

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

INSIDE

- Restoration apace
- Revival of Town Hall?
- Toilets for the public
- The Madras Season
- Tamil Nadu's finalists

Vol. XIII No.24

FREE ISSUE

April 1-15, 2004



This will help Ramu choose the right group for his Plus-2.

...Shouldn't be a blind choice, you see!

**A little of this,  
a pinch of that**

'Combination' – that dreaded buzz-word in homes with children of a certain age group.

"Finished Tenth? What combination next?" is the terse question addressed to parents and teenagers alike, to the confusion of the uninitiated.

Homes reverberate to arguments and endless discussions, with scary words like 'future prospects' flung at the poor child's head. But how do you look for all-round solutions among such unrelentingly tight combinations of subjects?

If you choose one that interests you, you find to your horror that several others leap to their feet, insisting that you take them too.

If you like to study plants, you also have to wrestle with numbers. That's tough on those who (like me) never cared when two trains, travelling in opposite directions, one serving *masala-dosai* and the other *vadai-chutney*, would cross each other.

Imagine being stuck for a couple of years with stuff that leaves you cold, just to study the one subject you want. Imagine what that does to you, your academic performance... Imagine... Ah, if only the powers-that-be had a little more of that... (!!!)

Are there any fun combinations out there – like Mathematics with Fine Arts; or Chemistry with Literature; or Physics with Music?

Fun – maybe that's the lesson being taught here. That real life is not fun.

How sad and dreary is the path we shoo our children on.

Ranjitha Ashok

## Senate House: 2nd phase to begin

*Trust to be formed to raise funds, maintain building*

(By A Special Correspondent)

With the Senate House Restoration Advisory Committee having finalised pathbreaking terms with the contractor, Messrs. L&T-ECC, work on the second phase of the restoration of Senate House is to begin. But even with favourable terms agreed on, work would be in no position to begin if it had not been for spontaneous financial support being offered by the Willingdon Trust, a few corporates and several constituent colleges of the University of Madras.

There are now enough funds to cover the second phase and bits and pieces of the other eight phases. But there is still a long way to go and Rs.5 crore is still needed. Hopes of meeting that target are bright with the very prompt action taken by dynamic Vice-Chancellor S.P. Thyagarajan to allay fears of potential donors and also get individual alumni and student participation. The action the Vice-

Chancellor has taken is three-fold.

He has set up an Alumni Office, which has begun drawing up a list of alumni of the

(Continued on Page 7)



• This picture by REFLECTIONS taken on March 25th, shows that defacing the walls of the city by electioneering parties continues unabated, neither disobeying election laws nor commitment to a Singara / Ezhilmighu Chennai anyone's concern.

## Basilica renovation causing concern

(By A Staff Reporter)

The news item in these columns last fortnight on the San Thomé Basilica renovation has not only had several heritage lovers expressing their concern in letters to *Madras Musings*, but, more importantly, a few raising several worrying issues.

One of them, looking at the work going on on the exterior, wonders whether the contractors are getting ready to use ce-

ment, instead of the original lime plaster on the building and thereby 'kill' it by suffocation. He also wonders, having looked at all the interior and exterior renovation work, how much of the original features have been recorded before the changes, necessary or otherwise, were undertaken.

Another has an even more worrying report to make. He says the tunnelling behind the crypt will weaken the whole edifice and feels it will not be long before the excavation will be filled up again – but by that time the damage would have been done. He also says his concern has been intensified by reports that the side walls of the tunnel have already collapsed twice and experts have no answer to this situation.

A third talks of plans to construct another building adjacent to the Basilica. Such construction next to a heritage site has to be examined in the light of what it might do to the existing heritage building and cannot be done on an *ad hoc* basis.

There has been no response to this appeal. But the Forum,

responding to the work that has been going on, has appealed to the Ministry concerned at the Centre, requesting action by the ASI, and also to the CMDA. Hopefully a positive response to these appeals will be possible and not be too late.

*Madras Musings* learns that envisaging "such ravage" when the Basilica authorities first began talking of renovation, the Forum for Catholic Unity, an NGO, had appealed as far back as April 2003 to the Archaeological Survey of India to investigate what was happening and declare the Basilica a National Monument. Citing Section 4, Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, the appeal states that the San Thomé Basilica and site conform to Section 2(a) of the Act which defines "ancient monuments as any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than one hundred years."

## Please send in your subscriptions

(By The Editor)

As explained on March 16th, we have no other alternative but to price *Madras Musings*. From the April 16, 2004 issue (Volume XIV, No.1), *Madras Musings* will be priced at Rs.5 a copy, ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/-. Please make out your cheque only to 'Chennai Heritage' and send it together with the COUPON ON PAGE 7, to Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018, or C/o Lokavani-Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

As you will notice from the coupon, 'Chennai Heritage' continues to welcome contributions from you for the causes it espouses. So if, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2004-5 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. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

# Surely, they should know better!

That several attempts to restore heritage sites are going on at present is a welcome sign that heritage awareness is slowly being achieved in Chennai. *Madras Musings* is undoubtedly glad that it has had a significant role in creating this awareness. But *The Man From Madras Musings* is rather alarmed that much of this restoration is being, or is likely to be, carried out in a haphazard manner, little attention being paid to the classical demands of restoring heritage buildings.

One of those demands is that before any restoration work begins, a complete recording, through photographs, drawings and detailed notes, be made of what exists *in situ*. Then, investigations need to be carried out to discover what the original looked like, what lies beneath layers of paint and grime, and thereafter efforts need to be made to ensure that the original is restored exactly as it was. And thirdly, the materials used in the restoration must be as close to the original as possible. For instance, brick and lime mortar buildings should be finished with the same materials of a consistency almost identical to the original and not with cement which will 'suffocate' such buildings and reduce their lifespan. Model restoration not only involves leaving behind a comprehensive documentation but also ensures that the restored building will survive for hundreds of years, if properly and regularly maintained, and certainly longer than if 'modern' materials are used. Now, has any of this been done in the cases of restoration that have begun and will they be done in cases where restoration is planned? The pity of it all is, MMM regrets, that all this work is being got underway by people who should know better how precious heritage is and how carefully it should be handled.

The Archaeological Survey of India has taken up work in St. Mary's in the Fort, *Clive House* (*Admiralty Building*) and the Connemara Library. MMM has no doubt that, as the ASI is involved, the materials used will very likely be as close to the original as possible as the restoration work will be of high quality. But MMM wonders whether any documentation was done in these cases before the work began or whether any attempt was made to find what lay beneath the additions of the years.

Elsewhere, the San Thomé Cathedral is not only being renovated but is also being dug up in areas to introduce additions. Here again, has documentation been done, have the features of past construction been looked for? Most significantly, what are the materials that will be used in the restoration? If cement is used, as seems likely, here is a building

doomed not to run its full span of life—a fate made more likely by all the excavation work that has been going on.

St. Mary's Cemetery on The Island, long a jungle and public toilet, is at last being cleared of the wild growth. But the clearing is by an organisation specialised in street cleaning, not in cleaning a heritage property. Is there a qualified supervisor overseeing this work? And what steps are being taken to ensure that the clearing does not affect the heritage tombstones? Are these tombstones being documented for future restoration of the cemetery as a heritage site?

And now, at long last, there are plans to restore the General Post Office building, whose interior was gutted by fire. Does this restoration effort—which states that only the façade is to be saved and the interiors made modern—include any effort at documentation of what's left of what was once one of the most splendid interiors in Madras? And is there any reason why some of the special features of that interior cannot be included in the new interior? All this is possible, if the Post Office also takes the route the University

Madras, this neighbour of Moore Market and Central Station was a major venue for theatrical performances, public speeches by the leading orators of the day, pantomimes, receptions and balls. Its management was headed by the Sheriff of Madras and a public trust, in which the Corporation of Madras was an interested party. In more recent years, ever since the city started developing southwards, all those concerned with the management of Town Hall began to neglect the venue, and litigation over the ground lease and other issues only helped compound the neglect. A few years ago, when Suresh Krishna was the Sheriff of Madras, he demonstrated what could be done for the Hall by renovating one room. Since then, not only has that room begun to lose its looks once more, but all the legal bickering has prevented the example being replicated.

It was against this background that the Max Mueller Bhavan invited several of those in the city connected with the arts to meet and discuss the future of the Town Hall. *The Man from Madras Musings* was delighted to find a consensus reached among all those present that the Hall needed to be

restored and revived as the most active performance space in, at present, at least in North Madras. MMM urges all those present at the discussion held at the Max Mueller Bhavan to form themselves into a 'Save the Town Hall' group and impress on the Corporation of Madras and the VPH Trust to get together, bury the hatchet and begin thinking of all those connected with and interested in the Arts. That thinking should involve not only the restoration of Town Hall in model fashion, but maintenance of it after restoration and encouragement of its use thereafter as a public performance space vying with the venues in the city that have usurped its place.

## The only way

Whether we the citizens of Chennai can afford it or not, desalination is the only answer to the water woes of the city, *The Man From Madras Musings* has long been convinced. Which is why MMM was delighted to hear a senior Metrowater official publicly state that not only was desalination the only answer for Chennai, but that it would also work out cheaper than transporting water by lorry.

MMM has no statistics, but certainly the middle class and the affluent in the city have for long been buying water and spending a tidy sum on it. In this context, paying similar amounts for water supplied through the desalination process is unlikely to cause any protests. Meeting this demand through desalination will make more water from the regular supply available to the rest of the citizenry. But even in such a situation, the 'rest' are unlikely to find the surplus created by small-scale desalination plants adequate.

changeovers possible to the city's bus service with train-cum-bus tickets being made available. This integration of the bus and Metro service has been hanging fire for long and even after all these years, it still hasn't materialised in any concrete form. In fact, even having a bus-stop near a Metro station is more the exception than the rule.

The sooner the city has an integrated bus-train service, the sooner it will be taking a step towards becoming a modern city.

## Biography controversy

T.J.S. George's biography of M.S. Subbulakshmi has stirred up quite a hornet's nest. Should he have referred to the romance in M.S.'s life, particularly quoting chapter and verse? And how dare a person who knows so little about music write about a person like M.S.?

At a recent meeting where these questions were raised, the last question was easily disposed of. He was not writing about or judging her voice or the music but he was writing about a person. And if there is a history of Carnatic music to be provided as background, you don't have to be a *rasika* to read and learn about the history of a subject and retell it; what you need to be is a good researcher, interviewer and analyst.

On Sadasivam's role in her life, the facts are well known. What George had to do was to evaluate the facts, make judgements and express them. So long as the facts were true as stated, opinion was free and he was entitled to express them.

It was the question of privacy that intrigued *The Man from Madras Musings*. Need the romance in M.S.'s life have been mentioned at all? In a good, objective biography, it certainly needed to be referred to. But to what extent? Were quotes from her letters necessary? George holds that he could have published the letters M.S. had written in their entirety in facsimile form. But he had wanted to tone down the whole thing and so he had kept the episode to only a few pages and had only used quotes, and not facsimiles, to demonstrate the extent of the romance. Was that so unethical?

And so the debate continues, with George getting on his high horse to say he does not approve of "approved (read 'sponsored') biographies" and does not consider such biographies as history, whereas biographies that he writes are histories because he states the facts as he sees them. Now that's another subject that merits discussion, MMM feels, particularly not having the certainty of a George.

But, for the Metro to really succeed, there have to be smooth

— MMM

## More favour Metro

*The Man from Madras Musings* is glad to see that the Metro has been becoming more popular ever since the track upto Tiruvanmiyur Station was opened. MMM has no doubt it will become even more popular the further the line is extended.

But, for the Metro to really succeed, there have to be smooth

## OUR READERS WRITE



### Effect of sewage

It may be relevant to point out that the quality of groundwater (MM, March 1st) also deteriorates due to the disposal of sewage in large quantity into the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham Canal. It is evidenced by the very bad quality water even at shallow depths in parts of the Boat Club area, Mylapore, Chepauk, Egmore, Chindadripet etc. Besides imparting salinity to the water, this also leads to bacteriological pollution of water. It is for Government to stop this pollution on priority basis.

K.M. Vedapuri  
(Groundwater Consultant)  
A.P. 100, 12th Street  
Second Sector, K.K. Nagar  
Chennai 600 078

### Moving an answer

The report on groundwater exploitation in Chennai (MM, March 1st) makes dismal reading. The total dissolved solids and chloride content of this source has been increasing steadily for many years. As this water source is being used up due to lack of other alternatives, there is no hope of reduction of T.D.S. in groundwater.

People cannot be faulted as being extravagant in the use of water. The extreme scarcity has already imbued a salutary effect on them. Almost all householders in Chennai have installed rainwater harvesting devices after a slight nudge from Government. We are now still waiting for the sky to open up so that every drop that falls can be conserved. But, Nature has been playing truant for a number of years continuously. What, then, is the solution?

An alarming problem needs desperate action. In this case the remedy is to reduce the density of local population. This can be done if all Government offices with their staff (I mean lock, stock and barrel) are shifted to a more congenial spot which is more or less at the centre of the State. I had already indicated in a previous letter (MM, September, 2002) that the hinterland between Tiruchi and Thanjavur is

ideal for such a move. It is significant that although Chennai and its environs have been missing the monsoon continuously over years, the southern districts have not done badly. It is now for the Government to make its move. Will it?

M. Sethuraman  
'Sankrithi'  
6, Second Cross Street  
Mahalakshmi Nagar  
Adambakkam  
Chennai 600 088

### With pleasure...

The decision of the management to price priceless *Madras Musings* at Rs.100/- a year is most welcome, because to many this amount is not a subscription but a fee for membership of a club for Madras memories.

C.G. Prasad  
C.S. Mudali Street  
Kondithope  
Chennai 600 079

### ... and by wile

MM has been getting donations these past couple of years which could very well have been termed 'subscriptions' and a list of 'subscribers' could have been furnished to meet the anachronistic P.O. Act, suddenly remembered by the Department, and the postal authorities' indulgence sought earlier, just by printing a token cost.

T.M. Sundaraman  
19, Nallappan Street  
Mylapore  
Chennai 600 004

Editor's Note : MM, unfortunately, is rather scrupulous on matters of principle. A 'donor', to MM, is not a 'subscriber'. And a 'subscriber' is not one who pays a token cost, but what is a reasonable cost for the publication. If the law is to be obeyed, MM intends to comply with it in the spirit of the law and not by means of just getting around it.

### The irony of it

Irony, isn't it, that MM, which has been heralding many British acts

# A citizen's offer turned down

A proposal was forwarded by residents of Besant Nagar to the Chennai Corporation to modernise the Besant Nagar cremation ground, with the entire expenses and efforts to be borne by the residents and a local NGO. Unfortunately, the Chennai Corporation has turned down the proposal without giving any reason.

The insensitiveness of the Chennai Corporation and other state agencies like the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to this serious environmental issue is causing not only surprise but also serious misgivings about the commitment of Government and its bureaucrats, to environmental issues.

The Besant Nagar scenario of operating a cremation ground in the midst of a housing colony must be one of its kind in the entire country.

When I first became a resident of Besant Nagar around 20 years ago, there was no compound wall or permanent shed in the cremation area.

My flat is one of the closest to the cremation ground. The sight and smell of burning bodies disturbed my sleep for several months and my relatives avoided my house. I had at the time a schoolgoing boy and I had the unfortunate experience of, while taking him to school, walking on the road past burning bodies. It was a horrible experience.

I took up the issue with R. Venkataraman, who was representing this constituency in Parliament, M.G. Ramachandran, then Chief Minister, Dr. H.V. Hande, who was at the time the Health Minister, as well as with various government officers, including one Corporation Commissioner, a senior IAS official, who was, in fact, a resident of Besant Nagar! Nothing came of it all for a long time.

and championing heritage, is 'shot' by an English Act of 1893!

MGR as எம்.ஜி.ராமச்சந்திரன் (and not as எம்.சி.ஆர்.)!!

When there were in 1952-54 Satanic suggestions to beautify Marina by shifting the fishermen, Rajaji cursed "Satanic aesthetics" and pointed out that the fishermen have been occupying the beaches for tens of thousands of years.

S.K.S. Ayyangar  
33B, Bharathiar Street  
Kamaraj Nagar  
Chennai 600 111

### Rajaji's corrections

M. Ratnasabapathi's "The Rajaji Days" (MM, March 16th) makes fine reading, But a few corrections:

- They were clay models (NOT idols; Only consecration makes anything an idol) of Pillaiyar that were broken by E.V.R. Naicker only in 1953.
- When C.R. wrote to *Murasoli* in 1967 or so to spell *சாத்திரம்* (and not *சாசிரம்*) pointing out that *Murasoli* was prudent to spell

Eventually, after repeated efforts by several residents of Besant Nagar, the Chennai Corporation constructed a compound wall, which only resulted in perpetuating the problem and making it a permanent one, whereas our request was to shift the cremation ground to a more suitable place elsewhere.

After constructing the compound wall, a cremation shed was also constructed in a crude manner without any sort of environmental impact assessment study or consultation with the local residents.

In my capacity as a chemical engineer, I again wrote several letters suggesting that at least the height of the chimney be raised to 120 feet to provide adequate natural draft. Most of my letters were not even acknowledged. I also objected to the burial of bodies, since the subsoil water for drinking purpose was being tapped near the burial area and distributed all over the Adyar neighbourhood.

It is sad that a place like Chennai, with reasonable educational standards, and particularly a location like Besant Nagar is being treated with such indifference by not only the Corporation but government authorities also.

Resigned to the fact that the cremation ground will not be shifted, an initiative has now been made by citizens to construct an environmentally acceptable crematorium. They have even arranged for the resources and only want the approval from the Chennai Corporation and the Government. I wonder how a responsible government and Corporation can discourage and turn down such a move!

N.S. Venkataraman  
M-60/1, IV Cross Street  
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090

lightest pretext, for example when autodrivers indulge in an agitation. Repeated unsuccessful attempts to discipline the drivers give an impression that the authorities merely go through the motions.

In Delhi, an NGO called People's Action has published a chart showing the distance and the correct fare from one point to another. It is available in bookstores and other places at a nominal price. The Madras Auto Passengers' Association may emulate the example set by the People's Action of Delhi.

R.V. Chandramouli  
L.A.S. (RETD.)  
B-2, Ramanalaya  
21, First Crescent Park Road  
Gandhi Nagar, Adyar  
Chennai 600 020

### Proceed beyond tokenism

You have mentioned a core concern of Chennai citizens ('Can we improve?', MM, March 1st), the autodrivers' autocracy. The short answer is we can and we should. It is not clear what is so special about autodrivers in Chennai and what is lacking in the Chennai Police that they seem to be incapable of doing what their counterparts in Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi have done. Your impression that the doctored meter problem has been dealt with is not correct. People plump for fixed lumpsum fares only because the meters are doctored and you do not know what you are in for. In fact, more often than not, you will be taken for a ride.

Every Police Commissioner, after assuming office, makes such soothing statements. Every campaign ends up as a damp squib. Whenever passenger-friendly measures are taken, such as insistence on electronic meters, organising prepaid autorickshaws and taxis, allowing stands for call taxis, the police meekly surrender on the

### PLEASE NOTE

• All letters for The Editor's attention should be addressed to The Editor, c/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greaves Road, Chennai 600 006.

• All business correspondence should be addressed to The Director, Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

• Madras Musings does not accept letters by e-mail.

## Enforcement when there's disobedience

In his letter 'Laws galore but enforcement...?' (MM, March 1st), the writer states that even though we have a plethora of laws, there has been laxity in their enforcement.

True, we have very many laws. But when we talk about any law, we need to bear in mind one thing: the obedience to law and its enforcement. In other words, the two are inseparable. They are two sides of the same coin. The enforcement part of the law comes only when there is disobedience.

Let us take the daily occurrences of traffic rule offenses. We have traffic signals at very important junctions. Still, we find traffic constables guarding them! Why? It is to check the disobedience. If only

we obey the traffic signals, there would be no need to guard any traffic signal!

Take yet another daily ritual taking place. The Tamil Nadu Government has brought out an ordinance banning smoking and spitting in public places. But we still find people spitting and smoking, making the law a mere mockery. Only when we do not obey the rules, does the enforcement come into play.

We are indeed in a strange and sad situation. Neither do we obey the rules, nor is there their enforcement! Result: chaos everywhere.

V.S. Jayaraman  
31, Motilal Street  
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017

# Welcome development on Kaatuppalli Island

Consequent to the report 'Development's price at Ennore Creek' (MM, March 1st) in which the adverse effects on the livelihoods of the people of Kaatuppalli Island were discussed, there have been some very positive developments.

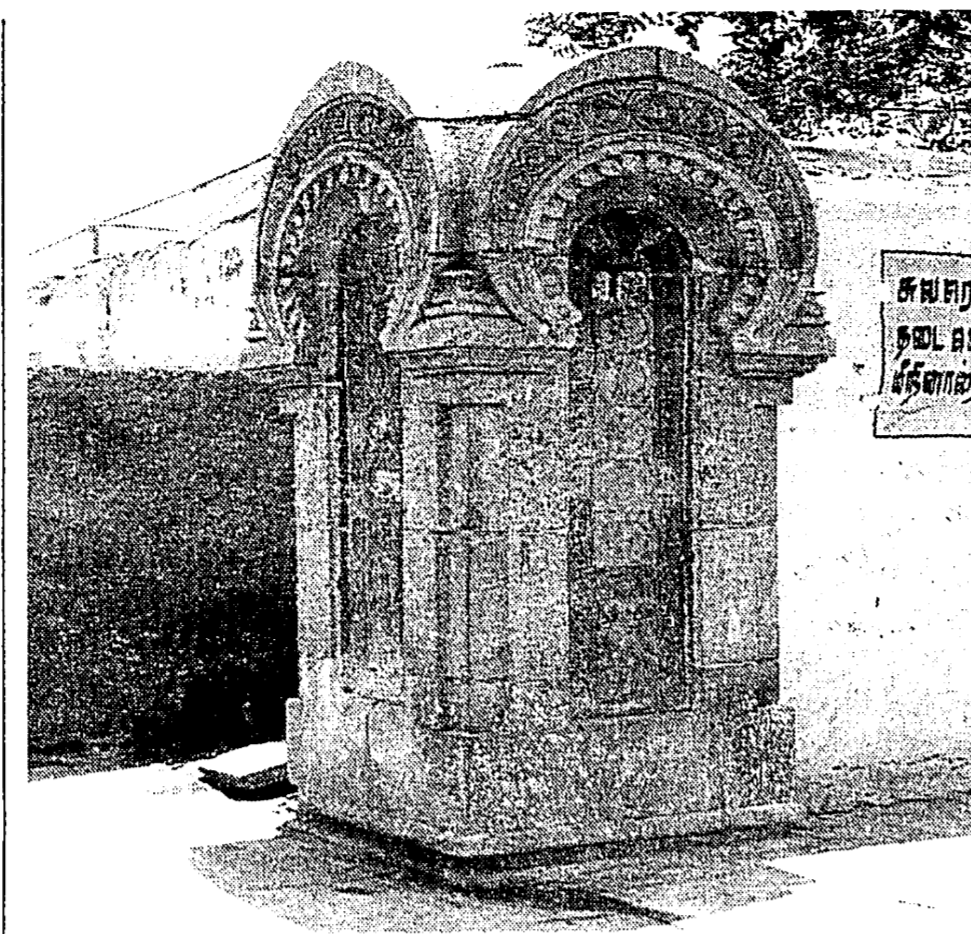
Following a preliminary meeting between Dr. Sanjeeva Raj, Consultant Ecologist and Trustee, Ennore Pulicat Environmental Protection Forum (EPEPF), and M. Raman, Chairman and Managing Director of Ennore Port Limited (EPL), an almost day-long tour of the affected villages was organised. Raman also arranged for senior members of the Fish-

eries Department and EPL to be present. Besides meeting officers at the Tahsildar level for relevant information about the village population, Raman actively participated in discussions with the villagers and the teacher in the lone elementary school in the village.

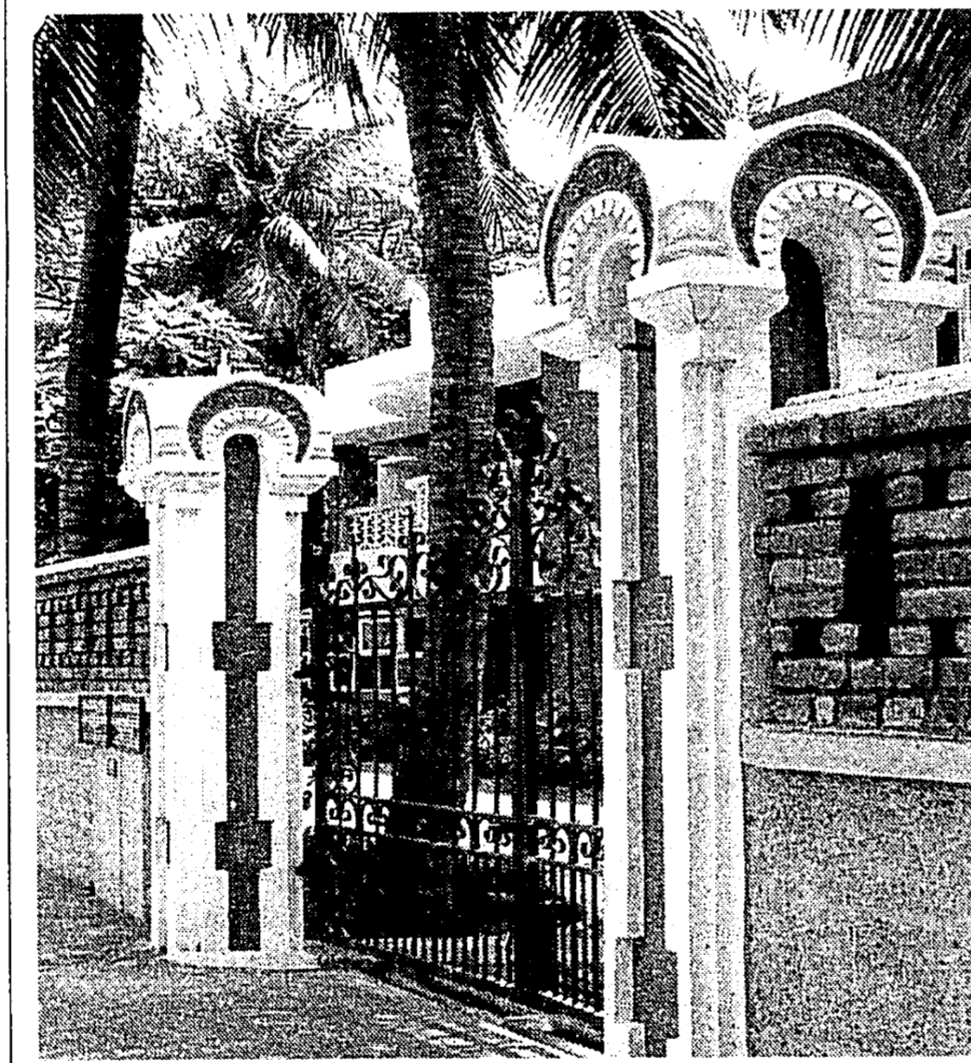
by  
**Shobha Menon**

Subsequently, Raman committed EPL to the following positive measures to alleviate the current situation on the Island. EPL will undertake:

- the laying of a tar road from the school in Kaatuppalli to the entrance of Ennore Port. (This will mean easier accessibility by van to Athipettu for villagers.)
  - provision of basic amenities for the elementary school in Kaatuppalli, including a kitchen for the noon meal scheme. EPL will initiate, through coordination with the Collectorate, for providing a toilet for the staff and water supply for the school.
  - to employ women from Kaatuppalli through Self Help Groups on the plantations in the Port area, besides giving permission for access to the cashew plantations and shell collection at the breakwaters.
  - motorisation of fishing boats for those interested, with a subsidy from the Fisheries Department.
  - a footbridge from the Chintamani Koil to Kattur over the backwaters, again for easier access for the benefit of the villagers (NOT a road, because that would mean more vehicular traffic and would affect the pristine nature of the existing environment).
  - provide a camping site for students within the Port area to promote environmental study where batches (upto 200 at a time) can be accommodated to study the ecosystems and habitats in the surrounding area.
- The Chairman of EPL voiced his keen interest in promoting an Environmental Education Centre on the Island. Ecotourism itself, he felt, could be facilitated along the Buckingham Canal if dredging operations were feasible.



It was in 1865 that the southwestern quarter of the Chepauk Palace grounds was converted into the cricket grounds of the Madras Cricket Club. Here the Club developed a tree-surrounded cricket field out of the English countryside amidst park-like surroundings. By 1919 it was decided to make the grounds more secure and a surrounding wall was built sometime by 1926. Our OLD is of one of the corner pillars of that wall, its 'cap' echoing the domes of neighbouring Senate House. The grounds have for some years now been those of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, with the MCC having but one corner of it. And the change in status resulted in the building of a new surrounding wall, but look carefully and you will be able to spot the original corner pillars, like today's OLD, at the corner of the Wallajah Road-Bell's Road junction. Echoing these pillars are our NEW, the gate pillars of a house on Cathedral Road. We wonder whether the owners are members of the MCC and wish to remember a little bit of its past or whether they were just eagle-eyed enough to spot the OLD sometime. (Photographs by REFLECTIONS.)



## A temple in need of greater attention

Kanchipuram, the Temple City, has scores of temples but seven of them are major ones. The Ekambareswarar (Eka - one, Ambara - the Mango tree, Eswarar - ruler or god) Temple is the most famous and the oldest. Saivite legend says that Siva's spouse, Parvathi, did penance here 3,500 years ago. She did the penance under the shade of a mango tree - which still exists within the temple. The tree, I observed, during a recent visit, is now hollow at its core, but alive. When I was there a few months ago, the open courtyard, about 50 grounds of bare land, was being flattened by bulldozers. There seemed to be no effort to plant either grass, vegetation or trees on the land. The temple tank had plenty of water and also kadai fish. Visitors wash their feet in the tank and feed the fish with puffed rice.

There is a large peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree near the temple tank. Underneath the tree are stone idols of the snake god (nagalingam). The stone platform around the tree is crumbling.

The outer wall of the temple is about 1600 feet long, each side approximately 400 feet. It is built of rectangular black stone slabs. On the northern side, renovation work has recently been done over a stretch of about 150 feet, the wall slabs' joints have been cemented over. The cost of this renovation came to Rs.10 lakh, I was told by the temple authorities. The cost was funded by a well-wisher.

However, much still needs to be done. The entire northern

wall I observed is overgrown with weeds, grass and peepal saplings. The roots of the saplings will gradually split the stone joints and endanger the wall. Signs of such decay are obvious in the *vhaara* (round tower) of the mother goddess, Kamatchi Amman. Peepal trees, Blue Rock pigeons and the crow-pheasant all find a home in this round yellow tower.

On the southern side of the temple is a hall. This hall of a thousand pillars - fifty rows of twenty columns each - recently hosted an exhibition of ancient *objets d'art*, such as old veenas, drums, idols, paintings and statues belonging to the Pallava dynasty. It was a positive move to bring these old heritage objects out of cold storage and into the

(Continued on Page 5)

## CAN THE TOWN HALL BE REVIVED?

(By A Special Correspondent)

Twentyseven artists came up with almost as many suggestions to renovate the Victoria Public Hall complex at a meeting organised by the Max Mueller Bhavan recently, under its Human City Series, to discuss the restoration and re-use of what was known as the Town Hall. The suggestions included using the hall for stage performances, workshops on the performing arts, and children's programmes. One speaker also suggested that the Hall, once renovated, could be used as a small film studio and edit-suite; there was room for studio spaces and accommodation space for

visiting artists as well, it was felt. Utilising part of the space for a temporary or permanent exhibition and for a cafeteria were other thoughts that were voiced aloud.

A formal proposal will be sent to the City's Mayor, the Corporation of Chennai officials, and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

The city is in dire need of public spaces, and the focus of the programme was to look at the existing Town Hall structure and explore the possibilities of its re-use. Ernst Hesse, a lead-

ing artist from Dusseldorf, Germany, who has carried out installations in German cities and who has been involved in similar reclaimed spaces, started the discussion by exhibiting his work and broadly touching upon the necessity for artists' initiatives in such projects.

The artists who attended the meeting included the young and old, representing the worlds of film, the visual, and plastic arts, and theatre. Na. Muthusamy, Veera Santhanam, Dakshinamurthy, Viswam, Natesh, R.V. Ramani and Benitha Percival were present.

Last year, Max Mueller Bhavan had, through its Human City Series, addressed the residents as well as the floating population of Mylapore, in a series of meetings and discussions. If the community initiative for Mylapore had to be worked with Mylaporeans, the Victoria Public Hall initiative had to come from artists, since they formed the community of users of the Hall. And so, Max Mueller Bhavan got artists to come together to explore the possibility of transforming Victoria Hall into a vibrant cultural campus.

public view, but there was some unseemly controversy over the exhibition.

Small bats roost in the ceiling of this hall. During one visit, we saw that a narikurava had shot about 300 of these bats with his rifle. The bats were be-

ing killed because they were damaging the walls and ceiling of the hall, said the temple authorities.

There is a large grass lawn on the northern side of the temple that is well maintained and has neatly clipped flowering bushes. The garden is the contribution of a former Collector of Kanchi-

public view, but there was some unseemly controversy over the exhibition.

Small bats roost in the ceiling of this hall. During one visit, we saw that a narikurava had shot about 300 of these bats with his rifle. The bats were be-



Fuad Lokhandwala

## Fuad's obsession

- public toilets India can be proud of

Let's face it: for all the many things we Indians can be justly proud, we do suffer from incompetence when it comes to sanitation. Some would even judge us a vicious society. After all, have we not for centuries expected a whole caste of fellow Indians to clean up after us? How little do we train our children in toilet use. How terrible are our public - and frequently, even private - toilets. How shoddily do we design, build and maintain them.

Gandhi, wise as he was to Indians' ways, chastised us and urged us to clean our own latrines. Alas, to little avail. The best groomed Indian often leaves a wrecked toilet behind. It is not surprising that we are the laughing stock around the world in this regard. The truth is, we have an uncomfortable, unprocessed mind mess when it comes to toilets and our responsibility towards them.

Now at last we have an Indian who is aware of this problem; who is proud of creating and maintaining sparkling public toilets. If Fuad Lokhandwala is emulated widely, there is hope yet, that we will correct a gross flaw in our collective outlook.

The year was 1998. India had thumped its chest and declared itself nuclear. Indians brimmed with pride. The world reacted with anger, threats and sanctions. All that flew over the heads of gleeful Indians. Fuad too was euphoric - but he stopped dead in his tracks one day, while watching a Jay Leno Show on TV. The burly wit had said something to the effect, "Indians can build nuke bombs but they can't build decent toilets." It hurt. And yet, as with the best of humour, how true!

Fuad was in his forties and had spent 25 years of his life in the US, as a student and as a professional. "I loved it there - the energy, the systems, the order. I longed for India to be up near there someday," he says. "It puzzled me as to what we

lacked. What was it that we must get right?" Back in India he had not quite settled down to life in Delhi. He was unsure as to what he should be doing. A routine 'job' made no sense.

What he didn't quite know about himself was that he was a Yankee style entrepreneur. Jay Leno uncorked that. Fuad's obsession began that moment: "I will build world class public toilets!" It is obvious that such a resolve would invite ridicule in India. His wife Mehru and daughter Sanaa were 'deeply concerned!' But an obsession must run its course.

• This is not a Chennai story. But this is a story every person interested in a better Chennai and committed to civic improvement should read.

After six months of trying to sell his 'crazy' vision, Fuad had the ears of K.J. Alphonse, an activist-bureaucrat. Alphonse was apprehensive, but nevertheless took him to 'his minister', Jagmohan. Fuad had their attention. Yes, it was time we built toilets we need not be ashamed of, but how would we fund them. It was one thing to get New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) or Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to permit him to build his dream toilets, but where would the money come from for maintenance and as return on investment? After all, you can't load on the user all that it costs to build and run.

Fuad knew he had a hurdle. Given his specifications, each of his dream toilets would cost Rs. 10 lakhs. And that is big money in India. He sat with his wife and daughter and discussed the deadlock. Suddenly Mehru said, "Hey, if it's going to be upmarket, why don't you get upmarket advertisers to support it?"

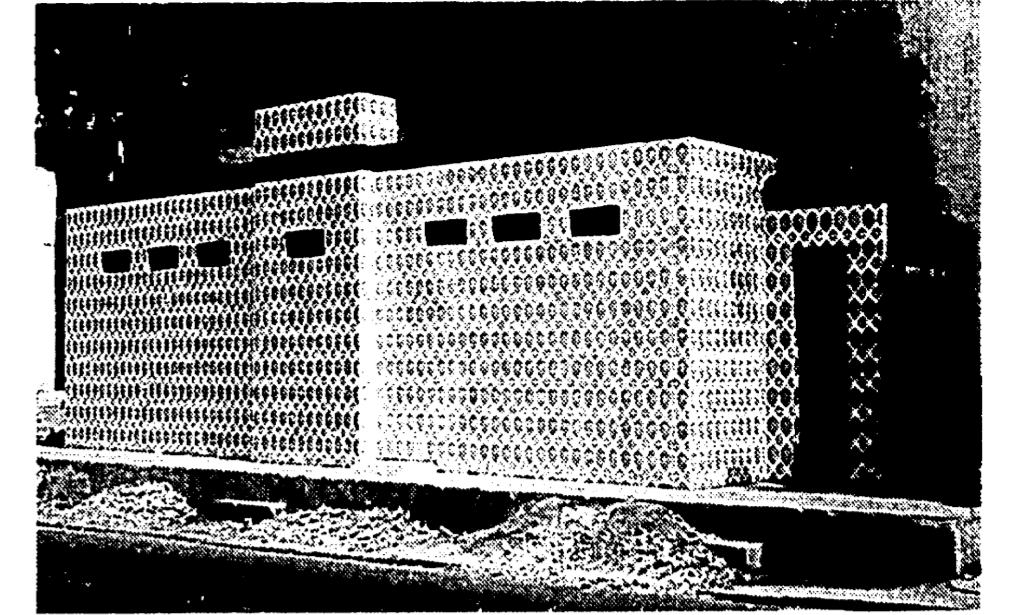
In a few days, Fuad had made a model, prepared a business plan and a formal request that

said more or less, "Just give me the permission and I will provide a service India can be proud of". He got the permit. He reminisces now: "Yes, it's not simple in India. But doors do open for those that are sincere. Most of the time our bad mouthing the Indian system is to do with our tendency to seek alibis. I found a receptive bureaucrat and a politician who backed me."

But no one was going to give him money to build a loo. He formed Fumes International Company, and decided to put his own savings on the line. "I am an entrepreneur worth my salt I must take risks," he told himself. He began to build his definitive toilet in one of Delhi's in-places - Khan Market. He lavished all his care and attended to every detail. Mehru, an interior designer, was with him the whole way. It was not to be just a tucked away loo, but a high profile object of style. When it opened in late 1999, it was a hit at once. Almost always in India, we build great edifices but pay little attention to how we maintain them thereafter. Fuad was firm from the beginning: "My toilets have to be inauguration-clean forever." He spent time in planning maintenance and training his staff - and it paid off.

After five years, his toilets are spotless. Two attendants clean after every use. A watchman guards it between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. Visitors are delighted. An affluent woman says she uses it all the time. Bernie Fernandes, a working woman, says, "I feel so safe, relaxed and comfortable." A highly impressed Robert Kinfarley, the head of World Health Organisation (WHO), in Delhi sent his staff to Fuad's toilet for training. Clearly, user endorsement was gathering. Visitors are charged a token Re. 1 and Rs. 2, just to induce a sense of responsibility.

Though it took him over six months trying to persuade ad-



A new look for Chennai toilets alone will not do; they need the maintenance Fuad Lokhandwala has brought to Delhi's toilets.

vertisers to support him, he was certain he had a USP: foot falls of the spending kind. Early mind blocks were blown away. Big names were eager. Fuad's toilet walls are not cheap to advertise on. The income from ads enables him to pay good wages, make a nice profit and to build more toilets. He has 11 in Delhi so far, in places like Connaught Place, Lodi Gardens, Sundar Nagar and Golf Links. Each is a unique piece with marble, granite, chrome, plants, aquarium and, above all, with that heavenly peace that reigns in great wash-rooms. Fuad is forever making the rounds. Are the sills clean? Is the soap in the right place? Is the plumbing drip-free? He's a perfectionist.

There is some concern now that his business model is stoking greed and quick grabbers are moving in. Fuad is worried that the idea of cost-free public sanitation may lose out if cronyism creeps into city administration. There are now about 80 toilets based on the Fuad model. He hopes all would pay attention to upkeep. But there is a built-in safeguard in the idea he has pioneered: if a toilet is run down, it won't attract advertisers.

Fuad is now attempting to make garbage pay. He has built collection and sorting centres where, again, advertising will pay for the process. He admits it's not a commercial success yet. And he has begun to ponder what else he should be doing to improve India's image in terms of public sanitation. So the question arises, what about toilets for the poor and for small towns? This question has been asked in the past and almost always been answered wrongly. Tokenism has ruled and subsidies and handouts have steadily been siphoned off. In the end the poor get unusable toilets.

An affluent man, a happy, family man, Fuad could have done tens of other things with his time. But India got lucky because Jay Leno made smoke come out of Fuad's ears. By the way, was that why he called his company Fumes? "Naaw," he draws with a wink. "It stands for FUad, MEhru and Sanaa."

Contact: Fuad Lokhandwala, Fumes International, 67 Anand Lok, New Delhi 110 049. e-mail: fumes international@hotmail.com Phone: 91 11 2626 4661. — (Courtesy: Goodnews India.)

K. Karunanidhi

## A TEMPLE IN NEED OF GREATER ATTENTION

(Continued from page 4)

public view, but there was some unseemly controversy over the exhibition.

Small bats roost in the ceiling of this hall. During one visit, we saw that a narikurava had shot about 300 of these bats with his rifle. The bats were be-

ing killed because they were damaging the walls and ceiling of the hall, said the temple authorities.

There is a large grass lawn on the northern side of the temple that is well maintained and has neatly clipped flowering bushes. The garden is the contribution of a former Collector of Kanchi-

public District, now transferred.

The main idol of this temple is that of Ekambareswarar, a form of the Lord Shiva, and is a stone lingam covered with a silver shield. The *sanctum sanctorum* (*garba griha*) is well lighted. The inner walk within the temple, however, is dark, with

only a single tubelight (not working) alongside the many-pillared hall/courtyard (*prakaaram*).

A lot more needs to be done to make this ancient temple more appealing and visitor-friendly.

## Quizzin' with Raminan

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

1. Name the new Prime Minister of Russia.
2. Who is likely to be the Democratic Party candidate to challenge George Bush in the U.S. Presidential elections later this year?
3. Name the Indian batting talent who was adjudged 'Man of the Tournament' at the recently concluded Under-19 World Cup in Dhaka.
4. To which Vincent Van Gogh painting does the newly discovered Super Giant star V838 Monocerotis bear striking resemblance?
5. Terrorist attacks at three railway stations in which European capital city left about 205 dead on March 11th?
6. Who recently became the second bowler to take 500 Test wickets?
7. A disinvestments public issue in which major corporate mopped up Rs. 10,534 crore?
8. Vinayagamurthy Muralitharan, an old and influential member of the LTTE, was expelled by the outfit on March 6th. How is he better known as?
9. From where in Tamil Nadu did L.K. Advani begin his 'Bharat Uday Yatra' on March 10th?
10. Name the high-profile home-making diva, founder of the 'Omnimedia' empire and once the toast of the U.S. corporate world who was recently convicted for obstruction of justice.
11. Which district has the distinction of having the highest literacy rate in the State now?
12. Name two sitting MPs from Chennai who have been re-nominated by their party for the coming Lok Sabha elections.
13. What important academic post does C.V. Bhirnanandham hold in the State?
14. Which famous school in Chennai did M.A. Singarachariar found 152 years ago?
15. A simple one. What religious event, that occurs once in 12 years, was observed on March 6th?
16. Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty was the first to hold which important post in independent India?
17. Name the Collector of Chennai.
18. What do the 21 islands near Rameswaram collectively constitute?
19. What 'certification' distinction does Ramesh Gents Hair Stylist shop on Nungambakkam High Road in Chennai hold?
20. What is the former and more generally used name of Musiri Subramani Salai in Mylapore?

(Answers on page 8)

## A two-page spread on the Season...

# The Season, briefly...

The Season witnessed a revival in crowds attending concerts of the top-rung artistes. In terms of crowd-pulling ability, Aruna Sayeeram appeared to be the overall winner. Among the women, Nithyasree was a close second, with Sudha Ragunathan and Bombay Jayashri third. Among the male vocalists, it was Sanjay Subrahmanyan who had full houses across all venues, with T.M. Krishna a close second.

In the middle of P. Unnikrishnan's concert at the Music Academy, a sudden announcement was made that the Chief Minister was passing by and all those who had parked under the flyover (which, incidentally, is an authorised car park) would have to remove their vehicles. The hall was half empty in a few minutes.

During an Aruna Sayeeram concert, a *maami* on stage dialled her mobile, and kept the phone on hold throughout a song, so that somebody back home could hear it.

The R.R. Sabha held its last season in the old building. Next year, a swanky new hall is to come up on the same site. Nobody has given a thought to parking facilities, as usual.

The cash component of most awards has fallen to all time lows, no doubt in keeping with falling interest rates. At some places the honoured *viduans* got as low as Rs. 1000. It is ironic that the *sabha*-s choose to have a grand inaugural function, spending many thousands and yet give the awardee a paltry sum, invariably accompanied by a hideous copper plate and a shawl that often reeks of mothballs.

*Kurai onrum illai* was the song of the year with most women artistes singing it, sometimes to a full choral support from the women in the audience. *Kambhoji* was undoubtedly the *raga* of the year.

Singers referring to music sheets or notebooks on stage has come to stay. It was reported that the notebook was replaced by a laptop computer on a stage as Yesudass opted to go hi-tech for referring to lyrics.

Instrumentalists like U. Shrinivas and N. Ravikiran announced the details of *raga*, *tala* and composer. Other musicians might consider following suit.

As the metropolis spreads, and new colonies of the middle class develop, religio-cultural activity has a corresponding

growth. So, to some extent, proliferation is inevitable. Also, the nature of activity has become varied, as every type of artistic effort, traditional and other, seeks exposure during the season. The increase in number has necessitated the search for new venues. Except in some cases, they cannot be termed as 'auditoria'; still, their catering to area needs and specific target groups is a good justification for the effort.

This season, Rukmini Devi was the inspiring 'spirit of dedication'. This was amply reflected in the schedule of programmes and also in the selection of the awardees by many *sabha*-s. Kalakshetra dance-drama productions were presented in different venues, after a long gap in some cases.

Inaugural functions need more finesse. Except in a few cases like the Music Academy and the Narada Gana Sabha,

evenings round the year. During the season, the special canteen service that operated in the venue proved most popular. With an STD booth and ATM located inside, the complex has become a throbbing activity-cum-utility centre.

In the case of the Music Academy, mired in damaging conflicts, the fact that they held their annual conference, though by leave of the judiciary, was the real achievement. The odds against were heavy. Reference to this unique institution was being made for all the wrong reasons and by wrong sources. Even *Kutcheri Buzz*, providing such purposeful service, could not refrain from the temptation to poke fun: a quiz in the tabloid indicated 'court cases' as an identifying factor with reference to the Academy. One is reminded of the poet's lament, 'misfortunes never come singly'.

Another regular from abroad is a Frenchman, Dirk Muysers, with his Madras base at Maris.

Some of the *rasika*-s from the West become 'localised', wearing *dhoti*, with a cloth bag hanging from the shoulder, and other typically ethnic features.

This year's season presented a positive picture. Audience discipline appeared to have improved, however slightly. The usual 8 p.m. exodus was less in evidence and almost nil during the *tani avartanam*, especially in the first slot evening concerts.

The sound systems left much to be desired this year too. A bit of cotton proved to be handy for listening at a comfortable decibel level! One scribe was so shaken by the unbearable auditory assault in a Carnatic recital by a male vocalist at the 'Freedom Hall' that she had to rush home in the middle with a splitting headache and it took two full days for her palpitations to subside. No exaggeration this!

Sanjay Subrahmanyan and T.M. Krishna were among the top preferences, giving quality music. Their rapport with the accompanists was one factor that made their concerts very satisfying. At the fag end of the 'season', Sanjay Subrahmanyan's concert for *Tyagaraja aradhana* at Narada Gana Sabha was a lesson in presentation. N. Vijay Siva was another winner, giving good music all the way, at the Kartik Fine Arts festival.

Sudha Ragunathan and Nithyasree Mahadevan drew capacity to overflowing crowds. Bombay Jayashri maintained poise and dignity in her singing.

The Heritage Walks, organised by *sangeetham.com* and

competently anchored by Sriram.V, is one such endeavour. Apart from the nostalgia it evokes, it is highly informative and educative. Similarly, the tabloid, *Kutcheri Buzz*, undertook some innovative activities: the 'Chat with the Artistes' organised in collaboration with Essen Musicals on three evenings had good response and appreciation.

A considerable number of impresarios from outside, including from abroad, talent scouts, scholars and observers descend on the 'singing Pattanam' during the eventful period to partake of the *usavam* spirit and perform their functions. There are some regular visitors like Dr. Kasinathan from Singapore, who could be spotted in the main venues, and in hotels like Woodlands and Maris.

The composer from Finland, Eero Hamenniemi, is a familiar figure; he has been interacting with *mriddanga* maestro Karaiikkudi Mani, for many years. He fixes some programmes for the festival in his country during his 'seasonal' visits to Chennai.

Some individual artistes became the toasts of the evening due to brilliant performances. The *tavil* maestro, Haridwaramangalam A.K. Palanivel, proved his mettle providing embellishing accompaniment in different types of concerts from vocal to instrumental categories like *nagaswaram*, flute, violin and mandolin. We have heard of 'speaking' drums from Africa; here was a 'singing' one. Alarmel Valli confirmed her reputation as the chart buster in the dance scene, reportedly setting a record of sorts, in gate collection. T.N. Seshagopalan has started creating waves in his new *avatar*, as *Kathakalakshepam* artiste.

There is more to the 'Season' than the routine concerts though these may be the main attraction. The potential of the phenomenon might not have been tapped as a 'selling' proposition from the tourism angle, as rightly pointed out by the Governor in an inaugural address. Also, the occasion has several other dimensions, visible and invisible, generally overlooked. Several related activities are conducted during the period. These contribute to the total atmosphere and experience; some of these are particularly interesting and beneficial to outstation visitors.

The Heritage Walks, organised by *sangeetham.com* and

(Continued on Page 7)

# The Season slows down a bit

The Chennai 'festivals season' is one of its kind. There is nothing like it in any part of the world. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that this huge 'mela' is mounted without any financial assistance from the government and revolves round *sabha* finances, corporate sponsorship, private funding and sale of tickets.

● by S. Janaki

Lecdems, music and dance performances are presented almost throughout the day for a period of one month (December) — this is the 'concentrated season' with the maximum density of performances. This period has been described in some of the issues of *Sruti* as the 'umbra' of the season. Over the years the programmes have spilled over into what has been called the 'penumbra' of the

season, that is November, January and February.

The number of performances by a musician/dancer during a season certainly affects the quality of the performances offered. There were some cases of burnout among musicians and

dancers in this 'season' too as was the case in previous years. This season, as many as 15 organisations held two festivals each and three *sabha*-s held three festivals each. Hindustani music too found a place during the season.

There was yet another festival, apart from the regular music and dance festivals held in

*sabha*-s, which drew a good crowd. It was the four-day Mylapore Festival presented by Sundaram Finance, put together by *Mylapore Times*, the popular neighbourhood newspaper. Held at various venues in the Mylapore area, it comprised a variety of activities like *kolam* contests, folk festival, classical music and dance programmes in the Kapaleeswarar temple, handicrafts bazaar, food festival, vintage cinema, *kolam* contest, artists' corner, a shopping mela, Tamil literary corner, quiz contest, *kutcheris* in the Nageswara Park, and special programmes for children.

Last year, the CII showed some interest in trying to promote the Chennai music and dance season as a tourist attraction. It convened a meeting

## Ten years at a glance

In the past 10 years the number of organisations conducting festivals has increased. With the entry of more and more organisations, the duration of the season has gradually expanded to cover a four-month period — 1st November to the last day of February.

The total number of performances increased from 1275 in 1994-95 to 2188 in 2002-03. The latest season, 2003-04, shows a decrease to 2103 performances.

Year	Duration	No. of Organisations	Music	Dance	Total
1994-95	1 Nov - 5 Feb	39	1034	241	1275
1995-96	1 Nov - 21 Feb	49	1283	334	1617
1996-97	1 Nov - 28 Feb	59	1425	307	1732
1997-98	1 Nov - 28 Feb	64	1671	364	2035
1998-99	1 Nov - 28 Feb	64	1614	346	1960
1999-2K	1 Nov - 29 Feb	69	1681	371	2052
2K-2001	1 Nov - 28 Feb	68	1596	351	1947
2001-02	1 Nov - 28 Feb	68	1703	395	2098
2002-03	1 Nov - 28 Feb	73	1792	396	2188
2003-04	1 Nov - 29 Feb	67	1723	380	2103

(Courtesy : *Sruti*)

which was supposed to be a brainstorming session, but it did not take the idea any further. The 'season' could do with bet-

ter planning, packaging and promotion on the national and international level. — (Courtesy : *Sruti*)

# The Season, briefly...

(Continued from page 6)

She sang with the assurance of a master, her voice strong and soothing.

Ranjani-Gayatri duo's singing was musically elevating and fulfilling. Their presentation was straightforward and had the right mixture of virtuosity and depth.

Thanjavur Sankara Iyer had many a piece of advice for the young musician. He stressed that a sense of proportion should be maintained in planning a concert and that the *kalpana swara* section should not be overdone. He said that one genre of music should not be mixed with another and that it was our duty to preserve the purity of Carnatic music for future generations.

Of late, judging by the dwindling audience strength at in-

strumental performances, you are uncomfortably plagued by the question: Does the Chennai audience prefer vocal to instrumental music? The *nagaswaram* has all but been ousted from the concert platform and the *veena*, despite its hallowed status as the instrument of the goddess of

music, is slowly but steadily receding in the popularity charts. While India's cultural lineage includes an impressive variety of musical instruments, the compositions of Carnatic music, for the major part, however, do seem to have been composed to suit the vocalist. In fact, the vir-

tuosity of instrumentalists is admittedly judged by their ability to reproduce the 'vocal touch' through their instruments. A Carnatic music connoisseur can also never gainsay the importance of lyrics in this music system. So, does the answer lie in creating a distinct genre of

musical compositions for instruments that would help display the unique characteristics of the instruments?

An up-and-coming vocalist did not get a good review in the press. Her well-to-do pushy parents thereupon bought advertisement space in the same newspaper to describe the "scintillating performance" of the young singer!

## NEW PUSH TO SENATE HOUSE RESTORATION

(Continued from page 1)

University, who could be approached for contributions.

He is introducing a scheme whereby every student will pay a nominal sum towards the restoration of Senate House.

And, most important of all, he has persuaded the University

authorities to set up a Trust with ex-officio NGO participation which will raise funds for the restoration, ensure the restoration is done in model fashion, maintain the restored building and put it to gainful use on behalf of its owners, the University of Madras.

The objects of the Trust are:

- To undertake the restoration and maintenance of Senate House in conformity with internationally accepted principles and methods of conservation.
- To collect funds and manage them as 'The Senate House Conservation Fund' in order to ensure judicious use of the funds for the restoration and maintenance of the Senate House. The 'Fund' will be operated by the Registrar of the Madras University under the direction of the Trustees.
- To maintain and upkeep Senate House in good condition after the restoration.
- To oversee and manage the use of Senate House by its owners, the University of Madras, and by others through compatible use for activities that will in no way be detrimental to the preser-

vation of the building for the future. The Trust is empowered to collect and fix charges through renting of the premises and to raise funds from external sources solely for the continued maintenance and upkeep of Senate House.

The patron of the Trust shall be the Chancellor of the University of Madras and the meetings of the Trust shall be chaired by the Chancellor whenever present. The Managing Trustee shall be the person who holds the office of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras.

The total number of Trustees shall be six, and will comprise:

1. The Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras
2. Nominee of the Syndicate, University of Madras
3. Nominee of the Syndicate, University of Madras
4. Nominee of the Chennai Willingdon Trust
5. Nominee of M/s. Chennai Heritage
6. Nominee of the Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage, Tamil Nadu Chapter.

Of the non-University Trustees, the Willingdon Trust has already contributed Rs.25 lakh towards the restoration work and has promised further funding as phases of the work get completed. The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Tamil Nadu Chapter, is offering its services free to advise on how the restoration should be carried out in model fashion, help supervise the restoration and maintenance, and help identify specialist subcontractors for such work as stained glass restoration etc. And Chennai Heritage, which has been catalytic in getting University and Corporate interaction going, is committed to creating awareness of the project in order to help raise funds for it. Teaming with the University, PWD, Archaeological Survey of India and Structural Engineering Centre teams, these three organisations are certain that they can get Senate House restored in model fashion by the end of 2005 to enable the University to celebrate its 150th year in 2006 in the Great Hall.

## CHENNAI HERITAGE

260-A T.T.K. ROAD, ALWARPET, CHENNAI 600 018.

I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No. ....) / I have just seen *Madras Musings* and would like to receive it hereafter.

I/We enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs.100/Rs. .... (Rupees) ..... payable to CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS, as token of my support of *Madras Musings* and the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that it espouses. Please put me on your mailing list.

Name : .....

Address : .....

Note: Overseas postage Rs. 450/year extra. Cheques payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd.

# They took TN into the Ranji final

As I write these lines, Tamil Nadu is meeting Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy final at Chepauk. With the weight of history loaded against it, it would be foolhardy to indulge in soothsaying, especially as the result will be known by the time this issue of *Madras Musings* reaches your hands. Yet, I cannot resist the temptation to stick my neck out. It is easily the host team's best chance in a long while to emulate Balu Alaganan's team of 1954-1955 and S.Vasudevan's men of 1987-1988 and win the Ranji Trophy for only the third time since it all began 70 years ago at the very same venue.

My confidence stems from Tamil Nadu's improved performances against Mumbai in the last decade. Since it overcame the psychological barrier of its long run of defeats at the hands of the champion team from the West Zone at Tirunelveli in the 1995-96 quarterfinals, not once has Tamil Nadu surrendered meekly.

In the 1999-2000 semifinal, it took a masterly 233 by Sachin Tendulkar to squeeze out a meagre 5-run first innings lead after Hemang Badani (162) and skipper Robin Singh (183) had taken Tamil Nadu to a total of 485 at the Wankhede Stadium. It needed spirited batting by the Mumbai batsmen in the second innings and inspired bowling by Ajit Agarkar, Abey Kuruvila, Sazena and Ramesh Powar for Mumbai to emerge winners by eight wickets in the end.

Again, in last season's final, the youthful veteran medium pacer Gokulakrishnan bowled

superbly to start an early collapse from which Mumbai never recovered, to finish on 260 all out. Skipper Suresh had chipped in with 3 for 51. S. Ramesh made 85 and Hemang Badani 56 as Tamil Nadu took a small first innings lead. Again, Mumbai showed characteristic gumption to turn the tables on Tamil Nadu despite a hundred by Hemang Badani.

Tamil Nadu may gain courage from the fact that on each of the last two occasions, it had Mumbai on the backfoot for most of each match; also, star performers Sachin Tendulkar, Ajit Agarkar and Ramesh Powar are now away in Pakistan. True, Tamil Nadu will

match against Railways, missing a hundred by three runs in the first innings.

Sriram too had a modest beginning for the State team, picking up form in the South Zone and India A matches, and getting into top gear against Railways, making 172. He found in young Dinesh Kartik a bold new partner, who made a brilliant 122 and helped the left hander to pull Tamil Nadu out of trouble, to reach a solid 481. The India Under-19 wicket-keeper is evidently a player for the big occasion. Though inconsistent in the first half of the season, the young man made runs when they were badly needed.

● by V. RAMNARAYAN

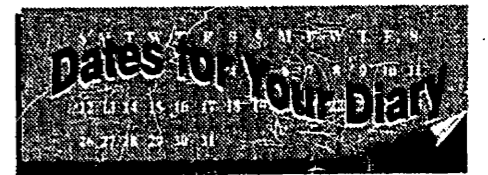
sorely miss the bowling of L. Balaji and the experience and all-round excellence of Robin Singh — who, at Tirunelveli, bowled the home team to its only victory over Mumbai so far — but it has a formidable batting line-up led by the prolific S. Sriram and a Ramesh hungry for a Test comeback.

Of the frontline batsmen, Ramesh made a quiet start to the season, though he blazed away in the local league. He was in superb nick at higher levels of cricket, scoring enough runs on the Australian tour to merit inclusion in the XI, but losing out to Akash Chopra, who surpassed expectations and shut Ramesh out of contention. Coming back to India, he came into his own in the semifinal

Sridharan Sharath became Tamil Nadu's highest rungetter when he went past V. Sivaramakrishnan's 5000-plus aggregate, in the first match of the season at Bangalore, and made a fighting 155 against Gujarat. Another left hander, Vidyut Sivaramakrishnan, made 50 and 68 in that match, his contribution proving crucial in both innings. He followed this up with another timely half-century against Assam, Sunil Viswanathan made important contributions against Gujarat (56) and Hyderabad (50 and 70 not out). Right hand batsman S. Badrinath made 86 and 190, against Bengal helping Tamil Nadu escape from an innings defeat, and made 115 not out in the Assam match.

Ramkumar and Balaji were the most successful bowlers, with the left arm spinner getting off to a great start, bagging 4 for 42 and 6 for 62, including a hat-trick, against Karnataka. Ramkumar, who also took 5 for 66 versus Gujarat and 4 for 24 against Assam, made a few useful scores too, including a 73 against Assam. Balaji missed most of Tamil Nadu's games as he was picked to play for India A and India, but he got off to a flying start with figures of 4 for 51 and 3 for 97 against Karnataka, and 3 for 26 and 7 for 42 against Rajasthan.

Going into the final, Tamil Nadu looks the weaker bowling side with Balaji away in Pakistan, and an unsettled set of bowlers — no bowler in the side, with the sole exception of R. Ramkumar, has had an extended spell in any of the matches. Tamil Kumaran who impressed everyone with his method of all-out attack is out with an injury, only to be replaced by M.R. Shrinivas, another medium pacer kept out by injury for the last couple of months and coming into the final straightaway. There's a school of thought that believes Gopalakrishnan should have been recalled in order to achieve some psychological advantage besides benefiting from his experience. Be that as it may, the bowling is what might undo the best of Tamil Nadu's efforts in a year of so much promise.



**April 8:** *Sonatas* for piano and clarinet, Opus 120 by Johannes Brahms performed by Roberta Swedien (piano) and Rudolfs Putans (clarinet). (At the Max Mueller Bhavan 7.00 pm.)

**April 19-29:** *Perturb Me Not!* — an exhibition of the work of Benitha Percival, who is in residence at the Lalit Kala Akademi. (At Alliance Francaise.)

**April 22-24:** An Anand Patwardhan documentary Film Festival. One of India's most distinguished documentary filmmakers, winner of numerous awards at international festivals, will screen the following films: **April 22:** *Ram Ke Naam/In the Name of God* (On the rise of Hindu fundamentalism as reflected in the temple/mosque conflict in Ayodhya which led to nation wide carnage) and *We are not your Monkeys* (A Dalit critique of the *Ramayana* epic). **April 23:** *Father Son and Holy War* (On the relation between religion, violence and male identity). **April 24:** *War and Peace* — filmed over three tumultuous years in India, Pakistan, Japan and the USA, this is an epic documentary journey of peace activism in the face of global militarism and war. (At Alliance Francaise.)

**Till April 17:** *Tamarai Neelum...* 'The Land of Lotus', an exhibition of paintings by Dinesh P.G., Maya Burman, Muralidharan, Nikil Ranjan Pal, Priyanka Bharadwaj, Senaka Senanayake, Sidharth, Srinivasachari, Thotta Tharani, Selvaraj and Devi Design Studios. (At Apparao Galleries.)

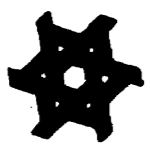
## Answers to Quiz

1. Mikhail Fradkov; 2. John Kerry; 3. Shikhar Dhawan; 4. 'The Starry Night'; 5. Madrid; 6. Shane Warne; 7. ONGC; 8. Col. Karuna; 9. Kanniyakumari; 10. Martha Stewart.

\* \* \*

11. Kanniyakumari; 12. T.R. Baalu and C.K. Kuppusamy (both DMK); 13. Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University; 14. The Hindu Higher Secondary School; 15. The Mahamaham at Kumbakonam; 16. Finance Minister; 17. V. Kannuswamy; 18. The Gulf of Mannar National Park; 19. It is Asia's first ISO-certified hairdressing salon; 20. Oliver Road.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



Amalgamations Group



Ashok Leyland



Brakes India Limited



Go Placidly

KASTURI &  
SONS  
LTD.



CONSTRUCTION DIVISION  
LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED

LOKAVANI  
HALLMARK PRESS  
PVT. LTD.



MURUGAPPA  
GROUP



BATTERIES  
TORCHES



Rane Group



The future of glass. Since 1665.



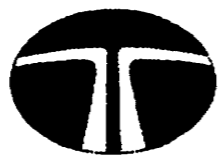
SANMAR



Sundaram Finance  
Limited



Sundram Fasteners  
Limited



TATA

TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES



TVS MOTOR COMPANY



UCAL AUTO PRIVATE  
LIMITED

Since 1856,  
patently leaders  
— A WELLWISHER