different government agencies, and conformity with prevailing international and Master Plan norms.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) is a powerful agent of change for 63 Indian cities, and must be used to leverage the objectives of heritage management in those cities.

- Heritage Management and Tourism Development must be viewed as two sides of the same coin and entails Heritage Impact Assessment Studies being undertaken.
- To mitigate the negative consequences of tourism, both the host community and visitors should be well informed about the significance of local heritage mores and cultural practices through interpretation centres and a strategy to distribute tourism, keeping in mind the carrying capacity of each site.
- Human Resource Development, starting with training of the trainers, is required at all levels to create a cadre of professional conservation experts, tourism personnel, and sensitised bureaucrats, as well as for all staff related to development and maintenance of tourism infrastructure.
- INTACH's outreach programme should be expanded to develop high-end conservation education at the University level and to create a public mass support for heritage management.
- The goodwill of Corporates and Non-Resident Indians must be tapped for funding conservation projects. INTACH should constitute an expert group to evaluate strategies and make recommendations for funding; and lobby with policy makers to create a financial regime to encourage and reward good heritage management practices. — (Courtesy: *Virasat*, the journal of INTACH.)



- Till February 20:** An exhibition of sculpture by Nupur Chatterjee. (At Apparao Galleries.)
- Till February 21:** Crafts Council of India's handicraft exhibition and an art exhibition by Uma Dayanidhi. (At Lalit Kala Akademi.)
- Till February 21:** An exhibition of the work of artist V. Anamika (at Alliance Francaise).
- February 24:** *Hitesvara*, an evening of music with U. Shrinivas, Shankar Mahadevan, Sivamani and Zakir Hussain, in aid of medicare for the underprivileged in rural areas. (At Music Academy, 6.30 p.m.)
- February 26:** A lecture on *Innovative Services of a Special Library* by Dr. Rafael Ball, Central Library of Research Centre, Julich, Germany. (At Department of Informa-

- tion Science, University of Madras, 4 p.m.)
- February 27:** A music concert by the choir of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi, conducted by Madhup Mudgal. (At Kalakshetra.)
- Till February 28:** *Vasantha Vizha* – annual children's mela with bullock cart rides, shadow puppets and special activities (at DakshinaChitra).
- Till February 28:** Paintings and photographs by Palaniappan. (At Apparao Galleries.)
- February 28:** Violin concert by T.N. Krishnan. (At Kalakshetra.)
- February 24-March 2:** *Australian Handicrafts*, embroidery and handicrafts from Australia. (At Lalit Kala Akademi.)
- Till March 3:** The work of artist Sudip Roy. (At Artworld.)

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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 2006-07 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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New finds compensate for T.N. disappointing

There's no need to feel despondent that the Tamil Nadu Trophy cricket team plummeted to unexpectedly low levels in the Ranji Trophy Super League group. The team was distinctly unlucky from its first game against New Delhi. Luck rather than performance deserted the side.

The selectors should be lauded for spotting some promising talent which is bound to make the side a much stronger outfit in the next couple of years.

Former Indian opener and State skipper, W.V. Raman, now the team coach, was given a team that was undergoing a transformation similar to what happened in the mid-1960s when the then Madras team was bereft of stars like its captain and Indian all-rounder, A.G. Kripal Singh. Captaincy was thrust on wicket-keeper P.K. Belliappa and he inherited a virtually raw Madras University team that had several promising players who had enabled it to remain at the top in the All-India Rohinton Baria tournament.

This past season's virtually new-look Tamil Nadu team was captained by S. Badrinath. With the exodus of the likes of Sadagopan Ramesh and Sridharan Sriram, India paceman L. Balaji rendered unfit through a back injury, and the possibility of Hemang Badani's shift to Rajasthan, it faced uncertainly right from the beginning. Badani later rescinded his decision, but his form was none too good.

Veteran off-spinner Aashish

Kapoor, who reaped a rich harvest of wickets in the local league, for some strange reason was unable to reproduce that form in the Ranji games till the last one against Baroda. Left-arm spinner R. Ramkumar, one of the finest left-arm spinners in the State, disappeared into oblivion and so too paceman M.R. Srinivas.

● by
BHASKERAN THOMAS

All this did not dampen the spirit of the team. It fought hard and Badrinath led by personal example, scoring 136 in the first match against Delhi, an impressive 69 against Haryana and a dazzling 89 against the fancied Baroda team. He also had useful scores against Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. The outright defeat against the last-named team placed Tamil Nadu in the piquant situation of being relegated to the Plate Division of the Ranji tournament.

The batting finds of the season were M. Vijay, R. Prasanna and wicket-keeper M. Vikram. Vijay has the potential to become an Indian opener in the not too distant future, going by his string of good scores. He began with 59 and 38 in his debut game against Delhi, scored a massive 179 against Andhra, 34 and 32 not out against Haryana, and a splendid 121 against Baroda which helped Tamil Nadu considerably.

Ramaswamy Prasanna, who made his debut for Tripura in the East Zone during the 2004-05 season, returned to play for his home State this season. He

started off with a 'duck' in his first Ranji game for Tamil Nadu, against Haryana, but then scored 89 against Saurashtra, 134 against Uttar Pradesh, and 39 and 59 against Karnataka.

Ravichandran Ashwin, the off-spinner, looks to be the elusive replacement that the State has been looking for since S. Venkataraghavan's retirement from the game in the 1980s. His performances in the just-concluded First Division League proved to be no flash in the pan and his entry into the senior side certainly lent an edge to the attack which for long had been dependent on two left-arm spinners. He made his debut against Haryana in the third game of the Super League and started off with 4 for 93 and two for 55.

From then on he went on to bigger performances. He nearly won for Tamil Nadu the crucial game against last year's Ranji Champions Uttar Pradesh, when he took 6 for 128 and 5 for 23. Suresh Raina's superb 134 and skipper Moham-med Kaif's 88 took the game away from Tamil Nadu and cost the team two valuable points. But at one stage, Ashwin, who also scored an unbeaten 42, had Uttar Pradesh gasping to avoid defeat at 100 for seven in its second innings. In the game that Tamil Nadu lost to arch-rivals Karnataka, Ashwin made 46 and bagged three wickets.

Ashwin's five for 65 demolished Baroda's hopes of a big total in the first innings and helped his team restrict the visitors to 263. Then Vijay and



R. Ashwin, selected Indian bowler of the year. This article had been written before that selection.

captain Badrinath helped Tamil Nadu gain the vital lead. His second six-wicket haul conceding just 64 runs in Baroda's second innings paved the way for the home side to gain an outright win and four valuable points. This effort prevented Tamil Nadu being relegated to the Plate Division.

Much was expected of India Under-19 paceman Vijayakumar Yomahesh, but he was a bit of a disappointment, possibly because he lacked support at the opposite end. It is said that fast bowlers hunt in pairs and Balaji was successful because of Srinivas at the other end. Jesuraj and D.T. Kumaran somehow failed to live up to their earlier promise.

Opener S. Anirudha was unlucky to lose his place against Baroda despite an 86 against Uttar Pradesh and 56 against Saurashtra. His twin failure

against Karnataka cost him his place. But Anirudha has represented the country with aplomb at the Under-19 level and should soon bounce back. None can easily forget his brave effort as a 17-year-old, when he scored 32 against one of England's fastest and most accurate bowlers, Simon Jones, at Chepauk.

Among the veterans, Sridharan Sharath scored a brilliant 109 against Saurashtra in his 100th Ranji game and brought pride to his team. Wicketkeeper M. Vikram made a promising debut against Delhi and also scored 52. Strangely, he later lost out to K. Varun Kumar. I wonder what happened to that agile keeper Peston Matthews who showed much promise in the league circuit. It was a pity that Indian wicketkeeper Dinesh Kaarthick was available only for the last game, against Baroda, when he was unfortunately dismissed cheaply.

It's good news that skipper Badrinath's name figures among the 30 probables chosen for the 2007 World Cup. The TNCA would do well to groom Badrinath, Ashwin and Vijay as future candidates for Indian teams. They have the potential to replace many of the seniors who are sure to hang up their boots after the World Cup. — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. £ 6.7 billion; 2. Stonehenge; 3. Five minutes, to indicate growing concerns about the global nuclear threat; 4. Space Capsule Recovery Experiment (SRE-1); 5. Jimmy Carter; 6. Windows Vista; 7. Roger Federer and Serena Williams; 8. The cruise ship *Queen Elizabeth 2*; 9. Jermaine Jackson, brother of Michael Jackson; 10. Ford.

* * *

11. Revathi; 12. Servarayan range in the Eastern Ghats; 13. *Porulathikaaram*. They are the three chapters of *Tolkappiyam*; 14. *Cheraman Kadali*; 15. Corporation of Chennai; 16. Failing to latch on to a simple catch. The term could mean the person also; 17. Bertrand-François Mahé de La Bourdonnais; 18. Kulithalai; 19. Sivaganga; 20. Rajapalayam.

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