

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Lessons for Chennai First

A look at the Bombay experience

(By A Special Correspondent)

A number of proposals and several major projects put forward by Bombay First have not got off the ground. This, says Louis Menezes, the former IAS officer who had long stints in Madras with the Corporation and the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority and who is now a UN adviser with the Sustainable Chennai Project, has been due to an "unbridged gap between Bombay First and the official authorities who have to cooperate, collaborate, approve or support these projects in order for them to move forward." Gerson da Cunha, the one full-time person with Bombay First, recently told Menezes that this has been "the major bottleneck".

In the context of the first steps being taken towards Chennai First, Menezes not

only suggests that Chennai learn from the Mumbai experience but also get down Gerson da Cunha in July before he moves on, as planned, to pastures new, and hear him spell out the Mumbai experience. The Madras Management Association and the British Council, who worked together on the first meeting on Chennai First, should, in this context, take the next step early.

Among the proposals put forward by Bombay First are these that have been prepared by the consultants it has hired:

- Alternative uses for textile mills land in Mumbai;
- Support projects for the Metropolitan Urban Transport Project; and
- Cleaning up, decongesting and maintaining the Tulusi Pipe Road (8 km), which is an alternate route from Ballard Estate to the suburbs, by a private sector-

Mumbai Municipal Corporation collaborative effort.

The Bombay First initiative has also suggested:

- A scheme for well-lit signposting for the major routes in the Mumbai metropolitan area, which could be implemented by the private sector;
- An ultramodern computerised network linking all financial institutions in Mumbai; and
- A shared pager system that will give easy and low-priced access to small businessmen to telecommunications.

Bombay First, a totally private initiative, is a registered Trust funded by some of the leading business houses in Mumbai. It has a 20-member Governing Council, including four of the Trustees, and deeply involved in its work are Ashok Advani of Blue Star, Keshub Mahindra of Mahindra & Mahindra, Deepak Parekh of HDFC and the House of Tatas among others. Apart from da Cunha, the initiative has several advisers, like B M Sukhthankar, a retired Chief Secretary of Maharashtra. The Trust has identified specific areas of concerns it plans to work on and has listed Financial Services, Telecommunications, Traffic and Transportation, Housing and Land Use, Employment and Training, and Heritage and Conservation as its priorities.

Bombay First has also initiated research projects that will study the Informal Sector and its Linkages (entrusted to the NCAER), the City's Financial Services, and Mumbai's contribution to the National Economy.

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A trust to help Chennai

In a note on the proposal for a Chennai First Trust (which he prefers to call a Sustainable Chennai Trust, LOUIS MENEZES, IAS (RETD.) writes:

"The main problems facing Chennai need no elaboration. There is an urgent need to tackle the critical problems of water supply, garbage collection, sanitation, polluted waterways, traffic congestion, transportation, slums and squatter settlements, air pollution and environmental degradation. There is need for revamping the urban infrastructure. There is an urgent need to protect and conserve Chennai's cultural and historical heritage and natural environment. There is a dire need for some realistic long-term planning of the Chennai Metro Area and beyond. There is need to tap non-budgetary sources of finance for the development of the metropolitan area. There is need to have a close look at human resource development and the requirements of the new enterprises coming into this area. And, lastly, there is a whole unfinished agenda of urban sector administrative, legislative and institutional reform to remove the innumerable barriers that still exist to speeding the pace of progress.

Hitherto, all this was left to the Government. No doubt, much of this is within the public domain. But the failure of Governmental agencies to get their act together has generated a variety of initiatives to find alternative ways of doing things. Some of it has to do with privatisation, joint ventures, commercialisation of infrastructure, new and environment friendly technologies etc. Some of it has to do with greater transparency and accountability in public life. Some of it has to do with greater consultation between Government and business and industry, particularly through industry associations. Some of it has to do with the growth of trusts and movements for heritage and nature conservation and public interest litigation

to stay the hand of perceived violators of our inheritance. The articulation of these initiatives and new concepts cannot be left to the Government. The whole process needs major inputs from business and industry. In other words, business and industry have to actively participate in the process. There is, therefore need for a private, non-governmental, industry-supported initiative which can operate independently. A Trust has been suggested.

What would be the mandate of such a Trust? The Trust could start modestly and work on specific areas of concern. Such as:

- Supplementing and complementing the efforts of the CMC and other official agencies in improving conditions in Chennai.
- Supporting these in the field of heritage conservation and environmental protection.
- Promoting, supporting awareness creation and information dissemination programmes in matters of public interest.
- Acting as a Brains Trust and Resource Centre on CMA's development and environmental matters.
- Promoting the greening of Chennai and inculcating environment consciousness among the young.
- Stimulating public debate and supporting research and analysis on development vs environment issues in the CMA.
- Publishing or supporting the publication of newsletters, papers, reports etc., in furtherance of the Trust's objectives, more particularly on heritage conservation, environment pollution, NGO activities.
- Assiduously and systematically promoting among all citizens in the CMA pride in their City and a commitment to developing its image as a City which is efficiently and equitably managed.

(Continued on page 3)

Support for Musings — and beyond — grows

(By The Editor)

The support for Madras Musings and the Chennai First initiative that, it is hoped, will emerge out of this enthusiasm, keeps growing. Generous support has been received during the first quarter of 1997-98 from APCOM Computers Ltd, the TAJ groups of hotels, the WELCOMGROUP of hotels, THIRU AROORAN Sugars Ltd., HDFC and TVS SUZUKI. Madras Musings, your Editor and the Publishers, Messrs Lokavani Hall Mark Press Pvt Ltd, thank them for their generous support to an initiative that cares for Madras that is Chennai and which aims to help make it a better city.

The support being provided

Madras Musings, by these six organisations and the eleven initiators of this support who continue their commitment, is for the FREE distribution fortnightly of 10,000 copies of the journal to those who WANT it. At the moment, about 9000 copies are being sent out to those on a dedicated and growing mailing list and the rest are distributed through about 15 outlets, mainly bookshops, for the casual reader. The cost of this is around Rs.12 lakh. All surplus funds will go towards forming the corpus of a Trust, perhaps the Chennai First Trust, which, it is intended, will, in the future, work on specific projects that will help develop a better Chennai.

No more Soviets

One of the curious and completely overlooked outcomes of the end of the Cold War is the absence of the large groups of Soviet citizens — Heroes of The Republic, all of them, no doubt — who used to be sent to India under the strict and austere control of English-speaking commissars. They were regularly to be seen in and around Madras in those days, and always stayed at the Connemara Hotel. It was said that they were never allowed to have any local money, in case they were tempted to run away.

To make up for that, the poor Russian tourists often tried to sell Soviet articles locally. One place where this was evident was on the route to Maha-

balipuram, where they always stopped at the Crocodile Bank. Over the years, a trade sprang up between the Russians and the local villagers. The Russians used to sell things like cigarette lighters and fountain pens to the locals who then set up shop and sold them back to groups of Indian tourists from other parts of India, presumably making a reasonable profit on the deal.

This suited everyone except the commissars who were in charge of the Russian groups. These were always tough but good-looking English-speaking women, whose duty was to shepherd their Soviet sheep from place to place without risk of contamination from freedom-loving Indians. This did not, however, work out exactly to plan. On one occasion, two daring Soviet heroes, tired of being cooped up in the Connemara Hotel, are said to have slipped their guards late one evening, and taken one of the taxis waiting outside.

Now, our Madras taxi drivers are an enterprising lot, as anyone who has suffered their attentions will attest. But though they speak several Indian languages in addition to their native Tamil, and most of them have a good smattering of English too, Russian is not among their linguistic accomplishments; nor are Russians, heroes of the Republic or otherwise, noted for their command of Tamil. Thus it came about that our trusty pair of Soviet heroes tried to tell the taxi-driver that they would dearly love a protracted tour of our beautiful city, but could pay for such a trip only in Russian cigarettes, since they did not possess a single rupee between them. The taxi driver, or so it is said, got the idea that the cigarettes were to be an unexpected additional bonus to the already extravagantly inflated fare he had planned to palm them off with and when, some hours later, he returned them to the Connemara after the lengthy city tour they had demanded, and found they had no money at all, the enraged taxi driver pursued them into the hotel foyer, bellowing for his fare, and had to be physically expelled by the hotel staff.

Such a scandal is the very thing the escorting commissars were there to prevent, and in a reckless and ill-considered attempt to cover up, the commissar concerned made the fatal error of trying to sell the hotel manager a bottle of their best vodka in order to get the money to pay the taxi driver. Unfortunately, this event occurred during the last attempt of Tamil Nadu to enforce Prohibition, and the manager, fearing for his own reputation, was obliged to refuse the vodka and was left with no alternative but to pay the taximan out of his own pocket.

That Manager happened to be a good friend of mine, which

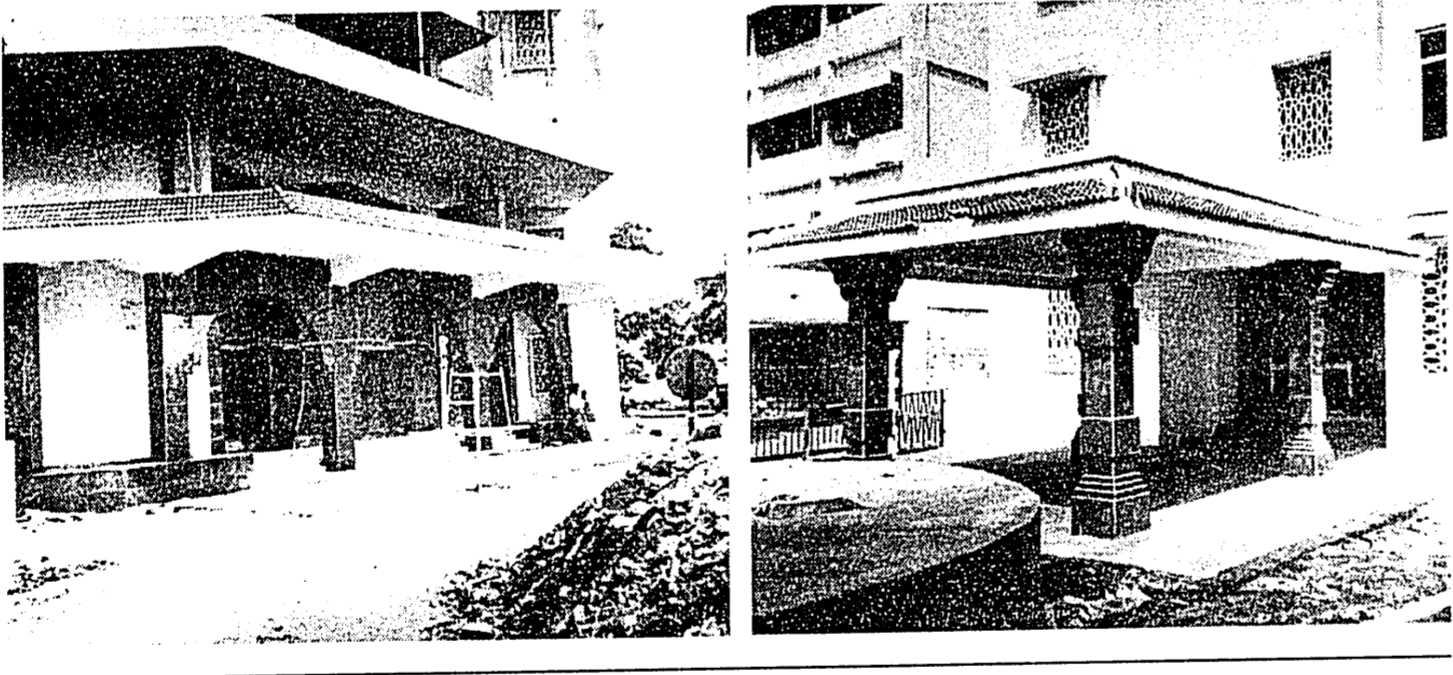
Regarding our story last fortnight about the possibility of Chepauk Palace, or a part of it, being pulled down to make way for a multistorey building, we are told by other sources that the new building is contemplated in the Palace campus, in vacant space to the rear. All we can say is, that will destroy what little is left of the view of the building that must be considered the precursor of Indo-Saracenic architecture.

Late in the 19th Century, Robert Chisholm hid part of the view with his PWD building, though he did attempt an exercise in integration. Then, in more recent times, another PWD building and Ezhilagam, the former in art deco style, the latter in a non-style, hid the rest of the Palace which once lent majesty to Madras's skyline seen from the sea. Now, another building in the campus will only hide whatever is left and lead to an eventual case being made for pulling down an ancient building that no one can see.

This is why we have long sought a Heritage Act. Such an Act would not only prevent the construction of such view-blocking buildings on heritage campuses, but also such sore thumbs as that multistorey block in Fort St. George, which has completely ruined the ambience of a protected area.

Such an Act will also ensure that if new buildings are built in a protected place, they will merge well with the existing buildings. The cases we have cited have certainly not integrated, and the authorities are now making bad worse as they embellish the Fort tower block with arched stonehats and the entrances to Ezhilagam with ornate porticoes that seem bent on using the PWD's now favourite decorative medium, polished red granite. These additions have little relevance to what was built lately and what had existed for 200 years and more. In this connection, a thought might also be spared for whether such embellishments are necessary for buildings so badly and filthily maintained inside?

Our OLD shows the majesty of Chepauk Palace when its view was not hidden from public gaze. And our NEW shows the embellishments at Ezhilagam. (Photographs: THE OLD courtesy VINTAGE VIGNETTES and the NEW by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



is how I know this story, but our friendship did not survive my publication of it in the newspaper column I was at the time writing in the *Indian Express*. My friend was outraged at what he considered a gross breach of confidence on my part and pointed out that much of the Connemara's profits at that time derived from those Russian tour groups. By publishing the story, he told me, I had jeopardised the hotel's lucrative Soviet trade, as well as his own job.

How things have changed! The Cold War ended long ago, the sinister, shuttered premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation on Cenotaph Road, often jocularly referred to by many of us as the Lubyanka — that notorious prison and torture headquarters of the Soviet KGB — appears utterly deserted, and I am told that by an extraordinary reversal of political dispo-

sitions, the American community in Madras, which, like the British, has expanded considerably due to the opening up of the economy, has set up a school for their children in the Russian Cultural Centre, behind the Chola Hotel.

I don't know what has happened to those choice little groups of Soviet Heroes who were once so pathetically shepherded around our country and our cities by their dour commissars, but neither can I resist the temptation of retailing one more story as told in a British newspaper by James Cameron that outstanding journalist. Cameron frequently came to Madras for holidays, and once encountered such a group of Russians in a beach hotel on the Mahabalipuram road.

The manager of that hotel somehow learned that it was the birthday of one of the Russian women in the group stay-

ing there, and as a delightful gesture presented the lady with a beautiful Kanchipuram saree, telling her that he wished her to accept it as a memento of affection not only from himself and his hotel but from the people of India.

To the Manager's — and Cameron's — astonishment and dismay, the saree was snatched away by an infuriated commissar who said — Cameron swore this was true — that such a presentation "was not on the programme" and not only refused to allow the Russian woman to accept it but laid a severe complaint against the well-meaning manager who thereafter suffered a berating from the hotel owners, rather than the warm praise he clearly deserved.

Thankfully those days of outrageous Big Brother manipulation of the individual's freedom are gone for good, I hope.

THE OLD...

...& THE NEW

— THE EDITOR

One Man's Madras — HARRY MILLER'S

NOSTALGIA

The Egmore of yore



The Police Commissioner's Office

Sixty-odd years ago, Egmore was a clean, uncongested part of our city, with elegant bungalows set on wide, tree-lined roads. I remember the eponymous Police Commissioner's Office Road which used to be connected to Poonamallee High Road by a level crossing. The Egmore overbridge came many years later. The sound of feet marching to the rhythm of the Police Band, with the sound of horses' hooves following, would get the residents of this road on to their verandahs to watch the march-past.

The first bungalow on the road, a red brick construction, was called Cotter House. It belonged to K. Balarama Iyer, who had retired as an Accountant General at a time when very few Indians rose to such high office. On the wall of his upstairs verandah was hung a particularly large wall clock, earning the house the name *Gadiyara Bangala*. Hundreds of passers-by consulted the clock every day. In fact, the famous writer R.K. Narayan still remembers how, on his way back from the beach in the evenings, the clock made him quicken his footsteps to reach his grandmother's house in Purasawalkam before

dinner every day. Rama Iyer's son was B. Sivaraman, ICS, who, during his tenure as Secretary of Agriculture, was instrumental in promoting the Green Revolution. He later retired as Cabinet Secretary. This elegant house is totally unrecognisable now.

Their immediate neighbour

was Balakrishna Menon, an unassuming, scholarly gentleman who was with *The Madras Mail*. Then came *Dilkausha* (earlier called *Ashleigh* by its English owner), the home of V. Iyer, also a retired Accountant General. His son, V. Pattabhiraman, was a conspicuous figure in Madras cricketing circles

both because of his height (6'4") and as a spotter and nurturer of young talent. Ramsay Unger (an anglicised version of Ramaswami Iyengar, according to local wags), who occupied the beautiful colonial-style house next door, was a pioneer in the field of ice manufacture and owned an ice factory near Egmore station.

The Police Commissioner's office was the last building on the road. On the opposite side were the official residences of the famous gynaecologist Dr. Sir A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar of the Maternity Hospital and Dr. Muthiah of the Ophthalmic Hospital, who, as superintendents of their respective hospitals, rendered yeoman service to the poor, who, in turn, worshipped them.

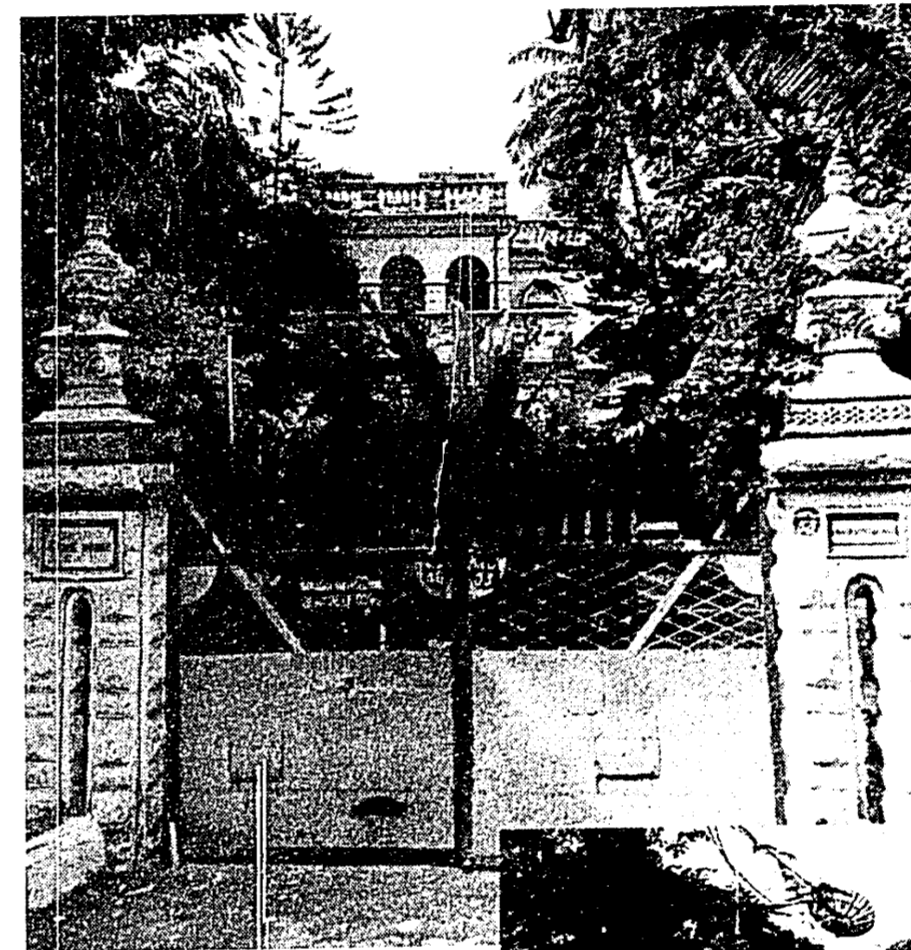
Past the Commissioner's office was the road crossing known as *Moonru Vilakku*, with the Presidency Magistrate's Court being diagonally oppo-

site. This led to Harris Road. Mr. Khabardar (of Buick car fame) lived in *Stone House*, where his children were brought up to imbibe Tamil culture along with Parsi and Western ways. Dr. M. Kesava Pai, the renowned doctor, and Dr. Kesari, whose infallible specifics, 'Lodhra', 'Amrita' and 'Arka', catered to various ailments, were also residents of Harris Road. So also Dr. Lakshminipathy and Dr. Mrs. Rukmini Lakshminipathy who were deeply involved in the freedom struggle. Nearby Marshall's Road has been renamed Dr. Rukmini Lakshminipathy Road.

The changes undergone by one side of Pantheon Road are certainly not for the better. The site of the present Ashoka Hotel was originally the vast property of the Zamindar of Chunampet. Most other bungalows on that road, including the home of Mrs. Y.G. Parthasarathy, have been replaced by characterless apartment blocks and shopping plazas.

An Octogenarian Egmoreite

(To be continued next fortnight)



A glimpse of Stone House (above). Note name on pillar on left. On right is the Hotel Ashoka, built on what was once zamindari property. (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

COMPTON vs. JOHNSTONE

Denis Compton, who passed away recently, left countless admirers wherever cricket is played. There must be a few of them who remember him in Madras. For Compton played a matchless innings of 81 for Holkar in the Ranji Trophy semi-final in February 1945 at Chepauk. It was a performance which was typically Compton in character, packed with gusto and grit and many saucy strokes, the cut, cover drive and the sweep which he patented.

The 1944-45 season is specially dear to me, for it was my last in Madras. Also every match prior to the semifinal had much to offer. The game against Hyderabad was a "close run thing" by Hyderabad, who, with elegant knocks of 54 by Jagdish Lal and 47 by Aibara, could have held on to their slender 16-run lead to knock Madras out of the championship. But Madras' captain C.P. Johnstone made an inspired change when he recalled

Rangachari, who ended the innings by having Mehta caught at short square-leg by Robinson. I can still hear the roar round Chepauk which greeted this dismissal.

In those days Madras had the best fielding side in the game, Johnstone at slip, Ren Nailer in the deep, with Robinson and Richardson to patrol either side of the wicket. Richardson was of American origin and had taken to the game while working for Burmah-Shell in Madras. He had a habit of tucking his county cap behind his back, in the waistband of his trousers, and for years club cricketers in Madras imitated him.

However this article is on Compton but I thought the lead up to it should convey the interest which the Ranji Trophy evoked — unmatched even by the 'pyjama game' of today. For there were vast crowds awaiting admittance into Chepauk, with mounted policemen ensuring

that the queues, which stretched along Wallajah Road, were orderly. There was just about standing room for latecomers.

Lucky to secure a seat on high in the Federation Gallery, which was right behind the bowler's arm facing the pavilion, one scene is frozen in memory to this day. It is of C.K.

by K.N. Prabhu

Nayudu, towering over all, leading his men out. They fanned out behind him, tossing the ball to each other. And as Patwardhan ran in to bowl the first ball, the cluster of slips bent down. It was like a scene out of some classical ballet.

Madras, as usual, disappointed with only C.P. Johnstone (64) and Ram Singh (34) being able to withstand the bowling of C.S. Nayudu and Sarwate who bagged six for 89. Worse still, my favourite, the young collegian M. Ananth-

narayan, bagged a 'pair' in the match. Tall and sturdy and favouring the lofted stroke over the inside, he did not live up to promise. Wonder where he is now?

However, the cynosure of all eyes was 'The Golden Boy', Denis Compton. He came in when Holkar had lost three wickets cheaply, including that other artiste, Mushtaq Ali, who was caught for eight runs by Gopalan off Ram Singh. Compton found the right company in his captain. What a titanic struggle that was, with the great C.K. playing a game that was totally alien to his nature in order to help Compton retrieve the innings.

I shall never forget the duel between Ram Singh and Compton. From over the wicket, Ram Singh came ambling through to bowl his legbreaks in line with the offstump. And Compton cut him repeatedly just out of Johnstone's outstretched hands at slip. Then, as Johnstone

would go through the usual drill and so would Compton, returning for his second run with a broad cheeky grin specially meant for Johnstone, even as Ren Nailer retrieved the ball and threw it to the keeper from third man. This is an example of the way the game was played in the past. For today a captain would pack the slips to block the stroke or get the bowler to attack the leg stump.

When I recounted this match in my column for *The Times of India*, Richardson who was living in Bombay after retirement wrote: "I could not agree with Niran (my pseudonym) more about Con Johnstone being a great captain. I was the principal actor in one incident which illustrates his brilliance. I was Madras Cricket Club's stock left-hand bowler, but certainly not good enough to bowl in Ranji Trophy cricket

(Continued on page 6)

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If you would like to be put on *Madras Musings'* mailing list, just fill in the form below (use block letters/type) and post it to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt Ltd, 62/63 Greames Road, MADRAS-600 006.

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Baking some some problems

“Started to provide food for the sick, the bread manufacturers themselves are now sick.” laments P.P. Subramanian, Secretary, South India Bread Manufacturers' Association. According to him, about 70 bread-making units, with a capacity of 5000 loaves a day, have closed down their ovens in the recent past. The reason: High cost of inputs and severe competition between unequals.

While private bread manufacturers have to pay about Rs.1000 for a 90kg bag of maida — a value-added wheat product from the open market, Modern Food Industries Ltd (MFIL) gets it for Rs. 850 from the Food Corporation of India (FCI), both public sector units.

urbanisation have resulted in the demand for bread going up. “Bread is no more a sick man's food, but a staple for many, including rural people”, he says. The industry, as a result, is growing at an average annual rate of 10 per cent, he adds.

The city's consumption, which was a little over 900 tons in 1990-91, increased to 1200 tons last year and, according to industry projections, the demand is likely to go up to 1300 tons in 1997-98 and 1700 tons by the turn of this century.

MFIL supplies 1,00,000 loaves a day in Chennai from its plant in Taramani, and has a dominant 70 per cent market share. The fight for a slice of the remaining 30% is between

unsold stock, unlike us, says Subramanian. Nor do they have to spend on promotional expenses; Milka Bread, it is reported, spends about 70 paise a loaf on advertising.

However, the days of plain white/milk bread are over. The recent trend is the introduction of varieties like wholewheat bread, milk bread, cracked wheat bread, brown bread, hearth bread, high protein bread, health bread (with high fibre contents), and bread with different flavours, like almond and cardamom. Sterling Healthcare Ltd (SHL) is soon to introduce fenugreek bread in the Chennai and Bangalore markets. Fenugreek (vendayam/methi) contains high fibre content, which is good for people with high cholesterol levels and diabetes. According to G. Gopalan, Vice President, SHL, the company which will initially focus on institutional sales to hospitals, canteens etc., hopes to sell about 2000 to 5000 loaves a day. While new varieties can help to carve out niche areas for exclusive bread-makers, bakery products like cakes and biscuits help fatten their bottomlines.

But all said and done, the need of the hour, according to Subramanian, is for the bread-makers in the country to modernise their production lines by importing high speed kneaders, cake mixers, sheeters etc. if they want to stay trim and fit. Failing which, they will inevitably fall sick and have to find nourishment elsewhere.

branded majors like Spencer's and Milka and neighbourhood bakers like Adyar Bakery, Iyengar Bakery and Hot Breads. For neighbourhood bakers, the margins are better. Also, with small volumes (150-200 loaves a day sales) realisations are quick. People also prefer them as they perceive their product as fresh bread. Apart from all this, they don't have to set up a distribution network and don't have to take back

Cooking Corner

Here are a couple of recipes for chicken. The Biryani can be prepared in just 50 minutes.

PRESSURE COOKER BIRIYANI

Preparation time : 10-15 minutes
Cooking time : 40 minutes.

Ingredients

- 500 g broiler chicken
- 500 g basmati rice
- 300 g onion - sliced finely
- 50 g green chillies - crushed
- 3 tsp garlic paste
- 3 tsp ginger paste
- 2 tsp khus khus - ground
- 1/2 cup curd
- 1/2 bunch coriander leaves - chopped

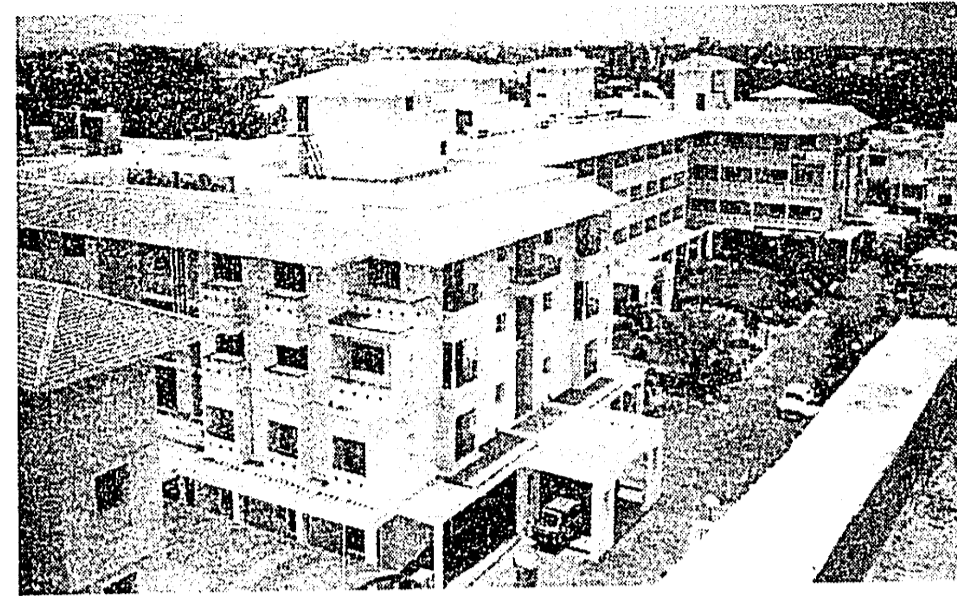
- 1/4 bunch pudhina leaves - chopped
- Juice of one lime
- 150 g refined oil
- 3 tbs ghee or Dalda
- 2 tsp garam masala powder
- 4 tbs rose water + a little kesari powder (yellow colour)
- Salt to taste.

Method

Cut the chicken into big pieces and wash. Mix half of the sliced onion, ingredients 4-11 and the salt. Marinate the chicken pieces in this mixture for half an hour.

Heat water in a vessel. Add washed rice and salt and cook for 3-4 minutes till the rice is quarter-cooked. Remove and drain the water.

Heat the oil in a pressure cooker and add the remaining onion. Fry to a golden brown colour and remove. Add the marinated chicken pieces together with the masala. Stir for a few minutes and add 1/4 cup water and a little garam masala powder. Now put



'Letting' congestion

The massive Indian Bank Complex in MRC Nagar is hardly used for the purposes it was intended. The Man From Madras Musings finds. It had been intended as a residential training institution, with quarters, guesthouse, residential quarters etc. But with that not working out, attempts are being made to keep it alive. Its several large conference halls and seminar and conference rooms are proving popular for discussion groups, workshops, public lectures, even AGMs of companies. All of them are well-equipped and offer the necessary support facilities. The staff will arrange for catering — or you can arrange for your own, enabling you to provide five-star catering and service if you are planning a five-star conference. A new college with what is said to be British links even hired a portion of these premises, but does not seem to have got off the ground.

The only fly in the ointment here is that the growing popularity of this complex is likely to lead to still heavier traffic in an area that was intended to be comfortably residential in Mayor Ramnathan's view, but is now becoming educational. If ever the Stock Exchange comes up here — and it has bought a substantial block of land here — the traffic can only further mar the peace of one of the quietest parts of the city and affect the ecology of the Adyar Estuary, it seems certain.

Compton remembered

(Continued from page 5)

and even less fit to bowl to C.K. and Denis. Amazingly, for two overs they fumbled and scratched at me as if I were Verity himself. My pace, flight and spin were just sufficiently different from Ram's to make all the difference and it unsettled them completely. In the next over, Rangachari clean-bowled them both. I had bowled my last over for Madras.

Rangachari finished with seven for 110 and there were many of us who were heart-broken when he was ignored for the side which toured England in 1946. For he surely seemed a more incisive bowler than

Ranga Sohoni, who was a failure on that tour, and Shute Banerjee, despite his record stand with Sarwate against Surrey.

Chepauk was always Sarwate's happy hunting ground. He was primarily responsible for routing Madras for 188. A year later, Sarwate was to run through Hassett's Services side on its way home after the War. This was before he shifted to bowling offbreaks. But when I think of that season before the War ended, it is the manner in which Compton enjoyed batting, even during a crisis, that stays in mind.

- 2 eggs
- 2 big onion - sliced finely
- 2 green chillies - chopped
- 1 tomato - sliced
- 1/2 bunch coriander leaves - chopped
- 2 tbs oil
- Salt to taste.

Method

If you are using uncooked chicken, cook the chicken with 2 teaspoons chilli powder, 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder, 1/2 teaspoon garlic paste and salt to taste. Cook till the chicken is done, remove the flesh and shred it. If it's leftovers you are using, you can shred the chicken without any further ado.

Heat oil. Add chopped onion and chillies. Fry till onion is soft. Add tomatoes and stir for a few seconds. Add chicken pieces and stir till dry.

Beat eggs well with a little chilli powder and salt. Add to the chicken and stir till the moisture is absorbed. Serve hot with chapathi.

— Ummi Abdulla

SCRAMBLED CHICKEN AND EGG

Preparation time : 5 minutes
Cooking time : 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup shredded meat from any left-over chicken curry or from half a chicken

Reviving Cholamandal

Nandagopal, the sculptor from Cholamandal Artists' Village, was in the news last year for his huge, stainless steel sculpture, 'The Tree', which was installed at Priyadarshani Park, Mumbai. As I walked into his home in Injambakkam, to talk about it a year after its installation, he had just received an invitation from the Government to be a member of the Jury for the selection of the artists to be represented at the Triennale of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

There was a big controversy recently in the press involving another Chennai artist, Sadanand Menon, who was in an earlier selected advisory committee. This committee had been created after the Akademi secretary had been asked to resign on corruption charges. S Kalidas had written in *The Pioneer*, Delhi, that the Baroda School was "hijacking" the Triennale, to which Sadanand Menon had replied angrily. *The Indian and World Arts and Crafts*, published from Delhi, added fuel to the fire by reproducing the report of Kalidas and the reply of Menon and stating

that the controversy had touched an all-time low in personal invective and innuendo. The Committee was disbanded soon after and Nandagopal was asked to join the new advisory committee. "Let's hope the Triennale take place in the middle of all these controversies," smiled Nandagopal as he ushered me into his house.

"Is the Queen visiting Cholamandal?" I asked right away. The British High Commission is looking at the different things Queen Elizabeth can see when she comes to Chennai

by V.R. Devika

in September. Cholamandal is one of them, but the programme has not been finalised, said Nandagopal.

I see a lot of change at Cholamandal. Gone are the days of thatched roofs and small houses. Most of them now are designer buildings and there is brisk construction activity going on all the time. Artists, it would appear, make money these days. "The days of my father (K.C.S. Panickar, the founder of Cholamandal) and

his disciples, the first batch of Cholamandal artists, are gone," says Nandagopal. Cholamandal served a purpose when it was created and that was to bring contemporary artists before the public eye and to support their artistic creativity. "It's now time to look to the future and not to the past. Cholamandal can only grow with more and more young people coming in."

The boom in the corporate sector, the boom in the art-gallery business, and the growth of the city of Chennai past Cholamandal has meant that Cholamandal has to change its original flavour and come to terms with the changing times. The original group who needed to be sheltered are now leading artists who plan holidays years in advance. "But the youth have that mood with which this project began and we have an obligation to nurture them", Nandagopal says emotionally.

"It is great to sit with young artists who are raring to go and hear them. I wish we could do more for them here."

There are four young people working in the studios at Cholamandal. The Village

to review books on her show and chose Jacquelyn's book as the first one to review. Overnight, the book became a sensational best-seller. It's about family bonds and values that hold people together.

* * *

The psychologist-detective, Alex Delaware is back! In Jonathan Kellerman's *The Clinic* (Warner Books — Rs.220.50), Alex with his detective friend Milo Strigis, unveils the horrifying truths behind the gruesome murder of Hope Devane, a professor of psychology and an author.

* * *

Sidney Arthur thinks she has lost her husband Jason, in a plane crash. However, she discovers something else — a sinister plot to kill the most powerful man in America. And Sidney is plunged into a trail of murder, violence and deep secrets in David Baldacci's *Total Control* (Pocket Books — Rs. 249.90). The author of *Absolute Power*, Baldacci is tipped to become a front-rank bestselling author, in the league of John Grisham and Robert Ludlum.

Savitha
Padmanabhan



Nandagopal and his 'Tree' at the Priyadarshini Park, Mumbai. This 20-ft tall, stainless steel welded sculpture was commissioned by the National Centre of the Performing Arts, Mumbai and installed a year ago.

wants to refurbish its studios, provide more space and get some scholarships to enable the young artists to pay a nominal rent for the studios. They can find accommodation in Injambakkam village and work at Cholamandal. RPG is opening a restaurant there and this will attract a new crowd. Architect Sheila Shivaprakash has drawn up plans for an innovative and modern gallery and auditorium space at Cholamandal. The Committee plans to sell two grounds of land to get money to build it. Nandagopal and his wife Kala feel it is important to have interactive workshops for children with the artists.

D.K. Oza has written a letter to the Cholamandal Committee and to the Press about reviving the plan for a 'Friends to Cholamandal' group with membership fees. The artists feel that while Oza's ideas are good and his intentions honourable, it would cramp the individuality of artists and make a club of Cholamandal's friends.

Cholamandal, it would appear, is gearing up for a lot of activity. But Nandagopal wishes the South would take a leaf out of the North's manual of helping such institutions. When he was working on the installation of the 20-foot tall, 15-foot wide 'Tree' in Priyadarshini Park, near the Hanging Gardens, Mumbai, several joggers who used the place regularly expressed concern about what was coming up there. They were happy to learn it was a sculpture that did not depict a political personality. The nearly 3000 joggers at Priyadarshini Park manage the place all by themselves through a citizens'

association and keep it very clean. They monitor all activities in the park.

'The Tree', an abstract sculpture, caught the attention of a film crew that used it as the tree a young couple in love need to run around. "That only drew more attention to the sculpture," laughs Nandagopal. "I decided not to be too avant garde in this work when J.J. Bhabha asked me to blow up a small sculpture of 'The Tree' that he had bought some time ago. So I put in playful animals and fish to make it art for the public."

The stainless steel used is SS, 316 grade steel used for atomic reactors and surgical equipment. Nandagopal contacted SAIL for help and they were very helpful. Iron hammers could not be used to work on it, as there was the danger of the iron corroding it; it had to be bent, while cold, by hand. It is cleaned with diluted nitric acid, which protects it from rain and shine — and enables the sculpture to wash itself clean with every rain!

Nandagopal worked on the sculpture for six months and then realised he had not worked on parts but on the full sculpture. That necessitated two cranes to load it on to a 25-ton truck to be taken to Mumbai.

People have recently started talking to Nandagopal about a large tree sculpture for Nungambakkam High Road.

Editor's Note: Will it have anything to do with Gandhiji now that the road has his name? It might be an apt commemoration of fifty years of Independence.

Run for a cause on the 13th

The citizens of Chennai will run for a cause, in fact several causes, on Sunday, July 13, 1997. The run, which will begin from Gandhi Mantapam on Sardar Patel Road, will end at Gandhi Statue, Kamarajar Salai.

The July 13th Run will comprise six laps. Each lap will be dedicated to one or more NGOs. These NGOs working to improve the lot of the socially disadvantaged have been chosen for support by the 1997 Run:

GNANA DEEPAM: Uma

Dandapani has been striving to bring some dignity into the lives of mentally retarded children. She runs a school at Pammal to train and educate retarded children of various levels. Citizen's Run hopes to raise the funding she needs to complete a first floor hall for a vocational course for the retarded.

MAITHRI: Sridhar was totally crippled by polio in 1947. He was 18 months old. He learnt English through the BBC, German through Deutsche

and Astrology by himself. He then built up a cassette library for the blind. Maithri, started by him, now has a network of volunteers who intervene in broken homes, provide sponsors to educate disadvantaged children, help in disaster-affected areas, and organise medical camps.

ANBUKARANGAL: Joseph Kalai Veeramani, himself an orphan, has organised the Father Ceyrac Children's Home. He has created a network of women who have become

"Mother SOS" to many children. Today, 250 young women and 500 widows in several villages of Tamil Nadu take care of children in return for wages. Father Ceyrac of Loyola College has donated a piece of land in Ramapuram where Anbukarangal plans to construct a shelter for 50 orphans through the Citizens' Run project and a student work project in France.

SEED: The Society for the Educational and Economic Development of the Children of Life Prisoners, Sriperumbudur, was founded by A.R. Palani-swamy, a part-time bank employee. The Citizens' Run project funding will go to build a shed for fitter training for 17-18 years old at an industrial training institute in Irrungattukottai village.

UDAVUM KARANGAL: S Vidyakar's home for the abandoned and distressed plans a shelter for the AIDS-affected. While there is a lot of funding for AIDS awareness, there is little money for caring for AIDS victims. This is where Citizen's Run will come in.

PROBUS CLUB: Formed by some senior citizens of South Chennai who have retired from active service in different walks of life, the Club's aim is to identify and discuss social problems.

The Club wishes to repair the broken kitchen and dining room of the Urur Olcott Kuppam primary school in Besant Nagar.

RASA, founded by dancer Ambika Kameswar, works at providing movement therapy for special children. Funding is needed to provide expenses for volunteers who are trained to go into the different special schools in the city.

Part of the money collected from the sale of T-shirts with the Citizens' Run logo of running legs will go to the GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION, Chennai, for its activities which aim to bring to student communities a belief in non-violence, an appreciation of diversity, an understanding of the different religions, and respect for physical labour.

Citizens of Chennai who wish to run for a cause can choose to run for any of the NGOs and may run either one lap or more or the whole distance, as they wish. They can register for the run by buying a T-Shirt at the Alliance Francaise, 40 College Road, Chennai - 600 006. Shirts will also be available on the Citizens' Run route on July 13.

V.R. Devika

Match-fixing not so easy

Manoj Prabhakar's widely publicised accusations against his former teammates, of throwing away international matches for personal gain, has predictably drawn much attention from the media as well as the cricket-crazy public looking for reasons beyond cricket for India's inconsistent showing in the world arena.

True, cricketers are no more saints than the average politicians, bankers, cinema stars or shopkeepers or, indeed, people from any other walk of life. But the question is: Are they the money-grabbing ogres that the likes of Prabhakar, a cricketer himself, make them out to be? And assuming that they are, is it indeed possible to fix or 'tank' international matches without the general public getting so much as a whiff of it as soon as the act is done? How can such transactions as the sharing of spoils between bookies and cricketers remain a secret for years until a disgruntled exsportsman decides to spill the beans?

Years ago, the results of Ranji Trophy matches were occasionally pre-determined by the contestants. A couple of startling examples come to mind. In one match at the Corporation (now Nehru) Stadium which was affected by rain, four innings were gone through in a single day with declarations at ridiculous scores like 30 for 4 or so. This was to facilitate both teams gaining more points than they would have, had no play occurred — which would have been the case had the decision been left to the umpires by disagreeing captains. Naturally, the match was harshly commented upon by the Press as was a similar fixture a few years later between Hyderabad and Karnataka, reported to the Board by N S Rishi, one of the umpires. In both cases, the outcome of the match was known to the captains and players from

the start. In a third instance, Tamil Nadu and Hyderabad were involved in what seemed like a nailbiting contest, but in fact had been a pre-arranged farce.

The essential difference between such matches and Test or international matches is financial. In the case of the Ranji matches, there was no money at stake, no betting involved and the players earned a pittance anyway. The other dimension of national pride and millions of viewers rooting for one team or the other, was also absent.

How would Test players go about taking part in such shady deals, assuming Prabhakar's charges were true? What would a typical team meeting be like in such circumstances? Does the captain or the team management tell the rest of the team that they should all work together towards a defeat? Is each player allotted a specific score, say XYZ 27 in 40 balls, is a bowler told to bowl a certain number of wickets? Would it be possible, or even considered desirable, to involve every member of the team in the action, or are only an exclusive few actually part of the think tank? What if an innocent, or even defiant, individual decides to take the 'law' into his own hands and win off his own bat a match that was meant to be lost? Can a Chetan Sharma actually deliberately bowl a full toss in the very last ball to be hit for a perfectly timed six by Javed Miandad for an unbelievable win? What indeed if someone holds a catch meant to be dropped and vice-versa? How is remote control exercised when the match is in progress, what kind of hand signals are used?

A number of cricketers informally interviewed expressed the opinion that, cricket being a team game, it would be an extremely complicated operation to engineer a defeat when the side is on course for a victory.

While some patriotic fans and carping critics of our sportsmen are willing to believe that greedy cricketers are out to grab the loot when the going is good, active cricketers I talked to, while agreeing that the matter must be investigated, are convinced that Prabhakar's allegations are unfounded.

— V. Ramnarayan

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