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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Vol. XXXVI No. 14

November 1-15, 2026

The State of Statues

Our state may have evolved politically over several decades on a plank of rationalism that included protests against all idolatry, but putting up statues has always been considered outside of this principle. The end result is that we are a state of statues, there being one in practically every open space and street corner. These can be religious, political, and of the religio-political variety. The last named comprises statues whose erection and veneration are meant for vote garnering. The latest move in this aspect by the State Government shows that this is a new regime with all the old thought processes intact.

A couple of months ago, the State Government approached the University of Madras for permission to build a memorial complex for five iconic personalities on the Union Cricket Ground at Chetpet. The persons to be so honoured are Rani Velu Nachiyar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, Anjalai Ammal

● by Sriram V

and K. Kamaraj. The estimated cost of the memorial will be Rs 5 crores. The move has met with considerable opposition from the University teachers, alumni and present students. The Government, it is said, is mulling over the matter.

The first aspect to be considered is – do we need a memorial complex at all? Periyar, Ambedkar and Kamaraj have plenty of statues in their honour. In addition, we have memorials for at least two – Ambedkar and Kamaraj at assigned places elsewhere in the city. Why then do we need further memorials to them? A casual visit to similar spaces in honour of martyrs to various causes, that have been put up in our city, will reveal that almost none of them see any footfalls except on special days of the year. Most of them are also in very poor states of upkeep. The land surrounding these are repeatedly eyed for other development, often destroying the vistas that they were meant to be housed in. In short, in a city like ours where pressure

(Continued on page 2)

Monsoon watch – early signs ominous

It is time for this column's annual monsoon watch. What is new, one might ask, considering that the same story gets repeated year after year, in terms of exposing the unpreparedness of the administration, the civic woes it brings along, the response mechanism and a staunch refusal to learn lessons from past episodes. A major change this year is that for the first time in several decades, the government in power does not have a single representative in the body responsible for the civic administration of the city. These pages have already warned about the ramifications of such an alignment and the games of one-upmanship between the two (see MM, May 16-31, 2026 and MM, June 1-15, 2026) which would potentially leave civic administration in the lurch.

At the time of writing, the Northeast monsoon has just made a terrific start for the season, with widespread rainfall across the State. It has marked its arrival over our city with a

● by Karthik Bhatt

torrential spell of rainfall on the night of 17th October and has subsequently, in fits and starts, kept the scorecard ticking. While it is heartening to see that prolonged waterlogging episodes have been minimal and the administration has been working actively round the clock to ensure life is not thrown out of gear, the tension simmering between the government and the corporation is there for all to see, with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor accusing the government of delay in starting works connected with monsoon preparedness as compared to earlier years. The government on the other hand has responded stating that its predecessor had left nearly 40 per cent of the stormwater drain work unfinished, which was now being completed.

The relations between the two bodies, which was never on great terms to begin with, has gone even more downhill over

(Continued on page 2)

HERITAGE WATCH

Heritage (Cannot) Watch





At long last, the Greater Chennai Corporation has completed its purely superfluous renovation of the Nageswara Rao Park in Mylapore. It was completely unnecessary as the park was flourishing even otherwise. What we have lost are several trees and what we have gained is an enormous pergola whose function people are yet to fathom. A bigger loss however has been the original commemorative plaque, let into the entrance gatepost in 1948. Why this could not have been saved is beyond any comprehension.

It is a matter of small satisfaction that a new plaque commemorates the first donors, but it is behind so many bushes that nobody can read it, as the NEW picture by Karthik Bhatt shows. Our OLD is a picture of Nageswara Rao Park taken in 1948, courtesy the GCC archives.

THE STATE OF STATUES

(Continued from page 1)

on public spaces is immense, memorials are impractical.

The second aspect concerns sports facilities for the students of the University of Madras. Not many may be aware that the Union Cricket Ground at Chetpet is the only such sports space that our historic university can truly claim as its own. The rest are all owned by the various colleges in their individual capacity. It was in 1932 that the Union of the University was formed and the same year these eight acres that comprise the cricket ground were given. Since then, this venue has seen many cricket matches happen at league level, apart from other sports events. Its upkeep may not be up to the mark but that can be no excuse for considering alternate use for the space.

Happily, for the ground, there has been a wave of protest against the proposed move. University officials have themselves represented for the abandoning of the plan. In addition, teachers of the physical education departments in various institutions have presented a petition. The alumni of the University of Madras too have expressed their disappointment over such a move.

It is high time the party in power realizes that taking over of public spaces is not something that can be done with impunity. It must be recalled that a similar attempt several years ago to convert the Queen Mary's College campus into a site for the proposed secretariat backfired on the then government. Another realization that must sink in is that statues, memorials and monuments are passe. What is needed are facilities and amenities for building a healthier nation. What better way for this than nurturing a sports ground?

Monsoon watch – early signs ominous

(Continued from page 1)

this short period. The corporation has consistently flagged delays in release of funding and project approvals, while the government launched a crackdown on corruption in the civic body in June, which resulted in suspension of six officials. Such has been the depths of the relationship that it even brought about an unlikely bonhomie (however temporary) between the two Dravidian majors on the floor of the corporation, when debating on the state of affairs. Our corporation's poor financial state has also not helped matters, as several new infrastructure projects have been deferred and tenders cancelled to help ease pressure on its finances. The tiff between the corporations and the government has pervaded across the state, with walkouts being reported in places such as Trichy. Newspaper reports point to even routine works such as streetlight maintenance and road repair being impacted on account of the standoff.

While people may be willing to cut some slack on the grounds that the new government is still trying to find its feet, it must realise that it has to soon come out of what is being seen as an increasingly adversarial approach, whatever be the validations it may come up with. There are matters that must go beyond political affiliations, and civic governance squarely falls under this category. With a fairly lacklustre Southwest monsoon season, great hopes have been pinned on the Northeast monsoon to provide some sort of respectability to the state's annual rainfall scorecard. With the Super El Nino adding a dash of unpredictability to the entire scenario, the chances of nasty surprises cannot be entirely ruled out, as some forecasters have warned. At such an important juncture, it is essential that every level of the administrative setup, right from the government to the councillors at the ground level is on the same page irrespective of the political identity. Differences at the top cannot be allowed to percolate to the lower levels and make the public unwilling pawns in the power games.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Pigeon Service

For over a fortnight now, *The Man from Madras Musings* has managed without an Internet connection. The service provider, whose parent company goes by the name of being reliable in everything from petrochemicals to spectacular year-long weddings, has proved to be unreliable beyond belief. The battle continues for *MMM* is not going to give up, but he can tell you that as far he is concerned, the connection is Just Impossibly Offline. Even if it were Just Intermittently Online, *MMM* would have managed, but short of lying on its back with all four legs lifted in the air, the connection has passed beyond the veil, mourned by all.

MMM can imagine the Chief, smiling down from wherever he is, remarking sagely that he had all along maintained such things are most undependable. Well, all that *MMM* can say is that the Chief lived in easier times and today life without data connectivity is difficult to contemplate. As a backup, *MMM* is considering rearing a brace of pigeons. He has decided that henceforth all the immortal prose that he types will be printed out, tied to the legs of the bird and then sent off to wherever it is meant to reach. Of course, there is no guarantee that it will reach but then the same can be said of email as well, especially if the data connectivity is poor.

For the sake of record, *MMM* must record the entire process of complaint and (non) resolution for it shows you how callous a so-called 'service' provider can be. The first step is to register a complaint with their portal, for which you need an internet connection. But that is precisely what is not working. Then how? Be of good cheer, for there is a phone number which you can call and lodge your complaint. This is answered with a pre-recorded message that says your business is important to the service provider and so can you please wait as all the agents are now busy. After what seems like an eon, someone does come along, by which time you have been made abreast with all the product offerings of this company, several times over. Anyway, you come away massaging your ear, all aglow because the complaint has been registered.

There is one silver lining in this cloud – the service technicians do turn up. But they do so at the wrong address. That is because, whoever entered your address details at the back end forgot to save the previous person's record and so his/her address is now showing up as yours as no doubt yours is showing up as the succeeding connection's address. Now this cannot be resolved at all – no matter how many times you provide your Aadhaar card and other such proofs. It is like the moving finger in Belshazzar's (or was it Nebuchadnezzar, *MMM* always forgets) feast – it having writ, moves on and nor all your piety nor your wit will lure it back, etc., etc. So, you are fated to a lifetime of technicians calling you from a wrong address and then you having to direct them to yours.

After all this, there is no guarantee that the connectivity will endure. It invariably fails after an hour of the visit. This time you take to social media (via phone data) to lodge a complaint. A bot answers most politely but beyond that it has not been trained. It says the same thing over and over again – "Your business is important to us…" etc., etc. and you know the rest anyway.

MMM has begun to yearn for those good old days when you befriended the linesman of Madras Telephones, slipped him something and got him to fix your connection pronto, sometimes with the charges being loaded on your neighbour's phone line.

Forwarding Fiends

These days, when anybody asks The *Man from Madras Musings* for his cell phone number, *MMM* hesitates. He then asks the person if they will send good morning greetings every day and also relentlessly forward videos on a daily basis. If there is any hesitation in saying no in response, MMM withholds the number. For his sixth sense tells him that there in person is an FF – a Forwarding Fiend.

Mind you, these days it has become increasingly difficult to spot them, so good have they become in camouflage. They hotly deny such habits and take your number and then it is too late. It begins with an occasional forward saying they know how interested *MMM* is in such a subject and so they thought they will send it. *MMM* grudgingly accepts but does not say anything more. After a couple of days comes a follow up call saying they sent a forward (haha they know how *MMM* hates them) and has *MMM* seen it (heheh despite his busy schedule that is). *MMM* is now caught in a bind – if he says yes, he has seen it, the next question will be oh, what did he think of it? These FFs take an almost parental pride in their forwards – in a sense they believe they have played a role in the forward's life, by furthering its reach.

MMM has come to the conclusion that the other option, namely saying no is the best – it kills all further conversation but runs the risk of finishing off friendships for good. A better option *MMM* has come to realise is to reply in fake tones that somehow *MMM* missed that forward and so could it be sent again. This the FF is unlikely to do as how is he or she to locate that particular forward among the millions they scatter hither and thither on a daily basis? But there again, there is the risk that this will encourage the FF into sending a few more. On second thoughts, the firm No is best.

But beyond all of this there is the FA – Forwarding Addict. They have reached a state of delirium tremens where, without forwarding, they cannot rest. *MMM* has had to contend with a few of these as well. He has learnt of a useful option in WhatsApp where you can archive such pests. That way they think they have sent you forwards but you don't need to see them unless you go and search in the archived section. *MMM* has placed his school and college Whatsapp groups in the archives. Handling one FA is possible but not 30 of them in a school group.

As a last resort, *MMM* blocks people. But he always sends them a polite message before doing so. He has thus far received no complaints from anyone.

– MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Need to Set Up Exclusive Welfare Board in Tamil Nadu for Migrant Workers from Eastern and North Eastern States

Nandini Voice For Deprived, a Chennai based not-for-profit organisation, conducted a study on the state of migrant workers in Tamil Nadu, their contribution and issues faced. The study was conducted based on informal discussions with a cross section of stakeholders. Highlights of the findings of the study are given below:

Compulsive employment need for migrant workers

It is reported that around 35 lakh migrant workers, from eastern and north eastern states including Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Nagaland are presently working in Tamil Nadu, as per the Tamil Nadu government data. They carry out different types of jobs in multiple sectors and fields such as textile/garment factories, agricultural operations, retail shops, construction activities, security agencies, eateries, quarries, etc. and work at the skilled and semi-skilled levels doing physical work.

Most of them are in the age below 40 and belong to lower income group. They come to Tamil Nadu due to lack of adequate job opportunities in their native states and in order to sustain themselves and their families economically. This is the compulsive condition faced by them.

Most of them get informal employment without proper rules and regulations being followed by the employers. Sometimes, they get the jobs through middlemen.

Employers prefer migrant workers

It is increasingly seen that the employers in Tamil Nadu generally prefer workers from eastern and north eastern states, more than the workers from Tamil Nadu, particularly for skilled and semi skilled work. Employers prefer them as they work hard for long hours, put up with difficult working conditions and often with low wages compared to the native workers in Tamil Nadu.

Working conditions

As these migrant workers are sometimes made to work in conditions without adequate safety measures in place, news often appear about death and injuries to the migrant workers as they carry out their work. The recent incident is the death of around 18 workers from Jharkhand in Thiruvallur region due to ammonia leak which is one among the number of accidents that have taken place in recent times.

When such accidents happen, adequate compensation is not provided to the injured persons or families of dead persons by the employers.

Further, they often lack housing facilities and on several occasions, the employers provide them common dormitory-type accommodation with minimum facilities.

Interaction with local population

Most of the migrant workers manage to speak some broken Tamil but seldom interact with the local population and mostly spend their time within their groups. Obviously, they find that Tamil culture is alien to them, which prevents them from identifying themselves with the local population. In such circumstances, there also seems to be a feeling of insecurity and helplessness amongst them.

No challenge to demographic balance in Tamil Nadu

Most of the migrant workers have plans to go back to their native places and do not plan to settle down in Tamil Nadu. A few of them bring their families and a few women may also work. However, this is only a temporary arrangement and they have no plans to stay lifelong in Tamil Nadu.

It appears that there would not be any significant impact on the demographic population balance in Tamil Nadu in the long run, because of the migrant workers from eastern and north eastern states.

Integral part of economic activity

All said and done, there is consensus view among a cross section of employers at various levels in Tamil Nadu that in the absence of the workers from eastern and north eastern states, industrial output would get reduced in several places and commercial and agricultural operations would be severely impacted. The view is that workers shortage could become a grim issue in Tamil Nadu, particularly with the output of workers from Tamil Nadu being much less than that of migrant workers due to reasons such as widespread freebie culture in Tamil Nadu and section of youth population in Tamil Nadu becoming liquor addicts and drug abusers.

There are many occasions reported in the media that output in the factories and workspots suffer heavily when the workers from eastern and north eastern states go to their native places during festival time and other occasions.

In short, workers from eastern and north eastern states have now become an integral and inevitable part of industrial and economic activity in Tamil Nadu. It is difficult to visualise a scenario without migrant workers.

Negative publicity

There are also exaggerated media reports about some persons from eastern and north eastern states being caught for criminal activities.

Such incidents are few and far between, but prominently published in the media, tarnishing the image of the hard working workers from eastern and north eastern states.

Appeal to the Government of Tamil Nadu

In the interest of sustaining the industrial activities and economic growth of Tamil Nadu, the migrant workers from eastern and north eastern states should be taken care of by providing them required support by the government.

While there is a portal for registration of migrant workers in Tamil Nadu, this has not helped the cause of the migrant workers in any way.

The present practice of informal employment of migrant workers should be put an end to. They need to be given medical facilities and minimum wages should be assured to them based on the work output.

While there is a welfare board for unorganised workers in Tamil Nadu providing them social security, the need of the migrant workers from eastern and north eastern states are different from the other unorganised workers in Tamil Nadu, and the government should take note of this.

Recognising the role and importance of workers from the north eastern states and their indispensable role, Tamil Nadu government should recognise their contribution to the state and set up an exclusive welfare board to ensure fair working conditions for them and to prevent exploitation.

It is high time that some proactive and specific welfare schemes are implemented for the well deserved migrant workers from eastern and north eastern states. Such schemes need to be adequately monitored by the government.

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Website Comments

Sport in 18th Century Madras

(Vol. XXXVI No. 6, July 1-15, 2026)

I have just discovered that my great grandfather John Lane, b.1815, a Saddler and Harness maker of Guildford Surrey, UK, kept a pack of hounds and at one point sent them to Madras, where they won what I would imagine was, the coveted prize at the time of the 'quickest kill'. The head of the animal was mounted on an oak shield bearing the event on a silver plaque. This curiosity was passed down to my grandfather who predeceased my grandmother.

At the time of her death, my father requested it might be sent to him but apparently it had become too damaged and had been disposed of.

I was just fascinated by the story, learning of it probably 150 years later.

Christine Jensen
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MADRAS QUIZ QUESTIONS

– By Vidya Swaminathan

1. After a historic defeat in 1815, which European ruler was supposed to be incarcerated at Fort St. George but was sent to a remote location in the South Atlantic Ocean?
2. In 1955, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Yugoslav President Marshal Tito were amongst the important politicians to arrive in the locality temporarily referred to as Sathyamurthy Nagar in Madras. Which locality and for what event did they arrive?
3. Who were the early settlers of Madras credited with the introduction of employing translators, later called Dubashes?
4. Name the legendary musician who lived in several Chennai neighbourhoods, including Triplicane, Kalki Gardens, Barnaby Road, Poonamallee High Road, and Kotturpuram.
5. Chaakalipeta was the name in local Telugu for which locality of Chennai?
6. Name the three cricketers who will be having stands named after them at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium this December.
7. Crazy Mohan's drama troupe now led by Maadhu Balaji is implementing a new format in which plays are performed for small gatherings. What catchy name has been given to this format?
8. Lake Area 5th Cross Street in Nungambakkam is set to be renamed after which illustrious resident who passed away this June?
9. Who is the legendary sportsperson of Chennai whose daughter Shameena won a Bronze in Women's Team Squash at the recently held Asian Games?
10. Which famous personality now heads the Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram?

(Answers on page 7)

T. Nagar Series – 2

J. Venkatanarayana Nayudu: A Distinguished Administrator and Writer

Of the arterial roads that were designed to emanate from the centre of the Mambalam Town Planning Scheme, connecting it with Mount Road, the south-east diagonal commemorates Jannyavula Venkatanarayana Nayudu, a distinguished administrator of the Government of Madras and the corporation.

Born in 1875, Venkatanarayana Nayudu had his early education at Ellore and graduated from the Noble College at Masulipatnam. He obtained a law degree from the Madras Law College and joined the civil service in 1899 and slowly rose through the ranks of the government. He began his career with the Revenue and Land Records departments, being appointed Tahsildar in 1908 and Land Records Superintendent the following year. He was appointed the Director of Land Records in 1919 and the Inspector-General of Registration in 1922. He also served as the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. In 1925, he was appointed Commissioner of the Corporation of Madras, a post he held for three years. It was a stint that saw him implement several reforms in curbing corruption and enhancing revenue. Writing about his tenure in the *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, T.P. Kothandarama Mudaliar, who served the corporation for a long time and was the chairman of the Taxation Finance Committee in the 1940s, states that Nayudu's reforms with the backing of the Justice Party earned him the sobriquet "Reforming Commissioner". Following the completion of his tenure in 1928, Venkatanarayana Nayudu was appointed Law and Education Secretary to the Government of Madras. He was recognised for his services with the titles of Rao Sahib in 1920, Dewan Bahadur in 1923 and C.I.E. in 1930.

Venkatanarayana Nayudu authored several books as well. Drawing from his experiences in the revenue administration, he wrote the *Chain Survey Manual for Revenue Subordinates* which was published by the Government of Madras and translated into all the vernacular languages of South India. He also authored *The Students Manual of the History of England*. He authored several philosophical works as well, such as *Adoration of the Supreme Being, Essential Teachings and Sadhanas of the Bhagavad Gita* and *The Hinduism of the Upanishads*, which won him the Sivananda Book-of-the-Year prize from the Divine Life Society for the best work on philosophy and religion in 1950-51. Nayudu was a patron of the fine arts and was associated with the Indian Fine Arts Society for a very long time.

● by
Karthik Bhatt

Venkatanarayana Nayudu was married to Manickyamma. The couple were residents of Ritherdon Road in Vepery and had seven children, five sons and two daughters. One of his sons was J.V.P. Rao, who joined the Amalgamations Group in 1941 and after training with Nuffields in the UK and Chrysler in the USA, took over as General Manager of Addison and Co. in 1949. It was thanks to his efforts that the company rolled out the first car assembled in Madras -- a Morris Minor in November 1950. His brother J.V.K. Rao too was associated with the Amalgamations Group, serving as General Manager of T. Stanes and Co. after various positions at the Indian Railways and Indian Oil. Yet another son was J.V. Satchidananda Rao, who followed his father's footsteps and served as Commissioner of the Corporation of Madras in the 1970s.



Diwan Bahadur J. Venkatanarayana, B.A., B.L., Commissioner, Corporation of Madras.

Venkatanarayana Nayudu passed away in 1958. The eponymous road was one of the first set of roads named in the T. Nagar locality, with reference to it being found in the street directory of Madras as early as 1934.

Following Fish in Madras

It forever rains books as far as I am concerned. There was a time when I was buying them much to the annoyance of everyone at home. Then people began sending books over – ones they have written, old books they did not want, etc, all with a Chennai theme, and over the years my collection of city-based books has grown. Last month I bought one – *Fishes of Chennai, A Comprehensive Visual & Practical Field Guide*. Compiled by Aravind Manoj and Beta Mahatvaraj, both naturalists, it has been brought out by Meenkaran Publications (what an apt name). I found it to be excellent.

The book in my view, goes a long way in fulfilling a gap in Chennai's heritage – the documentation of its natural habitats and wildlife. When you read colonial accounts your heart aches at what we have lost – tigers on the Adyar bank, crocodiles in the Cooum, leopards and jackals at the edge of Alwarpet. In recent times the writings of Shobha Menon and team at Nizhal, Jayshree Vencat of Care Earth, Theodore Baskaran, Zai Whitaker and Janaki Lenin have all opened our eyes to what we continue to lose. If this be the casualty list among animals and birds, what of fish?

A casual reading of Isaac Tyrrell's book *From England to the Antipodes and India, 1846-1902* (ALV Press, 1904) reveals how many ponds stocked with fish once existed along Poonamallee High Road, which includes land now occupied by the Central Station! Tyrrell being the Superintendent of the Madras Central Jail had enough opportunity to try his luck with the rod and line. There are photographs of soldiers stationed in Fort St. George fishing in the moat! The industrialist AC Muthiah has often reminisced to me about angling expeditions to Pallikaranai in the 1960s. Today, such activities can only be imagined.

However, as we often take satisfaction in saying, all is not yet lost. At least that is what my reading of the book *Fishes of Chennai* revealed. In terms of format, this is very well laid out, taking the novice step by step into fishy matters. There is an introduction to fish, their classification, etc. Then comes a detailed documentation on the water wealth of the city – its rivers and canals, tanks and lakes, and the sea. What follows is an exhaustive compilation of the various kinds of fish found in and around Chennai, with a page dedicated to each species. The photographs are most useful, having been taken with great clarity and reproduced on excellent paper. The book itself, including research for it, took three years in the making.

Having read the book I contacted Beta Mahatvaraj and found out that many of the fish were photographed in special tanks to ensure clarity. There are of course pictures shot at location, never an easy task. I was reminded of Lady Elizabeth Gwillim, arguably the world's first woman ornithologist, sitting in 19th century Madras at her San Thome home and painting furiously the birds brought to her – there was every need for hurry wrote that remarkably sensitive artist, for a captured bird had to be released within a day into its natural habitat, as it may otherwise starve!

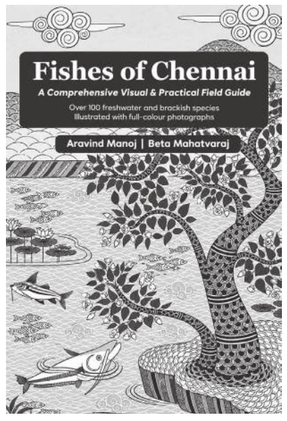
● by
Sriram V

To someone like me, greatly attached to ancient Tamil poetry, this book endeared itself at once, for it carries verses from Sangam anthology, each naming a freshwater fish variety that is included in the book. During COVID, I embarked on a similar exercise that I never finished – documenting flora and fauna mentioned in the *Tevaram* and *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. Perhaps this book will enthuse me to complete that someday.

Some did-you-knows (in my case, no I did not know) that I came away with:

- A fish new to science was discovered in a tank in West Anna Nagar (it was news to me that West Anna Nagar has tanks).
- Some of the fishes here breathe air and cross land.
- Chennai has a see-through fish.
- The mosquitofish, released here to control malarial larvae, has contributed to the decline of several native varieties.

The book overall surveys around 100 varieties of fresh and brackish-water fish species in the Chennai Metropolitan Area. It is a perfect guide for those who are interested in matters piscine. More importantly, it is excellent to gift to children so that they can be encouraged to appreciate our natural wealth. From the book I learnt that research on fish in Madras began in 1916 with B. Sundara Raj of the Madras Fisheries Bureau. He documented around 57 species in the Adyar, Cooum and other waterbodies. The present book says that much has changed since then and that many of the fish communities he documented are not there any longer! If that does not set off alarm bells, what will?



Chennai Turns the Page – Can a City Grow Without Losing Its Heart?

A city is a curious thing. We want it to grow, but not change too much. We welcome wider roads, faster trains and impressive new buildings, yet feel a small pang when a familiar landmark disappears. We want the convenience of a modern city and the comfort of a neighbourhood where someone still recognises us. In Chennai, these ambitions sometimes compete for the same stretch of road.

The question is not whether Chennai should change. Cities must evolve, and Chennai has every reason to look ahead. The question is what we want that change to achieve. Is a successful city one that helps us reach our destination faster, or one that also makes the journey, and the life we lead between destinations, more pleasant?

Ideally, it should do both.

A city is more than its roads

Chennai's expanding Metro network reflects the city's growing ambitions. Phase II is progressing through major construction milestones, promising better connections across parts of the metropolitan area. For commuters, improved public transport can mean more than saving a few minutes. It can mean greater access to work, education and essential services, with less dependence on private vehicles.

But a transport network is only as useful as the journey that surrounds it. Getting off a train is one thing; reaching one's destination along a safe, accessible pavement is another. A beautifully planned station cannot solve the entire journey if the pedestrian must negotiate broken footpaths, parked vehicles or a crossing that seems to require exceptional courage.

Perhaps we should think of the pavement as an essential part of public transport rather than an afterthought. Not everyone drives, and not everyone can simply step aside when a vehicle approaches. Children, older people, wheelchair users and parents with prams all deserve streets designed with their needs in mind.

A modern city should not make walking feel like an adventure sport.

The same principle applies to public spaces. A shaded pavement, a well-maintained park or a bench in the right place may not attract the attention given to a new flyover, but these modest facilities can transform everyday life. They give people room to pause, meet neighbours and enjoy their surroundings without having to buy a coffee to justify occupying a chair.

When the weather joins the planning committee

In Chennai, the environment cannot be treated as a decorative addition to urban development. Heat, humidity and seasonal rainfall influence almost every aspect of outdoor life. Trees and shaded walking routes are not merely attractive features; they help make streets more comfortable. Lakes, wetlands and waterways are not vacant spaces awaiting development. They are part of the city's environmental systems.

The Greater Chennai Corporation's Climate Action Plan recognises the risks associated with urban flooding, rising temperatures and the urban heat-island effect. Its climate budgeting also identifies flooding and water scarcity, waste management and sustainable mobility as important areas for investment.

These are not abstract concerns for a distant future. They affect how people travel, where homes can be built safely, how neighbourhoods cope with heavy rain and how comfortable public spaces remain during periods of intense heat.

Chennai's relationship with water is especially important. The city's lakes, rivers, canals and wetlands need to be considered as connected parts of a larger landscape. Protecting them, improving drainage and planning development responsibly are essential to building a more resilient city.

We often promise children a better future. Perhaps that promise should include a simple everyday pleasure: being able to walk along a tree-lined street, enjoy a park and live in a neighbourhood that is better prepared for the next spell of heavy rain.

A city that remembers without standing still

Chennai's identity is not confined to its infrastructure. Its historic neighbourhoods, markets, theatres, cultural institutions and places of worship contribute to the character that residents and visitors recognise as distinctly Chennai.

The city grew around Fort St. George after the English East India Company obtained land in 1639, with the settlement developing in the following years. But the region's history extends beyond this familiar date. Chennai's story includes older settlements, diverse communities and traditions that long predate the city's modern expansion.

Preserving this heritage does not mean resisting every new building or expecting the city to remain unchanged. It means recognising that older places can have value beyond the land on which they stand. A historic building may tell a story about architecture; a traditional market may sustain livelihoods and relationships; a familiar public space may connect generations of residents.

● by
Priyanka Soman

When such places disappear, something more than their physical structures can be lost.

At the same time, heritage should not become a reason to keep culture at a distance. Chennai's music, Bharatanatyam, Tamil literature, theatre and December music season are living traditions. They deserve not only to be preserved but also to remain accessible and relevant to younger generations.

A city can honour its established artists while welcoming new performers, writers and ideas. It can maintain its cultural roots without expecting every new expression to resemble the old. After all, a tradition that cannot accommodate the next generation risks becoming something people admire from a distance rather than participate in.

The neighbourhood is still the unit of belonging

For all the attention given to large projects, much of our experience of a city is determined by the neighbourhood around us.

It is where we buy everyday necessities, meet familiar faces, walk to a nearby shop and discover whether public spaces feel welcoming. A neighbourhood with safe streets, accessible facilities, local businesses and places for people to gather can create a sense of belonging that no landmark alone can provide.

This is particularly important in a growing city where residents arrive from different parts of India and the world. People need opportunities to become part of their surroundings, whether they have lived in Chennai for generations or have only recently arrived.

Belonging does not require everyone to share the same language, habits or background. It begins with the ability to participate in everyday life without feeling like an outsider.

A friendly neighbour, a helpful shopkeeper or a public space where people of different ages can comfortably spend time may seem unremarkable. Yet these are the small things that help a city become a community.

They also remind us that civic responsibility cannot be outsourced entirely to municipal authorities. Keeping public spaces clean, respecting shared facilities and allowing pedestrians to cross safely are everyday responsibilities. Even the most thoughtfully designed park cannot remain pleasant if everyone treats it as somebody else's job to maintain it.

Perhaps good citizenship is less about making grand declarations about our city and more about how we behave when nobody is watching.

What should Chennai promise its children?

The Chennai of tomorrow will belong to children who are growing up today. Their experience of the city will depend on choices being made now: how transport is planned, how water bodies are protected, whether public spaces are accessible and whether neighbourhoods make room for play, culture and community life.

Children should be able to explore their city, not merely travel through it under adult supervision. They should encounter its history in buildings and streets, its creativity in performances and libraries, and its natural environment in parks and protected water bodies.

They should also see that a city is not a finished product delivered by the government. It is a shared responsibility, shaped by planners, public institutions, businesses and residents.

This calls for a broader understanding of progress. A new transport link is valuable, but so is the safe pavement leading to it. A new commercial district can create opportunities, but its success should also be considered in relation to the surrounding neighbourhood. A public park is an achievement, but maintaining it and ensuring that different groups can use it comfortably are equally important.

These are not arguments against development. They are reminders that development should serve the people for whom a city exists.

The heart of the matter

Chennai does not need to choose between its past and its future. Nor does it need to abandon its ambitions to preserve its character. It can become better connected while remaining walkable, more prosperous while protecting its natural resources, and more modern while keeping its cultural life vibrant.

The challenge is to make these goals part of the same conversation.

I would like to imagine a Chennai where a commuter can look forward to an easier journey, a child can play in a safe public space, an older resident can find somewhere comfortable to rest, and a newcomer can feel welcome in the neighbourhood. I would like to see a city that protects its waterways, values its heritage and makes room for new ideas without losing sight of the people who give it life.

The Chennai of tomorrow will inevitably look different from the Chennai of today. That is neither a threat nor a tragedy. Change is part of a city's life.

What matters is the direction in which we choose to grow.

Let Chennai become faster where it needs to be, greener where it can be, more accessible wherever possible, and more considerate in the everyday details that shape our lives. Let its progress be visible not only in what rises above the skyline, but also in what improves at street level.

After all, the true measure of a city is not simply how impressively it welcomes the future, but how well it makes room for the people who will live in it.

Chennai Is Running Out of Places for the Rain to Go

● by
Colonel M V Shashidhar, Retd.

Every monsoon, Chennai has the same conversation: Will the rains be good this year? Will the reservoirs fill? Which roads will flood? Which neighbourhoods will be cut off?

We have become remarkably good at discussing the rain. Perhaps we should spend a little more time discussing the city. Because Chennai's problem is not simply that too much rain falls in a short period. It is that a rapidly expanding metropolis has progressively reduced the places where that water can pause, spread, seep, drain and finally reach the sea.

I have seen it first hand during the last Cyclone Michaung when the roads and campus were inundated and life remained dislocated.

The city beneath the city

There was another Madras beneath the one we know today.

It was a city of eris, tanks, ponds, marshes, wells, canals, surplus channels and backwaters. Water moved through this landscape slowly. Tank cascades stored monsoon flows; excess moved downstream; wetlands absorbed what could not be held; canals and creeks eventually carried the surplus towards the coast. The old system was neither perfect nor primitive. It was simply adapted to the terrain. *Madras Musings* has described this forgotten landscape in considerable detail in its past publications – how a network in which the eri-s were linked, bunds and sluices were maintained and water was treated as a community responsibility.

That is the part worth remembering. Not because Chennai can return to an eighteenth century water system. It cannot. But because the underlying principle remains valid: "Know where the water comes from, where it gathers, where it must go and never obstruct those routes without understanding the consequences."

Water does not recognise our boundaries

The modern city is divided into wards, zones, municipalities, departments and development authorities. Rainwater ignores all of them. It follows the slope of the land. This is why Chennai needs to think much more seriously in terms of drainage basins and catchments, rather than treating flooding as an isolated problem on a particular road or in a particular ward.

A building approved in one location can alter the flow of water somewhere else. A filled pond may not immediately create a problem. A blocked channel may remain invisible for years. Then comes an intense spell of rain and suddenly the accumulated consequences appear together.

The water has not changed its mind. The city has changed its landscape.

Pallikaranai is not empty land

Nowhere is this more evident than Pallikaranai. For years, the marsh was treated as though it were an inconvenient gap between areas of development. But the older water map tells another story. Pallikaranai was part of a much larger southern drainage system, receiving water from upstream lakes and tanks before the flow moved towards Okkiyam Maduvu and the backwaters.

An earlier article in *Madras Musings* has itself described Pallikaranai as a vital wetland ecosystem and a natural buffer against flooding. That observation is pertinent – A wetland is not "vacant land". A floodplain is not "unused land". A drainage channel is not an encumbrance waiting to be removed. They are components of the city's infrastructure. We understand the value of a flyover or a Metro line but find it harder to understand the value of land that prevents water from entering our homes!

Chennai has changed. The rainfall risk has changed too

The Chennai of today is not the Chennai of our grandparents. The metropolitan footprint has expanded enormously. Roads, apartment complexes, commercial buildings, parking areas, technology campuses and other infrastructure have replaced large areas of permeable ground. At the same time, climate change is making extreme rainfall, heat and other urban risks more difficult to predict and manage. This does not mean every flood is caused by climate change. That would be an easy but misleading explanation. It means something more practical – we can no longer plan the city using yesterday's assumptions about tomorrow's weather. The margin for error is shrinking.

The GCC question is really a planning question

Chennai should welcome its Global Capability Centres, technology companies and new economic activity. They bring jobs, investment and talent. They are part of the city's future. But economic growth cannot be considered independently of the infrastructure that supports it. When employment clusters grow, housing follows. Roads expand. Traffic increases. Water consumption rises. More land gets paved. More sewage and stormwater have to be handled.

So, the question for planners is not whether a particular GCC, office complex or residential development is desirable. The question is cumulative: Can the drainage basin absorb the development being permitted within it? That question should be answered before the building rises, not after the neighbourhood floods!

Time for development red lines

Chennai now needs some firm red lines.

Critical wetlands, flood-storage areas, natural drainage channels, watercourses and identified flow paths must be protected as infrastructure assets. Where development is allowed, the developer should demonstrate its impact on the entire catchment, not merely the individual plot. This is where planning needs to become more sophisticated. A project-by-project approach can miss the bigger picture. Ten individually "compliant" projects can collectively overwhelm a basin.

The city therefore needs a "cumulative drainage-impact test" for major developments. The principle has to be simple – if a development adds to the public drainage burden, it must contribute to solving that burden.

Regulation without penalties is only a suggestion

There is little value in identifying water channels on paper if they can subsequently be encroached upon, filled or narrowed. Nor is a small penalty a deterrent where the commercial value of the land is enormous. Illegal construction over watercourses, filling of waterbodies and obstruction of natural drainage should attract penalties proportionate to the economic gain from the violation. Restoration should be part of the remedy wherever feasible.

There must also be accountability within the approval system. Otherwise, the cycle remains familiar – permit, build, flood, inspect, announce corrective measures and wait for the next monsoon.

Chennai deserves better than that.

Government cannot do this alone

The Greater Chennai Corporation has an important responsibility. So does the State Government. So do the planning and water-management agencies. But this cannot remain a government-only exercise.

Political parties must resist the temptation to treat every flood as an opportunity for blame and every drainage project as a five-year achievement.

Developers must recognise that the city is not an unlimited development canvas.

And citizens have responsibilities too.

We cannot demand every vacant patch be paved, every road widened and every waterbody beautified into something that no longer holds water and then ask why the neighbourhood floods.

Residents' associations and 'area sabhas' could play a much larger role in monitoring local waterbodies, drains and known flood points. The public should be able to see the drainage map of its own neighbourhood.

Citizens should know which basin they live in. That sounds technical. It is not. It is basic civic literacy.

Chennai needs a water map

Perhaps the most useful thing Chennai could do now is to create a publicly accessible 'Metropolitan Water and Drainage Atlas'. It should show the city's drainage basins, lakes, tanks, wetlands, old watercourses, surplus channels, flood-prone areas, culverts, stormwater networks and critical discharge routes. Old survey maps should be studied alongside current satellite imagery and ground-level data.

The earlier *Madras Musings* research makes the point beautifully – traces of the old system still survive in tanks, marshes and the faint lines of former water routes. We do not have to recreate old Madras. But we should know what stood there before we build the next Chennai.

Make flood resilience a citizens' movement

Chennai should move from 'monsoon management' to 'monsoon governance'.

That means protecting natural storage, strengthening engineered drainage, maintaining what already exists, regulating what is built and making the consequences of poor development decisions visible. It also means looking beyond one monsoon and one administration.

A metropolitan resilience plan should have a long horizon and political continuity. Governments will change. Chennai's geography will not. The city should set measurable targets for protecting wetlands, restoring water channels, improving drainage capacity and reducing development pressure on flood-sensitive land. And citizens should be able to hold institutions accountable against those targets.

Save Madras

There is something almost ironic about all this.

We call Chennai a modern megapolis. We speak proudly of its IT corridors, manufacturing base, ports, universities, hospitals and global businesses. Yet the city beneath all this modernity still follows an older rule: Water must have somewhere to go!

Earlier *Madras Musings* articles had described the old water system as a form of "practical memory" – a reminder of how water once came, stayed and left without turning the town against itself. That is precisely the memory Chennai needs now. Not nostalgia.

The red lines have to be clear. Protect the wetland. Protect the watercourse. Respect the drainage basin. Make development carry its infrastructure cost. Penalise violations meaningfully. Publish the data. And involve citizens before, not after, the flood.

The rain will come. We cannot negotiate with it. But we can decide what kind of city receives it.

Madras once knew how to live with water. Chennai must learn it again before the next monsoon teaches the lesson the harder way.

The Marina We Didn't See

● by V.Vijaysree

As children, we ran toward the water the moment we heard the ocean roar – obeying an instinct we could not name. The Marina Beach of my Madras childhood was bright and noisy: cotton candy, merry-go-rounds, families taking in the fresh, salty air – the Sunday evening Marina.

One of the longest urban beaches in the world, the place tries on various guises as the day lengthens into night. It becomes a different place, and it is this afterhours shoreline that Sujatha Rangarajan captures in his novella *Marina*, set in the 1990s, the early years of India's economic liberalization. Marina is a living system with its own rhythms, hierarchies, and unseen shadows.

Awash in the yellow of sodium lamps, Sujatha's Marina comes into focus. The rich North Indian Seths arrive; their wives lounge on aluminum chairs. Their pet dogs leap at the waves and chase ghost crabs, scuttling creatures that make perfect holes in the wet sand. Young couples – the bold and the not-so-bold – linger in the gathering dark for a few private moments, but they do have a bus to catch. Those who depend on public transport live by the timetable.

By 8.30 pm, Marina enters the phase Sujatha calls meditative. Against the backdrop of drying fishing nets, shorebirds – perhaps blackcapped night herons – dart into the darkening waters of the Bay of Bengal to catch fish. Farther out, boats switch on their lights and look towards the shoreline for entertainment. And then, almost as an aside, the writer mentions that the keeneyed might spot dolphins.

Dolphins, here? Did they really swim off these waters? We are a city by the sea, yet the idea of dolphins just offshore surprised me.

But yes, humpback dolphins still move in small pods along this coast, keeping just beyond the breakers from Ennore down to Kovalam – a stretch of port, fishing villages, and new suburbs. Fishermen notice them often; beachgoers almost never do. The animals prefer quieter waters just beyond our sight.

In Sujatha's telling, nature is only prelude. The real drama begins when the human predators arrive. As the last of the petromax-lit food carts shut down, another set of night creatures rolls in on motorbikes. Running red lights, engines revving, they grab the last packets of fish chips from roadside stalls. Young men, bodies buffed by hours in the gym, announce themselves with the casual arrogance of those who have never been denied anything. Whether they speak Tamil or English hardly matters – their true language is violence. They flick open beer cans – the hiss cuts through the dark – then smoke pot, snort cocaine, and speak casually of buying sex.

This is the Marina Sujatha walks his readers into – a perfect setting for a crime that the iconic detective duo, Ganesh and Vasanth – the cool, cerebral lawyer and his irrepressible, wisecracking assistant step in to solve. A young man's body is found on the shore. The suspect is the leader of the drugaddled teen gang. The boy's industrialist father calls Ganesh in – not for his legal expertise but to simply determine whether the bribe will move through the "right" channels. No report has been filed yet; the case can be quietly erased.

When the assistant Vasanth drops in to gather the facts of the case, the spoilt young man at the centre of the mess stays slouched in his chair reading a *Peanuts* comic as if the whole affair were a minor inconvenience. "You are up shit creek without a paddle young man," Vasanth tells him, a line straight out of Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*. Impressed by a man who knows his drugs, his American slang, and the night economy on Marina Beach, the boy starts calling Vasanth "*guru*".

The case resolves with the usual Madras irony: the guilty punished, the corrupt rewarded and the city – indifferent. The characters, especially Vasanth, speak Madras *bashai*, the city's irreverent slang, which is delightful. To me, however, the highest point of the novella is the introduction of urban ecology, specifically dolphins – a detail Sujatha drops casually, as if the natural world were simply another presence in the dark. It is a reminder of how easily the city forgets the wildness at its edge.

And no city can afford to forget the wildness at its edge.

The Second Act – Cheapest over the Best

In Tamil Nadu, power-hungry industries needed electricity at a cheaper cost. "Captive consumption, wheeling and banking arrangements gave companies a way to generate their own power and reduce dependence on the grid," points out D.V. Giri, a wind energy veteran and former Secretary General of the Indian Wind Turbine Manufacturers Association. Apart from the model's win, wind energy's early growth story is often read as the story of opportunism. It was the tax deferral that made capital investment easier and improved cash flow.

The policy detour

2017 policy shifts changed the economics of this sector. Competitive bidding and central procurement introduced to bring transparency and efficiency, pushed smaller Indian investors out. "A project was assessed mainly by how low a tariff could be quoted and not based on the generation value. This shift had consequences for quality, ownership and long-term value," points out Giri. When companies bid too aggressively, the pressure often shifts to equipment quality, project timelines, financing assumptions, or the resale valuation of the project itself. But despite the changes, the sector's annual wind additions have now crossed a record 6 GW.

Major bottlenecks

The gap between signing a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and securing a Power Sale Agreement (PSA) was one of the biggest challenges. Even if a developer wins a project and commits investment, the project could not move forward unless a buyer confirms to get power. "Nearly 45 GW capacity is reportedly stuck because PPAs had not been converted into PSAs or fully executed," highlights Giri. Central procurement too favoured projects of 50 MW, making it difficult for smaller captive consumers. While project costs were estimated at around Rs 9 crore per MW and industry calculations suggested tariffs needed to be much higher to ensure sustainable returns, auction caps were lowered to commercially unviable levels.

This pushed developers to run on thin margins. "In some cases, the generator earned just 3-4 paise per unit of electricity, while intermediary agencies collected commissions of around 7 paise per unit," points out Giri. The larger point is that the renewable sector cannot be strong if it rewards the cheapest possible asset over the best possible one. The next crucial step in the sector can be repowering, as land is a precious resource.

"In a country that wants faster renewable growth without endlessly expanding its foot-print, repowering may be one of the smartest levers available," points out Giri. Adding to that, offshore has real potential because it avoids many of the land and right-of-way issues. Demonstration projects can prove its viability, as without proper testing, financing, logistics and port infrastructure, offshore will remain a promise rather than a market. If renewable power is going to be merchant power, it must be storable, dispatchable and compatible with exchange-based sales. – Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*, July 2026.

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– THE EDITOR

Answers to Quiz

1. Napolean Bonaparte
2. Avadi for the Avadi Congress
3. The Dutch
4. M.S. Subbulakshmi
5. Washermanpet
6. S. Venkataraghavan, Krishnamachari Srikkanth and Ravichandran Ashwin
7. Chamber of Humour
8. K. Bhagyaraj
9. Mohammed Riaz, former captain of Indian men's field hockey team and a 2-time Olympian
10. Pushpavanam Kuppusamy

My cousin Raman

● by
V. Ramnarayan

My cousin Raman was my first cricket hero among people I knew personally. He was my first cousin, my elder brother by Tamil tradition, almost three years my senior, and already playing competitive cricket at the junior level when I was slowly making my way into the school team (largely owing to my being his cousin). My joy knew no bounds when I opened the sports page of *The Hindu* one morning and was greeted by Raman's photograph. He had taken eight wickets in an innings for City Schools vs. Districts Schools in the annual selection match for the State Schools team. He was then an orthodox leg spinner with a nice loop and a smart googly, and there was no stopping him after such a splendid start.

It was while Raman – P.S. Ramachandran, to give his full name, was pursuing his engineering degree at the PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore, that his cricket career fairly exploded and he became the darling of the crowds in that part of the world. He had evolved into an attacking opening batsman and an unusual spinner who sent down thunderbolts of leg breaks and googlies, in fact, more googlies than leg breaks – the result of his growing into a tall, solidly built young man, I believe. One of the things he did successfully as an opening batsman was to send the new ball over mid wicket or square leg with an imperious flick of the wrists, something today's spectator would find unsurprising, but was sensational back then. I was lucky enough to watch some of his more brilliant knocks. And, believe you me, he was as successful as a bowler in junior and university cricket as one of his rivals from Bangalore, the one and only B.S. Chandrasekhar, who soon afterwards went on to become one of the world's great wrist spinners.

By the time I started playing in the senior Madras league, Raman had unfortunately struck a rather long bad patch, perhaps more distressing to me than him, for not only was he my hero, but also my greatest supporter who wished the very best for me. He and I played together for a strong Alwarpet CC in the league, and, while I performed with reasonable consistency, Raman rarely troubled the scorer, and his bowling had completely deserted him. At the end of the season, I left Madras for good. I came to know that Raman left the ground half way through a match in protest against an attempt by his team to tank a match to help the opponents to stave off relegation from the first division. I was proud of him, but also saddened by his loneliness.

Raman soon moved to New Zealand, helped by the sports writer R.T. Brittenden, a friend of Raman's father P.N. Sundaresan, the sports editor of *The Hindu.* Raman was living in that country during my first tour of Australia in 1977-78, with the Deccan Blues, but neither of us could cross the Tasman to meet the other during those cash-starved times. I had to wait till the summer of 1986 to meet Raman again. He had now moved to Australia and made Sydney his home, and I was a member of a team called Madras Occasionals led by the late Ram Ramesh, another talented cricketer and colourful character of Madras cricket. My wife Gowri and I basked in the warmth and hospitality of the Ramachandrans – Raman, his wife Raji, and his young son Arjun – for about a week. Raman was enjoying his cricket again, and his leg spin was apparently a big hit in Sydney's club cricket. One of his teammates going by the name of Steve Waugh later went on to lead Australia. Waugh in fact praised Raman's bowling during a newspaper interview, a clipping of which I saw during my visit. When I met Steve Waugh many years later, however, he had no recollection of Raman or the interview.

During the Sydney phase of Madras Occasionals' tour of Australia, we invited Raman to open the innings for us in one of our matches. No one could have been more excited than I at the prospect of watching a vintage Raman knock, but alas, my cousin was run out in the very first over of the match!

Tragedy of a much greater magnitude dogged Raman. Not long after I returned to India, we received news that he had been diagnosed with cancer. The prognosis was pretty bad, and the doctors did not give him much time. He and his family then came to Madras to try homeopathy (banned in Australia), I believe – as a last resort. He eventually underwent allopathic treatment at Apollo Hospitals as advised by my doctor sister Sarojini, and his condition showed some improvement before he returned to Sydney, though we all knew it was perhaps only a temporary reprieve.

Raman was the most devoted cheerleader of the Tamil Nadu team's Ranji Trophy campaign that season, his enthusiasm quickened by the presence of my brother V. Sivaramakrishnan in the team. Siva had a string of good scores leading up to the final against Railways, in which he made 94 as TN piled up over 700 on its way to a trophy triumph. Raman actually rode a scooter to the stadium every morning defying medical advice and common sense, somehow clambered up steep stairs to the pavilion terrace, and sat in a corner of the topmost row surrounded by his paraphernalia.



Young Raman.

There were many outstanding performances – by skipper S. Vasudevan, M. Venkataramana, Robin Singh, V. Sivaramakrishnan, L. Sivaramakrishnan, V.B. Chandrasekhar and others – but you could not take away from Raman's sterling contribution as he willed TN to that memorable victory 32 years after its first Ranji title.

Raman passed away in Sydney a few months later, all our prayers going unheard.

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