

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Sustaining the TN growth story

The new government would have been in place for more than a month by the time this issue goes to press. A perusal of the ministerial berths allotted to various legislators shows a mix of heavyweights and newcomers, with the tilt in favour of the latter. While much has been debated upon the choices for the various portfolios, nothing has polarized opinion as much as the choice of a young woman (she must probably be amongst the youngest ministers ever in the history of the state) to head one of the state's most important one's, that of Industries and Investment Promotion.

Soon after the polls ended came the news that the state had clocked a double-digit real economic growth of 10.83 percent for 2025-26 as per statistics released by the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme

Implementation. Coming on the back of a 11.19 percent growth the earlier year, it represented a remarkable achievement of consecutive years of double-digit growth and reaffirmed Tamil Nadu's status as the country's second largest economy. The primary drivers of the growth story were the performance of the secondary sector, which registered nearly

● by Karthik Bhatt

a 15 percent increase, and the services sector, which registered a 8.5 percent increase, both comfortably higher than the national average.

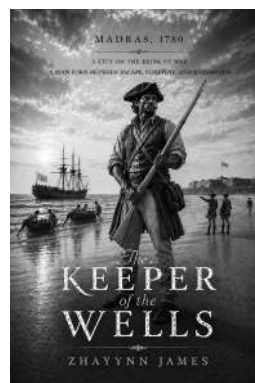
The economic development of the state, initially spearheaded by the manufacturing success story and its later transfor-

mation into a services-oriented economy by the late 1990s and 2000s has been well-documented. But let us be in no doubt that we are at a particularly testing time in history, faced with tremendous upheaval brought about by global headwinds at a macro economic level. We have already seen how the tariffs imposed by the USA mid-last year hit the state's export economy hard, with the textile industry being particularly affected. Just as there were signs of some revival thanks to the tariff reset in early February came the West Asia crisis, which has again impacted a wide range of industries right from poultry to knitwear. As another article elsewhere in this issue points out, the industrial ecosystem is also plagued by problems of

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HERITAGE WATCH

The Family that protected the Water Supply



The story of the Nicholases of Seven Wells is too well known to repeat in these columns. Suffice it to say that between the 1780s and early 1900s, they held the title of Custodian of the Seven Wells. Zhayynn James who is of that family has now completed a fictional work based on that story. The book is slated for release on July 11 and will add to the volume of books on Madras.



Why Everything feels Temporary

Imagine waking up, looking around a room, and realizing that almost nothing in life is guaranteed to be there next year. The high-tech apartment in Sholinganallur is a temporary rental, the software role is a one-year project contract, the friends gathered for evening tea in Mylapore might relocate to Bengaluru or Hyderabad by summer, and the phone in hand is buzzing with digital updates that will be entirely forgotten by tomorrow morning. Lately, an unsettling feeling has been spreading across Chennai's bustling corridors: everything feels like it is just "for now".

This isn't just a passing mood. The very foundation of how

people live, work, and connect has shifted, transforming the city from a historical stronghold of generational permanence into a fast-paced hub of tran-

● by A Special Correspondent

sition. For decades, Chennai was defined by long-term roots, families staying in ancestral homes for generations, and professionals spending thirty years at a single company or banking institution. Today, that world is changing. Society is living in an era where permanence feels like

a rare luxury, and transience has become the default setting of modern life.

The biggest anchor in life used to be a steady career. In Chennai's traditional landscape, corporate loyalty and predictable paths were the gold standard. Today, along the Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR) IT corridor, that stable ground has largely vanished. Hundreds of thousands of individuals navigate a world of freelance software gigs, short-term tech contracts, and project-based roles. While this shift is often praised as the ultimate expression of professional freedom, the emotional toll is heavy. When income depends on a

project contract that expires in six months, planning for the future feels impossible. Milestones like purchasing a home or starting a family become stressful mathematical equations, and people spend half their energy worrying about what they will do when the current project ends.

Because work is constantly shifting, living arrangements have to follow. Combined with skyrocketing real estate costs, the traditional Chennai dream of buying a plot of land and building a permanent home is slipping out of reach for a vast majority of the younger workforce. Instead, a generation of renters and nomads

has emerged, packing their lives into cardboard boxes and moving between fully furnished apartments, co-living spaces, and gated communities in Velachery or Thoraipakkam.

This constant shifting does something painful to the human sense of community. When an individual knows they might only be in an apartment for twelve months, they are less likely to learn the neighbours' names, participate in resident welfare associations, or invest in the local neighbourhood. Chennai's traditionally close-knit communities risk turning

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Sustaining the TN growth story

(Continued from page 1)

rising electricity tariffs, extensive cross-subsidization and structural inefficiencies of the power sector – all of which hinder growth of energy-intensive units. Yet another challenge that looms large is that of ensuring that the state is geared up for a smooth integration and eventually, a transition towards an AI driven economy.

The next phase of the state's industrial journey is going to revolve around areas such as Artificial Intelligence, deep technology, cybersecurity, cloud computing, EV technology and semiconductors. These will bring with them associated challenges, primary of which would be upskilling of the existing workforce, which is an essential aspect to attract investments in these areas. The State Planning Commission has already warned that the state has a limited window of five to seven years to prepare its workforce for the age of AI, failing which it would end up losing its demographic advantage, as already 14 per cent of the population are above the age of 60.

Sustaining the growth of

the industrial ecosystem will be a key performance indicator of the government. Taking cognizance of some of the common challenges faced by investors seeking to invest in the state, it has promised a 21-day clearance guarantee with single-window approvals and a direct escalation system to the chief minister for grievances relating to investments. While all these make the right noises, it is important that they don't remain just as empty promises and are followed truly in spirit. Engineering giant Larsen & Toubro's decision to invest Rs 18600 crores in the state across three locations and the signing of the MOUs (signaling the first major investment for the new government) would probably come as a relief for the young minister, who has been under fire for taking to social media reels to invite investments into the state. If she can show that she is capable of continuing to build on the industrial progress of the state, the means to the end will not matter. But the road is not going to be easy, and this journal wishes her a successful term ahead.

Why Everything feels temporary

(Continued from page 1)

into places people merely occupy, rather than places where they feel deep cultural roots.

Technology and rapid physical mobility have amplified this fast-paced lifestyle, conditioning society to expect everything to disappear. Social media apps are literally built to provide a blank slate every 24 hours, and this culture of quick updates has bled into real-life relationships. Digital tools make it easier than ever to meet new people across Chennai, but they also make it incredibly easy to walk away. Furthermore, because people are constantly relocating for global offshore assignments or moving to different tech hubs, long-term friendships suffer from frequent interruptions. Keeping a deep, lifelong friendship alive takes immense, conscious effort when people no longer share the same physical city or evening routines.

Psychologists note that human beings fundamentally need stability to be happy. The mind requires routines, familiar faces, and steady environments to feel safe and grounded. When a job, a bedroom, and a social circle

are constantly updating like a smartphone app, it causes a deep, quiet kind of exhaustion. Humans are not designed to live in a state of perpetual transition, and having to constantly reinvent a life every few months takes a massive toll on peace of mind.

Yet, there is a silver lining to this fluid lifestyle. People who navigate this fast world learn to be incredibly resilient. They become highly adaptable, open-minded, and excellent at navigating unexpected economic challenges. The real goal of modern life is finding a balance. Individuals can enjoy the flexibility to change careers or explore new opportunities, but there remains a fundamental need to protect emotional safety.

Because people can no longer rely on big companies or permanent neighbourhoods to provide stability, it must be built from the inside out. Creating a meaningful life today means making steady personal habits, protecting mental health, and holding tightly to the people who matter even in a world where everything else keeps moving.

The Mills of Government Grind Slowly

Those of you who follow these long and loquacious ramblings of *The Man from Madras Musings* will know that among his favourite subjects are the ways of Babudom aka the bureaucracy in this our State, which despite this slowness, clocks double digit growth consistently. It only makes you wonder as to how much more we could grow if the mills of government ground on a little faster. But be that as it may, MMM is thankful for whatever is done and at the same time, wishes it could be hastened a wee bit.

Take the task of recording the histories of the various departments of the government. The same task, in the private sector, is a year-long project at most. But with the government, there is no accounting for when it can begin, when it can lose steam, how many times later it is resurrected, and finally when, if at all, the findings are published. MMM

was being revived. But now there was a new political dispensation in place, Mater Dei and Pater Familias both having gone and the latter's son being the head. MMM was asked if the photos that depicted Mater Dei and her partymen could be replaced by Pater and his extended brood, both familial and temporal. MMM, left with no choice, agreed. He reflected on how Mater Dei too, had scanned the photos and demanded the excising of Pater and his lot. The boot had since moved to the other foot. Mercifully, there was no tampering with content and the book was released. MMM got a shawl and a bouquet of flowers.

All of these memories came flooding back when MMM was contacted around six months ago by another department of the government. And now that this project too has gone into a limbo, its inside story can be told. It was as follows –

They came laden, rather in the manner of the Magi, with plenty of information and the discussion that ensued was rather fruitful. When they departed, it was with assured tread. They would soon be back they said, with the man up top, to discuss dates, deadlines and commercial aspects. And that was the last that MMM saw of the trio.

Subsequent enquiries revealed that elections had been announced. And that with the electoral code of conduct in place, no decisions could be taken. It was in vain that MMM suggested that work ought to continue, for commercial matters could always be discussed later and finalised, when the elections were over. To this, the reply was that such a pathbreaking decision was not within the purview of anyone's powers. Clearly the writing of history was one of those subjects that

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

is not going by hearsay. He knows, by experience.

The first time that MMM was commissioned to take on such a work was around 13 years ago. A landmark building of the city was approaching its centenary and though everyone in power must have known of the 100th birthday even on the day the structure was inaugurated, they woke up to the fact only a few months before the centenary! MMM was called in, asked to name his price, told not to expect any help by way of archival materials and make sure a book was ready by the date fixed for the celebration. MMM and team got down to it, worked with the officers and lesser bureaucracy, made plenty of friends, found tons of archival material and finally completed the manuscript and layout.

All would have gone as per schedule but there was one of those periodic transfers of just about everyone in the administration and with that the book went into cold storage. It would have languished had not the man up top in the pecking order consistently pushed for it. But even he was no match for Mater Dei who for some reason decreed that the book could come out later. And that was that.

Years rolled by. The strands of hair on MMM's head greyed, those that were left that is, and he aged. One day there was a call – the book

Taken at the Flood

The department that contacted *The Man from Madras Musings* had a hoary history as far as the city was concerned for it was one of those without which the city would breakdown. Or should MMM say that despite this department the city had not broken down? But anyway it was one of those that was best co-operated with, failing which your life could become a desert. And so, MMM was all attention.

The man up top had decreed that the department's history had to be written, said the lead among a team of three visitors who trooped into MMM's office one day. And he had also decreed that MMM had to be roped in. The lead, unlike in the previous story, was all eagerness to help. She had a fair bit of information with her and every once in a while, when in doubt would glance at her two assistants, who as befitting protocol, sat a little to the rear. MMM gave them a suitable chapter structure, asked them to go and scour for archival material and then come back for a review. Unlike in the previous episode, this request for archival resources was not met with shock. There was apparently plenty to work on and so the team promised to soon be back.

A couple of weeks later, they did come. And there was no prodding on MMM's part.

could violate public peace when elections were around. MMM, having concluded that nothing could be done, pigeonholed the project and went on to other things.

The elections as we all know, brought forth the unexpected and that led to the expected – the usual transfer of IAS officers. MMM read that his man up top, vide GO No such and such was transferred from department X to department Y vide so and so, who was already transferred, or words to that effect. In short, the history project had gone into cold storage. But with experience, MMM knows it is not dead. Give it around a decade or so, and it will be back, dusted off the shelves and given a new lease of life. Only MMM is not so certain that the team of three that came to meet him will be around. They looked as though they were on the verge of retirement. But MMM does have a worry – will the archival material that the team collected survive the passage of time?

Tailpiece

There is a growing body of thought that with the change in regime, the incidence of posters disfiguring walls has come down. *The Man from Madras Musings* is not so sure. He would prefer to wait and watch. It is early days yet.

– MMM

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



More on Woodlands Drive-In

With nostalgia I read the article written by Mylapore Venkata Shashidhar – *Woodlands Drive-In: A Restaurant That Became a City's Memory* (MM, Vol. XXXVI No. 3), May 16, 2026. I agree with him and would like to add a few points.

1. Favourite dishes were the crispy vadai and rava idly.
2. We could exchange a handshake, smile or strike a conversation with the famous singer P.B. Srinivos who would be there. He moved to New Woodlands on Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai after closure of the drive-in.
3. From the third to fifth year while studying engineering, soon after getting the hall ticket for our semester exams, we friends, used to meet at the drive-in to exchange notes, discuss expected questions and the strategy to be adopted in studying for the exams.
4. Twenty years after leaving college, around 50 engineering students of our batch met here and from then onwards we have been meeting regularly at this resort or the other. This is our 47th year but Drive-in Woodlands is still green in memory.
5. In 2004, at Venus restaurant in Muscat, I happened to meet Mr Bhat, a former employee at Drive-in. He recalled that all the employees were given a free pass to watch the movies released by Gemini Studios.

I thought of sharing my experience at the Drive-in Woodlands with your readers.

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Watch out if you are visiting Elliots beach

I am a senior citizen and I go to Elliots beach almost every day along with my wife for an evening walk, hoping to catch the cool breeze and uncontaminated free air.

There are two walkways in this beach, one with a smooth floor and the other one a little less smooth. We chose the second one for our walk.

On the beach there are hundreds of shops selling food and other assorted items with several plastic chairs around each shop. In addition, there are more than a hundred stray dogs looking for throwaway eatables.

Further on the walkway there are some pushcarts selling various products including eatables and frequently two-wheelers are driven on the platform itself. There are well designed cement benches, which are often occupied either by vendors who have spread their wares on them or the stray dogs lying on them, leaving less space for the visitors.

As one walks on the pathway, it is difficult to see the seawater, as the view is blocked by the numerous shops in many places.

On May 15, 2026, as I was walking on the walkway with the pace that a senior citizen like me is capable of, two dogs were chasing each other and one of the dogs suddenly dashed against my leg in high speed, as a result of which I fell down on my knees and found it difficult to get up. My wife and some passersby helped me up and gave me a lot of unsolicited advice.

While one of them advised me to sit on the bench for some time, others told me to drink some water, walk with a long stick and not walk without being accompanied by a youngster. The final advice was that I should avoid Elliots beach for walking, as the place is crowded with shops, pushcarts and stray dogs.

After relaxing for a few minutes, I limped back to my flat and reminisced on my fall – violently hit by the stray dog. It reminded me of the incident I witnessed a few days earlier, when two young girls were sitting on the cement bench eating some food while two stray dogs were standing near them, looking at the food. Embarrassed by this, the girls started walking and the two dogs followed them with a third dog joining in. The girls panicked and started running and were chased by the dogs. A few alarmed passersby drove away the dogs and the girls quickly left Elliots beach.

Several people who have travelled around the world have opined that Elliots beach is the most beautiful beach in the world. However, while it would remain naturally beautiful all the time, it should not be unnaturally marred by the numerous shops, thrown away eatables, stray dogs and hawkers. It is a million dollar question whether Greater Chennai Corporation would take any steps to maintain its natural beauty!

What's a Summer Vacation for, Anyway?

There is a particular kind of silence that descends on Chennai in April and May. Not the poetic, misty silence of hill stations or the contemplative hush of a library, but the practical silence of people refusing to step outside unless absolutely necessary. The sun, meanwhile, behaves less like a kindly celestial body and more like an over-enthusiastic industrial lamp that has forgotten the concept of moderation.

And yet – this is when the school calendar declares, with great optimism, that it is vacation time.

Most teachers and parents in the city are only a few weeks into the new academic term when the word “summer vacation” starts appearing in conversation like a promised land. Those outside education assume it is a long holiday filled with leisurely mornings, travel plans, and the noble pursuit of doing absolutely nothing. Those inside education, meanwhile, are usually trying to finish portions, revise worksheets, complete worksheets, update records, and simultaneously remember where they kept their own sanity.

Somewhere between these two perceptions lies the truth – slightly crumpled, mildly sunburnt, and carrying a steel waterbottle.

There was indeed a time when summer vacation meant something closer to a pause. A proper pause. Teachers could step away from school registers without feeling as though they had forgotten an organ at home. Children disappeared into grandparents' houses, mango-sticky afternoons, cricket in the lane, and the occasional “don't come inside, you'll bring the heat with you” warning from elders.

But modern vacation has developed a new personality.

In Chennai today, even during “break”, WhatsApp groups of schools remain remarkably alive. Circulars arrive with cheerful urgency. There are reminders about “light reading”, “holiday homework (creative, not burdensome, of course)”, and “a quick update of pending documentation”. One begins to suspect that the vacation was designed primarily to give everyone time to catch up on the work they were doing during term time!

And yet – hard is not the same as impossible.

If one thing Chennai teaches you (along with how to survive without stepping on a hot pavement barefoot), it is adaptation. The real challenge of summer vacation is not the heat alone, but the art of protecting it from being quietly filled with work. Because between lesson planning and Excel sheets, there is supposed to be something called rest. A slightly neglected concept, but still valid.

Of course, “rest” in Chennai is a flexible idea. It may include:

Sitting directly in the line of a fan and calling it “recovery”.

Strategically planning all errands before 9 a.m. as though one is conducting a military operation.



Drinking tender coconut water and believing it counts as hydration, wellness, and emotional support all at once.

And the classic: promising oneself that this year, summer will be “productive but relaxing”, a phrase that usually collapses by the second week.

Walk through any neighbourhood in the city during peak summer and you will see the unofficial curriculum of the season in action. Children cycling at 6.30 a.m. with the seriousness of early commuters. Parents negotiating with ice cream vendors as though they are part of essential supply chains. Apartments humming with the faint ambition of “summer classes” that somehow resemble school, but with marginally more boredom and better snacks.

And yet, there is something deeply important about this pause – even if it refuses to behave like a pause.

A Chennai summer vacation is not just a break from school; it is a break around school. It is when children learn that boredom is not an emergency. That afternoons can be slow without being unproductive. That a well-timed trip to a relative's house can feel like a full cultural expedition. That mangoes are a legitimate food group. And that “I'll do it later” is sometimes a seasonal philosophy.

Which brings us to the slightly uncomfortable question raised in conversations about school calendars: are vacations truly designed for rest, or merely arranged for convenience?

As one observes Chennai's rhythm – where heat, humidity, and harvests of mangoes quietly dictate daily life – it becomes clear that the academic calendar does not always negotiate with geography. The city does not pause for summer; it simply adjusts its posture and survives it with grace, ceiling fans, and complaint.

Perhaps that is why summer vacation here feels both essential and slightly ironic. It arrives at a time when stepping outside feels like a calculated decision. Yet it also becomes the only socially accepted permission to slow down.

And so, we return to the original question: What is a vacation for, anyway?

In Chennai, it is not escape. It is not luxury. It is not even rest in its purest form.

It is a negotiated truce between heat and habit, between work and weariness, between the calendar and the human need to occasionally do nothing without justification.

And if one manages, in between the worksheets and the WhatsApp reminders, to sit under a fan with a plate of sliced mangoes and absolutely no guilt at all – then perhaps, just perhaps, the vacation has done its job.

Priyanka Soman

When I was discussing my experience on Elliots beach with one of my elderly friends, he said that one should look at the positive side instead of being obsessed with the negativities. He further remarked that we should be grateful to the Corporation for allowing only

stray dogs and not monkeys to roam around on the beach!

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The Government College of Arts and Crafts, Egmore

The Government College of Fine Arts (formerly, the Government College of Arts and Crafts), Egmore, is the oldest institution of its kind in the country. Last year marked 175 years since its initial founding as the Madras School of Art by Dr Alexander Hunter in 1850. Surprisingly, there was no major public commemoration of this milestone. Over the course of the next few issues, we present a profile of this historic institution, which was originally written in 2020 for the book *Nurturing music and fine arts – A historical perspective, brought out by the Tamil Nadu Dr J Jayalalitha Music and Fine Arts University, to which the institution has been affiliated since 2013.*

The Government College of Arts and Crafts, Egmore, is the oldest institution of its kind in India. Over the course of its existence, it has played an important role in the development of our traditional arts and crafts as a formal branch of study and documentation of its various forms. Several distinguished names in the world of arts, architecture and sculpture such as EB Havell, RF Chisholm, KCS Paniker and DP Roy Choudhury have served as its Superintendents and Principals. It has also produced several notable alumni such as KM Gopal, KM Adimoolam and S Dhanapal. This hallowed institution had its genesis in the Madras School of Arts, founded in 1850 by Dr Alexander Hunter, a surgeon of the East India Company.

Born in 1816, Dr Alexander Hunter arrived in India in the



Dr Alexander Hunter.

1840s after having had his medical education in Edinburgh. He was a man of varied interests, as he had studied natural history and botany too while pursuing his medical education. He had also passed through a formal course of study in the School of Design under the Royal Scottish Academy. His artistic education was completed at the School of Design in Paris.

Arriving in India, Dr Hunter was posted as a medical officer in Chenglepet near Madras, where the light nature of work meant that he occupied himself with collecting minerals and objects of natural history. He found the area to be rich in clays, feldspars and siliceous rocks, which were useful for making pottery and porcelain. Engaging the services of a local potter, he learnt the technique of making pottery and soon, native potters were being enabled to work accurately from drawings under his directions. The manufacture of bricks and tiles was yet another area where he spent considerable attention. Acquiring the services of two soldiers who had worked in the Staffordshire and Welsh potteries, he engaged the prisoners of the Chenglepet jail in making tiles and good bricks. In a short span of time, forty to fifty different qualities of pottery of various shades were being made in Chenglepet. Several porcelains and glazes of English, French and Italian varieties were also being produced. Hunter sourced the minerals for making the moulds and other raw material such as pastes for the wares from across various places in South India. In 1850, the machinery, apparatus and moulds were shifted to the Orphan Asylums in Black Town in Madras with the permission of the Government.

Dr Hunter was transferred to Madras a short while later and was appointed the surgeon of Black Town. Struck by the poverty of the native inhabitants and with a view to providing them with gainful employment, Dr Hunter promoted several new occupations. These included pencil-drawing, casting of bronzes and cutting of marbles, making of ropes, cleaning of fibres of aloe, plantain, palmyra and coconut leaves, etc. With a view to promote industrial activity, rewards were offered for discovery of clays suitable for pottery, for native sulphate of lime and for a substitute for linen-thread from the fibres of the plantain. The natural consequence of all these

activities was the establishment at his own cost, of a School of Arts in Madras.

The account of the initial years of the School as reported in *The Arts Journal* make for interesting reading. The announcement of the establishment of an institution for the promotion of art education seems to have been welcomed with cheer, going by the great number of applications from Madras and afar. A branch school at Vepery and subsequently another branch at the Military Male Orphan Asylum were opened, under the superintendence of masters trained under Dr Hunter. A fee of one rupee per month was charged from the students. This was augmented by Dr Hunter, who apart from contributing personal funds, also gave up the lower part of his house and library for the running of the school.

The subjects taught included

● by Karthik Bhatt

geometrical and free-hand drawing, lithography, wood engraving, etching and pottery. Students whose works were advanced were also helped to market their produce. An industrial school was added a couple of years later, where glazed, painted and encaustic tiles, and bricks of all kinds were produced. Paper made from plantain and aloe fibre for drawing and writing purposes was also produced. Attempts were also made at modelling and casting of native figures, toys and table ornaments. Dr Hunter also started a journal called the *Indian Journal of Arts, Sciences and Manufactures*, a richly illustrated work with lithographs and etchings which had a lot of material on the various subjects taught. However, its publication ceased after just nine issues.

Over the first three years of its existence, the total number of students in the artistic department was 472, while the industrial department had 45 students. Dr Hunter applied to the Government to be relieved from his duties in order to devote his time to the schools. Unwilling to part with his services, the Government made him a medical store-keeper, which gave him more time at his disposal. Around this time, a committee

had been formed to look into the management of the industrial school. Considering the progress of the students, it was recommended that the Government be approached for support. A sum of Rs 500 per month for five years was sanctioned as allowance for the services of a glaze-fireman and a good artist, besides a one-time grant of Rs 6000 for the purchase of machinery, models, casts and studies from England. In March 1855, the school was taken over by the Government.

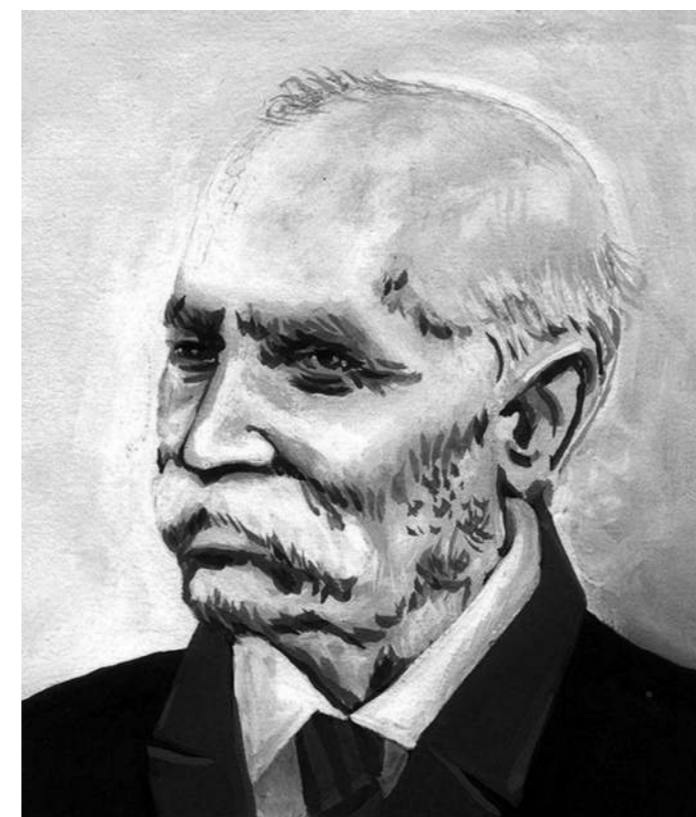
In 1856, Dr Hunter received the services of an able assistant in the form of Archibald Cole, an artist from the Kensington School of Design, who was made in-charge of the Industrial Section. Hunter for a brief while returned to England in 1858 on sick leave and returned a year later. He took the advantage of his visit to study copper plate engraving and also receive some

lessons in wood engraving. The School was put under the superintendence of Dr CM Duff during his absence. Dr Duff introduced the manufacture of bricks, paving and roofing tiles, water pipes and construction of cooking ranges in the Industrial Section during his tenure. In September 1859, Hunter resumed charge of the institution.

In 1860, the School found itself being the subject of a Special Enquiry instituted by the Government of Madras into its working and as to whether it would be viable to continue running it. This was necessitated by the fact that there seemed to be a prevailing opinion that the institution was not making much progress by way of producing tangible results. The Committee undertook a thorough investigation into its working and unanimously recommended that the School, by virtue of its uniqueness, had an important role to play in the development of the arts and should continue to function. It drew attention to the pottery workshops established by Arunachalam Mudali at Chintradripet and to the brick and tile manufactory undertaken by Mr Midford in Poonamallee High Road, both with the help of machinery and people supplied by the School.

It also adverted to the opinion of the civil architect and of Mr Wright, locomotive Superintendent of the Madras Railway, both of whom attributed good results to the School of Arts. The fact that the students of the Engineering College regularly underwent training at the School in areas such as brick and tile making, was also instrumental in the Committee pronouncing its verdict. In order to improve its usefulness, the Committee made a set of recommendations, which included employing of additional manpower to assist as teachers, instituting of prize scholarships to induce art students to prolong their stay in the school, etc.

Even after being finally relieved from medical service, Dr Hunter's services were retained by the Government as he was appointed on several committees such as the Sanitary Committee, the Drugs Committee, a Farm Committee and also the Committee of the Agri-Horticultural Society. The School of Arts was of great assistance to these committees in drawing, etching, engraving and painting illustrations for their proceedings, besides making useful and ornamental terra-cotta works, draining tiles and flower vases. Yet another institution that greatly benefited from Dr Hunter's services was the Photographic Society, of which he was one of the founders



Robert Fellowes Chisholm. Picture courtesy: The Hindu.



Panoramic view of Government Fine Arts, Chennai. Picture courtesy: Wikipedia.

in 1857. The Photographic Society in fact functioned from the premises of the School of Arts during its initial years. Photography as a subject was introduced by Dr Hunter in the School as early as 1855-56, just over a decade since its invention in 1839. Today, several photographs of Madras city and the Presidency taken around the 1870s and 1880s have been digitised and preserved online.

With the question of its existence being resolved, the School of Arts began to establish itself as a mentor for other institutions of its kind being setup across the country. It was approached for assistance and advice in the establishment of similar institutions in various places such as Bombay, Calcutta and Jaffna,

besides in States such as Travancore, Vizianagaram and Jeypore. In all, assistance was offered to 33 schools. By the time Hunter retired in 1873, the School had taught more than 4200 students, of which a large percentage had found remunerative employment in Government and other establishments.

Following Hunter's retirement, Major WS Hunt was appointed Acting Superintendent of the School. Despite the special instructors as recommended by the Committee and approved by the Government more than a decade earlier not being appointed, the Administration Report of the Madras Municipality for the year 1876 noted that the quality and quantity of work done at the School was remarkable. As evidence of the same, the School had been awarded a gold medal by Her Majesty's Commissioners for contribution to the International Exhibition of 1873 and two other medals for casts and metal works sent to the Vienna Exhibition the same year. Dowley, the Foreman of the Industrial Section had also been awarded a silver medal for the specimens of the ceramic ware, casts, etc. at the Madras Fine Arts Exhibition that had been just held.

In 1873, the School yet again found itself the subject of an enquiry instituted by the Government about its functioning. Reviewing the areas where it had made progress and areas that needed attention, the Committee formed for this purpose suggested various remedial measures such as appointment of a Superintendent for the entire institution (as opposed to different ones for the Industrial and Art sections), employment of an artistic instructor with a British reputation and the gradual expansion of the school into an industrial college. The Com-

mittee also specified the subjects it would like to be taught in the Industrial and Art departments.

The call for appointment of a Superintendent (albeit not a full-time one) was answered in the form of a man who was altering the landscape of Madras around this time, RF Chisholm. Employed as Executive Engineer of the Puri Division under the Government of Bengal in the early 1860s, Chisholm arrived in Madras in 1866, having won the prize instituted by its Government for the best design for the Presidency College on the Marina. A new designation Consulting Architect to the Government of Madras was created especially for him by the Governor, Lord Napier. Amongst Chisholm's earliest contracts was the construction of the PWD Buildings on the eastern face of the Chepauk Palace. Chisholm would then go on to work on several other projects such as the old Madras Club buildings (on the grounds of the Express Estate), the B&C Mills in Pulichthope, conversion of the old courts in Royapettah into the Amir Mahal and the renovation of the ceramic ware, casts, etc. at the Madras Fine Arts Exhibition that had been just held.

Chisholm's growing stature meant that he was the natural choice to relieve Major WS Hunt of his charge. It was around this time that he was also involved in his most famous work in Madras, the Senate House of the Madras University which was inaugurated in 1879. The campus of the Madras School of Art became his home, as he employed the students of the School extensively in designing the interiors of the Senate House. The variety of stained glass, mosaic and painted canvases produced by them under the watchful eyes of Chisholm are a sight to behold even today. In an

article titled 'Indian Industrial Development' published in 1909 in the *Journal* of the East Indian Association, Chisholm would recount how the School worked in conjunction with the Consulting Architect's office during his tenure. The School became the architect's workshop and the materials and articles indented for and supplied by it was paid out of sanctioned estimates for public buildings. He also recounted its working, which was divided into the morning and afternoon halves. While the mornings were spent in 'educational activities', the students worked on the industrial projects as apprentices at the various handicrafts in the afternoons.

Chisholm's tenure as Superintendent was also marked by changes in the courses of instruction. A branch for girls was opened in the Arts department. It was however short-lived, for by 1879-80, it had become defunct. Two new branches of Industry were added, viz., enamelling glass and decorating in oil colour, and two others, metal work and wood carving were revived. The Artistic and Industrial Departments were also amalgamated.

Chisholm's stint in Madras ran into troubled waters in the 1880s, when charges of irregularities in maintenance of accounts surfaced. He had been angling for the post of the Superintending Engineer of the Madras Presidency, an appointment that the Government was not keen on conferring him with. This must have also been instrumental in the search for a successor to replace him as Superintendent of the School of Arts. The search ended with the appointment of EB Havell, an artist from England.

Nothing much is known about Havell's early life, except that he was an alumnus of the

School of Design, South Kensington, which later became the Royal College of Art. He was appointed as the Superintendent of the Madras School of Arts in 1884, which marked the beginning of a two-decade teaching career in India. He was the first full-time Superintendent of the institution, a post that had been recommended by the Committee a decade earlier. His tenure was initially for a period of five years and he was appointed on a salary of Rs 500 per month, with an additional allowance of Rs 50 per month towards house rent.

Havell was instrumental in modifying the curriculum and introducing the study of Indian designs and decorative patterns into the courses. Going against the popular opinion prevailing at the time amongst the authorities that Indian architecture was truly a matter of the past, he set about actively trying to dispel the myth. Soon after taking charge of the School, he hired three master craftsmen, a wood-carver from Ramnad (Meenakshi Achari, later succeeded by his son Kalimuthu Achari), a *sthapathi* from Kumbakonam (Ramawamy Sthapathi) and a goldsmith from the Vizianagaram district to teach the crafts that he wished to develop as courses of study. Wood-carving as a course had been started as early as 1877 but had not been popular until a regular class was established. The increasing demand for carved furniture amongst the Europeans led to a corresponding increase in the demand for the course. While the framework or structure of the wood work was that of a modern cabinet maker, the ornamentation drew greatly from the Dravidian models.

(To be continued next fortnight)

Many strings to her bow

A multi-faceted personality like VR Devika, and to compress it into a short essay! Having known her for over 50 years, it is amazing how the simple, young girl blossomed before my eyes to the woman of substance she is today. She began her career with Madras Craft Foundation, earnest in discharging her duties and learning in the process, deeply involved in folk art and dances.

Prior to this she taught in a school in Shastri Nagar, then in PS School. A gifted teacher, Devika with her love for children, drove home many a lesson without it sounding preachy. She developed a skill for telling stories, related to arts and history and established herself as ace raconteur, very much in demand.

She learnt Bharatanatyam from the famous duo – Shanta and VP Dhananjayan. Being past the age of taking the stage did not deter this indefatigable young woman. She was brilliant in her lecdems on dance and won accolades for the same.

She is Founder and Managing Trustee of The Aseema Trust which is an NGO linking traditional performing arts and education where she developed many interesting programmes on these topics.

Deeply interested in Gand-

hian ideals, she has under her belt an M.A. in Gandhian Thought from Madurai Kamaraj University and a PhD on communication strategies of Mahatma Gandhi from the University of Madras. She loves sitting before a charkha and weaving, coaxing the threads to flow in quiet discipline.

Starting out as a journalist contributing to leading newspapers and journals, she is today an author of several books on leading personalities. Who can forget her fortnightly column 'View from the Wings' for *Madras Musings*? Her books on Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy, and on Rukmini Devi Arundale – both won the Ladli National Award for non-fiction in their respective years. In 2025, Devika was honoured by the

Vocational Excellence Award from WIA and the Rotary Clubs, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Amir Khusro Music Academy, and the British Council's Charles Wallace Award for Arts in Education.

I often think of this incredible woman as a whirling dervish of activity, moving from one field to another, and enjoying whatever she takes up. She received the Certificate of Honorary Citizenship from the Governor of Maryland during participation in the US State Department's international visitor leadership programme. Her lectures include traditional subjects such as Nataraja and the Cosmos, and collective consciousness in traditional performing arts like the Koothu.

● by Sabitha Radhakrishna

Governor of Tamil Nadu on International Women's Day. Her latest book on Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer has already won praise from readers.

Among the bouquet of awards and recognition, too long to be listed here, are the Kala Seva Ratna Award from the Rasika Ranjini Sabha, the

She has been on the folk and tribal arts and puppetry advisory committee of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Government of India.

More of her accomplishments would run into pages, so let's look at Devika the woman, peeling off the layers of academic excellence, and trying to



fathom what makes her go on and on the way she does!

She admits that not having a family with the string of commitments it entails, gives her unfettered freedom to do what she chooses to do, enhanced with the good health and energy that she is blessed with. The world is her family, and being a teacher brought in innumerable number of children who love her to distraction. "So having no children of my own is amply compensated by my many students."

"Yes, there was a time when I was young, I did think of marrying and settling down, but today I feel blessed that I

am single and free to expand my horizon and keep learning. I have so many nieces and nephews besides my students that I have never missed not having any of my own," she says with her wide smile.

I admire her *joie de vivre*, her zest for life and an incredible thirst for exploring new avenues. She is now on to her second wind so to speak, though in her early seventies. Call it serendipity when an ad film producer saw one of her television interviews and offered her a role in his ad film as Patti. As it happened, she had never faced a camera before, but she was a natural, and admits that she just enjoyed acting before the camera and had no inhibitions or nervousness whatsoever. The rest is history. Devika bagged 27 ad films, and was always the Patti in her different avatars. She loved the experience and another chance meeting with Sudha Kongura won her a small role in the feature film *Parasakthi*. And I won't be surprised if she takes on more films as she enjoys it.

Devika's philosophy is to enjoy whatever she takes up and to do it well, and turn down anything she would not consider suitable. Earning money has never been her prime aim, though as a single woman she needs monetary sustenance. Her eyes always twinkle with mischief and express a deep satisfaction with her life. Her grounding in Bharatanatyam surfaces in her own abhinaya, as she talks with gestures and speaks through her eyes.

Devika is a standing example of what you can achieve in life, with determination and not let age dog you or restrain you. "Do whatever you can and how you can, but be happy in all that you do," is her final quip to the elderly. And that sums it all up, the secret of her success – she is truly a living inspiration to us all!

Constraints that could limit the second wind

In their newly released book *A Sixth of Humanity*, Arvind Subramanian and Devesh Kapur point to a striking fact. Starting in 1980, Tamil Nadu grew as fast as China. It sustained that pace for nearly four decades. And it did so without the early agricultural surge that drove growth in many north-western states. Tamil Nadu built its rise on manufacturing automobiles, engineering goods, textiles, leather. Export-linked industries built on formal firms and a steady integration with global markets. For years, that model delivered.

But this dynamism did not last uninterrupted. Between 1991 and 2011, Tamil Nadu was the fourth fastest-growing major state in India. In the decade that followed, from 2012 to 2020, it slipped to eighth place. The state did not fall into stagnation, but it lost momentum relative to its competitors. It struggled to attract fresh investment in manufacturing, despite its deep industrial base, strong human capital and established infrastructure.

Several forces contributed to this slowdown. Labour costs rose faster than productivity.

Urbanisation lost steam. States such as Karnataka, Telangana and Gujarat competed harder for global capital. Tamil Nadu still had strengths, but it was not converting them into new opportunities as effectively as before.

But covid had come as a blessing. Post covid, based on available data, Tamil Nadu has again become one of the faster-growing major states. The recovery is broad. It is being driven by investment rather than by short-term stimulus. And, it is taking place during a global reordering of supply chains.

Seizing the China+1 Moment: Tamil Nadu has been one of the major states to capitalise the China+1 moment. Between 2021 and 2023, the state secured manufacturing investment commitments exceeding two lakh crores rupees from more than 200 companies, promising over 3.5 lakh jobs. The investments span both labour-intensive sectors such as footwear, textiles and furniture, and capital-intensive industries like electronics, automobiles and electric vehicles. Global firms, including Cisco, Sam-

sung, Hyundai Motor Company, Renault-Nissan Alliance and Ola Electric, are expanding their footprint in the state.

The most visible example is the expansion of the iPhone supply chain led by Apple through partners such as Foxconn and Tata Group.

Another notable signal is the decision of Ford Motor Company to resume manufacturing in Tamil Nadu after exiting in 2021, reflecting renewed confidence in the state's industrial base and administrative capacity. How did this momentum return? Writing in the *Financial Times*, economist Arvind Subramanian argues that Tamil Nadu has cultivated a reputation as a relatively easy place to do business. The state combines a large pool of engineering graduates, established automotive clusters and competitive incentives with something harder to replicate: policy stability and political consensus.

When Ford chose to shut its plant that year, the state helped manage labour and land issues smoothly. That experience convinced Ford that risks were lower in Tamil Nadu. When it decided to make a new invest-

ment in India, it chose the state again. The lesson was clear: when exits are predictable and fair, firms feel more confident about entering.

New Trade Openings: The timing of this administrative strengthening is significant. India has just concluded what officials call the "mother of all deals", a free trade agreement with the European Union, following similar pacts with the UK, New Zealand and Oman. Tamil Nadu, with its export-oriented manufacturing base in footwear, apparel, leather goods and light engineering, stands to gain from improved access to high-income markets as global supply chains diversify. Yet risks remain. The USA, India's largest export destination, has introduced new trade uncertainties through tariffs and legal disputes. While states cannot shape global demand, they can reduce domestic cost disadvantages. When external conditions tighten, competitiveness at home becomes critical.

The Fiscal Strain: This brings the focus to Tamil Nadu's fiscal situation. The investment

(Continued on page 7)

Paper Chains, Pig Genomes

In 1980, in Chennai, a young man dies of renal failure and his family hesitates to donate a kidney. For a cinematic timestamp, it was the year Rajinikanth's *Kaali* opened in theatres. In his short story *Kagitha Sangaligal*, Sujatha Rangarajan — modernist writer and pioneer of Tamil science fiction — imagined a tragedy with his usual economy. The plot, written in spare, unsentimental prose, poses a stark question: Are blood ties infallible when a life hangs in the balance? And the answer? The title itself, "Paper Chains", gives it away.

At her husband's bedside in the ward of the Government General Hospital, the young wife begins her daily vigil. Walking past the statue of Dr S Rangachari — the "Flying Doctor" who raced across the Madras Presidency in a Puss Moth monoplane to reach far flung patients — she is too preoccupied to notice the bird droppings streaking his bronze likeness. Another morning, she might have allowed herself a small smile at the good doctor's posthumous indignity. Not today. The shifting rhythms of the general ward, however, do not escape her: the medicinal smells, the low moans of the patients, the steady traffic of nurses, physicians and unauthorized visitors. Almost subconsciously she begins to pen lines with the cadence of a Beatles song.

People come, people go // Selling prayers, selling soap

By afternoon, the diagnosis arrives. On the chief doctor's

advice, she rushes to Spencer's on Mount Road, for a bottle of human albumin, clutching the prescription as if speed alone might change her husband's fate. At the iconic departmental store — where the Corporation sometimes set up temporary vaccination booths — she moves blindly past the familiar counters.

On the ride back, as the bus shudders, another line surfaces for her poem about the general ward. It comes to her the way the morning's line did — unbidden, a rhythm she can hold on to while everything around her shifts in ways she can't yet name.

People come/ people go // Selling prayers/ selling soap Human albumin — and hope.

Sujatha's spare telling stayed with me long after I closed the book. Days after I read the story, I mourned for the young widow, an English literature graduate. I asked myself: what if this renal affliction had happened to me, or to a loved one, at age twenty-five?

Blood relatives were once the only lifeline for those who needed a kidney. Sujatha's bleak ending belonged to a world where medicine offered no alternative — where love, fear, hesitation, or family politics could decide who lived and who died.

In the early 1980s, cyclosporine arrived. Thanks to this powerful immunosuppressant, altruistic strangers — even the newly dead — could donate their kidneys. For the patient, it

became a matter of waiting for the right match. But the wait can stretch into years, binding patients to dialysis machines, until life itself slips away.

Even as all this was happening, science was already looking for alternatives through research. In 1964, a young American schoolteacher lived almost nine months with a chimpanzee's kidney. Later, pigs became the chosen species to replace human organs — heart, liver, and kidneys.

In the 21st century, with genome-editing technology CRISPR, researchers began editing pig DNA with precision, silencing rejection signals and erasing hidden viruses. In 2024, one patient survived six months with a pig kidney carrying ten edits in its genome — a milestone.

In January 2025, Tim Andrews, a 66-year-old, received a pig kidney with 69 edits at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. By summer, he was

● by V. Vijaysree

Constraints that could limit the second wind

(Continued from page 6)

rebound is occurring alongside a deterioration in the state's public finances. The 16th Finance Commission (FC) raises several concerns. It notes weak GST buoyancy in Tamil Nadu and expects a revenue shortfall of about Rs 20,000 crores in 2024-25. Debt has risen sharply over the past decade. Tamil Nadu's debt-to-GSDP ratio has increased from 17.4 per cent in 2011-12 to 31.5 per cent in 2024-25, far above the 25 per cent ceiling set under the state's Fiscal Responsibility Act. Interest payments take up around one-fifth of revenue receipts. This leaves limited fiscal room for critical public investment. Logistics, urban services, ports, education and skilling all need steady funding to support a manufacturing-led economy.

The Power Problem: The power sector remains the single largest contributor to Tamil Nadu's fiscal strain. The 16th Finance Commission notes that accumulated losses of the state's DISCOMs exceed 6 per cent of GSDP (highest in India) making them the biggest fiscal risk. Much of this stems from operational inefficiencies and a tariff structure built on extensive cross-subsidisation. Tamil



Statue of Dr. S. Rangachari outside the GH, picture courtesy: Surya Kumar.

strong enough to throw the first pitch at Fenway Park, Boston's famous baseball stadium. Andrews named his kidney Wilma — after the pig. By late October, his body had rejected Wilma. Now back on dialysis, he waits again — but his trial gives others a glimpse of what might be possible. "It's like going to the Moon," he said in the news story in the journal *Science*. "I am just one of the people on

this journey who suffered pain, health issues, and grief to move the program forward."

Sujatha's readers had pleaded with him to reconsider the heart-rending ending of *Kagitha Sangaligal*. They said they would donate a kidney, but their generosity would have been of no avail. The drug that dramatically improved survival in human transplant surgery and expanded kidney donation beyond blood relatives had not been invented yet.

"The story was set in a time when immunosuppressants like cyclosporin were not in vogue," the author wrote. "Today, if you contact a broker in Royapuram Tsunami Nagar, fifteen people will come forward to donate their kidneys." In the rehabilitation slum where fisherfolk had lost everything to the waves in 2004, kidneys were sold, not given. Poverty turns bodies into commodities.

In his 2026 book *Every Living Creature*, surgeon Joshua D. Mezrich traces how xenotransplantation — the transplanting of organs between species — could save human lives. It offers a glimpse of a near future where survival does not depend on a sibling's hesitation, a stranger's desperation, or anyone's altruism. In this vision, science becomes the more reliable bond — the one that endures when human kindness falters.

The lines she once shaped in the ward echo differently now, in this age of editable genomes. *People come, people go // Selling prayers, selling soap // Xenotransplants — and hope.*

Someday, when science spares the pig as well, the last line may change again.

People come, people go // Selling prayers, selling soap // Xenotransplants — 3D-printed organs — and hope.

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— THE EDITOR

(Reproduced from *The Industrial Economist*).

New Stars in Chennai's sports families

“Like begets Like” is a well known scientific (genetic) fact meaning only a Lion comes out of a Lion, as it were. Extend this to a skill activity like sports or any performing art: the rule will hold good except in a few rare cases. Chennai/ Tamil Nadu has many examples of this kind, especially in a few sports and in the Tamil film world. And, some such offspring have made it to the top of their chosen field like their parents.

Focussing on sports in Chennai, which has a rich sporting history, city born girl Krishna, the younger daughter of the highly talented former national basketball couple Jaishankar Menon-Prasanna, has been rising fast, although in a university in the United States as a champion shot putter (part of athletics sport). She has been setting new national records throwing the sphere to new distances with her strong right arm and shoulder. What's more, she is waiting with hope to prove during the next Commonwealth Games and the Olympic Games in Los Angeles USA, that her achievements thus far are not a flash in the pan.

Her illustrious father, Jaishankar reveals to *Madras Musings*, with a hint of pride, that Krishna was attracted to athletics more than basketball, to which she was first introduced by her parents. In fact, it was

her physical education teacher who picked her for the athletics competition in SBOA School & Junior College in Anna Nagar, and Krishna has remained steadfast to it. Later, at the college level, when she was training in a sports academy at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, her coach from Jamaica advised her to take to shot put rather than discus throw.

● by
V. Venkataramana

According to Jaishankar and Prasanna, their daughter has laid her path in the sport of her choice herself: “Krishna started off in earnest with tennis. Of course, we put her in basketball. But she grew interested in athletics after taking part in her school competition.

Jaishankar adds that Krishna's reluctance to pursue basketball stemmed from her belief that her parents had not received due honours for their achievements in basketball nor for the service rendered for further development of the sport in this part of the country.

“We are confident that she has the determination, will power as well as the focus necessary to achieve what she aims for in life,” says Jaishankar pointing out that at the young age of 18 she went to Jamaica

all alone to pursue her objective. She was named “Krishna” by her mother Prasanna who is a great devotee of Guruvayurappa. And on her part like Sri Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita*, this rising athlete pursues her own philosophy: “Believe in yourself. Do not allow the world to determine who you are.”

Krishna moved to El Paso in USA in August 2021 and then to Eugene for further coaching in shot put. The beginning of this year proved to be the high point in affirming her talent. In the professional competitions in the USA on behalf of her University, Krishna emulated three standing national records.

Much like the above story of the former basketball couple, there is another instance of sports running in the family. Former India hockey captain, twice Olympian and Asian Games star Md. Riaz's daughter, 18-year old Shameena Riaz is a rising star in squash. Inspired to take to the sport when she happened to accompany her father to the Madras Cricket Club (MCC) as a 10-year old, she gave up skating and took to squash like a fish to water. Since then her progress has been laudable what with her representation as a member of the Indian team in two world junior championships, winning the gold medal in the team event in the 2023 National



Krishna Jaishankar (left) finished third in the Mountain West Indoor track and field championship in Albuquerque (New Mexico). Picture courtesy: The Hindu.

Games and bronze in the 2022 edition. She also proved her mettle in the 2023 Khelo India Games on home turf Chennai, winning a silver and a bronze. All this was possible because of the great encouragement of her parents, especially father Riaz, who wanted her to become a sportsperson. Shameena's mother Mehnaaz was also a hockey player and had represented Tamil Nadu in the National Championships. Shameena's progress in squash has been possible due to financial assistance from the Tamil Nadu Government.

Talking about squash, there is another story of sport in the bloodline in Chennai. Former Indian cricketer Susan Itticheeria, though born in Kerala, had played for India from Tamil Nadu, in seven Tests, includ-

ing India's inaugural women's Test match in 1976 and in two ODIs. She married Pallikal, a businessman. Their daughter Dipika took instead to squash and excelled. Dipika was the first Indian player to break into the ranks of the top 10 in the world. She represented India in seven world championships, four Commonwealth championships and six Asian Games editions, winning 11 titles in her career. She is married to another Tamil Nadu sportstar, former India cricketer Dinesh Karthik.

The story does not end there: another former India sporting talent, triathlon star Amudha's children – daughter Pooja Aarti is an up-and-coming squash player, and son Raghu in swimming.

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