

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

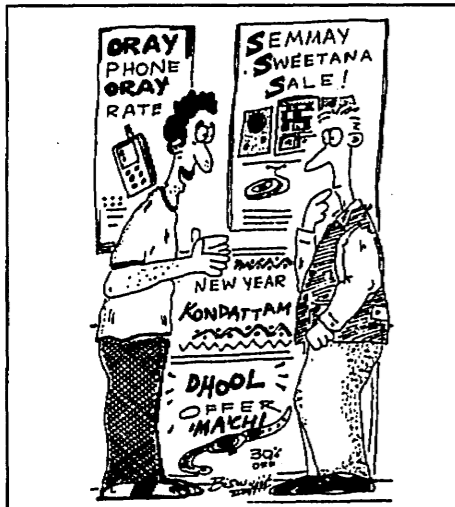
INSIDE

- Challenge facing India
- A *sabha* at 50 ...
- ... & a school at 150
- First ISO saloon
- Sailing with a difference

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It's Tingleshaar... Konjam Tamil, Konjam English!

Konjam mixing

Visitors to Chennai are a puzzled lot these days. Apparently, some of those huge hoardings the city delights in are getting them all confused over language issues. (Who isn't — confused, I mean?)

Now this bunch of well-informed people knows the *lingua franca* of our good old State, is aware of the script, or at least what it looks like.

So, naturally, they can't understand a sentence that goes: "Hello Machi, calling attention to Dhool Sale, Ba!" blazoned in brilliant letters across an equally brilliant background.

"Excuse me," they ask tentatively. "What is that?"

"Oh, it's just an advertisement," you reply.

"Yes, we know....but in what language?"

"It's a sort of Tamil."

"Well, we've been all over the State, and we haven't seen anything like that."

"That's because that *bashai* — 'language' to you uninitiated types — is quintessentially Madras." (Sorry, 'Chennai' just doesn't seem to cut it in this instance.)

They gaze at you, eyes narrowed, then suddenly ask, "What's a *machi*?"

"Oh, just a 'pal'."

"And what's a *Dhool*?"

"Super'."

"In what?"

"I told you...in Madras-speak."

You are getting rattled, trying to remember that the strict rules of Indian hospitality frown upon dotting an *athithi* on the head.

"And what's a...."

"Sorry, time to *kilambings*," you say, rushing off, even as puzzled looks dawn.

That's the trouble with these 'petter-parties' — too hide-bound, with absolutely no imagination.

Ranjitha Ashok

Eco-business for lower costs

(By Sashi Nair)

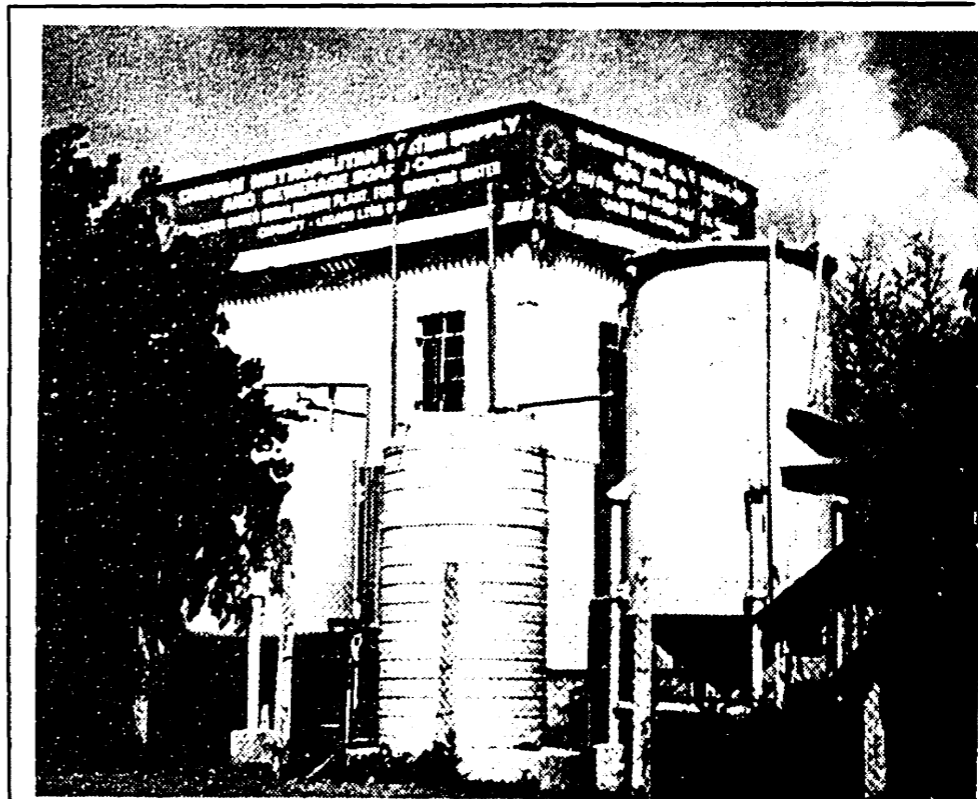
Special proactive environmental compliance and protection programmes are to be made available to companies, enterprises and industries in the first phase of the European Commission-funded Eco-Business Plan (EBP) for small and medium enterprises that was formally launched in Chennai recently. EBP is an internationally acclaimed 'Best Practice' that began in Vienna (Austria). The Plan offers opportunities to save on energy and expensive raw material, avoid waste products and emissions, and optimise operating processes leading to lower costs and higher productivity. Greater Athens Area is the European partner of the City of Vienna in this project.

"The purpose of the EBP is to make eco-efficiency an earning proposition for industries and enterprises instead of a spending one. In fact, the job of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board will now become much easier. There will be a better relationship between companies and statutory or regulatory authorities. The compliance of laws and regulations will be linked to the city's environmental concerns," says M.G. Devasahayam, Managing Trustee of the Citizens' Alliance for Sustainable Living (SUSTAIN), Chennai, which is teaming with Vienna (Department of Environmental Protection) and the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board set up brackish water desalination plant in this area seven years ago. Since then, there has been no water scarcity here.

The partnerships that are being developed in the project will exist at three levels; at the international level, between European and Indian local authorities and NGOs; at a commercial level, between European and Indian companies and consultants; and, at the local level, between the stakeholders in the participating cities.

Speaking at the launch of the EBP, Rabindranath, Chairman, Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny Industries Association (TANSTIA), said, "For a small industry, if cleaner production is practised seriously, it will definitely bring advantages of reduced production cost and increased competitiveness. It will reduce the need for more environmental regulation. It will not only improve the health and safety of employees, it will

(Continued on Page 2)



• The water desalination plant on the Marina, serving a fishing kuppam. (Photograph: REFLECTIONS.)

A desalination success

With a grim scenario — the spectre of water shortage — staring people in the face, one of the suggestions being considered to solve the water problem is desalination.

Desalination is nothing new to the people of Nochikuppam. They have been drinking sea water treated by the desalination plant for several years now. And it is tasty water, much better than mineral water, they say.

The reverse osmosis desalination plant at Nochikuppam, next to the lighthouse, is the source of water for Nochikuppam's residents. Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board set up brackish water desalination plant in this area seven years ago. Since then, there has been no water scarcity here.

The desalination plant purifies the salt water from the sea to make it consumable and the treated water is stored in a tank, which can hold 1,50,000 litres.

From here the water is sent to 32 different pumps in the

Nochikuppam area twice a day. There are about 2000 families in the Nochikuppam area. People gather around their 'Team water' fountain in the mornings, between 6 am and 11 am, and in the evenings, between 5 pm and 7 pm. The

water is popularly known as Team water because the plant is maintained by the company called Team.

The reverse osmosis plant is maintained in shifts. Usually the water is supplied on all the days without break, except when there is no electricity.

Nochikuppam residents use this water only for drinking and cooking purposes. They say it cannot be used for bathing purposes because the water is very soapy.

Apart from this, they also have a handpump near each fountain that is to pump out for washing purposes.

R. Baghyalakshmi, one of the residents, says, "This is the poor man's mineral water." Most residents use it without boiling and say it is pure and safe for consumption.

This technology that provides water to Nochikuppam can very well be adopted to provide water to the citizens of Chennai. — (Courtesy: *Mylapore Times*.)

How reverse osmosis works

The reverse osmosis desalination plant functions in the following manner: The salty seawater is drawn from a well in the plant area. This water is sent to the settling tank, where the water settles. From there it is sent to the water storage tank, and then into the sand filter through the intake pump. After going through the micron filter and filtrate tank, the hard seawater is subjected to high pressure, removing the salt content. Finally, it is purified and stored in the drinking water storage tank.

Fostering music and dance for 50 years

The Golden Jubilee of the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (SKGS) and its 48th Art and Dance Festival, dedicated last December to Rukmini Devi Arundale's birth centenary, were celebrated together. The golden jubilee of the SKGS reflects the triumph of an association in T. Nagar that was visualised at its birth as a neighbourhood organisation to cater to local needs for occasional music programmes, but which has developed much beyond such narrow confines. Now it is among the top *sabhas* in Chennai, offering an activity schedule marked by judicious variety spread over the whole year, encouragement of promising young new talent, cultivation of appreciation, self-contained infrastructural facilities that include its own auditorium space — main and quality with comforts like A.C. quality stage equipment and aesthetic environment, arrangements for teaching music and dance, and a 'homely' canteen.

SKGS was established in 1954. The founder-secretary was Maharajapuram Santhanam, and the founder-president, his father, Viswanatha Iyer. In the first three years of its existence, it did not have a place of its own, not even a sheltered accommodation, and so its programmes were held in the open-air auditorium of the Hindi Prachar Sabha, and the Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya, in T. Nagar.

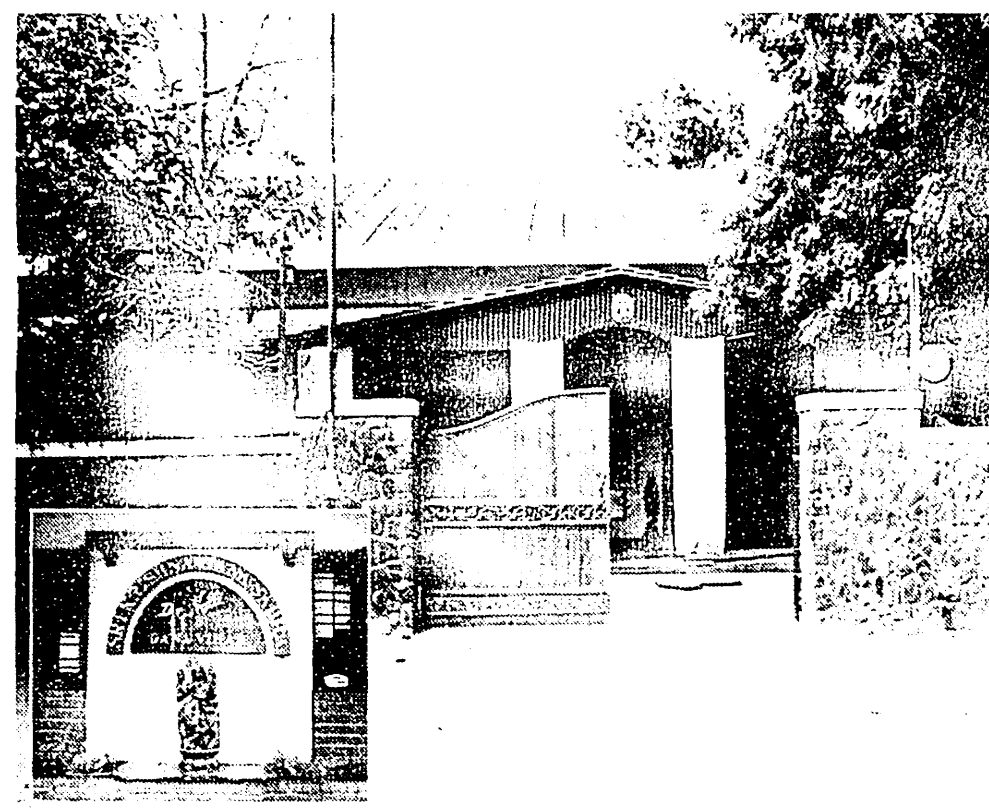
In 1956, R. Yagnaraman took over the responsibility of running

the Sabha when it was at its "lowest ebb, membership dwindling, and resources drying up". To hold the membership intact, something tangible had to be done. On his own personal undertaking, he negotiated a three-year lease of a piece of land of three grounds, on Nageswara Rao Road, adjacent to Nalli's, and put up there a thatched shed (*kottagai*) with a stage. He also arranged for a loan of Rs.5000 from the Melarkode Bank on his personal security, repayable in instalments. The Sabha's activities in the new premises started on Vinayaka Chaturthi day, with a concert featuring GNB, Lalgudi, Palani and his disciple, Trichy Sankaran. From that moment, the Sabha has not looked back.

The three-year lease was yet to expire when Yagnaraman took a piece of land of 5½ grounds on Griffith Road in T. Nagar (the

present premises), on a 12-year lease, and erected a semi-permanent shed with a Tayspan tubular angle and asbestos roofing. The Rs. 30,000 required to erect this structure was secured by debentures of Rs.1000 each from members on 6% interest, repayable in seven years. The repayment was made before time. M.V. Venkataraman, the then Vice-President of the Sabha, who was the Chairman of Simpson & Co., provided 500 steel chairs, the price payable in instalments over five years. All these facilities helped to consolidate the institution, which then embarked on arranging high profile programmes.

The effect on Yagnaraman of the manner in which the music concerts at the Perambur Sangeetha Sabha were conducted was to sow the seeds of the Gokulashtami series, conducted annually since 1956.



Looking back...

R. Yagnaraman, General Secretary of the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha since 1956, recalls:

When the SKGS was set up in 1954, *sabhas* were few, each concentrating on the art-form of specific preference. At T. Nagar, there was only one *sabha* which was not sufficient to cater to the needs and tastes of the people in such a big area.

The audience for the programmes of these institutions consisted of people of taste and knowledge, and this spurred the performers to give their best. The audience could not be taken lightly. *Sabhas* were governed by high society people, providing programmes of high standards, and the *rasika*s also were of a high order. The professional artistes in general, and the musicians in particular, were people of commitment, flexibility and modesty, apart from their merits and standing in the respective fields. They were heroes to the *rasika* public, enjoying their goodwill and patronage. The relationship was very friendly, and the hospitality given to the musicians and dancers showed the degree of closeness.

Opportunities were few, because of the economic conditions and lack of availability of good and quick transport. The purchase value of the rupee was so high that eminent *vidwans* were content to be paid as little as Rs.35 per concert. Whether it was tick-

eted or free, the audience was limited, but of quality. The eminent artistes preferred to present their programmes not very frequently, but to space them out; as a result, the audiences that had to wait came to look forward eagerly to the programmes. Performers and organisers vied with each other in making the events successful.

I used to attend the music concerts organised in the Perambur Sangeetha Sabha, by one Sethuraman, who was its Secretary. In their annual music festivals, only stalwarts participated. It was held in a school classroom. I used to bike all the way to Perambur from T. Nagar, with my very close friend, Dr.S. Ramanathan, who was a Joint Secretary of the SKGS.

The success of the concerts, the enthusiasm of the performers, the sincerity of the organisers and the audience coming from all parts of the city evoked such admiration and awe in me that I was inspired to organise similar events in T. Nagar.

We had then arranged music, dance and drama programmes for members only. The venue was a thatched shed with chairs, accommodating 500 persons. The atmosphere was homely and the acoustics reasonably good. But we were on our way. (Courtesy: Sruti.)

The Sabha organises three major festivals, one each dedicated to music, dance and drama. On the inaugural day of each of these festivals, an artiste of name and fame is honoured with the titles of *Sangeetha Choodamani* (since 1974), *Nritya Choodamani* (since 1974), and *Nataka Choodamani* (since 1992) respectively, carrying a cash award of Rs.25,000 each and a gold medal. The *Choodamani* award is open to all systems of classical music and dances of India.

In addition, the title of *Acharya Choodamani* is awarded (since 2002) to recognise excellence in teaching in the fields of music and dance.

The Natya Kala Conference conducted by the Sabha for the past 23 years, along with the music and art festival in December, has gained great importance. Scholars from India and abroad attend the conference, conduct *lecdeems* and present papers. The *Nritya Choodamani* awardees take turns to serve as conveners of the conference.

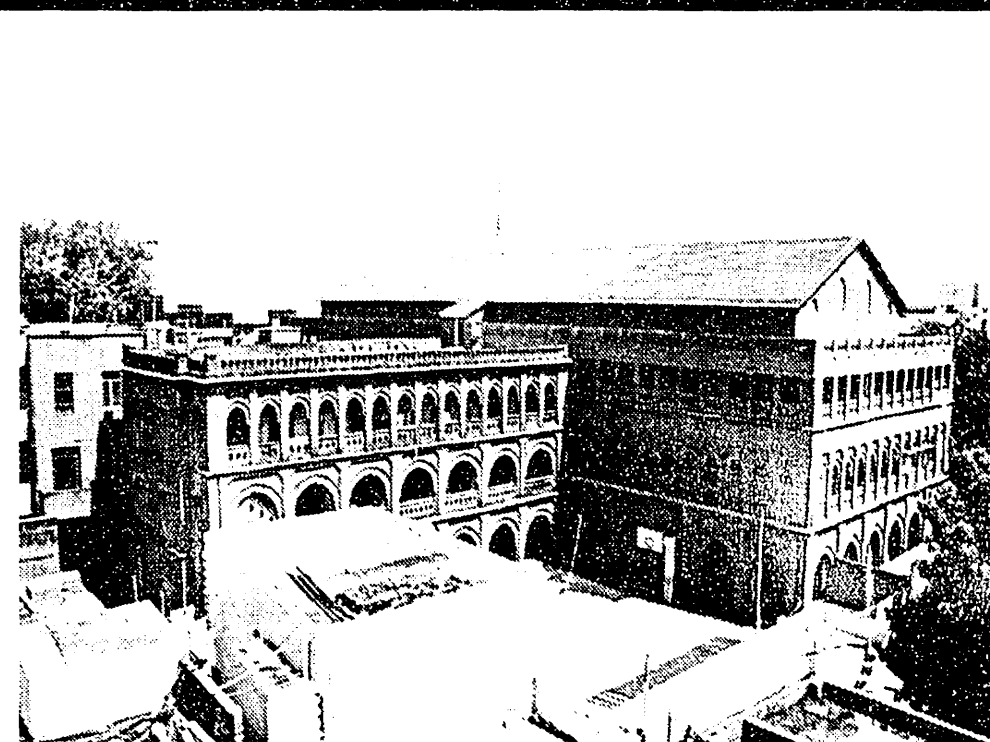
The Sabha has been selected by the Government of Tamil Nadu as the best-run cultural institution.

A generous donation by Nalli Kuppuswami Chetty, the Sabha's President, facilitated a complete renovation of the Sabha hall, making the SKGS complex a new city landmark.

By a coincidence, another T. Nagar *sabha* premises — the Vani Mahal (of Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha set up in 1945 at the initiative of Chittoore Nagaiah) — has also undergone a similar transformation recently.

In the initial stages of the development of the *sabha* system in Madras in the 20th Century, the north Madras region was more prominent: reference is often made to the Jagannatha Bhakta Sabha of Egmore, Perambur Sangeetha Sabha, concert venues like the Gokhale Hall, Museum Theatre, etc. Even the Music Academy, that later brought about a marked regional shift in that area in the beginning. From the 1950s, the position changed so drastically, resulting in a concentration in Mylapore and nearby areas, that Mount Road marked a cultural divide of sorts. It was the entry of the Tamil Isai Sangam and the T.Nagar *sabhas* that brought about some balance. In this process, the role of the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha has been quite significant. (Courtesy: Sruti.)

Anniversary time



Our OLD is of the first building of what is now called The Hindu Higher Secondary School, Triplicane. Designed by Henry Irwin and built by that great contractor of the era, Namberramal Chetty, who was not happy with the design and improved on it, space-wise, the building was originally L-shaped. The long stroke of the 'L' is perpendicular to Big Street and is seen parallel to the base in our photograph above. The 'L' was made a 'T' with the addition of a sympathetic wing to the north (not seen in our picture) in 1906.

Our NEW shows a bit of the long stroke of the 'L', parallel to which was built the New, the Centenary Block, in 1951/52 — to the left in our picture and presenting a rather sad contrast to the OLD. (Photographs: REFLECTIONS.)



Remembering days at Hindu High

Back in 1921/22, Sri Subba Rao was a great English teacher who instilled in his pupils love of the great language. Sri Nambi Aiyangar, the mathematics teacher, had a quiet but incisive way of handling classes was vastly perplexed over the inability of some students to follow his rapid teaching ways — but was very helpful. G.V. Narayanaswamy Aiyar who became headmaster much later, was another charming teacher of mathematics, who filled the blackboard in an incredibly short time and who had a way of endearing himself to his students. His interest in music was as remarkable as his scholarship was deep. Little wonder he took such pains to train his son G.N. Balasubramaniam in the great art of musicology and music.

We had among other teachers, men who were able to console their personal infirmities like deafness and do a very creditable job indeed. I have often wondered how these great pre-

ceptors, who were the genuine symbols of plain living and high thinking, were able to keep the wolf from their doors, on the measly salaries they were paid and still take so much interest in their teaching and in their students.

S. Narayanaswamy

* * *

I still remember how the students looked upon the Headmaster, Sri P.A. Subramania Iyer, with awe and reverence, and how they observed pindrop silence whenever he moved out in the corridors. The Headmaster got in close contact with the students by himself taking up classes in the different subjects of English literature, prose, poetry, non-detail and composition and his teaching left a deep impression on all of us. Sri Srinivasachari was then regarded as the "Jambuvan" of the School and his teaching of History was such that it was admired and followed by the other teachers in the

School. His interest and devotion to the subject were such that there were no failures at all in the public exam. Next to him I recall the active interest which Sri Nambi Iyengar bestowed in teaching us elementary mathematics and English and his zeal was such that he would see that at least 35 to 40 sums in arithmetic were done by the students in the course of a period of 45 minutes.

K.S. Venkataraman

* * *

Even today I recall the joyous moments when Sri G.V. Narayanaswami Iyer taught us Byron's *Isles of Greece*. How can I forget the 3 R's of British History (Restoration, Reformation, Revolution) taught to us by Sri S. Krishnamurthy Iyer who spoke flawless English with perfect accent? We learnt from him for the first time the correct way of pronouncing the word 'memoir'. We learnt the three ways of transfer of heat (conduction, convection,

From small beginnings to eminence

The Hindu Higher Secondary School, Triplicane, now celebrating its 150th anniversary, had its beginnings in two small schools, The Dravida Patasala for Tamil boys and The Hindu Andhra Balura Patasala for Telugu boys that were in existence in 1852. In 1860 they were amalgamated as The Triplicane Andhra Dravida Balura Patasala and in 1898 re-named the Hindu High School.

When dark days confronted the school in 1869 and even the pay of teachers fell in arrears, M.A. Singarachariar, head-cashier of the Bank of Madras, was requested to take up the Secretaryship and Treasurer-ship of the school. His tireless efforts and munificence for 38 years made the School into a stable, first class High School.

Singarachariar ensured the improvement of instruction in English. In 1870, the first batch of students was sent for the public examination. To reflect the strengthening of English-language teaching, the name of the school was changed to The Triplicane Anglo Vernacular High School in 1873.

From the first, the school was located in Big Street, Triplicane. In the 1890s its rented building and the adjoining sites were acquired and the main building constructed and opened in March 1897. The name of the School was changed to The Hindu High School in 1898.

G. Subramania Aiyar, who went on to found *The Hindu*, was one of its first Headmasters. V.S. Srinivasa Sastriar was the Headmaster of the School for nearly seven years and left behind an indelible impression at the beginning of the 20th Century. Then came P.A. Subramania Iyer, who was the head of institution from 1916 to 1938 and who developed it as one of the best schools in the Madras Presidency and enhanced its reputation of being the "Feeder School" to Presidency College, then an institution of formidable repute.

The Centenary celebrations in 1952 saw a Centenary block being raised. In 1978, measures were taken to raise funds to build a 125th Year Block and to renovate the Singarachariar Hall. The 150th Anniversary celebrations are to begin shortly.

Musing on Triplicane and its 'Big' School

(By P.N. Appuswami)

Madras was once known as the city beautiful (its Marina was claimed by its citizens as the best in the world), and as the Garden City. Now (1978) the Marina is no longer a thing of beauty or of joy; its gardens of lofty trees and spacious lawns have disappeared on account of the greed for pelf, of its new rich citizens and of the city's administrators and their exercises in social justice. Their compulsory artificial pneumo-thorax had made it a polluted city exposing its teeming citizens to grave health hazards.

I remember how wild date palm trees waved their fronds in the breeze in Big Street, Pycrofts Road, and elsewhere, and offered

homes to nesting storks and crows. The birds provided a good contrast in black and white. I loved to hear their delighted squaks and caws in the night, when the moon shed her gentle silver radiance over a fairly silent city. And many more like me were delighted to see and hear so much joy in a city of such long tradition, where many gods dwelt in amity.

I have many nostalgic memories of Triplicane, for I was born there in a house to the south of Big Street and looking through its straight stretch from the south right up to its northern end cutting across Pycrofts Road.

It was known to the elite, the

devoted, and to the not so very ignorant, by its name of six syllables — *tiru-v-alli-k-kani* (the lovely lily pool). The Britisher contracted it to a very harsh trisyllable as *triplicane*, which name has stuck to it. The *jukka*-driver of the famous coachbuilt *jukka* of old was equally lazy and he called it by a mellifluous trisyllable, *tillni*, by which it was long known among the many, but which, I am afraid, has now disappeared and is no longer in use.

The original name of Big Street was another polysyllabic one — *Viraraghava Mudali Street*. But here again laziness interfered, and it became *Peria Tharu* and nine syllables became

four. Luckily the name was appropriate and no one changed it to honour any political butterfly of a day. In its English form it became even shorter, as Big Street, a word of only two syllables, and that is the name by which it is now known to the Corporation of Madras. It is a street deserving much honour for its extraordinarily representative character, but not for its width.

Starting from the south, it had a furniture shop, which later on became a Post Office; a brace of schools, one of which was used by a music association as its auditorium whenever needed; a couple of bookshops; a firewood depot; a publishing house which brought out a famous Tamil monthly magazine for men, woman and child — the *Viveka Chintamani* — and issued many books of quality in Tamil (well printed and well bound, and well illustrated too); a Co-operative Society (the first of its kind); a clinic and dispensary; and ended up with a mosque at its northern end. Administrators, artists, artistes (musical and other), men belonging to various learned and unlearned professions, men of different castes, religions, languages and communities, lived in that street, quietly, unobtrusively, and with gentle good will.

Almost in the middle of this street stands the Hindu High School in a brick red building near the street and built with an eye to effective use rather than to aesthetic beauty.

The School, in 1978, has grown both vertically and laterally since it was first built, in order to accommodate its ever-growing student population. It is one of the most ancient and most famous High Schools in Madras. Appropriately, it is located in Triplicane, once regarded as the cultural centre of Madras, and the desired home of the upper middle class elite. 'The High School', as Presidency College in its early days was known, was located there, founded in 1840. The Revenue and the PWD Secretariats were between it and the sea. It started with great ideals,

Prof. K. Subramanian

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(Continued on Page 6)

(Continued on Page 7)

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period January 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

- Who was awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize in New Delhi recently?
- Name NASA's latest Mars Exploration Rover that landed on January 3rd and sent back the best-ever pictures of the Red Planet.
- Simple one. Where was the 12th SAARC Summit held recently?
- Which world-renowned research institute in Pune was brutally ransacked by the 'Sabbhaji Brigade' in protest against a book on Shivaji?
- Which famous comic book hero celebrated his 75th birthday on January 10th?
- Jason Allen Alexander's one-day marriage to his childhood friend-turned-global entertainment celebrity made news worldwide. Name the celebrity.
- Which famous Indian sports person's newly released autobiography is called *Straight from the Heart*?
- What is the 'Reflecting Absence'?
- India's first indigenously assembled T-90 battle-tank, handed over to Army recently, is named after a popular *Mahabharata* character. Name it.
- One of the oldest and most abstruse mathematical problems is supposed to have been solved by Russia's Grigori Perelman. What is this famous problem called?
- In which popular Olympic team game did Tamil Nadu men win the National title for the fifth time in a row?
- Who is the State Finance Minister?
- Which Sun TV mega-serial is the longest running soap opera on Tamil TV now?
- Name the church that you reach after climbing the 135 steps of Parangi Malai.
- Where in the city suburbs is the Heavy Vehicles Factory located?
- Where in the State are two Russian-designed nuclear reactors coming up?
- History time. In which famous Chennai building was the first meeting of the State's Assembly held after Independence?
- If it's M. Karunanidhi for DMK and Venkaiah Naidu for BJP, who is it for PMK?
- Who is the recipient of the Tamil Nadu Government's coveted Tiruvalluvar Award?
- The National-level 'Postal Finance Mart' has been held only in Tamil Nadu so far. Which place had the honour of holding the inaugural mart?

(Answers on Page 7)

Asia's first ISO-certified Saloon

What's the common strand that runs between giant industrial groups like TVS, Tatas and Birlas and the Ramesh Gents' Hair Stylist shop on Nungambakkam High Road? It's the possession of an ISO quality certification.

The Ramesh Saloon is the first in the whole of Asia in its category to get this quality tag. The saloon is certified by the Mumbai-based International Certification Services (Asia).

G. Ramesh, the saloon's proprietor, who entered the hair-styling profession when he was 12, does not have any academic certificate to boast of, but certainly has an envious list of clients that includes cine and television stars, industrialists, politicians — State and Central ministers, MPs, MLAs — and bureaucrats.

Ramesh clearly articulates the purpose of going for the ISO tag. "We want to set up business overseas as well as to meet the globalisation and competitive threats at home."

It is to be noted that many leading corporates have ventured into this segment. In Chennai, the fast-moving con-

sumer goods company Cavin-Kare has started a unisex saloon. As for the plans of going overseas Ramesh intends to open a branch in Malaysia tying up with a local partner. In addition, Ramesh plans to open a couple of branches in major Indian cities and also convert the sole proprietorship into a private limited company.

"Prior to the quality certification, we didn't follow the system of prior appointments. For 18 years it used to be a first come, first served," says Ramesh. Nevertheless, many of the customer service norms were followed, but without proper documentation.

With the start of ISO certification process, the saloon has

"Before starting the grooming work, items like pen, spectacles etc. are put inside a separate box and handed back after the work," says Thiruvalluvar.

Similarly while going out, the customer is required to give his views in writing. The records are properly filed and reminders are sent to customers about the next appointment. On the operations side, a proper record of inventories and the saloon's operations is maintained.

Operating out of three shops — one owned and two rented — with a staff of 20, Ramesh caters to around 750 customers a month.

Though planning to corporatise his business, Ramesh is not interested in expanding through franchising. "I always attend to my clients. Even if I open branches I will attend to my customers. But the same is not possible if I appoint franchisees."

His other plans include starting a health club with sauna, Jacuzzi and ayurvedic massage. "I also plan to start a gym," he says, speaking of the future. (Courtesy: www.domainb.com)

• by Venkatachari Jagannathan

What makes Ramesh's saloon different from other hair-style outfits? "It is his attitude towards his customers. I am his client for the past two decades," vouches Sakthikumara, a Tamil television star.

According to Ramesh, hygiene is given the utmost importance in his saloon. "We use disposable cutting caps and sterilised grooming kits and neck cape. Imported disposable shaving kits are also used." The saloon also boasts of a shower facility that others generally don't have.

systematised all its operations. Adds ISO consultant Ayyan Thiruvalluvar, CEO, IQ International Consultancy Services, "It took us three months to map and systematise the entire process involved in running the saloon."

Now every time a customer comes to the saloon a job card is made out, listing the services requested (hairstyling, colouring, facials, skin treatment, pedicure, manicure and bride-groom makeup). Other details like allergies to some dyes, etc., are also obtained upfront.

Remembering days at Hindu High

(Continued from Page 5)

While studying in VI Form in 1921-1922 Mr. Srinivasachariar was the History teacher. He was well-known for his simplicity. Clad in khadi and with a brass pan-box in hand he used to enter the class. His ways of teaching were very curious but at the same time very impressive. He used to say one sentence and next moment repeat the first few words of the same sentence and would ask a student to complete it. By this method, no student could be absent-minded but would be very attentive as the chance of completion of the sentence left out by the teacher might fall on anyone in the class.

E.N. Ramarao

My first day's work (as a teacher) was a great ordeal. I was shown into a room — the one to the north of the winding staircase — where two sections of IV Form boys had assembled. The boys welcomed me with the usual politeness. Some twenty among them were somewhat big and tall, being above the normal age. I began teaching a theorem, explaining with a diagram on the blackboard. The younger boys were eagerly listening

while the bigger ones began to hum. One among them — our distinguished (late lamented) old boy A.M. Sambandam — stood up and cast a stern look at them and said to me that I might continue my work. The noise soon died out and when the work was over, I came out thanking my stars. In a week's time I received congratulations from some teachers on my initial success...

When I returned from training, I read a number of books on teaching and my study of ancient Hindu Mathematics increased my thirst for perfection. The boys of the IV Form were then taught a good bulk of Advanced Algebra, the most dreaded part of Mathematics. During the first three years, I tried several means to make Algebra easy and interesting. As a result of my experiments, I learnt to divide topics into small units linked together and through plenty of oral work and drill and illustrations on the blackboard I succeeded and this success helped me later a good deal in preparing standard textbooks. Likewise I improved my English teaching, studying a number of books on grammar and idiom and a variety of readers by standard authors.

P.A. Subramanya Iyer was

the most popular Headmaster not only in the city but also in the entire South. As he walked to school and when he returned home in the evening, the people in Big Street greeted him with folded hands. He was indeed a prince among headmasters.

The advice he often gave was: Teachers should keep themselves aloof from their students and should not send them on errands nor have obligations from them. This, he said, would make them "look big" in the eyes of their students.

While he was on his daily rounds he would move on as though aimlessly, with a key bunch in his hand. If there was anything wrong in any classroom, he would send for the teacher the next period and enquire.

There were also days of commotion and trouble during the last few years of his service and when boys led demonstrations and gathered at the gates shouting, he would bravely stand like a statue at the gate and kindly advise them to disperse. One such occasion was during the Simon Commission Boycott Movement. He managed the situation quite tactfully.

T.S. Rajagopalan

* * *

Dr. V.V. Ramanujam

Seven fisherfolk children have been selected for training in competitive sailing, by the Tamil Nadu Sailing Association (TNSA), the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDATN) and The Little Theatre (TLT) who have teamed together on a project to produce champions from among the underprivileged. Four boys (Praveen, Pratap, Kumaresan and Suresh) and three girls (Vineeta, Jaya and Priyanka), all students aged 9-10 years and residing in Srinivasapuram, near Foreshore Estate, will have their first sailing class on February 1st.

At the end of the multi-fleet regatta held on January 24th, in

which 22 boats and 30 sailors participated, the children were introduced to the sailors, and PWC Davidar, Member-Secretary, SDATN, presented T-shirts and shorts to the children. Life jackets and footwear will soon be provided.

Two years ago, TLT, founded by Aysha Rau, got corporate support from TI Cycles and Ramco Cements and together they spent Rs 5 lakh

(TLT spent Rs 2.5 lakh) on the purchase of two 420-class sailboats. The sailboats were used to train Niloufer Jamal and Rohini Rau who went on to become national sailing champions. "When these children could sail so well, we were wondering how much better children who have sailing in their blood would perform. And so, TNSA was established in January 2002, with TLT becoming an institutional member, to focus on setting up a sailing programme for children from the fisherfolk community — children who we realised could, if trained well, go on to become brilliant sailors — as well as other underprivileged children with potential," says Aysha.

Fourteen Optimist craft (the basic racing boat) boats have just been given by TNSA, with the Sports Development Authority of India (SDAI) and SDATN bearing the cost in a 75:25 ratio. "It was a pretty good deal to get these boats at a subsidised cost," says Davidar. These boats are exactly what any beginners' training programme needs.

Munna Jamal, who trains members at the Royal Madras Yacht Club, and Aysha, with Police Inspector John's assistance, visited Srinivasapuram, met the Panchayat head and the elders of the community. Since TLT have regular street theatre productions in the area, Aysha and the others were warmly welcomed. Later, about 20 children came forward for selection. After Jamal selected seven children, Jairaj Rau, member, TNSA, interviewed them.

"The concept was to pick children who take to water like fish, who can read the wind, the flow of current, etc. We consciously wanted to pick only the best and, therefore, did not go the whole hog picking everybody who came," points out Jairaj, adding, "We primarily looked for keenness, enthusiasm and a sparkle in the eye. The energy levels, ability to grasp instructions and knowledge of English were then considered. Their interest in education as well as their participation in any other sport or physical activity, such as fetching water, for example, was also looked at."

"SDATN and TNSA are keen that we broaden the sport and we are interested in training other children too, preferably bigger children in the under-15 category. We want to identify the best talent and make sure this project continues," says Aysha. Adds Jairaj,

It's sailing with a difference for 7



Rohini Rau

"We are moving in the right direction. From the sporting arena itself, many have encouraged this initiative. This is what the country needs — underprivileged children being given an opportunity. Sports is a great leveller."

"We have never got into sailing in this fashion before although, of course, Niloufer and Rohini are part of the SDATN's Champions Development Programme. But we have found that TNSA has been going beyond them and taking its commitment to the sport very seriously. If we make good headway, we can look at expanding the sport. Meanwhile, this is a great start," says Davidar.

Aysha Rau, who has played the catalyst's role in getting the programme going, says she has spent most of her life near the sea. In the mid-1960s, as a child, she used to spend six

worked for 24 years with the United Nations Organisation for Technical Cooperation, and mother Supriya who, at 79, still drives on her own and is a most sought-after singer.

Aysha's love for sailing rubbed off on her two children, Rohini and Ajay. Rohini, who began sailing at the age of 12, recently became the first gold medal winner from Tamil Nadu when she (with Pallavi Naik of the Coa Yacht Association) won the Asian Sailing Championships. It was also for the first time that Indian women/girls had won gold medals at that level. The two girls had trained separately and met only in December 2002 at the Nationals. Using the Nationals and the selection trials thereafter to train together, the two have done the country proud. Not too long ago, Niloufer and Rohini formed the strongest sailing pair in Tamil Nadu. They were the youngest competitors at the 2001 Nationals in the 420 Sailboat Category in which they came first. But when Niloufer fell seriously ill, Rohini was looking for someone to crew her — and the meeting with Pallavi proved lucky.

• by Sashi Nair

hours every day on the beaches at Mogadishu, swimming, diving and trawling. While studying for her degree in marine biology in Portsmouth (72 miles south of London), she used to sail frequently, though not in competitions. Support for Aysha's love for the sport came from her parents — father KC Cherian, one of the six who started the Student Congress movement in 1938 and who

MUSING ON TRIPPLICANE

(Continued from Page 5)

was served by devoted and dedicated public citizens and teachers and had as its Headmaster one of the most famous Indians of all time, the Right Honourable V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C. C.H., Statesman, Orator, Scholar, and a true servant of India, who out of humility declined a knighthood of the highest degree.

I was not privileged to be a student of this great school, for though Madras-born, I was far away at Tirunelveli in my school days and came back to Madras and Presidency College

for my collegiate studies. Presidency College was always regarded as the older sister of the Hindu High School, and the students of both had cousinly affection and regard for each other.

The school has educated and sent into the world many brilliant men, and many talented sportsmen.

Its buildings have housed many meetings at which great men spoke or presided, and drew the public and their hearts and minds into it. (From the School's 125th Anniversary Souvenir.)

Answers to Quiz

- Vaclav Havel, the former Czech President; 2. *Spirit*; 3. Islamabad; 4. Bhandarkar Oriental Institute; 5. Tintin; 6. Britney Spears; 7. Kapil Dev; 8. The winning design in the World Trade Center Memorial competition recently; 9. Bhishma; 10. The Poincare Conjecture.
- Basketball; 12. C. Ponnaiyan; 13. *Annamalai*; 14. Church of Our Lady of Expectations; 15. Avadi; 16. Koodankulam in Tirunelveli District; 17. *Senate House* at the University of Madras; 18. G.K. Mani; 19. R. Muthukumarasami of Saiva Siddhantha Kazhagam; 20. Madurai.

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A balm for sore minds

Music is perhaps the only stimulant sought by persons in their daily lives that is beneficial both to the mind and heart. The late N. Pattabhi Raman, founder-editor, *Sruti*, had felt that just as the intake of greens is good for general health, music promotes general well-being. Indeed, music helps us forget our sorrows for a while and purifies the mind in a sense.

Although the traditional concepts of music and its effects on health need to be scientifically investigated and proved, there is growing recognition of the fact that music is good for the human system. In India, music therapy has gained some importance in the recent past and its palliative effects on metabolic and respiration rates, internal secretion, muscle tone and the nervous system have been observed.

At two recent seminars, the Music Symposium 2002 organised by the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha in Mumbai, and the National Consultation on Impact of Music on the Mental Health of the Elderly, organised by the Society for Gerontological Research and HelpAge India in New Delhi, speakers tried to explore and explain the many facets of music therapy. Does music provide cathartic relief, does it lead to a balance in reactions and perceptions, does it help build interpersonal relationships and offer relaxation, were some of the questions discussed.

In a round-up of both seminars in a recent issue of *Sruti*, Vimala Sarma writes that in India the miraculous powers of re-

juvenation have been attributed to music through the ages. Writers on music, like Bharata and Sarangadeva, she writes, had identified the emotions created by music and the different *rasas* produced by different *swaras*. The sound of OM, produced with a deep pitch from the abdominal region, is believed to vibrate through the spinal column and clear the neural pathways, she goes on to state.

The New Delhi symposium, focussing on the plight of the elderly, Alzheimer's disease, the common problems of ageing, anxiety and fatigue, stressed the point that alternate therapies, particularly music therapy, help in overcoming depression by providing a window for the out-

flow of emotions and bring about a more positive mindset. According to one of the speakers, *bhakti* is essential for a person to benefit from listening to music; it is not enough to listen to music with mind, body and heart — you have to be totally immersed and involved in the spirit as well.

Another speaker, urging the inclusion of music as a holistic treatment strategy, compared the seven *chakras* of the body — the seven centres of consciousness — to the seven strings of the *sitar*. The seven *chakras* function healthily when they are well-balanced, as much as a *sitar's* seven strings that produce mellifluous music when they are

in perfect tune with one another. Soothing music aids sleep, helps children with learning disabilities to concentrate better and brightens up the lives of patients with Alzheimer's disease, the speaker stated. One of the significant points highlighted at the seminar was the fact that music is a panacea, especially for the mentally sick and terminally ill. A survey conducted in a Ratnagiri mental hospital revealed that music and *bhajans* resulted in a marked reduction in the hospitalisation period of the 60-70 patients who voluntarily and joyfully participated in the music sessions. A similar study conducted on cancer patients at Delhi's Shanti Avedhna Ashram showed that patients wanted music to be played, and music helped them confront their emotions and calm their minds.

Eminent personalities in the fields of music and medicine, making presentations at the Mumbai seminar, pointed out that music therapy was in its in-

fancy, and urged artistes and scientists to conduct experiments and research to learn more about the therapeutic effects of music, reported Gayathri Sundarsan in *Sruti*.

Music therapy and yoga act through the brain and nervous system; music and art are related to the right side of the brain. People having a larger right brain generally show greater inborn musical ability, said Dr. B. Ramamurthi, renowned neurosurgeon, at the symposium. When a person concentrates on music, other senses 'freeze' and the person is in a state of *laya* for a few minutes. Ramamurthi went on to say that learning music is excel-

lent exercise for the brain, and even mathematical skills, a left-brain function, improve considerably in a musical person. However, for positive effect, the person needs to enjoy the music being played, he stressed.

Kollegal R. Subramanyam stated that music has its roots deep in mankind's ancient history and that *sangeetham* is an *upavedam*; there are seven deities, he said, one for each of the *sapta swaras*. Different *ragas* are associated with each of the *navagrahas*. Chanting *mantras* helps cure diseases. And the 72 *melakartas* denote the 72 nerve centres in the human body, according to him.

Dr.T.V. Sairam explained the specific therapeutic benefits of several Carnatic *ragas* — *Sama raga* restores mental peace, *Bhoopalam* and *Malayamarutan* are ideal for waking up, *Bilahari* tackles depression, *Dwijavanti* is useful in treating paralysis, *Neelambari* brings sleep, *Sree* helps digestion, *Kalyani* and *Yaman* reduce blood pressure while *Hindolam* and *Malkauns* benefit those with low blood pressure. M.S. Subbulakshmi expressed a similar view, stating that experiments had indicated that patients who listened to 30 minutes of *Sankarabharanam* every day for three months showed lower blood pressure and cholesterol.

There may be little disagreement about music being a sort of balm for disturbed minds. However, as the late Pattabhi Raman himself said, all music is sound but all sound is not music. And with the present generation hooked on to sound and rhythm more than soulful music, Pattabhi Raman wondering whether today's music itself needed a therapy was perhaps not totally out of place.

Sport on Page 7



February 13-17: *Living Gods on Earth*, a photographic exhibition by Dr. Cornelia Mallebrein.

Dr. Cornelia Mallebrein studied Indian History and Culture, Classical Indian Art and Anthropology in the Universities of Munich, Gottingen and Tubingen, and has held several exhibitions including in 1984 'Sculptures from India - Meaning and Form' in Munich, and in 1993 'The Other Gods - Folk and Tribal Bronzes from India' in Cologne. At present she is carrying out a research project on the 'Tutelary Deities of Royal Families in Orissa - Their History and Change', since 1999. (At Amethyst.)

The exhibition "The living gods on earth" focusses on one prominent and unifying element in the diverse Indian religions, which are still so vital in present-day India. It is divided into four sections highlighting 10 characteristic topics from the regions where she travelled.

February 6: *Ashokamitran* a 30-mins-colour video, directed by Amshan Kumar.

In this documentary *Ashokamitran* talks about his formative years spent in Secunderabad, his stint at Gemini Studios, his craft and the many aspects that touched his life with rare insight and a unique brand of humour. The screening will be followed by a discussion. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan, 7 p.m.)

February 12: The fascinating world of folk and tribal traditions — an introduction. A lecture by Dr. Cornelia Mallebrein. (At Amethyst.)

February 14: *Elijah-Oratorio* by Felix Mendelssohn, sung by Shamas, conducted by Damayanthi Santwan with Arul Siromoney and Daniel David at the Piano. Shamas was formed in 1987 and has been giving concerts regularly ever since. Its aim is the study and performance of Western choral music classical and modern, sacred and secular. (At Egmore Wesley Church, 6.30 p.m.)

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