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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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INSIDE

A blot on the medical capital

The recent episode in Chennai where the son of a cancer patient stabbed a doctor repeatedly just because he felt the treatment was not proper has exposed the risks that the medical fraternity faces on a routine basis. That this should have happened in our city which historically has been a centre for medicine and is indeed considered one of the medical capitals of the world is doubly shocking. It is a blot on Chennai's face that the city and its administration will do well to ponder over and come up with corrective measures.

The General Hospital where Chennai's medical journey began.

● by Sriram V.

The incident in question happened at the Government-run Super Speciality Hospital in Guindy. The patient was in a critical condition and her son felt the treatment was responsible for it. He entered into an argument with the doctor and in a fit of rage whipped out a knife and stabbed the latter several times in the neck. The victim was himself suffering from medical conditions which aggravated his injuries, and he was admitted in a critical state at the same hospital's ICU. The assailant has been arrested.

With that the law will take its own course. But what has happened is an indication of a

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Please Bear With Us

The *Madras Musings* postal list has had some problems because of which the last two issues have been mailed to addresses that were in our database two years ago. Consequently, many of those who have already notified us of change of address and to which we have been mailing since, have now got the magazine delivered to your old address. To these we can only say they are in august company for your deputy editor too had his copies delivered to his old address. We also seem to have resurrected some subscribers who have passed away. This may have kindled sad memories among their immediate family members when a copy addressed to their deceased relatives was delivered. We apologise for the same. We should have overcome this problem in a few weeks from now. In the meanwhile, please bear with us.

Notification of apartment development rules paves the way for residential benefits

In a much-welcome move, the Government of Tamil Nadu recently notified the Tamil Nadu Apartment Ownership Act which clarifies the guidelines under which ageing apartment buildings can be redeveloped. Under the new rules, apartment owners must establish an association with at least four owners. The association will be responsible to draft bylaws and register the body with the relevant authorities. A board of managers must then be formed, constituting at least one-third of the number of apartment owners; following which, a special general meeting should be convened to pass a resolution on the redevelopment of the apartment. The written consent of at least two-thirds of apartment owners will count as successful, allowing the residents to proceed with the next steps for redevelopment. This is a key development, for a small number of residents can no longer veto the plan and hold back redevelopment. In the case of dilapidated buildings that pose a hazard to residents, certification from the appropriate authority is sufficient to greenlight the project. Given that many apartments in the city show the strain of years gone by, Chennai can expect to see a flurry of construction over the next couple of years as old residential buildings choose to go in for redevelopment.

● by Varsha V.

Apart from revitalizing the city, redeveloping old buildings can work out very well for residents as well as the larger community.

For one, the old structure can be improved upon to offer a better quality of life to the residents. Ageing properties demand near-constant maintenance, and structural repairs can help extend the life of a property only by a few years - it only postpones the inevitable, for bigger issues like weakened walls and seepage cannot always be addressed satisfactorily. With redevelopment, residents will gain from a decrease in maintenance costs; further, they can plan to build new facilities that were absent from the old structure such as expanded parking spaces, wheelchair-friendly premises, intercom facilities, concealed plumbing and the like.

In fact, apartments with space at their disposal are exploring plans for upgraded conveniences such as a clubhouse, a gym or a walking path. Redevelopment also offers the opportunity to integrate eco-friendly and sustainable elements in their new apartment, including solar panels, better facilities for segregated waste management, or even simply the inclusion of more greenery on the premises. Residents can build a new home with all the desired modern facilities while benefiting from a surge in the

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A BLOT ON THE MEDICAL CAPITAL

(Continued from page 1)

deeper malaise- of increasing violence in the public sphere and a belief among youth in general in instant 'justice', with no thought as to the consequences. This is a direct outcome of the cinema craze that Chennai seems to revel in and films that extol heroes taking the law unto themselves and settling scores. If it were all so easy, then why do we need a due process of law with all its systems and machinery?

It is also high time that hospitals began counselling patients and more importantly, attendants of patients that medical treatment is not like fixing a malfunctioning piece of machinery. The human body is complicated and while medical science has advanced, there is still a lot that can happen which may seem inexplicable. Therefore to hold a doctor responsible, without proof and just based on emotional conjecture, is not correct. The young man in question seems to have assumed that his mother was critical because of the doctor and decided to take revenge. This is not behaviour of civilised society.

The Chief Minister and the Health Minister put out tweets condemning the assault. The medical fraternity lodged its protest. But what is needed is for role models from various fields that appeal to youth – film and sports in particular, to condemn the happening and express solidarity with the doctors. That way, hot heads may cool down somewhat and think twice before attempting something like this again.

The practitioners of medicine, like those in the teaching profession, are out there in the open. Both have of late come in for a lot of hate which is unwarranted. Assaults on both have become commonplace across India but for Chennai this is a first. And the city has the most at stake given that it is numero uno when it comes to medical services.

If doctors are not given suitable assurances, if action is not palpable and if patients and their attendants are not counselled on the need for responsible behaviour, good quality doctors and paramedics may think twice about coming to the city. That in turn will have a domino effect – a fall in medical standards and therefore a decline in medical tourism. Chennai's reputation as a medicare centre was not built overnight. It took centuries and yet, a reversal of that name and fame may not take very long especially with other centres developing fast. We need the healing touch, from the administration and those who inspire the youth.

Notification of apartment development rules paves the way for residential benefits

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value of their properties, especially those currently located in prime urban locations.

For another, Chennai stands to gain more houses for its citizens, and not just in its suburbs or outskirts, either. A considerable proportion of redevelopment involves the construction of additional flats in the apartment, courtesy of the increase in FSI (floor space index). This means that the city and community stand to benefit from an additional supply of reasonably affordable housing in premium locations.

There are, however, a few issues that still need to be addressed. For one, there is the real risk of delayed deliveries or abandoned projects from financial mismanagement on the part of the developer; unfortunately, a fairly common problem faced by many across the country. Chennai's apartment owners will benefit from educating themselves on the legal and financial best practices involved in managing housing redevelopment projects, especially considering that these tend to take at least two to three years to come to fruition.

There's also the problem of FSI violations. There are cases where old and ageing buildings have been constructed with floor space indexes that exceed their official approval. This poses a conundrum for apartment owners, for while some have flats within the official FSI, their neighbours have homes that are not part of the approved plan. There is little clarity on the resolution of these cases. In a conversation with *Citizen Matters*, M. Sadhanand, a Town Planning and Development Consultant recommends that the government establish a quicker grievance redressal mechanism. "In many cases, we have seen the apartment owners approaching the court for legal remedy and it takes years to resolve the case. A mechanism to resolve such complaints faster is necessary," he says.

Restroom, restless room

The Woman from Madras Musings recently attended a terrace party. It was a rather nice one, for there were many friends that she hadn't met in a long time. The food was delicious, and even the sky was fairly clear and had many stars. Everything was going swimmingly well until *WMM* had to answer nature's call.

The washroom was one of those state-of-the-art affairs. It was of the sort that *WMM* tends to panic in, for she finds new-fangled bathroom fittings very non-intuitive. Perhaps MM readers also have these experiences from time to time – moments of sheer despair in a bathroom at a hotel (or worse, someone's home) where the fittings are entirely alien and one blindly fiddles about with the knobs and buttons while praying to god that something goes right. The bathroom at this particular party was on another level altogether. It lit up the instant *WMM* walked in, indicating that it was fitted with motion-sensor lighting. It was a beautiful place, obviously designed by a professional hand. *WMM* felt the stirrings of trepidation and was soon proved right – she didn't know how to lock the door once it closed. She turned the lock this way and that, but no comforting click sounded. *WMM* had to give up after a while and spent the rest of the time in sheer terror that someone might walk in, all the while with one foot firmly against the door. She resorted to coughing loudly every few seconds, hoping that it would serve as an indication of occupation to those seeking to use the facilities. Then, things got worse. The lights went off – perhaps, *WMM* thought, the motion sensors required some movement to keep the bathroom lights on; and so it was that she found herself on a porcelain throne, loudly coughing and flailing her arms for sheer mercy. The only silver lining thus far was that the flush mechanism was blessedly familiar.

Then, it was time to wash the hands. The sink was quite capacious, but the tap was a revelation – instead of being affixed to the sink, it was suspended from the ceiling. It was quite a lovely fixture actually, arguably a piece of modern art in its own right. *WMM* appreciated it, but was also left mystified as to its secrets. A few moments of keen observation helped her identify a thingamabob on the countertop to be the lever that operated it. She turned it left first, then right; she tried swivelling it around, and at one point even tried pressing it like a button. But no matter what she did, water flowed in a thin, slow stream from the tap. *WMM* decided after some time that it was good enough to wash her hands in and that was that. It was after she exited that she realised that the door was mildly translucent – meaning that her shadowy antics were on full display to anyone standing outside. *WMM* waited for the prick of embarrassment, but it never came – she was among friends after all, and they knew full well that she was challenged (threatened, really) by most forms of plumbing, traditional or new. A friend later told *WMM* that the bathroom lock had in fact been broken earlier that evening, which *WMM* supposes could be the reason for the mischievous lights, too – maybe they're not motion sensor after all, but programmed to stay on as long as the bathroom was locked from inside. If true, that would admittedly be quite clever.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Unfortunately, *WMM*'s bad luck with plumbing didn't end that day. The very next evening saw her at a friend's home, where – as she soon discovered – the bathroom has a wonky flush that doesn't stop until some mysterious thingummy is pressed. *WMM* was unaware of this fact until she used it; she stared at the flush for a full twenty minutes before admitting that it showed no signs of stopping. She had to make a surreptitious phone call to the Better Half and summon him for help. *WMM* was then made the brunt of jokes and banter for the rest of the evening.

It will be some time before *WMM* can gather the courage to use the facilities anywhere but home.

Ulterior interiors

The Woman from Madras Musings wonders if MM readers have noticed how very ideal architectural designs are. Whether a villa by the beach or a highrise in the city, the proposed designs depict the building to be located in a fancy area surrounded by lush greenery and connected by smooth roads upon which ply fancy sedans. It's only when one visits the actual site that the reality makes itself known.

WMM and the BH are currently working with an interior designer for their home. The proposed themes are pretty indeed – no complaints there – but the chap keeps taking the liberty to add creative elements when depicting the view outside; there are bunches of happy, pink bougainvillea, winding vines of honeysuckle, soft golden sunlight streaming in the windows and the like. *WMM* feels it is her moral duty to constantly remind the BH that there is no hope of such landscape materializing outside the home – the windows will look bleakly upon a bland, concrete terrace where every evening a congregation of ladies regularly conduct washing exercises with near military dedication. There will be no bougainvillea or sparrows – instead, there will be clothes flapping away on clotheslines, messy lines of electrical wires, and dust rising from the traffic on the street.

There is a room that looks out on another neighbour's garden, where *WMM* has spotted mongooses gambolling about rather prettily. However, she was told by the designer – rather tersely, she thought – that though accurate, this is much harder to bring into a design mock up. Oh, well.

Work ethics

The Woman from Madras Musings was staring down the barrel of a very busy day. Thankfully, she had one particularly efficient chap in her team who was amenable to getting things done whether they were his responsibility or not. He buzzed about hither and thither like a bumblebee, completing tasks in less than half the time and coordinating with everyone else. *WMM* was feeling pretty pleased until a co-worker asked to see the chap's forehead. It seemed like a particularly strange request until he swept aside his hair to reveal an angry, red bump. It transpired that he had an accident on the way to work – his cab had been at the tail end of a pile-up at a traffic junction, and he had bruised his forehead in the incident.

WMM felt terrible for having given him so much work, some of which required physical effort. She asked him why he said nothing about this, and he replied something about wanting to be committed to work. Assuring him that health was another matter altogether, *WMM* shipped him off to the doctor. Thankfully, the wound was shallow and he returned beaming with a band-aid on his forehead.

– WMM

OUR READERS WRITE

Nalla Madras /Chennai

I was glad to receive the latest issue of *Madras Musings*, which contained interesting, informative, and motivating narratives about Chennai. I'd like to share with readers and other senior citizens that Chennai has transformed into a lovable city with neat & broad roads, beaches with lots of greenery, as well as clean bus stations, railways, parks and the like. Those who visit the city from November to January have many compliments to share, weather-wise and otherwise, too. The city's education and healthcare sectors – including facilities for yoga practice, pyramid meditation and dhyana centres – are to be celebrated. One classic example is the National Centre of Ageing at Guindy which has been established by the State and Central government under the Aayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana.

I love my Madras, my Chennai and my *Madras Musings*.

Lakshman Rao
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Untold Stories

It was really interesting and informative to go through your issue dated October 1-15, 2024. Yes, the Tamil Nadu government should learn from Colombo on flood management. Coming to SWD drainage, pedestrians are the worst hit, especially at places where the Metro work is on. It is more so at Luz Junction in Mylapore, where the traffic is diverted near Sanskrit college, via Mundakkanni Amman Koil Street, which is too narrow to cater to such heavy traffic. With no proper footpath available, it is the pedestrians, especially senior citizens, who find it too difficult to walk on this road. As averred by you, the planning of Chennai Metro Rail could have been better – not to inconvenience the residents of smaller roads, most of which are battered with potholes, filled with rain water. The unmarked speed breakers and uneven manholes add to our misery.

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Puliyodharai Missile – A Chepauk Memory* by V. Vijayasree. Apart from the Test match and ODI matches against Pakistan, we vividly remember the Tied Test against Australia. I was fortunate to watch the Test at Chepauk. It was a bold and sporting declaration by Allan Border at the 4th day overnight score of 170 for 5 to set a target of 348, and gave ample time for our team to score this in 90 overs, which was a daunting task at that time. But our openers, especially Kris Srikanth gave a rousing start along with Gavaskar, who scored 90 runs. Except Captain Kapil Dev, centurian of first innings, rest all performed well in their second innings. Hats off to Ravi Sastri for his knock of 48 in just 40 balls and his crucial decision to tie the score and allow Maninder Singh to score the one run needed for victory. Unfortunately he was given out LBW, by Umpire Raju to deny a victory for our team. Though the final day was interesting, right from ball one to the last ball, the behaviour of Tim Zoehrer and Greig Mathews took out the sheen. All these are etched in our memory.

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Chennai's public pays the price!

This refers to the article in your issue dated October 16 2024, about the inadequate facilities for the airshow at the Marina beach. Of course, this is an article by an armchair writer! There was no reason for the huge crowd to have struggled to watch the show. They could have comfortably remained at home and watched the show, as we had done. As the author himself suggests, "Entry should have been restricted to the maximum number that could be safely taken care of." An entry fee could have been collected, just as TTD does for devotees seeking darshan at Tirupati.

PS: I am hoping this will find a place in *Madras Musings*, as the periodical has a reputation for publishing contrary views, too!

Subramanian (M)
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Editor's Note: Reader Subramaniam seems to conveniently forget that five valuable lives were lost owing to shoddy planning of the infrastructure for the air show.

Website Comments

From Kottur to Kotturpuram – adding to the city's kaleidoscopic heritage
(Vol. XXXIV No. 14, November 1-15, 2024)

I am Raj Krishnan, a colleague of late S. Muthiah while he was working in TT Maps. I read your article on Kotturpuram, a well compiled one. I wish to inform you that Mr. S. Muthiah was also residing in Kotturpuram in the year 1985. If my memory is right, a torrential rain flooded his residence too. The famous singer D.K. Pattammal was a resident of Sriram Colony, in Sriramnagar and not in Kotturpuram. I had been to her house a number of times as one of her sons was a colleague of mine too.

Raj Krishnan
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Correction: D.K. Pattammal was indeed a resident of Kotturpuram in the final decades of her life, living in a bungalow on Gandhi Mandapam Road. She lived prior to that at Srinagar Colony, Saidapet and not Sriram Nagar as reader Raj Krishna writes.

– The Editor

* * *

How sad to see the Adyar so polluted.

Ramu
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Every day in the park
(Vol. XXXIV No. 14, November 1-15, 2024)

When I consulted Dr. Biswas, he turned out to be a busy and serious person juggling with many activities. But this article shows the humorous side of him and his sharp eyes.

Ramanathan PK
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Memories of Luz Church Road
(Vol. XXXII No. 9, August 16-31, 2022)

Very well written. Good nostalgia. As the current secretary of The Mylapore Club, enjoyed reading it.

K Shivakumar
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***Kalaimagal*, the literary Tamil monthly turns 90**
(Vol. XXXII No. 4, June 1-15, 2022)

My father-in-law Sri. S. Srinivasan, was working in the *Kalaimagal* office. Immediately after my marriage, when he learnt that I am passionate about art, he took me to his office one day and was introduced to Sri. Gopulu who was there that day. It was so overwhelming that I was wonderstruck and speechless; I looked upon Gopulu, Maniam, Silpi and others as my manaseega gurus. I find it hard to express my feelings in words even today. Namaskarams to them and your publication for maintaining the purity of jounalism even now. Best wishes. By the way, I became a full-fledged artist after my children left the nest, and still continue in the profession at 72, thanks to your as well as other magazines, our only source of good materials to read and awesome artists to illustrate.

Gowri
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Vincent's Jottings

A recent Sunday evening had me at two events. Both in Mylapore. Both at sabha halls. Back to back.

One was a play; the other a felicitation and a dance concert. I was checking out these performances, as I do across the city; this helps me choose some for the annual Mylapore Festival we hold every January in the precincts of Sri Kapali Temple. The first call was at the MFAC sabha hall. Dummies Drama, which has some successful plays to its credit, was staging two plays, back to back. Both plays had had a good run and the Sunday shows, I gathered were for some fund-raising effort.

Five minutes to the curtain raise, there were some 260 odd people. It was a 5 p.m. show. I noticed lots of senior couples streaming in. Ten minutes into the play, *Payanam*, and the hall had some 500 plus people. And more people kept coming in. The play is about a decade old, and yet remains relevant to the day. It is about the journeys of some seven people, all with an American connect; their delayed flights put them all in the lounge room of a Dubai airport, and their lives and outlooks unfold through the story.

The anecdotes resonated with the audience. Many laughed, some clapped lightly, some guffawed too. The stage was reflecting their lives, or of lives they knew too well. Since Mylapore is the hub of concerts and drama, most theatre artistes tune their scripts to be Mylaporean. *Payanam* too was just that. But did rasikas have a good time, laugh at all the slips and hiccups and go home to talk about it over tiffin or did some lines make them rethink the real life? Impact their outlook, their attitude?

And as I surveyed the packed hall as the curtains came down on Play One that evening, I just felt all over again that people must pay for music and theatre and all the rest today. Even one hundred rupees for a package by the Dummies that evening. Though a fair price would be Rs. 250 or Rs. 300.

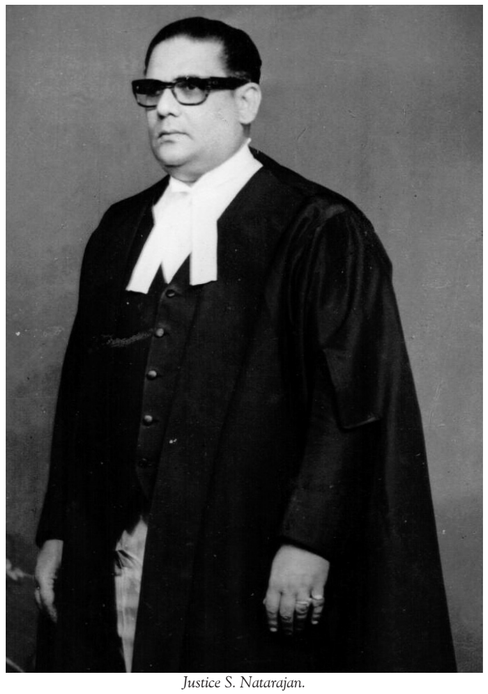
My second stop was at Narada Gana Sabha's hall. Feted artiste Sudha Raghunathan's Foundation was 25 and was decorating two people and awarding support to some NGOs that evening. I wanted to catch the dance production – Kallazhagar. Inside, it was a slow-roll event. Delayed to start with, it went on and on; this should have been a 45-minute crisp first section. The dance started at 8.10 pm. Very delayed. Imagine the state of the artistes who had been at the venue since noon. Why do artistes dampen the spirits of artistes? I am told Sudha Raghunathan apologised to the dancers.

Appreciate this. But can organisers, sabha heads and guest speakers be snappy at the mike. And make way for the artistes. The stage is theirs.

Vincent D'Souza
Mylapore Times

A Judge recalls Madras and its High Court

The family of Justice S. Natarajan (1924 -2014) is celebrating the centenary of his birth. A commemorative volume, with tributes from many prominent personalities has been released and in it is also included his autobiography, originally published as *Family History and Rambling Reminiscences* in 2010. The learned Judge, whose career in law comprised advocacy, magistracy, and serving on the Bench in the High Court and Supreme Court, makes for interesting reading. We publish below excerpts relevant to the city, with the kind permission of his family.



Justice S. Natarajan.

Madras during WW II

Justice Natarajan could not have chosen a more interesting time to move to Madras, living through the Second World War, the Freedom Struggle, and the torrential monsoons of 1943. He recalls their impact –

"At Loyola College, I joined the hostel and the University Training Corps (UTC). My joining the UTC benefited me a lot. We used to go for weekly parades and route marches for 8 to 12 miles. All that gave me good stamina and discipline. I was a Company Clerk with the rank of Corporal and in the second year I was made Provost Sergeant for the Annual Camp.

"The years 1941 to 1943, when I did my B.A. Degree course, were eventful. The Second World War (1939-1945) was in full swing. Due to the fear of air raids, we had blackouts, and air-raid shelters were dug. To alert people, there used to be air-raid warning sirens. If these sounded, people were expected to take cover in the air-raid shelters to escape the danger of aerial bomb attacks. All the streetlights were fully covered and were therefore really dim. Petrol was rationed. We had only a few taxis and hand-pulled rickshaws. Everywhere, one could see people queuing up for purchase of ration articles like rice, sugar, kerosene, etc., But even in those days of scarcity of essentials, the Loyola College authorities provided good and sumptuous food, including sweets, for the hostel inmates.

"The Independence Movement was in full swing as well, and Gandhiji announced the Quit India Movement in August, 1942. Because of the war scare, the Quit India Movement, and the UTC camps, I did not write the quarterly, half-yearly examinations in both years or the annual examination in the first year. I wrote the University examination only at the end of the second year.

"For mofussil students coming to Madras from their respective places, to join the college and return home after it closed was a nightmarish experience because the trains were so crowded that the students were often forced to travel seated all through the night, and sometimes travel even standing for long distances.

"The Professors in the Loyola College were eminent people. Prof. A.L.Krishnan, and Prof. Balakrishnan of the English Dept., Prof. L.N.Govindarajan (in the Economics Dept.,), Prof. Appadurai in the Politics Dept., were all well known."

Justice Natarajan also had the advantage of his sister Sivagami and her husband being in the city as his local guardians. He found time to visit them at No. 10, North Mada Street, Mylapore, which was then a locality where the aristocratic Mudaliars lived, many of them very active in law and politics. Their names would read like the Who's Who of the time. Perhaps they influenced Justice Natarajan, who made up his mind to qualify in law after he had completed his B.A. Degree. This involved a wait of six months, after which he joined the Law College, Madras, at its historic campus at the end of Broadway, along the Esplanade.

Loyola college early views.

At the Law College

"In those days, joining the Law College was not a difficult matter. In fact, admissions used to go on till the end of August. The then Principal of the Law College Dr. Krishna Menon used to deliver the first lecture for the new entrants, and he would start his lecture with the following words:

"I know, gentlemen, that most of you are here because you cannot be anywhere else. Some of you would have sought admission in the Medical College, some in the Engineering College, and some even in the Agricultural College, but having failed to get admission there, you have all come here."

"Then he used to tell the students what an important, noble and learned profession the legal profession was and how the students must do the Law Degree Course and conduct themselves with dignity and decorum in the profession. His opening remarks were true in the case of most of the students because many joined the Law College as they could not join any other professional college. Of course, there were some students who came from families of lawyers and they were therefore interested in joining the Law College and getting a Law Degree so that they could become lawyers and take over the offices and established clientele of their father, uncle, etc.

"The Law Degree Course was then of a two-year duration, with public examinations at the end of each year. The first-year examination was called the Fellow-of-Laws Examination, and the second-year examination was called the Bachelor-of-Law Examination. Classes would be held only for three hours per day; usually from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, with three periods of one hour each. Except for the Principal, Vice Principal, and one or two other full-time Professors, the other lecturers in the Law College were all part-time. They were Advocates who practised in the High Court. They would deliver lectures during their allotted periods and then go to the High Court to attend to their work there. The Principal, Dr. K. Krishna Menon, was a Doctor of Civil Laws, a high law degree obtained from the Oxford University. The Vice-Principal, Govindarajulu, was an authority on Criminal Law. He was small in stature, but he was a strict disciplinarian, and the students dared not play the fool with him. Then we had Professor Venkatasubramania Iyer, a great authority on Hindu Law with mastery of English language and fluency of expression. His lectures would make the students sit spellbound and listen to him with rapt attention. He would refer to decisions of the High Courts in India and the Privy Council in England without reference to any notes but with remarkable accuracy and clarity. The Supreme Court of India came to be formed after we attained Independence and framed a Constitution for ourselves. Hence, all appeals against judgements of High Courts had to be filed then in the Privy Council alone.

I must confess that except for a few, most of the Law College students were not dedicated students. In fact, they used to be frequently absent from classes. The Law College building, situated in the campus of the High Court, is a heritage structure. The classrooms were of a gallery pattern. Most of the students used to take the back row of seats and after answering the roll call for attendance, they would slip out. Worse than that, there was a practice among some students present in the classroom to give proxy attendance for their absentee friends at the time of roll call. Excepting the Vice Principal and one or two other lecturers, the others would not mind students giving proxy attendance.

"My two years of law study passed happily. All those students who passed the first- and the second-year public examinations became Law Graduates and were eligible to join the legal profession after doing an apprenticeship course for one year under a Senior and enrolling at the High Court.

"At the time, when I did my Law Course, the Law College building had been commandeered by the Military authorities for accommodating the defence personnel stationed at Chennai. Therefore, the Law College was shifted to the Holy Angels Convent in Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar. I used to joke, telling people that I did my Law Degree Course in a girls' school and not at the Law College."

When Hostel Accommodation was in Short Supply

"I must also refer to my place of stay when I did my Law Degree Course. The Law College has a hostel known as the University Union. It was situated in Broadway. On account of the Army authorities taking over the Pachayappa College Hostel as well for their requirements, a section of students from the Pachayappa College Hostel were given rooms in the University Union. When I joined the Law College in 1944, I found that the University Union was fully occupied by senior students of the Law College and by the students of the Pachayappa College. Not only I, but my cousin Palani Kanakasabapathi, my friends N. Ramalingam from Salem, and Doraiswamy (nephew of Former Minister Mr. C. Subramaniam), were all left high and dry for accommodation. After much searching, we found a newly built house on Nungambakkam High Road which was vacant. We took it on rent. We brought a cook from Salem and ran a mess for ourselves. The beauty was that the building was not electrified, so we had to make do with hurricane lanterns. Kerosene for hurricane lamps was in short supply and was a rationed commodity. Sivagami, living in Mylapore, somehow managed to get extra kerosene and would give it to us for our use. The absence of electric lights was a good excuse for us not to study our books at night. What little study we did was in the afternoons after returning from college and before dusk.

"All of us passed the first year Law Examination, and after the summer holidays we all came back to Madras to join the second year Law Course. Things had not changed even though the War came to an end in 1945. The Law College continued to function in Holy Angels Convent. The University Union hostel was not available, and so we had to find accommodation for ourselves again. The un-electrified house in Nungambakkam was not available because the owner had occupied it. We therefore secured rooms in a building called Bashya Sadan, on one of the streets in Triplicane. We used to have our food in hotels, and generally ate at the famous Coimbatore Krishna Iyer Hotel, which was nearby. It was a small but homely place. Only three or four items would be prepared, like idli, oothappam and pongal with sambar and chutney in the mornings. The hotel would close at 10:00 or 10:30 am, and reopen at 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. In addition to the above said items, the hotel would also serve us good bhajjis and one or two other snacks. The food was very wholesome and tasty. On Sundays, the hotel would make badam halwa made out of pure ghee and almonds, which was so famous that people from T. Nagar, George Town, etc., would come to the hotel specially to buy it.

Madras Law College.

Appointment as Chief Presidency Magistrate, Madras

"By August, 1969, I had completed four years of service as District Judge at Coimbatore. At that time, Justice Veeraswamy took over as the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court. His first visit to a mofussil station was Coimbatore, and we made elaborate arrangements to receive him and make his stay comfortable. So perfect were the arrangements and so successful were all the functions attended by him that the Chief Justice complimented me on my good work on the judicial side as well as in organising functions. He then told me that on account of the retirement age of District Judges being reduced to 55 from 58, a number of posts held by Senior District Judges would fall vacant, one of them being that of the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Madras (CPM). This was a coveted post. Only very Senior Judges held that office. The Commissioner of Police, the Commissioner of Madras Corporation, the Collector of Customs, the Collector of Central Excise, the Commissioner of Income Tax, and the General Manager, Southern Railways, all had to be in close touch with the Chief Presidency Magistrate, because cases filed by the Police and other departments used to come before this office. The car driver for the CPM was a Police Driver. Besides this, two police orderlies were posted to do office work and household duties at the CPM's house. Many persons who held the post of CPM had later become Judges of the High Court.

"I told the Chief Justice that I would like to serve in Coimbatore till the summer of 1970, but this was turned down, and I had to go over to Madras as early as possible. The formal orders of transfer came about three weeks later, but in the meanwhile the news of my posting to Madras became known to everyone. Invitations started pouring in for me and my wife from friends and relations and official circles for dinners, lunches, breakfasts, and tea. We were overwhelmed by the spontaneous manifestation of regard and affection for us by all sections of people.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

Kottur – The Core of Kotturpuram

Last fortnight we looked at the landmarks in Kotturpuram that help us trace the heritage of that upmarket housing district. We now turn to Kottur, the ancient village from where the name Kotturpuram evolved.

For the record, Kottur is now a warren of streets at the southern end of Kotturpuram, bound by Sardar Patel Road and the Adyar river. But in ancient times it was a busy administrative headquarters. An inscription in the Dandiswara temple in Velachery dating to the 10th century records the place as being within Kotturnadu in Puliyur Kottam. This takes us to the reign of Sundara Chola Parantaka II. In his *The Early History of the Madras Region*, Prof K.V. Raman states that many inscriptions can be seen relating to Kottur prior to the 13th century. That gives us an idea of the antiquity of the place.

However, there is nothing like going to a locality to see for ourselves. Kottur's streets preserve at least in name their village character. There are for instance Naidu and Yathaval Streets, surviving despite the ban on caste names. They indicate to us the predominantly Vaishnavite nature of the village

in olden times. As though to reinforce this, we have a Prasanna Venkateswara Swami Temple in the centre of this settlement. And surrounding the locality are various guardian deities. But perhaps even older than all of these is a Sivalinga, unearthed some years ago and now housed in a makeshift shelter facing the Prasanna Venkateswara shrine. The Linga is now named Koteswarar after Kottur but we do not have any idea as to what it was consecrated as, and the whereabouts of the temple in which it stood. It is very likely that under the Cholas, Kottur was a Shaivite village.

Today, it is the Vishnu temple that dominates. It is dated to the 16th century based on the idol and the pillars in the sanctum. There is also an inscription carefully preserved but practically undecipherable, at the base of the north wall of the sanctum. Lord Prasanna Venkateswara is in standing posture in the middle of what seems to have been a simple shrine – six pillars fronting the garbhagriha and all at one time probably open, to provide ventilation but now walled in. The spaces that have come

● by
Sriram V.

up on the sides owing to the raising of walls have become niches for the Goddess and other deities. Fronting the shrine is a small sanctum to Garuda. This in turn has to its rear a Vijayanagar-era stone pillar or deepasthambha. That more or less completes the older parts of the temple, which has a large, spacious courtyard. Much of the recent restoration of the precinct is by the munificence of a community that identifies itself as Agni Kula Kshatriya on the stone slabs. They are as per Government records, a variant of the Vanniyar community. The upkeep of the temple is truly excellent.

Facing the entire temple and across a narrow street is a Hanuman temple. It seems to have at one time been a part of the same complex. That the temple had extensive lands in the area in the past is made clear by HR&CE boundary stones at some distance away. But as all the intervening space is built up it is quite likely that there has been considerable encroachment.

The guardian deities of Kottur are well represented by shrines. There are temples to Thulukkanathamman, Peeli Amman, Ellai Amman and Ponni Amman. The last named, is very near to Lake View Road which is to be expected, as Ponni Amman is said to protect water bodies. But of lake in Kottur there is none now though the road remembers it by name. Thulukkanathamman here is prefixed by the word Dandu, indicating that Her worship here is linked to an army camp, probably that of the Nawab of Arcot.

In Yathaval Street is a temple to Lord Venugopala. This was once a simple bhajana mandiram – a place where the music-loving Yadava community gathered to sing of their Lord. This is now upgraded into a proper shrine. Each year in the month of Purattasi (Sep/Oct), this temple has a festival.

Pondicherry Street is a short stretch that begins nowhere and ends nowhere – that is strictly not true, for it starts from Teacher's Colony and peters out by the Adyar. The name is a mystery. It probably is a remnant of what a PWD minute dating to 1862 speaks of as "the old coast road from Madras to Pondicherry which is almost obliterated and only here and there can traces of the old line be seen by the trees that formed the avenue." That Pondicherry Street is by the Adyar coast is undeniable. Moreover, writing of the route to Fort St George, Ananda Ranga Pillai in his diary states that it is along the Adyar. It is very likely that the Pondicherry Street here is part of what was once a busy highway. Sadly, what is left also may soon vanish. Already, a part of Pondicherry Street is now RS Sridhar Road, after a one time MLA.

By the side of the Adyar River, in Kottur, is South Lock Street. This is where the Buckingham Canal connects with the Adyar, becomes a part of it, and then on the opposite bank emerges as the South Canal and proceeds all the way to Cuddalore. The canal as we know, cuts across both the rivers of the city – it intersects the Cooum behind the University of Madras and the Adyar at Kottur. Both locations required locks to balance tidal variations in water flow. The Northern Lock was behind the University and can still be seen from what was once known as ME Grant Duff Bridge on Adams Road/Sivananda Salai. The South Lock was in Kottur but it survives no longer though it is commemorated in name. Ironically, the North Lock survives but the Lock Nagar there is now named after Navalar Nedunchezhiyan!

And so we come to the end of our heritage tour of Kottur/Kotturpuram. Superficially it all seems modern city but scratch the surface and there you have its antiquity. There may be a lot more waiting to be discovered.

Prasanna Venkateswara Swami Temple.

Thulukanathamman Temple.

The Walk Group outside the Bhajana Mandiram.

This article owes much to the following sources:

1. *The Early History of The Madras Region* by Prof K.V. Raman, The CP Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation, Chennai, 2008.
2. *Vishnu Temples of South India*, Vol III, by Dr. Chithra Madhavan, Chennai, 2010.

How Chennai became an auto hub

Business Houses of the South
by
Sushila Ravindranath

A recent report that Ford, which had exited India a couple of years ago, is planning to start manufacturing again in its Chennai plant at Sriperumpudur, has brought back exciting memories of the mid 1990s.

It was Maruti, with its Suzuki tie-up, that first made a difference, with its launch of the 800 in the 1980s. That plant was set up in Haryana. In 1994, after liberalisation, the government of India finally decided to let multinational automobile manufacturers into the country. It seems unbelievable now, but we were stuck with the cumbersome Ambassadors and Premier Padminis. Foreign technology was not allowed. It was those do-it-yourself, import substitution days.

To add insult to injury, one had to wait for years to get these cars. For a country of our size and population we were not even producing one lakh cars a year. Most large auto manufacturers were waiting to enter India.

For various historic reasons, Chennai was the leading manufacturer of automobile components in the country. There were always expectations that one of these people would start making automobiles when the time was right. However, none of them showed any interest. It was left to Ford, the American company, to sow the seeds for Chennai becoming a major automobile hub in the country .

Ford initially tied up with the Mahindras to enter India. Mahindra Ford was the largest of the new automobile projects which came up at that time. There was much excitement surrounding this. Global experience showed that setting up an automobile factory immediately improved the economic prospects of the area.

All the states with manufacturing background started courting Ford and the Mahindras. It was assumed that as the Mahindra base was Maharashtra and as the state was the country's major industrial hub, the project would automatically go there. Gujarat and Delhi were the other contenders.

After almost a year of sheer persistence, Tamil Nadu pulled off what was considered a near impossible feat. The state government signed an MOU with both Ford and Mahindras to set up an automobile plant at Maraimalai Nagar. At that time (1995) the investment was around Rs 1,500 crore which was considered huge. This is not counting the many ancillary plants which sprang up around the unit.

This was the then chief minister Jayalalithaa's most triumphant moment. To quote from my book *Surge*, "The ecstatic bureaucracy gave chief minister Jayalalithaa full marks for her initiative in bringing the project to the state". It was also a rare instance of co-operation between the state government and the private sector. Again to quote from *Surge* "The then Industry Secretary, C. Ramachandran, asked Suresh Krishna, of the TVS group to talk to his old friend and Mahindra Chairman Keshub Mahindra, to accept the location. After all it was Mahindra who brought Ford to India.

The state needed an automobile project as Tamil Nadu had not attracted large investment in decades. Chennai was not the first choice as Ford felt the market was in the West and the North."

The state launched an all-out marketing effort unheard of before. To quote Ramachandran again, "We put together a highly professional multimedia presentation on the state which made a very favourable first impression. Then Ford sent a 200 query questionnaire covering all aspects of Chennai like climatic condition, social conditions and so on.

When all this was going on, the South Korean giant Hyundai had already opted for Chennai as its entry point. It had to choose between Chennai and Pune. When the company did a thorough market survey, it decided on Chennai as it had a port. According to Korean sources, Tamil Nadu at that time had 100 engineering colleges, the state offered impressive human resources, and South Indians were seen as more hard working than North Indians."

The South Koreans do not mingle unlike the Westerners. They have created their own enclave in Sriperumbudur, where the Hyundai factory is located. Many Korean restaurants have come up in the suburbs. Hyundai Motors India was established in 1996 in Irungattukottai, near Chennai with an investment of over $600 million. Today it is the second largest car manufacturer in the country. When Hyundai came to India, it said it wanted to make India a global hub for the export of its cars. It has kept up its word.

After Ford and Hyundai came to Chennai, car makers like Renault Nissan, BMW, and others flocked to the city making it an automobile hub of the country. Tata Motors has in March pledged to invest Rs 9,000 crore for a car manufacturing unit in Ranipet district near Chennai.

Chennai has an annual capacity to produce 1,380,000 cars and 361,000 commercial vehicles. This means that the city can produce three cars every minute and one commercial vehicle every 75 seconds. We have truly arrived.

In a matter of three decades our own Chennai has emerged as one of the largest automobile clusters in the world.

Automobile production line. Picture courtesy: The Hindu.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Readers,

Please email all your letters, comments, additional remarks, brickbats and bouquets to editor@madrasmusings.com

– THE EDITOR

The Accidental Chennaite

On Madras Day this year, Kirty Kochar (neé Chopra), the daughter of famed Choreographer Anil Kumar Chopra, remembered her father.

It would not be wrong to call my father A.K. Chopra the Father of Choreography in the South Indian film industry. He was among the pioneers who gave meaning to film dances in Madras. In 1946, he came to Gemini Studios with his Guru – the great Uday Shankar – to shoot for the film *Kalpana*, in which he assisted as well as danced. However, the devastating Partition followed and his affluent family from Pakistan lost everything. It was S.S. Vasan of Gemini Studios who noticed his potential and offered him a permanent job for a salary of Rs. 500, a princely sum at that time. His passion for classical dancing was superseded by material needs and he stayed on in Madras. His time at Gemini Studios saw him giving hit after hit for both Tamil and Hindi films produced under its banner.

He co-choreographed the iconic Drum Dance, which even today is considered the epitome of dance choreography in films. He has worked with every superstar hailing from the south, from the great Sivaji Ganesan to the celebrated Rajinikanth. His personal favourite, however, was the versatile Kamal Haasan. My father's dances were applauded in films like *Anbe Vaa*, *Athey Kangal*, and so many others. He made MGR do the Bhangra in *Kudiruntha Koil* and the Twist in *Anbe Vaa*. His range was expansive and included light classical, the folksy Thapankuthu (which he performed himself in *Enga Veetu Mahalaxmi*) as well as the Western styles. He wholeheartedly adapted himself to Madras and its vibrant culture and refused offers to shift to Bollywood despite their number. The film industry in Madras too patronised him, never letting him feel like an outsider. The only wounding cut was that his contribution to Jayalalithaa's film career was never recognised. He was her dance teacher since the time she was twelve, and gave her the first break in AVM's *Man Mauji* in which he composed a beautiful Radha Krishna dance.

He was always clad in a spotless kurta pyjama, his only luxury being the gold buttons that he wore. I remember that Sivaji Ganesan liked the buttons so much that he borrowed them to make a replica for himself. His last movie was *Meendum Kokila*, a Kamal Haasan and Sridevi starter; his composition for the song *Radha Radha Nee Enge* was much appreciated. He was too sick to do movies after that. It would not be wrong to say that he left this world with his dancing shoes on.

– Kirty Kochar

Associate Editor's note: With thanks to Mohan Gopalakrishnan who posted the story on social media and kindly provided permission to carry it in *Madras Musings*.

A Report on the first ever Buchi Babu Nayudu Tournament (1909)

– Annotated by Karthik A Bhatt

The Buchi Babu Tournament has traditionally occupied an important place in the Indian cricket calendar. Conducted in the memory of Buchi Babu Nayudu, considered the father of organized cricket in Madras, it was initially played amongst local cricket clubs, before becoming an invitational tournament in the 1960s featuring teams (corporates and others) from outside the State as well. Despite its lack of First-Class status, the tournament (which was initially conducted by the Madras United Club before being handed over to the Madras (later TN) Cricket Association) nevertheless has a hoary past, with top cricketers such as Sunil Gavaskar, Krishnamachari Srikkanth, Kapil Dev to name a few and several domestic stalwarts participating. This year's edition saw the likes of Ishan Kishan, Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar Yadav turn out for their respective State sides. Usually held in August-September, it was a sort of a curtain raiser for the domestic season, with several States sending their full-strength sides as a build-up to the season ahead. After a long run of more than four decades, the tournament's run came to a halt in 2018, as it became increasingly difficult to find a place for it in an increasingly crowded cricketing calendar. It was revived in 2023.

Recently, this contributor came across a report of the first ever edition of the tournament, held in 1909. It was a contest that was held amongst twelve local clubs, viz., Aryan CC (M.A.U), Pickwick Cricket Club (PCC), Queen's Jubilee Cricket Club (Q.C.C), Mylapore CC, Madras United Club, Friends CC, Trades Union (TUC), Ordnance CC, Telegraph CC, Pudupakkam CC, Saidapet CC and Emmanuel CC. The report from a magazine called *The Critic* (about which there is absolutely no information available) by an anonymous contributor makes for interesting reading. The season had its share of controversies, with teams having to be disqualified on disciplinary grounds. It is also interesting to note that there does not seem to have been a uniform dress code in force, as evidenced by a few players turning up to play in loin cloths!

CRICKET IN MADRAS

To the Editor of the 'CRITIC'

Sir,-- I hope you will spare a corner in your journal for a few words about the 'king of games as played in Madras. The season here commences about the beginning of August and as usual it closes about the month of February. A very important feature in this season's cricket and in the annals of South Indian Cricket is the Tournament for private clubs started in honour and memory of the late Mr. Buchi Babu Naidu, who, has been the worthy captain of the M.U.C. till his untimely death. Indeed every sporting club is really thankful to the M.U.C. for having founded the trophy which object is sure to promote a healthy athletic and thorough sporting spirit among the rising generation of Southern India. The Buchi Babu Memorial Trophy Competition commenced on the 25th Ult., and one is please to note that about twelve teams competed. The tournament committee got all the available private cricket grounds and about three or four matches are being played every day. The most interesting and important match was between the Q.J.C.C. and the P.C.C. with a keen hope to win the trophy. The P.C.C. strengthened its eleven by importing a few strong bats from the "Land of Beans" and from the "Field of Gold." This sort of patchwork of course will not be very condusive to the health and tone of a sporting club and at all events the treatment perhaps was for a temporary cure only and so the result has been too. For P.C.C. had to be scratched by the tournament committee for reasons already published in your journal. (In the first ever match of the tournament, played between Pickwick CC and Jubilee CC, the former team objected to the condition of the carpeted pitch and required it to be rolled, although it was declared by the umpires and referee fit to play on. The matter was then referred to the Tournament Committee, who disqualified the Pickwick CC and declared Jubilee CC to be the winners.)

However, the game between Q.J.C.C. and the P.C.C. did continue for about three days and but for the refusal of the P.C.C's Captain to play in the commencement of their second innings, this match of course would have been the very best from a test point of view and a game to witness.

Behaviour subversive of all discipline and practice and against the laws of cricket has been too much in evidence in this tournament. Three teams, viz. The P.C.C., S.U.C., and T.U.C. had to be scratched by the committee. In the match between M.U.C. and S.U.C. the Capt. of the S.U.C. at a late hour about 4.30 p.m. objected to the umpire for an l.b.w. not having been given in their favour when appealed to and insisted on the umpire being changed. More or less at the same hour and under similar circumstances, the T.U.C. Capt. refused to continue the match between his eleven and the P.A.U. at the Engineering College Ground. However, the sporting public are really glad and congratulate the Tournament Committee for scratching the unconstitutional elements out from this tournament for 1909 and 1910.

In this connection, the attention of the committee is also drawn to the fact that some players appeared on the field with their loin cloths on which is highly objectionable. Why not adopt and follow the Madras inter collegiate trophy rule which requires every player to turn up in pantaloons? This slovenly habit of loin cloth business in a cricket field is not only an eye sore but also it will interfere with the free use of one's legs, and a player with dhoti on also runs the risk of being out for "obstructing the ball."

Now coming to batting, bowling and fielding in this tournament from a critic's point of view. On the whole there is a decided improvement in batting and bowling. Fielding though not bad, yet requires a deal of improvement. Till now the only team that knocked up some centuries is the M.U.C.; B. Singara Babu made 110 in the match between the M.U.C. and the Friends' eleven. Here a word of praise must be given to the Friends' eleven, for, although they were mere juveniles and beginners yet they completely played both innings without any kind of grumbling. Nor did they show any white feather. B. Subramanium knocked up two centuries, 119 and 131 and his game is safe and reliable; but a little more dash will add lusture to his consistent game. M. Yethrajulu plays a quick and fine game; but lacks patience and the lilliputian players made 68 runs only.

Kuppal Reddy of the Q.J.C.C. made 69 against P.C.C. This batsman plays a very restrained game and looks nervous which makes his strokes feeble.

V. Ramanjulu of the M.A.U. made 53 against T.U.C. He is the eldest son of the late Mr. Buchi Babu Naidu and is quite a chip of the old block. "He has all the chances of turning out a powerful bat. Of all the bowlers the left-handed Manickam of the S.U.C. is par excellence. The M.U.C. surely carries off the palm for the worst exhibition of very poor and bad fielding.

The Q.J.C.C. continued their 2nd innings on the 9th instant. Kuppal Reddi one of the not-out players of the 2nd instant was late and at the request of the Q.J.C.C. Captain, the M.U.C. Captain waited till his arrival. They had to make 160 runs to save an innings defeat and when Mehanathan was given l.b.w. when their score stood at about 75 runs for 6 wickets, the Q.J.C.C. Captain declared the match in favour of the M.U.C. and withdrew his team from the field.

Scores: M.U.C. first innings 360 runs. Q.J.C.C. for first innings 199. Second innings 75 for 6w.

In conclusion, I wish the Tournament every success and co-operation and sympathy.

-- The Cricket Critic

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