

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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INSIDE

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- Kennet Lane, Egmore
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On Blue Flags and Red Flags

The Marina beach story moved to its next phase – namely that of judicial intervention. A two-judge panel of the High Court of Madras inspected the place and expressed shock at the manner in which bunk shops had been allowed to proliferate in what was once a pristine beach. They have asked for a plan to reduce these and also restrict the nature of items on sale in these shops. The Corporation has acquiesced. It has also agreed to create a fourth blue flag zone behind the memorials, in addition to the three that it was already planning to have on the rest of the Marina.

All to the good? End of story? Well not quite. There are plenty of questions that are thrown up on the basis of the above developments. First, there is disagreement on the actual number of shops in exis-

tence – a drone survey reveals over 1,900 while the Government stubbornly sticks to 1,400. What is the agreed and accepted number of shops that there can be? Second, who is going to monitor the items that can be sold in these shops and make sure they are restricted to food, toys, and souvenirs as

● by **Sriram V.**

mandated by the Court? Third, why should there be any shop on the beach when around forty years ago there were none? In a sense are they not all illegal given that the beach is public property and cannot therefore have squatters? Who is to answer these queries?

We next come to the question of the blue flag areas. These

are bounded sections of the beach where special facilities will be put up – play areas for children, access for the elderly and those with special needs, etc. But there will also be an entry fee, which will ostensibly go to cover some maintenance costs. Does this not however mean that we are creating exclusive zones for those who can afford to pay for these facilities and therefore exclude others? Was not the beach a free facility for everyone to enjoy in its entirety till the shops came along and then forced us to accept clean (read blue flag) and dirty zones? Even now, if the blue flag areas are the ones to be cleaned, are we to accept that the remaining will become rubbish tips? A recent news item showed that this was

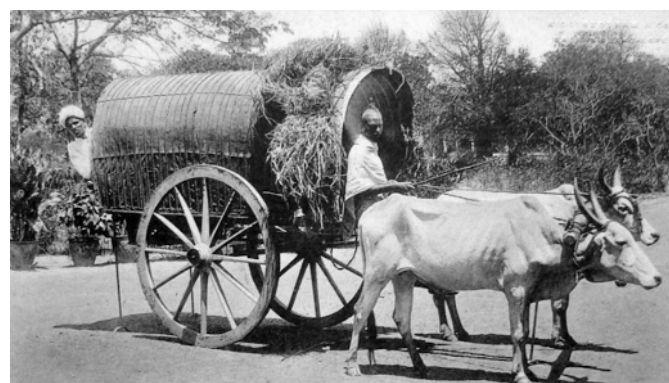
(Continued on page 2)

HERITAGE WATCH

The Season of Bulls, Bullocks and Cows

Pongal, the uniquely Tamil festival is around the corner. The day following it will be when cows are worshipped and then will come the bull race or Jallikattu. The Courts may have spoken as also the Government, but opinion will always be divided on the event. If there was a Madras Mooings maybe we could get the animals' view on it as well. In the meanwhile, here is wishing everyone a happy Pongal. And while we are at it, we feature a bullock cart, captioned as a bullock bandy in this century old picture postcard published by Higginbothams. It must have been a curiosity in the lands to which the postcards were sent. In today's Madras that is Chennai, the bullock cart would be as much a curiosity, an indication of how much times have changed within a hundred years.

Many were the bandy mandapams in old Madras. None survive today. As late as 1925, the flat rate for a bullock cart for plying within the city was 2 annas!



Exciting times ahead for the city's transport scene

The dawn of 2026 brings about with it several important developments with respect to transport in our city. The first, of course is the much-awaited commissioning of a portion of Corridor 4 of the Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail (from Poonamallee Bypass to Vadapalani), which at the time of writing is likely to start operations in mid-February. The "better tomorrow" promised is to arrive shortly for travelers and residents of these areas, and let us hope it is on track to extend to other parts

soon. The other is a project that has been a permanent fixture for long whenever matters relating to rail network in our city is discussed, that of the extension of the MRTS services from Velachery to St Thomas Mount. A completion time of more than 18 years for a small distance of 500 meters, bringing along with it a multi-fold increase in cost must be a record by any yardstick.

The completion of the aforesaid service comes at a time when there is yet another important development on the

anvil, that of the signing of the MOU to formalize the takeover of the MRTS by the CMRL. This is expected soon, with gov-

● by **Karthik Bhatt**

ernment officials stating a few weeks ago that it was in the final stages. Over the next couple of years, the takeover is expected to be completed in a phased manner. It would be interesting

to see how the economics play out consequently, considering the respective organization structures and the differences in the rates charged. While understandably a corporate entity cannot be expected to charge the way the government-run entity did (and given the investments that CMRL proposes to make in terms of rehauling the existing infrastructure), it must be kept in mind that affordability is not compromised, for the MRTS was, as its name denoted seen as a lifeline for masses seeking quicker modes

of transport. Any exercise that alienates them would be against the purpose for which it was envisioned.

There are positive tidings with respect to road transport as well, with a World Bank report lauding the Metropolitan Transport Corporation for creating a sustainable, dependable public transport service. Though buses have for long been the workhorses of the public transport system in our city, according to the above report,

(Continued on page 2)

ON BLUE FLAGS AND RED FLAGS

(Continued from page 1)

exactly what had happened at Elliotts Beach.

The bigger question is the red flag that this issue waves in our face as regards a steady pattern that has emerged as far as administration is concerned. This concerns encroachment of all kinds. Be it that of sidewalks, water bodies, green cover, or plain illegal additional floors over and above what is sanctioned, the administration prefers to watch or turn a blind eye until it is very late and the issue cannot be overlooked. The Courts then step in, demand action, and the administration takes some steps that owing to the earlier inaction, makes for news and is sometimes hailed

as decisive. The beach too has gone the same way in front of our eyes.

The rest of the story is quite predictable – there will be an eviction drive, followed by cases in court. This being election year, the party in power will let the matter lie. Many promises will be made during campaigning, and this will be across all parties. Post the election, depending on which way the court verdict is, action of a half-hearted nature will be taken. The problem will fester and a few years from now, we will be forced, by way of a fait accompli, to accept a multi-storey hawker precinct on the beach. Watch this space, and that on the Marina, to see if this happens or not.

Exciting times ahead for the city's transport scene

(Continued from page 1)

their mode share had declined from around 50 percent in the 1980s to just about 16 percent in 2023, thanks to a combination of factors such as outdated fleet, poor service quality, etc. Over the last few years, the corporation has embarked on a series of corrective measures to address the decline. These include replacing old fleets, introduction of E-buses, steps to improve last-mile connectivity by upgrading the mini-bus service, real-time information systems to track bus timings and the "Bus First" awareness campaign to prioritize use of buses for public transport. That these efforts have not gone unnoticed has been evidenced by the national award presented by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for the 'city with the best public transport system' late last year. The World Bank recognition further validates the efforts being made by the entity to reinvent itself. Also on the cards is an initiative to reintroduce double decker buses on the city roads after 17 years, this

time in a completely electric avatar, in sync with the increasing push towards electrification of bus services. However, it is understandable that these can be run only on select routes due to infrastructural constraints.

In a city like ours, where the pressure on our roads is immense, thanks majorly to the increased reliance on private transport to commute, it is essential to have in place a robust public transport system which will assure people of faster, reliable, and safer modes of travel to their destinations. The next couple of years, when more parts of Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail are commissioned, are especially crucial in the formulation and implementation of measures in this regard. The implementation of the Chennai One mobility app, which seeks to seamlessly integrate various modes of transport, is already a right step in this direction. Hopefully, 2026 will be a breakthrough year in the city's quest to aid its citizens get rid of a daily hassle, that of commute. We wait and watch with hope.



Modern transport services in operation. (Picture courtesy: The Hindu.)

Ringling in the New Year

“And those of you with cell phones, which is probably every one of you, please put them on silent mode...” – *The Man from Madras Musings* awoke one night from a dream of peace, not to find an angel recording by the side of his bed as it happened in Abou Ben Adhem, but to find that he, meaning MMM and not ABA, had recited those very lines in his sleep. And then he turned over and went back to sleep.

You see, come December each year MMM has to sit in on a music conference each morning for a fortnight, he being the convenor (or is convenor?) of it. And in recent years the attendance has gone up quite a bit, requiring some crowd control and some disciplining. And among these, MMM's pet peeve is the cell phone, which quadruples itself into audio recorder, still photo camera, video camera, and overall nuisance – all four rolled into one.

If all that was not enough, the ringing of the cell phone was yet another nuisance. And it was not just the ringing. Despite all the announcements, many did not think they needed to switch to silent mode and so their phones rang. You would have been amazed at how many ring tones there are in this world, almost all of them jarring. The women were bigger offenders than men, for they kept their phone deep in the recesses of their handbags and when the ringing went on and on it took them quite a while to pick up the bag, rummage in its interiors, find the phone and then switch it to silent.

After a couple of days of relentless reminding and occasionally naming and shaming and otherwise glaring at the offender, some order was brought about. MMM felt he could relax his vigil somewhat and let his mind wander. And then it happened – a phone

all in short, was well. Apologies were freely expressed and MMM, nursing a dull ache in his back, accepted them graciously, and removed himself from the scene.

But the aftermath was not so good. The man had apparently been lunching at the season canteen and also done himself well. He had then gone to the washroom and was coming back with wet hands when this incident had occurred. As a consequence, he had placed his wet hands on MMM's back leaving behind two soaking palm prints on MMM's shirt. And judging by the smell that came from it MMM could also guess as to what the man had fed on. Feeling rather like Lady Macbeth and the perfumes of Arabia, MMM had to go home and change. But the sensation lingered.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

MMM does not understand it – he unlike the late Chief is a heavy user of the phone and occasionally indulges in what is known as doom scrolling – namely the art of idly scouring social media, but he does know when to draw the line. Or at least tries to. Not so seems to be the case with several others. At least that was the impression MMM got from his audience.

Take for instance, standard operating procedure on being seated – the first act is to take out the cell phone and begin recording the proceedings. When told that there is no necessity to do this as the entire event is anyway being recorded (high quality and not mono) and will be put up the very next day on social media, there is a sense of disappointment. But all is well, for it does not prevent still photos being taken. When that is objected to, there is sullen resignation, which is when the third activity starts, namely browsing idly on the phone, without paying any attention to the actual paper being presented. Of course, the presentation may be below par but if that be the case, those left unimpressed can very well leave the venue. Perhaps the comfort of the padded seat and the air-conditioning prevents this! But for a performer or a presenter, it may be very disconcerting to perform or present before an audience that seems collectively engrossed in its cell phone.

went off in MMM's vicinity, on stage. It rang and rang, and then having subsided, began once again. It turned out to be the performer's!

Three Mighty Steps

“And then the Lord took three mighty steps.” *The Man from Madras Musings* was reminded of his grandmother telling him the story. “With one step he measured the earth, with his next he covered the sky, and then from atop he thundered to Mahabali as to where was to be placed his next.”

You know the story anyway. Poor Bali was perhaps the first victim of landgrab. And was pushed into the nether regions. MMM felt the same when during the height of the music season he was standing at the car park of the Mecca of Music, and was suddenly buffeted from the rear. The blow was so powerful that he practically fell on the two people he was conversing with. But MMM not being of mean bulk could not be dislodged that easily. He recovered quickly to find a man all apologetic behind him.

It transpired that the assailant was busy reading messages on his phone as he climbed down the steps and had then tripped. With one step he took in the entire stairway, with the second he was airborne and the third he placed on MMM's rear and came back to earth. And

Culinary Cautions

Talking about the music season, has *The Man from Madras Musings* ever told you his favourite canteen story? It happened a few years ago when the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was just being brought into force. A December Music Season was in full progress and so was the canteen at a big-ticket organisation. To this place comes a rather unassuming man who orders a cup of coffee. This is duly brought to him and after he has had it he asks for the bill to pay.

“What bill?” is the supercilious reply of the waiter. “Here you pay in cash and get going.”

Not happy with this response the unassuming gent then went up to the bill counter where too he was fobbed off with the same response, with loads of arrogance added to it. The man paid up and left.

The next morning, there was a sales tax raid on the canteen. The owner was quizzed on billing, and the accounts were relentlessly gone through and a fine imposed. It turns out that the unassuming gent was the big boss of GST implementation. It just goes to show that appearances can be deceptive. And it takes all kinds to make a music season. And if you offend someone, be prepared to face the music.

– MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Memories of Lempert Hospital

Your writeup about Lempert Hospital brought back fond memories of my childhood days when I resided opposite to the hospital in Thiruvengada Naicken street also known as First Street. I was the youngest of three brothers. My elder brother suffered from constant throat infection, and on the advice of our family doctor he was referred to Dr Subramanian who had his tonsils removed. He asked him to take a lot of ice cream. I remember my eldest brother and me rushing to Jaffar ice cream parlour on Mount Road next to Elphinstone Theatre, the only place where it was readily available. Diagonally opposite, on the left, was the Presentation Covent school, where I had my early schooling. Diagonally opposite to the hospital, on the right side was the Ophthalmic Hospital, then the biggest in Asia, and next to it was the Fire Service HQ. There was an Anglo-Indian lady by the name of Dagma Moses who served as a receptionist. After my eldest brother passed away, four years back, I no longer visit the place. My vivid memories are still fresh, even after eighty years.

J.C. Moral

* * *

More on Marshalls Road

Many thanks for your message conveying your memories of Marshalls Road, based on my short article on that thoroughfare and a memorable doctor, whom I have never known from a bar of soap! One of my interests in writing such pieces is to jog memories of Madras of the 1960s and 1970s.

Many thanks for reminding me some of the points which I had missed to write on: space was a significant constraint and importantly my focus was on the science (medicine) promoted by Dr VS Subramanian, incidentally touching on the old-world charm of the then Marshalls Road!

I am fully aware that I had missed referring to the 'nursing home' run by Dr AS Ramakrishnan (ASR), General Surgeon, Madras. Importantly, ASR was the personal physician to Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari (a.k.a. Rajaji) and the rest of his family. ASR's faith and confidence in an absolutely clean, sterile surgical theatre and consequent avoidance of 'antibiotics' was a brilliant and fascinating science philosophy.

It cannot be gainsaid that this is the greatest tribute to Joseph Lister (1827-1912) British medical doctor, pioneer explainer of 'sepsis'. The Listerine mouthwash is named after him! Space constraint, again!

Anyway responses such as yours keep my spirit upswing and going, writing about the science of erstwhile Madras! I think, that is something to be celebrated!

A. Raman

Correction

The article *Epitaph* in the December 16, 2025 issue carried quotes attributed to Srinivas Chari. The author was Priyanka Soman and the error is regretted.

Sriram V

"What If" our History was Rewritten?

Adventures in Counterfactuals

I have always believed that teaching History in Chennai requires three essential things: a strong cup of filter coffee, the patience of a Mount Road traffic policeman, and the ability to answer thirty different questions at the same time. Add 'counterfactual history' to this mix, and suddenly my classroom feels like Parry's Corner – equal amounts of chaos, curiosity, and comedy.

The Day My Class Un-Exploded

On a bright, suspiciously quiet morning (always dangerous in a middle school), I wrote on the board:

"What if Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not happened?"

The reaction was instant.

You would think I had announced free kulfi for everyone.

One child raised his hand and said, very confidently, "Miss, then America would have had to send a powerful warning letter by post. Registered post with acknowledgement due."

Another chimed in, "Miss, then maybe the Cold War becomes Cold Breeze War. Little tension only."

I took a deep breath and reminded myself that this is the same class that once asked me if the Indus Valley people had mixer grinders.

But as the laughter settled, something remarkable happened:

My students realised that without the atomic bombings, the nuclear arms race might have taken a slower, less explosive path.

One child put it beautifully in true Chennai logic: "Miss, if there was no big explosion, then the world leaders would not panic and build bigger and bigger bombs... like how we try to show off bigger and bigger water bottles in school."

Fair enough.

Historical Empathy: The Chennai Edition

I often tell my students that historical empathy is not about excusing or justifying the past. It's about understanding it – like how any Chennaiite instantly forgives a hot-headed auto driver after he says, "Sister, traffic romba jamm-packed."

So when they examine Aurangzeb, Gandhi, or even a bewildered British Viceroy, I ask them:

- What pressures were they under?
- What information did they not have?

My class takes this very seriously. Sometimes too seriously.

Chennai children are unique. They empathise deeply – and sideways.

My Top "What If?" Moments

A few unforgettable contributions from my budding historians:

- "What if the British had felt guilty early and quietly gone home?" "Miss, then your syllabus would have become half. Super for us."
- "What if the World War II leaders had a joint mediation session with a strict counsellor?" Absolutely brilliant. Possibly our future Prime Minister.

These counterfactual explorations bring out curiosity, wit, and surprisingly deep thinking – even from the ones who usually pretend to be asleep.

Why I Teach History This Way

Because History becomes alive when children ask questions that shake the dust off old events.

Because humour softens the edges of difficult topics. (And sometimes softens the teacher's blood pressure.)

Because Chennai's spirit has always been one of warmth, curiosity, and gentle rebellion – exactly the qualities that make children fantastic historians.

And because when students learn to ask, "What if...?"

It quietly teaches them to think, "What next?" and "How can we make better choices today?"

If history teaches us anything, it is this:

Even the smallest "What if?" can change the world — or at least, change one lively Chennai classroom into a place of laughter, learning, and infinite possibilities.

– Priyanka Soman

Website Comments

In love with Lovedale – a life dedicated to children

(Vol. XXXIII No. 15, November 16-30, 2023)

"I am deeply honored to express my profound gratitude to Mrs. May Enos, a brave and exceptional lady who was far more than just my English coach; she was a sculptor of my life. May Enos (fondly known as "Ma Enos") is a celebrated figure in the Nilgiris, known for her long tenure at Lawrence School, Lovedale.

During my year of stay in her coaching at Lovedale (1989–1990), she did not merely teach me the English language – she taught me the 'English of Life'. Through her guidance, I learned how to think critically, communicate with confidence, and face challenges with courage.

Her belief in my potential changed my destiny:

She facilitated my admission to Christus Rex Higher Secondary School, Ooty. She later mentored my transition to St. Joseph's Boys' Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School, Coonoor. These foundational years, shaped by her wisdom and strength, paved the way for my career in law. To a 'stalwart of Lovedale' who has dedicated her life to children for over a century, I offer my sincerest appreciation. Thank you, Ma Enos, for teaching me to frame words – and for framing my future.

Advocate S. Prakash
parkprakash@gmail.com

Recalling A Vellayan

(Vol. XXXV No. 16, December 1-15, 2025)

Vellayan's early demise is shocking. I have had

the good fortune of meeting MV Arunachalam at his Greenways Road residence. MV was the FICCI President when my Periyappa P Chentsal Rao was Secretary General. Also, my late father was a classmate of MV. I was fresh out of college, BE from PSG Tech. MV was in a crisp shirt and dhoti and explained to me the 'Chettiar' way of learning businesses. Even, he said, if a person is from the 'family' his journey starts at the base of the pyramid. Vellayan's passing away has shaken me in more ways than one.

P Krishna Rao
1818krishna@gmail.com
A.S. Diwakar – A Man for All Seasons
(XXXV No. 12, October 1-15, 2025)

Extremely interesting to realise that passion for

a profession guides the way to achieve the objective. God bless Diwakar sir.

R Gopalakrishna
gopu744@gmail.com

The Forty Umbas and the Guava that started it all

(XXXV No. 14, November 1-15, 2025)

Beautiful writing, Cauvery.

The Guava-umba story is hilarious. Keep it going. All the best.

Rukmini Iyer
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* * *

Wonderful Cauvery!!! Hilarious umbas. Keep writing and bring out the smile instead of sulking about all these so called formalities.

Sasikala Muralidharan
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Throwing light on Madras Journal of Medical Science

Abstract

This article sheds light on a medical bimonthly, the *Madras Journal of Medical Science* (MJMS), which was active between 1850 and 1854. A unique aspect of MJMS was that it was published by the apothecaries and dressers of the Madras Subordinate Medical Service for their professional development. Similar to any professional journal of the mid-19th century, this journal included a few original case reports (referred to as literary contributions) by the apothecaries and dressers working with the Madras Medical Establishment (MME). This journal also included a few paraphrased articles from contemporary British medical journals, as well as featuring some locally relevant information related to the medical profession. This effort, aimed at academic growth, made by the subordinate medical staff of MME and not by the mainstream, higher-qualified medical personnel, impresses as valiant and daring.

Introduction

Romeo

‘... .. Let me have
A dram of poison, such
soon-speeding gear
As will disperse itself through
all the veins
That the life-weary taker may
fall dead, ...’

Apothecary
‘Such mortal drugs I have, but
Mantua’s law
Is death to any he that utters
them’.

William Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet
(Act 5, Scene 1, lines: 58–67)

Nearly 50 professional medical journals, published in English, were issued in India in the 19th century. Some of them lasted 3–5 years, whereas a few others lasted up to 20 years. One premier journal was the *Indian Medical Gazette*, administered by officers of the Indian Medical Service in Calcutta (now Kolkata), which appeared from 1866 and survived until recent times.¹ The Madras Presidency also contributed to professional medical journalism, with notable publications such as the *Madras Quarterly Medical Journal*, in addition to the *Madras Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*, the *Transactions of the South Indian Branch of the British Medical Association*, and the *Madras Medical Records*, all of which appeared between 1840 and 1910. In the article entitled ‘Medical journalism in the 19th century Madras’,² we mentioned

Madras Journal of Medical Science (hereafter MJMS) but with no details. Recently, we managed to obtain some details about MJMS, and this article is a consequence of that. Notably, MJMS was initiated and administered by medical personnel from the subordinate medical service (SMS) – specifically, the apothecaries and dressers – of the Madras Presidency, rather than by the British-trained, qualified medical officers appointed as executive, mainstream medical personnel at that time.

The SMS: Apothecaries and Dressers

The SMS of the Madras presidency was established in 1812, the earliest of its kind in India. The SMS included non-commissioned medical servants of either European or Eurasian descent (Anglo-Indians), who were designated variously as ‘apothecary’, ‘second apothecary’, ‘assistant apothecary’, and ‘medical apprentice’, depending on their level of seniority. Those of Indian descent, who completed the same training and passed relevant examinations, were

One reason for establishing MMS in 1835 was to train medical personnel for formal recruitment into military service. The term ‘dresser’ was used only in the Madras Presidency, whereas in the Bengal Presidency, ‘stewards’ and ‘assistant stewards’ were used further to ‘apothecaries’. Madras followed the procedure of subjecting assistant apothecaries and assistant dressers to an examination before promoting them to full apothecaries and full dressers. This practice influenced the Bengalis to follow suit.³

In Madras, candidates seeking training as apothecaries and dressers were subject to an examination for selection as apprentices. The Madras Medical Board considered the qualified for formal study towards the titles of apothecaries and dressers in MMS, which included lessons in anatomy, materia medica, pharmaceutical chemistry, dissections and clinical instruction in medicine and surgery. At the end of 2 years, they sat for an end-of-programme examination. The successful were drafted either into military service or into the

many government reports and private tabloids were printed here, e.g. *Instructions which have been Issued from Chief Engineer’s Office from Time to Time, for the Guidance of Engineers, Madras Railway* (1858), a religious monthly, *the Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star and Monthly Visitor* promoting Mormonism edited and published by one Richard Ballantyne, an American Mormon, living in Madras.

GW Flynn, an Assistant Apothecary attached to the Madras Medical Establishment (MME), has signed as the editor on the first issue of MJMS. GW Flynn or George William Flynn (GWF) (source: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Flynn-1852>, accessed 02 March 2025) was born to George Flynn and Charlotte (an Indian native) in St. Thomas Mount, Madras, in 1824. George Flynn (Senior) was a trained apothecary from Cork, Ireland, who arrived in Madras in the early 19th century and worked with the East India Company in Madras, most likely as an apothecary. It is possible that GWF was trained in the newly established MMS for his apothecaryship.

The prospectus in the first issue of MJMS indicates that this journal would appear every other month, i.e. six issues per year (Fig. 1), and each issue was priced at Rs. 1. All technical papers (referred to as ‘literary contributions’) were to be received by the GWF, c/- The Medical College, postpaid. Other communications were to be sent to JH Stanthorpe, Vepery, who was likely the owner of OP. A statement (p. 4), reproduced below, in this prospectus offers an interesting read:

‘This Journal, which will be called the *Journal of Medical Science* will be conducted entirely by the Medical Subordinate Department of the Presidency (i.e. Madras Presidency) and will be supported by literary contributions from the same source’.

GWF further says that the chief objective of this journal (p. 1):

‘... is to afford intelligent and studious Medical Subordinates of this (= Madras) Presidency, an opportunity of exhibiting proofs of their reading, experience, and observation, in the great Field of Disease; of proving that the talents confided to their care have not been allowed to lie dormant and unimproved; and of showing their superiors of every class that they have, as a body, resolved to secure approbation by their zeal, intelligence and

perseverance. This Journal is intended to be the representative of the Medical Subordinate Department, an exponent of its abilities, knowledge, and progress, and not be it remembered, a harbour for its private feelings, or its petty jealousies’.

Multiple remarks in this prospectus evoke curiosity regarding the style of presentation and the words used, but they are remarkable in their content and message. A few samples are reproduced here (pp. 5–6) with supplementary explanations in italics and brackets for archaic terms and potentially confusing possessive pronouns:

‘It is necessary that the Projector (= publisher) and Editors of this Journal should clearly intimate the ground they intend to occupy in conducting it. In order to avoid misapprehension, as much as possible’.

‘The Editors regard their duty in this light as sacred; they will spare no pains to maintain the honourable and useful character of the Journal; but they will not allow it to be the medium of any unamiable altercations, or the means of propagating those personal and private janglings (= discordant notes) which, when admitted into any Journal, alike derogate from its respectability and its usefulness’.

‘With these principles, which they (= editors) intend to dwell upon more fully in their opening number, the Editors of this periodical beg humbly to present their bantling (= this new journal) to the patronage of Medical Public. From the liberality and kindness of Medical Officers, they (= editors) confidently expect both countenance (= approval) and support, for they have already received from many, proofs of their warm interest in this new and hitherto untied undertaking’.

‘From their subordinate brethren, they (= the managers of MJMS) expect not only pecuniary, but also literary, subscriptions – one alone will not do; without money they must make their final bow, and without literary contributions their little Journal must fall to the ground’.

‘Original communications will occupy a prominent part of the Journal; these will be carefully and in every case impartially selected, and will, the editors

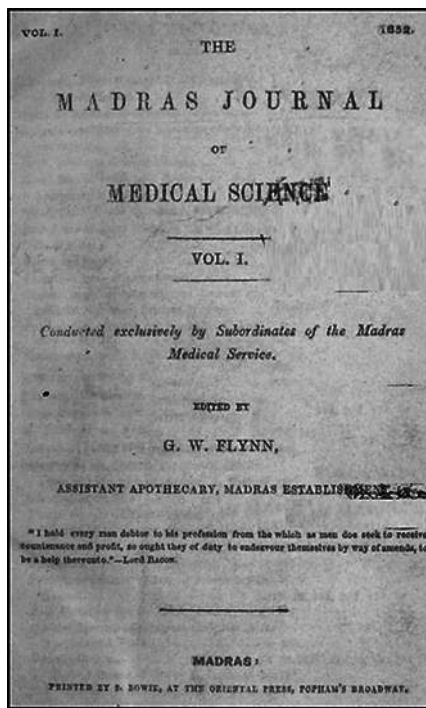


Fig 1. Cover page of the inaugural issue of Madras Journal of Medical Science, 1852.

trust, be found to be of a kind reflecting hono(u)r upon their authors, and credit upon the subordinate department generally’.

The first Issue: Contents

MJMS was created to promote the intellectual growth of apothecaries in Madras. The SMS promoted their scientific reports (Fig. 2). Eleven articles -- 7 review articles -- by the Madras apothecaries feature in this issue: The blood in health and disease (R. Prince), Cracked feet (G. O'Hara), Intermittent fever (G. Norton), General spasm (J. Dean), Inflammation (A. Bogg), Opium poisoning (J. Martin) and Salivation produced by iodine (G. O'Hara) and four case reports – acute dysentery treated with the sulphate of soda (J. Barrow), a case of the injury of the brain (R. Hutton), an acute case of hepatitis (J. Falloon), a case of vaginal fistula (J. Shortt). This issue also features a selection of articles written by senior medical professionals, primarily professors of medicine in the UK and occasionally from the Madras Medical College. For example, Ambrose Blacklock (1816–73) was a professor of medicine and surgery at Madras Medical College in the 1850s, whose class lectures on medical jurisprudence have been reproduced in this issue. Additionally, 21 short articles (one page or less) on various medical themes, such as burns and scalds, dislocation of the hip, strangulated hernia, epilepsy, and hydrophobia, written by anonymous authors, also feature. Furthermore, this issue also features brief articles by trainee students of the apothecary study

programme, such as W. Baker's on cholera and D. Karney's on albuminous and fatty urine.

Comment

Only four volumes of MJMS were issued (1850–1854). All of them are freely available on the Wellcome Collection, London, for anyone interested (<https://archive.org/details/b31516816>, accessed 29 November 2024).

This effort, led by GWF, a member of the practicing apothecaries of Madras in the 1850s, is laudable. One possible reason for the launch of this journal by the members of the SMS of Madras was to demonstrate their academic and intellectual capabilities, as well as their personal academic growth.

Apothecaries and dressers in Madras have published case reports in professional medical journals, such as the *Madras Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* edited by Howard Montgomery and William Cornish, who were executive medical officers of the MME. However, the frequency of publications by the apothecaries and dressers was far and few between compared with those by better-qualified executive surgeons. For example, George Davis, an assistant apothecary attached to the primary department of MMS has published a paper entitled a ‘Case of chylous urine’.⁹ A few other papers, mostly referring to single-case studies by Madras apothecaries, are available in various medical journals published from Madras.²

The Madras apothecaries launched the Madras Apothecaries Society (MAS) on 30 May 1864,¹⁰ styled after the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London. The MAS aimed to promote and advance medical science and knowledge. For example, at their first business meeting on 28 July 1864, a seminar on ‘Cholera, its aetiology – prophylactic and therapeutic management’ was presented by an unnamed member of the MAS. The cholera aetiology seminar was followed by brief presentations on ‘dog bite and hydrophobia’ and ‘relationship between nerve force and electricity in cholera management’ by two other MAS members. The MAS sustained till 1871.¹¹

Among the several names of apothecaries who have published articles in the inaugural issue of MJMS, we could recognize the name John Shortt (b. 26 February 1822), who started as an apothecary from MMS in January 1846. He went to Scotland and earned a Doctor of Medicine degree and

subsequently became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. He also qualified as a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. He returned to Madras and joined MME as an Assistant Surgeon in July 1854. He was admitted into the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1859 and was elevated as a Full Surgeon on 20 September 1866. Shortt was the Superintendent of Vaccination in Madras. He was a prolific writer and was recognized with admission as a fellow of the Linnean Society of London and the Zoological Society of London. He was the corresponding fellow of the Société d'Anthropologie, Paris and the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte. As an elected member of the Obstetrical Society of London, he was the Secretary of the Madras Chapter of the Obstetrical Society of London. He retired as Deputy Surgeon-General of Madras, holding the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, when Edward Green Balfour was the Surgeon-General. Unverifiable notes on Shortt indicate that he held a Licentiate in Dental Science. Post retirement, Shortt lived and died in Yercaud. His memorial stone is located at the CSI Anglican Church Cemetery, Yercaud.¹²

At present, the terms ‘Apotheker’, ‘Apothekerin’ (German) and ‘apothecaire’ (French) imply a pharmacist, whereas in English-speaking nations, the term ‘pharmacist’ is used. However, until the end of the 19th century, in India, an apothecary not only referred to a person who performed the duties of a pharmacist but also functioned as a junior medical officer, treating the sick, and filled the space

between executive-medical officers and nurses. In 1894, the designation of apothecaries (and dressers) was abolished in the MME and replaced with ‘assistant surgeons’.

With the start of World War I in 1914, the Madras government required trained medical personnel for posting in war zones. Hence, it established medical schools all over the presidency, e.g. the Royapuram Medical School (presently, the Stanley Medical College and Hospital, Chennai), Thanjavur Medical School, and Madurai Medical School. These medical schools offered short-term medical training to high school leavers, and after three years of training in medicine, surgery, and midwifery, the graduates were recognised as Licensed Medical Practitioners (LMPs). The LMP programme continued for a few years and many Indians qualified for that title and joined the army as medical officers. When women were admitted to Madras Medical College in the 1880s, they were admitted into the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (LMS), a programme that involved a shorter time and lesser rigour than the GMMC title (equivalent to the later offered M.B.C.M. programme) then extant at Madras Medical College. It is highly likely that the apothecary-dresser academic training of earlier times was reshaped in the starting and conducting of the LMP and LMS programmes in Madras in later days, although no concrete evidence exists.

What is admirable in the context of the short-lived MJMS is that the Madras-trained subordinate medical servants launched this Journal. The following text by the editor (p. 34) impresses:

‘Prior to the institution of the Medical School at this Presidency had such a project as the one now under consideration been started, failure must have been the inevitable result owing to the want of individuals possessing the requisite education to enable them to contribute anything of sufficient interest for publication; but matters are now changed for the better; – the great proportion of our department consists of men who have received to a greater or less extent, a professional education, the remainder being subordinate of tested qualifications, acquired by their own industry and perseverance – creditable examples of what can be effected by unaided application and long continued observation of disease. We expect much assistance in this our new undertaking particularly from our junior members, and we hope sincerely we shall not be disappointed in our expectation of contributions both numerous and good’.

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Fig 2. Contents pages (indicated as index) from the inaugural issue of Madras Journal of Medical Science.

At last, found the source of Kennet Lane, Egmore

Sometime ago, I sought some information from the Madras Heritage expert Sriram V for my forthcoming biography on Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a pioneer of poetry and drama in Bengali language, much before Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. I asked him whether he knew anything about an old Madras resident during East India Company days namely Charles Egbert Kennet, who was a classmate of Michael at Bishops' College, Calcutta. While replying in the negative, he asked me in turn, whether the Kennet Lane at Egmore is named after him.

I replied that it may not be so and said that it might have been named after his father Charles Kennet, who was a clerk in Madras Treasury and also the Secretary of Civil Orphans Asylum, Egmore. Subsequently, this asylum was shifted to St. George's Anglo-Indian School at Poonamallee High Road after giving away its lands to the Railways in order to build the present Egmore Station terminal. As such, that Kennet lane would have been named after Kennet Senior during this transfer of the asylum's property to the Railways. That was my reason at that time and I assured him that I shall go deep into the issue. Later on, I found that the transfer of the property of the Asylum was done in 1903-04 to the Railways and as Kennet Senior passed away in 1851 itself, my contention on this score was not a correct one.

Now let me present the eventful life of Rev. Kennet as I have gathered so far. Rev. Dr. Charles Egbert Kennet (21/09/1826 – 28/11/1884) was the second child of Eurasian parents namely Charles Kennet (1787-1851) and Charlotte Temasfield (1803-1841).

Charles Kennet Sr., a clerk in the Treasury Office at Madras, was well known as the Secretary of the Civil Orphan Asylum. He was the one who offered teacher's post at the Asylum school when Michael Madhusudan Dutt came to Madras in January 1848. Kennet's mother and some other near relations were members of the Roman Catholic Church. As such, in his youth, he was brought up as a Roman Catholic. At the age of 16 or so, he joined the English Church. In his youth, he showed a love of books and study, and in early manhood earned the name of 'Pundit'. He was educated first at Bishop Corries' School, Madras. From there, he went to Bishop's Col-

leged by the Rev. W. Taylor and published in 1850 in *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*.² This article points out the relationship between the language of Gonds and Tamil. It has been mentioned that the article was sent on October 8, 1849 from Idaiyangudi where Rev. Robert Caldwell was functioning as a priest for SPG and also undertaking research on the Dravidian languages. It can be safely presumed that with his deep knowledge in Tamil, Kennet would have been helpful in this endeavour besides his missionary activities. On February 2, 1851, he was admitted to Deacon's orders at Palayamkottai by Bishop Dealtry and was appointed

lege, Calcutta. In both of these institutions, the education was of high order and students had time to master the subjects they studied. He was thus a scholar in the true sense of the word.

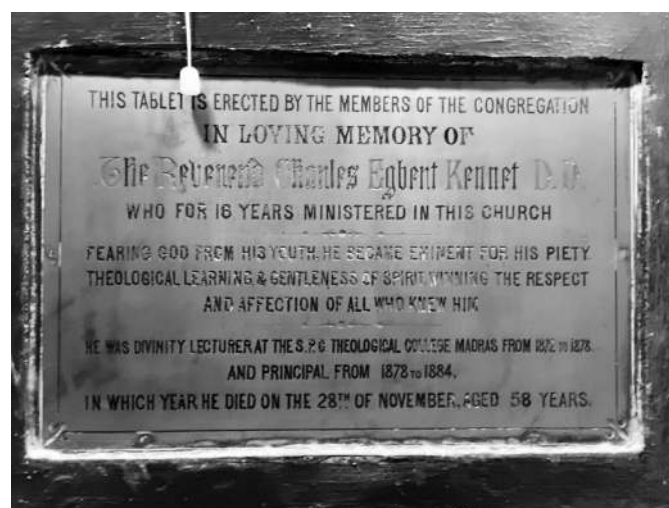
In 1847, he joined the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in Madras and worked for it in various capacities, with a short break between 1865 and 1868 (due to his wife's health conditions), till the day of his death.¹

In 1848, he passed both the examinations in Tamil as required by the Society and in 1849 he was appointed as Catechist (preacher) at Mudalur in Tirunelveli district. To highlight his expertise in Tamil language, it can be cited that his article on *The Observations on the Languages of the Gonds, South of Nerbudda*, was commu-

at the same time as Assistant Missionary at Mudalur. On July 25, 1853, he was admitted to Priest's orders at Courtallam by Bishop Dealtry and appointed Missionary in charge at Mudalur. In 1855, he was appointed to act for Bishop Dr. Caldwell, who was on furlough, at Idaiyangudi. From 1857 to 1865 he was in charge of missionary activities of Christianagaram in Tirunelveli District.³

In 1865, he was compelled to leave Tirunelveli owing to his wife's health. He settled in Madras and for a short time, his connection with the SPG was discontinued. However, considering his erudition in Scriptures, Bishop Gell of Madras insisted on utilising his services. In 1868, he was appointed as Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), a post he held till 1878. During this period, he was instrumental in bringing out the Tamil translation of *Holy Bible* by Rev Dr Bower, which is being followed by the Protestant Church till today in Tamil Nadu.

As he felt the need of more direct clerical work, the SPG was glad to utilise his valuable services, given without any remuneration, as the Incumbent of St. John's, the Baptist church at Egmore. He served the congregation of this church for 16 years from 1868 to 1884 (till his death). A tablet in memory of Rev Dr CE Kennet has been put up in the church by the congregation. His name has also been



The Kennet Memoriam Tablet

inscribed in the (glass) pane of the rear side window of the altar of this church.⁴

The book *The Claims of the Roman See to Supremacy: Disproved by an Examination of the Testimony of Catholic Antiquity* written by Charles Egbert Kennet in 1869, is a critical examination of the claims made by the Roman Catholic Church regarding its supremacy over other churches. The author argues that these claims are not supported by the evidence of Catholic antiquity, which he examines in detail. Kennet provides a historical overview of the development of the Roman Catholic Church and its claims to supremacy, tracing the origins of these claims back to the early church. He then examines the testimony of Catholic antiquity, including the writings of the early church fathers and the decisions of church councils, to show that there is no clear evidence to support the claims of the Roman See. The author also addresses the arguments made by defenders of the Roman Catholic Church, and provides counter-arguments based on his examination of the evidence. He concludes that the claims of the Roman See to supremacy are not supported by Catholic antiquity, and that the church should abandon these claims in order to promote unity and cooperation among different Christian denominations.

In 1872, Dr. Kennet began his connection with the Theological College, Sullivan's

Gardens when he was appointed as Divinity Lecturer under Rev AR Symonds, who incidentally was his teacher at Bishop Corrie's School, Madras and who solemnised his marriage with Phoebe Kennet (nee Rodgers) in 1851. In October 1878, he succeeded Rev AR Symonds as Principal of the Theological College, Sullivan's Gardens, a post he held until his death in 1884. All who knew him considered that he was eminently suited to this post.⁵

He was by common consent accepted as the best theologian, in a technical sense. He was exceedingly well read in the writings of the early Christian Fathers and equally familiar with the books of the most eminent Anglican Divines. On all recondite questions, on Church history, Canon Law, or Theology, the usual custom was to "Ask Kennet" who from some corner of his well-selected library, or his well-stored memory, could nearly always throw light upon the subject placed before him. In this respect, his knowledge was often marvellous. The study of his life was that of theology and probably he had in that department no equal in India.⁶

In Kennet's time, the connection of the church with the University of Madras was advisedly brought to an end, and undivided attention bestowed on imparting a thorough theological training. With this end in view, Kennet obtained permission to present candidates for the Theological examination then popularly known as the Cambridge Preliminary, and the studies of the College were so arranged as to conform to the requirements of that

(Continued on page 7)



AT LAST, FOUND THE SOURCE OF KENNET LANE, EGMORE

(Continued from page 6)

examination, which as Kennet remarks, 'has been in itself a great advantage, independently of any results of examinations, as furnishing a solitary teacher out here with a choice of subjects made by the most experienced teachers of Divinity in England.' The first candidate for the Examination was presented in 1878 and passed in the Second Class. In 1883 the Principal was cheered, by the following words from Professor Westcott, the Chairman of the Board; in connection with the candidates presented by him in the previous year: "All have done intelligently and well, and their work shows careful and successful teaching. The papers

of Pakkyanadan are excellent, and he comes among the first few in the whole examination of 123 men, and wins a First class, easily. The other men come very near to the minimum for a First [88/89] Class, and so stand at the head of the Second Class. We have now three classes."⁷

During this period, he published some of his most important writings: *Missionary Teaching Viewed in relation to the Conduct of the Controversy with Hinduism*; *The Doctrine of the Priesthood*; *The Claims of the Roman See to Supremacy disproved by an Examination of Catholic Antiquity*. At the same time, he contributed articles to the *Indian Church Quarterly Review*. In 1880, the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity (DD) upon the recommendation of Bishop Gell. He died on November 28, 1884 after a brief illness.⁸

The Diocese perpetuated his memory by purchasing his library and establishing it for general use at

Sullivan's Gardens. He was a great scholar rather than a great missionary; but he used all his knowledge and intellectual gifts in the missionary cause and he raised many a native priest in the practice of using precise language in theological statements and in the pursuit of truth.⁹

Most Rev. Frederick Gell, the then Bishop of Madras in a letter to the Society's Acting Secretary in Madras wrote as follows:

"I have received your telegram announcing the death of our valued brother, Dr. Kennet. I have lost a very affectionate and instructive friend, and all the diocese has lost one of its most distinguished ornaments – a clergyman of eminent learning, devoutness, and a large heartedness.

"The Theological College especially has suffered such a loss as cannot be adequately repaired for several years to come. But we must pray that God will raise up a duly-qualified man to occupy the vacant Principalship; and the Society at home must be earnestly requested to search and send out such a man."¹⁰

The words of an old friend, the Rev. G.U. Pope (formerly Warden of Bishop Cotton School, Bangalore, Madras), most venerable Tamil scholar and translator of many Tamil classics including *Thirukkural* into English, brought out the ultimate quality of Dr Kennet as follows:

"He was full of gracious humility, often quite embarrassing to those who were brought into connection with him. From Professor Street (of Bishop's College, Calcutta), he acquired a profound love for Catholic truth, and seldom is one to be found who so simply as by intuition, holds all Catholic Doctrine without any tinge of un-English theology, as he did. Truly evangelical, large-hearted, candid, tenderly conscientious, mighty in the Holy Scripture and in Patristic and old Anglican Divinity, he yet read and weighed most of our noteworthy modern productions.

"The last evening I was in India, we knelt in the College Chapel and commended each other to God; and so, I shall see him always, till, if God please, we meet and mingle our praises in the temple within the veil."¹¹

Rev. Bishop Robert Caldwell, the Dravidian Scholar who wrote the famous treatise *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* under whom Dr. Kennet functioned

as a missionary in Tirunelveli district from 1849 to 1865 wrote the following in his reminiscences:

"Dr. Charles Egbert Kennet was not in Madras when I arrived from England, though I became intimately acquainted with him some years afterwards in Tirunelveli where his first appointment was as Catechist under me at Idaiyangudi. He was at the time of my arrival a student in Bishop's College, Calcutta where he imbibed from Professor Street's teaching and influence, that attachment to the doctrines and practices of the High Church school, which he not only retained to the last, but which became deeper, stronger, and more fervid every year he lived.

"His course was very different from that of Dr. Bower, but they were men of equal intellectual gifts, and equally respected. The principal work of his life was as Principal of the SPG Theological College, Sullivan's Gardens, Madras. His deep personal piety, and his earnest advocacy of what he believed to be the truth gained for him the sincere respect of those who differed from him and the unbounded esteem and confidence of those who shared in his theological views. He was consequently regarded, as long as he lived, as the undoubted head and leader of the High Church Party in the Diocese of Madras, if not also throughout India.

"He received from the Archbishop of Canterbury the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity shortly after the same degree has been conferred on Dr Bower. Dr Kennet died in Madras at the close of 1884. It is sad to think that these two eminent men have left no successors in the community to which they belonged, and of which, each in his own way, they were such distinguished ornaments."¹²

Dr. Kennet was survived by his wife Phoebe Kennet who passed away on March 29, 1910 at Perambur, Madras at the age of 78. Her funeral service was done by Rev. Yesadian of St. John the Baptist Church, Egmore where her husband served for 16 years and was most revered by the congregation.

After going through many sources as described above, now I am able to recover the working life of Rev C E Kennet to some extent and also able to confirm the query of Sriram V that the Kennet Lane, Egmore is indeed named after Rev CE

Kennet, the Incumbent of St. John the Baptist Church, located adjacent to Kennet Lane, at Pantheon Road (presently Police Commissioner Office Road) for sixteen years from 1868 to 1884 (i.e. until his death) as an enduring memorial to his missionary activities¹³ and not after his father as I have suggested to Sriram earlier.

About the Author

VB Ganesan is a notable translator. He worked in different capacities in All India Radio, Information & Cultural Affairs Department, Govt. of West Bengal, and the Internet Editorial of *The Hindu*. Among his translations, notable is *History will Absolve Me* by Fidel Castro, *Red Star over China* by Edgar Snow (earned First Prize in Ki.Pa. Aravindan Memorial Award for the best translation appeared in Tamil between 2001-2020), *History of the Working Class* by Sukomal Sen and *20 Fehuda Stories* of Satyajit Ray.

Among his own writings, notable is *Satyajit Ray – His Life and Times*, *Tagore – The Life Sketch of the Steward of Bengal* and *Tagore from a Multi-dimensional View* (his contribution in various fields).

After preparing a short biography on Michael Madhusudan Dutt, he is currently into research on the families of Rebecca and Henrietta in Madras to write an authoritative biography of Michael in English and Tamil soon.

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– THE EDITOR

Maiden World Cup Squash title

India made history by winning its maiden World Cup title in squash in the event held in Chennai at the Express Avenue Mall. It was the moment that squash lovers were waiting for and finally a quarter century after the Indian Squash Academy (ISA) came to the southern metropolis, a big splash had come about to signal India's entry into the elite band of world cup winners. Australia, Egypt and England were the only countries which had won

this coveted title earlier. What made the performance in this SDAT World Cup event even more outstanding was that India did not lose even a single tie in this competition involving 12 teams and finished it off in style downing the top seed Hong Kong (China) again by a spectacular 3-0 margin. Earlier to that in the semi-final, India had downed Egypt considered the numero uno in squash and that too on a facile note. Not just that, but there is more to

by
S.R. Suryanarayan

this grand moment in Indian squash.

This is a mixed team event, comprising two men and two women players, each playing singles. Of the four in the Indian team, Joshna Chinappa, Abhay Singh and Vela van Senthilkumar hail from Chennai and what is more were groomed at the ISA. The fourth is Anahat Singh, the

17-year-old national women's champion from New Delhi and currently the country's squash sensation. Anahat too is not new to ISA. It was thus the experience and wisdom of Joshna, combining with the youth and drive of Abhay and Vela van along with the brilliance of Anahat that saw this Indian team scale a new peak in the world of excellence in this sport. As the thoroughly happy Secretary General of the Squash Rackets Federation of India and former

national coach Cyrus Poncha was to say "it is an absolutely outstanding achievement. It cannot really be compared with anything before, because this is the first time we are winning a WSF team championship event, whether men, women or mixed team, junior or senior. This is the only time we have won it, our best performance earlier was a bronze in the junior and fifth place in the senior. A very special occasion indeed and since this was achieved at home made it even more special."

For Chennaites certainly it was a squash mela, and more so since this was held not at a conventional venue but a Mall. This is not the first time that the organisers had brought a major tournament to a shopping area nor will it be the last considering what a hit this has become. Indeed, that is the beauty of this sport. Squash can be played within a club premise but also if required on the beach sands or just in the midst of traffic at a key junction or virtually anywhere. Portable court is the key. In a bid to bring the sport to the general public, this move to organise it in a Mall certainly made many shoppers join the regular fans to get engrossed in the excitement of the competition. It was in such a setting that Joshna had won her Asian champi-

onship title eight years ago. A veteran now, still full of beans, never short of her known skills, stamina and hunger for excellence, Joshna it was who proved the inspiration for the team. Fittingly in the final, she laid the winning path, and the rest completed the job much to the cheers and excitement of the packed corridors of the Mall.

At the turn of the millennium, when the ISA became a reality thanks to the visionary zeal of N Ramachandran, the then Secretary-General of SRFI and more importantly a leading industrialist, the aim of the national body was to raise a facility where a 'planned growth' could be the theme. Seasons later, results began to flow with national champions in various age groups trooping out. Success then came at the Asian level and it has now touched the World level and India is now recognised as a force in the sport of squash. Happy tidings all. With the next Asian Games in 2026 in Japan and thereafter the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics where squash is to make its debut, there is much to look forward to. For now, let's savour the happy moments that this proud bunch of players have provided.



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