

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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# City Awaits Its Third Master Plan

In all the excitement of the recent political developments, and the euphoria of a new dispensation in place, it must not be forgotten that life in our city, namely Madras that is Chennai, needs to go on. And a key factor in ensuring that this proceeds on an even keel is the master plan. Not many may be aware that the Second Master Plan of the CMDA expires this year and a third one needs to be notified. However, though this document has been in preparation since 2020, there is no sign of it being made public.

The track record of our Master Plans has not been very good to say the least. The first was formulated in 1976 by the then MMDA and was supposed to last for 20 years. It envisaged the development of satellite towns, the decongestion of the core city, and creation of several amenities across the entire metropolis and the greater metropolitan area for a population of 7.1 million people by 1996.

However, in implementation, the first master plan failed miserably. The satellite towns did not take off, and as for the core city, decongesting efforts were stymied by legal tangles, and political interference. The population continued to grow.

The Second Master Plan, which ideally should have come into existence in 1996, was

● by **Sriram V.**

released only in 2008. It envisaged a growth of the city to 330 square kilometres by 2026. However the actual area even in 2016 was 450 square kilometres! It mooted the idea of mixed zoning in order to ensure better utilization of land space. What has happened in reality is that this has destroyed the fabric of the city, by converting desirable residential areas into commercial spaces and driving more and more core residents

into the peripheral areas of the city. This has only added to pockets of congestion. The Second Master Plan, which also addressed the issue of slums, could not come up with a practical solution.

The CMDA had also mandated that all master plans had to be reviewed once every five years. This too has not happened. As a consequence, any new master plan that is developed will remain out of date with the city's development. While both the master plans professed high ideals, they were found woefully inadequate in implementation and what is more, toothless in the face of systemic corruption. The result has been there for all to see – rampant illegal construction, failed infrastructure and degraded waterways and environment.

In the light of all this it is very doubtful whether the Third Master Plan, to be  
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# Landing before takeoff

Opposing a policy decision or a course of action when not in power and implementing the same when given the chance, is quite commonplace in politics. Hence, one of the most eagerly awaited decisions of the new government was with regard to the proposed second airport for the city, at Parandur in Kanchipuram district. Before it came to power, its stance was clear that the project should not proceed tak-

ing into account the concerns of the various stakeholders and particularly, its impact on the environment and the livelihood of the locals. So the

● by **Karthik Bhatt**

question was, would there now be a possibility of a flip? Recent developments have proven

otherwise. With fresh land acquisitions grinding to a halt and protests thinning out on the back of oral statements and assurances given by various political sources, all that remains is the sounding of the Last Post to officially call off the project.

We are no strangers to development projects being caught up in a mix of bureaucratic inaction and political

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## HERITAGE WATCH

### A Tale of Two Churches



Our pictures are both of recent vintage. The first is of the Santhome cathedral, captured last week. Its history is well documented. The present structure, handsome as it is, however is only from the 1880s, the earlier being a domed edifice of Portuguese design. Our other picture, by Surya Kumar, is of the 1894 consecrated Church of the Assumption, which is in an area known as Darkhast, in erstwhile Chengalpattu and now in Chennai, located in PIN code 600045. Its history however is sadly undocumented. Even the locals do not know much about it. Perhaps the Catholic diocese ought to consider a serious documentation exercise of its churches.



## City Awaits Its Third Master Plan

(Continued from page 1)

notified in 2026, will at all be a relevant document. However, its absence does not make matters easier, for unless there is a planning document in place, no sustained development of infrastructure can happen, however little that may be. A key aspect to master plans is public consultation, once the draft document is released. This has to involve all stakeholders and if it is to be a serious exercise, it needs time. That in itself has not happened so far. Therefore

the final master plan is unlikely to be released in 2026 and the city will continue to go in its historic unplanned fashion. The Government may also plan to rush the draft and consultations to follow, making it a sham process. In which case too, the Master Plan will lack teeth. It will affect the quality of life for each one of us, and the sooner we wake up to it, the better. Let us see if the new dispensation proves us wrong and gives us a worthwhile master plan.

## Landing before takeoff

(Continued from page 1)

compulsions and being inordinately delayed or in some cases even shelved. It is worth remembering that the idea for an expansion of the city's airport was first conceived around 1998-99, as it was felt that it would reach a saturation point by the 2030s. Earlier tangible attempts at expansion failed primarily on account of land acquisition challenges. The revival of the idea in 2022 by the previous government recognizing its importance in taking the state towards becoming a One Trillion Dollar economy came about as a positive step in the right direction.

However, that the project faced immense resistance from the time it was announced on account of various factors, primarily displacement of villages and also the impact it would have on the ecology has now been well-documented. Matters have not been helped on account of the fact that there has been opacity on the part of the government on critical aspects such as the hydrogeological studies undertaken by IIT Madras and Anna University, the findings of which have not been made public. This journal has echoed the most practical view with respect to the entire project, that is, recognizing the need for a secondary terminal, while at the same time emphasizing on adequate guardrails to ensure that all concerns particularly with respect to livelihood and environmental impact have been addressed (MM Vol XXXII, No 9, Vol XXXV, No 1).

Now that it is all but confirmed that the government is not going ahead with the Parandur project, certain questions need answering. Identifying an alternative suitable site would mean starting from ground zero and will have to take into account the fact that all the challenges faced when zeroing in on the current site with respect to land acquisition, feasibility studies, obtaining various clearances etc., even before construction can start would have to be gone through again. And assuming a site that is acceptable on all counts has been identified, what happens if there is another round of protests against that choice, something that is almost inevitable? The government needs to ensure that it has a watertight case on hand to effectively counter them. Yet another question that needs to be dealt with would be with respect to finding alternative use for the land already acquired at Parandur. Reports suggest that several agri-based options such as a processing zone are under consideration but have also brought to light concerns by those who gave up the land pinning their hopes on employment opportunities that would have manifested if the airport came up. Any alternate use plan needs to effectively accommodate them into the scheme of things.

The government needs to bite the bullet and start afresh immediately on the project, as much precious time has already been lost owing to the stalemate. Further delay will only result in long-term ramifications on the state's growth prospects as a whole.

## Dog Show at the Museum

**T**he Man from Madras Musings is not sure how many of you read the recent news item about priceless artefacts being strewn about carelessly in the famed Government Museum of our city. The verdict was that the place had gone to the dogs. MMM was not surprised as he had long ago come to the same conclusion. But he was surprised at the number of forwards he received of the same report, some with the gratuitous suggestion that he ought to do something about it. MMM did not bother to reply. His influence, if any, over governmental matters is minuscule and he also knows that getting involved in such things means tying yourself up in red tape with no chance of ever being released.

But as to how much the museum had gone to the dogs became manifest to MMM only when he visited

turned out to be a dog sniffing at MMM's heels. Now, MMM is not the kind that is deterred by canines and so he walked on. What he did not bargain for was the dog, evidently a newcomer like MMM to the campus, deciding that MMM was its saviour. It stuck close to MMM and man and dog walked on only to suddenly come into the midst of what could be taken to be the climactic scene from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Only if you will recollect, the novel had one hound while now MMM was surrounded by what seemed to be a full pack. The baying reached alarming levels and reinforcements by way of other dogs seemed to be in the offing. MMM, still undeterred, decided to walk on though by now his confidence was a little shaken. However, the first dog – the one that had taken shelter under MMM's feet, clearly

month, a significant birthday was celebrated. It was that of the chief minister (who else did you think it was?). And it was so low key that it was hardly a chief ministerial birthday. It was not even a party functionary's birthday going by our past track record. *The Man from Madras Musings* has to admit that the new boy is ticking all the right boxes and may he continue to do so for the rest of his tenure.

Some of you, who are the new incumbent's followers, may bristle at MMM's usage of the word boy but let him assure you that he does not mean it as anything derogatory. On the same day MMM too reached a certain landmark age far in excess of what the chief minister has reached and therefore the latter is a boy in comparison. But let MMM get back to the point at issue which is

### SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

the place last week to attend a play at the Museum Theatre. It was late in the evening and therefore the vast campus was quite dark. Adding to the general visibility issues was the fact that the entire precinct seemed to be in the throes of major construction activity with metal barricades raised at random. Driving past these to look for a parking slot seemed a daunting task but help was at hand by way of a friendly watchman who waved his hand to indicate the direction in which MMM had to drive.

The handkerchief-sized parking lot was quite full and MMM, after having tried his best at steering the car into a slot, decided to look elsewhere. Once again a friendly watchman was at hand and he suggested that MMM drive on to the rear of the theatre and park at a site which he said was large and relatively unoccupied. MMM drove on and at a particular point lost his bearings and instead of taking a left, drove ahead. He crossed a large arch and found that he had come to the rear of the museum itself. There was plenty of space, enough to park a hundred cars. In the gathering darkness, MMM got off his vehicle and having locked it, prepared to walk towards the theatre.

It was at this juncture that he was compelled to pay attention to what he had till then dismissed as a rustling of the bushes close by. It

decided that he was not much of a guardian and chose to scoot, whereupon the entire pack followed the animal, leaving MMM to walk ahead, shaken but not stirred.

It was at this juncture that an apparition manifested – enough to make MMM's knotted and combined locks, if any, to stand on end. It was a third watchman arriving, asking MMM to remove his car at once from the place where he had parked it. MMM asked as to why and the watchman replied that he was requesting this for MMM's own safety. After the play, he said it would be close to 10:00 PM and nobody in their right senses could walk through that dark corridor to get his car. Why, asked MMM. Was the place haunted? No Sir, came the reply, it is the dogs that are the biggest menace. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, MMM, under the guidance of this watchman, drove on and reached a well-lit spot in the museum campus where he parked his car. But he could not help reflecting as to how, had it not been for this watchman, he would have at 10:00 PM that night been probably chewed to pieces with one M at the theatre, another at the Connemara Public Library and a third at the museum building.

### A Low Key Birthday

You may not have noticed it, but on the 22nd of the last

the birthday. Where Sir are the banners? What about the posters extolling him as the Aristotle of another age? Where were the arches? What about the deafening drums? And the dancing men, and women? And finally, where were the traffic blocks?

MMM feels that a large chunk of what was recent heritage has been given the go by. Fostered by matinee idol and made into a fine art by Mater Dei, the birthday celebrations reached a crescendo under Pater Familias and family. And now, at least for the nonce, the city has breathed easy. But for how long is the question. It may not be long before some important party factotum breathes into the leader's ear that there is not enough publicity in such silent birthdays and so in the interest of optics, the leader should have a noisy series of events. In such a scenario will the new leader listen to the voice of reason or the voice of popularity? Time alone will tell. If he decides to be different, then he is truly in the mould of an earlier leader, one who laid the seeds of industrialization in this state and whose benefits we are still reaping. If not, he will be of the populist kind that we have got used to in recent times. MMM is watching with bated breath. After all the reputation of 22nd June as a great day hangs in the balance.

– MMM

# OUR READERS WRITE



## Reg. Letter to the CM

A revealing letter by the Editor to the Chief Minister on various issues faced at Fort St. George (MM, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, June 1, 2026). Equally important are several other civic issues faced by the public at large that require the Chief Minister's immediate attention.

**Nadai Pathai Nadappadarkey – an empty slogan:** This slogan remains meaningless unless the numerous obstacles faced by pedestrians are addressed. These include broken pavement slabs, abandoned cables, exposed junction boxes, the parking of two-wheelers and four-wheelers on footpaths, encroachments by roadside eateries and shops, and several other obstructions. Some residents have even raised portions of the pavement to provide level access to their homes, causing inconvenience and danger to the public. As a result, pedestrians are forced to walk on the roads, risking their lives. Furthermore, the Supreme Court has held that safe pedestrian pathways are a constitutional right.

**No further destruction of the beach area:** The proposal to construct an elevated pathway at Marina Beach is completely unnecessary. This idea should be buried once and for all. Let us preserve the natural beauty and ecological significance of the beach.

**Growing stray dogs menace:** The stray dog population on the roads has increased significantly, leading to a corresponding rise in dog bites and cases of rabies. Immediate and effective measures are required to address this public safety issue.

**Nuisance caused by the concrete-mixer lorries:** Giant concrete-mixer lorries begin operating as early as 5 AM, even on residential side roads, causing severe noise and dust pollution. These vehicles should carry out their operations only at construction sites and not on public roads. This practice should be strictly prohibited.

**Removal of hoardings:** Illegal hoardings should certainly be removed, but why stop there? Whether legal or illegal, any hoarding that collapses can cause serious injury or loss of life. Like many developed cities, our city should become completely free of hoardings.

**Encroachment of footpaths by property owners:** Some property owners have encroached upon public footpaths to create small home gardens, seemingly to prevent pedestrians from walking close to their compound walls. Such encroachments are illegal and an inconvenience to the public. All such obstructions should be removed without exception.

There may be several other areas of concern that also deserve attention. Let us work together to make Madras (Chennai) and Tamil Nadu model examples for others to follow.

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## MM – A vital resource for heritage and tourism

We are a team of MBA (Tourism Management) students currently interning with IndiaTourism (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India).

We came across *Madras Musings* and felt compelled to reach out and express our sincere appreciation for your publication.

In its 36th year, the publication continues to serve as a valuable record that provides us with various insights into

Chennai's heritage, its history, civic life, culture, and environment. The article 'Memories of Madras in the 1960s', published in the May 1-15, 2026 issue, was a truly excellent read. What inspired us most about the article were the following:

- The vivid descriptions of life on Khader Nawaz Khan Road in Nungambakkam.
- The insights it helped us gain into the city's relevance to heritage tourism.
- The understanding it provided of the intangible her-

itage that heavily influences modern tourists.

- The way it reveals how Chennai carries multiple layers of meaning for different communities.
- This article helps remind us that a destination's true value lies in its preserved memories, which directly support sustainable and responsible tourism development.

Thank you to the entire editorial team and your contributors for your decades of dedication to preserving the earliest chapters of Chennai's history and keeping them accessible and alive.

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## Urgent Reforms Needed: Replacing Dangerous Firecracker Units with Industrial Clusters

May I congratulate you for publishing the article "Needed urgent reforms in fireworks industry, (MM, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, May 1-15, 2026). The article is very important in the present scenario where most sections of the media, concerned government officials, and ministers give the impression that they view accidents in fireworks factories as inevitable.

There are reportedly 1,074 firecracker units in Sivakasi and the surrounding regions in Tamil Nadu, manufacturing more than 300 types of firecrackers. There are also reported to be around one lakh direct workers and hundreds of indirect workers depending on fireworks units in the region for their livelihood.

In the last few years, hundreds of accidents have occurred in these fireworks factories. In the years 2024 to 2026, more than 100 workers (both men and women) lost their lives, and several more suffered severe injuries, with some becoming physically crippled for life. Many of these accidents are so severe that the roofs of nearby houses too have been blown away.

Every time an accident takes place, the government announces some monetary compensation and sometimes orders an enquiry. The Green Tribunal also makes suggestions, but little change happens on the ground.

Most of the firecracker units in the Sivakasi and Virudhunagar regions lack the required level of automation, instrumentation, testing facilities, material handling equipment, and safety standards. Often, innocent labourers are asked to handle hazardous and explosive chemicals only with hand

gloves and no adequate safety kits. Even the physical layouts of the units are not constructed with safety aspects in mind in most cases.

The only option is to insist that all fireworks units possess quality control laboratories adhering to ISO standards and implement facilities for large-scale automation and instrumentation for material handling. This will help avoid accidents and improve productivity. However, such requirements cannot be met by the present tiny and small-scale units.

What is required is for medium and large-scale firecracker units to be set up in Sivakasi and other regions for the production of firecrackers, complete with sufficient safety and automation measures. This means that several small and tiny units would have to be closed down. By doing so, the overall production of firecrackers would not decrease, as the demand would be met by large and medium units.

However, this would cause thousands of workers to lose their jobs and livelihood, which cannot be allowed. Under such circumstances, to keep the workers employed and enhance the economy of Sivakasi and the surrounding regions, the following suggestions can be implemented:

**Relocate proposed auto clusters:** Recently, the Tamil Nadu government announced that a cluster for the production of auto components would be set up in the Thoothukudi region. Further, a proposal has been announced to set up a large electric vehicle unit in Thoothukudi, calling for several crores of rupees in investment. There is, of course, a lot of scope for promoting auto component units considering the domestic and export markets. This auto cluster should instead be set up in the Sivakasi region, which is not far from Thoothukudi.

**Establish a foundry cluster:** There are a number of foundry units already operating successfully in the Coimbatore region. The foundry industry is highly growth-oriented, in tune with the economic and industrial growth of India. With the booming auto industry in Tamil Nadu, setting up a foundry cluster in the Sivakasi region would be a very appropriate idea, creating the much-needed capacity to meet the requirements of the auto and other industries.

**Establish a garment cluster:** There are a few thousand garment and hosiery units in the Tirupur region, employing around eight lakh workers (two lakh of whom reportedly hail from eastern India). It is reported that production is often hindered by a shortage of workers, affecting export performance.

Developing garment cluster units in the Sivakasi region would be an ideal proposition, considering the steady growth and export market for garments.

By implementing the above measures, all fireworks unit workers who lose their jobs due to the closure of small and tiny units can be usefully employed in these new clusters. It is well-known that the people in the Sivakasi region are hardworking and quick learners, and they would contribute to the rapid growth of these clusters in the coming years. In short, implementing these suggestions would lead to a win-win situation for all concerned. The entire scheme can be implemented in a phased manner within a period of two years.

I have submitted these suggestions a number of times to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the concerned state minister, and the Green Tribunal. Sadly, none of my letters have even been acknowledged.

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## Website Comments

### Many strings to her bow – V.R. Devika

(Vol. XXXVI No. 5, June 16-30, 2026)

This was indeed a deserving tribute to a woman of substance. Knowing her inside out as a teacher, brother, and mentor, Shanta and I have always admired this multifaceted woman. We are justifiably proud of V.R. Devika, who was a teacher to our sons, Sanjay and Satyajit. Our blessings to Devika for flying high – she is an achiever par excellence. We are happy and very proud of Devika for being an alumna of Bharatakalanjali.

**V.P. Dhananjayan**  
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\* \* \*

This was a well-scripted bio-profile of an enormously talented lady whom I have had the privilege to know for about four decades. Her multifarious activities, of which I can claim only a ringside view, rightly earn her the honorific of a 'woman of substance'. I wish to make particular mention of her brilliant choreographing abilities and her work with underprivileged children, from whom she trained a troupe and took to perform in front of the UN Assembly. She is a prolific author and an accomplished orator. I pray she finds new horizons to explore and continues to enrich her admirers.

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# The Government College of Arts and Crafts, Egmore

(Continued from last fortnight)

The School also did a great amount of work in teakwood, blackwood and rosewood. Havell also introduced novel teaching methods in areas such as metal work which were aimed at saving time and effort and aided simple industrial purposes.

Havell believed that the Indian students had a great natural aptitude for ornamental design, that could be easily developed. Handloom weaving and block printing were two other areas that received his special attention. He believed that the 'soundest basis for the industrial regeneration of India is to be found in the revival of the great handloom industry'. He also believed that 'with proper looms and proper instruction, the Indian weaver could take a leading position in the world of hand-woven fabrics'.

Havell was appointed by the Government to undertake a survey and report on state of the arts and industries of the Madras Presidency. He undertook three journeys into various parts of South India and his observations were published under the title 'Reports submitted by Mr EB Havell during the years 1885-1888 on the Arts and Industries of Certain Districts of the Madras Presidency'.

In 1889, Havell proposed a scheme for the reorganisation of the School based on the experience gained over five years of his stint. Drawing the attention of the Government to the fact that the School covered a very wide field, 'far wider than the organisation of any Indian School of Art', he stated that a large expenditure was necessary in order to consolidate the scheme of work being carried out. He also suggested several changes in the appointments of instructors and teachers. By this time, he had made himself invaluable to the Government, which had no

hesitation in recommending his reinstatement as Superintendent on the expiry of his term of five years in 1889.

Writing to the Home Department, Government of India, on the subject of his reappointment, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras wrote that Havell's services were 'unquestionably more valuable to the Government than they were when he was first engaged'. However, the increment mentioned in the terms of reappointment that he would be eligible to draw was to be subject to his clearing a vernacular examination. This condition had near disastrous consequences for the School, for Havell failed the test. He requested that the test be made simpler, which did not find much favour and hence he resigned his appointment. He was however persuaded to stay on until the end of 1891, by which time a successor could be found. Thankfully for the School, a suitable successor could not be found and Havell too, having taken up the test again in 1891 and clearing the same, expressed his desire to continue as Superintendent. A relieved Government accepted the withdrawal of his resignation and Havell was back in the saddle. His tenure continued till 1896, when he was finally transferred to Calcutta as the Superintendent of the School of Arts in that city. Edwin Holder was appointed the Acting Superintendent of the School until a successor could be found. The Government did not have to search far, for there was a ready replacement in the form of Sir Alfred Chatterton, a man who would go on to become one of the most prominent personalities with regard to industrialisation and industrial education in the Madras Presidency.

Born in 1866, Chatterton joined the Indian Educational Service as a Professor in the Engineering College of Madras in 1888. He was made in-charge

of the PWD Workshops in 1892 and was also in charge of the Sub Division the same year. He was no stranger to the Madras School of Arts, having been associated with it earlier in 1889. In 1897, he was appointed the Superintendent of the School. This was not an exclusive appointment, for he continued to work in the Engineering College.

Chatterton's earliest initiative on taking charge as Superintendent was with respect to the introduction of aluminium as a technical industry. He brought out some aluminium from England and after experimenting with it at the School, ordered at his own risk a ton of the metal to be sent out to Madras. This formed the base for the starting of the aluminium industry. With the Government sanctioning a sum of Rs 1500 towards manufacture of aluminium vessels in the School as an experimental measure, Chatterton set about

● by Karthik Bhatt

developing the same in a big manner. Thanks to his personal exertions, extensive orders for aluminium ware were received from all parts of India and by end of 1899, a net profit of around Rs 11,750 was earned by the Government. Consequent to the School's success, the aluminium industry was begun in a small way at the Madura Technical Institute and also at the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute in Bombay. Chatterton's efforts would ultimately lead to the establishment of the Madras Aluminium Factory, much to the chagrin of the British-owned business houses of Madras. Handloom was yet another area which received Chatterton's special attention. He undertook experiments in weaving at the School, with the introduction of fly-shuttle looms as an improve-

ment over the native handlooms. This was not however a great success.

The School led the list of delegates from the Madras Presidency participating in Delhi Durbar Exhibition of 1903 held in connection with the festivities to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII as the Emperor of India. The Madras Room was created entirely by Chatterton and students of the School, and incorporated several elements of the Dravidian style of architecture such as the temple pillars and the figurines. The door to the room with its intricate wood carving drew special attention. The fittings and furniture of the room were purchased by the Nizam of Hyderabad. The School also won several medals for the various exhibits made by it.

In 1899, Chatterton was relieved from his duties at the Engineering College and was

appointed on special duty by the Government of Madras in connection with the development of technical trades and industries in the Presidency. He was instrumental in persuading the Government to open a Department of Industries in 1908. Madras was the first province to do so in the entire country. He was a great supporter of the Swadeshi Movement, declaring it a good sign for India to develop her industrial life. The chrome process of making leather was yet another technique that Chatterton advocated in a great way. The School started tanning hides by this process for the purpose of utilising them in the manufacture of buckets to raise water, in the apparatus known as the kavalai lifts. He later started the Chrome Leather Factory in the area that would one day come to be known as Chromepet. Chatterton also founded the Pencil Factory at Korukkupet that would be later sold to V Perumal Chetty and Co, the business house that ran it under the name of Madras Pencil Factory. Chatterton's stint at the School came to an end in 1907. He was succeeded by WS Hadaway, an American who was then making a name in Britain

for his silver work.

Born in Malden, Massachusetts, Hadaway studied at an art school in New York, where he met his wife Jean Louise Carre. They both left the USA in 1897 and migrated to London, where Hadaway soon began forging a highly successful artistic career as a silversmith, designer and teacher. His early work in silver was illustrated in several journals such as *The Art Journal* and *The Studio*. There is no information on how Hadaway came to be appointed as the Superintendent on the retirement of Chatterton, of the Madras School of Arts and Crafts, as it had been renamed in 1905. It is however interesting to note that the Government of Madras was at this point in time looking for a person who had been trained in India and was acquainted with Indian trades or Indian art and preferably, would be a native of the country to take over as the Superintendent of the School. It even wrote to the Government of India for its recommendation, which replied stating that they had no knowledge of any such person qualified to be appointed. This search would however be suspended until a good two decades later, for Hadaway had a long stint as the Superintendent from 1907 to 1927.

Nothing much is known about Hadaway's tenure. He was however involved in producing several monographs titled *Cotton Painting and Printing in the Madras Presidency*, *Tinsel and Wire in the Madras Presidency* and *Illustrations of Metal work in Brass and Copper, mostly South Indian*, etc. It was during his tenure that a significant change occurred in the structure of the institution. A Committee was appointed by the Government of Madras in 1921 to go into its working and to submit proposals for its reorganisation. Its main brief was to decide on a question that had been debated upon almost since the early years of the School, that is whether to teach Fine Arts or Industrial Art or both. In 1923, the Committee submitted its report recommending that the two aims were incapable of attainment in a single school and that the object of the School of Arts should be to teach the application of arts to industries. This was accepted by the Government, which approved the

dropping of the Fine Arts section while however stating that it would consider opening in due course a separate institution to teach the same. This does not seem to have happened even four years later, for in 1927-28, the Government sanctioned the reintroduction of the fine arts classes. It was also decided to appoint a Board of Visitors to the School, who would make periodical visits and offer suggestions as to its working. Hadaway retired in November 1927 and the School got its first Indian Superintendent, Rao Bahadur NR Balakrishna Mudaliar.

Born in 1870, Balakrishna Mudaliar was an alumnus of the School. He was appointed as a teacher in 1889 and promoted as the Assistant Superintendent in 1920. There is no information as to what he studied or what he taught at the institution. He endowed Rs 1000 for awarding gold medals in the School by rotation for each department to the first two pupils for their best works. Outside of his vocation, Balakrishna Mudaliar was an ardent sportsman, one of the original members of the Madras United Club and its Vice President for some time. He was a good tennis player and had the distinction of being the first to win the Club's singles and doubles championships consecutively for three years. He was also a good cricketer and played against Lord Hawke's touring team in 1894. In all, he is credited with having won more than 100 prizes in sports, a remarkable achievement. His long association with the School came to an end with his retirement in 1930. Commemorating his tenure and in appreciation of his services, the School erected a bust of his in 1933, sculpted by the master sculptor MS Nagappa. Balakrishna Mudaliar's successor was the man whose works across the country would make him one of its foremost figures in the world of art and sculpture, Debi Prasad Roy Choudhury.

Born in 1899 at Tejhat, the part of undivided Bengal and now part of Bangladesh, Choudhury learnt painting from the renowned artist Abanindranath Tagore, a nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, at the Indian School of Oriental Arts. He then learnt sculpting, initially from Hiromony Choudhury and

later at Italy. Initially coming under the influence of the Bengal school in terms of style and technique, Choudhury developed a style of his own and became one of the first Indian artists to sculpt in bronze.

Choudhury applied for the post of the Principal in the School and was appointed in January 1929. Writing in the *Swatantra* magazine in 1952 in a series titled *Life with an Artist*, his wife Charulatha states that there were several prominent personalities such as AMGC Tampoe ICS, Dr P Subbarayan, SV Ramaswamy Mudaliar and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya who were instrumental in Choudhury landing this job. It was the start of a nearly three-decade long association with the institution, one that would see several students such as Paritosh Sen, KCS Paniker, KM Gopal and S Dhanapal learn their craft under his influence and go on to become legendary figures in the world of contemporary Indian art.

Choudhury was quite maverick in his approach. Legend has it that when he once accidentally dropped coffee on his canvas, he asked for more cups of coffee and poured them all over and created a unique painting, instead of discarding it! On yet another occasion, when rain had splashed water on an almost completed painting on a woman in a captivating pose, he changed the entire image into that of a wet crow perched on a branch, inspired by the vision in a flash. Needless to say, such brilliance inspired several students, and in the words of Khasa Subba Rao, the editor of the *Swatantra* magazine, "the influence of the School as a centre of inspiration for things artistic had outgrown provincial status and it had acquired the stature of a national institution."

Choudhury retired from the institution in 1957. Post his retirement, he was contracted by the Government of Madras to sculpt one of his most famous works in the city, the Triumph of Labour statue on the Marina. Modelled on the photograph of raising of the flag on Iwo Jima by American Marines in World War II, it was to commemorate the country's first ever May Day rally that happened in Madras in 1923. Choudhury interestingly chose two people from the

college to model for the statue, Ramu a student and AP Srinivasan, a watchman.

Following the retirement of Choudhury, the institution would go on to be served in succession by several alumni. The first in the list was a man who in 1966 would go on to establish the famous Cholamandalam Artists Village, KCS Paniker. Born in 1911 in Coimbatore, Paniker graduated from the School in the 1940s and chose to work as a teacher in his alma mater, teaching painting. He was one of the founders of the Progressive Painters Association in 1944. It was during his tenure as the Principal that the School became the backdrop for what today is known as the Madras Art Movement, a collective term denoting the body of work and style of several artists apart from him such as SG Vasudev, KV Haridasan, AP Santhanaraj and KM Gopal.

Paniker's tenure lasted for a decade and he was succeeded by R Krishna Rao. Joining the School in 1942, Krishna Rao's academic brilliance earned him the distinction of finishing the five-year Diploma in Fine Arts course in three years. After a stint with the War Publicity Department and as a textile designer in Gudiyatham, Rao was appointed the Head of the Department of the Applied Arts in the School. His defining contribution came the following year, that of designing of the emblem of the Government of Madras. A native of Madurai, he chose the Western Gopuram of the temple as the inspiration for his creation. In 1965, he was promoted as the Vice Principal and transferred to the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Kumbakonam, before coming back to Madras to head the College on the retirement of Paniker.

S Dhanapal initially trained in painting, before going on to specialise as a sculptor. He was appointed as an instructor in the sculpting department and in 1957 rose to become the Head of the Department. He sculpted using varied sculptural media such as terracotta, metal, wood and cement and worked closely with Choudhury on several of his commissions. KM Adimoolam, the famous abstract artist was greatly influenced by Dhanapal and graduated with a Diploma



Mrs and Mr DP Roy Choudhury.

in Advanced Painting from the School in 1966.

Over the past decades following Dhanapal's retirement in 1977, the institution has been helmed by several dedicated personalities such as L Munuswamy, AP Santhanaraj, S Murugesan, CJ Anthony Doss (all alumni) who have kept the flag of the institution flying high.

In 1973, the institution, which had been upgraded to the status of a college in 1961, came under the aegis of the Department of Technical Education. Following this, the courses of study were upgraded up to the level of a Degree, and Industrial Design courses in Ceramic, Textile and Visual Communication were offered in affiliation with the University of Madras. In 1991, the College was brought under the purview of the newly created Department of Art and Culture. Masters Level Degree programmes in Painting, Visual Communication Design, Ceramic Design, Textile Design and Sculpture were added over

a period of time. Since academic year 2014-15, the institution has been under the aegis of the Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University.

The institution currently offers four-year full time undergraduate courses (BFA) in Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, Visual Communication Design, Industrial Design in Textile and Industrial Design in Ceramic. It also offers two-year postgraduate programmes (MFA) in these courses, except for Sculpture.

Today, the institution stands as a proud torchbearer in the field of arts education in the country. It has been the fulcrum around which the Industrial and Fine Art movement in South India has developed over the period. Its dedicated band of teaching staff carry on the proud legacy of the institution and ensure that the vision of its founder Dr Alexander Hunter and his illustrious successors lives on.

(Concluded)



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

# Tamil Nadu: Stability As Strength

From ancient trade routes to modern industrial corridors, Tamil Nadu's growth story is an outcome of decades of policy stability, administrative discipline and deeply rooted entrepreneurial culture. In this conversation, CV Sankar, IAS (Retired), highlights how stable policies, strong institutions and social welfare have shaped the state into a manufacturing and services powerhouse.

**How have stable policies helped industrial growth in Tamil Nadu over the years?**

Throughout our history, Tamil Nadu has been consistent in its approach to entrepreneurship. Tirukkural has an entire chapter on economics. Even before Independence, we had Tamil entrepreneurs travelling all over the world and India looking for business opportunities. The match and printing industries started as early as 100 years ago. Tamil traders and entrepreneurs in the Far East were an established fact long back. Madras being the starting point for the English rule helped in many initiatives like the banking industry, cooperatives, shipping, textiles and many others. Independence brought many Tamil leaders having influence in Delhi with leaders like Kamaraj as influential as the PM himself. Central and state policies aligned to bring many public sector enterprises and institutions to TN. The state vigorously pursued industrial growth especially focused on the small and medium scale with the establishment of many industrial estates in the first two decades. The regional parties continued the thrust with many large size industrial estates being formed and policies evolved to support industries. The state saw substantial investments in the power, irrigation and tertiary sectors providing the much needed back end support. Chief Ministers took pride in bringing in new investment and many policies to suit changing times like the special policy for mega industries and emerging sectors like IT, biotechnology, aerospace, logistics and many others. In fact, the state continuously brought in these policies much ahead of many others and also learnt from others. Liberalisation in the 1990s speeded up adoption of such policies at the ground level. A good part of the leadership's time has always been devoted to business related issues and this has helped the state tremendously.

**What institutional mechanisms or administrative culture enabled this stability?**

Tamil Nadu has always been good in processes and

practices. Historians have recorded detailed administrative instructions for maintenance of temples, irrigation tank systems, local self governance and many other aspects of life. The successful rulers were also good administrators laying down detailed guidelines for administration. The English rule further strengthened land administration, survey and legal procedures ensuring fair and equitable treatment. The state governments after Independence created many institutions like SIPCOT, TIDCO, TIIC, Infrastructure development board, TIDEL, etc. to give focused attention on critical support systems for industrial growth. The state could create many public-private partnership models much before many states because of the availability of such institutions. The state was always strong in education and the thrust given for engineering, polytechnic and technical training institutions has ensured that the state can provide a ready pool of talent to suit any industry or service.

**One of the key features of Tamil Nadu is its well-distributed and decentralised industrial growth. What have been the driving factors?**

With no perennial river or canal systems, no great natural resources or advantages, the state has always had to work hard to mitigate the harsh conditions. The developed industrial belts in areas like Sivakasi, Virudunagar, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Ambur, Ranipet, Hosur, Krishnagiri, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, etc. are testimony to the entrepreneurial spirit

of the people. Governments have helped but the enterprise has come from the people of the state. The even spread of infrastructure like roads, power, railways, airports and ports have helped in spreading the fruits of development throughout the state with no other state showing similar progress.

**Tamil Nadu has done well both in manufacturing and services? What have been some key initiatives which have helped this?**

During our road shows before the Global Investors Meet, we used to highlight the point that the state is an all-rounder. It would be within the first three ranks in any parameter, be it number of factories, industrial workers, export, FDI, SEZ's, engineering colleges, polytechnics, per capita power consumption, patents issued and so on. Our strength has been skilled workers, entrepreneurs, engineers and other professionals who are among the best in the country. Our workers are disciplined, willing to learn and work hard with a team spirit. The society encourages such behaviour with governments and policy-makers averse to interfere in this process contrary to what is seen in some of the other states. The basic foundation of strong entrepreneurship, cooperation and education has helped the state to do well in manufacturing as well as services.

**Tamil Nadu is a welfare focused state topping in several social development indices. How has this welfare measure helped industrial growth?**

## C V Sankar's recipe for improvement

A very effective single window portal; Guidance Bureau does a great job but the crucial departments like planning, electricity, pollution control, etc have to be handled separately also.

Water is a very critical resource and Tamil Nadu doesn't have adequate perennial water systems. The state could have taken up rejuvenation and increasing the capacity of water sources avoiding frequent flooding simultaneously. CSR and schemes like NREGS could have been effectively used for this along with public participation. A clean and green environment would have added to the attractions of the state.

Planning and zoning bodies are bogged down in transactional issues with futuristic planning largely non-existent. CMDA and TN Housing Board, starting with the City Improvement Trust, planned out great areas like Koyambedu, Anna Nagar, Besant Nagar, etc. A similar work throughout the state would have created an excellent TN model for urban areas with efficient facilities for water, sewage and solid waste disposal and common facilities like parks, playgrounds, etc.

Government polytechnics and ITIs have generally languished despite regular upgrades with the mushrooming of engineering colleges. With industry links, these could have sharpened the state's image as a very talented state. It would not have been very difficult to create technical institutes on par with Germany, Japan, Korea, etc.

Tourism as a sector has largely grown on its own in the state. A well co-ordinated exercise, like it was done by Kerala, would have catapulted the state's image as a top international destination. With such developmental infrastructural facilities like four major airports and ports, excellent road and rail connectivity, the state with so many attractions like forests, beaches, cultural icons like temples would have been a winner hands down.

The welfare measures of the state cover three broad areas: education, health and safety net. These have ensured that the population can hope to reach its full potential irrespective of the handicaps at birth. Education leads to better parenting and smaller but better provided families. Prenatal and post natal care helps in lesser deficiencies and fuller brain and body development. Safety nets like rations, pensions,

basic income support, targeted schemes for welfare of women, help in families actively participating in economic activities with least disruption boosting demand for goods and services. Like decentralised industrial activity, the state has well dispersed educational and health institutions including primary health centres helping save money and time in accessing these services. – (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)

## NGO project focussing on fisherfolks safety at sea

It is not about the Adyar river, not about Cooum, nor is it about cleaning up the Buckingham Canal or about making these three waterways navigable. But the novel project taken

● by V. Venkatramana

up by the well known Delhi based NGO, George Institute of Global Health India, is about a crucial safety aspect of fishing communities in Chennai – along the Marina, Besant Nagar and Thiruvanniyur areas.

It entails making the fishing

communities understand the importance of focusing on their personal safety whenever they put out to sea. Apart from Chennai, the project has also been launched in Nagapattinam district as well as in the neighbouring coastal state of Kerala.

In a conversation with *Madras Musings*, Chennai based Project Manager Sharmila Shanmugasundaram explains the details of the project titled "Improving lifejacket wear among boaters".

In India there are more than 60,000 deaths every year attributed to drowning, thus making the tragedy a large public



Chennai based project manager Sharmila Shanmugasundaram interacting with fishermen at Odaikuppam – Besant Nagar (Chennai).

health issue. This has not been scientifically addressed. Fishermen on the coast are exposed to the dangerous conditions of the sea while working for their livelihood. "As they have a high risk

of drowning, the study focuses on understanding the barriers to lifejacket use and co-design interventions to improve the

(Continued on page 7)

# Curtains Up, Madras: Why Kodai Nadaga Vizha Must Become Chennai's Summer Soul

Some cities preserve themselves through monuments. Others through cuisine, commerce or grand festivals.

Madras has always preserved itself through culture.

And among its most enduring inheritances, understated perhaps yet profoundly influential, stands drama and theatre. Not merely as entertainment, but as one of the strongest cultural threads woven into the emotional and intellectual fabric of the city.

For generations, Madras did not simply watch theatre. It lived it.

Long before multiplexes, OTT platforms and social media occupied our evenings, Chennai gathered under stage lights. Sabha halls, temple courtyards, school auditoriums and modest theatre spaces became places where society met itself -- laughing at its contradictions, debating morality, questioning authority and celebrating Tamil expression in all its richness.

## Drama was Madras speaking to itself

Humour met philosophy. Satire met social reform. Ordinary life transformed into compelling storytelling.

To understand old Madras without theatre is perhaps to understand only half the city.

Tamil theatre in Chennai flourished because the city embraced it not as elite culture, but as public culture. Office-goers rushed from work to evening performances. Families debated scripts over dinner. Students volunteered backstage.

Amateur troupes rehearsed in neighbourhood halls. Theatre became as natural to Madras life as Carnatic music, temple festivals and cricket on the Marina.

At the heart of this cultural movement stood pioneers like Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, who transformed Tamil drama into a disciplined art form, moving it beyond mythology towards realism, social commentary and literary depth.

And then, in the 1990s, emerged what should be considered one of Chennai's finest cultural traditions -- the "Kodai Nadaga Vizha".

If December and January belong to the celebrated music season around the Music Academy, then April and May deserve to belong to theatre.

Kodai Nadaga Vizha is not merely another event in Chennai's cultural calendar. It is a seasonal reaffirmation of the city's theatrical soul. For more than three decades, this summer festival has sustained Tamil theatre, nurtured amateur troupes, introduced emerging artists and keeping alive the irreplaceable experience of live storytelling.

Its importance lies not in nostalgia alone. It preserves continuity.

In an increasingly fragmented digital world, theatre still offers something of the rare collective experience. Unlike cinema or streaming platforms, live performance demands presence. Actors perform before you without retakes. Emotions unfold in real time. Laughter becomes communal. Silence carries meaning.

Life slows down. And people reconnect.

Perhaps that explains why theatre has not disappeared, despite changing times.

It has simply adapted.

Look closely at Chennai's growing stand-up comedy culture and one sees unmistakable traces of theatre. The timing, storytelling, improvisation, satire and commentary on social

● by Mylapore Venkata Shashidhar (Retd) Colonel

behaviour all echo the DNA of traditional Tamil drama.

Today's Gen Z audience may prefer a twenty-minute comedy set to a two-hour social play, but the instinct remains unchanged. A stand-up comic speaking about Chennai traffic, Tamil parents, hostel life, office politics or dating anxieties is ultimately doing what theatre has always done -- holding a mirror to society.

The format evolved. The stage survived.

Rather than lamenting the decline of traditional audiences, Chennai must recognise this shift as an opportunity. Kodai Nadaga Vizha can become the bridge between classical theatre and contemporary performance blending satire, spoken word, youth theatre and experimental storytelling while preserving Tamil theatrical traditions.

## Madras has always adapted without surrendering its soul

But preserving theatre cannot remain the responsibility of sabhas alone. The next generation must inherit this duty.

First, stronger institutional support is essential. The State Government and corporate Chennai must step in with seriousness. Theatre deserves structured funding, fellowships, grants and sponsorship ecosystems, much like sports and cinema enjoy today. Chennai's IT, automobile, manufacturing and startup sectors could meaningfully support theatre festivals and amateur productions through CSR initiatives.

Artists cannot survive on passion alone.

Second, amateur theatre must return to schools, colleges and universities with purpose. Drama should not remain confined to annual day performances. Inter-school and inter-collegiate theatre circuits, scriptwriting competitions and campus drama festivals can become breeding grounds for future playwrights, directors



Kodai Nataka Vizha in Chennai. Picture courtesy: The Hindu.

and actors. The next great Tamil scriptwriter may today sit unnoticed inside a classroom in Anna Nagar or Tambaram.

## Talent needs platforms

Third, Chennai must consciously build a stronger theatre ecosystem. Affordable performance spaces, playwright workshops, mentorship under veteran directors, grants for experimental productions, neighbourhood theatre festivals and theatre appreciation programmes in schools are urgently needed.

Why not theatre cafés?

Why not public performances in parks, metro spaces and

cultural precincts?

Why not collaborations between dramatists, stand-up comedians and digital creators?

A culturally confident Chennai can make theatre fashionable again, not in superficial terms, but meaningful.

After all, Tamil cinema itself owes much to theatre. From the legendary TKS Brothers, Nadigavel M.R. Radha and R.S. Manohar to icons such as Sivaji Ganesan, Nagesh, Cho Ramaswamy, Kathadi Ramamurthi and Y.G. Mahendra, the Tamil stage trained generations

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— THE EDITOR

## NGO project focussing on fisherfolks safety at sea

(Continued from page 6)

same," she explains. As the number of fishermen in Tamil Nadu is very high, the objective of the project is to improve life-jacket wear by these fishermen on the Chennai coast as well as across the coast of Tamil Nadu.

Talking about the steps being undertaken to implement the project, Sharmila Shanmugasundaram says, "We have been having meetings with Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department and informing them about our study findings, and discussing the possible interventions to make fishermen use lifejackets and lifebuoys, after taking in their inputs."

The fishermen, however, feel that a lifejacket is not necessary as they believe that their swimming ability is sufficient to save themselves in an emergency situation at sea. They are rather reluctant to spend out of their pockets to acquire a lifejacket, but would use one if it is provided to them for free. They are also happy about the concern being shown for their safety. Sharmila informs us, "There are over 10 lakh fishermen in

Tamil Nadu apart from inland fishers".

She further explains that in the first phase, a cross-sectional study of the prevalence of lifejacket wear was undertaken among 1,356 fishermen in 12 fishing sites in Tamil Nadu and an equal number of them in Kerala.

The study also focused on the determinants, especially the barriers in wearing a life-jacket. The project is presently in its second phase: "We are co-designing interventions in consultation with the fishing communities and stakeholders at the authoritative level aimed at improving lifejacket ownership and use. Interventions are being developed that include 'behaviour change initiatives' to improve fishermen's safety against drowning. In the third phase, the effectiveness of the interventions would be evaluated. The study's principal investigator is Jagnoor Jagnoor, Program Lead of Injury, The George Institute of Global Health, Sydney. The study is being funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

# Sport in 18th Century Madras

In a country where Englishmen had horses, there was naturally hunting, though it were after no nobler an animal than the jackal. The first reference to this has been thought a letter of 1776 asking for a yearly draft of 20 couple of hounds for the "Madras Hunting Society". But jack-hunting was certainly followed twenty years earlier. In the Mayor's Court papers of 1753 is a horse-dealing case, in which the seller demands specific performance of the contract, while the buyer claimed to have bought the horse under warranty of soundness. The horse in question, it appears from the evidence, was that ridden by Pigot on an occasion celebrated by Orme, when in 1751 Pigot and Clive saved themselves from a body of the enemy by the superior speed of their animals. When the plaintiff recalled this incident as a proof of the goodness of the horse, the defendant rejoined that that was before it "was sprained by Mr Pigot in a fox-chase". Hunting saddles occur frequently in the inventories; there are four for instance in 1768; and I think that hunting, though perhaps in a rough and ready form, was popular round Madras. In 1791 Roebuck writes to a Calcutta friend:

"Will you excuse me troubling you with a trifling com-

mission, which is to procure for me any number of half-bred hounds, from one couple to six couple. They are dogs bred in this country from the Europe fox-hound and a half-bred country dog, and they live better than the Europe hounds.... The dogs are for the Madras Hunt, and I have undertaken to procure them. The fleetest they are the better, as our present dogs are very fast...."

Roebuck must have been reckoned a doggy man, for only a couple of years later I find him ordering two pointers from Pondicherry for a friend in Bombay. The jack was coursed as well as hunted. Watts escaped from Murshidabad just before Plassey on the pretext of a coursing match; and leashes of greyhounds occur in the Madras inventories. Even in the nineteenth century Sir William Denison got some rattling good gallops when he got near enough to the jack to slip a greyhound.

The origins of racing at Madras are as obscure as those of hunting. I expect many scratch races were run long before the sport was in any way organised. The Fort St George orderly book of 1773 contains the first reference known to me. Colonel Lang there announces that not more than half the officers off duty can be allowed to be absent at one time to attend

the races at the Mount; but in order that "they may partake of the diversions day and day about, and for the convenience of such as have not accommodations at the Mount, the gates will be ordered to be opened every morning at 4 o'clock."

The earliest-mentioned form of field-sport, however, was none of these, but hawking. So early as 1654 the Agent, as the first governors of the Fort were called, went hawking by the Mount. In 1771 Warren Hastings, during his short stay upon the Coast, did the same. Captain Fletcher had sent him a present of hawks from Ongole, which Hastings thus acknowledged:

"I return you many thanks for your genteel present.... I have been twice abroad with the hawks, and hope I may find an inducement in them to use the exercise of a morning ride, which I much want. They seem to be well trained, and the chief man, as well as his bird, very intelligent and expert in their respective professions. The only difficulty is to meet with game for them. The Carnatic yields none but kites, crows, and paddy-birds. The two former will not be caught, and the latter are hardly worth catching. These however afford me sufficient entertainment."

To big game I find hardly a reference. Not for lack of game.

After the Second Mysore War the Carnatic was teeming with tigers, and no doubt many an officer in the up-country garrisons went after them, either on elephants, which were common enough too in the south in those days, or with his muzzle-loader on foot. The records of shikar belong almost entirely to the nineteenth century.

However, among the stray references is one that I wish to mention, for it introduces as well the concluding topic of this chapter. In 1794 Captain Alexander Macpherson and Mr Dawson Logan were

stationed at Ambur, in hilly, jungly country where you could easily flush a brace of tiger before breakfast. They were out shooting together, and got on the track of an animal which Macpherson said was a tiger. Logan denied it, and that with so much heat and persistence that the other was at last obliged to inquire the meaning of his behaviour. A duel followed, in which Logan was shot. And if there are few records of shooting tigers, there are plenty of shooting men. — *From The Nabobs of Madras by Henry Dodwell, 1926.*

## KODAI NADAGA VIZHA

(Continued from page 7)

of brilliance before cinema inherited their greatness.

The stage built discipline. Cinema amplified genius.

Now, preservation belongs to Chennai's youth. They cannot remain passive consumers of culture.

They must perform, write, volunteer, experiment, preserve. Because timeless traditions survive only when ordinary citizens decide they matter.

And theatre, perhaps more than any art form, teaches empathy, patience, reflection and shared humanity — qualities

increasingly scarce in a hurried world.

For life in its purest form is celebration. And Chennai has always known how to celebrate.

If Margazhi belongs to music, let summer belong to theatre.

Let April and May become Chennai's season of stage lights, storytelling and shared laughter.

Let Kodai Nadaga Vizha become not merely an event, but a citywide emotion.

For when Madras takes the stage, the city does not merely perform. It comes alive.

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