

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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"I'm starting to believe in the saying, 'The Known Devil's better than an Unknown Angel!'"

Absolute garbage

You have to admit things looked a little dicey a few days ago.

Piles of rubbish, representing the daily ebb and flow of life in a huge metropolis began...er...piling up – dotting street corners and roadsides, or just scattered around, pretending to be part of the general landscape.

The citizens watched with growing unease as battle lines were drawn between Those-who-were-there-before and the Now-we-are-in-charge brigade.

The former obviously felt that it was no longer their problem, and walked away, removing their bins in a marked gesture.

The second lot apparently fell short on equipment. A bit remiss of them, don't you think?

You are reminded of one of the first rules of the school playground: Never put off the persons who own the sports equipment, because if they storm off, taking their bats/nets/rackets with them, guess who ends up at a loss.

Now, if the previous lot were up on popular music, they'd have gone around singing: "Don't you wish your garbage bins were in place like ours?"... following it up with triumphant guffaws like villains in old movies.

All very sad – when professionals face off.

Things have now begun to improve – or so we're told. Good thing too.

Bit much if a coastal city began to use a sea of rubbish to compete with its watery neighbour.

Ranjitha Ashok

City going for green

Chennai has the maximum number of eco-friendly buildings in the country

(by Sriram V.)

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is organising a Green Building Congress in the city from September 19th to 21st. Chennai playing host to the Congress would seem most appropriate as it has the most Green Buildings in the country – 15 out of India's 80 certified-as-Green-Buildings. "India is on the right path because the only platinum rated (top rank) building outside the USA is located in Hyderabad. There are 80 Green Buildings in India, with a built up space of 25 million square feet. Almost 85 companies have joined the IGBC," says S. Raghupathy, senior director, Confederation of Indian Industry - Godrej Green Business Centre.

The Green Buildings in Chennai are:

- Grundfos Pumps India Pvt Ltd.
- Vestas Wind Technology India Ltd.
- L&T EDRC 1
- Olympia Technology Park
- ABN Amro
- L&T & TC II building
- Turbo Energy Limited
- ETL BPO Park
- World Bank building
- Chennai Tech Park
- Rane Institute for Employee Development
- AMTI Tech Park
- RMZ Millennia Business Park
- Ashok Leyland Properties
- Sunhera Realty Pvt Ltd.

The concept is new and is still gaining ground and, so, the figures are not large. But the IGBC has set itself a target of 1000 buildings in the country by 2010.

Of Chennai's 15 Green Buildings, the Grundfos Pumps India Pvt. Ltd. office in the city has achieved gold rating, scoring 49 out of a maximum possible score of 62 points.

Internationally there are only 50 projects that have achieved gold ratings. The building claims to recycle 100% of its water and uses 40% less of potable water when compared to other structures of similar size. More than 75% of the building uses daylight and there is 28% energy saving when compared to conventional buildings. The office complex occupies 35,000 sq. ft. in a two acre plot. More such green buildings are in the offing in the city. The concept is also being extended to inde-



The 'golden' Grundfos green building.

pendent houses. It is estimated that the construction of such buildings costs only 3% more than conventional ones.

Internationally, buildings are rated for their environmental friendliness through the LEED system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) which looks at five parameters:

sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. The LEED system, like any certification process, has third party inspection and rating and there are LEED-accredited profes-

(Continued on page 7)

Increase road space, arrest vehicle growth

– Recommendations to the CMDA

“Every department in the transportation sector of Chennai metro has its own agenda. Each works to its own advantage, without considering the larger interest of the whole,” said an expert who initiated a recent Discussion Session on the Transportation Sector of the Second Master Plan, at Anna University. And this is exactly why ‘constructive criticism’ of different aspects of the Second Master Plan that looks in a ‘holistic fashion’ into each issue is so vital to the city.

The discussion was organised by the Alumni Association, College of Engineering, Guindy, and, after four hours a deliberations, the following recommendations were made to the Vice-Chairman of the CMDA who was present throughout:

- The road space must be augmented from the present 3% - 4% to 30% in newly developing urban areas. Transport network develop-

ment must be planned before land development. Transport facilities must not be added on a piecemeal basis.

- The alarming rate of vehicle growth must be arrested. Control measures on vehicle growth need to be put in place, as in other countries. The growth of automobile manufacturing units

• by SHOBHA MENON

too continues unchecked, with scant regard to diminished road space. Augmenting bus services, **increasing fuel cost**, and discouraging personalised vehicle usage etc. could be a long-term help.

- Suburban/metro and MRTS must be linked to encourage people to make use of intermodal transportation, as in integrated transportation systems in different cit-

ies in the world. Buses must be used as a link to encourage more rail transportation, which is more economical, energy-efficient and environment-friendly.

- There must be an emphasis on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and more road space must be provided for them, with pavements and separate lanes.
- Planned parking spots should be a must in public concourses and shopping areas, and there must be improved enforcement of parking discipline.
- Road crossings and subways near women's institutions must be planned properly to ensure safe usage.
- Education and Enforcement must complement each other. Currently, the focus on Education is low, leading to problems when Enforcement is inadequate

(Continued on page 2)

The joys of a Ministerial visit

The Man from Madras Musings lives in what used to be a residential area which, thanks to the mixed (or complete lack of) zoning laws of our city, has now become a commercial zone in which virtually the only surviving bungalow is MMM's. The property opposite is now a warren of business establishments in which a bank and a pawn broker coexist in amity. Now a supermarket has been added to the motley grouping. And MMM is thankful for its having sprung up. For, it was due to the inauguration of the supermarket that a Minister came to the area. And it was thanks to the Minister coming that the garbage of the last few weeks, which had been piling up ever since the changeover of clearing agencies, miraculously vanished. One of the drains had clogged, and liquid was pouring forth from it for a few days and this too was stopped, owing to the ministerial visit. MMM hopes and prays that more and more ministers come to his road regularly so that it will receive some attention.

A castle for a home

A few weeks ago, *The Man from Madras Musings* called on a friend only to find that there was no access to the latter's house. The cul-de-sac in which the friend lived was the scene of some hectic drain-laying activity, part of a city-wide project to provide stormwater drains. While this is perfectly laudable and most necessary, what MMM cannot understand is the cloak and dagger manner in which it has been done. Of official word, a by-your-leave, a suggestion to alleviate the dislocation, there was NONE from the authorities.

It was only by the sound of a pickaxe going about its job that the residents of the area got to know about the plan to lay new drains. By then a huge chasm had been dug as a result of which residents could not take out their cars, leave alone themselves. The elderly found it impossible to leave their homes, for, in order to do so, they would have had to be as supple as Njinsky was in his prime to hurdle the deep drain and climb over the mounds of

excavated earth and rubble. A few made bold to ask those digging how they could go to office with such a moat around their homes. Why don't you take a few days off, was the rather pert answer. Easier said than done was the feeling of those in salaried jobs. As for the others, they had to only imagine that, like the Englishman, their home was their castle and be happy. The moat must have lent verisimilitude.

Meanwhile, the residents of the lane have had to park their vehicles on the narrow road off which their lane leads or in friends' houses some distance away. Cars left in the lane have, without exception, suffered damage from garbage lorries or the lorries of the drain-diggers – or other users of the road, not least the urchins who delight in scratching them with a sharp instrument. Who is to pay for all this?

Just before these lines were written, MMM visited his friend again. The situation was a little better – six weeks of considerable inconvenience looks like coming to an end in a COUPLE of weeks, says



SIGNS OF THE TIMES: The Man from Madras Musings is surprised to find that a new use for missionaries has been found by a demolishing contractor. (Photograph: Dr. N. RAMANATHAN.)

wrecker's hammer moves inexorably on, rather, like the moving finger in Nebuchadnezzar's feast.

The *Bharat Insurance Building* (Kardyl Building) has been without a roof for over a year now. True, the LIC has put a scaffolding to make passers by

fulfil the avowed objectives of the Association. It has, however, been noted that conservationists have voiced their views through the press and electronic media, joined by some conservatives."

Now, what is that "conservationists" and "conservatives" have asked for which is not in keeping with the spirit of the Association? In what way is the present building not a "fitting memorial" to the founder? Plainly put, the present structure does not please the present office-bearers. They want to pull down a historic building and put up a monstrosity which will have no bearing on the history of the existing structure. Why is a new building necessary? In what way will it improve on the facilities now available? As always, there are no answers to this. There is only a desire to demolish.

Showing the way

While Madras that is Chennai seems hell bent on destroying what little heritage it is left with, whether built or natural, Mumbai that was Bombay has shown the way when it comes to preservation and restoration. *The Man from Madras Musings* was recently in that city and a

news item caught his attention. The Central Railway has decided to open a second entrance to the Victoria Terminus (VT), now renamed the Chattrapati Sivaji Terminus. Towards this end, 20 acres of old sheds and tracks were removed and, while in that process, the authorities discovered a "lost station", complete with magnificent pillars and cobblestone floors intact.

The building had been shrouded by dense foliage and came to light only when the trees were being cut. It has now been identified as an old station connected to the docklands and has been dated tentatively to 1879 when it must have been part of a line connecting VT to the Princess Docks from where goods such as cotton and opium were exported. A steam crane has also been found intact inside the station. The construction must have been the work of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway which later became a part of the Indian Railways.

What was heartening to MMM and other lovers of heritage was the decision by the railways to leave the building as it was without demolishing it to make way for some other construction. It will hopefully be brought into day-to-day use, if not as a station, then at least for some other railway purpose. In Mumbai, the preservation of the old has become a matter of routine, while in Chennai it is always a fight to the finish with the building usually ending up a complete loser.

Elsewhere in Mumbai, the Santa Cruz police station has been restored and renovated without doing away with the existing building. And it is not even a 100-year-old structure. The culture of heritage preservation has permeated all levels in Mumbai, while Chennai, which calls itself the cultural capital, has chosen to lag behind.

Tailpiece

"Don't dring and drive" says a sign on Mount Road. Syne of the Tymes?
— MMM

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

MMM's friend, resigned to a city that does not care for its citizens' comfort.

Whither the Act?

Another Madras Day has come and gone and there is no Heritage Act in sight. *The Man from Madras Musings* is deeply disappointed. *Gandhi Illam* in Government Estate stands half demolished and whatever is left standing has been abandoned to the elements.

The story goes that work on bringing the structure down has been suspended pending the larger demolition activity that is to take place here in order to make way for the new Assembly. The fate of *Government House*, in the same enclave, hangs in the balance. Last heard, the police, who are in occupation, have not been asked to leave. But such delays are small comfort. The

believe that some renovation is on. But with the matter in court, there has been no new development. This has been a year of copious rains and heaven knows what damage the building must have suffered by now. MMM is not sanguine at all. As for Gokhale Hall...

A Besant memorial?

A friend of *The Man from Madras Musings* is a life member of the Young Men's Indian Association which owns *Gokhale Hall*. He showed MMM the latest annual report of the association which, in addition to listing the regular activities, has a paragraph on the Hall. And that is worth quoting:

"The Association would be initiating further steps for constructing a new building as a fitting memorial to our founder Dr. Annie Besant with all the infrastructure and facilities to

ROADS & VEHICLES

(Continued from page 1)

or not applied uniformly across the cross-section of road-users.

- Building plans must be approved only if the space allocation for transportation is also submitted.

An example of good planning that was shared during the discussions was the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike's re-

cent initiative to make a traffic management plan compulsory to obtain approval for buildings. It was being done through suitable modifications in the existing building by-laws.

Owners of commercial buildings with built-up areas of more than 2000 sq m and residential buildings with built-up areas of more than 4,000 sq m have to produce traffic management plans, that show how many ve-

hicles would enter the building every day and their impact on the traffic congestion in the surrounding areas. Also "Visitors' vehicles are not allowed" boards outside multistoreyed apartments must be removed, since the building by-law clearly states that 10 per cent of the total parking area should be reserved for visitors' vehicles (which would otherwise compound the traffic congestion).

A big 'Thank You' to 29 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.8.08 and 15.9.09, 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. — CHENNAI HERITAGE

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We, the people, at CMDA consultation

The final event deliberating the draft Second Master Plan for the Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) was a two-day workshop organised by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA). Builders, citizens, NGOs, Government officials — all offered their ideas.

Some of the recommendations made in the workshop were:

- An integrated mode of public transport linking the bus routes with the rail stations, having common ticketing facilities.
- Providing vertical parking facilities and underground parking lots.
- Need to implement the Coastal Regulation Zone rules.
- Creation of a solid waste management authority.
- Heritage should be treated as a local issue.
- A heritage committee to implement conservation plans on the ground for man-made and natural heritage.
- Natural heritage, such as wetlands and estuaries, needed to be saved.
- Population growth will stabilise by 2026 and infrastructure should be provided for the expected population.
- Answers needed to be found for lopsided employment.
- Extension of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) concept for lands taken over for development or heritage conservation.
- Need for self-contained townships and satellite towns.

- Real estate issues needed to be answered.
- Green building concepts to be promoted.
- Urbanisation of two- and three-tier cities to be encouraged.
- Vertical development, without compromising on the density, should be allowed.
- Employment and skill training in cluster development areas.
- Fishermen's contribution needed to be included in the Master Plan.
- Poverty alleviation and slum improvement projects should be implemented.
- Market forces should be allowed to decide the location of the informal sector businesses.
- Wastewater to be recycled and new sources for water options to be identified.
- Bus fleet to be increased from 2800 to 9000.
- Staggered school timings and allotted zones in market centres.
- Exclusive pedestrian areas to be designated.
- Advanced traffic management technologies to be introduced.
- Prevent formation of new slums.
- Working women's hostel and single-person quarters should be encouraged. — (Courtesy: *The Hindu Property Plus*)

EDITOR'S NOTE: How many of these can we expect to be included in the final master plan and how many of them will be implemented? We live in hope.

Our Addresses

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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

OUR READERS WRITE



Trams again?

People speak of old buildings and their beautiful architecture, of personalities of the past who had noble conscience and always thought of doing good to the community without any return. But, surprisingly, no one has looked at a transport system of the past which was a boon to the then travelling public. It was the cheap and effective tram service. Trams were noisy due to the tracks but there was no polluting the air, no smoke emission, etc.

Further, the trams carried more passengers, upto 102 passengers in the bigger trams. From Royapettah to Mylapore we paid only 3/4 anna or 4 nayepaise. It was 1/2 anna by small tram plying between Luz and San Thome with single track and crossings at certain places. It was indeed a pleasure and a good experience to travel by tram.

Bharat Hiteshi
3/54, Gandhi Nagar
II Cross Street
Palavakkam
Chennai 600 041

EDITOR'S NOTE: Yes, why not look at trams again? They are no longer noisy, they travel faster and are more comfortable in every city they ply abroad. Their services are continuing in Kolkata even today.

Garbage resort

I was shocked to recently read an article about dogs being shot at hotels and resorts on the East Coast Road. But readers should also be made aware of the appalling conditions under which these hotels dispose of their garbage. One beachfront property with an international tag has a pit on a small plot of land near its southern boundary on the seashore (about 25 m. from the water line) into which solid wastes including plastic and thermocole from the kitchen, bathroom and service areas are just thrown and left in the open. This attracts plenty of stray dogs, hundreds of crows and many gypsies to the area.

Another 'green resort' throws its plastic and other waste over its rear compound wall on to what happens to be the bank of the Buckingham Canal (this canal not long ago used to be a traditional fishing ground for fishermen during the rough sea season).

Brazenly polluting the environment and then employing illegal means to get rid of the dogs (apparently, these country-

made guns do not kill the dogs but only injure them and make them yell and squeal for a long time in pain till they eventually breathe their last) are inhuman, to say the least.

Can the Government do something to make our 'resorts' responsible corporate citizens?

C. Navaz
2/157, Karrikatu Kuppan
Muttukadu Village
Chennai 603 112

Earlier Assembly

In the 1950s, an Assembly building (MM, June 1st) was constructed in *Government Estate* and it functioned for some time, i.e. in the present-day Kalaivanar Arangam (Children's Theatre). In fact, the Post Office inside *Government Estate* was renamed Assembly Buildings P.O. For reasons best known to the authorities, the Assembly was again shifted back to Fort St. George and at that time Rajaji had stated that abandoning the newly constructed Assembly buildings and subsequently changing the same into the Children's Theatre were all wasteful expenditure.

Already the State Secretariat is functioning inside the Fort and the functioning of the Assembly there would be more conducive to the effective functioning of the Secretariat. By again shifting back to the *Government Estate*, not only is the tax payers' money being wasted but also the only patch of greenery in the Mount Road area will be wiped out, besides creating more traffic snarls in an already congested area.

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

Improve the old

I quite agree with your Special Correspondent's views (MM, August 1st) about the construction of the stadium on Old Mahabalipuram Road. I had the opportunity of attending a baseball game in San Francisco, US. It was in a huge indoor stadium with all infrastructures like weatherproof structures, comfortable seats for the viewers, etc. If such arrangements are made to convert our Chepauk Stadium, it would not only be beneficial to sports lovers but would also create another fine building in Madras.

P. A. Ranganathan
16/24, Vedachala Garden
Mandavalli Street
Chennai 600 028

Public utility ordeal

Of what avail is the BSNL's "Public Utility Services" pertaining to the Railways?

On Saturday, August 18, 2007, waiting for a response to an urgent telephonic enquiry about special trains on the Erode route, I had to be on the line for nearly 75 minutes! On dailing 131, my order of waiting was given as 20 which took about 30 minutes to move to 1 at snail's pace. I gave up following a further 20 minutes' wait. Then I tried 132 and my order of waiting improved slowly from 17 to 3 where again I had only to 'grin and bear' the otherwise sweet "Your call is important to us" voice for yet another ten minutes. I gave up on that too! Then I got the response, thank my stars, from one Mr. Raghu who came on the direct line 25353816. He hung up on my asking for names of other persons on duty during my grueling attempt!

The "Public Utility Services" is billed after the first 3 minutes, and so the cost I have incurred for a simple enquiry may very well be imagined! (Except the above and other automatic enquiry numbers, no other direct line was responding.)

I have no complaint if it were a system failure, but that was not the case here. It would be in the public interest if action is taken immediately to rectify the inept handling of the system.

If the PUS cannot be offered free as before, why can't the caller get an "engaged" tone after 3 minutes of unsuccessful wait? Otherwise such enquiries would be unaffordable, apart from irritation and inconvenience.

P.K. Parameswaran
Technoclan Flats No.6
11, Vembuliamman Koil Street
K.K. Nagar
Chennai 600 078

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.

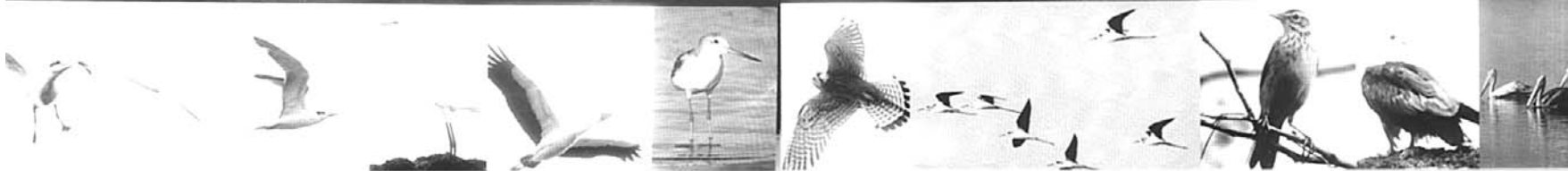
Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

THE EDITOR



A glimpse of the winged visitors that through the Salt Works at Vedaranyam. A rare visual treat!

Photograph: Maheswari Kripasigamani



A bird-watcher's paradise visited...

EDITOR'S NOTE: This may not be Madras that is Chennai – but it's a place every nature-lover in the city should visit.

• The swamps of Vedaranyam are a showcase of our feathered brethren in action. The flocks of migratory birds that swarm the swamps have drawn the attention of naturalists. Chemplast Sanmar and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have set up a study centre at a cost of Rs.20 lakh of which Sanmar advanced Rs.12 lakh. The foundation stone was laid by Pheroza Godrej, Vice-President of the BNHS, at Point Calimere Sanctuary on the Vedaranyam coast in Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu in April this year. This centre established by the BNHS and the Sanmar Group is the first of its kind in the country and is a boon to ornithologists, birdwatchers and tourists. Two-and-a-half acres of land has been purchased by the BNHS for this purpose. (Courtesy: Matrix, the house journal of Chemplast Sanmar.)



... And a far cry from it, the garbage of the city

Madras Musings on September 1st carried a story on the way garbage was piling up in Triplicane, Kodambakkam and Pulianthope Zones even as the new agency, Neel Metal Fanalca Environment Management Limited, was coming to terms with the volume. The principal problem appeared to be one of shortages of bins and a workforce that was not trained to handle the pile-up.

There is, however, much more to it than meets the eye. It now emerges that there were delays in the floating of the tender by the Corporation which, therefore, cascaded into delays in identifying a new agency. The term of the previous contractor, Onyx, ended more than six

months ago and they had been requested to continue till a new agency was appointed. The contract was awarded to Neel Metal on the basis of the lowest bid, but, according to a leading business daily of the city, this is the first time that the company has forayed into garbage collection! Sheet metal fabrication is the company's speciality.

The shortage of bins and lack of trained staff is now staring everyone in the eye in the shape of the mounds of garbage in various localities with animals foraging in and around them. The citizens of Chennai, never the most conscious of their environment, have continued dumping garbage in the same spots where the bins of the previous contractor used

to stand. Only, now devoid of the bins, entire stretches of road have become dumpyards.

Neel Metal had placed an order for 1000 bins of 600 and 700 litre capacities with a manufacturer who failed to deliver owing to a fire in his factory. It has now

By A Staff Reporter

been decided that the bins will be imported from Bangkok and the delivery is expected "soon". It needs to be pointed out here that this number is lower than the 3700 bins that were estimated as being required earlier. It must also be noted that the previous agency used 1000 litre capacity bins in most locations.

The present agency claims that it has estimated the requirement of smaller bins mainly because its mandate was to collect pre-segregated wastes from households. The Corporation has made no move to train households into segregating wastes and, so, the refuse continues to pile up without any separation. In any case, it is doubtful as to how many households will practise the discipline that is required. Even as this issue of Madras Musings goes to print, not many in Chennai are aware that this is required of them.

The absence of a fleet of garbage handling vehicles is also striking. The company had estimated that it would require 32 compacting trucks, 10 hook

loaders and 160 Tata Ace trucks. At present it has only one compacting truck; the delivery of 27 more is awaited. As a stopgap measure, 43 tippers are being used to ferry the garbage to the landfills. All this is making for a very slow and highly inefficient system.

There are also reports of serious shortages of trained staff. On September 7th, the company claimed to have begun training 1300 workers in garbage clearance, a full month after the contract was awarded and at least two weeks after the takeover was effected! The original staff requirement was 2700 and the present strength that is roughly half does not encourage hope.

Mazes and cheese

All right, Chennai, that's enough – slow down a little.

Enough with the frenzied activity-ing.

Honestly, what's happened to the old girl? She just doesn't want to stay still any more, even for a minute.

She's behaving like a particularly youngish 22, high on life.

And her citizens are in a tizz. A few decades ago – well, yes, decades certainly sounds 'long, long ago', but, then, Time changes in texture, colour and content as you grow older. And what's 20-30 years in the life of a city? So – until a few decades ago, this was little Miss Prim 'n' Proper among the nation's metros – oodles of culture, yes, but not too great on the hustle-bustle-boil-and-bubble variety of social hysteria already rampant in other 'big' cities.

People?

Well, like everywhere else – friends, family. But, don't forget, those were the days before highrises broke out all over the city, shutting people into boxes, both basic and luxurious. So, with everyone knowing everyone, going back several generations to boot, you had people telling you they remembered your grand-uncle kicking up a fearful fuss at Next-Street-Corner-House Maami's daughter's wedding, because of the late arrival of his second helping of *payasam*.

Or how someone's aunt-twice-removed was a great one for landing up, by remarkable coincidence, exactly at tiffin-time at various long-suffering homes every day.

Everyone you came across had been classmates (with one another) at some stage of education or the other at some point in time.

A newcomer to the city took years to get naturalised. Some merely stayed 'new' for ever, too tired even to try, after a while.

Chugging along in a Time-warp – that was what superior beings who lived in sprightlier cities liked to say.

Locals, as only to be expected, would spring immediately to an aggressive defence of their beloved Madras, leading to some truly spectacular fights with cousins during summer holidays, requiring parental intervention and grandparental soothing.

Not any more.

The Chennaiite, thoroughly gratified, can actually say with

complete pride: "I can't make it to the book-launch; I am going to that theatre festival thing in the morning. Today they are showing the growth of a pin – in black and white – so stark and effective, no? Then there's that lunch for the latest flavour-of-the-month personality; then a gallery opening at 7, followed by cocktails to meet the Consul General of Little-Friendly-Nation by 8 pm."

And you can genuinely claim not to know your neighbours, or their grandparents – who has the time, after all?

Isn't that something?

Considering Chennai is so adept at bringing various streams of life together, chances are that

● by
RANJITHA ASHOK

the above-mentioned Hop-About will probably 'show-face' at a kutchery, or even a philosophical discourse, before turning up at the gallery.

Being exhausted all the time is a sign of a full life these days.

Bright eyes and a healthy appetite mean you just haven't enough to do, and you obviously do not figure on too many invitation lists. Arriving breathlessly late to an inaugural, trailing cell-phones and *haute couture* embellishments, whispering agitated complaints about traffic is practically *de rigueur*, and it's a sad social flop who doesn't have at least a few of these 'difficult times' in a week. And those times are increasing. It is honestly getting tougher to keep track of the various 'happenings', and the way you run around, it's a wonder you don't catch your heel on your own manic shadow and come a cropper.

Sometimes, you have no choice but to throw up your hands at the sheer impossibility of dovetailing all the various programmes and timings, and opt to stay home and watch song-and-dance sequences on TV instead.

Even that permanent fixture in all forms of community living – the wedding – has gone larger-than-life. There was a time when old-timers in your family caused much inter-city dissension by



"It's an easy evening and here is the list... starting with the art opening, there are only a dozen other events to go to!"

baldly stating, "Nothing like a Madras wedding."

They are still around, the old-timers, but have been struck dumb into stunned silence by what defines a 'Madras wedding' in certain sections today, and the vast, and varied, amounts of 'running around' it now demands.

Chennai has become a city of festivals – and not just for music and dance. Theatre, food, interiors, clothes, jewellery... you name it, somebody or the other is festival-ing away for all they are worth.

And some of these designer gatherings are throwing up an alarming question – are people getting substantially thinner? Or being forced to?

What's happening to the familiar Southern silhouette?

The S is definitely 'S - er'; 'M'

's a joke, and even a so-called XL hasn't bothered to take the presence of hips into account.

Since age groups are no longer divided strictly along non-negotiable lines, everyone is desperately trying to fit, literally. After all, you cannot possibly be seen trying on an XXL, wonderfully comfortable as it might prove, can you?

No, not even surreptitiously, no way.

It's easier to give up breathing for the rest of your life.

And so the citizens run, and not just for causes.

A concert here, an exciting sale there,

Here a talk show, there a fashion week,

Everywhere a 'something on'....

But what to do, as we say?

We've become like this only.

Of gharials, frogs and pythons

• Some excerpts from B. VIJAYARAGHAVAN'S column 'Random Harvest' in *Cobra*, the journal of the Chennai Snake Park.

From the brink, back to the brink

That, in brief, has sadly been the tale of gharial conservation in India. The gharial was on the brink of extinction in the early 1970s with an estimated wild population of just about 200. A crocodile recovery programme for all the three crocodilians of India was then formulated by the Government of India with assistance from the FAO/UNDP. This led to the collection of about 12,000 gharial eggs during a period of three decades. Over 5000 young gharials were released, mostly in protected areas. "While numbers built up in some areas like the Chambal River (and subsequently crashed), in other places like the Mahanadi in Orissa only two gharials have survived although 700 were released there."

At present, there are only some 200 adult gharials in the wild. (Back to the early 1970s!) Breeding is taking place at only four locations in the wild: Chambal River, Girwa River, Son River and the Rapti/Narayani River in Nepal. The gharial is confirmed as extinct in the wild in Burma, Pakistan, Bhutan and, probably, Bangladesh. – (Source: *Zoos' Print*.)

Frogs in peril

Of all of God's creations, the frogs seem to have the toughest time. They live in a wide variety of habitats, on land and in water, but everywhere their luck seems to be running out. Numerous species of frogs have become extinct in the past few decades, many of them even without being known to science, and far more are threatened. Habitat destruction, pollution of the waters, prevalence of pesticides and herbicides, global warming, known and unknown diseases, vulnerability of frog eggs, tadpoles and juveniles to a whole lot of native predators, introduction of non-native predatory fish, cattle grazing, prolonged droughts, floods, depletion of the ozone layer and consequent increase in ultra-violet ray radiation, acid rain, human exploitation for food and for the pet trade, all these and some more have conspired to take a heavy toll of frog populations across the globe.

In the meantime, let us, in the words of 'Anon', celebrate the frog, one of the most endearing creatures that populate this planet.

"What a wonderful bird the frog are!

When he walk, he fly almost;

When he sing, he cry almost.

He ain't got no tail hardly, either;

He sit on what he ain't got almost".

'Man-eating' pythons

We occasionally hear stories of pythons and other such large snakes eating or attempting to eat humans. But authentic accounts are extremely rare. Writing in *The Monitor Newsletter* of the Hoosier Herpetological Society, Ed Ferrer says, "...Scientists feel it is unlikely that a large snake could take an adult human. First, the chance of a healthy human being caught is improbable, although someone injured, resting or asleep might be vulnerable. Secondly, although snakes have the ability to dislocate their jaws and swallow items bigger around than they are, our wide shoulders make this feat very unlikely. Although adult humans are not prime targets for these large predators, children and babies are certainly on the menu." Ed Ferrer then proceeds to recount a few confirmed cases of pythons killing adult humans.

Now, *The Hindu Business Line* of 28th February 2007 reports that a python kept as a pet in southern Vietnam strangled its owner who had cared for it for more than 10 years. The 40 kg 2.5-metre reptile reached out and wrapped itself around the neck of its 69-year-old keeper and squeezed him to death. But the snake did not try to swallow him.

Incidentally, in case you ever happen to get entangled with a python or vice versa, remember that the coils are the real danger, not the head. There is a vernacular saying: "Letting go the head and holding the tail". This bespeaks the folly of trying to tackle a problem from the wrong end. But in the case of a python attack, that is precisely what you should do. Grab the tail and unwind the coils. Simultaneously, keep an eye on the head too, lest it gives you a bite which can be nasty though not poisonous. And best of luck!

Schools show the way

One of the significant features of this year's Madras Week celebrations was the voluntary participation of schools and colleges and, yes, even activity centres for small children. Suma Padmanabhan, Principal, Asan Memorial Senior Secondary School, was the first to confirm participation. Thanks to her initiative, the School had three days of activity – an exhibition tracing the topography, clothes, food habits and lifestyles of Chennai, and a walk by students down Anderson Road, all open to school-children from neighbouring schools.

Spring Into Reading, an English activity centre in KK Nagar run by Binita, and assisted by Shrimathy, former teachers at Padma Seshadri School, KK Nagar, teamed with popular storytellers Jeeva Raghunath and Nandini Sridhar to produce day-long activities for children during Madras Week, at Hotel Green Park. Pooja Gupta and two others who run Alps Academy in Mylapore also organised a variety of events for children, including photo-sessions with the children before heritage buildings in the city. And Chandni Khanna who runs Hippocampus in Abhiramapuram took children on a tour of heritage spots in the Mylapore area.

I consider the entry of colleges this year into the weeklong celebrations a significant first. Presidency College, Sir Thyagaraya College, Washermanpet, Ethiraj College, Dr MGR Janaki College, and MOP Vaishnav College for Women all organised several days of celebrations.

* * *

A storyteller's Madras

Chennai chronicler S. Muthiah more or less kick-started the Madras Week celebrations with a talk at one of R.T. Chari's usual breakfast meetings at the TAG Centre, generally held on the last Sunday of every month, but an exception made for Madras Week.

S.R. Madhu managed these talks very well. He painstakingly prepared a resume of the speaker and formally introduced the speaker at such meetings. I understand that Madhu does a great job of this at the Rotary meetings as well (Rotary Club of Madras South). This time, he went one step further to get views about Muthiah from a few who knew him reasonably well, me included. That was one way to present a different take on the speaker; after all, who among Chennai's Who's Who does not really know about the storyteller who's written more than half a dozen books on the city?

Muthiah divided his presentation into two parts: one on the

history of the city and the other pictorial, with some startling images of a Madras many in the audience never knew existed. From "no man's sand", Fort St. George, grandiosely named so in 1639, grew into what Muthiah always calls "the first city of modern India." To understand that better, you will do well to read some of his books on Madras, starting with *Madras Rediscovered*.

Can we, the citizens of Madras that is Chennai, try and get Fort St. George on the World Heritage Site list? Doesn't the place truly deserve it? Wasn't it from where the British took roots as traders first, and where the foundations of modern Madras, nay modern India, were laid? Let's strive for that recognition then, shall we?

* * *

Children centrestage

Madras Week celebrations finally took off in the KK Nagar-Vadapalani area. It was a first for Madras Week ever since the celebrations began in 2004.

Spring Into Reading, KK Nagar, organised a performance of *thudumbu attam* (folk drum-

ming) and a captivating storytelling session by Nandini Sridhar and mime artistes Anbu and Shankar. The drummers set the stage for possibly one of the best storytelling sessions held in this part of the city. The drummers and artistes belong to an organisation called Unarvugal Dramatics based in Saligramam.

The stories, narrated in folk style, while touching upon the history of Chennai and Tamil Nadu, held morals for children, such as the need to show magnanimity. Fifty children parading on stage in traditional dresses brightened up the finale.

The Vijaya Hall at Hotel Green Park was packed to capacity with parents and residents of the area. Present to motivate the artistes and children were M.B. Nirmal, founder, Exnora International, R. Shankariah, former chief regional librarian, British Council, and Dr. Balambal, an expert in traditional games.

Earlier in the day, at Ethiraj College, about 40 students staged a medley of folk and contemporary dance, and street theatre. During their performances, they raised pertinent issues, including pointed references to public apathy regarding segregation and proper dis-

posal of garbage. There was a detailed power-point presentation about Chennai and its neighbourhood. The auditorium was house full, and most of the students had taken time off their study schedules and exams to participate in the celebrations. Heartening it was!

* * *

The gentleman's game

It was almost a full house at the Gallery Sri Parvati when Badri Seshadri spoke about street cricket played in Chennai. But what Badri, who arrived early, came equipped with was a laptop and a lightweight WoodWing bat (most likely made in Meerut from wood imported from the U.K., and then sent overseas), his treasured possessions.

Present even before Badri arrived were three students from the Asian College of Journalism – they had heard so much about Madras Day and Madras Week, and would I speak a few words on camera.

Badri's power-point presentation was interlaced with clippings from the film *Chennai 600028*. He recalled his days as a child when he and his group

analyse for themselves and then make a proper presentation? Where is the time to refer to the right books and conduct a thorough research? Nevertheless, they should learn that it is not the quantity that matters but the quality. Shorter presentations based on deeper original research would have produced better results.

* * *

Time to act

At the Accord Metropolitan, members of the Public Relations Society of India, Chennai Chapter, marked the Madras Week by listening to Sundar, Director, Roja Muthiah Research Library, and Sivaramakrishnan, President, Consumer Business, SIFY Ltd. Sundar's power-point presentation was on the early publications of Madras. Sivaramakrishnan spoke about SIFY's new portal, www.chennai.live.in. I wonder whether Sivaramakrishnan and his team can lead the charge on the Internet during Madras Week celebrations next year. It's good to have at least one solid base on the Internet. We've not had one so far.

From www.sashinair.blogspot.com

of friends would play cricket, the days when Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Vishwanath and Vengsarkar ruled the roost. It was a refreshingly different evening, when people exchanged their views on what was once called the 'gentleman's game'. I too learnt a thing or two. For instance, I never knew that between 60 and 80 per cent of the runs scored by batsmen came from shots to the off side, the reason why there were usually six fielders placed in that area.

* * *

Research needed

The girls of MOP Vaishnav College, Nungambakkam, organised a painting competition, an elocution contest, and research-based presentations on the city during the Madras Week.

I sat through a couple of presentations on Chennai. Some of the data presented was incorrect. Many students relied heavily on the Internet, especially Wikipedia. Was it the right way to do? You can't really blame them. In the midst of their various activities, they are occasionally saddled with projects such as this. Where do they have the time to visit places, talk to people, and

I also wonder whether the Chennai Chapter of the PRSI can't go beyond corporate PR, join hands with organisations like Chennai Heritage, INTACH-Tamil Nadu, Consumer Action Group and others to lobby for a Heritage Act for Chennai. That will need determination as well as dedicated work. Are there members in the PRSI in Chennai who can take the lead? I think we need more action than talks and presentations. If we have a Heritage Act, we can save so many threatened heritage buildings. As a later challenge, the PRSI can even look at joining forces with the same organisations to make a case for Fort St. George to be declared a World Heritage Site. Success on these fronts will make Madras Week celebrations so much more joyful.

* * *

Heritage by MRTS

Prema Kasturi, former head of the History Department, WCC, was responsible for following up with colleges and goading the professors she knows to get their students to contribute in some way towards remembering the city during Madras Week. One of the colleges that took the initiative, thanks to her persuasion, was

Presidency College. And the credit here must go to Professor S. Amarnath, who has, along with his brother and sister, contributed a great deal to bringing Tamil culture alive, especially among children.

A group of 20 postgraduate students from the Department of History, Presidency College, took a train journey from Thiru Mayilai to Beach Station by MRTS on Madras Day. They were led by Dr. S. Amarnath, who explained the historical significance of the city and helped the students rediscover the heritage buildings along the route. The students are currently doing a paper on Madras.

The stretch included Kapali Temple, San Thome Cathedral, DGP Office, QMC, Ice House, Presidency College, Madras University buildings, Napier Bridge, Island Grounds, Ripon Building, General Hospital, Reserve Bank of India, Fort St. George, the High Court, and the Harbour. The journey concluded with the students being asked to carry forward the message, "Madras Nalla Madras."

Now, why doesn't the MRTS think about a recorded commentary on its trains, interspersing heritage notes with soft music?

* * *

Two names, 2 cities

Shreekumar Varma, author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet, spoke about Madras as well as Chennai, at the Gallery Sri Parvati.

He began by describing how Nungambakkam High Road was in the 1960s and 1970s – full of trees and open spaces, large garden houses, and eeriness at night. It was so silent at night that his dog's bark could be heard near the Gemini flyover! It was Shreekumar's father who established Hotel Ganpat, and that probably changed Nungambakkam forever. The Taj Coromandel came and things were never the same again.

Shreekumar read out portions of his writings and others' as well, including Colin Todhunter's. All so varied and rich in prose that together they weaved a tapestry of the city that was.

For Shreekumar, Madras is nostalgia, while Chennai is a happening city; both names, he says, conjure different images. They are to him not one and the same city.

* * *

A happy ending

Being part of Madras Week this year was fun – and though some plans did not take off, 'The Catalysts' were all happy at the end. For one thing, the media reserved quite a bit of space for covering events during the week, and, for another, many more people came

(Continued on page 8)

Let's make docu-films on the city

On Madras Day 2006, film-makers were invited by 'The Catalysts' to produce docu-films on the city: its people, its institutions, its communities, its issues. The idea was to generate more visual content on Madras that is Chennai.

This year, the Documentary Film Contest attracted 11 entries. Five were short-listed for screening. There was a film on the dhobis of Saidapet; another on the industrial estate of Ambattur, said to be the largest of its kind in Asia; a film on trans-genders; and one on 'Madras Basha' (language, or lingo, as some would put it!). And there was a film on the Buckingham Canal.

These were nice efforts but they were sorely lacking in professional inputs and strong, factual content, said Venkatesh Chakravarthy, who teaches cinema and who judged the films.

A short film made by Mohan Das Vadakara during the last Corporation of Chennai local election was also screened. The film focussed on one woman contestant (Lakshmi Suresh of the BJP) in the Mylapore area who was a local councillor. It recorded her campaign through

an urban slum as well as the quiet colony of Pelathope, once famous for its lawyer residents.

Also screened was Venkatesh's film, *Chennai-The Split City*, which looks at different sides of this city: the neglected North, the expanding IT Corridor, the makeover of the East Coast Road, the shifting of the Kotwal Chavadi Market; the religious rituals and celebrations of yore which continue to be held in the heart of this metro, the vandalisation of the seashore by big time developers...

Ideas from film makers who wish to make films on the city are welcome. Vincent D' Souza and his team will be glad to help them with books / resource materials / guides and specialists to enrich the script, ensuring better-made docu-films. Hopefully, there might also be some funding for scripts which could make good docu-films.

If you wish to start working on your ideas, talk to the Vincent D' Souza team or email them at madrasday@yahoo.com. This will make possible several new Chennai-focussed films to

be shown for 'Madras Day 2008'.

* * *

We had a call from St. George's School, which was late on the 'Madras Day' schedule but was keen to motivate schools in their neighbourhood to join them in a festival dedicated to the city we love.

And St. George's had another request - could we help provide a person who could take their school children on a tour of Fort St. George?

● by VINCENT D' SOUZA

Would you believe it! Even before this request we had 84 people on the walk around the Fort on a Saturday and 72 on the next day, during Madras Week. And our guide, Dr. S. Suresh, the archaeologist, never complained though he was on duty on both days. Which brings us to a suggestion we have for our schools - would it not be a great idea if each school trained a teacher or two to double up as guides on at least two heritage courses in our city?

They could take groups of their schools on walks, one at a

time, throughout the year. And then train a different set of teachers who could take charge. And thereby, keep this cycle alive...

It would also be great if senior and fit residents who intimately know areas like Egmore, George Town, the Marina, Mylapore, San Thomé, Adyar, Kilpauk, the film studio neighbourhood of Vadapalani... could themselves be guides on special tours through these areas.

* * *

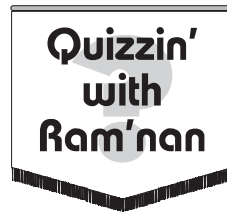
We chose to have a contest to create a design for a Chennai T-shirt and, last year, a design student, Shreya, won the prize for her effort.

We then invited this bright, young girl to work further on the basic design and if you check out the web site - www.themadrasday.in - you will get a peek at Shreya's new design.

Going by the many e-mails that are flowing in - the mail ID is madrasday@yahoo.com - Shreya's design seems to have caught the eye of young people. Each T-shirt costs Rs.100 (Tel: 24982244).

* * *

It was good to see the city's corporates responding positively to Madras Week events. Ashok Leyland's PR and Communications department lent its bus specially designed for children free for all Madras Week events in which children were involved.



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

1. Name the two places in Hyderabad that were rocked by blasts on August 25th, killing at least 40 people.
2. Whom did India beat to win the Nehru Cup football tournament for the first time?
3. Name the Indian company that has won rights to mine uranium in Niger, ensuring that India's requirements for the next 1,000 years could be met!
4. Who was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award by the President recently?
5. Name the former Chief Minister and Union Minister who has been appointed the new Governor of Andhra Pradesh.
6. Where did Viswanathan Anand retain the World Rapid Chess Championship recently?
7. What is Google's new service, that lets surfers gaze at a virtual sky and tour through the cosmos, called?
8. Name the new company that has come into being after the merger of Indian Airlines and Air India.
9. Which Asian country celebrated 50 years of Independence on August 31st?
10. Which marine animal which had been recently declared functional extinct has been spotted again in China?

* * *

11. Whose directorial debut is the multi-national award-winning Tamil film *Sringaram*?
12. What is actor Sarath Kumar's new political party called?
13. Who is acting in the remake of the hit Rajinikanth film *Billa*?
14. Name the private operator who has recently replaced Onyx in conservancy operations in four zones of Chennai Corporation.
15. Where, in 1882, was Madras's first ever telephone exchange commissioned?
16. In Tamil Nadu police parlance, what is 'Operation Romeo'?
17. What government institution came into being with the Public Department that was created in 1670?
18. Who is the Minister for Transport in the present Tamil Nadu Government?
19. Name the two districts in the State starting with the letter P.
20. In which year was the Connemara Library formally opened?

(Answers on page 8)

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- THE EDITOR

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GOING FOR GREEN

(Continued from page 1)

signals who offer this service for a fee. Buildings so certified carry a LEED plaque which indicates they have lower operating costs and increased asset value, are healthy and comfortable for their occupants, reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. In many countries this entitles building owners to tax rebates and zoning allowances. Buildings are graded into Platinum, Gold and Silver levels when they qualify.

In India, the CII has set up the Indian Green Business Council (IGBC) and is spearheading this concept. The norms are stringent and require energy saving construction, use of non-toxic paint, recycled tiles, wood from certified forests or recycled wood, use of fly ash bricks and fly ash cement, efficient airconditioning, natural or energy efficient lighting and water and sewage treatment.

But there are voices of dissent as well. Some architects in the city to whom *Madras Musings* spoke have felt that while being excellent in concept, the idea ought to be Indianised before it can be utilised to the fullest possible

extent. The designs being looked at are all Western in concept, they feel. For instance, the current craze of cladding buildings in plate glass is totally alien to Indian environment and is also energy inefficient. The glass frontage makes sense in countries where natural light is at a premium, which is not so in India. The glass traps heat and also cuts off ventilation, making airconditioning essential. So how does this make for an environmentally friendly building when the primary design itself is not? The second issue is that traditional Indian architecture is yet to be taken up for study and so there are no blueprints for such designs. Should a country with a rich architectural tradition not have its own methods as part of the rating process? This will also encourage local craftsmen and artisans. Lastly, what happens when a building is pulled down? Will the disposal methodology of green buildings also be green? These are some points that need to be pondered over.

The move to have 'green' buildings is, however, a welcome one and *Madras Musings* is delighted that the city is leading the way, as it has in many institutions and traditions of the country.

The Gonds and their trees

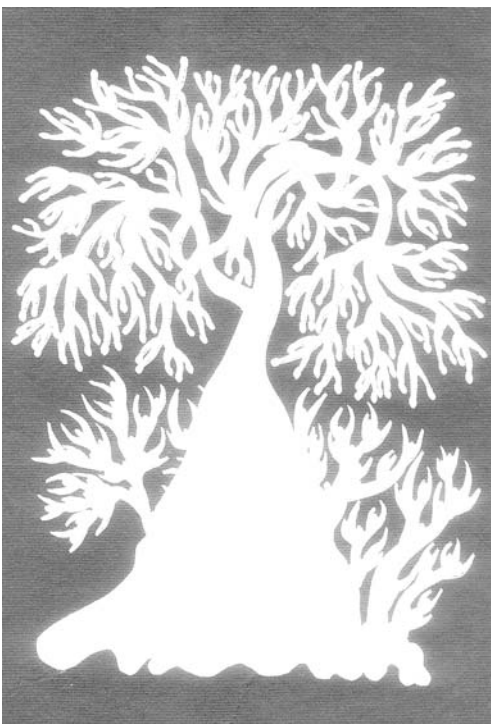
The Gond tribe from Madhya Pradesh works in a ritual and functional art style, and draws inspiration from their belief that the practical, spiritual and aesthetic aspects of nature are inseparable. The Gonds have, traditionally, surrounded themselves with their brilliant art, painting them on the mud walls of their houses. Each surface teems with symbolic diagrams, stories of creation, gods, goddesses, animals, trees and village life.

The Gonds are forest dwellers, and trees stand as the focal point of their cosmos. To the Gonds, each tree has special significance, and an associated myth, legend or belief. They believe that trees are hard at work during the day, providing shade, shelter and nourishment for all; at night, when daytime visitors have left, the spirits of the trees reveal themselves. It is these luminous spirits that are hauntingly captured in the exhibition and a handmade book *The Night Life of Trees*, brought out by Tara Publishing.

Bhajju Shyam, Durga Bai and Ram Singh Urveti are all from the village of Patangarh, about 500 km from Bhopal, who have travelled the world, will be in Chennai to talk about their art, their travels, their stories, and their beliefs.

Bhajju Shyam who, in 2001, received a State award for Best Indigenous Artist, had in 2004 his *The London Jungle Book* published — a visual travelogue of his first visit to a Western metropolis. The book was launched at the Museum of London, along with an accompanying exhibition, and it has now been published in Italian, Dutch and French. His work has since been exhibited in the UK, Germany, Holland, Italy and Russia, making him the best known artist of his tribe today.

Durga Bai is the illustrator of two children's books *Sultana's Dream* and the award-winning *One, Two, Tree!*, a delightful counting book that



One of the paintings at The Night Life of Trees exhibition now on at the Ashvita Art gallery. The exhibition features art by three of the finest living artists of the Gond tribe of central India.

has been translated into Dutch, French, German and Japanese.

Ram Singh Urveti's work has spread the myths and stories of the Gond community throughout Asia, Europe, Australia and South America, and has won him awards nationally and internationally.



Till September 21: *Enfants Du Monde (Children of the World)*, an exhibition by Flore Lamoureux, a French photographer, who lives in Delhi. This collection of colourful children's portraits was taken during her travels all around the world from Africa to China, Guatemala to India and more.

Her choice to exhibit in a non-institutional gallery, and especially a garden, is to allow everybody to come and share a moment with those children. Moreover, the new concept she'll use to exhibit her photos in lightened boxes will reinforce her point of view: "My desire is not to show their faces but I want the children to look at the visitor as they looked at me when I caught their expression with my camera." (At Alliance Francaise.)

Till September 21: *Children of the World*, a photography exhibition by Flore Lamoureux of her collection of children's portraits taken during her travels all around the world. (At Alliance Francaise.)

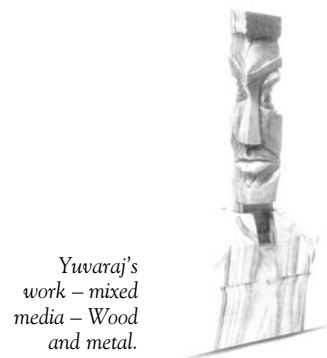
Till September 22: *Kerala Murals*, an exhibition on canvas by P.C. Sreejith and P. Naveen Kumar. (At Lakshana Art Gallery.)

Till September 23: *Woyzeck (A Tale of a Soldier)*, directed by Gil Alon, presented by Koothu-pattarai, which celebrates its 30th anniversary as a contemporary Tamil theatre group with this play. In this production the play will take place in the navy. (At Alliance Francaise.)

September 20-30: *Mixed Group Show*, an exhibition of contemporary art by young and old Indian artists. (At Artworld.)

September 21-23: *Acid*, presented by Madras Players and directed by Anupama Chandrashekar. (At Museum Theatre.)

September 21: Signum Quartett: *Music travels time*. The Quartett, shortly after its founding, was awarded 1st prize in Germany's



Yuvaraj's work — mixed media — Wood and metal.

1994 nationwide youth competition *Jugend - Musiziert*. (At the Music Academy, 7.00 pm.)

Till September 24: *Different Strokes*, an exhibition of the work of Aparajita, Lakshmi Krishnamurthy and Kamla Ravikumar. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

September 24: *Compagnie Castafiore*, a modern dance group, will, through Savitry Nair, a kuchipudi dancer, discover the choreographies, cinema and music of Chennai (at Alliance Francaise, 7.00 p.m.)

Till October 18: An Exhibition of sculptures by V. Yuvaraj. (At Ashvita.)

Answers to Quiz

1. Lumbini Park and Gokul Chat shop; 2. Syria; 3. Taurian Resources Private Limited, Mumbai; 4. Ace shooter Manavjit Singh Sandhu; 5. Narayan Dutt Tiwari; 6. Mainz, Germany; 7. Google Sky; 8. National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL); 9. Malaysia; 10. The 'Baiji' or the Chinese River Dolphin.

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11. Sharadha Ramanathan; 12. Akila India Samathuva Makkal Katchi; 13. Ajith; 14. Neel Metal Fanalca; 15. A 40-line exchange on Errabalu Chetty Street (Parry's) to serve a baseline of 24 subscribers; 16. It's the files containing details of the names and faces of people who indulge in eve-teasing; 17. The Tamil Nadu Secretariat; 18. K.N. Nehru; 19. Pudukkotai and Perambalur; 20. 1896 (December 5th).

MADRAS WEEK – FROM SASHI'S BLOG

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forward this time voluntarily to support our effort.

One of the points we debated on was whether to have two or three speakers speaking on the same day at the same time at different venues. Why not? — particularly if the locations are scattered widely and the subjects don't clash. One of the objectives in future is to

have smaller programmes in different neighbourhoods so that residents in these areas can participate in the celebrations of the founding of the city.

One of the things that we need to do the next time around is to get more action in Tamil — more Tamil speakers, for instance.

If you ask me, the heroes of this year's Madras Week were

the students, teachers and professors who not only managed to put together a variety of programmes at short notice, but who also displayed a lot of enthusiasm showcasing what they had prepared.

To all those who supported Madras Day and Madras Week, many, many thanks. **Till next year, then, from August 17th to the 23rd, 2008.**

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

