

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## Special Madras Week issue

# Seeking a place in World Heritage

(By A Special Correspondent)

Last week saw the Advisory Committee, World Heritage Matters, constituted under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, visiting Chennai. The Departments of Tourism of the southern States, the Archaeological Survey of India and several NGOs, including INTACH, were invited to present their views on sites/buildings/precincts in South India that they considered worthy of World Heritage status. This by itself is a first, for the South has never been considered in such lists. The consultations are, however, only a preliminary step and do not by themselves amount to any kind of recognition or even a promise of future recognition. But they did give the South an opportunity to present its views.

World Heritage status is usually granted by UNESCO to sites of special physical or cultural significance. Of the 911 sites listed across the world, India has 29, of which merely five are in the South. A further 33 have been submitted by India for consideration and none from the South was in the list. This was, therefore, sent back for revision and that resulted in the present discussion. Moreover, it was felt that the lists from India tended to lean towards majority of monuments, most of them from the Mughal era. UNESCO, on the other hand, prefers inclusion of natural habitats, representations from pastoral and

nomadic communities, unique forms of agriculture, which are on the wane, and living examples of heritage such as historic cities that are still in use.

In Tamil Nadu, Mamallapuram, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway and three of the major Chola temples – Brihadeeswarar, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram – are the only sites which enjoy World

Heritage status. The State, along with Kerala and Karnataka, also has the Western Ghats that has recently made it to the list.

The presentations were done by all the southern States and Union Territories. Tamil Nadu had seven recommendations (see box). Each of the presentations was to be of five minutes'

(Continued on page 2)

## Sites proposed in Tamil Nadu

Site	Proposer
Srirangam	Government of Tamil Nadu
Kailasanatha Temple, Kanchi	Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai Chapter
Fort St George	INTACH, Chennai Chapter
Adam's Bridge	School of Planning & Architecture, Anna University
Chettinad Houses	Revive Chettinad Development Project
Pulicat Lake	AARDE Foundation
Kazhugumalai Temple, Tirunelveli	DHAN Foundation

# Will Union Finance Minister keep his promise?

India has a new Finance Minister in P. Chidambaram. The portfolio is, of course, not new to him, for he has held it several times before. The markets are hoping that his taking over the portfolio will bring a new phase of growth for the Indian economy. The Finance Minister has promised to take steps to "keep the market tempo upbeat." While welcoming this, we at *Madras Musings* hope that he will also keep an earlier promise, that of restoring *Bharat Insurance (Kardyl) Building*.

It was on August 24, 2008 that the Minister was in the city to release a book on the Connemara Hotel penned by the Editor of *Madras Musings*. The sorry state of *Bharat Insurance Building* was brought to his notice and, in his speech, he promised that he would ensure its preservation and restoration. To quote from the Indo-Asian News Service report of the event, these were the Minister's words: "I promise, by using or misusing my powers, I will instruct LIC (Life Insurance Corporation of India) not to bring down the historic *Bharat Insurance Building*. The building could be used as a training centre or even as a museum." This was hailed by every newspaper that reported the event.

And rightfully so, for that would be a service that will be forever remembered with gratitude in this city. *Bharat Insurance Building* has been an integral part of the city's skyline from the 19th Century. It also typifies what has been described as Indo-Saracenic architecture run riot. Considering that Madras gave birth to that particular style, would it not be appropriate if the building was retained and splendidly restored to its delightful best.

Not according to the LIC. It had allowed the building to go to seed and in 2006 initiated proceedings for its demolition. This was

despite the CMDA having inspected the building and given it a clean chit on grounds of structural stability. It was also considered to be of Grade 'A' significance in term of its architecture.

The demolition was challenged by INTACH and the CMDA in the High Court of Madras. By the time a stay could be obtained, large portions of the roof had been removed. LIC preferred to take the matter to the Supreme Court which referred the matter to the High Court of Madras. The latter in a landmark judgement in 2010 included *Bharat Insurance Building* in a set of 400-plus heritage structures that could not be demolished. The grade 'A' certification was also confirmed.

The matter has since been challenged by the LIC in the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, under the guise of protecting the building, LIC had it covered with plastic sheets, which it subsequently removed. It has also put up notices all around the building declaring that it is structurally unsafe. That it has no intentions of protecting the edifice is clear from the fact that it has permitted Metrorail to carry on work within the precinct, in close proximity to the building.

INTACH has in the past suggested to LIC that the structure ought to be preserved just as the LIC has done with several historic buildings in its possession in Bombay. But LIC has chosen to turn a deaf ear. It is understood that LIC wants to build a modern multi-storey building on the site.

That *Bharat Insurance Building* continues to stand despite so much neglect is by itself a miracle. It will be a greater miracle if the LIC changes its stance. The Finance Minister is perhaps the only one who can ensure that.

• By The Editor



FAREWELL

(see page 3)

# World Heritage status sought

(Continued from page 1)

duration, with discussions after that. Very few of the presenting teams adhered to this norm, with the usual tendency to be verbose being a prominent feature.

The State Government did its best to do an overkill on its own nomination by pushing it up in the order of presentation, trying to get some more time, etc. It is, however, a moot point as to how much of the presentations the Advisory Committee was able to absorb, given that it listened to almost thirty of them during the course of the day. But to be fair to its team, the short-listed sites will be given a year and sufficient funding to prepare a dossier for further consideration.

This, of course, is not the last word. The short-listed sites will then be forwarded to UNESCO along with the dos-

siers. There they will compete with sites nominated from across the world to, hopefully, make it to a final list. Once listed, UNESCO expects the site to adopt stringent norms of conservation and even the smallest deviation could result in delisting. Hampi almost suffered this ignominy a few years ago when a bridge was constructed in contravention of UNESCO norms. That has since been set right. It will be a tall order for any site in India to strictly adhere to UN regulations.

That said, it was an opportunity for Tamil Nadu and its neighbours to air their heritage. This brought to light several forgotten and unknown treasures. Leaving aside the possibility of these heritage sites making it to UNESCO list, such exercises will help keep heritage in focus. That by itself is a step in the right direction.

## A big 'Thank You' to 23 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.07.12 and 15.08.12, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

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THE EDITOR

# Getting people together the bureaucratic way

Meeting ...

**T**he Man from Madras *Musings* was urgently summoned to discuss matters of pith and moment with one of the grand panjandrums running this State of ours. The minion who called MMM did not inform him in as many words, but hinted through tone of voice that a minute's delay this way or that would be to MMM's detriment. Not that MMM would have dared. Courage to defy, as his good lady (or She Who Must Be Obeyed) would attest, is not among MMM's virtues.

So the appointed hour saw MMM present himself at the portals of power. The minion, having no doubt sighted MMM from a ravelin or a bastion or a lunette, preferred to remain out-of-sight. A call on MMM's cell from a landline (so that MMM could not call back and establish contact) tersely informed him that he needed to proceed to a certain floor and enter a conference room.

It was exactly 10.30 am and MMM duly mounted the

After the refreshments had given out, those that had made it to the feast retired to chew the cud and the rest subsided into a coma. At around 11.30 am, there was another minor stir. A lunch bag arrived, preceded by a flask and a towel. These were deposited with due ceremony in some inner sanctum. At 11.45, just when MMM began wondering if he ought make something out of the rest of the day and earn a rupee or two, the building bestirred itself. Peons and clerks began running around. Some parked themselves expectantly in front of the lift. At precisely 12 noon, a pair of double doors opened with a flourish and to a chorus of sycophantic greetings, the great personality whom MMM and other non-entities had waited for sauntered in. Everyone was herded into the conference room and the meeting began with not a word of apology for the wait.

It proceeded along expected lines and ended with a promise of a second meeting a couple of days later. On the appointed day, the anonymous minion called again and said that the

bosses who in turn were applauded by the local minions. As a result the local panjandrums had louder applause and this was not liked by the babus from up north.

Preceding the lamp-lighting was a prayer to be played off a recorder. Everyone was ordered to remain standing. Long after everyone stood up, the recorder refused to switch on and the standing-in-silence became more like a condolence meet. Meanwhile, the already-nervous, stammering and apoplectic Master of Ceremonies got off stage to go and check what was wrong with the music system. Someone must have twiddled with the volume meanwhile and so when the music suddenly got going it was in full blast and MMM bit his tongue in shock. It was a good thing that those on stage, no doubt owing to being tightly packed, did not or could not move a muscle. Otherwise we would have had a bureaucratic reshuffle.

For the lower orders in the Government, this meeting was a happy day out, in air-conditioned comfort. Several heads

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

staircase, two steps at a time. After all, it would not do to keep the poobah waiting. On arriving MMM found the conference room locked. He espied a sofa in the corridor and decided to wait. Other invitees to the same meeting were also there, all waiting. We waited and waited and soon the waiting began weighing heavily on us. MMM proceeded to wander about only to note that employees (if you could call them that) kept casually sauntering into work, only to stop at watercoolers and on verandas for casual chats and sundry banter. None thought it necessary to make it to a desk and get on with the day's work.

At 11 am there was a stir. MMM wondered if the high and mighty bureaucrat had arrived. It was not he. Four men staggered in under mounds of biscuit packets. Another bore plates and a third carried what can only be described as a cistern of coffee. These were set up on tables and, as though on cue, MMM was informed by phone to partake of these refreshments. That was evidently on the mind of every employee in the building. Abandoning all tasks (casual chats, telephone calls to spouse, internet browsing) they rushed in like the famine-stricken. MMM and the rest of the invitees preferred to avoid adding to the crush.

meeting had been postponed by two days. This by itself was an improvement. MMM would not have been surprised if he had been made to wait for two full days in the office itself for the mandarin to make his appearance. But this time MMM was wiser. He sent a colleague instead. The idea was to spread the bounty all around.

Conferencing ...

**T**hese meetings resulted in a grand public meeting at a five-star hotel. This, no doubt, because it involved the top bosses from the national capital, began on time. But such being the bureaucratic consciousness of pecking order, far-too-many mandarins had to be accommodated on stage. They were all so tightly wedged in that the merest nudge by anyone would have sent those in the periphery tumbling down. Each one had come armed with a speech. And all of them were far too long and highly repetitive.

That was not all. The meeting had to be conducted in the format perfected locally. Lamps had to be lit. And that meant all those on stage had to light one wick at least, as a consequence of which the lamp resembled more a bonfire. The lighting of the wick was applauded as though it were an Olympic medal. Here again, a strong hierarchy was followed. The national bosses were applauded by the local

nodded, which in a private enterprise would have ensured that they rolled.

... & Lunching

**A**t the same meeting, *The Man from Madras Musings* noted that when lunch was served everyone was dynamism personified. They rushed to pick up plates and then forks. Why not spoons MMM wondered. Then he realised. The fork was far handier in intimidating those who tried to compete for the same dishes. MMM had heard of Oliver Twist asking for more, but the average Government employee asks for more, some more and then still more.

MMM, armed with a mere spoon, was last in the race. It was while waiting for the crumbs from the table that MMM realised that the hotel had wisely avoided providing knives. After all, nobody likes to see bloodshed. Sure enough after filling their plates, MMM noticed that everyone laid the fork aside and ate with their hands.

This feast, straight out of something in the life of Caligula, ended and the meeting resumed. Loud belches punctuated the speeches for a while. And then came a gentler rhythmic sound. Their efforts over, those that laboured now rested.

— MMM



# With many thanks...

She sits in an ergonomically correct chair; thick jasmine strands fall gracefully over one shoulder. The highlights in her hair gleam, as designer-shod feet peep from beneath the pleats of her red and yellow saree.

She takes an elegant sip of the latest flavour-of-the-month offering on the menu from Coffee-iana, while tossing *seedai* into her mouth 'long distance'.

You approach her warily – she's been known to have her moods.

She stares at you for several unnerving seconds, and then pronounces: "I know you. You're the ones who presume to write about me...and have been doing so for a while now."

You swallow hard, then stammer: "Er...yes...and...er... we thought we should come and formally thank you..."

"For what?"

"For giving us the stories; for playing along..."

She grins.

"Playing along', eh?" She gives you a quizzical look. "I've noticed you call me the 'Grand Old Lady' every time my Week comes around ..."

"Oh, only in the deepest, most respectful sense..." you assure her hastily.

She takes another dainty sip, and observes: "You know, the very first column in your series, and the last one, at the beginning of this month, were on the same subject – roads. Planned or coincidence?"

"Coincidence," you answer, taken aback, having only just realised this yourself.

"So much whining about roads over the years," she frowns, "and the weather...so many barbs over something even I can't help..."

"We never meant..." you try to interrupt, but she sweeps you aside, and when the Grand Old Lady makes a sweeping gesture – you stay swept, and silenced.

She takes one more sip of coffee and peers into the trendy cup.

"Amazing – look what they've done to coffee. Very intimidating – all this latte art and fancy names. And yet I notice the *davara* tumbler is still going strong. I like that."

She glances at you.

"Did you have to do piece after piece on garbage?"

We try to look contrite.

"People just don't get it," she says, "fancy pick-up vehicles and uniformed personnel can't compensate for lousy civic sense."

"Which was what we were trying to..." you trail away at her expression.

"Well," she smiles grimly, "you guys certainly mined the city for stories. Everything was

grist for your particular mill. No idea was too small for you to churn a column out of it, eh?"

"Not always," you mumble, reflecting on all those times when the city sat congealed and silent, refusing to 'do' anything, as deadlines came closer, and The Chief's tone went from indulgent to sharp. All those times when you fell back on generalities. "Sometimes, this place was as still as a sack of pounded tamarind."

You realise you've spoken out loud when you see her huge eyes narrow.

"Don't you dare use my own little 'isms against me," she snaps, then grins impishly. "You did get into trouble at times, though. Those sniping letters every now and then. You should have seen the expression on your face whenever that happened."

She throws her head back and laughs heartily.

## ...from Ranjitha Ashok and Biswajit

You bite your lip, chagrined. "Who'd have imagined such innocuous stuff could provoke so much irritation?" you mutter.

"Humour can be dangerous." She now smiles kindly, coaxing a smile out of you in spite of yourself, "...and easily misunderstood."

There is a brief silence as she seems to brood on something.

"Mosquitoes," she says suddenly, making you jump. "You made it sound as if the whole city is just one big cloud of pests...."

"Er... fact, Ma'am."

"I'll tell you what causes a constant buzz in your head," she states. "It's all those wires all of you have dangling from your ears all the time. Were people meant to be so connected 24/7? I don't think so." She glances at you from under her lids and smiles playfully.

"You people really love pass-words, don't you? I wonder what I would use? 'Patinam?'" she grins, then goes on, "All those digs about those who love sports, and the...what was that word? Oh yes: 'Un-sports'. Well, I'm a sports-loving entity myself. Except cricket's gone a bit strange these days...I remember – back then..." her voice trails away.

She flicks her jasmine strands back.

"I am proud of how culturally alive we are, you know. Sure, the December Season has its own subterranean agendas – 'tiffin' (now that word brings back memories), groom/bride-hunting, the NRI invasion and

sartorial one-upmanship – but it is one of a kind....and now I find there are theatre fests, art fests, book releases... quite thrilling, actually – and yes, people need to know when to switch off their cell-phones."

You nod fervently in agreement.

"I'm glad you made roads and buildings talk," she muses. "Everything has a voice, you know. You humans must learn to listen."

"I like this new generation of grandparents," she says suddenly, "I quite like the way the look of the city is growing and evolving."

"Er...the traffic..."

"Driving conditions are pathetic, no question," she cuts in, "You know, to use a phrase from my all-time-favourite Madras Bashai, darting in with verbal repartee in a 'cycle-gap' in a conversation is smart – doing the same thing with a vehicle on



kids...none of them similar. But that's half the fun – a colourful family with a variety of characters, all jostling to co-exist. How boring life would be otherwise."

"You're okay with change, then?"

"Of course I'm okay with it. I have never been scared of change. Or overly resistant. That's just a myth other cities cited so often – it became a stereotype, a truism. At 373 years, I still want to learn. I'm eager for new ideas. But - I've always believed in keeping things in perspective."

"Remember how they called me 'a city of balance and moderation' at some study three years ago?"

"I also accept, and have the courage to reflect, all of my history...that's what the ageing process is all about. Which is why I can't understand this angst-y attitude towards the past. All this 'touchiness' about everything, especially by those who claim to speak for me."

"And when Change does get too much for you...?"

She smiles.

"Ah, when that happens... all I have to do is disappear into the *sabhas*, *gaana-paatu*, *malli-*

*poo*, the *navarathri* dolls on *Mada Veedhi*, *pattu podavais*, temple streets, *sundal* on the beach, the *idli-kadais*, the heaps of *kumkum* and turmeric, the heritage buildings... I have to say I'm thrilled over how well both my personalities are showcased all the time."

She straightens in her chair. She is both 'Grand' and 'Old' – and needs her rest, you realise.

"Thank you, Ma'am – for giving us the stories," you repeat.

She smiles.

"The stories will never run out, you know. You'll be back...."

Then, she's gone. All that's left is a lingering sense of jasmine in the air.

As you prepare to leave, you think to yourself: Nice.

Nice – to have been gifted a decade and more of dealing with a Lady who wears both her personalities with such élan – who, above everything else, has that best of all qualities – a sense of humour.

It's been...amusing.

**Ranjitha Ashok**  
says farewell and  
we are not a-mused

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## • Vincent D'Souza's thoughts for Madras Week

# Do your bit for the city...

An interesting production is on the cards at AMM Matric School in Kotturpuram.

Well-known dancer Nirupama Nithyanandan, who grew up and learnt classical dance in our city, and then moved to France to learn and perform, and is now an international artiste, is leading this project at the school.

V.R. Devika of Aseema Trust broached the idea after she watched Nirupama lead a project while working with senior school students in France.

The duo are trying to get the teenagers at AMM express themselves on the theme of 'Cosmopolitan Chennai'.

Where are you from and what brought you to this city? What are the influences that the city has had on you and what have you assimilated and what have you bypassed? Who are your friends and neighbours and how do you relate to them?

Since we have also set the ball rolling for the 2012 edition of "Madras Week" celebrations which celebrate the founding of the city and all that it stands for, we are hoping that Nirupama's work at AMM can be staged at a few venues later in August.

At one level, Madras Day/Week ([www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in)) is about events. At another level it may also set the tone for something more substantial.

Nirupama's effort is in that direction.

There are others too.

Writings on the city have begun to get published. The city has been the stage for a few books of fiction and non-fiction. A book titled *Chennaivasi* has just been launched. Bishwanath Ghosh's *Tamarind City* was published some months ago.

A few music bands have over the years composed songs with threads based on the city, its life and its idiosyncracies. A compilation of these songs and some fresh ones on a CD sponsored by a city-based business would make a nice gift or a memento.

Elesware, a script is being readied for a short film on an Anglo-Indian family of Madras.

There is also an increasing volume of photographs on this city. They remain on Flickr or in Seagate hard drives. Perhaps, it is time to collate them for coffee table books or direct them to online data banks.

Perhaps this is the time for you and your group to do your bit for the city.

A thought from Singapore in time for Madras Week

# Blog... Blog... Blog... heralding your heritage

As a harbinger to the Singapore Heritage Fest 2012 (in late July), a group of bloggers will be giving a talk about Singapore heritage and what it means to blog about this heritage. Called 'Past Forward: A Heritage Blogging and Social Media Workshop', several bloggers both young and old will be sharing their experiences about maintaining blogs that deal with Singapore's heritage, whether it be music, movies, food or just general knowledge.

One of the speakers is Andy Lim, who used to sing with popular 1960s Singapore pop band. He says "to bring the knowledge of our heritage to the youth of Singapore is why I started the blog."

Although the 72-year-old retiree's blog centres on music, Lim says that he wanted his blog to be a little different. "It's more about the scene in those years, not just the music," says the retired teacher. "For example, I talk about these 'moon glasses' – a lot of people don't know what

'moon glasses' are. I also cover the clubbing scene, and even the food scene."

Adds writer Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, 38, who co-wrote the book *Singapore: A Biography* and is moderating the talk: "Heritage is sometimes overlooked and taken for granted, but (thanks to the bloggers) when you see it described or in a photograph, you can make the connection. It could be right in

• by  
**Christopher Toh**

front of you, but you never noticed it. Then when people point it out, you take notice of it."

For Lim, he said that he hoped the talk will inspire not only younger Singaporeans, but older ones as well.

"Nostalgia is not negative, it's very positive. Nostalgia is personal history and pictures tell stories. I think it's really good for seniors as well as youth," he said. "I think it's important to know about our heritage, to know who we are. We came from kampongs. We need to know our identity. I think a lot of us don't realise who we are.

"There is a line from John Fowls, who wrote *The Magus*, which says, 'we will never know ourselves if we don't know our past'. Our present is our past."

Agreed Balasingamchow: "We might not like to think so, but I believe that everything we think, do and say is a result of our upbringing, our past, which shapes who we are today." – (Courtesy: *Today*, Singapore.)

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An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs.100 covers only a part of our costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essential for Chennai Heritage and *Madras Musings* to play a greater role in creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDITION TO your subscriptions.

If in the coming year Chennai Heritage receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep *Madras Musings* going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2009-10 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings*, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions.

– The Editor

## ...& do a destination or two yourself

There are many interesting destinations people of the city are still to explore though some of us take these for granted.

On my list is a trip to the hill which we all know as Saint Thomas Mount. The hill which greeted you not so long ago as

you approached Kathipara roundabout in Guindy and the space you swing past on your way to the airports.

Choose to do this on a Sunday morning when the world is happy to laze at home. If you are driving down, enter the area from the Garrison Church side and not from the Butt Road end, the road that leads you to Porur, Poonamallee and Bangalore.

If you take my suggestion, then crawl at the foothills, or pause to take a closer look. The church, the English-era bungalows . . . some in good shape, some crumbling. . . this was the area where the British set up a Cantonment outside the Fort when the latter got a tad crowded.

Swing past the gate of the OTA (Officers' Training Academy) to approach the hill from its western side. The road can take your car or bike but a walk is recommended. You may huff and puff doing this but the sights of the city at various levels are special.

Besides the heritage church atop the hill, where Christians believe Saint Thomas was killed by his enemies, step into the crannies to explore other landmarks here.

Open your picnic packs, refresh and take the steps down, on the eastern side of the hill.

You too may have your 'must do' things in this city that you share with guests or friends.

At our end, for Madras Week ([www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in)) we are putting together a compilation of '51 THINGS TO DO IN CHENNAI'.

Now, there are three listings on a blog – at [www.51thingstodoinchennai.blogspot.in](http://www.51thingstodoinchennai.blogspot.in).

Do send us your 'must do things'. Mail to – [themadrasday@gmail.com](mailto:themadrasday@gmail.com). Or post at the Madras Day space on Facebook ([facebook.com/madrasday](http://facebook.com/madrasday)). (Courtesy: *Mylapore Times*)

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*Madras Musings* now has its own email ID. Letters to the editor can be sent via email to [editor@madrasmusings.com](mailto:editor@madrasmusings.com). Those who wish to intimate change of address can also do so provided the subscription number is quoted. For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: Madras Musings, C/o Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

On editorial matters: The Editor, *Madras Musings*, No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

– THE EDITOR





# MADRAS WEEK '12

## 19th to 26th August

Updated till August 13th

### August 19 (Sunday)

● **Bicycle Heritage Ride:** From Marina Beach behind Gandhi Statue, where all the vehicles can be parked. Starting point and finishing point will be the same. The Bicycle Heritage Ride will include 10 heritage sites in Triplicane and Mylapore. All riders should follow road/lane discipline. Helmets are mandatory. Please carry adequate water and energy/nutrition bars for the ride. This ride is totally self-supported. Please be with the group till the end of the ride. Organised by "Cycling Yogi's." Visit Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/groups/414620605215708>. A few cycles are available on rent — contact 9940457777.

● **Chennai Heritage Walk:** Walk along the Marina, from the Lighthouse to War Memorial. Partly by van. Guide **Nandini Arun** will provide historical details and interesting nuggets of information about AIR, *Vivekananda Illam*, the evolution of Indo-Saracenic Architecture — and much more. Approximately 100 minutes. Charges: Rs. 300 per head

● **Chennai Heritage Tour:** *The vanished and surviving theatres of Mount Road.* Tour by van and foot for two hours, followed by breakfast. Guide: **Mohan V Raman**. Charges: Rs 600 per head.

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO', For registration: Please call: 9003011372. Online registrations at <http://goo.gl/EiekZ> (or) Email: [nizhal.shade@gmail.com](mailto:nizhal.shade@gmail.com).

● Trekking on Pallavaram hill. Organised by SOS Children's Villages of India-Chatnath Homes, Tambaram

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO'

Indo-American Association symposium on *Caring for Madras's Ageing Population* (for members & their guests).

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Famous Doctors of Madras* by **Dr. B. Biswakumar**

### August 19 & 26

● **Fort St. George Walk** led by Vincent D'Souza. Walk lasts 90 mins. Register by email at: [themadrasday@gmail.com](mailto:themadrasday@gmail.com). Parts of the Fort are secured areas, hence walk may be restricted at any point/time. Please carry your ID card.

### August 19-26

● **Photo Exhibition on Wildlife in and around Chennai** organised by Madras Naturalists' Society.

● **Exhibition on Madras Presidency & Early British Coins**

### August 19-31

● **Photographic Exhibition:** *Sights and Sites of Madras* organised by Photographic Society of Madras and DakshinaChitra. Tel: 27472603.

### August 20 (Monday)

● **Talk:** **Sriram V.** on *George Town, the oldest part of Madras.*

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Tennis in Madras* **Ramanathan Krishnan** in conversation with **Nirmal Shekar**

### August 21-23

● Music competition (Papanasam Sivan songs); oratorical competition (*How I visualise Chennai ten years from now*); Impact of Metro/Monorail on heritage; Philately Quiz; On-the-spot Painting competition on *'The place I like in Chennai'* (material to be brought by participants); and *Pullu kolam* contest for students of Central Cluster and neighbourhood schools. Organised by Padma Seshadri School, K.K. Nagar.

● **Exhibition:** An exhibition of coins, paintings, pen-and-ink drawings and old books on and about Madras. Also a special display of Buckingham Canal pictures. Organised by the Madras Heritage Lovers' Forum. Inauguration on August 21 at 10.30 am by Nalli Kuppaswamy and Mrs Y.G. Parthasarathy.

### August 21 (Tuesday)

*Madras - A Pioneer in Fine Arts*, the theme of competitions organised by Asan Memorial School.

Gandhi Statue  
Start 5.00 a.m.

Reporting time  
6:15 am  
For details & bookings:  
Sushi\_1952@yahoo.co.in  
Tel: 98840 72433

Reporting time  
6.30 a.m.

QMC College  
Marina, Main Gate.  
(7:30 to 9.30 a.m.) – (Tamil)

Contact:  
S. Nambi Varatharajan  
94450 70149, 95001 18759  
[sosvich@gmail.com](mailto:sosvich@gmail.com),  
[snvraj1@yahoo.co.in](mailto:snvraj1@yahoo.co.in)

Kalakshetra,  
Thiruvannamur, Main entrance  
(4.30 - 6.00 p.m.) –  
(English)

Hotel Harrison  
Nungambakkam  
6.00 p.m.

The GRT Grand  
Sir Theyagaraya Rd,  
T'Nagar  
(6.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.)

Parking lot  
Opp. Main Gate of Fort  
7.30 a.m.

Studio Palazzo & Art  
Gallery  
7, Seethamma Road,  
Alwarpet.  
11.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.  
Ashvita Art Gallery  
Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai  
(98400 94412)

DakshinaChitra  
10.30 am to 6.00 pm  
(except Tuesdays)  
Contact: Gita  
(98410 11785)

Saidapet Govt. School.  
3.30 pm  
The Hyatt  
Mount Road  
(6.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.)

Padma Seshadri School,  
K.K. Nagar.  
9.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

Padma Seshadri School,  
KK Nagar  
9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Ammu Swaminathan  
Auditorium (Asan)  
Nungambakkam.

● Inauguration  
Inter-School Classical Music Competition –  
Vocal and Instrumental.  
Inter-School Classical Dance Competition  
● Madras Day Celebration organised by Altrusa Club-Madras  
Chapter. Talk by **Sriram V.** on *Important Ladies connected  
with Marina Beach.*

Elocution competition, for the college students on  
*Known Names and Unknown Facts of Madras.*

Traditional *Villu Pattu* competition for school students.

● **Multimedia Presentation Contest for schools:** This contest encourages city school students to explore Madras's history and heritage and present the subject in multi-media form. The subject for this year's contest is **Old Houses of our City**. For guidelines and rules of the contest please visit the website [www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in). The organisers will provide a PC and a projector at the venue for the presentations. This contest is open to the first 20 school teams to register on first come first serve basis.

The best three presentations will be awarded trophies, gifts and certificates. All participants will be given certificates. Prizes will be awarded on the same day at about 4 pm. Prizes will be awarded based on quality of research / presentation of pictures-visuals / presentation style. Organised by *Mylapore Times* and supported by **L&T**.

● Slide Show on *Insects & Spiders* by '**Poochi**' Venkat organised by Madras Naturalists' Society.

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Panel Discussion with first-gen entrepreneurs of Chennai* – anchored by **Chandu Nair**

● **Talk** by **Dr. B. Biswakumar**, Grand Master, followed by a Chennai Quiz by **Bharath Epur**. Organised by the Freemasons

### August 22 - September 1

● Exhibition of Photographs and Prints of Old Madras. To be inaugurated by His Worship **Saidai Duraiswamy**, Mayor of Chennai, at 9 a.m. on August 22.

### August 22 (Wednesday)

● **Lecture** on *'A few selected works of the British Architects in Colonial Madras'* by Prof. George J. Jeyaraj

● Valedictory of *Madras - A Pioneer in Fine Arts* competitions organised by Asan Memorial School.

● **Storytelling:** *Magic Vessel* – *Maaya Paathiram*, a Tamil Nadu-based story. Open to children 5 years and above. Participants to bring light coloured envelopes that don't tear easily (preferably the one used for couriering with a layer of gauze inside), sketch pens, pencils, erasers, colour pencils and crayons. Organised by *Spring and Zoom*.

● **Vintage Heritage** presents film clips of songs shot in Madras in the 1950s and 60s.

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Changing Face of Chennai's Dance Scene* by **Anita Ratnam**.

● **INTACH's Historical Personalities Competition:** Each competing school may be represented by a maximum of 3 students who will present a historical personality (political/administrative/institutional heads/women/cultural/social reformers) of Madras who lived some time between 1649 and 1949. The presentation can be by a slide show, an enactment highlighting an episode from the selected personality's life, or a speech. Organised by INTACH Chennai. (For details contact: [youngintachchennai@gmail.com](mailto:youngintachchennai@gmail.com)).

### August 23 (Thursday)

● Slide Show on *Woodland birds* by **Vikas Madhav**. Organised by Madras Naturalists' Society.

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *My time in Chennai* by **Mike Nithavrianakis**, Dy. High Commissioner, UK

● **Talk** by members of one of the oldest lodges, **Mount Lodge**, followed by a pictorial presentation on Sister R.S. Subbalakshmi by her great-grand-niece **Kaveri Bharath**. Organised by the Freemasons.

### August 23-25

● Display of the shortlisted entries in the British Council competitions (Photography / Cartoons / Short films) on the theme: *From Kaapi to Cappuccino: Madras then and Chennai now*.

### August 24 - September 2

● **Indo-German Urban Mela.** Besides entertainment, there will be interactive presentation explaining how life in our cities can be improved. For information on the *mela*: <http://www.germany-and-india.com/en/event/637/we-are-coming-to-chennai/>.

### August 24 (Friday)

● Inauguration of *Sustaining the Spirit of Chennai* Exhibition

● **On the Spot Competition:** *Idhu Namma Oorul*

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO'. For registration: Please call: 9003011372, between 10 and 6 pm. Online registrations at <http://goo.gl/EiekZ> (or) Email: [nizhal.shade@gmail.com](mailto:nizhal.shade@gmail.com)

**Dr. D. Dayalan Devanesen** AM speaks on his days with Australia's Flying Doctor Service and the Aborigines. Organised by the Consulate General of Australia in association with the Indo Australian Association. (By invitation)

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Some famed lawyers of Madras* (Special tribute on the 150<sup>th</sup> year of the High Court of Madras) by **Suresh Balakrishnan**.

**Exhibition:** *Madras Music Musings.* A collaborative presentation of the Music of Madras through the ages by **Anil Srinivasan** and a humorous take on music and musicians in cartoon art by **Biswajit Balasubramanian**. A collection of paintings and sculpture from the Forum Art Gallery collection will also be on view. (By invitation, limited seats). Organised by the Forum Art Gallery.

● **Talk** on *History of Civil Aviation in Madras* by K.R.A. Narasiah. Organised by the Freemasons.

10.00 a.m.  
11.00 a.m.

1.00 p.m.  
Queen Mary's College  
10.00 a.m.

Srinivasa Sastri Hall,  
Luz, Mylapore.  
9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. with a  
30 mins. lunch break at about  
12.30 p.m.  
(Participants and others  
must bring their lunch).

Studio Palazzo & Art  
Gallery (6.00 p.m.)  
Amethyst  
Whites Road  
(6.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.)

Freemasons' Hall  
(6.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.)

Vennirul Art Gallery,  
C.P. Art Centre,  
No.1, Eldams Road.  
(10.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.)

Faculty of Architecture,  
Dr. M.G.R. University  
Maduravoyal.  
(10.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.)

Ammu Swaminathan  
Auditorium (Asan)  
(3.00 p.m.)

Hotel Green Park  
Vadapalani  
(5.00 - 6.15 p.m.)

Hotel Green Park  
Vadapalani (6.30 p.m.)

The Park  
601, Anna Salai  
(7.00 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.)

Anna University  
Alumni Club  
(9.30 a.m.)

Studio Palazzo & Art  
Gallery, 6.00 p.m.

Hotel Savera  
Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai  
(6.30pm - 8.00pm)

Freemasons' Hall  
(6.30pm - 8.00pm)

British Council

Y.M.C.A. College grounds,  
Nandanam.  
10.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m.

School of Architecture and  
Planning (SAP) Campus,  
Anna University, Chennai.  
2.00 p.m.

4.00 p.m.  
Queen Mary's  
College, Marina, Main  
Gate (4:30 to 6.00 p.m.) –  
(English)

Taj Clubhouse  
5.30 - 7.00 p.m.

Accord Metropolitan  
GN Chetty Road, T'Nagar  
(6.30 pm - 8.00 pm)

The President Hotel  
25, Dr. Radhakrishnan  
Road, Chennai 600004.  
(7 p.m.)  
For invitations call Asha  
4211 5596 / 97

Freemasons' Hall  
(6.30pm - 8.00pm)

**NOTE:** ● Open to all, but terms apply. Limited seating at all venues.

Freemasons' Hall: seating available only for one hundred persons, on first-come, first-served basis.

All Chennai Heritage tours require booking and payment in advance. Please make your bookings through email ([editor@madrasmusings.com](mailto:editor@madrasmusings.com)) and you will be informed on where to make the payment and get further details.

**Promotion & Publicity: PRISM Public Relations. Also check [www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in) for up-to-date programmes.**



**August 24 & 25**

● Exhibition of student works of the Department of Architecture and *Sustaining the Spirit of Chennai* competition.

**August 25–September 11**

Art & Soul's *Namma Chennai – ECR* presented by Bharath University. Thirteen artists will exhibit in varied mediums featuring the East Coast Road.

**August 25–September 25**

● **Biswajit Balasubramanian's** cartoon exhibition

**August 25 & 26**

● **Exhibition of Adyar Photos** from a private project to archive visuals and document everything related to the Adyar neighbourhood. The show will have photos of Adyar in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Those who possess old Adyar pictures are welcome to share copies. Co-ordinated by photographer C.P.Dhanasekar.

**August 25 (Saturday)**

● **Chennai Heritage Walk:** Walk in and around Mylapore and San Thomé, from Luz Church to San Thomé Basilica and back. Partly by van. Guide: **Meenakshi Ramesh**. Beginning with the arrival of the Portuguese on our shores, and tracing the history of Mylapore. Approximately 90 minutes. Charges: Rs. 300 per head

● **Chennai Heritage Tour:** *The heritage of Alwarpet*. Tour by van and foot for two hours, followed by breakfast. Guide: **Sriram V**. Charges: Rs 600 per head.

● **Namma Mylapore Heritage Tour:** Led by Dr. Chithra Madhavan. The tour by van will start at Luz Church at 7 a.m. and will end at Kapalishwara temple at approximately 9 a.m. Tour will end at Karpagam Mess for coffee. The monuments will be explained from the outside only. The fee for the tour will be Rs.300/- per person.

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO'. For registration: Please call: 9003011372, between 10 and 6 pm. Online registrations at <http://goo.gl/EiekZ> (or) mail: [nizhal.shade@gmail.com](mailto:nizhal.shade@gmail.com)

● **The Importance of Madras as a Trade Centre on the Coromandel Coast**, Lecture by **G. Venkataraman**, Head, Department of History, University of Madras.

● **Madras Quiz in Tamil** (for Tamil medium city schools only): This quiz is open only to registered teams from Tamil medium schools. Registration at 98410 49155. Quizmaster: **R. Revathi**.

● **Students' Art Competition** (ages 7-14). Subject: *Your Dream ECR* (materials to be brought by contestants).

A young ventriloquist will give her take on the ECR after the Art Workshop, followed by a 'Meet the Artists' hour.

Inauguration of *Namma Chennai – ECR* exhibition. Illustrated talk on *ECR – A happening place in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century* by **Pradeep Chakravarthy**.

A Madras Medley Group Dance by college students and Duchess Club members professionally choreographed.

● **Namma Arcot Road Tour:** *Walk Down Memory Lane*, a tour of the studios.

● **Prize Distribution and Valedictory of Sustaining the Spirit of Chennai** Exhibition

● **Photowalk:** The walk covers the Kandasamy Koil, South Mint Street, Ekambareswarar Temple, Chenna Kesava Perumal and Malleshwarar Temple, the Electrical, the Gold trade pockets and end at the Rattan Bazaar Road. Starting Point : M A Ethirajulu Naidu & Sons shop at Evening Bazaar Road/Kandasamy Koil Arch.Organised by The Chennai Photowalk. Be there with your cameras (or even without one)...

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO',

● **The Mint Food Trail** organised by The Madras Day to discover the food delicacies of Sowcarpet, in and around Mint Street. The Walk will take in 4 or 5 great North Indian snacks shops in and around Mint Street to give you a taste of the rich food offered in this part of the city. You will need to pay for the snacks you sample.

● Slide Show on *Wetland Birds* by **Gnanaskandan K** and **Murugan Mohan** organised by Madras Naturalists' Society.

● Valedictory address by **S. Muthiah** followed by prize distribution for the British Council children's visual competitions on theme: *From Kaapi to Cappuccino: Madras then and Chennai now*.

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *The Tamil forms of Sivaji Ganesan* (Special tribute on the 100<sup>th</sup> year of Indian Cinema) by **Mohan V Raman**

**August 26 (Sunday)**

● **Chennai Heritage Walk:** Walk on Poonamallee High Road, from Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium parking lot (next to the Archives Building,opposite Egmore Railway Station). Mostly by van. Guide: **Kavitha Srinath**. Beginning with the Archives, it will take in St. Andrew's Kirk, My Ladye's Garden, Victoria Public Hall and other important places en route.

Approximately 2 hours. Charges: Rs. 300 per head

● **Chennai Heritage Tour:** *102 years of the Royal Madras Yacht Club – How the harbour developed*. Tour by van, foot and boat, followed by breakfast. Guide: **Sriram V**. Charges: Rs 850 per head. Optional: Lunch at the RMYC and a speed boat journey in the sea at Rs 200 extra. Bookings for this walk close on 19<sup>th</sup> August. Those interested must furnish copy of proof of identity along with payment.

● **Nature Walk** organised by Madras Naturalists' Society at the Pallikaranni Marsh on Perungudi-Velachery Road. Starts at Forest Department Office by the Marsh just before the Toll Gate to Perungudi from the Velachery side.

● **Walking Tour:** Fifth annual enactment of *Living Statues of Marina Beach*. Dramatic enactments of historical characters Kannagi, NSC Bose, Thiruvalluvar, George Pope, Bharathidasan, and Auvvaiyar (English and Tamil). Organised by World Storytelling Institute.

● **Gandhi Nagar (Adyar) Walk** to explore what was Madras' first planned residential area. 80-minute-walk led by G C Shekar and Shekar Raghavan. No registration.

SAP Campus, Anna University, Chennai. From 2.00 p.m., August 24 & 10.00 a.m., August 25.

Art & Soul 204-A, East Coast Road, Akkarai, Chennai 600 119.

Forum Art Gallery, 57, 5th Street, Padmanabha Nagar, Chennai 600020.

Spaces, No.1 Elliot's Beach Road. (5.00 p.m. to 9 p.m.)

Reporting time 6:15 a.m.

Reporting time 6.30 a.m.

7.00a.m. -9.00 a.m. call Geetha 9941450776

St. George's Cathedral, Cathedral Rd., Parking Lot (7.30 - 9.00 a.m.) – (Tamil)

C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, No.1, Eldams Road, 11.00 a.m.

P S School campus, R.K. Math Road, Mylapore. 2.00 p.m. onwards Art & Soul From 3.00 pm For details: 24530033 / 72997 73311

L V Prasad Studios (4.00 p.m.) Contact: 93821 65705

SAP Campus, Anna University, Chennai. 4.00 p.m.

4:30 pm Srinath 99625 10275 Ram 94440 62684

Little Flower Convent, Gemini Flyover, Main Gate 4:30-6.00 p.m. – (English) Start point: Kakada Sweets, New No 348, Old No 343 (Near Jain Temple), Mint Street, Sowcarpet. 5.00 p.m. -6.30 p.m. Contact Pratibha Jain 94440 20011

Studio Palazzo & Art Gallery 6.00 p.m.

British Council 6.30 - 7.30 p.m.

Park Sheraton TTK Road (6.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m.)

Reporting time 6:15 a.m.

Reporting time 6.30 a.m. at RMYC

Contact: Gnanaskandan at [gnanaskeshav@gmail.com](mailto:gnanaskeshav@gmail.com) or call him at 98843 66446 Reporting time: 6.30 a.m.

Meet at the Kannagi statue on Marina Beach (Opp Bharati Salai). (7.30 a.m.)

Start: Shakambari Nursery on 4th Main Road, near Fortis-Malar Hospital. (7.30 a.m.)

**Photowalk for children** led by N. Ramaswamy of <http://chennaiidailyfoto.wordpress.com>. Open to children studying in classes 5 to 12. From Spencer Plaza to *The Hindu*. Children must bring their own cameras. Limited to first 25 registrations. Organised by YOCEE.

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO'. For registration: Please call: 9003011372, between 10 and 6 pm. Online registrations at <http://goo.gl/EiekZ> (or) Email: [nizhal.shade@gmail.com](mailto:nizhal.shade@gmail.com)

● **Namma Mylapore Tour:** Bronze Gallery, Govt. Museum, Egmore. Led by Dr. Chithra Madhavan. The tour will be between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm. The fee for the tour will be Rs.200/- per person.

● **Madras Quiz 2012:** The annual Quiz conducted by *Mylapore Times*. Quizmaster Dr. Sumanth Raman. Written prelims followed by a final featuring six teams. Teams of two can take part – no age restrictions. Register team leader's name and contact number at – [themadrasday@gmail.com](mailto:themadrasday@gmail.com)

● **Storytelling:** *Living Beside the Sea* by members of the Chennai Storytelling Association (English language). Organised by World Storytelling Institute.

● **Tree Walks** by Nizhal, the 'Tree NGO'.

● **Chennai Heritage Lecture:** *Cooking for Chennai* by Vipin Sachdev and Chef Willi in conversation with **Geeta Doctor**.

● **Map Ur Way –** Map making workshop / walk / competition organised by Kalaa Manjari After School Activity Centre and Bambaram Toy Library followed by a competition for children 12 years and above. Learning session on maps followed by a walk in a neighbourhood and a presentation contest. Register at Kalaa Manjari, 6/12, First Street, Venus Colony, Alwarpet in person on or before August 22, 2012. Open to first 25 registrations only.

**August 27 – September 2**

● **Early Imprints on Propagation of Music**, an exhibition organised by the Roja Muthiah Research Library from its collection. Station)

**August 27 (Monday)**

**Madras Quiz** by **S. Muthiah** and talk by **Sriram V** (for staff of British Deputy High Commission & guests).

**August 29 (Wednesday)**

● **S. Muthiah** speaks on *Media Focus on Heritage*. Organised by Press Institute of India-RIND (round the corner from the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation)

**August 30 (Thursday)**

● **G. Sundar**, Roja Muthiah Research Library, speaks on *Archiving Vernacular Journals*. Also, inauguration of an exhibition by RMRL on *Early Tamil Periodicals*. Organised by Press Institute of India-RIND

**August 31 (Friday)**

● **K.R.A. Narasiah** speaks on *Subramania Bharati – Journalism and Prose Writing*. Also, exhibition by RMRL on *Early Tamil Periodicals*. Organised by Press Institute of India - RIND.

**September 1 (Saturday)**

**Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz** conducted by **Dr. Naveen Jayakumar**. For schools' teams comprising students from Classes V to XII.

A written preliminary round followed by a grand finale Prizes worth more than Rs. 1 lakh to be won. Audience rounds for the general public also. Details and registration: [www.murugappa.com](http://www.murugappa.com)

**September 2 (Sunday)**

● **Heritage Tour:** A walk in Mylapore for Madras Gymkhana Club members led by **Sriram V**.

● **Talk** for 45 minutes by **Sriram V** on Chennai, the *Crazy City* organised by the Probus Club. For members of the Probus Club.

**British Council Competitions**

● The British Council celebrates the fusion of Madraspattinam and Chennai Maanagaram – "A modern blend to a traditional brew!" – with three competitions: Photographs / Cartoons / Short films on the theme *From Kaapi to Cappuccino: Madras then and Chennai now*. Last date for submission is August 18th for Photographs and Cartoons, and August 21st for Short films.

Entry forms can be collected from British Council, Landmark and Crossword bookstore. Filled-in forms along with your entries should be submitted ONLY to British Council. For more information contact 42050600 / [chennai.enquiry@in.britishcouncil.org](mailto:chennai.enquiry@in.britishcouncil.org)

Judges: Photographs - Ashok Krishnaswamy, Heritage Photographer; Short films: Balaji Mohan, Film Director; Cartoons: Keshav, Cartoonist, *The Hindu*

**INTACH Chennai Contests**

(For details contact:[youngintachennai@gmail.com](mailto:youngintachennai@gmail.com))

● **Exhibition on Madras Day:** Madras's history to be commemorated through an exhibition/activity in each competing school. On completion, each participating school to send INTACH Chennai, a write-up of the exhibition/activity, the names of students who participated, and photos/video of the activity. The best activity (adjudged by an INTACH Committee) to be awarded certificates and a prize. Last day for sending exhibition details: August 31st.

● **Raja Seetharaman Memorial Competition on Numismatics and Philately:** A 750-word essay with visuals on *Scientific Coinage in the Madras Presidency* to be sent through e-mail or post with postal address given. Open to students of 8th and 9th standards. Three prizes – Rs. 2500, Rs. 1500, and Rs.1000 – to be awarded in memory of Raja Seetharaman together with the INTACH Madras Day Award. Last date for entries: August 31st.

● **Competitions** organised by Archilogue, the technical society of the Department of Architecture, SAP Campus, Anna University, Chennai.

*Sustaining the Spirit of Chennai* is the theme for these two competitions.

● *Micro Ideas, Macro Change* – Design competition

● *Against All Odds* – Photography competition

**ThinkTops Competition**

● **ThinkTops Madras Hunt 2012** : A six-day (August 19-24) Online Treasure Hunt exclusively for Madras Week. The hunt is jointly organised by Bambaram Toy Library and YOCEE ([www.yocce.in](http://www.yocce.in)). Children (10-16 years) who have a penchant for adventure and treasure hunt can participate as teams of two. Registrations open only to first 100 teams who register online with [thinktopshunt@gmail.com](mailto:thinktopshunt@gmail.com). Details on <http://thinktopshunt.wordpress.com>. Registered participants will get a set of clues everyday starting from August 19.

**Online Photo Contest by Chennai Live Radio Station**

Click a picture on the concept "Changing Chennai" and upload it on our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/chennaiilive104.8>). Winners will be chosen by ace photographers of the city! Terms & Conditions: Maximum 3 original pictures allowed per person (to be uploaded together!); The photos can be taken using any camera, but should not be digitally edited or enhanced; Last date for entry is 19th August. Winner will be announced on Madras Day- 22nd August!

(7.00 a.m. - 8.30 a.m.) Contact Revathi 98405 44629

Little Flower Convent, Gemini Flyover, Main Gate (7.30 a.m. - 9.00 a.m.) – (Tamil)

10.30 a.m. -12.30 p.m. Geetha 9941450776

(1.30 p.m.) Hotel Ambassador Pallava, Montieth Road, Egmore.

Oxford Bookstore (Haddows Road, Nungambakkam) Admission: Rs.150 for each Child and Adult. (4.00 p.m.) Madras Museum, Egmore Ticket Counter 4:30 -6.00 p.m. (English) Burgundy, MRC Nagar (4.00 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.)

Contact 99623 87624.

RMRL, Taramani (opp. Indra Nagar MRTS Station)

Cottingley (4.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.)

At PII-RIND CPT Campus, Taramani 4.30 p.m.

At PII-RIND CPT Campus Taramani 4.30 p.m.

At PII-RIND CPT Campus Taramani 4.30 p.m.

Vani Mahal (2 - 5.30 p.m.)

Tour lasts 2 hours (6.30 a.m.)

Russian Cultural Centre, Exhibition Hall, Kasturiranga Iyengar Road, Chennai 18. (10.00 a.m.)



## . Two at the top

# A champion of economic journalism

**T**he *Hindu* recently organised a function to felicitate the *Bhishma Pitamaha* of financial journalism, P.A. Seshan (Leo), on his entering his 100<sup>th</sup> year.

In *The Hindu* dated July 8, 2012, P.A Seshan's (Leo) News & Notes on the economy appeared. So what's the big deal? Well, Seshan is 99 years old and has been writing in the paper for 60 years!

Seshan cut his teeth in journalism at *Indian Finance*, Calcutta, where his uncle, P.R. Srinivas, was the Editor. In 1957, Seshan shifted to Madras and joined *The Hindu* and worked for them for the next 37 years.

Seshan focussed on covering corporate performance. He suffered a serious handicap: he was near blind. That said, he had a phenomenal capacity to absorb information conveyed to him orally. He established close contacts with the new generation of entrepreneurs. He was liberal in writing about companies, big and small. In quick time, he became to the business community the face of *The Hindu*.

I came into contact with Seshan in the mid-1960s. I was then editing *Mobile*, a transport monthly, and *Trade Wheel*, a bi-monthly on two-wheelers. In 1967, when I decided to ven-



P.A. Seshan.

ture into a publication with wider coverage of the economy, I discussed the project with Seshan and received tons of guidance. He introduced me to P.R. Srinivas who joined our editorial team and worked with us for the next ten years till he breathed his last Well-known cartoonist, Thanu, drew cartoons for the wrapper and inside pages.

Those days, the business leaders of Chennai shunned publicity. I could discern two specific traits: when the company did well, they were concerned about the evil eye and desisted from speaking about their profits. Obviously, they would not want to speak when their company was not performing well. They were content being noticed by *The Hindu*. Seshan provided us access to annual reports of companies and guided us on their coverage.

For several generations of newspaper readers in the South, his column was the major source of information on corporate performance. Though Seshan retired officially in 1997, he continued to write an occasional column under his Leo's News & Notes.

The extensive coverage of corporate news provided by Seshan helped in the copious flow of corporate ads. Seshan also produced *The Hindu Survey of Indian Industry* as an annual publication. For this, he persuaded a wide range of business leaders and executives from the corporate sector to write on their sectors and on their companies. These write-ups provided information on the performance of industry.

Maintaining close relations with Chambers of Commerce, Seshan helped them produce special issues for seminars. I remember one such issue he helped produce for the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce. T.S. Narayanaswamy then headed the Chamber. HCC's dynamic secretary G.V. Rao and his colleague S.B. Prabhakar Rao worked closely with Seshan to produce *The Progressive Madras State* that remained for long a reference book for the development of the State's economy.

Deeply religious and attached to the Maha Sannidhanam of the Sankaracharya of Sringeri. Seshan has been supporting a number of social activities in his Palamadai village.

I am indeed happy that this Tendulkar of economic journalism is getting ready to hit a century. These days, such loyalty and long tenure of dedicated service is a rarity. (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)

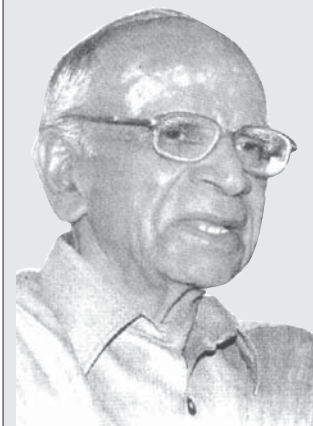
—S. Viswanathan

# Musing on an accountant's world

**G.** Narayanaswamy's autobiography *Beyond Auditing* is a page-turner. It's a gripping story of an impoverished Kumbakonam boy who goes on to become a highly influential chartered accountant and public figure.

GN tells his story like a true accountant. Without a trace of hyperbole! The words are so matter-of-fact, yet they evoke emotions that strike at the very root of the soul.

Those who have interacted with him are aware of his direct and frank manner of talking to people and this is perhaps the best aspect of his book. He is frank, forthright and on target when he airs his views, whether it's about his mother pondering about her milk business or his views on the real-politik in the 1950s. GN has been politically active too; his association with the Swatantra Party in general and Rajaji in particular is one of the highlights of the book. GN has allowed us a glimpse of an era gone by.



G. Narayanaswamy

GN has always been a seasoned master of his game, and his musings about his clients and their regard for their auditor may look odd today, when tax laws aren't as draconian and complicated as they were. His countless parries with Income tax Officers appear like a thing of the past; e-filing, e-processing and all things electronic have eaten into that part of the interface with the friendly neighborhood taxman.

In a profession where naming clients, talking about the system or even the world at large is taboo, here is a man who boldly treads his past with a certain style and clarity that makes you ponder whether GN was merely looking beyond auditing, or was there something more subtle for all of humanity here?

This is a veritable chronicle of our times and a vital document that historians in future will rely on to get a better understanding of the events described by GN from first-hand experience. (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)

— S. Srikanth

## READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i-s' and crossing the 't-s'.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

— THE EDITOR

## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period July 16th to 31st. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. On July 22nd, Bradley Wiggins became the first Briton to win which prestigious event in its 99-year history?  
2. Larissa Latynina's 48-year-old mark was erased on July 31st. What record and by whom?  
3. What symbol has Twitter introduced for users to click on stock symbols and see related tweets as a way?

4. Who carried the Indian flag during the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympic Games?

5. On July 18th, which Asian was officially announced the Supreme Leader of his country, a post that he has occupied *de facto* since his father's death?

6. Name the first American female astronaut, and third overall, who died recently of pancreatic cancer.

7. What is 'Me The Musical' launched on Facebook all about?

8. Which Asian nation has won exclusive rights to exploit a deep-

sea mine in the Indian Ocean that could produce more than \$300 million worth of minerals a year?

9. Name the latest iteration of Apple's OS X launched on July 25th.

10. Name the author of *Narcopolis* that has been put on the Booker Prize long-list.

\* \* \*

11. Name the Director of the Krishnagiri-based NGO Integrated Village Development Programme who has been awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award this year.

12. Who wrote *Thembavani* (The Unfading Garland), an extraordinary epic poem that is 3615 stanzas long?

13. Name the temple in the metropolis where Ramalinga Swamigal sang of "charitable Chennai".

14. *Ramalayam*, which stands at the corner of Besant Avenue and

Sardar Patel Road, is the palace of which South Indian royal family?

15. The Kuppam School, set up by Sister Subbalakshmi, is now called...?

16. Which Taluk in Chennai Collectorate has the most number of villages (15)?

17. Which famous institution stands on the old site of the Monegar Choultry established in 1782?

18. Which town in Theni District did Pandit Nehru call 'South Kashmir' because of the weather and natural beauty?

19. With respect to Geographic Indications, which places are for *jammakkalam* and *sungudi*?

20. Who collected the *Tiruvaymoli*, one of the Divya Prabandhams?

(Answers on page 8)



Madras that is Chennai – in today's writing

# A boy in the 1970s creating his own fun

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli, Krishna or KSD for short, has spent most of his life in the good old Madras of the 1960s and onwards and continues to do so after it became Chennai in the 1990s. Based on his life and times in this city is a trilogy of fiction he plans to write. The first of the books, *Ice Boys in Bell Bottoms*, came out last year.

With a poet-grandfather and an illustrator-and-writer father, KSD, just by watching them in action, took to cartooning, illustrating and graphic designing pretty much like a duck takes to water. Grandfather was a Telugu poet and lyricist, a legend of his time, Devulapalli Krishna Shastri. His father is D.S. Sastri, popularly known as Bujjai. They lived for more than 25 years in the 1960s and 1970s in the T'Nagar of capacious bungalows and avenue trees. There, Krishna's creative family, comprising grandparents, parents and his two sisters, revelled in Madras, then an extension of the Telugu film industry.

A delightful mix of fiction and autobiography, Krishna's *Ice Boys in Bell Bottoms* is peopled by some of these characters marvellously etched out. With no room for monotony, daily happenings transform into dramatic situations. While the book is set in the T'Nagar Krishna grew up in, the appeal of the stylishly told rambunctious novel is universal, bringing smiles on the faces of not necessarily only those who swear by Madras and its sights and sounds.

References to places in the city are woven into the narrative as Gopi's father is a regular at the Race Course in Guindy on weekends. Mother who, on and off, rides different hobby horses like embroidery, cookery and doll-making, goes shopping to the markets of George Town. And Gopi's grandfather finally agrees to write a song for 'Telugu Terence Hill', Kalyan Babu's hit copies of Westerns where a Telugu-speaking cowboy is visualised riding the Pallavaram hills. Influenced by his father's craze for the 'golden age' of Hollywood, Gopi buses to the three-km-long entertain-

Mahabalipuram. There were also Anand and Little Anand, Devi and her three sisters, and the venerable Casino. Off Mount Road was the then new Satyam complex, and Midland and Leo a little further away. There's passing mention of Tondiarpet and Burma Bazaar and, not to forget, a film studio in Vadapalani with its toy bridge, artificial streams and man-made ponds. There's also the French and Tamil side of Pondicherry where Gopi and his classmates go on a rather out-of-the-ordinary school excursion.

Gopi, the narrator of the book, is a boy of his times, and Krishna hardly sees one in the boys of today, what with younger generations wising up to the world, having lost their sense of innocence and waiting. Though every generation thinks theirs is the best, Krishna feels today's environment kills the imagination of boys. They have been handed over a template of professionalism by their parents. As a boy in the 1970s, the world was his playground and he and his contemporaries could create their own pastimes, unlike today's generation which has pre-digested stuff.

Early in life, Krishna learnt drawing watching his father bring alive comic books. His father's studio was an inviting training ground for him to ultimately learn the art and craft of storytelling. His other reading influences were the absorbing pulp fiction of James Hadley Chase and Mickey Spillane.

● by T.K. Srinivasa Chari

ment district of Mount Road, from Gemini Flyover to India Silk House, twice a month. With a princely sum of five rupees in his pocket, Gopi plans the trip to the last paisa: Rs. 2.90 for the ticket, 60 paise for to-and-fro transport, and the remaining Rs. 1.50 for eats during the intermission.

The book recalls that before the word multiplex was invented, Madras had its Vee-cumsee Complex with its three gems, Safire, Blue Diamond and Emerald, the last-named showing only Hindi movies. Underground was its discotheque, Nine Gems, and the office of Silversands, the Caribbean-style beach resort in

Krishna also owes much to the mathematical precision of the American sitcoms in drawing guffaws. Travel writer Bill Bryson and humorist Dave Barry have been later inspirations. Closer home, apart from his family, he greatly respects Ashokamitran. In later years, as he began to draw, he started putting himself in the shoes of the writers. Toying with the idea for a major original effort (he has retold many Indian children's stories) from the late 1990s, he sat down to write it in late 2007 and the book was released late last year. Asked to compare illustrating with writing, Krishna says, "The funny thing is most drawing begins as words or a description in your head and most writing begins with an image. While I drew pictures with lines earlier, I am doing it with words now."

Krishna acknowledges that being married to Chitra, a writer herself and editor to boot, is the reason the book has taken the shape it has done. The reception of the book, says Krishna, has been "affectionate". The young and old alike have been communicating their responses, particularly mentioning the humour quotient of the book. A woman-turned friend left him a complimentary letter in his neighbourhood bookshop. And, of course, the ultimate compliment: the publishers are ready for reprint.

His next book is not the second in the trilogy (*Rally Days & Disco Nights*) but a thriller set in the Tamil film industry to be called *Jump Cut*. A writer, according to Krishna, is someone who, first and foremost, tells a good old-fashioned story, then aims at getting the reader to say, 'Wow, that's exactly how I feel' or 'Man, I wish I'd said that.'

Looking at the Madras of then and Chennai of today, Krishna says the change has



K.S.D

been predictable, with bungalows and trees giving way to matchbox flats and flyovers. Development claiming its individuality is true of other cities too. But Chennai has its beaches, its saving grace against claustrophobia, and anytime he feels boxed in, all he has to do is stand on the Marina, and he knows the world is out there.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Tour de France; 2. Winning most Olympic medals. Michael Phelps won his 19th medal on that day; 3. The \$ symbol; 4. Wrestler Sushil Kumar; 5. Kim Jong-un of North Korea; 6. Sally Ride; 7. Launched by Intel, it creates a personalised animated movie which takes FB users on an entertaining journey, via song and dance, through world events; 8. South Korea; 9. Mountain Lion; 10. Jeet Thayil.

\* \* \*

11. Kulandai Francis; 12. Viramamunivar; 13. Kandar Kottam; 14. The Travancore family; 15. Lady Willingdon High School; 16. Mambalam-Guindy; 17. Stanley Medical College; 18. Bodinayakanur; 19. Bhavani and Madurai; 20. Nammalwar.

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