

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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"Can you please stop honking now? We are inside our compound!"

## Sound sense

A traffic signal.

The digital clock changes shape every second.

40 seconds... 30 seconds... then, 25 seconds...(seconds, mind you)... to go.

And the horns begin to blare.

Loud, intrusive – and senseless.

These horn-blowers seem to think that if they don't raise hell, the drivers up ahead will drift into deep, poetic slumber. Traffic signals are perfect, right? To park and think long, beautiful thoughts?

The noise-obsessed are obviously VVIPs in a great hurry, for whom concepts like courtesy, queues, and signals are akin to dust.

They should consider helicopters then, or really large carrier pigeons.

Agreed, there are tense moments when a warning blast helps avoid unpleasantness. But most vehicle-users have a "Have Horn, Will Use" philosophy unique unto themselves.

How else do you explain horns going on on empty roads? Or insistent cacophony when the vehicle ahead has obviously slowed, or halted, for a good reason? Or someone who honks at you when you are nowhere near his vehicle, and are, actually, proceeding in a different direction?

Those vehicles with those cheerful "Sound Horn" messages on their backs certainly have a mass following.

If only various car manufacturers would take horn use in this country into account, with a little thought and co-operation between them, the vehicles could create grand symphonies on the roads.

And we shall have music wherever we go.

Ranjitha Ashok

# Turbulence ahead

– in the murky waters of the Adyar Creek?

(by A Staff Reporter)

Matters in the Adyar Creek area once again appear to be heading for a confrontation between the Government and environmentalists.

To recap, the conversion of the wetland area had been challenged by the Consumer Action Group (CAG) in the Court during the building of the Ambedkar Memorial and, in 2000, the High Court had directed the State Government to preserve the wetland. On December 22, 2003 the State Government handed over 58 acres of this wetland to the city's Corporation to develop an eco park modelled on Tezozomac of Mexico. The budget for creating the park, Rs. 60 crore, was passed in 2005.

In 2006, the Tamil Nadu Urban Infrastructure Financial Services Limited (TNUIFL) was appointed the co-ordinating agency and an Adyar Poonga Trust was set up in November 2006 with the Chief Secretary as the Chairman, and Secretaries of Highways, Forests, Fisheries, Municipal Administration & Water Supply, and Finance as members. Ironically, many of the members of the Trust were those who had appeared for the Government when the CAG had challenged its actions in Court. CAG was not made part of the body. The Trust brought in consultants from Auroville as advisers.

Environmentalists have all along questioned how only 58 acres of the Creek could be restored without linking such restoration with the preservation of the entire riverine system.

In 2007/8, an increased budget, of Rs. 100 crore, was passed for the work. The same amount was allocated the previous year as well and it is not clear as to how much of it was spent and on what activities concerning the eco-park.

Matters took a sudden turn last month when the Government requested the Court to permit the recognition of the TNUIFL as the agency for the development of the Park and that it must also be allowed to select the consultants responsible for the work. It also requested that the TNUIFL be allowed to reconstruct any building within the Adyar Creek and Estuary. The CAG has ques-

(Continued on page 2)



A part of the Adyar Creek.

# Northward Ho!

*New development planned in a long-forgotten part of Chennai*

(By A Special Correspondent)

After rapid, completely chaotic and somewhat unplanned development in other parts of the city, resulting in skyrocketing land costs, it is now the turn of North Chennai. Reports speak of two massive investments in land by property developers in Gummidipoondi, Minjur and surrounding areas. Parcels of land in Tiruvotriyur and Manali are also reportedly being looked at.

The logic behind these moves is that there are a number of pluses in looking at residential development in these areas.

FIRSTLY, property prices are still relatively low and, therefore, it is possible to purchase land at around Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 lakh an acre in Gummidipoondi, and around Rs. 1.5 crore an acre near Minjur in North Chennai. Compare this with prices which are ten times these values in other parts of the city.

SECONDLY, this area is well connected by rail, espe-

cially for those who commute to the city on a daily basis.

THIRDLY, with the ring road planned to run very close to these areas, commuting by other modes will also be easier. In addition, there is a National Highway very close by.

LASTLY, North Chennai has gained attention with major projects being announced, including the Ennore SEZ, Ennore Port expansion, and an India-Singapore economic zone for investors from Singapore.

In a reversal of logic to the Hosur experiment, where an industrial township was set up close to Bangalore so that people living in that city could commute easily to work, the developers here feel that the proximity to Andhra Pradesh's Tada, where Special Economic Zones and industrial projects are coming up, would make residential properties in North Chennai attractive. It is, how-

ever, expected that the accommodation that will come up here will be for the lower to middle income groups, with the target segment being the blue collar workers of the industrial belt. Plots of 1800 to 2400 sq. feet, which can accommodate houses of 750 sq. ft, are expected to sell at Rs. 15 to 20 lakh.

With large-scale development like this, it is expected that North Chennai will soon become attractive to multiplexes and malls. It must be remembered that North Chennai has already got a rich selection of schools and, so, education, which is an important deciding factor when it comes to choice of housing, is already taken care of.

Experts on environment and some city planners, however, view all this as a mixed blessing. They feel that it is not correct to refer to the recent plans of developers as North Chennai-based projects. The very defini-

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## Turbulence ahead?

(Continued from page 1)

tioned these moves of the Government.

The TNUIFL is a financial and largely facilitating organisation. What are its capabilities in developing an ecological park? The earlier understanding was that the Chennai Corporation would be doing this work. It is not clear as to what has brought about this attempt to transfer its mandate to the TNUIFL.

Secondly, the terms of reference regarding the "reconstruction of any building" in the area are very vague. The Government has not specified what is meant by area. Is it the 58 acres planned for development or is it the entire Creek area? Environmentalists are concerned that if it means the latter, then it could open an entire Pandora's Box, for the area will then include the fishing hamlet of Srinivasapuram. It is a well known fact that this area is being viewed as prime real estate and there have been attempts in the past, especially in 2002/3, to "Shanghai" it into a modern downtown with highrises, malls and the rest – which is already happening in a nearby area that was one part of the proposed Adyar Sanctuary.

Environmentalists feel that any permission to develop or reconstruct must be viewed against this backdrop and guidelines on what is permissible must be clearly notified. The ambitions of the Government with respect to the area are vaguely stated and perhaps it feels that it is best to keep them that way so that interpretations can be made depending on commercial reality rather than environmental concern. To give the Government the benefit of doubt, by the term 'reconstruction' it could simply have meant the old fisheries building which it planned to convert into an information centre. However, it is the

vagueness of the definition that is causing concern.

Madras Musings learns that TNUIFL is very keen to put into action what it feels are the right steps to develop the area. The consultant from Auroville, whose initial mandate was to come up with a master plan for development which could then be defined in a bid for tender from interested parties, has been asked to "demonstrate" steps by means of planting of saplings, laying of electricity lines, building accommodation for workers who will develop the park, and fencing off the area under water to prevent access to buffaloes. The CAG feels that this will create an in-built bias in favour of the consultant when it comes to the final tendering process. The absence of the promised master plan is also puzzling. The CAG is clear that the Court has not asked for any development and has only ordered the preservation. This only requires definition of the year of reference and if that is clear, then the Government only needs to restore the area to the status in which it was in that year. This could be the most mean minimum work and not on the mammoth scale in which the Government feels it needs to do things.

The Court has posted the matter for hearing on August 2nd and has asked the Government to submit its total plan before hearing the case. Matters rest there as of now.

Worldwide, it has generally been the practice to leave reserve forests and natural habitats alone without any reconstruction or development to suit urban aesthetics. Wetland experts have opined that re-establishing the interface between the Creek and the estuary/sea is of prime importance, as also removing debris and pollutants. Grandiose reconstruction plans for what Nature has wrought appear to be most unnecessary, according to the environmentalists.

## NORTHWARD HO!

(Continued from page 1)

tion of North Chennai, according to them, is vague in CMDA records, for it includes everything from Red Hills to the Tiruvallur High Road to Villivakkam and Ambattur. All these areas, according to them, strictly constitute what should be designated Northwest Chennai, and the area that deserves being referred to as North Chennai is really George Town, Royapuram and their environs. Here property development has simply not taken place and land values continue to remain low. Very poor planning and a complete lack of civic maintenance are the causes for these areas not devel-

oping, according to these sources.

Experts are also concerned about the environmental impact of such development. The areas in which these projects are being planned are really fertile land and it will be a pity if these are consumed by real estate greed. They also question the absence of any planned development in these areas and the lack of safeguards for environment in what is already a considerably polluted area.

North Chennai and its environs have always been victims of haphazard development. Will the pressure on real estate only add to this chaos? Only time will tell.

## Celebrations – the TNEB way

Taking a cue from the State's political leadership, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board decided to celebrate its golden jubilee according to current norms. Huge synthetic banners stretched across hastily erected casuarina scaffolding came up outside every TNEB office in Madras that is Chennai. *The Man from Madras Musings* noticed that these obstructed sidewalks, blocked traffic lights, and tilted alarmingly on to the roads – just as political party banners do. There were photographs of leaders and a line or two on whatever had been achieved in the past 50 years.

The TNEB is usually a modest organisation (with much to be modest about?), but this time it decided to splurge. There were full page advertisements and a slew of power projects was announced, which is to be welcomed as the load-shedding that goes on in the districts is truly alarming. This apparently is not owing to lack of power generation but due to terrible transmission losses against which consumers are not guaranteed in any way. MMM, who had hoped that the jubilee would witness some soul-searching and also arrival of plans to plug loopholes, was disappointed.

If that was not enough, what was done to the rather charming but battered façade of the TNEB station on Nungambakkam High Road was truly tragic. Most of the art deco ornamentation was scraped out and the usual coat of cream paint was covered with a chocolate brown which has made the building completely drab. Of course, it was illuminated for a few days with serial lights, even as a banner erected across the entrance swayed to and fro threatening to fall on passing vehicles. Similar was the fate of the TNEB office on Westcott Road, another 1950s building with a simple architecture. The TNEB office in Royapettah (the old tramshed) went a step further. Having painted its compound walls in cream and ochre and put up notices discouraging the sticking of bills, it went on to paste its own posters lauding those in power and commending the Board's performance! With this being one of the few long stretches of compound wall on this road, it is used as a urinal by passers-by and, soon, MMM feels, the wall will go back to its old colours.

### Pleading inability

That is what the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority appears to be expert at. Earlier, it pleaded inability to demolish illegal structures in the city as there was a court stay. When that was vacated, it pleaded inability owing to threats by those in occupation when the CMDA's team went to demolish the struc-

tures. Then it claimed that it was unable to find any agency keen on taking up the demolition. This, as *The Man from Madras Musings* once noted, in a city where there are enterprises that are advertising themselves as experts in bringing down buildings within 48 hours! The latest excuse, however, takes the cake. Apparently, all these buildings are now fully occupied and so it has become difficult to demolish them!

What was the CMDA doing when building permissions were applied for, when permission was granted, when construction went on and, finally, when occupants moved in? Was it watching lamely or was it turning a blind eye? MMM wonders if CMDA stands for Chennai's Most Debilitated Authority.

### Building safety

With the real estate boom on, all kinds of new business opportunities have sprung up. A colleague of *The Man from Madras Musings*, a possessor of a mobile phone,



recently received this sms: "Have u ever diagnose ur building 4 safe? we do by Non-Destructive Test also building material testing. Call —"

Now, is this not directly working against the interests of those who are experts in demolishing any building within 48 hours? What happens in a city like ours where any heritage building is first declared unsafe and then demolished? Also, is any building in the city safe, when its real value is only when it is razed to the ground and the land sold to developers? And, again, how does this agency diagnose a building 4, er... for safe? Is it safety from neglect? Or from land sharks? Or from the fire that suddenly sweeps through old buildings in the city? MMM is curious to know more, but not through sms; MMM doesn't have a mobile phone.

### Passage from India

*The Man from Madras Musings* recently attended a programme where the chief speaker was the head honcho of an organisation that helps expatriates adjust to India and, in a sense, therefore, tropicalises them. What was more interesting to MMM, however, was the training that is given to Indians going abroad. Apparently, according to the honcho, Indians get too personal upfront and ask their overseas colleagues all kinds of

searching questions about parents, children, marriages etc at the first meeting itself. Yet another problem is lack of awareness of such products as deodorants and breath fresheners. There is also the problem of bringing in heavily spiced food for lunch which, in a closed office, leaves behind a lingering smell. A lot of training time is spent in handling these issues. If Indians overcome these habits, said the speaker, they would have come a long way. But do we want to? Is a *rasam* in Madras not worth more than a ravioli in New York?

### Presidential polls

*The Man from Madras Musings* should be pardoned for thinking that it was an assembly election. At least one of the candidates has added to the medley of posters, hoardings and banners that are already blighting the city. To add to the verisimilitude, there was a political rally as well, with the public being asked to answer boldly as to whom they would like to see seated in the old Viceregal chair.

This being a rally of the gentler sex, there was a lot less hullabaloo, less lumpenism, and less traffic hurdles. But what was amusing was that many of those who had ostensibly "come on their own to the city to participate in the rally" had no clue as to why they had come. MMM, who spoke to some of the participants, was tickled pink when one of the respondents said she had come to vote for the President!

### Chennai on top

Yet another first for the Y city! And one for which it has long worked! Something that its citizens have contributed to and for which they have a natural aptitude! Amazingly, even the politicians and government officials have played a role in this success! What is more, it looks like no other city can hope to achieve anything even remotely like what we have. Even that upstart on the same latitude, Bangalore, can only look on in envy. And when *The Man from Madras Musings* realised that this unique honour has come just as Madras Week is around the corner, words failed him.

The truth is this. MMM was recently with a visitor from abroad. This man (the visitor and not *The Man from Madras Musings*) had recently been to several cities in India and his last stop was Madras that is Chennai. MMM naturally asked him about his views on the cities he had seen. The visitor immediately said that there was one aspect in which Chennai stood out and that was traffic INDISCIPLINE! Aha! What an honour!

– MMM

# OUR READERS WRITE



## Sinned against

**I**n flight behaviour – Indian style' (MM, June 1st) was good reading with most of what is stated being true. But there are other things too that airlines should look into.

All the airlines, in their desire to earn more revenue, have arranged seats in the most cramped manner possible, causing great discomfort. Passengers in the window seats cause harm to the knees of the passengers next to them every time they move out of their seats.

Many of the air hostesses or stewards in several of the airlines seldom smile and are usually very curt in their answers to queries by the passengers. The quality of the food served is also not upto the mark.

The chaos at Chennai airport is not because of the passengers but due to the lack of infrastructure and the very few immigration counters. The handling of the baggage is heartrending, especially to those who are using new suitcases.

The time differences for international travellers naturally leads to sleeplessness and irritation. The passengers are more sinned against than sinning.

G.V. Ramana  
Executive Chairman  
Shriram Group Companies  
Mookambika Complex  
No. 4, Lady Desika Road  
Chennai 600 004

## Good old writing

**R**eaders M.R. Pillai's illuminating letter 'Tamil writers among lawyers' (MM, June, 1st) stirred old memories

and made long for the 'good old days' when such erudite scholar-writers were making our lives more worthwhile. They not only wrote humorously but also inculcated in us the good values of life by portraying the characters in a good light.

The heroine of *Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram*, Ganambal, was an epitome of womanhood and a role-model. Those who read this book would try to emulate the example set by this character. Similarly, S.V.V., who wrote in *The Hindu*, was persuaded by S.S. Vasana and Kalki to write for *Vikatan*. S.V.V.'s stories were not only value-based, packed with humour, but also gave an insight into the lifestyle of earlier generation. In his book *Gopalan I.C.S.* he brought out the essence of the *Gita*, besides giving us an excellent story. Readers cannot but feel most nostalgic about the olden days, especially when he describes vividly life in the Mambalam area, which was once a 'retired men's paradise'. How peaceful and pleasant life was then! Even after Kalki started his own magazine, S.V.V. continued to write for *Vikatan* only.

T.K.C.'s *Kambar Tharum Kaatchi*, serialised in *Kalki*, was a very lucid exposition, of *Kambar Ramayanam*. Rajaji's *Chakravarthi Thirumagan* and *Mahabaratham* are all in very simple language, as he meant them for children. How nice would it be if the present generation is exposed to these writings!

T.M. Sundararaman  
19, Nallapan Street  
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004

## Those lawyer-writers-I

**I**n 'Tamil writers among lawyers' (MM, June 1st), there is a very minor but factual error. V.C. Gopalaratnam, the eminent lawyer, was not only an amateur actor but also a dramatist whose forte was hilarious comedy. The humorous play written by him and cited by reader Pillai was not *Sattampillai*, *Sub-Assistant Magistrate* but *Sultanpet Sub-Assistant Magistrate*. I am not sure whether it was serialised in *Ananda Vikatan* or *Kalki*, but I vividly remember the illustrative caricatures of the characters involved – especially of the court room scene spread across two pages.

V.C. Gopalaratnam's father-in-law, V.V. Srinvasa Iyengar, a legal luminary himself, was also a stage enthusiast and I have a

## Elliot's Beach

# Asking for answers

**C**oncerned about the plans of Chennai Corporation to implement the beautification project in Elliot's Beach, I sent a letter to Chennai Corporation expressing my apprehensions about the project.

As no acknowledgement or reply was received from the Corporation, I sought specific information about the Elliot's Beach beautification project from the Corporation under the Right to Information Act.

The Corporation has now provided a reply to me. From the reply it is clear that Corporation has not carried out any study on the prevailing practices in developed countries or elsewhere on beautifying a beach. Such a study would have enabled the Corporation to learn from earlier experiences. Obviously, the Corporation is going ahead with the project in its own way, without conducting any study from the point of view of ecology or public perceptions or based on the experience of any other country (particularly developed countries). It has also not carried out any Environmental Impact Assessment Study.

Further, it is strange to hear from the Corporation that there is no need to get any consent from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board for the project. This does not seem correct to me, since there are apprehensions that the beautification of the beach may cause an ecological imbalance in several ways. It would be better for the Corporation to get consent from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, as the TNPCB is a statutory body of the Government of Tamil Nadu and has knowledge and expertise in the field.

With regard to the consultative process with the residents of Chennai, the Corporation says that it conducted two meetings but is unable to indicate how many members of the public actually participated in the meetings. I understand that the meetings were not adequately publicised beforehand and only a few people attended. Many of those sitting in the meetings were officials. Further, several letters sent to Corporation on this issue from the public have not been acknowledged or replied to.

However, what is gratifying is that the whole project is only in the planning stage as yet, though it is stated that the Government Order has been issued.

Since the scheme is under the planning stage only, necessary corrective steps can still be taken on the project.

Perhaps, the Corporation should also reconsider whether this project is necessary at all. Many persons think that what is required is only a clean beach, which would then give it back its original beauty. On the other hand, any attempt to beautify Nature would be futile.

Chennai Corporation should seek more consultations by appointing an expert committee immediately, including environmentalists in it. The project should be redesigned based on the recommendations of the committee, and not as a political and bureaucratic exercise.

N.S. Venkataraman  
M-60/1, 4th Cross Street  
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090

P.S.: Some of the information sought (I) and responses given (R) were:

- I. What is the estimated cost of the project?**  
R. This project is in planning and investigation stage. Estimates will be prepared after finalisation of plans.
- I. Has the project work commenced?**  
R. It is in the planning stage.
- I. What is the present state of the project?**  
R. Surveying and preparation of plans are in progress.
- I. If consultative meetings with the public have taken place, please let me know as to how many persons participated in the meetings other than the officials?**  
R. Exact number of persons is not known, but many persons have participated.
- I. What are expected benefits of the project?**  
R. Facilities like modern conveniences, children's playfields, and parks etc. are some of the benefits to the users of the Beach.

vague memory that he also wrote some skits, perhaps in English.

When you think of P.N. Appuswamy Iyer, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai's name automatically comes to mind, as they both collaborated in their writings. Vaiyapuri Pillai was also a qualified lawyer, but devoted most of his time to producing the *Tamil Lexicon* while serving in the University of Madras in the Tamil Department.

In recent times, 'Cho' Ramaswamy who, happily, amongst us, is well-known for his thought-provoking satirical plays. He also happens to be a lawyer, though more devoted to writing for and editing *Thuglak*.

There may be many more lawyers-turned writers and I look forward to more information from readers on this topic.

K.S. Krishnaswamy  
B-1, 'Ashok Suparna'  
27, Third Main Road  
Kasturbanagar, Adyar  
Chennai 600 020

## Those lawyer-writers-II

**W**hen reader M.R. Pillai reminisces on Tamil

writers among lawyers (MM, June 1st), how is it that he forgot to mention K. Chandrasekharan (Sahrudaya) who wrote beautiful stories/articles in Tamil, and Y. Mahalinga Sastri of the lineage of Appayya Dikshitar, well-known for his unoftending, soft humour. And then there was N. Raghunatha Iyer who adorned the editorial desk of *The Hindu* for four decades. His *Rasikanin Kathaigal-Katturaigal* are a feast to any average Tanjorian even today.

Ve. Narayanan (F/o Sruti N. Pattabhiraman) has rendered invaluable service to the cause of Tamil and Sanskrit through his work like *Sri Vishnu Sahasranama-Saankera Bhashya* in lucid Tamil. There may be still many more writers among lawyers unknown to the present Tamil literary world.

S.N. Dikshit  
Sri Kamakoti  
29-30, Akshaya Colony  
Padi, Chennai 600 050

## Our Addresses

For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: Chennai Heritage, 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, West Cott Road, Royapettah Chennai 600 014.

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

THE EDITOR

## READABILITY PLEASE

### Dear Readers,

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

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

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

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

– THE EDITOR

The third part of a series of articles on the pluses and minuses of the draft Second Master Plan for Chennai.

## The way forward for the CMDA

Strategic planning is worthless – unless there is first a strategic vision.

– John Naisbitt  
American businessman

The draft Second Master Plan (SMP) for Chennai that has been developed by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) thankfully does acknowledge a vision. The draft SMP's Vision 2026 seeks to "make Chennai a prime metropolis which will be more livable, economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable and with better assets for the future generations" (emphasis mine). The four aims of the Plan are therefore:

- to enhance the quality of life;
- to strengthen economic activity;
- to ensure that the growth and development is environmentally sustainable; and
- to ensure inter-generational equity is maintained by creating long-term assets for future generations.

These four pillars of Chennai's proposed Plan are indeed progressive and laudable.

In previous issues of *Madras Musings*, various aspects and attributes of the draft SMP were discussed and it was argued that the positives need to be further fortified and the shortcomings overcome. This article and the next, the concluding parts of my review of the SMP, seek to point out what else needs further clarification and revision in the draft SMP if it is to become a document that lives up to its stated Vision 2026.

THE FIRST is a review of the entire section on demography. The draft SMP provides all sorts of tables and charts about Chennai's population – the number of births and deaths, the rate of migration into the city, the growth in population and trends, the literacy rates, sex ratio, and the age profiles. Excellent information, but why is this information not put to use? Despite possessing and sharing all this information, the CMDA appears to have overlooked the utility of this information as being the base, indeed the foundation, of its planning. For instance, the data on age profile of Chennai's population suggests that majority of the population is below 30 years. Shouldn't the draft SMP aggregate this data spatially to understand where these specific populations are? Shouldn't this then be reflected in the land use

sections dealing with, for instance, allocation of space for schooling needs, vocational training needs, and playgrounds? Similarly, the data shows that 12-13 per cent of Chennai's population is above 55 years. Why are its needs not discussed, let alone provided for, in any section of the draft SMP? Further, the number of families in Chennai is absent from the data provided. The entire population is arrayed in numbers of male and female individuals, though everyone knows that when you are planning for housing needs, water and sewerage needs, electricity needs, etc., the unit you would need is not that of an individual, but that of a family. Simply put, the CMDA will do well to obtain a list of all such laws and policies from the State and National governments and realign its chapters and recommendations to ensure compatibility with those documents.

THIRD is the scale of information provided in the draft SMP. At present, all the information pertains to the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA), which comprises the Chennai City Corporation, 16 Municipalities, 20 Town Panchayats and 214 villages. Data and information at this macro level can only identify macro issues and provide macro solutions. While this is necessary and important for several macro activities – including planning arterial roads, rail routes, airports and, perhaps, even common facilities like burial grounds and crematoria – it has a limited utility below this level of planning. Several other planning choices are determined at a more local level of information, determined largely by the population and its needs. Planning for schooling, to take one example, will depend on the demography of specific neighbourhoods and their needs. The absence of this data presents the planners at CMDA a one-dimensional perspective of the situation. For instance, a study conducted by a colleague, Sumitra Gautama, in a school in Besant Nagar that caters to children from lower income homes, revealed that more than 15 per cent of the students came from homes in Semanchery and Kannagi Nagar – nearly 30 km away from the school. These children used to live in low income houses near the school earlier, but were relocated with their

families to these areas outside the city. No schools exist in these areas and so the children leave home at 5.30 am or 6.30 am (the only buses available) to get to the school in time. If the planners were in possession of this detail of data, they could, potentially, address the multiple issues of relocation of slums, lack of schooling opportunities in Semanchery and Kannagi Nagar and inadequate transportation options. Similarly, road planning suffers if the CMDA does not descend from its macro-CMA approach. How can a city planner only identify the arterial roads and the ring roads? The scurrying of ants in a random, unguided and chaotic manner is only visible when you get close to them. The various problems identified in the chapter on 'Traffic and Transportation' typically happen at a neighbourhood level – where roads are laid out without planning, leading to repeated ad hoc responses, including converting the roads to one-ways, new thoroughfares, etc.

There is, therefore, a huge responsibility on the CMDA to prepare and share Detailed Development Plans (DDPs) – which may still be inadequate for some specific aspects of planning, but will at least be more realistic and useful than a CMA-type Master Plan. DDPs will provide an opportunity to provide local level designs and solutions to several specific challenges in a city plan. By not providing information at the DDP-level, the CMDA is denying itself and the citizens the opportunity of finding several such solutions. For instance, neighbourhood level solutions to waste management are possible at a DDP-level, and this will in turn reduce the dependence on the Kodungaiyur and Perungudi dumpsites or the need to identify another large piece of land to convert into a dumpsite. Similarly, land for housing the EWS (economically weaker sections) may be easier to find at a DDP-level, since we will not need large, 50-acre plots of land, but smaller pieces of land where housing can be provided for families closer to their places of work. It will also be easier to engage citizens on a discussion on specifics on the DDP than the draft SMP, as the CMDA must have realised during its various public meetings.

Similarly, road planning suffers if the CMDA does not descend from its macro-CMA approach. How can a city planner only identify the arterial roads and the ring roads? The scurrying of ants in a random, unguided and chaotic manner is only visible when you get close to them. The various problems identified in the chapter on 'Traffic and Transportation' typically happen at a neighbourhood level – where roads are laid out without planning, leading to repeated ad hoc responses, including converting the roads to one-ways, new thoroughfares, etc.

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Curiously, the draft SMP makes recommendations that go against these laws and policies. For instance, its plan on solid waste management, if implemented, will violate the provisions of the law. Similarly, its recommendation that "ad hoc use of carriageways and footpaths" be "addressed" immediately can be interpreted as violating the mandate of the National Street Vending Policy.

There are other Policy Notes of the State government too – the Industries Department (that talks about the setting up of various industries in the CMA), the Agriculture Department (that specifically talks about the iden-

tification of land for setting up a terminal market in Chennai to process and market fruits and vegetables), the Fisheries Department (that discusses several fisheries infrastructure projects along the CMA coastline), the Tourism Department (that proposes to lease government land within the CMA, seeks to promote 'Bed and Breakfast' schemes in Chennai to generate employment, and also seeks to provide tourists additional transportation options using the public transport system), the School Education Department (that discusses land for the setting up of a 'book park' in Chennai) etc. The CMDA will do well to obtain a list of all such laws and policies from the State and National governments and realign its chapters and recommendations to ensure compatibility with those documents.

THIRD is the scale of information provided in the draft SMP. At present, all the information pertains to the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA), which comprises the Chennai City Corporation, 16 Municipalities, 20 Town Panchayats and 214 villages. Data and information at this macro level can only identify macro issues and provide macro solutions. While this is necessary and important for several macro activities – including planning arterial roads, rail routes, airports and, perhaps, even common facilities like burial grounds and crematoria – it has a limited utility below this level of planning. Several other planning choices are determined at a more local level of information, determined largely by the population and its needs. Planning for schooling, to take one example, will depend on the demography of specific neighbourhoods and their needs. The absence of this data presents the planners at CMDA a one-dimensional perspective of the situation. For instance, a study conducted by a colleague, Sumitra Gautama, in a school in Besant Nagar that caters to children from lower income homes, revealed that more than 15 per cent of the students came from homes in Semanchery and Kannagi Nagar – nearly 30 km away from the school. These children used to live in low income houses near the school earlier, but were relocated with their

families to these areas outside the city. No schools exist in these areas and so the children leave home at 5.30 am or 6.30 am (the only buses available) to get to the school in time. If the planners were in possession of this detail of data, they could, potentially, address the multiple issues of relocation of slums, lack of schooling opportunities in Semanchery and Kannagi Nagar and inadequate transportation options. Similarly, road planning suffers if the CMDA does not descend from its macro-CMA approach. How can a city planner only identify the arterial roads and the ring roads? The scurrying of ants in a random, unguided and chaotic manner is only visible when you get close to them. The various problems identified in the chapter on 'Traffic and Transportation' typically happen at a neighbourhood level – where roads are laid out without planning, leading to repeated ad hoc responses, including converting the roads to one-ways, new thoroughfares, etc.

(This part to be concluded)

## Chennai's like that – today!

They head out of Chennai at various points of time in a year, primarily to the US (although you hear mention of other nations these days).

They are determined; they are armed with packets; they are symbols of foresight and forethought; and they are prepared for every domestic contingency...

They are – The Mothers.

The March of the Amma Brigade becomes particularly energised when their young ones announce: "I am moving into my own apartment."

Emotions are already on a high, thanks to a life-pattern that requires you to live here, but divide your mind and heart into

## Mum's the word!

equal-sized portions that then proceed to live between 'here' and various 'there-s'.

And the thought of your little fledgling getting all set to build its own nest sends the maternal instinct into overdrive.

This applies even to those mothers whose kids have been on their own for years – battling ill-equipped hostels right here on the subcontinent.

These kids have cheerfully waxed and waned in blazing heat and chilling cold; weathered power shut-downs, canteen food, water-challenged bathrooms, and lopsided tables in tiny, dark, cubby-holes they so proudly called 'my room'.

They have caught buses, trains with strange names, and whimsical flights – all on their own – making it home for the holidays. They have then winged their way to foreign lands, handling all those scary-looking documents and distinctly hostile formalities with ease.

And why bother with this profusion of bedsheets, bedcovers, pillowcases, vis-à-vis 'pillow shams', blankets, quilts, counterpanes...

## A big 'Thank You' to 15 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.6.07 and 15.7.07, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

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And yet, the minute they decide to move into an apartment, the Mothers feel everything will collapse if they are not there to 'help'.

You can't blame the Mothers. They are, after all, victims of centuries of typecasting.

The kids, endlessly understanding as always, roll their eyes, but tell the Moms to come on over. That's easier than receiving 150 instructions sent either by e-mail or over cell phones every few hours.

They figure that it is best that Mom gets hysterical under their supervision.

Let her have her moment, and after she takes off, they can al-



This is a child who has slept on questionable bare floors after umpteen rock concerts you know nothing about.

As for all the racket about laundry – imagine a life where you put everything away neatly only to take it all out again.

What's the point?

You have to admit that does make a weird kind of sense.

Now you don't want to be sexist, categorise people and traits, especially in these enlightened days of blurring gender lines.

But there is such a thing as basic nature...put it down to the shape of individual heads, if you like.

Let's face it – some varieties of the species are more forthcoming and clearer about their requirements than others.

(Not that it makes them any easier to please, though.)

But at least you know where you are heading, from colour

## by RANJITHA ASHOK

You insist that 'equipping' a kitchen is essential. Your child, a veteran now of toss-together-and-eat-in-anything-that-doesn't-have-a-hole can't understand what the fuss is about, and points out that formal dinners lie years ahead in the future.

And why bother with this profusion of bedsheets, bedcovers, pillowcases, vis-à-vis 'pillow shams', blankets, quilts, counterpanes...

schemes to apartment can't-do-withouts.

But if your conversation with your young hopeful goes:

"Hi!!"

"Hi."

"How are you?"

"Okay."

"Hmm... about your apartment... I was thinking..."

"Uh-uh."

"Do you need..?"

"Na."

Then those who are listening are pretty clear which particular variety you are blessed with.

Amazing, isn't it?

These are the same people who can scream their heads off while watching a sports programme, wax eloquence on the relative merits of Ferrari and Macaren, and spend hours on the phone – as long as it isn't a blood relative on the other side, especially the ones who are, at this point, still paying their bills – and who were the ones most involved in their particular births.

And so the Mothers take flights, armed with enough *podis* and 'instant' stuff to cater to a South Indian wedding of the XXL size, packed with particularly big eaters. Only to find that your baby has created some pretty ingenious dishes which are easy and quick to prepare.

As the days progress, it becomes clear that the most nonchalant person is the one who is actually moving.

In your secret heart, you pray you won't hear the dreaded words: "Chill, Ma. I can manage on my own."

And, of course, you do.

That's like running into a solid wall, because it means that you now have to re-define your role in your child's life.

Is this a sort of 'Last Hurrah' for the Mothers?

Perhaps.

Somewhere inside, you know that Time has declared war on you, whizzing by, grinning mockingly.

This is probably your last chance to have a say in their environment, bringing your choices and your own unique touches to it.

Actually, 'The Move' began that day your child, returning from play-school, showed you that first 'drawing' and said, "Miss said I was very good," making it abundantly clear that the whole morning had not been spent weeping for you.

You just missed it, being caught up in the whole routine of turning your child into an independent grown-up. Talk about your efforts coming right back to bite you in the ...well...you know.

But you will make the trip, anyway.

And, go on, admit it, isn't part of the excitement the fact that, after years of settled routine, it's nice to be able to play 'house' again – just like old times?

You are tempted to ask who the actual beneficiary of this trip is, and then decide that some questions are better left alone.

## Conservation of ancient monuments

The history of conservation of ancient monuments in India is a little more than 150 years old. The principles and methods to be adopted in conserving the ancient edifices are well defined in the *Conservation Manual (Calcutta, 1923)* written by Sir John Marshall. The principles and methods prescribed by Marshall are still being adopted by the Archaeological Survey of India to conserve monuments declared by the Central Government as Monuments of National Importance. These are under the protection of the ASI which looks after more than 5000 monuments all over India. In addition, every State Government has its own Department or Archaeology. The State Departments follow the principles and methods adopted by the Survey.

It is easier to build a new monument than to conserve an ancient one, for conservation is

used as washing stones, drain coverings, stone benches, etc. due to ignorance. However, there are innumerable instances where the monuments have been brought to a state of disrepair due to intentional human vandalism.

I recall some examples. The ancient temple at Thodiyur in Pudukottai District, datable to 13th Century A.D. and built by the Pandya rulers, is an example of a changed environment affecting a monument and pushing it into a condition of disrepair. The embankment of the tank breached and led to damage of the temple complex. This has now been strengthened, so that the temple complex will not suffer due to the recurrence of the problem. The whole temple complex also has been conserved according to the principles of conservation.

A classic example that the area in and around a monument

## by B. Narasimhaiah

Retired Superintending Archaeologist of ASI, who worked with the team constituted to preserve the monuments in Hampi, conducted village-to-village surveys in Tamil Nadu for antiquarian remains, and led for three seasons the conservation team of the ASI to Angkor Wat in Cambodia that was given the task of conserving the biggest temple in the world.

neither restoration nor renovation nor reconstruction of a monument. It is strengthening of the edifice to withstand the vagaries of time, enabling it to live for many centuries. In the process of conservation, the original features, styles and construction methods are not lost – they are kept intact. Therefore, it is said that the conservation expert should have the patience and dexterity of a surgeon, devotion of a saint and the skill of an architect with a good knowledge in ancient architecture.

Once a particular monument is taken for conservation, the person in charge of the work should read all the available literature on it. In addition, he should make his own study of it to know intimately all aspects of the monument. Ancient monuments have fallen into a state of disrepair due to many reasons. But the most widely active contributing agencies are human and natural ones. Among the two, the former is more dangerous. We all know that a familiar sight in many villages is beautiful architectural members being

should be brought to its original working level, before carrying out any conservation, is the Bell Tower (probably built in the 16th Century by the Nayak rulers in the Palace Complex at Thanjavur. Incidentally, the ASI as Civil Deposit Work conserved the Bell Tower for the Government in 1994. The monument was in a dilapidated condition before it was taken for conservation. In the process of conservation, it was found that the Bell Tower was not an isolated edifice, but was in a large palace complex. It was a part of the Audience Hall which was intended to be a *Hawa Mahal*; the *Saraswati Mahal* was, in fact, a harem of the king.

The drainage system of the Brihadeeswara Temple at Thanjavur (Rajaraja Chola, A.D. 985-1012) had a unique system in ancient times. The builders had thought of harvesting rainwater. This water was collected and drained into the Sivaganga Tank, situated a little away from the northwest of the complex. This ancient system was discov-

(Continued on page 6)

## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

## NOSTALGIA

(Current Affairs questions are from the period June 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Which bustling place in Asia observed the 10th anniversary of its reunion with China?
2. Which bird, the U.S. national symbol, has been removed from the endangered list?
3. Who recently became the first writer from the Indian subcontinent to be knighted?
4. Name the Chennai-based firm responsible for the 'white' Rajnikanth in *Sivaji*?
5. Which Indian complex is the latest to be put on UNESCO's World Heritage list?
6. Who is the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom?
7. Japan has changed the name of Iwo Jima, made famous during World War II, to its original name. Name it.
8. In which African nation, recently rocked by political unrest, did the inflation touch 9,000%, the highest in the world, recently?
9. Which Asian nation is to buy the famed *Queen Elizabeth 2*, one of the world's most majestic cruise liners, for \$100 million?
10. Of the six in Grade 'A' of BCCI's new list of contracted players, who is the new face?  
\* \* \*
11. Name the well-known *santoor* artiste, nephew of the legendary G.N. Balasubramaniam, who passed away recently.
12. Who founded Dakshina-Chitra, the centre for arts, craft and architecture, on the East Coast Road?
13. Which scheduled tribe or community is known to be experts in "smoking out" rats from paddy fields and catching poisonous snakes to extract venom?
14. Who compiled and wrote *Periya Puranam*?
15. Where is Lord Shiva worshipped as 'Amritakateshwarar'?
16. How many chapters are there in the second book (on *Porul*) in *Tirukkural*?
17. Who was the first non-Congress Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu after independence?
18. Namakkal and Rasipuram are taluks in which district of the State?
19. For which work did Kannadasan win the Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize?
20. K. Viswanath's acclaimed Telugu film *Swathi Muthyam*, starring Kamal Hassan, was released in Tamil proved a big success. Name it.

(Answers on page 7)

# A wedding beneath the banyan tree

In 1923, a wedding took place under the banyan tree in the Theosophical Society in Adyar. It was between Jayalakshmi, daughter of Ranganatha Mudaliar of Arcot, and Bhagat Ram Kumar, son of Hukum Chand Kumar of Quetta. The bride was 19, the bridegroom 26. It was in July, traditionally an 'auspicious' month for weddings in South India, so undoubtedly there must have been many weddings being celebrated on that day.

But this one was different, for the bride was South Indian and the bridegroom was from the North. Contrary to what might be expected, given the social mores in India at the time, it was not a runaway affair. It had the blessings, indeed had been arranged by the fathers, who were both Theosophists. There were no mothers, for both the bride and the bridegroom had lost their mothers when young. Many leading Theosophists were there to bless the couple, including Mrs. Annie Besant and Dr. George S. Arundale. Mrs. Besant gave them an ornate silver vase as a wedding present and Dr. Arundale a clock.

Looking back on the event now, it occurs to me that both mothers, by dying, had set in motion the events leading up to this union. For, Jayalakshmi was sent to study in far-off Benares (as it was then known) when she was eight years old because she was a motherless child; Bhagat Ram likewise was sent to Benares for schooling because, it was hinted, his step-mother was not good to him.

The school in Benares was the Theosophical School in Kamacha. It was a rocky start for my mother who was fresh out of Kurnool and spoke neither Hindi nor English. But she was determined to stay, she later told us, because she hated her teacher in Kurnool so much! The next ten formative years were spent at Kamacha in the Theosophical School and College. Undoubtedly they were a very special part of her life, for she never ceased telling us tales of her school friends, teachers and escapades. She was troop leader of the Girl

ing Kamacha, my father saw Jaya 'running in the rain' and decided that this was the girl he wanted to marry. All his life he wore an enamelled ring in the shape of a shell with a blue band in the centre, with JAYA on it in gold letters. As a girl, I loved this romantic slant to the way my father and mother had come together. My mother was more circumspect. Questioning her, I always embarrassed her, and she always brushed off my attempts to flush out the story. This dichotomy in their characters was a part of our family am-

spreading banyan tree in the gardens of the Theosophical Society.

Education was an important aspect of Theosophical work in India in the early 20th Century. With some breaks over the years, my father's working life as an educator was in association with the Besant Theosophical College in Madanapalle, for most of the time as Principal. In this role he succeeded eminent educationists like Ernest Wood (the founder), Dr. Cousins and C.S. Trilokekar. The College, founded in 1915, celebrated ninety years as an educational institution recently.

My mother, during the early years of her marriage, went to Santiniketan where she studied painting under Nanda Lal Bose. She later completed the Montessori Teachers' course under Dr. Maria Montessori in Adyar. My memory of her role in Madanapalle is as the mover and shaker behind cultural events. She conducted painting classes on campus, organised exhibitions and produced plays when she was not running the girls' hostel or supervising the College gardens.

The banyan tree is a potent symbol of continuity, change and regeneration. My parents' union lasted sixty years. The family that started with Jaya and Bhagat now includes Andhras, Konkans, Mahrattas and Tamilians as well as Americans, Australians, Chinese and Canadians, and is spread over five countries. — (Courtesy : *South of the Adyar River* by K.R.M. Menon and K.V.S. Krishna.)

● by GANGA POWELL

Guides when Lady Baden-Powell visited. She and her classmates, who were a heady mix of Bengalis, Biharis, Burmese Indians, Kashmiris, Mahrattas, Punjabis, Sindhis and other South Indians, would have been one of the earliest groups of women graduates in India.

My father would have been six years ahead – and that is a big difference when one is still in school. He never recalled my mother from these years. By the time he completed high school, he was one of a select group of young Indians who were chosen by Dr. Arundale to be sent to England for higher studies. The group included, amongst others, J. Krishnamurti and his brother Nithya. They left India in 1913. My father went to Oxford. World War I intervened and most of them did not return till 1918.

Around 1922, upon re-visit-

biene: my father, the stereotypical 'sentimental' Punjabi, my mother the more 'down-to-earth' Tamilian. Their shared Benares experience and Theosophical background were a bond resulting in shared interests. For both, friendships forged in school were lifelong ties and these friends often visited our home.

The marriage, if not quite as romantic as I imagined, was nevertheless groundbreaking. It was an 'arranged marriage' but an arranged marriage, pre-empted by a young man who had fallen in love after a passing glance. The wedding broke conventions of caste, religion (my father was a Sikh), and the restrictions of geographic region. There were not many such marriages in India at the time. One of the handful of places, where it could possibly have happened, was Adyar under the

## CONSERVATION OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

(Continued from page 5)

ered when an effort was made to understand the system adopted by the builders. Now, this system has been revived and, needless to say, it has improved the source of water in the tank.

The Jalakanteswara Temple, Vellore, had suffered heavily due to waterlogging and vegetation growth. The ASI, after conserving almost all other parts of the temple, had left the temple *Kalayana Mandapa* unconserved. The reason for not taking the work of this *mandapa* was the fact that no perfect, time-tested method was known to solve the conservation problem faced there. When ASI acquired knowledge in the 1990s to solve such problems, the Kalyana Mandapam was

conserved by introducing I section girders and steel rods inside the broken beams and pillars.

The Piravathaneeswara Temple, Kancheepuram, is of early 8th Century A.D. Pallava architecture. This temple was in a state of disrepair due to heavy vegetation growth. The foundation of the structure had been disturbed in many places. The walls of the temple had bulged out in some places. Therefore, it was decided to dismantle the temple structure, including the foundation, and reconstruct it after documenting every bit. This was done after meticulous planning of the conservation effort, resulting in the temple getting its original shape.

There was much planning while conserving Angkor Wat, the biggest temple complex in

the world, in Cambodia (ancient Kambujadesha). The temple, built by Suryavarma II who ruled Kambujadesha from 1112 to 1152 A.D., was called Vishnuloka and was dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It was a Herculean task to conserve a monument as massive as Angkor Wat, which harmoniously blends monumentality with artistic details. The temples had no foundation problem and only had errors in the original construction, which pushed the monument into a condition of disrepair. Angkor Wat is one of the best examples to show how this factor can destabilise a monument. In spite of many tensions and hurdles, the ASI successfully carried out the Angkor Wat conservation work.

When a monument is taken up for conservation, its method of construction should be understood thoroughly. This information not only helps in future conservation, but also gives an intimate understanding of the engineering knowledge and skill of the ancient builders. For example, it is known from the experience in India that ancient temples were provided with foundations of more than sufficient strength. Therefore, the temples had no problem with their foundations. The conservator who is entrusted with a monument should not execute a particular work if he thinks that the problem is beyond his comprehension. The problem should be left for the future to be solved. — (Courtesy: *HRD Times*.)

# The tram was his study room

Madras has produced several brilliant lawyers over the years .... Eardley Norton, Nugent Grant, V. L. Ethiraj, Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar, V. Krishnaswami Iyer, V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, S. Sreenivasa Iyengar and, perhaps, the most brilliant of them all, Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer.

Sir Alladi was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. It is sad that, when the founding fathers of the Constituent Assembly were recently remembered and feted in Delhi, no mention was made of Sir Alladi. If the Indian Constitution has till today stood the test of time, a major share of the credit should go to the unsung genius, Sir Alladi, the master lawyer from Mylapore.

Sir Alladi's life is a rag-to-riches tale and his phenomenal success was as much due to his brilliant mind as his amazing capacity for hard, ceaseless toil.

\* \* \*

Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer was from a modest Saivite Brahmin family in Nellore District. He belonged to a subsect, the Pudur Dravidas, found only in that district. The Pudur Dravidas were known as 'Iyahs' and included the famous historian and scholar Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiah, Alladi Mahadevaiah and others. Later, after their migration to Madras and elevation in society, they called themselves 'Iyers'.

As a boy, Alladi had to struggle hard to educate himself. Overcoming considerable difficulties, he qualified with fly-

ing colours as a lawyer. In those days, a law graduate had to undergo a year-long period of apprenticeship in the chambers of a senior lawyer and Alladi Krishnaswami joined the chambers of the famed Mylapore lawyer, P. R. Sundara Iyer, respectfully known as 'Iyerval'. Sundara Iyer enjoyed a fabulous practice at the Madras High Court and later became a High Court judge. In those days, struggling juniors and apprentices chose to live in George Town because of the low rents and the proximity to the High

prentice under Sir Alladi. The writer's grandfather Madabhusi Narasimhachariar, an earlier leader of the Nellore Bar, was a classmate of Alladi's at law school, and both of them, poor boys, shared a small room in Triplicane during their college days. The two swabbed it every night by turn so that they could sleep in clean surroundings!

Setting up practice at the Madras High Court on the Appellate side, Alladi quickly made a mark. He had an interesting method of preparing his cases. Most lawyers would read

## PERSONALITIES OUT OF THE PAST

● An occasional series by RANDOR GUY

Court. As a junior, Alladi lived in Krishnappa Naicken Agharam in George Town.

Every morning, he would catch an electric tram in George Town to get to Iyerval's chambers in Mylapore. The studious Alladi made excellent use of the slow tram journey to study legal texts and the reports of leading cases. The tram became his study room! He had an excellent memory and whatever he studied on the tram was stored in his memory bank, proving most useful in later years when he was the uncrowned king of the South Indian Bar. No wonder Sir Alladi had a soft spot for the Mylapore tram and often spoke about it in grateful terms to his juniors and apprentices.

(This writer heard it all from his father, a member of the Nellore Bar, who was an ap-

a case file in chronological order, but Alladi would concentrate on the minus points in his case, and the points against him and for him, and the pitfalls ahead of his client. He would pick these papers from the file and concentrate on them to work out his legal strategy. Such study would lead him to other points and, thus, he would in time have read the entire bundle! He had a habit of marking the important points in pencil in the margins of a page. He would also write down the more important aspects in his legal notebook, never writing more than ten lines on a foolscap sheet. Before standing up to argue his case, he would go through those lines and would need no further reference to the case file.

While preparing his case in



Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer.

his chambers, he would have heated discussions with his disciples and listen even to the silliest of arguments and most absurd points of view. If a junior put forth an opposite view, he would go after him tooth and nail, probing deep into the disciple's arguments. All this helped him to anticipate the attack of the other side in court. No wonder Alladi was rarely taken by surprise!

His clientele was large and much of it was wealthy. But the sweet smell of success and his fabulous earnings did not change the man. He never forgot his early poverty and struggles and remained a humble human being. He extended a helping hand silently, offering monetary help to poor students to pursue their studies. No poor person seeking his help for education ever left his home with an empty pocket.

In recognition of his success, and legal genius, he was appointed the Advocate-General, Madras, an office which he held for 17 years, a record indeed! In appreciation of his services to the State and community as a lawyer, a knighthood was conferred on him.

\* \* \*

When Sir Alladi was in action in court, the chamber was

invariably full of lawyers and apprentices listening to him with close attention.

Once, Sir Maurice Gwyer, a judge of the Federal Court in Delhi (the predecessor of the Supreme Court) and later the first Chief Justice of India, was presiding over an appeal being argued by Sir Alladi, who finished his arguments before the lunch break. The famous British barrister and later Lord Chancellor of England, Sir John Simon (of 'Go back Simon' fame!) was in Delhi and visited the Federal Court after lunch. Having heard of Sir Alladi's legal brilliance, Sir John was eager to listen to his arguments and expressed his desire to Sir Maurice with whom he was seated on the Bench. The Chief Justice specially requested Sir Alladi to argue his case again! (To use a cinematic idiom, it was 'Take Two' for Sir Alladi!) The Madras genius was only too happy to oblige Lord Simon who was visibly impressed by his forensic peroration. When Sir John visited Madras, a similar event took place at the Madras High Court.

\* \* \*

Sir Alladi was invited to adorn the Bench of the Madras High Court more than once, but he refused the offer every time. When the Federal Court was established in Delhi after the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, three judges had to be appointed to the Court. Sir Maurice Gwyer was chosen as the Chief Justice and Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan (later a Pakistan diplomat) was one of the two judges appointed. It was decided by the Government to choose the third judge from Madras and legal circles expected Sir Alladi to be appointed. He too had expectations of the high office but, for some reason, he was overlooked, much to his disappointment. Sir S. Varadachariar, another great legal mind of Madras, was chosen.

Later, however, when the Indian Constitution was being formulated and written, Sir Alladi was an automatic choice to draft it. His knowledge of law, wide experience, and erudition in international constitutional law proved of great value.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Hong Kong; 2. Bald eagle; 3. Salman Rushdie; 4. Indian Arts; 5. The Red Fort complex; 6. Gordon Brown; 7. Iwo To; 8. Zimbabwe; 9. Dubai; 10. M.S. Dhoni.

\* \* \*

11. R. Visweswaran; 12. Deborah Thiagarajan; 13. The Irulas; 14. Sekkizhar; 15. Tirukadayur; 16. Seventy; 17. C.N. Annadurai; 18. Namakkal; 19. Cheraman Kadali; 20. Sippikkul Muthu.

## Subscriptions and contributions

● Since Volume XIV, No.1 (April 16, 2003), *Madras Musings* has been 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 BELOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or C/O LOKAVANI SOUTHERN PRINTERS PVT. LTD., 122, GREAMS ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

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

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

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2006-07 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.

— The Editor

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## Dates for Your Diary

12 noon. (At Don Bosco School.)

**Till July 24:** *Figurative*, an exhibition of paintings by S. Jayaraj (at 6.30 p.m. at Lakshana Museum of Arts.)



One of Jayaraj's exhibits.

**July 19-25:** *Installation*, an exhibition by Davide Grazioli (at Artworld).

**July 21-30:** Vinnyasa's Collection of paintings and sculptures (at Vinnyasa Art Gallery).

**July 21-30:** *Ayyanar and Adiperukku - Karagam* folk performances throughout the day, sowing of the *navadanyam* (9 cereals), and the Ayyanar procession on July 30th. Master potter Ramu Velar has made two terracotta cows for the traditional offering to the Ayyanar deity during the Ayyanar procession. (At DakshinaChitra.)

**July 21-August 10:** Exhibition of paintings by Devendra Shukla and Mun J.H. Shukla. (At Forum Art Gallery.)

**July 21:** *Mati Kahe*, a compilation of seven songs written by *Mati Kahe* literally means "The earth says", seven mystic saints from the Bhakti movement between the 13th and 17th Centuries. Vedhanth Baradwaj has set the songs in a mixture of Hindustani classical and other styles, lending the songs a 'young' touch (at Alliance Francaise, 6.30p.m.).

**July 22 and July 29:** Workshops by Madhav Chari - India's foremost jazz musician. On the 22nd, *The French and Indian Jazz Connection*, a brief overview of the French connection to jazz music. On the 29th, *The African Heartbeat*, the African roots of jazz music. African culture and music in the Americas, Argentina (Tango), Brazil (Samba), Cuba (afro-Cuban music), United States. (at the Alliance Francaise, 11 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.)

**July 22:** *Five Point Someone* - Evam presents a Madras Players' Production of a stage adaptation of Chetan Bhagat's bestseller *Five Point Someone*. The play is about love and life at IIT. (At Music Academy, 7.30 p.m.)

**July 22:** *Vintage Car Rally* organised by the Madras Heritage Motoring Club in association with "My TVS". Around 70 vehicles will be on display from 8 a.m. until

**July 28:** *Sing Along with Pied Piper* presented by Reach Out with Krishna Iyer and Jeeva Raghunath. A mini musical with 40 children on stage. (At Music Academy, 6.30 p.m.)

**July 30-August 4:** Painting Exhibition of Dhanasekaran's work (at Lalit Kala Akademi).

**July 30-August 3:** *Tranz*, a mentoring programme for dancers and movement artistes conceived and directed by Anita R Ratnam, will bring young dancers from the worlds of classical and contemporary dance, yoga, meditative and martial arts to present their new and unfinished work before a nurturing panel of mentors. The artistes will take the daily feedback from the panel and work towards a small showing at the end of the five-day session (at Alliance Francaise, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. daily).

**Till August 20:** *Children's Mela* on the theme 'Rain': *Mazhe Jaatre* supplements the annual Adiperukku festival. Thematic exhibits and displays on less-known facts about the monsoons, traditional games, shadow-puppet shows, folk music and dance performances, live demos of artisans at work, foodstalls that serve traditional delicacies of the rainy season, the *Mamundu Kadai*, an exhibition of traditional medicine to tide over the rainy season in good health,

# Madras Week ahead

(By A Staff Reporter)

It is that time of the year again when we celebrate Madras Week. As regular readers of *Madras Musings* will know, August 22nd, is Madras Day for it was on that date in 1639 that the city was founded. As in the last few years, *Madras Musings* and Chennai Heritage will team with *Mylapore Times*, *Adyar Times* and others to catalyse a week-long celebration making it a Madras Week.

Here is a curtain raiser on what is being planned:

*Madras Musings* will organise its series of talks at various locations in association with organisations such as the Taj Coromandel, Goethe Institute-Max Mueller Bhavan, Chamiers, Prakriti Foundation, the Madras Book Club and others. The final schedule is still in the making but we are looking at the following speakers:

**August 19:** Gowri Ramnarayan on *Music in Madras*

**August 20:** Geetha Doctor on *Eating out in the city*

**August 21:** Dr Bautze, a scholar from Germany, on *Reconstructing Remembrance - The Emden, Madras and after*

**August 22:** KRA Narasiah on *Ramanujan, his legacy*

**August 23:** Dr Bautze on *Reconstructing Remembrance - Klein and Peyerl, Photographers of Madras*

**August 24:** Sriram V. on *The Devadasis of Madras*

**August 25:** Randor Guy on *Three great murders of Madras*

**August 26:** The Madras Book Club discusses two books *Madaraspatnam* by KRA Narasiah and *Chennai, Not Madras*, a collection of essays on the city compiled by Dr AR Venkatachalapathy (in the morning)

**August 26:** Mohan Raman on *Madras as a backdrop in films*, an audio-visual presentation (in the evening).

All are welcome to attend these talks and the venues will be announced in *Madras Musings* on August 1st.

**August 19:** S. Muthiah, editor of *Madras Musings*, will speak on "Madras, the Gracious City" under the auspices of Ramu Endowments at the Tag Centre in the morning. Entry is by invitation only. A few passes for this will be available on a first come first served basis, for which those interested need to contact chari@tagcorporation.net

**August 20:** Muthiah will also be speaking on *Madras, the American Connection* at 6.30 pm at the Taj Coromandel, under the auspices of the Indo-American Association. Entry is restricted to members of the Association and their guests.

There will also be heritage walks organised on the two Sundays, 19th and 26th. Programmes for two of them are

and much more (at Dakshina Chitra).

**DakshinaChitra workshops**

**For children**  
July 21: Catapult making; **August 4:** Block printing; **August 11 &**

**12:** Making a chessboard **For Adults**

July 21 & 22: Wheel pottery; **August 4 & 5:** Gujarati thoranam; **August 11 & 12:** Glass jewellery making.

finalised. Sriram V. will take participants on a heritage tour of Poonamallee High Road, from My Lady's Gardens to the Madras Medical College, at 6.30 am on the 19th of August. On the 26th, it will be a walk to commemorate 80 years of the Anti-Nautch movement and will cover the residences of some of the prominent Devadasis of the past. The fee is Rs 300 and those interested may contact 98400 24200. In addition to the above, Vincent D' Souza of *Mylapore Times* will be planning a few walks, details of which are awaited.

**August 19-26:** The Forum Art Gallery (57, 5th Street, Padmanabha Nagar, Adyar) will be organising an exhibition showcasing the Madras-focused works of nearly 35 artists, both emerging and established, three photographers and two cartoonists, all living and practising in Chennai.

The Roja Muthiah Library, Taramani, is working on setting up an exhibition of early publications, periodicals and magazines of the city. This is likely to begin on the 15th of August and continue till the 26th.

There is talk of a food festival at the Taj Coromandel and also an exhibition of vintage photographs of the city at the Piano Lounge in the Taj. These are still in the planning stage.

In addition, there will be quiz contests and activities for children organised by the Heritage Clubs in various schools.

Details will be posted on the web site [www.themadrasday.in](http://www.themadrasday.in) as and when events get finalised. Organisations wishing to conduct events connected with Madras Day are requested to contact 98405 44629 (Revathi R) and 98410 49155 (Vincent D' Souza) for assistance.

Meanwhile, watch this space!

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



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