

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## A marsh under threat

The Pallikaranai Marsh, about 1000 hectares in extent and about two kilometres from the Velachery bus terminus on the road to Tambaram, is under threat by development. An industrial estate has been planned here and environmental clearance sought for this ambitious Rs. 520 crore redevelopment scheme of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA).

In 1992, Government asked Mott MacDonald, consultants, to prepare a drainage plan for the Pallikaranai swamp and floodplain located between the Old Mahabalipuram Road and the Velachery-Tambaram Road in order to site an industrial estate. An Environmental Impact Assessment on this plan was done in 1995 by other consultants and the consultants' findings were that "no adverse impacts will be caused by the preferred drainage scheme" on the wetland habitat.

This floodplain gets flooded during the Monsoon season. The catchment area contains many water bodies. The run-off rain water enters Pallikaranai from Velachery in the north and Kumuli and Sonallur in the south. All this water passes through a stream called Okkiyamadavu and then through the South Buckingham Canal to enter the sea from the Kovalam Estuary.

Dr. V. Santharam, Honorary Secretary of the Madras Naturalists' Society, told *Madras Musings* that he remembers this

● by **RAJIND N. CHRISTY**

wetland habitat as a green carpet with tall green reeds. It used to be an ideal place for nature lovers and birdwatchers. There was little life around about 20 years ago except for the birds and small fauna. There was no traffic, no noise pollution, no industrial activity. The advent of the monsoon used to transform the marsh into a migratory home for a host of birds. About 100 species of birds of the 300-

odd species found in Chennai are found here. The common resident birds are the Purple herons, Yellow bitterns, Indian moorhens, Cormorants, Cattle egrets, Pond herons and Kingfishers. The migratory birds are the Golden plover, Common swallows, Snipe, Marsh harrier, Green sandpipers and Teal, coming from as far as Central Asia, Siberia and the Arctic Circle. Exclusive to the Pallikaranai marsh are the Purple heron, Streaked weaver, Large reed warbler, Water cock, Large Indian pratincole, Indian courser and White-nested stork. The winter visitors include the Red-necked phalarope, Long-toed stint and the

Short-toed lark. Open-billed storks and Painted storks can be spotted in quite large numbers. In winter, over 10,000 birds make this swamp their resting place.

Some birds, like the Muniya, nest within the reeds. According to Dr Santharam there is no place around Chennai with this pattern of reed growth. The Pratincoles, Coursers, Lapwings, Larks and Pipits nest on the ground.

The locals and the gypsies have a field day shooting and trapping the birds, fishing, and gathering snails. Cattle, domestic poultry and washed lines are other factors leading to the destruction of the floating vegetation which is essential for roosting and breeding birdlife.

The swamp also helps in charging the groundwater aquifers of the region and if drained the entire area will suffer from acute water shortage, the Society points out. G N Varadan, Director-in-charge, Operations, Geological Survey of India, observes: "Disturbing any of the waterways or ponds in the city and suburbs will adversely affect the natural drainage and groundwater conditions of the area. It will not be wise to fill up all the tanks and ponds and develop them, because in the process we would disturb the natural balance." The present flooding of the city roads is mainly due to filling up of many ponds and low-lying areas and converting them into residential areas, it is stated.

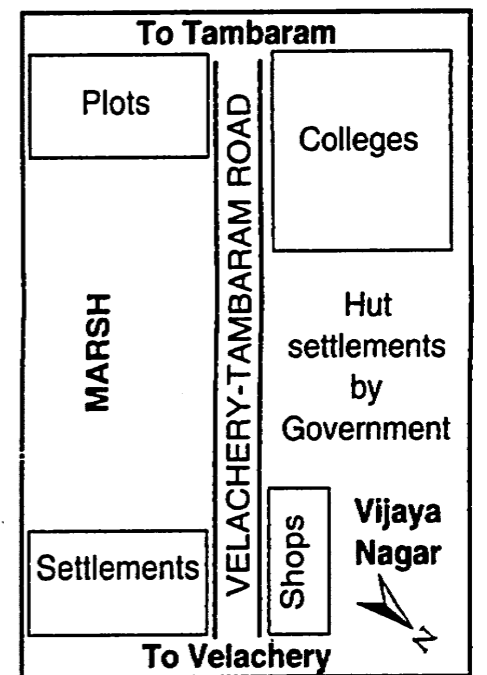
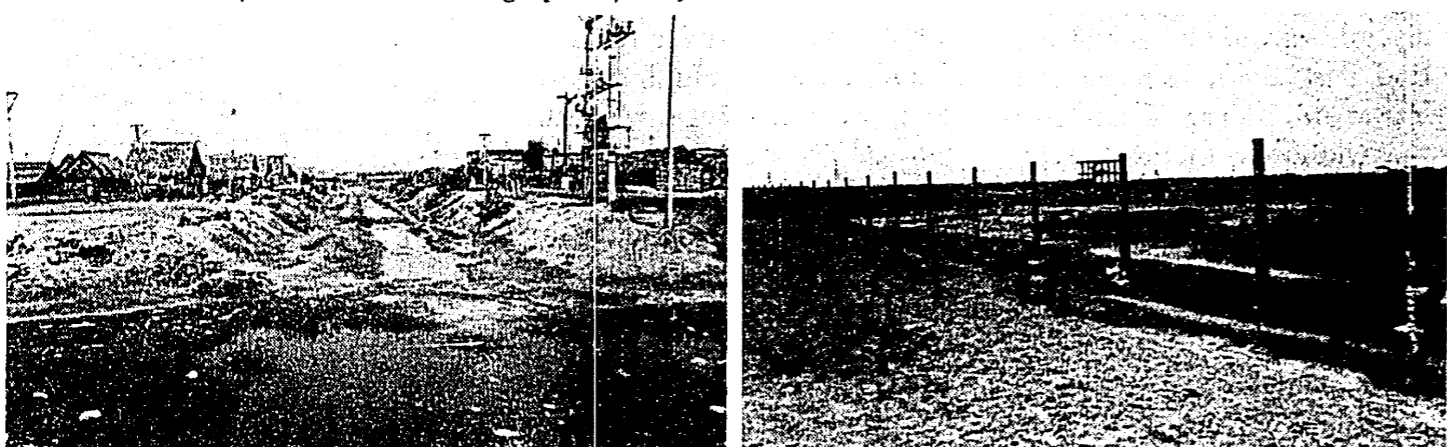
The site across the road from the marsh has been reclaimed and developed by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board to house the hut-dwellers shifted



The Pallikaranai Swamp, gradually being reduced and soon likely to be built over.



The Velachery-Tambaram Road, which passes through the Pallikaranai wetlands, is being broadened and traffic on it is increasing every day (above). Across the road from the swamp seen in the top picture, a resettlement scheme for hut-dwellers is underway, with roads and drains being built in several parts of the 'colony' (below left). On the swamp side, land is already being plotted out even while the reclamation of the swamp for development is being discussed by the CMDA, PWD and other Government departments (below right). (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



under the MRTTP project. This land has been raised to about 3 metres and is being plotted for construction of houses. With the development of the Velachery-Tambaram Road, much building work — colleges, offices and homes — has commenced on either side of the road. The road is being widened with degradable, nonde-

(Continued on Page 3)

### We welcome two more

The support for *Madras Musings* and the concept of Chennai First grows. The Publishers, Messrs Lokavani-Hall Mark Press, your Editor and all those trying to get the concept of Chennai First off the ground thank Messrs. Kasturi & Sons Ltd and EIH Associated Hotels Ltd for their generous support to both and are delighted to have them swell the numbers of supporters to 22. Meanwhile, plans for the Chennai First Trust are being drawn up and it is hoped that before the year is out the Trust will be operational and planning its first project.

— THE EDITOR



# Robert Clive's pieces of gold

Once upon a time journalists, particularly sub-editors, were supposed to know their history. At worst, they were trained to use the journal's library that used to be known by the rather morbid colloquialism, 'The Morgue' rather than the scientific sophistication of today, 'The Index', which sounds rather more like something out of the Inquisition. Sadly all that's a thing of the past today, to judge by some recent examples. But then, *The Man From Madras Musings* supposes he shouldn't be too harsh on this count, particularly when historian themselves have lost track of history and become fable-tellers in their quest for higher eminence.

These thoughts, more in sorrow than in anger, were brought on by the discovery that a UNI reporter — and all the sub-editors (if they still exist!) through whose hands his 'copy' passed in newspapers throughout India — thought Robert Clive was "one of the founders of the East India Company"! As far as MMM is aware — and his library records tell him so — John Company was founded by 24 London merchants on the last day of 1599 and went into business on the first day of 1600. Robert Clive couldn't have been even a tadpole-like glint in his mother's eye at that time; he came out as a lowly 19-year-old clerk to Fort St George in 1744, shortly before it capitulated to Duplex and La Bourdonnaise in 1746!

As Writer and soldier Robert Clive could not — and did not — make any worthwhile money, but as the Steward of Fort St David in the late 1740s and Steward of Fort St George in 1752 he did have an opportunity of making something out of everything the Commissariat bought for the soldiers' and officers' meals. In February 1753 he married Margaret Maskelyne in St Mary's in the Fort. With her brother having a career identical to his brother-in-law's her dower is not likely to have been anything noteworthy. With Robert Clive's 'commissions' out of his Stewardships also not likely to have been impressive, he went back to England shortly after his marriage richer than when he arrived in Madras but unlikely to be considered rich by any means.

The 1755 journey back to Madras and the loss of gold coins worth \$3000 when a companion ship went down during that voyage is what the UNI report has been all about. *The Times*, London, is quoted as the source for the story. But *The Times* after Rupert Murdoch has often seemed in need of history lessons. MMM doesn't doubt that divers have found a treasure; but he would like to hear more definite information that the money did indeed BELONG to Robert Clive. There's little evidence that he made that kind

of money during his first stint in India; later stints in Madras and, especially, Calcutta (he was governor of Bengal from 1765) was where he made his fortune — and that was long after 1755.

Where then MIGHT this money have come from? He might have been carrying it for the Company; more likely he might have been carrying it for friends who were sending out money through him for investment in India, a common enough practice in those days. If, however, it is still believed that the money did indeed BELONG to the lowly officer in Fort St George that Robert Clive was, MMM would be as delighted as any revenue officer to hear about its source.

Meanwhile, the fact remains that both journalists and historians on the make, doing no research and not even any reading, revel in reproducing incorrect facts and stirring up unnecessary controversies. We've had several of the kind in India in recent years — and nowadays there seems to be one brewing every time a politician takes his cue from these modern recorders. The tragic Babri Masjid affair was one consequence; do we seek others?

Incidentally, MMM keeps hearing Clive's name being taken in vain in connection with several buildings in Madras. A building in the YWCA, the building where the Ambassador Hotel was behind IOB headquarters, Banqueting (Rajaji) Hall, an island in the Ennore creek and other places are all mentioned in terms of "Clive was here". To set the record straight, the fact is that in all these cases the Clive in question was EDWARD Clive, eldest son of ROBERT and Governor of Madras (1798-1803), not THE Robert Clive.

## Safe blood

It was 46 years ago on Vijayadasami Day that Dr B Ramamurthi did his first brain surgery and pioneered neurosurgery not only in India but in Asia. Inaugurating the Rotary Central TTK VHS Blood Bank on Vijayadasami Day this year he also recalled the state of blood donorship when he started life as a doctor. One day, fifty years ago, he was, as a house surgeon, watching his Chief operate. When blood was needed, he volunteered, as he had the then universally used O group. And so, even as he lay on another bed in the operating theatre, the blood was drawn and the transfusion completed. Blood procedures have come a long way since then, with a blood bank and testing an integral part of any good modern hospital.

Indeed, the VHS Blood Bank, *The Man From Madras Musings* has long heard, is probably the best in Chennai, its procedures the strictest. Of more

recent repute has been the Rotary TTK Blood Bank in Bangalore, the finest and the most modern in that city. MMM has been told. The VHS, determined to enhance its reputation, the TTK Group, furthering its concept of contributing something significant to the public that keeps the company in good business health, and Rotary Central Club, Chennai, taking a cue from its Bangalore brethren, have now teamed together to expand the VHS Blood Bank into the Rotary Central TTK VHS Blood Bank, the best-equipped blood bank in Chennai and which will follow the scrupulous procedures of the VHS.

In a true partnership, the Rotary International Foundation is contributing Rs.1 crore worth of equipment, VHS the land for the new building, Rotary Central will raise the Rs. 4 million for the building — a member announcing a million towards that, on the spot — and TTK's has pledged to meet all running costs of the Bank in perpetuity. With Chennai the medical capital of India and fast-developing as the medical capital of South and Southeast Asia, such a facility of excellence is not only necessary but is sure to find takers in plenty even in a City

**SHORT 'N' SNAPPY**

where, MMM was told, procedures in most hospital blood banks are stricter than anywhere else in India.

Even as MMM noted that standards in Chennai were meaningful in at least one significant field, he watched the *bhoomi pooja* for the new building get underway under a sprawling banyan tree several decades old, perhaps even a century and more old. And as he watched he heard Dr Ramamurthi echo his thoughts; a 6000 sq feet building, one as envisaged in the plan, would require space and that might require the chopping down of the magnificent tree... "I hope that doesn't happen".

Indeed, that plan had intrigued MMM as much as the site. The ghost of Robert Chisholm, that pioneer of Indo-Saracenic and Madras's leading architect in the 19th Century, must have watched with a benign smile as his 20th Century disciple unveiled Central Station, Park Town, transported to Taramani, Adyar. There were the twin towers on the sides and the towering clock tower in the middle, all topped by Chisholm's 'county caps'; there was the same 'sarkari red', and there were the tall, glassed windows, topped with arches, reminiscent

of the side doors of Senate House. But located as it is, with a nondescript building that looks strictly temporary but is said to be a permanent canteen, only the towers of what might develop as a landmark are likely to be visible from the road; the pedimented and pillared entrance and the tall windows are likely to be seen only as callers enter. Why, wonders, MMM can't the canteen be located — as 'temporarily-looking' — under the banyan tree and the Bank be moved forward to provide it a road view? MMM is sure the donors would be willing to take such a move, including a temporary-looking canteen, into their calculations.

## Back to publishing

Professor Ekambaranathan of Presidency is someone Zoology students are not likely to forget. Fifty years down the line, many are still using his texts as 'bibles'. It was to help with the publishing of his books that he started Amra Press with his sons around fifty years ago. But somewhere along the line, as printing become more sophisticated and colourful, the third generation moved away from publishing and began concentrating on the gloss presses now churn out. In the process, even the Amra name had almost vanished, except that many still insisted on using the deeply-rooted name when referring to the press in Adyar.

It was with pleasure, therefore, that *The Man From Madras Musings* noted that not only were roots remembered and heritage resurrected when the Professor's grandsons, at a recent meeting of the Madras Book Club, announced that they were getting back into publishing but would also be known as Amra Publishers. With India the third largest country in the world in the English-language book business (in the number of titles a year) and very little of this publishing being done in the South, particularly in general publishing, the arrival of Amra on the scene is welcome.

MMM was doubly pleased to note that Amra's first title was by one of *Madras Musings*' strongest supporters from the first, Randor Guy. His *Starlight, Starbright* narrates in profile form the story of early Tamil Cinema and both he and his publishers promise follow-up titles that will provide a racy and easy-to-read social history of different aspects of Tamil Nadu. At the launch, Muktha Srinivasan recalled the days when some characters spoke in Tamil, others in Hindi and the songs were in Telugu, when the musical accompaniment trailed the singer wherever s/he moved on the set, but kept ducking out of the camera's eye, and when there were scenes which had all the actors with eyes shut or heads chopped off. As he, how-

MMM

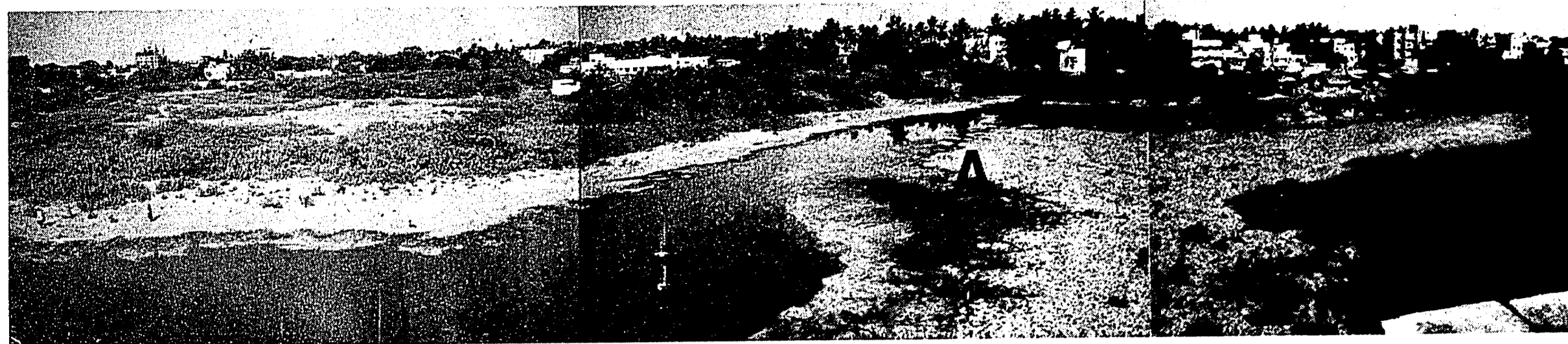
ever, said, and Chief Guest Cho echoed, we may have improved in technology, but we produce dross as content nowadays. Where are the meaningful messages and the actors (except Kamal Haasan) of yesteryear? History was meant to record this — as Randor Guy and Amra have done — not leave it to oral storytellers.

Echoing these sentiments was critic V A K Ranga Rao, but MMM was rather sorry to note that he felt that he had to fulfil his role of critic on the occasion. If the perception of that role is fault-finding, a more careful reading is warranted before speaking out. MMM hopes that by now critic Rao has found one and the same version three pages apart and not two different stories, as he announced on the floor. Sivaji played nine different roles in *Navarathri* on both pages; one page did not say that nine different people played the hero's nine roles. Sadly, MMM finds many a reviewer rushing into word or print after skimming through material or not doing adequate homework. And with that MMM finds we're back where this fortnight's column started!

## In brief

★ Sterling Swamimalai has been named 'the destination of the year' by the Travel Agents Association of India. *The Man From Madras Musings*' congratulations to a property that has made a splendid effort to conserve a hundred-year-old home and put it to imaginative use. Its rural setting, its tours to temples and craft centres and its Ayurvedic massages have had foreign tourists — the well-heeled ones — and expatriates — who are certainly well-heeled in Chennai — delighted with the experience, but local visitors have proved ambivalent. Maybe, then, this is the first truly tourist-oriented heritage hotel in India, not the palaces in other parts of the country.

★ Speaking of expatriates, while *The Man From Madras Musings* welcomes expatriates to the City — despite what they have been doing to rents — and salaries there is another problem some of them are causing that needs their cooperation. These businessfolk have taken over large houses or floors in highrise in central areas of the City where the roads are narrow and parking places almost non-existent. With inadequate parking in the properties they tenant for the several cars that they and their local executives come to work in, the roads are their fancy. And that leaves long-term residents no longer with the facilities they have enjoyed in these roads, either for parking or ease of driving. It's time offices like these began to think of pooling transport to minimise the inconvenience to others in a village-city like Chennai.



# Is a university the threat now?

Following on the heels of our story and pictures of the threatened Adyar Creek, the Exnora Naturalists' Club (ENC) has sent us another overview of the Creek, this one showing the area A in the map and points out that this area is under threat, with construction envisaged here.

Further southwest, the Government had, a couple of years ago, begun to fill in the Creek (X) to build a Dr. Ambedkar Memorial. An appeal by environmentalists to Court put a stop to those plans, but, unfortunately, did not result in the removal of the fill-in that had already been dumped there. The result has been a reduction of the creek and natural replacement with shrub-covered fill similar to what is seen in the picture sent to us by the ENC.

With land having been created without their contributing anything to it but patience, the present powers-that-be, it is said, are toying with the idea of establishing the Dr. Ambedkar Law University campus here, with all the construction that it involves. And they're hoping they'll have the President's blessings for it after his recent visit.

# An alternate suggestion

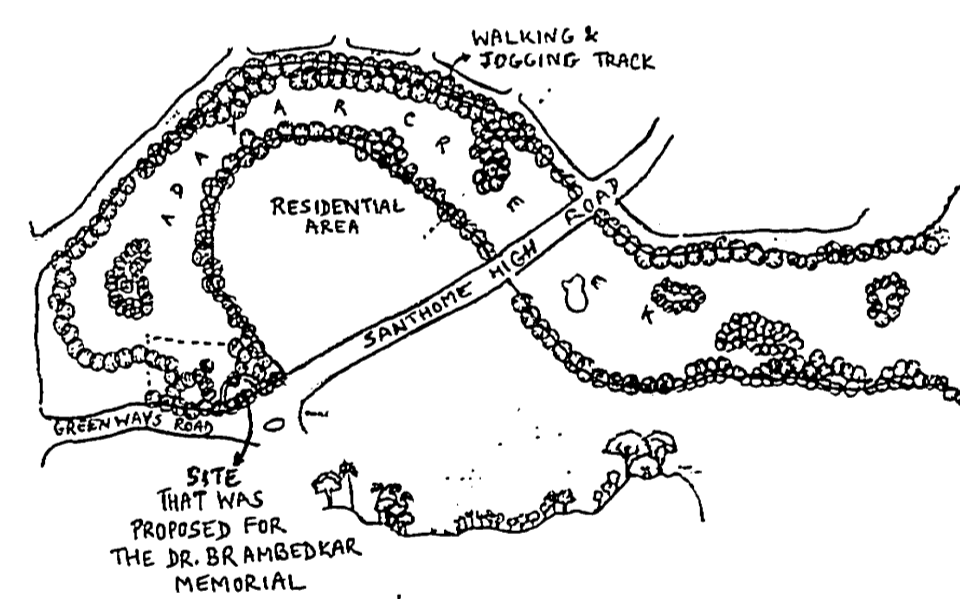
It is suggested to develop the 15-acre plot, and the entire backwaters, known as the Adyar Creek, into a Dr. Ambedkar Natural Park. The plan has been made with the help of TROPICS, Landscape Architects.

- \* The proposed lay-out harmoniously blends with the ecosystem and will be in harmonious co-existence with nature.
- \* It is cast in Buddhist design, reflecting Dr. Ambedkar's beliefs. The selection of plants and tree species for the memorial as well as the plan and lay-out will reflect the personal philosophies of Dr. Ambedkar.
- \* It will promote serenity and meditation, which are at the base of Buddhist tradition.
- \* The plan envisages more greenery and lungspace, and better advantages for the public.
- \* It will also allow free wind flow over the waterbody near the memorial, thereby providing natural cool breeze.
- \* It will provide natural light

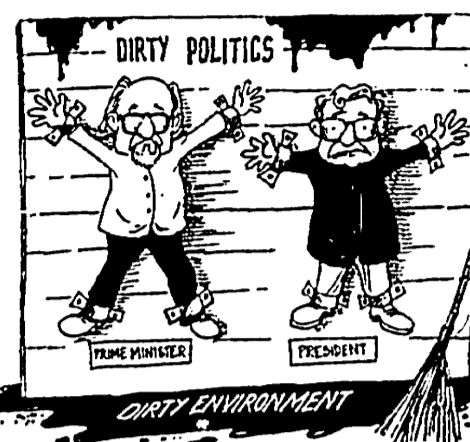
The President and the Prime Minister, however, are likely to be between the devil and the deep sea on such issues, considering how positive they have of late been about the need for greater environment friendliness in India. Local environmentalists and conservationists are hoping that their views on this will be made known to ALL State Governments and that these Governments will ensure the protection of natural heritage and if, for any reason, they have to move into areas of natural heritage they will do so with a sense of responsible eco-friendliness.

In the instance of the Dr. Ambedkar memorial, *Madras Musings* is all for letting the creek and the new shrub-covered fill remain as it is. But if it has to be made a memorial, says the Exnora Naturalists' Club, why don't the authorities think about a Dr. Ambedkar Natural Park? And following that line of thought, they have sent *Madras Musings* the following proposal which we are glad to publish, but we DON'T agree at all with the BUILDING of any memorial.

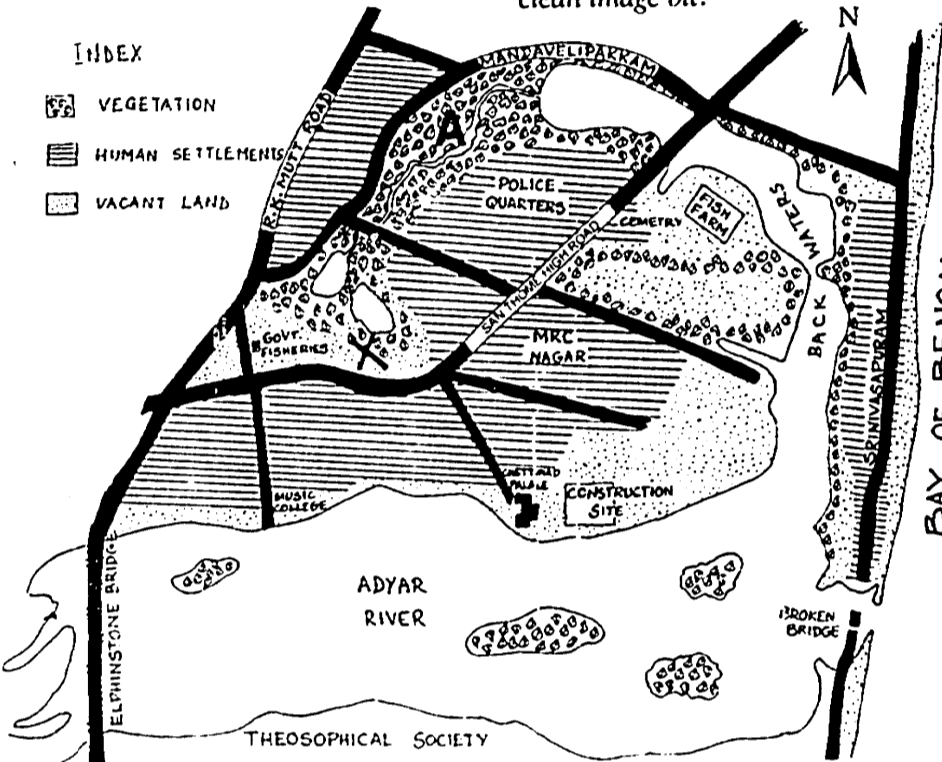
— THE EDITOR



- \* Only foot paths are provided to ensure serenity and respect to Dr. Ambedkar. There will be no car parks or driveways.
- \* When developed the 'Dr. Ambedkar Yearkai Poonga (Nature Park)' will:
  - provide a more expansive set-up in a clean environment which is a fundamental right of citizens;
  - entail proper fencing of the entire area and dredging of certain pockets to remove already dumped material;
  - simultaneously increase public access to the area, while improving the ecosystem;
  - improve the habitat for birds and fish life by planting marsh reeds, plants and trees on the bunds all around;
  - provide nature trails all around for nature lovers and walkers;
  - provide woodlots to act



X in the map below marks the area where the Dr. Ambedkar Law University might be developed in the Adyar Creek. X is all the area to the southwest of the Creek (A) in the photograph (from the Exnora Naturalists' Club). The Club's alternate suggestion, developed by landscapers TROPICS, is the sketch below the map. And the Centre for Science and Environment-Down to Earth Feature Service's cartoon on left says it all: "Are we also expected to live up to this clean image bit?"



# Marsh under threat

(Continued from Page 1)

gradable and chemical work dumped on the sides of the swamp. There is a board sounding a warning that no waste should be dumped, but this goes on unabated. Industrial activity along the Old Mahabalipuram Road has brought pollution with it, while dumping and burning of waste along the Kandanchavadi-Perungudi stretch has added to the pollution. All this development is an additional threat to the swamp.

Whether the Pallikaranai redevelopment comes through or not hinges on the PWD, whose opinion has been sought on the drainage system designed by the CMDA to tackle the problems of floodings. But whatever that decision, the society independent of it is appealing to the Government and the concerned authorities to spare this area from 'development'.

## Our Readers' Write...

has been held over due to lack of space

- a) supporting a great biological diversity, must be ensured. An expert committee can be formed to advise on restoration and management.
- The planners also suggest that in any plans that the Government may finalise for the memorial, the built-up area be kept to the minimum, and no cars be allowed within the memorial area so as to avoid noise and automobile exhaust pollution which in turn will affect the bird life. There should also not be any generators or other equipment which will cause noise and exhaust pollution in the area. Excessive filling of the creek should also be avoided as this will disrupt the ecological balance, and affect bird life. The proposed memorial should be in harmony with the wetland ecosystem, they conclude.
- a) flood control,
- b) prevention of storm damage by retention of store water,
- c) maintenance of water quality and water balance in the region,
- d) acting as a nutrient-rich spawning ground for marine and other aquatic life,
- e) helping the cleaning of polluted water, and prevention of eutrophication, and



# 'Do it now'

— or it's lost forever

How many times in my years as a photographer have I passed an interesting subject but have said to myself, oh, I'm too busy now, or I just can't stop because I'm going somewhere else, or I haven't got the right lens, or whatever, and I'll come back later/tomorrow/whenever and do it then! Of course, coming back later has proved too late, for whatever it was that had caught my eye had vanished or changed and had completely lost whatever attraction it might have held for me. Of all these putative subjects the one I most regret NOT having photographed was the interior of the old Spencer's building, that incredible long hall with its Burma teak beams holding up the roof like the fan-tracery above the pillars of a Gothic cathedral — from which the architect might well have drawn his inspiration — and raised side galleries running all around, with their many stained-glass windows.

Every time I went in there and looked up at that unique roof I promised myself that as soon as possible I must come in — after asking permission, of course — with some kind of very wide angle lens or a technical camera on a tripod with what are known in photography as 'movements' that enable you to increase the sharpness of a long distance, such as inside that great hall, and record that incredible roof for posterity. But I never did. It was always something I put off for tomorrow. And, of course, tomorrow never came, and on the night of Friday 13, 1981, my opportunity was lost forever when the great fire demolished that wonderful old building.



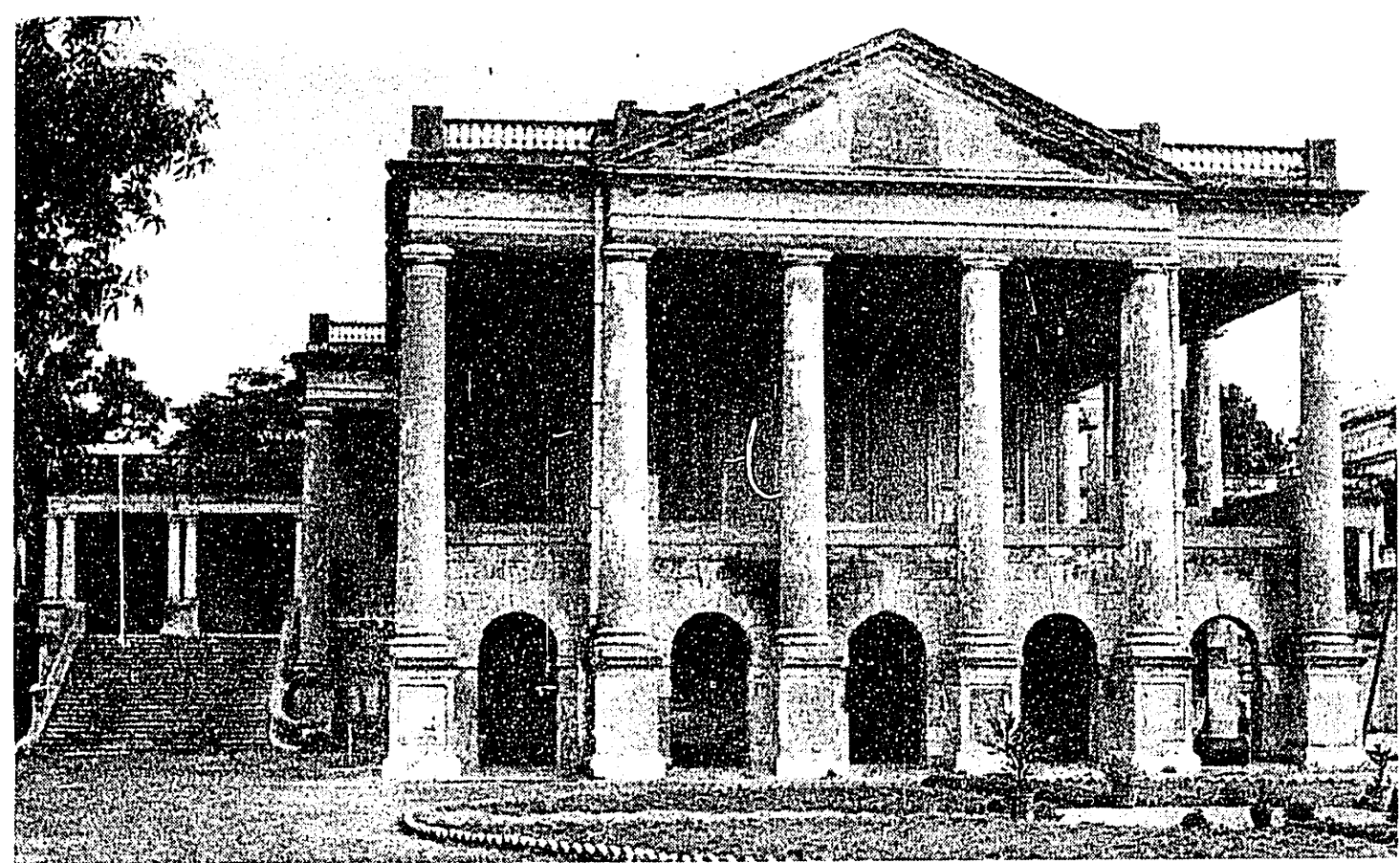
A thing of beauty was the view of the roof of Spencer's old showroom that Harry Miller kept wanting to photograph but kept putting off. Alas, there was the Great Fire and, so, there's no record today of the magnificent teak-beamed roof except this rather poor photograph from a rather faded print. Recognisable, however, are the handsome wrought-iron railings of the walkway below the roof, the wooden teak beams and the stained-glass windows that let in diffused, coloured lighting into the giant shopping hall.

I was thinking of this the other day while talking to a young woman who wants to become a writer and a journalist, and who had come to me for advice and criticism of her work. I mentioned Spencer's to her casually and said she must remember the great curved front of the building, and the red bricks and the towers at

## One Man's Madras — HARRY MILLER'S

either end — when she stopped me and told me she'd never even seen that Spencer's. I realised only then that I was dealing with a whole new generation of citizens who never even saw that lovely old building, and my regret at never having photographed the interior of the great hall became even more bitter. For a photographer the adage, "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today" is more pertinent than for most people.

On many occasions after that I asked the management of the company what they intended to do about the building, and was always reassured that it would be restored exactly as it had been. I did not believe them for a moment. It would have been quite impossible, both for practical reasons and for reasons of cost, to find replacements for those great Burma teak beams. And so we now have a great chunky building, housing innumerable shops, called a plaza. And still more building is being added on.

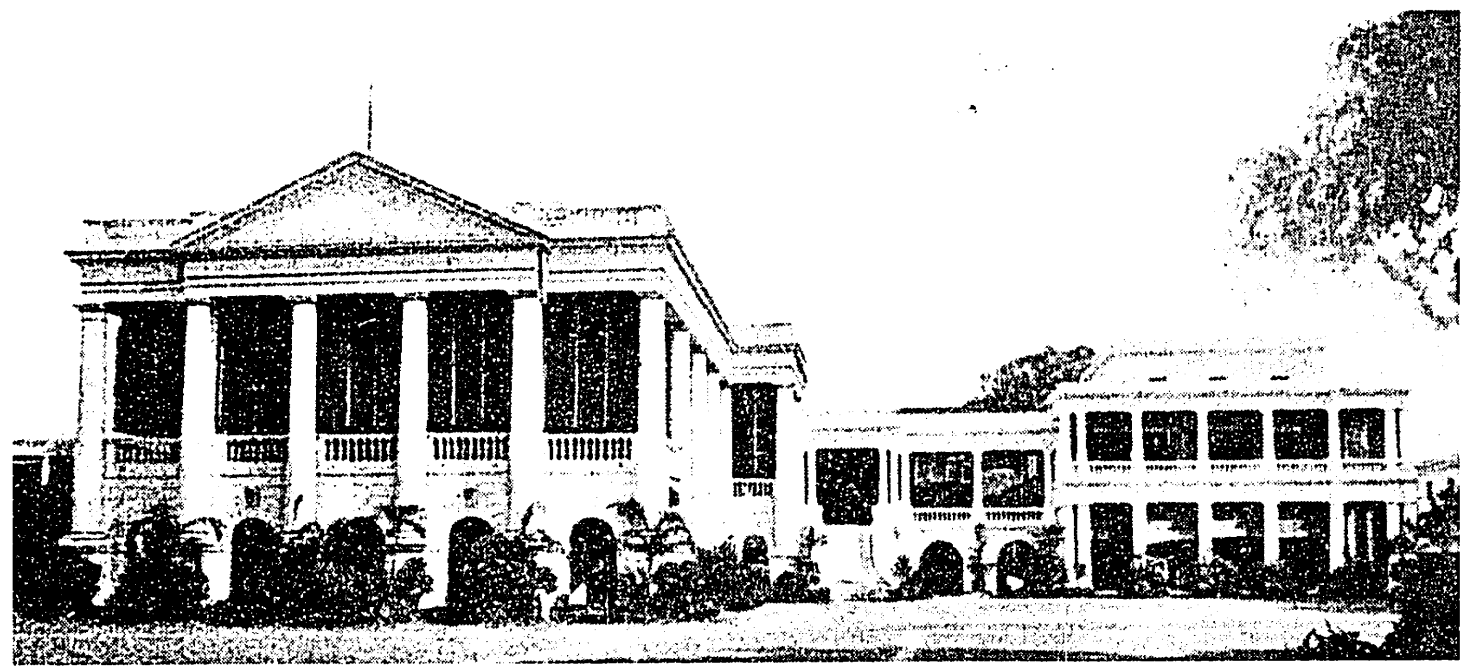


Our OLD (below) is a picture of the first buildings of the Madras Club, that 'Ace of Clubs' established in 1832, taken in the Club's heyday. A mansion built here in the 1810s was merged with a later one and the Club developed this as a handsome home in the Palladian style by the 1840s. Other buildings were bought and added to the Club's grounds in the 1850s and in 1855 a covered swimming pool — now used as a godown — was built nearby, making the whole complex one of the finest residential club complexes in India. In 1947, the Club sold the property to Ramnath Goenka and moved on. Today, the ghostly building is part of Express Estates and is used from time to time for melas and film shootings. Our NEW shows the building as it has looked these past few years, rather decrepit and forlorn. But despite those looks the building is solid enough to last a couple of hundred years and more. And so will its outbuildings, like the Billiards Room, the Smokers' Octagon and the Library, even if they look in worse shape.

Our focus on this building this fortnight is because there have been stories in the air that the building has been sold to developers and that it is in danger of being pulled down by them. Whether it has been sold or not, the one thing Madras Musings and fellow-conservationists hope is that the building will NOT be pulled down but will instead be developed as a Heritage Hotel. Charles Correa, perhaps India's best-known architect, had drawn up plans in the past with just such a future in mind, but on account of one thing or another his plans wound up in limbo.

Madras Musings here offers its suggestions for free: The main block to be Reception, Lounge and Bar, the side rooms to be converted into two restaurants and the outbuildings in the rear to be the kitchens. On both sides of the building two tower blocks to rise in the same architectural style — not towering but big enough for 50 rooms each. The swimming pool and the vast gardens to be revived and entrances and exits to be through a sweeping driveway from White's Road.

There could undoubtedly be a hundred other ideas for the building and its spacious grounds, but one idea that cannot be put into practice is pulling it down. This is a HERITAGE BUILDING if ever there was one and we wouldn't be surprised at all if the Archaeological Survey of India hasn't looked at it some time or another with those eyes. (Photographs: The NEW by Susheela Nair taken a few years ago and the OLD from Somerset Playne's *Southern India*, 1915.)



Spencer's is, no doubt, providing Chennai citizens with far more facilities than the founding directors ever dreamed possible, and there must be employed in the building many hundreds of workers for every dozen there was before. Well done then, Spencer's! No one applauds success and prosperity more than me. But I cannot help but wonder, at the same time, about the road outside, Mount Road, now known as Anna Salai. Am I wrong in thinking that all this time that great and vital road has not been widened an inch, and now, because of the massive buildings astride it, never can be? Surely if you are going to multiply by many times the number of shoppers, the number of shop assistants helping them, the number of vehicles both shoppers and staff will require to gain access there, surely

the infrastructure to enable them to do so should match the progress of the buildings and shops themselves?

This is not only true of the stretch of road outside the new Spencer's, but everywhere along the length of Anna Salai. New and huge buildings have been constructed all the way along, more are under construction — including a massive five star hotel where the modest little Abbotsbury kalyana mandapam used to be. Yet Anna Salai stubbornly refuses to yield a single inch more width to the inevitable increase in traffic that all this wonderful and exciting development and enrichment of the city's life is bringing about. The only change in this long and celebrated thoroughfare is the absence of the many huge trees that used to be seen along its perimeter. The result, as every-

one knows, is that we are rapidly approaching the condition of cities like Bangkok, where 'gridlock' meaning an almost total paralysis of road traffic, is now an accepted way of life.

Now that all those massive buildings have been allowed to be constructed, it seems to me too late to do anything about it. Perhaps we should therefore, think in terms of constructing a second Anna Salai, raised on pillars above the present one, with traffic on each allowed to go only one way.

But this is all the result of a total absence of foresight and planning. We persist in putting the cart before the horse. Surely infrastructure should come first, development second. The alternative is chaos.

I was confronted with an identical problem many years ago, after my wife and I had

(Continued on Page 7)

## THE NEW...

## ...& THE OLD

## SOME THOUGHTS, as Chennai tries to stem auto pollution

# Vehicular exhaust

## Killing softly but swiftly?

One out of ten Delhi school children suffers from asthma. Worsening air pollution caused by motor vehicles affects 880,000 asthmatics in Delhi. About 40,000 Indians are dying early every year — 7,500 in Delhi, 5,700 in Mumbai, and 4,500 in Calcutta — because of air pollution. And, Indians spend Rs 4,550 crore annually to make up for health damage caused by air pollution.

In most of the 23 Indian cities with million-plus populations, air pollution levels are dangerously higher than World Health Organisation (WHO) limits. In Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kanpur and Nagpur, levels of suspended particulate matter (SPM) — dust and carbon particles coated with toxic gases — are at least three times higher than WHO standards.

The main culprit is vehicle exhaust. It accounts for 65 per cent of the air pollution in Delhi, 52 per cent in Calcutta and 30 per cent in Mumbai! Vehicle exhaust contains harmful gases such as nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, lead, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). Vehicles also emit SPM less than 10 micrometers (a micrometer is one millionth of a meter) in diam-

eter (PM10), which can be inhaled. About 80 per cent of this is deposited in the respiratory system. Ozone, another poison, forms when exhaust reacts with sunlight.

There is mounting evidence that air pollution is related to numerous respiratory problems and even deaths from such illnesses. In June 1996, European

the project indicate that increases in SPM, sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) or ozone can significantly increase respiratory illnesses and deaths. These health effects were seen at pollutant levels much lower than those of most Indian cities.

"We are seeing more chronic and complicated asthmatic cases such as patients with lung

the presence of 0.25 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> will show severe symptoms of asthma within minutes. This makes Calcutta a danger zone as SO<sub>2</sub> levels are already 0.15 ppm in winter and still on the rise.

According to Swedish tests, diesel exhaust causes ten times more mutations than leaded petrol, which is ten times more mutagenic than unleaded petrol. A US study shows that exposure to high levels of diesel exhaust can cause cancer indicators in blood DNA and urine to be even 20 times higher than normal levels. Diesel is the main source of PAH and particulate emission.

ruptures, fibrosis and pneumonia because of pollution, especially traffic pollution," warns an expert from Delhi's Patel Chest Institute. 66,000 asthmatics are severely affected in Delhi every year.

Evidence suggests that an asthma sufferer exercising in



'Belching' vehicles are commonplace on Chennai's roads, especially if they are public vehicles or private vehicles for hire. This picture by RAJIND N CHRISTY doesn't show the worst one by far.

## DELHI TAKES ON VEHICULAR EXHAUST

TEJINDER KHANNA, the Lieutenant-Governor of the fourth most polluted city in the world, Delhi, talks to SAURABH BHATTACHARYA about his plans for a better and cleaner city.

On the anti-pollution powers of the Delhi government:

Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, can be used effectively. Frankly, I feel that we do not need any more powers. People have been talking about powers to impound polluting vehicles. This can be done under Section 5. By end-January, about 35,000 vehicles had been checked for vehicular pollution in the city and 14,000 to 15,000 of them had been fined. That was the first warning. Then the polluting vehicles were detained and then they were impounded. They were ordered to take immediate pollution-abatement measures. They were re-tested and only then were they re-

leased. In the last traffic pollution review meeting that I chaired, we decided that very old vehicles which are beyond repair would be impounded. The owners would be told that they could get scrap value or something.

On determining which vehicles should be impounded:

When a vehicle is well-maintained, it can have a longer lease of life. So you don't need to have a specific age beyond which we would not permit the vehicle to ply. What we will really do is have more pollution-oriented norms. If the vehicle is spouting clouds of monoxide and other particulate matters, then we take action. It would have to be impounded. I think it just cannot be allowed to continue to ply.

On phasing out old two-wheelers:

Among the two-wheelers that I have seen, the main culprits are those which use adul-

terated fuels. Maybe, there are cases of mixing kerosene or diesel with the petrol or something. Of 10 two-wheelers that are running, maybe one or two have an extra pollution load. Those are the ones we'll try and zero in on first. It's not that all two-wheelers would have to be phased out. That cannot be done.

On the lack of good public transport:

We recognise that the solution to vehicular pollution would lie in a more efficient system of public transport. We are already looking at the possibility of importing 100-200 more buses with very fuel-efficient engines and total control on emissions with catalytic converters. We also acknowledge that we do not have buses that are really built as buses. Trucks are remodelled as buses. So the whole thing is really not fuel-efficient.

On poor fuel quality:

We have said that surprise

checks would be carried out at all the outlets in Delhi to see if any adulterated fuel is being sold. We are, however, told that in the case of two-wheelers, sometimes it is the user of the vehicle who at home will mix a certain amount of kerosene or diesel as one gets these things at a subsidised rate. And, this kind of adulteration causes much greater pollution. That's why we have decided that action would be taken on both the vendors as well as the users of this adulterated fuel.

(Continued on Page 8)

## What's under a bus body?

It's 8:45 a.m. and time for you to take the bus to work. Correction. It's time for you to take the truck to work. What state transport corporations in India pass off as buses are actually trucks, camouflaged under a bus body.

The use of a truck chassis and engine on an urban bus is one of the main reasons for the alarming rise in vehicular pollution in cities. According to H.B. Mathur, a professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, diesel engines for trucks are designed to give maximum power with maximum load in long-distance travel. "The parameters of an automotive engine designed to give maximum power do not take into account fuel efficiency," says Mathur. "Hence, they emit more smoke. But since the trucks run on highways that are not populated, this does not make much difference. Also since trucks operate with maximum load, the engines are fully utilised."

However, when the same engines are used on city roads, the whole equation changes. Urban buses have to start and stop a number of times. As a result, in cities, especially crowded ones, the buses end up emitting huge amounts of unburnt fuel.

Mathur puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of the government. "It is the responsibility of the Surface Transport Ministry to see that truck engines are not used on city buses." But the price for an urban bus is bound to go up by 50 per cent the moment we make a bus meant for urban transport and state governments are not in a position to buy such costly vehicles.

Next time the exhaust from a city bus smells suspiciously like exhaust from a truck and makes you feel as nauseated, you know it's your government saving money. (CSE/Down To Earth Features.)

— Saurabh Bhattacharya

the neighbourhood. All this information can be given to two points of control — one with the office of the area deputy commissioner, of which we have nine in Delhi. Simultaneously, a point of control is going to function constantly at the Lt Governor's office. We intend to reduce the response time between the receipt of inputs like these and the appropriate action, in order to do something effectively — (CSE/Down To Earth Features).

On a citizens' watchdog body:

The watchdog body is basically to be the eyes and ears of the government in the city and to give us timely inputs about any kind of anti-social activities, any kind of illegal construction and encroachment on parks and lands and other such activities, which are going to spoil the availability of civic amenities for other sections of



## Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period September 16 to 30. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Which prestigious European magazine has elected P. Chidambaram as 'Asia's Best Finance Minister'?
2. The new U.S. Ambassador to India is ...?
3. A documentary, *Selling of Innocence*, on the trade of Nepalese minor girls has won the first-ever Emmy for an Indian. Name the person.
4. Which S.E. Asian country leader and investment banker have accused each other of currency crisis in that part of the world?
5. What has been named as the 'prime cause' for the crash in Indonesia of the Air Garuda plane, killing all 234 on board of September 26th?
6. Which media baron has agreed to donate \$ 1 billion to the U.N. over a period of ten years to help the organisation's programmes?
7. Simple. Who won four consecutive 'Man of the Match' awards and the 'Man of the Series' award as well in the recently-concluded Sahara Cup in Toronto?
8. The U.S. military experts are testing the super 'Metal Storm'. What is it?
9. Name the former Chief Justice of India who passed away recently.
10. Name the new international peace award instituted by the Union Government that carries a prize money of Rs. 15 lakh.
11. Which famous Italian basilica, storehouse of some of Christendom's best treasures, was destroyed by an earthquake recently?
12. Name the Indian cargo ship that sank in the Straits of Malacca after a collision, leaving over a score of crew missing.
13. Name the satellite placed in orbit by PSLV-C1 on September 29th?
14. To mark which historian's 250th birth anniversary, was a stamp released on September 29th at Chennai?
15. Dr. Young Seek Choue, Prof. S.S. Katagihallimath and R.K. Patil are the recipients of this year's ...?

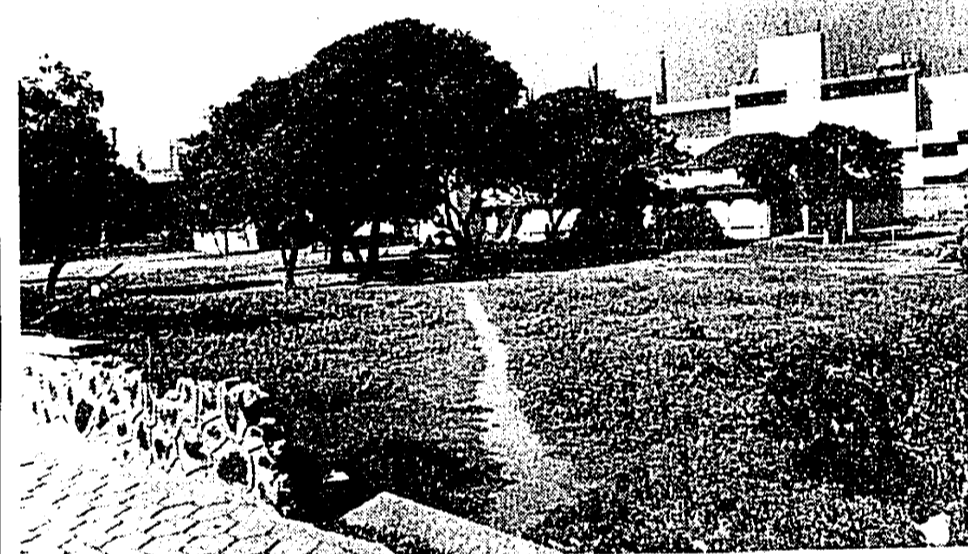
16. Name the two police stations in the city receiving commando protection following extremist threats.
17. Name the world's only U-233-fuelled operating reactor to achieve full capacity on September 17th. It is sited near the city.
18. A university, the first of its kind in the country, was inaugurated by the President recently. Name it.
19. What new MD course, the first in South India, has been started at the Dr.M.G.R. Medical University?
20. The Golden Jubilee of which religious establishment was celebrated in the city recently?

(Answers on Page 7)

# Scouting

*Started in Madras, almost forgotten in Tamil Nadu*

George Bernard Shaw once said, "The greatest contribution to education in the 20th Century was made not by an educationist, but by a soldier, who founded the Scout and Guide Movement". Founded in 1907 by that soldier, Lord Baden Powell, the Scout Movement is now spread across 150 countries, has over a million youth on its rolls, and is described as 'a code of life, which is both pragmatic and idealistic.' In India, the movement first took root in Madras, with educationalist Dr Annie Besant (whose 150th birth anniversary was recently celebrated in Chennai) at its helm. In fact,



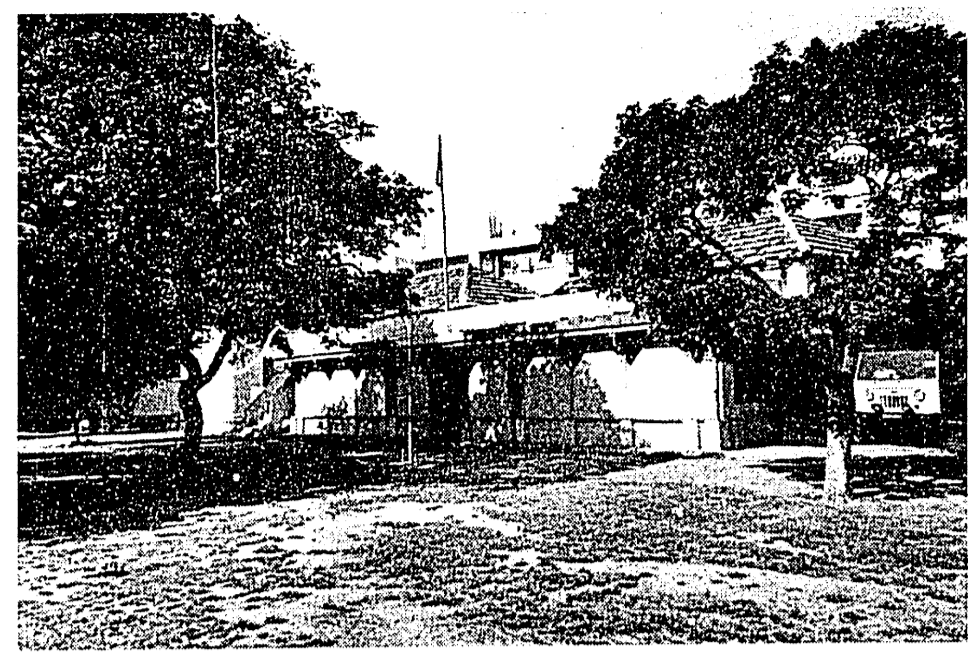
Wenlock Park — no longer in a fit state for Scouting activities, so sought after by various public transport authorities. (Tiruvallikeni) Metro station is already a part of the Park! No doubt they'll appreciate its sad state today more than anyone else. (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

the first Scout Camp in India was held on October 1, 1916, in the Theosophical Society gardens under the banyan tree!

The Bharat Scouts and Guides movement, however, was actually formed in November 1950, after the historic merger of three different Scouts Associations — the Boy Scout Association, The Hindustan Scout Association and The Girl Guide Association. It is the national organisation affiliated to the World Association of Boy Scouts and World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. The State Headquarters of Bharat Scouts and Guides is in the once-picturesque Lady Wenlock Park, on Kamarajar Salai, overlooking the Marina. Named after the wife of a Governor of Madras, Lord Wenlock, it was originally meant for the recreation of *gosha* ladies. In 1924, the Governor of Madras gave the building and land on long lease (periodically extended) to the Boy Scouts Association. The current lease ends in January 1999. Meanwhile, the campus strikes the visitor as being in a sorry state. Is this a reflection of the Scout-

ing movement in Tamil Nadu today?

For all the dedicated support of scouting enthusiasts, the Movement has not gained momentum in the State. As of today, the 1.5 lakh students on its rolls represents only one per cent of the schooling population! Why? According to T P Elangovan, State Secretary, who has been associated with Scouting for more than 30 years, "I wouldn't say the Movement is on the decline, for every year there has been at least a 0.5% increase in the number of students enrolled. And over 200 scouts and guides from Tamil Nadu get the prestigious



The Bharat Scout Headquarters in Wenlock Park. The dilapidated state of the building reflects the state of Scouting in Tamil Nadu.

We have submitted proposals to increase this sum to Rs. 15 lakh at least, but will we get it?"

Rajeswari Anantharaman joined the Movement as a 'Bluebird' when she was seven. Today she is a retired School Principal who has been associated actively with Scouting for 35 years. The absence of any enthusiastic scouting activity in the State, she believes, is "due mainly to lack of public awareness. Parents must realise that Scouting is a 'man-making movement', one that helps in moulding and imparting good values to future generations. When children are given responsibilities, and recognised for their efforts, their self-esteem rises. This is extremely important in character-building, which is what we do in the movement."

A Government Order passed in 1983 stated that Scouts and Guides must be given preference in admission to higher education and professional courses. "Unfortunately, this is not implemented in institutions, either due to ignorance or, worse still, sheer indifference. Moreover, the Secretaries in the Department of Education in our State are not very encouraging, as they give preference only to academically-related activities. In Maharashtra, Scouting is actually part of the school curriculum and considered very important," points out Elangovan.

Meanwhile, moves to claim

Wenlock Park for a bus terminus are afoot by the MTC, Chennai. Says Dr Bhakthavasan, a surgeon and an ardent Scouting enthusiast who is at present the District Chief Commissioner, North Chennai, "After repeated meetings with the concerned CMDA authorities, we have worked out a solution whereby a portion of the northern side will be taken by the MRTS system, and about 7 metres of the area facing the beach will be used by the MTC. We are trying to get the Government to grant us the remaining land for permanent use, where we can build a State Headquarters for the Bharat Scouts and Guides." As for the waning interest in the Scouting Movement, he says, "Educational authorities do not realise the importance of such a Movement in improving the general standard of intelligence in youngsters. Unless the heads of institutions, the managements and teachers encourage Scouting and Guiding units, the young lose out on a great experience." Dr Bhakthavasan has been a part of the Movement from the time he was six.

"Let us leave the world a little better than we found it," was Baden Powell's message. Will the present Government leave the State Scouting Unit a little better than they found it by providing adequate encouragement and monetary support?

— Shobha Menon

## When Annie got her anger up

It was a C P Aryaratra (from Ceylon) of the Theosophical College in Madanapalle, now in Andhra Pradesh, who, in 1916, introduced Scouting for boys. After setting up a Scout unit, he applied for the affiliation of the Madanapalle Troop to the London Headquarters of the Baden-Powell Scout Association. Much to his chagrin, the application was rejected by Baden-Powell himself. The reason given was that there were not enough British officers in the Scout Movement in India to justify the extension of Scouting among Indians!

At that time, Dr Annie Besant, then President of the Theosophical Society, was deeply involved with campaign-



Annie Besant

ing for Home Rule in India. When she heard of this incident, she strongly felt that this was a manifestation of British racial arrogance and, together with Dr G S Arundale, fought back by starting what was known as the Indian Boy Scouts Association in Madras. Under her enthusiastic leadership, a number of sister organisations were started in the other provinces in India.

S.M.



October: Craftspeople at DakshinaChitra: Ramaswamy, master craftsman in soft stone and Ramu Velar, master craftsman in pottery.

Till October 19: *Ancient Rome and India*: An exhibition presented by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre. (At Clive Building, Fort St. George - 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Till October 19: *Visual Language*, an exhibition of some of S C Sekhar's favourite photographs culled over six years of work. (At Welcomgroup Chola Sheraton.)

October 23: *Die Bruder Skladanowsky* (The Skladanowsky Brothers), a black and white film by the Munich Academy for Film and TV.

The first part (1994) is seen through the eyes of Max Skladanowsky's first daughter. In the second part (1995), Max Skladanowsky himself reports on the Premiere of the Bioscope at the Winter Garden in Berlin. A third part shows an interview in 1995 with a daughter (well advanced in years) of Max Skladanowsky. (6.30 pm at South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce).

October 19: The Arangham Dance Group will perform the Chennai premiere of *Gajanaama* as part of the three-day celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Sudharani Raghupathi's dancing career. (At the Narada Gana Sabha.)

October 19: Gift packaging for Deepavali workshop. 10.00-4.00 at DakshinaChitra. (Rs.225/- including lunch.)

October 25: Papier Mache Workshop. 10.00-4.00 at DakshinaChitra. (Rs.225/- including lunch.)

October 25: Five-day workshop on lathe-turned soft stone as well as carving (for embellishment) with follow-up workshops each month. Vikram Parchure leads the workshop. Participation is limited to six persons. For further details, contact Vishalam at 4918943. (At DakshinaChitra.)

## Answers to Quiz

1. Euromoney; 2. Richard Celeste; 3. Ruchira Gupta; 4. Dr. Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia and George Soros; 5. The terrible smog over the Indonesian region due to forest fires; 6. CNN's Ted Turner; 7. Saurav Ganguly; 8. It is a gun capable of firing a million rounds per minute; 9. E.S. Venkataramaiah; 10. The Maulana Abul Kalam Azad International Award; 11. The basilica at Assisi; 12. ICL Vikraman; 13. IRS-1D; 14. Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society; 15. The Jannalal Bajaj Awards.

\* \* \*

16. J.J. Nagar and Basin Bridge police stations; 17. Kalpakam Mini Reactor (KAMINI); 18. The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University; 19. MD in Transfusion Medicine; 20. Church of South India.

# Keeping the music record straight

N. Rajagopalan, a retired IAS officer, is 74 and has recently had an eye surgery but he's still busy writing and publishing books and booklets. His latest, which he calls Book-I — ah! so there's more to come! — discusses, through short stories, the perils of donor insemination.

He was inspired to write the short stories after he read a report in *The Hindu* which said, "Fertility centres are reported to be having a roaring trade. People resort to them for an anonymous donor's sperm. It is naturally difficult to get volunteer donors. Indian law is silent, though psychological, moral, legal and other aspects would surface sooner or later." (*The Hindu*, August 17, 1997) Rajagopalan based his short stories on the aspects listed in the report as well as others he felt would surface soon. He has published the collection as a booklet and gives it free to those interested. "All the stories are imaginary and the characters fictitious," says Rajagopalan. "But I hope they raise questions and get the medical, social and legal professions and the public all pondering, with sympathy, on the issues."

This booklet, published by his own 'Thoughts and Facts' publishing house, is amusing, but his earlier work is awesome — four compendious volumes of biographies of Carnatic musicians. And he has published the set entirely on his own. No wonder this retired Excise and Customs Secretary sits in a modest ground floor flats *sans* ornamentation.

Rajagopalan began his work on his *magnum opus* in 1985, impressed by the huge volumes of biographies of Western musicians that he had seen at the British Council library. He had grown up in a family that loved music, but had no talent for it. The village of Maandai, near Thanjavur, had a musical environment. The village *nagaswaram* ensemble was extremely popular and would play divine Carnatic music. They were not just extras at weddings; their music was an integral part of the ceremonies. The bridegroom's procession (the *maipillai alaippu*) would begin after dinner and would take all night to go around the temple. The musicians would be stopped every few steps, their music admired and only then allowed to move on. The procession would come to the wedding hall only at dawn! These musicians were also part-time actors and performed *koothu* by night after

working in the fields in the mornings. Their dramas were known for their excellent music. Rajagopalan also tried his hand as an actor but did not make much progress as he could not learn his lines as well as the reputedly illiterate village actors. He, however, passed his IAS exam and became busy with administration work.

But music was his first love. Ever since he saw the biographies of Western musicians, Rajagopalan dreamt of such books about Carnatic musicians. But information was scanty. He began to visit different libraries on art in Chennai — the Government Archives, *The Hindu's* library, the Music Academy library, the Kalakshetra library etc. — and went through all the music journals. He still found information about musicians scanty, but legends about music composers and musicians abundant; in other words, fact was scarce but fiction plentiful. One day, he went to an important music festival and requested the organisers to make an announcement about the proposed biographies project; he sought the cooperation of the musicians. The organisers turned him down.

Rajagopalan laughs as he talks about a letter written to *The Hindu* by Subbarama Dikshitar, a descendant of Venkatamakhi, who classified the ragas of the Carnatic system. Subbarama Dikshitar too had been interested in publishing facts instead of myths. He had a manuscript of music and wanted to verify its authenticity with the only other copy available with a musicologist. Subbarama Dikshitar wrote to this musician for permission to look at the manuscript. The answer he got was that the musicologist would prefer to tear up the book and throw it in the Kaveri, rather than let another person look at it. This was repeated to the Sankaracharya of Kanchi, who then requested the musicologist to oblige, but he too was refused!

Despite sensing the antipathy of the people for such a project, Rajagopalan placed advertisements in all the leading papers and wrote about two thousand letters to people, but he received very little cooperation from musicians, most of whom were suspicious of his motives. There were some who complained about some entries after the biographies were published. These corrections were carried out in subsequent volumes.

The four volumes are called *A Garland* (1988), *Another Garland* (1992), *Yet Another Garland* (1994), and *The Fragrant Garland* (1996). They contain not just biographies but anecdotes and reviews wherever available, quotes, articles on music, thoughts, sayings, aphorisms and epigrams concerning music. There are many drawings and archival photographs too.

A cartoon of Sir C V Raman by R K Laxman finds a place in the last page of the fourth volume. I asked Rajagopalan why. He said it was because Raman had been crazy about music. He worked quite a bit on the scientific aspects of sound. Rajagopalan tells the story of how Raman had come to a house in Adyar as a 19-year-old and heard the *veena* being



N. Rajagopalan in his I.A.S. days; today he is into record-keeping of a different sort.

played inside. Attracted by the sound, he decided to marry the girl, who was very young and unlettered. But she was a clever girl, later went to school in Calcutta after they had got married and made a good partner to the Nobel Laureate.

Rajagopalan's books are available at his residence at 3, 24th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Chennai 600 020. The four-volume biographies set is priced at Rs. 999/-, but he is offering them at Rs. 770/- for the set to personal callers.

— V R Devika

# 'Do it now'

(Continued from Page 5)

built our charming little house in the village of Thirumullaivayal, between Avadi and Ambattur. In those days there were just two buses a day, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Now there are streams of them, and all jam-packed. When we went there, Dunlop's factory was the only one built, but very soon the TVS people, with foreign collaboration, built their beautiful, prosperous and immaculate factories, giving much employment and a higher degree of prosperity all round. All well and good. But what happened was that within weeks tiny mud-and-thatch shops sprang up along the roadside, offering the workers beedis, paan, coffee and other requirements. They prospered, and very soon the mud-and-thatch gave way to brick walls which, in their turn, were supplanted by, first, one and then two or three-storeyed concrete pukka 'otels', and later, rows of obviously prospering shops, selling as wide a variety of goods as you will find in any of the great city shopping centres like T. Nagar or Mambalam. They were built within a few feet of the main road and are now impossible to move without the expenditure of vast sums of money and, of course, years of litigation by the Government to acquire the land.

When I went to live at Thirumullaivayal the journey there was an enjoyable 20 minute drive from the Conne-

mara Hotel in Madras, past the waterworks and then through pleasant countryside, with paddy fields here and there, the odd shrine or tiny hamlet, a few pleasing groves of palm trees. Today, the same journey is an hour-and-a-half of grim battle through streams of buses, lorries and other motorised vehicles, all seemingly going the wrong way, whose drivers appear to think they are engaged in some desperate battle — which, in a way, they are. The village and much beyond it has been engulfed by a surge of industrial slums, scarcely recognisable as a village any more. Again, the same problem, putting the cart before the horse, development before, not after, the extension of suitable infrastructure — communications in this case being the most important.

After my conversation with that delightful young woman, she who had never seen the Spencer's I was thinking about, an even worse thought struck me. I realised that she would never have seen Anna Salai as I remembered it either, and that a whole new generation is growing up around us who will take it for granted that the present condition, the present nightmare congestion of Anna Salai, is its normal, natural state. She has never been abroad to see the graceful, spacious conditions of great cities like Singapore or Tokyo, let alone the towns and cities of the Western world so how could she and the millions of her generation ever know and demand — better!





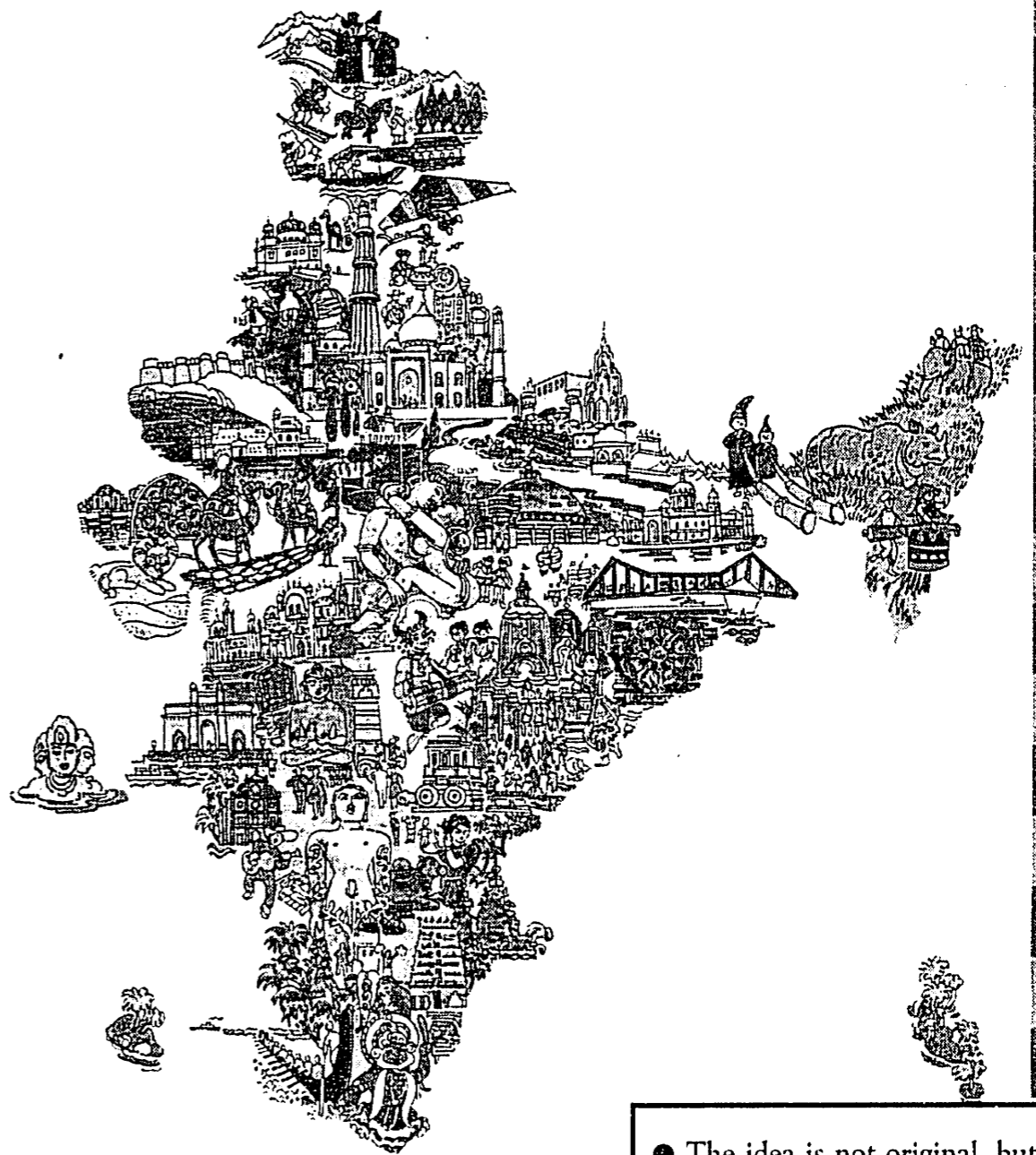
**Say Chee!**

When you catch someone peeing, don't just look away. Show him you're disgusted. Wrinkle up your nose. Gather your friends if you have to. Look him in the face and say "Chee!" whenever you see someone spitting, littering or polluting. Say it till these disgusting animals listen to you.



● Reader Robert DePenning sent us this advertisement and wondered what *Madras Musings* would make of it. "If a mutt can't have a pee in peace, there's surely a hell on earth," he mused in supplementary comment. We agree; but what about all those other mutts who make our city filthy by spitting and peeing and worse. We wonder what DePenning makes of all THOSE mutts. Meanwhile, the Clean Mumbai Foundation's advertisement which was created by Hindustan Thompson and which was sponsored by the *Indian Express*, where it appeared, certainly attracted a lot of attention. We received copies from half a dozen readers, so it obviously made an impact even in Chennai. While the ad is striking, we can't say we found the 'copy' palatable. Will shocking copy shock the mis-users of our roads into desisting? Somehow we think not; fines — and worse, for repeated offences — will. But will Government give the Police the go-ahead?

**Come, India is calling**



● The idea is not original, but this Hindustan Thompson advertisement for Air India was, in all its glorious colour, quite the most striking ad for India *Madras Musings* has seen in a long time. We spotted it in the elegant programme brought out for 'The Music Festival of India' which was held on September 13th in Carnegie Hall, New York, to celebrate India's Golden Jubilee of Independence. Making significant contributions to the Carnegie Hall song, music and dance show were Chennai's own Balamurali Krishna, in a vocal *jugalbandhi* with Ajoy Chakraborty, and Anita Ratnam of Arangham Trust who was Co-Host with Roshan Seth. Apart from both of them, the South was not represented at all in the programme, which ranged from Kathak to Santur and Bansuri to Thumri and Dadra.

**Vehicular pollution in Delhi**







(Continued from Page 5)  
nently lower IQ, damage emotional stability, cause hyperactivity and reduce the ability to concentrate. In most cases, children are affected within the first five years of their lives.  
Lead in petrol is completely banned in the US, Japan, Canada, Austria, Sweden, Brazil, Columbia and South Korea. But, in India, leaded petrol is used in 90 per cent of vehicles. Removing lead from petrol is cheap and easy, says the World Bank, so why are poor countries

resisting attempts to phase out a substance that threatens the health of millions?  
Toxic effects of air pollution can also lead to mental problems, including anxiety and changes in mood, cognition and behaviour. Toxic air pollutants interfere with the development and adult functioning of the nervous system.  
Vehicular pollution will come down by 25 per cent if public mass transport is introduced in Delhi, says a Tata Energy Research Institute study. It

can come down by a further 40 per cent if vehicles are properly maintained. The vehicles mainly responsible for air pollution vary from city to city. In Delhi, two-wheelers and autos — because of their sheer numbers and their engines' inability to burn fuel efficiently — are the most polluting in terms of their share in total vehicular pollution. Chennai has a very similar problem.

(CSE/Down To Earth Features.)

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