

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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The better of the species...

That women are better than men in studies has been demonstrated every recent year. But what is startling is that the gap that's the answer to the question 'How much better?' is growing substantially every year, writes a reader who sends in this extract from Volume II of the University of Madras' Annual Report for AY 1995-96, published this year.

Results of March 1996 Exams

	Appeared	I Class	II Class	III Class	Total passed	%age passed	Overall %age passed
B.A. Degree (Re-structured)							
Men	6018	218	1173	690	2081	35%	50%
Women	4753	742	1182	667	3291	69%	
Men	7561	1614	796	62	2472	33%	48%
Women	5969	3218	819	33	4070	68%	
B.Com Degree (Non-Semester)							
Men	4447	539	1004	337	1880	42%	53%
Women	2859	962	842	172	1976	69%	
M.A. Degree							
Men	1973	—	—	—	450	23%	29%
Women	1405	—	—	—	520	37%	
M.Com Degree							
Men	566	5	64	—	69	12%	20%
Women	196	44	43	—	87	44%	
M.Sc Degree (Non-Semester)							
Men	66	27	3	—	30	45%	58%
Women	94	57	5	—	62	66%	

Overall Bachelor degrees' pass percentage 49.92%
 Overall Bachelor degrees' Men's pass percentage 35.7%
 Overall Bachelor degrees' Women's pass percentage 68.8%

"Questions have been asked and the odd book written on the question, 'Are men necessary?'," adds reader INDER GILL.

... causes the other half concern

Looking at the fact that girls are scoring more in examinations, and making some pertinent observations about this, has been POONAM MOHAN, a freelance contributor to Business Line from New Delhi. She writes:

getting the kind of education they deserve and they are routing the boys by every measure of academic excellence — not just in developed, but in Third World, countries such as India, especially in urban areas...

For instance, in this year's Senior School Certificate examination (Class XII) (in Delhi) girls had a pass percent-

age of 76.8 whereas boys had a pass percentage of 68.4. While the boys' percentage shows a decline by a little less than 8 per cent over last year's, the girls have recorded an improvement of 1.3 per cent.

Not only are girls joining, in huge numbers, the institutes which have been traditionally theirs, they are also making ma-

major inroads into those traditionally reserved for boys, such as engineering colleges. Even in mofussil towns such as Rourkela and Sindri, managements have been forced to convert boys' hostels into hostels for girls, what with the large number of girls seeking admission there.

And in this scene... sud-

denly, there is panic. Researchers rush in with theories about why boys are falling behind, and educationists plan new schemes and strategies to help get the boys back on track... Where was everyone when the boys reigned supreme? Does it not seem a little unfair to start thinking about helping boys when the girls have yet to enjoy even a decade of academic dominance?

(Continued on Page 6)



Madras Park in Denver

The Madras-Denver Sister City relationship was established on January 16, 1954. The most visible mark of this programme is the 17-acre Madras Park in Denver, strategically located in one of the more visible areas of Denver. A statue of Mahatma Gandhi occupies a central location in the park.

The statue is a gift from the people of Madras to the people of Denver. The gift is a beautiful bronze weighing 77 lbs.

The statue was made by Professor S. Gopal of the Madras College of Arts and Crafts and is modelled after the one in Tabstock Square in London. The Mahatma is in a sitting position, holding a book in his hands. A picture of this view is shown on Indian Television almost every night before the parliamentary news. Dr. Mohan Sundareson, a medical doctor from Madras, settled in California, contributed the money towards the expenses for this striking statue commissioned by the Indo-American Association of Madras.

Animal dissection optional in schools

In a major win for animal rights activists, the Ministry for Human Resource Development, Government of India, told the Delhi High Court on May 19, 1997, that it had decided to make animal dissection optional for school students.

Following this submission by the Central Government's Standing Counsel, a Division Bench, consisting of Justice Y.K. Sabharwal and Justice D.K. Jain, disposed of a public interest petition moved by the Blue Cross of India and ten others, including the Delhi-based Kindness for Animals and Respect for the Environment (KARE). The petitioners had demanded that if the Government did not ban dissections, these should at least be made optional.

Counsel for the petitioners had contended that "needless and unnecessary" experiments

on animals in schools were not only cruel to animals but also to students, whose right to act by their conscience was violated by the forced dissections.

The division bench, while disposing of the petition, hoped that "the decision would soon be implemented".

The Committee for the Purpose of Controlling and Supervising Experiments on Animals, re-constituted by the Government of India in March 1996, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, had taken a unanimous decision at its first meeting in July 1996, banning dissection upto the +2 level. The Government of India has, however, so far not placed the notification of this Committee regarding dissection before Parliament, which is a prerequisite for it to be passed as a law.

One man's terrorist is another's ...

The Tamil Tigers of Eelam were not tigers when they attempted to blow up the World Trade Centre in Colombo and in the process killed a few innocents, including a "non-political" Buddhist monk; they were 'terrorists'. The Tigers fighting and winning or losing bloody battles in the Vanni jungles are gallant 'freedom fighters'. The Tigers seeking to be the sole voice of Northeastern Sri Lanka are canny 'politicians'. The Tigers who collect 'taxes' or 'tithe' from Tamils in the island's Northeast and elsewhere in the world are 'extortionists'. And the Tigers who hold kangaroo courts or dispense 'justice' through rough-and-ready jurisprudence in Northeast Sri Lanka might be considered 'fascists'. It's all in the eye of the beholder and the time of the beholding. *The Man From Madras Musings* is inclined to think.

It's not very different in the case of Veerappan of our own western jungles. He's a Robin Hood to some villagers, a ruthless avenger to others; a genius in the jungle to some, a bandit who is protected by persons in power to others; an anti-conservationist and anti-environmentalist when he kills elephants and fells sandal trees, but as Reader Kandhaswami points out elsewhere today, what do we call ourselves, those who kill fauna for food and destroy trees for household articles?

It may be a sign of weakness, but MMM has never been too keen on judging people; he'd much rather leave it to courts, the people — who vote or revolt — and history to draw their conclusions from the FACTS, and give the benefit of the doubt to the accused. It may be a sad thing to say in this new age when we've decided to re-hate the British — but welcome the Booker and other British goodies — but there's much in their favour to British jurisprudence and Westminster-style democracy that the British — and Macaulay — bequeathed to us and which have allowed every critic and villain to flourish.

MMM mentions this in passing because those who've been given the freedom of the wild ass — or, to be polite, freedom without responsibility — have been bent on stirring up a hornets' nest over a person who many might consider the first rebel, Marudhanayagam Pillai Yusuf Khan, who, MMM was delighted to hear Chief Minister Karunanidhi, call Khan Saheb. Like the Tigers, Veerappan, the 'Bandit Queen' and sundry others, Khan Saheb too has done good and ill, been just and unjust, heroic and traitorous, greedy and generous. But as the Army might say, "He was a bloody good soldier" and there are many who would hold that, together with Stringer Lawrence, he laid the foundations for today's Indian Army. In this context, can't we let the facts of a long ago story speak for themselves, instead of trying to com-

ment on matters about which we know little and about which there are less records. Is it really necessary to create controversies out of everything and out of nothing by distorting quotes? Must we fight battles hundreds of years old, all over again? We've had a ball on these lines during the Queen's visit, forgetting in the process, the basics of traditional Indian courtesy. Must we continue on these same lines?

A major launch

Queen or no queen, controversy or no controversy, Kamal Haasan's *magnum opus* is going to be a major film and will prove a visually striking action story that is likely to have its problems with the local censors, for there's a wench in it who dares to bare (foreign, since no Indian woman bares... French, is she?). (Incidentally, a leading woman's magazine from Mumbai around the same time had gone around asking local married couples whether they had seen each other nude! Most hadn't, except the mod, the report had it!)

At Rs.25 crore it would not only be big and opulent but with Kamal's commitment (obsession?) with it, the film should also be splendidly done and enacted, no matter the liberties he might take with gently bending the historical facts. The film therefore got the launch it deserved.

Almost every major name in the film world turned up for it, with a fence-sitter or two coming to meet the Queen but skipping the inauguration speeches and felicitations. It was sad that K. Balachander and his cohorts chose to skip the function, but no matter how much Kamal regretted it and wore his heart on his sleeve and how much MMM feels there are occasions to forget and forgive even momentarily — there are certainly two sides to the story. No matter how much one has at stake, loyalty is often more fundamental and change should be wrought from within; compromises like, for instance, forgetting Yusuf Khan and featuring Marudhanayagam in Islamic script, are often not wisdom. On the other hand, when some are making millions, it's not the done thing to quibble over hundreds of rupees and use, in effect, strike-breakers. But that is no reason not to call truce for a moment of celebration; the Tigers have done so often enough. Why not Kodambakkam?

On more pleasant lines were the courtesies Sivaji Ganesan and Chief Minister Karunanidhi exchanged, each vying with the other to be the head of Kamal's thespian house. AVM Saravanan made first claim, since the boy Kamal had started with his father AVM, but in his inimitable fashion the Chief Minister had the last word, claiming to be four years older than the Chevalier. In the process, Kalaingar also elevated the star of the

morning to 'Kalaingar' Kamal. But when it came to the Chief Minister's final last word he pulled a fast one; what a magnificent coincidence, he stated, the fact that the *muhurat* of Marudhanayagam was on the same day as the centenary of the hanging of Veerapandiya Kattabomman and on the anniversary of the day Khan Saheb was hanged, October 16th. The only thing is that MMM found the records to date Khan Saheb's hanging to October 15th. In such cases, literary licence may be permissible, but not when the wrong hangmen are named; then someone else needs to look up history.

Call for perpetuation

It was a sad editorial that *The Man From Madras Musings* read in *Srutu*, a magazine he's been rather fond of from its very first days — when, through no song-and-dance fan, he enjoyed its contents while putting it to bed. What Editor-in-Chief N. Pattabhi Raman was ruing was something common to many a small journal of quality that is a one-person show. What after the founder? How do you perpetuate existence of a publication that a certain section of society has found making a substantial contribution to it and the

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

cause the journal is dedicated to?

Pattabhi Raman states, "I get the feeling that even the most ardent fan of *Srutu* is unwilling or unable to help build a secure future for the magazine". And asks, "Does not the community of those concerned with Indian music and dance, including *Srutu* readers, have a stake in the future of the magazine? If some day *Srutu* ceases to exist, would they simply sigh collectively, say 'What a pity' and forget about it? Or blame the founders for not ensuring, on their own, a perpetual existence for *Srutu*?"

Indeed, these are major questions for the educated citizenry of Chennai to ponder over. This city is unique in having three or four — perhaps even a few more — magazines that are unique in India, in that they focus on heritage, culture, the environment etc. without in the least being intellectual or pretentious. These magazines are almost all one-person or tiny shows, which makes them difficult to perpetuate. What they need is a publishing godfather or godfathers committed to such issues willing to bring them under one protective roof. MMM wonders who is out there not only to answer *Srutu*'s cry but those of all similar publications in Chennai as well.

In brief

★ Political elections have over the years been getting dirtier and dirtier and money has begun to play an increasing role. *The Man From Madras Musings* has realised for several years now. That the sad trend of canvassing for election to club committees, the leadership of professional bodies and the councils of commercial associations had begun a few years ago, MMM had noted with dismay. But he never thought that the worst aspects of political elections would seep into associations of professionals, even if they be owner-professionals. It was tragic to watch what happened during the recent elections for the leadership of one such national body, when presidential candidates from three southern states fought it out. Not only was there canvassing and wining and dining, but tickets for travel, the expenses for accommodation and local travel were arranged for voters, with rumours talking of worse. What strikes MMM as the saddest part of all this is that the elected President need not have indulged in this; he was the best man by far and deserved the honour. It's just that he couldn't be certain that merit would have its day. To what a pass we have come!

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that the old Madras Club buildings in *Express Estate*, which were featured in *Madras Musings* last fortnight, have indeed been bought — though the dotting of the i's and the crossing of the t's have to be completed — and that the buyers plan to develop a heritage hotel on the site. The Chennai-based company — one of the country's Top 500 companies — has tied up with Singapore and West Asian interests for this venture, which also includes developing an international style shopping mall in the same complex, MMM is told. And that is what frightens him. Glitzy international shopping malls and conservation of heritage buildings don't go well together. MMM hopes that when the planning starts, local heritage experts will be consulted to ensure the restoration of the first Madras Club buildings in the PROPER environment.

★ Speaking of heritage hotels, *The Man From Madras Musings* is happy to find Government also talking about them. The State tourism developers and the national ones (the TTDC and the ITDC) propose to restore the old Law College Hostel on Broadway as a heritage hotel at a cost of Rs.10 crore. Hooray for them; MMM looks forward to seeing what government makes of a heritage building.

Business briefs

★ That South Indian tea production is booming, *The Man From Madras Musings* is de-

lighted to hear. It is estimated that a record production of 195 million kg will be achieved against 180 m kg last year and around 49 m kg in 1946. What is creditable about this is that the increase has been achieved by only marginally increasing acreage, from a little over 67,000 hectares in 1948 to an estimated 76,000 and a bit hectares at present. And much of this increase has come from 31,500 small planters working plots of less than 8 hectares. Science — and better working conditions — has been responsible for the increase in yield from 725 kg/hectare in 1948 to 2493 kg/ha in 1995, an almost 250 per cent increase. The only fly on the horizon of this splendid achievement is that Indian tea is losing out on its supremacy in world markets and has a battle on its hand IN the country, with coffee, fruit juices and soft drinks all targeting the same market. Will increasing tea production find a market, in India or abroad, in the years to come, MMM wonders.

★ Businessmen looking for a new investment might like to look deeper into a Tamil Nadu Government study which is convinced there's money in herbiculture. *The Man From Madras Musings* learns that the Study has identified TEN herbs with international potential. They are Aloe, Aswaganda, Brahmi, Hibiscus, Indigo Fera, Lavender, Tulsi (Basil), Wedilia, Palmarosa and Patchouli. These have medicinal, cosmetic and food flavouring potential, the Study states. Whether Government is going to encourage their farming is a decision MMM looks forward to.

★ When The Murugappa Group's Coromandel Engineering recently celebrated its 50th birthday, Group Chairman A M Arunachalam narrated how the Group got into the construction business. He was building his house in Madras in 1946, he related, and helping him with it was Eric Coe, a sanitary engineer then well-known in the city. Their regular meetings and a subsequent meeting with elder brother Murugappa led to the three of them starting Coromandel Engineering in 1947. Later, a Sri Lankan repatriate, Nawaz helped the Company to grow. And that was growth accelerated by tackling such a major project as the LIC building, still — but not for long — the tallest building in Chennai. Coromandel Engineering has, in its 50th year, set another new mark. It has imported and put up the first precast concrete factory shell in Chennai — for Mahindra-Ford — and is now planning to do the same for a Ford ancillary in Chennai. A.MM Arunachalam has a fund of stories about the Group's beginnings; it's time he put them all down in a book, *The Man From Madras Musings* suggests.

MMM

OUR READERS WRITE

Was it in Hindi?

I read with great interest the article on M.S.S., the Southern Nightingale (MM, September 16th).

M.S.S. deserves all the encomiums that have been showered on her by great personalities like Sarojini Naidu. Nehru had once told her jocularly that he was only a Prime Minister whereas she was the Queen of Music.

The article says that the Hindi version of her film *Meera* is scheduled to be screened in the North shortly. Was not the film seen by the Prime Minister and Sarojini the Hindi version?

P. Vajravelu
S.P.Q., 9 Lloyds Estate,
Chennai 600 014.

A meatless answer

About strict enforcement of the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, there cannot be two opinions and it should be made to apply to all animals, domestically trained and those which are kept in the zoos for entertainment. Seeking a total ban, singling out elephants and that too the ones in temples, as advocated by the Violet Memorial Trust, cannot be understood.

There is a provision in Municipal Acts that bullock carts with loads should not ply during the hottest hours of the day. No one bothers about the hazards bullocks undergo. Why talk about animals, when school children of all ages are made to stand in the scorching sun for hours to dance and sing whenever VVIPs visit the city. Is it not torture? Does it come under any provision of the Prevention of Cruelty Act? Compared to humans, animals are safely covered under an act!

How many cattle die, fowls perish and pigs are slaughtered in abattoirs daily compared to the number of elephants that die of torture? What stance does the Violet Memorial Trust take against such slaughter made for our consumption? Why pick a rare happening to an isolated elephant and make a noise about it. Race horses, when they are injured, are shot dead mercilessly on the spot, not by an illiterate mahout, but by the educated rich! The caged animals in zoos are always the target of torture by the visiting public. Will those who sympathise with the elephant, spare a thought for other animals too and adjure consumption of fish, mutton, fowl and pork?

K S Kandhaswamy
Flat 6, 6 Rajagopalan Street
Valmiki Nagar, Tiruvanmiyur
Chennai - 600 041

Report from Gopalan?

Re. K.N. Prabhu's comments, Rand an octogenarian's memories of the match between the Indian Olympic XI and the All Madras XI 65 years ago (MM, September 16th).

Whenever we discussed hockey in our house, my late father used to recall this match. He used to talk about how privileged he was to have seen players like Dhyan Chand, Roop Singh, Penniger, Tapsell, Jaffer and Gunmeet Singh. He also used to rave about the way Gilbert and Blankley raided the All India XI goal and the way M.J. Gopalan defended for Madras.

Many people who have witnessed the match are not able to recall the details. Fortunately M.J. Gopalan is in our midst. Perhaps we can get a detailed report from him?

K. Rangarajan
23 Murrays Gate Road,
Chennai 600 018.

House plants too

I would like to offer my comments as an engineer on the item "The Consultation Recommends..." (MM, September 16th), especially para 3, "Entry of waste and effluent into the waterways..."

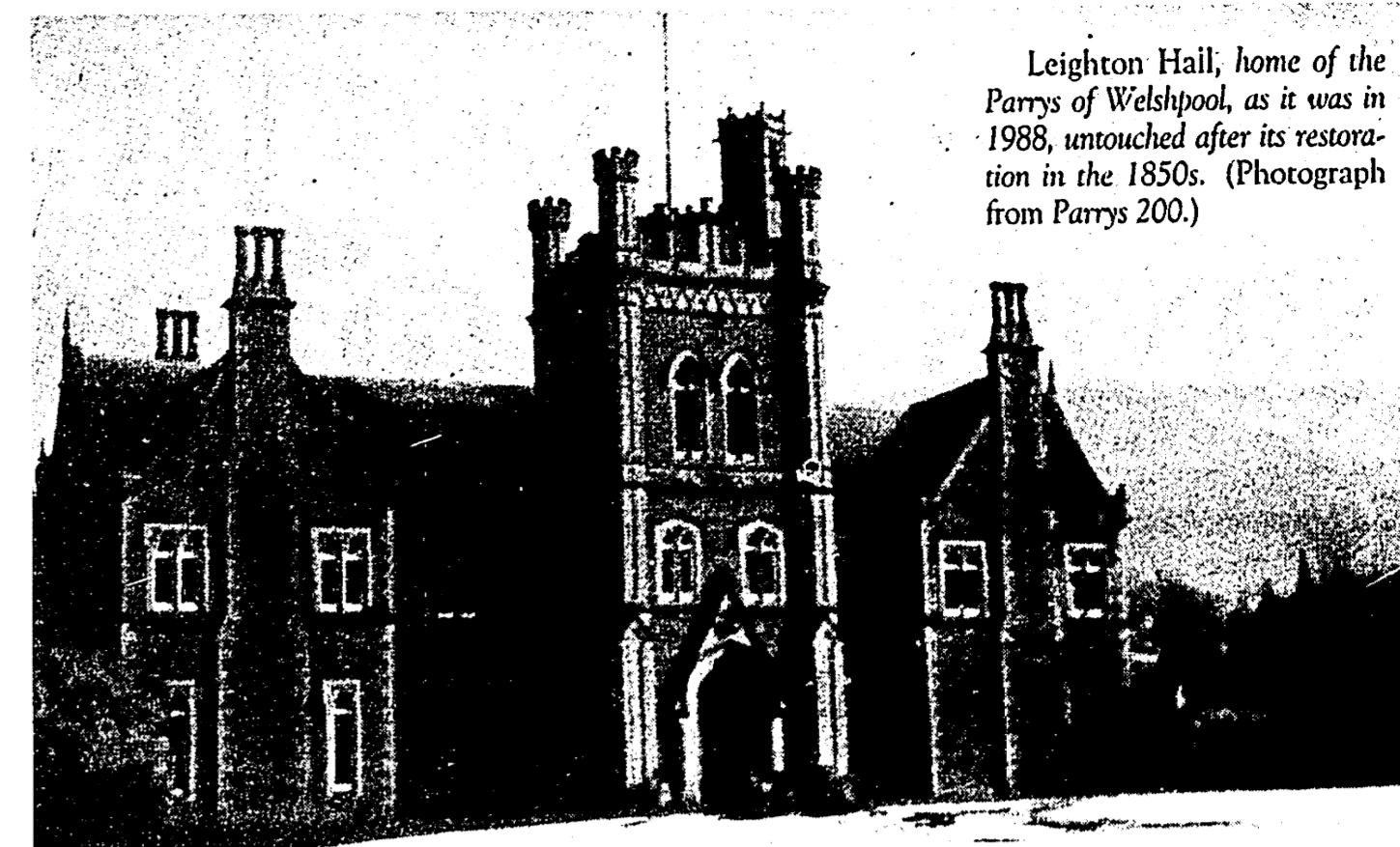
I am glad to find in the para cited that "all larger developments, such as hotels, multistoreyed buildings and industries should have their own treatment plants and should let only treated effluent into the waterways". This is the correct approach. However, it should not have exempted individual houses.

Individual houses or a group of houses should also make arrangements to treat effluents. Now micro-sized treatment plants are available that will treat relatively large quantities of sewage more efficiently than in the past. It is to be remembered that in the suburbs of Chennai, individual households are provided with septic tanks by their owners. By the same analogy the owners of households in Chennai also should come forward to equip their houses or groups of houses with compact treatment plants and let the treated effluent out for recharging groundwater. The excess treated effluent, if any, may be let into the storm water sewers.

This approach is technically feasible. There may be some practical difficulties during implementation depending upon the local site conditions which may require innovative solutions. A part of the cost could be subsidised by the state.

This approach if implemented would recharge the groundwater, arrest seawater intrusion, and facilitate the cleaning or self-cleansing of Chennai waterways in due course.

S.N. Mahalingam
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Engineering Consultant,
5 Kalamegam Street Extn.,
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Leighton Hall, home of the Parrys of Welshpool, as it was in 1988, untouched after its restoration in the 1850s. (Photograph from Parrys 200.)

From Parry's Corner to Highnam Court?

Harry Miller writes: "The enclosed leaflet (on one of the gracious houses and gardens of England) came to me a few days ago from a friend in England. I well remember as a 12-year-old singing hymns that had the name Parrys written below the music, and always liked them best. And of course everyone knows his famous setting of William Blake's *Jerusalem* (a Christian metaphor for paradise, not the actual city). Why, heaven forbid, but I could still sing it to you today!! But I had no idea that there were any links between those Parrys and our Parrys of Madras."

The text of the leaflet, which provides us a glimpse of what they do with heritage buildings in other parts of the world, says in part:

"Highnam Court is a Grade I listed building that was built around 1658 after the original house was damaged during the Civil War. The Highnam Estate was bought in 1839 by Thomas Gambier-Parry who was an accomplished artist, musician and art collector. He laid out 94 acres of gardens and parkland, much of it to formal planting. During their heyday the gardens rivalled any in the country and employed 14 fulltime gardeners.

In 1844 Thomas Gambier-Parry started the planting of the Pinetum ... a 13-acre woodland garden set out with informal winding paths and underplanted

A clarification

India's first law university (MM Iqiz, October 16) is not the proposed Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University in Chennai, but the National Law School of India University set up by the Bar Council of India in 1985 in Bangalore. The first batch of students into the law university were admitted in 1988 and they received University Grants Commission (UGC) recognition in 1993. Five batches of students have graduated from the University since.

Bharath Jairaj
6, II Cross Street,
Karpagam Gardens,
Adyar,
Chennai - 600 020.

with a profusion of spring flowers.

The Church of the Holy Innocents was built by Thomas Gambier-Parry in 1851 in memory of his children who had died in infancy and of his first wife, Isabella, who died in 1848. Their surviving son, Sir Hubert Parry Bt. set William Blake's poem *Jerusalem* to music, and this still remains one of England's favourite hymns. Highnam's *Jerusalem* Appeal raises funds to restore the churches within the United Benefice. The magnificent frescoes, painted by Thomas Gambier-Parry himself, had already been restored prior to the establishment of the *Jerusalem Appeal*.

After Gambier-Parry's death the gardens and park went into a gradual decline and in later years were almost totally overgrown and derelict. The present owners of the Court are restoring the gardens with grant aid from the Countryside Commission and under the direction of Branch Landscape Associates who have produced a restoration masterplan. This summer the gardens, pinetum and church are being opened to the public. There will be guided tours of the gardens every hour, or you are free to wander as you wish. A brief talk will be given in the church at 11am, 1pm and 3 pm. Please remember that the house is private and respect the privacy of the family.

Entrance \$4 adults. No charge for children. All proceeds to be split between the *Jerusalem Appeal* and the *Surgical Laser Trust Fund* at Gloucester Royal Hospital. Entrance charge includes the gardens, pinetum and church. No dogs please. Visitors to the pinetum should be prepared to walk 1 mile across fields (walking boots recommended).

Harry's friend had scrawled on the leaflet: "The money was East India Co. money — Parry of Madras. Is Parrys still trading?"

THE EDITOR notes: Here is another example of what *The Man From Madras Musings* was talking about last fortnight —

the growing lack of knowledge of history and geography in today's world. Thomas Parry who founded OUR Parry's was NOT a Companyman; he was a Free Merchant (a private trader) who was often in trouble with the Company. That said, the scrawl raises interesting possibilities.

OUR Thomas Parry, who arrived in Madras in 1788, died in Porto Novo and was buried in Christ Church, Cuddalore. By his wife Mary Pearce (a widow) née West, he had two children, John and Eliza, both of whom died young; Mrs Parry went back in 1807 and the parting was final. A Thomas William Parry and an Edward Moorat Parry born to a Mary Ann Carr also died young. OUR Parry also provided in his will for two more children — George Parry Gibson and Emma Louisa Gibson — and eight other European, Anglo-Indian and Indian women whose homes were all along the route from Madras to Cuddalore.

After several other bequests, "the rest and residue of my property" he left to the children of a brother in England, John Parry, and to three sisters and their children. The only link Thomas Gambier-Parry could have with our Parry is through John Barry, who did have a son called Thomas born some time after 1787. As for any Gambier of the period with a Madras connection, the only one we've come across is a Sir Thomas Gambier, a judge of the Supreme Court and Chief Justice 1842-50, who owned *Gambier's Gardens* on Greenway's Road in Adyar. There were no other Parrys linked with the company after the founder, but there were some Pughs, who could be traced to a sister. So if there is any basis to the speculation, it must be on the assumption that Thomas Gambier-Parry's wealth may have been made possible by Thomas Parry, through John Parry's son Thomas, and not from Parry's of Madras.

Perhaps the present owners of Highnam Court would like to follow this up and let us know whether there is indeed a link between Madras and Highnam Court, which is between Ross and Gloucester, not far from Leighton Hall (as it is today, in our photograph), near Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, Wales.

Calcutta Corpn. saves buildings

Plans of the Life Insurance Corporation of India and the Central Public Works Department to demolish two heritage buildings owned by them in Calcutta seem to have been stalled as independent experts have found the buildings safe.

A team of experts from the conservation wing of the Associated Cement Company (ACC) has certified the Metropolitan Insurance Building on Chowringhee and the Currency House at BBD Bag (East) structurally safe.

"They are eminently reusable after conservation," the experts stated in their report.

The ACC report is also significant as the Calcutta Municipal Corporation can use it in court against the LIC and the CPWD for ordering the demolition.

"After all the LIC and the CPWD can afford the cost of conservation," said the municipal commissioner, Mr Asim Barman.

Both are on the list of 72 heritage buildings in the city, prepared by the CMDA under the land use and development control plan enactment.

The CPWD recently started demolishing the Currency House but had to stop midway after the intervention of the CMC, whose

officials filed an FIR at the Hare Street police station.

The CPWD chief engineer later met the municipal commissioner and said his department

● The easiest way to help developers is to recommend demolition of old buildings. We've seen that happen in Chennai many times, for instance in the case of buildings in the Fort, Bentinck's Building and Panagal Building. Which is why a Heritage Act, with a listing of buildings, is necessary. The one Calcutta has, though incomplete, recently saved two buildings destined for the wreckers' hammers. More in this feature. But what is significant in that report is the fact that one of the buildings is owned by the Life Insurance Corporation, which has money enough to set an example in conservation for others. We say this keeping in mind what they can do for that 100-year-old architectural fantasy, the Bharat Insurance Building, truly a landmark on Mount Road.

— The Editor

was unaware of the heritage status of the building. He assured the CMC the structure would be restored.

Mr Barman sent a notice last month to the LIC asking it to maintain the Metropolitan Insurance Building. An identical notice was sent to CPWD, asking it to repair the damage to the Currency House.

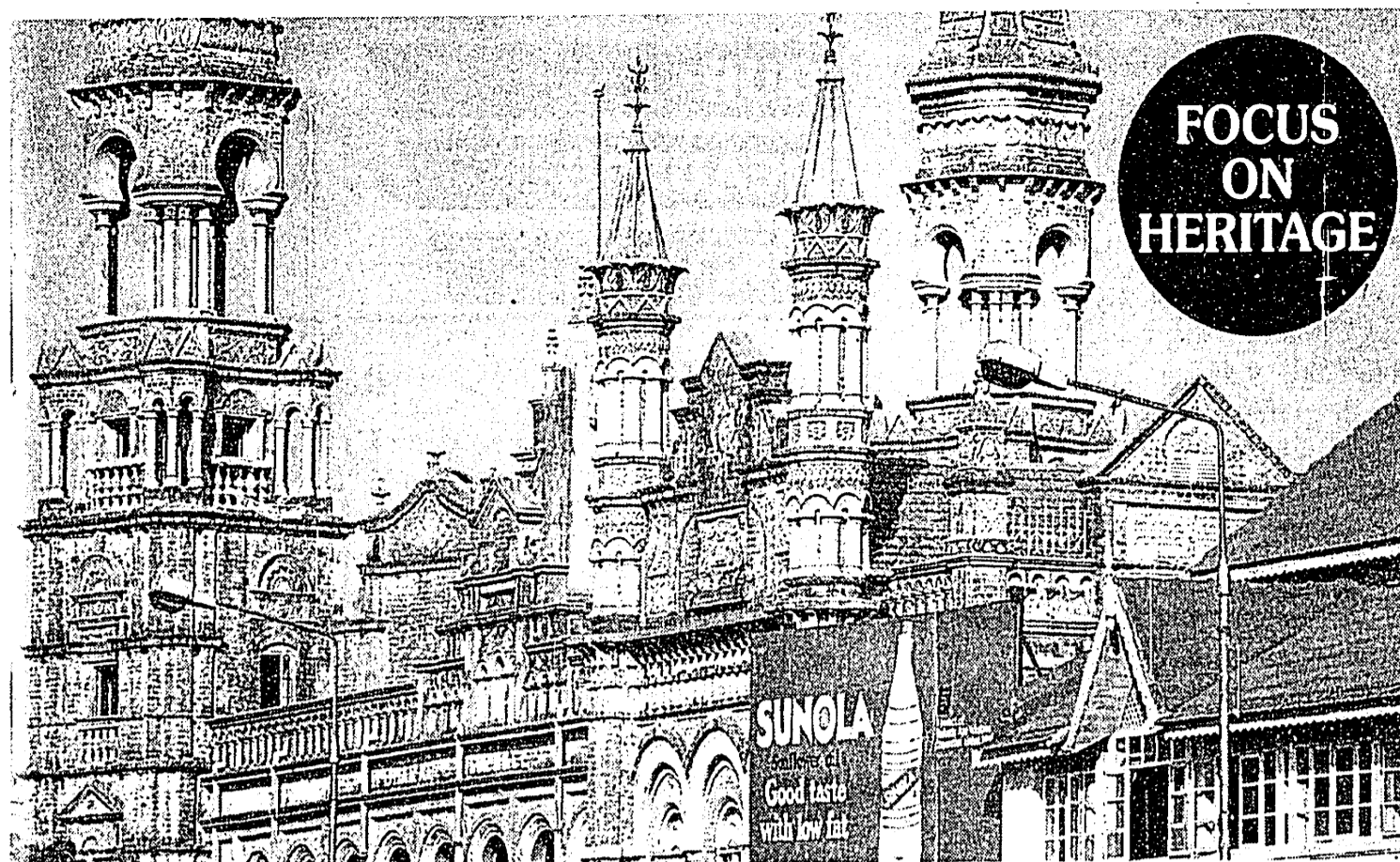
But both bodies informed the CMC that the buildings were structurally unsafe and had to be demolished.

However, the CMC architects and civil engineers did not agree and the Corporation decided to go to court. Before taking legal action the CMC requested the research and consultancy directorate of the ACC to conduct a survey on the building.

The Metropolitan Insurance Building is of Greco-Romanesque architecture of the Victorian era; and the Currency House is a majestic colonial architectural edifice.

The ACC report said the buildings are structurally stable and can be put into service condition for commercial and office usage, provided repair works are carried out at the earliest. Architectural conservation principles can complement modern use when viewed sympathetically.

(Courtesy: The Telegraph, Calcutta.)



Bharat Insurance Building, built as W E Smith's Kardyl Building in 1897. A landmark on Mount Road, this LIC-owned heritage building is threatened, the word has it. A cash-rich organisation like the LIC can surely do better, by showing the way to heritage conservation to others. (Photograph from Madras - The Gracious City.)

A beginning to save Bangalore's past

AARAMBH (An Association for Reviving Awareness about Monuments of Bangalore Heritage) is trying to capture and spread memories of a Bangalore that once was. Founded less than three years ago by Suresh Moona — a biology teacher who has committed himself to searching for Bangalore's heritage, AARAMBH has been quietly spreading the word about the rich but little known antiquity of 470-year-old Bangalore. Its actions, Moona says, can only be a gentle nudge towards preserving its relics and stopping further damage.

"This is just a start in stirring the Bangalorean's interest in his home-town and to merely create an awareness among the next generation. By taking a new look at a fast changing city's past and

shedding some light on forgotten times, we hope that at least some of what's left of its heritage can be retained," says Moona. "And as the name says, ours is only a beginning: it's for the authorities, the Corporation, the Archaeology Department or concerned citizens, to take over where we leave. Let's hope our effort pays off in some way."

There were 800 heritage sites in Bangalore in the 19th Century. Now, the number may not reach even a hundred. In the last 15 years, Raj remnant bungalows, rare architectural delights and historical monuments, some 70 old and interesting buildings have given way to apartments; a recent victim is the 150-year-old Elgin Mills building, while Cash Pharmacy is also due for the block. Not even pre-Independence streets or locality names have been left alone. This, according to Moona, "is like jumping from page 9 to page 12 in a history book".

In all the growth plans for the city, the lakes and *kalyanis* have had no chance. The *kalyanis* of the Kempe Gowda era are known for their aesthetic pillars and engineering wonders. AARAMBH also focusses on them. According to AARAMBH, ignorance and lack of concern have caused most of these relics to fall into ruin. Which is why the awareness drives are targeted at tomorrow's generation. It holds essay contests and slide shows, 125 so far, and takes enthusiasts to visit the sites. "We hope to build a second line of caring residents who will cherish something of the past."

Save that building...

The Sriramu Park in Loane's Square, George Town, may well be the latest victim of the uncontrolled urbanisation that is eating away much green space in the city.

This two-ground park, which is the only haven in an otherwise congested area, is soon to give way to a multistoreyed commercial/parking complex, going by a resolution recently adopted by the Corporation Council.

The reasons cited are that the park has become an open toilet for the slum-dwellers. Further, the high level of pollution in this hub of Chennai makes it impossible for any vegetation to survive. Therefore, it has to go. As a consolation to conservationists, the civic managers plan to create a landscaped garden in and around the proposed complex.

Other green spaces in the metro under similar threat include the verdant Government Estate where the Housing Board plan to construct multistoreyed complexes for the MLAs and the Government Museum Complex in Egmore, where a four-storeyed block is to come up to house sections of the Connemara Library (CPL).

The process of urbanisation not only threatens the natural landscape of Chennai but also many historical buildings. They have either been demolished or are left uncared for. The 110-year-old Victoria Public Hall, adjacent to the Corporation's Ripon Buildings cries for attention. Apart from this, new constructions that have sprung up near these historic buildings have obscured them from the public eye. A building on Wallajah Road now mars the majestic, Indo-Saracenic architectural beauty of Chepauk Palace.

The State Government recently approached the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to preserve the main building of the Connemara Public Library. For quite some time, the restoration of the stately *Senate House* at the Madras University complex has been talked about. But nothing much has happened.

(from an article by MADHUMATHI D.S. in *Business Line*)

The conservationists are not impressed by piecemeal solutions to preserve the historical monuments and structures. Their demand for long has been that the Government enact a Heritage Act for the upkeep of these buildings. Apart from the architectural structures, the Act should include natural heritage sites such as the Adyar Creek and the Pulicat Lake. Also the oldest residential areas — Thiruvottiyur, Mylapore and

● The Hindu's Metro supplement recently published this report from T RAMAKRISHNAN. Many may have seen it, but Madras Musings feels re-publishing it might help reinforce people's concerns for this city's heritage.

— The Editor

Triplicane — need to be protected from indiscriminate planning and construction of buildings. Areas should also be set apart for pedestrians.

The Indian Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has presented to the State Government a broad outline, as a basis for such a law. It has also listed 250 public and private buildings/monuments for preservation.

According to the Trust, an inter-disciplinary working group under the leadership of a town planner should be constituted for the preservation of historical buildings so that the process will be an integrated one. The group can have archaeologists, ethno-

graphers, sociologists, historians, architects and engineers as members. The process of conservation comprises the documentation of structures, areas, artefacts and precincts, listing/grading them, and physical intervention (meaning execution of conservation). The Trust's document also prescribes the way in which each phase is to be carried out. Physical intervention should be the minimum necessary and reversible if technically possible or at least can be repeated. At least for the last few years, officialdom is taking steps to bring the Heritage Act into force. But, the group involved in drafting the Act says more deliberations are required before the Act can be finalised.

For those who are anxious about the conservation of the city's heritage, these debates should end and 'concrete' action should be taken. This perception arises out of the apprehension that the future generations should not experience a historical void. Meanwhile, the institutions working for preserving heritage buildings should involve a large section of people and transform the movement for conservation into a true people's movement.

...spare that hammer

● Heritage buildings are living monuments of history and hence have to be conserved at all costs. The arguments that such historical structures occupy substantial space, when the city is expanding at a rapid pace and a considerable section of the people are forced to live in the suburbs, is philistine.

A conservationist argues that the loss of historical continuity, caused by the demolition of monuments, may not appear visible but will be felt. "The need to preserve our cultural heritage arises not merely to provide evidence of our past but also to forge a concrete link between the past and the present in public memory."

Many agree that a mere declaration of the monuments as heritage buildings will not do. Adequate resources should be made available for their maintenance so that they could be used. In this context, Dr. U. Srinivasaraghavan, management expert, has suggested involving the corporate sector in the task of conservation. He points out that many such buildings are in the public domain and, as such, the Government has limited resources. The corporate sector, therefore, can be roped in.

there's an urgent need to save and build upon it. That can come about only if our bureaucrats; politicians and planners understand historical processes.

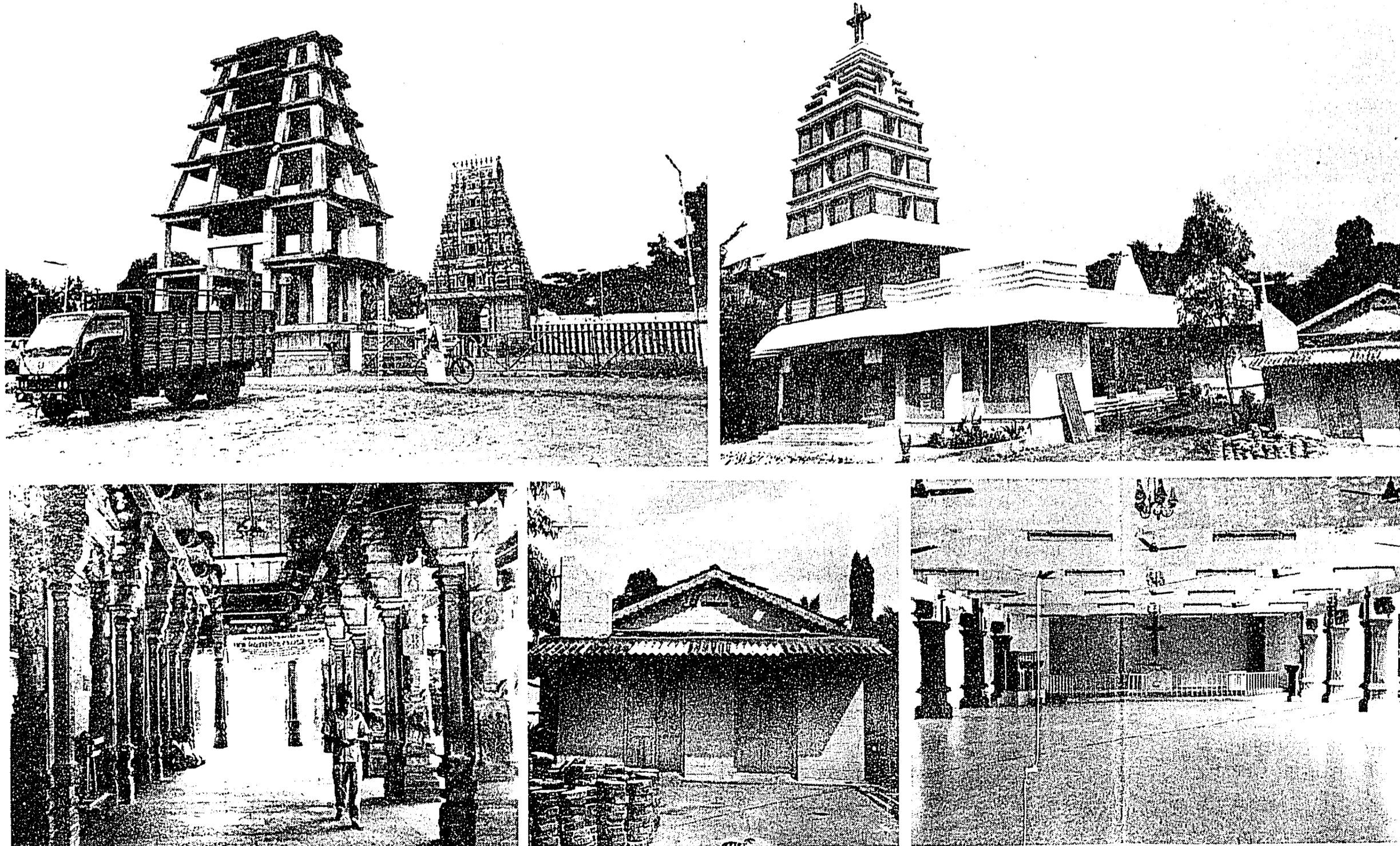
Perhaps, they should read *Is Paris Burning?* We could do with some defiance!

THE OLD... & THE NEW

Our OLD is of the Marundiswarar Temple in Tiruvanniyur, going back to the 10th-11th Century Chola period. Inscriptions on its walls have been dated to the 11th Century. Orate pillars support its Thyagaraja and Marundiswarar mandapams. Both its even-more embellished five-tier gopurams are, however, dwarfed by a towering unfinished gopuram facing the tank. Work on this new gopuram started in the early 1960s, but stopped abruptly, leaving it a stark skeleton.

Whether inspired by this bit of unfinished art or not, the NEW steeple of the Rivers Church in Adyar, near the Theosophical Society, looks remarkably like that gopuram. The new church building, echoing Hindu architecture and practices, has the taller gopuram at the entrance, a smaller one (the white, right at the rear) over the altar, and a pillar-ad mandapam for the congregation, who remain seated on the floor or standing.

The old Rivers Church, next to the new, Yesu Anbar Alayam, is a small, almost shedlike building Edwin Starneck raised in memory of his sister Elsa Rivers 100 years ago. This old church, built in Orin, in what was once the property of the Commercial Bank of India, is now administered by the Church of South India. Work on the new church began in the early 1980s and was completed in 1989. Work on the new gopuram-like steeple started some time after that and proceeded slowly, but was completed earlier this year. (Text and photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



CITIES NEED A SENSE OF HISTORY

A sense of history is necessary in the planning process, writes ALLEN J MENDONCA in his column 'Metro Matters' in *The Times of India*. What he has to say about Bangalore applies equally to us in Madras that is Chennai. He says:

"If you've read that classic 'Is Paris Burning?' by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre or watched the movie based on the novel, then there's one character who would have burnt his integrity into your sub-conscious; General Dietrich von Choltitz of the Third Reich.

As the Allies fought pitched air, sea and ground battles to liberate Europe from the Fascist hordes, Adolf Hitler ordered the pillage and destruction of Paris. The General ordered his men to lay charges below the 45 magnificent bridges that span the Seine and around every great building and monument that lined the river and central Paris. But he never gave the order that would

have reduced Paris to rubble. Asked at the Nuremberg Trial as to why he had defied the Fuehrer's order, he replied, "I would rather be accused of treason than face the ignominy of not being forgiven by history."

Paris or London, Shanghai or St Petersburg, great cities reflect their history. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus observed long before Christ, "History is philosophy drawn from examples."

Bangalore doesn't possess either the sweep or the grandeur of an ancient city. In comparison, it is a fledgling city, still finding its feet. But it does have a history... though it has been rudely confined to the dustbin of time.

The British did make an effort at keeping historical records, some of which found place in the gazettes, but not enough...

A city minus historical information, is an illiterate city. Alas! It's this malaise that plagues Bangalore.

The silver lining is that in re-

cent years, some individuals have studied a few historical facets of the city and written about them... There's also ... college lecturer Suresh Moona and his 'Aarambhi' (see above, left), an organisation devoted to reminding the citizenry that a historical perspective is a must for the preservation of this fair city, that is deteriorating by the year.

The civic authorities have just resorted to knee-jerk solutions to bring some order. But order also requires a gameplan. In a city growing vertical even as its sprawls in ever growing concentric circles on the periphery, what's required is a sense of history in the planning process.

The BCC seems to want a Manhattan in the city centre with an Ulsoor Lake tucked in. Browbeat the vendors, the marginalised, the poor. Get rid of the slums. But a great city is the sum of its various societal sections. Historically, Bangalore has exemplified this ethos. Now,

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight October 1 to 15. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Who has been selected to receive this year's Gandhi Peace Prize?
2. What landmark in the Indian literary scene was achieved on October 14th at the Guildhall, in London?
3. What form of gambling has been banned by an ordinance passed on October 1st?
4. Which Tamil actress has been sentenced to two years RI and fined Rs.4.65 lakh in connection with taking a loan from the AIADMK?
5. Delhi-based Gul Mohammed died on October 1st. He was a Guinness record holder. For what?
6. Which former Congress supremo has floated the Gandhi Forum to tackle corruption and criminalisation of politics?
7. What four-year-old was abandoned on October 4th after being beset by problems?
8. Name the veteran parliamentarian and secretary-general of the Forward Bloc who passed away on October 5th.
9. On October 4th, Sue was bought by the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, for \$8.4 million. Who is Sue?
10. Which Indian became the Asian junior chess champion in the boys' category?
11. Name the two Pakistanis who set a first by scoring a century each in the same innings on their Test cricket debut.
12. Which international organisation has won this year's Nobel Peace Prize?
13. The biggest inter-planetary explorer, Cassini, blasted off on October 15th. Where is it headed for?
14. Name the popular American singer killed in an air-crash on October 12th.
15. What remark by the Duke of Edinburgh at the Jallianwala Bagh sparked a fierce debate?

16. Which city hospital and cine actress reached an agreement, in the presence of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, after the actress had filed a suit alleging deficiency in service?
17. Trivia. Where did the Queen stay in Chennai during her visit?
18. Dr. (Mrs.) Nagabhooshanam is the new and first Vice Chancellor of...?
19. The Rs.1.3 crore EL Stacy is the latest addition to the city's police force. Who or what is E.L. Stacy?
20. Where was a state-of-the-art voluntary blood bank, costing Rs.1 crore, opened recently?

(Answers on Page 8)

Chennai's flying cooks

The 'in' topic with Chennai's chattering classes is the city's "Flying Cooks". This unique sub-genre of homo sapiens flies into your kitchen every day with dhori or saree flying, whirls like a dervish for the next two to three hours fixing the day's lunch, dinner, tiffin, snacks — and some. In the process flavours and aromas fly about in a merry mix of *sambar*, pizza, *pulao*, *dosai*, etc. while sundry vegetables jump and frantically fly under the flying cook's twirling knife. Which I do believe he operates with one hand, while with the other he leaps about juggling mixer, grinder, cooker, *idli*, stone and all the other props which go into the making of our daily bread. Amen and when! Chores over, in a rising crescendo of clanging pots and pans, your flying cook streaks in to take his leave, and before you can manage a strangled 'nalaiku parkalam' he has jet-setted off. To cook up a storm in another home for the next two hours, and then on to the next...

Apart from cooking, flying

cooks are known to double up as local newspapers with latest *taaza khabar* being briskly passed around as to what is cooking where — literally and metaphorically on their particular beat. In fact, kitchen politics has never had it so good,

● By
Pushpa Chari

and rumours are afloat that a gang of flying cooks is about to bring out *Kitchen Times* — "Tasty news with authentic flavour". Watch out *Mylapore Times*, *Adyar Times*, etc! And oh, yes, keeping up with the joneses, the Iyers and the Singhs hasn't been the same since FCs hit the city scene. No more peering stealthily over the fence to see what new gizmo the neighbour has acquired so that you can match it with a better one. Now you get 'neighbourly' information straight from the FC's mouth. Consequently, last month, in Locality X, everyone cocked a snook at everyone else by installing TVs in their kitch-

ens. No one was happier than the FCs, many of whom have taken to gyrating coyly like Govinda, complete with shorts and dunce cap, after-effects of watching him play the cook in Hero No. 1 or some such...

My very own flying cook, Nambodiri Inc., blew into our lives one bright morning, flung his shirt off and proceeded to take over the kitchen with alarming efficiency. He'd fly in everyday at the dot of ten and in the next 120 minutes or so conjure up the most sublime *aviyal*, *kuzhambus*, *biryanis*, *dhals*, anything. But for the fact that he was majorly critical of my frequent forays into my own kitchen and his strange insistence that only he should have access to the deep freeze in which he apparently stored his special *masalas*, there was little you could fault him on. He was a wizard at both cooking and time management. At the end of two months he barely spent one hour per day in the kitchen and the table never lacked for a varied spread! My friends were beginning to turn various

shades of green and I to preen just a 'leettle' when the bubble burst. Alas, one day I came upon F.C. Nambodiri removing a big cake of frozen *aviyal* from the deep freeze, cutting up a slice and putting it into the microwave to heat. Further investigations into the deep freeze revealed a variety of items cooked over the last two weeks, obviously meant to be thawed and served over the next week or so. The myth of the *masalas* was duly exposed and N put on his shirt and beat it...

A bit sad since my kitty party story of my flying cook's mysterious *masalas* was cruelly out down. Now we'll have to hear *ad nauseam* how Sunita's Flying Cook also works for film star X, Y, or Z. Or how Rita's FC's souffles are famous from Chennai to New York since her flying cook worked in the USA too. Ah well, there is a new FC in my life now. I call her Flying Rani and if her name sounds like that of a train I'll wager the train was named after her, for the speed with which she takes off after work.

CAUSING THE OTHER HALF CONCERN

(Continued from Page 1)

The results from schools in the UK show that, last year, nearly 48 per cent of girls gained five or more passes at the top grades in the GCSE examination take at 16, while fewer than 37 per cent of boys reached the same standard. At the A levels, taken at 18, girls now score better than boys in mathematics, physics and technology. Not just that, girls are also building on their achievements more successfully than boys. More 16-year-old girls than boys — 87 per cent to 78 per cent — continue either in full- or part-time further education. Thirty per cent of Britain's top companies now take more women graduates than men...

... in the professions, (too), the number of women is increasing. Nearly half of all newly qualified accountants (in Britain) are women today compared to a mere 10 per cent in the 1970s. However, the number of women at the very top of the heap still reflects a men-to-women ratio of the older pattern. Only two per cent of those who make it to the boardrooms of big companies are women, and only 9.5 per cent of MPs in the British parliament are women.

If the lack of women at the highest levels is one of the motivating factors for them to try harder, this fact is not easily accepted by researchers. Right now, researchers are looking at hypotheses that are more mundane and biased.

Data from a secondary

school suggest girls acquire good literary skills earlier than boys and can, therefore, use these skills to accelerate their learning. This does little to explain the women's subsequent success...

Another commonly held view is that girls do better than boys when coursework is more important than exams, because girls are steady and neat whereas the unruly boys need the short-term tension of exams. However, this olden-day view is sexist and does not make much sense in the face of real data and the girls' performances in competitive exams as well...

One educationist argues that boys are more disorganised and need more supervision. Another is of the view that the

emphasis on equal opportunity for girls has made boys give up. Another researcher feels that school-books have been emasculated, with not enough macho 'blood and destruction' to capture boys' imagination. Clearly, the hard and simple facts that girls are outperforming boys is difficult for the education mandarins to digest.

A more important and disturbing fact is that the view perpetuates the notion that boys are one thing and girls another where mental and cognitive skills are concerned. Educationists, instead of giving ridiculously simplistic age-old explanations, should help answer the question of how to create environments in which individuals, irrespective of sex, can do equally well.

FIFTY YEARS OF DANCING

Sudharani Raghupathy last month celebrated FIFTY years of dancing — and still looked as lissom as ever on stage.

Just a few weeks earlier, speaking on the occasion of the Sruti Foundation of Chennai presenting its E. Krishna Iyer Medal for 1996 to 84-year old *natyacharya* Thanjavur K.P. Kittappa Pillai, she felicitated her guru by relating how she had first met him in Bangalore in the early Fifties and had started learning from him. She recalled that 'Kittappa Sir' was a strict disciplinarian and was very particular about the dancer's posture. She also recalled her association with E. Krishna Iyer who advised her



"to live dance, think about dance all the time, so that it would become a part of her", in order to become a good dancer.

Sudharani Raghupathy started dancing when she was three and a half years old. That was in 1947. Her first steps of dance were in front of Tulasi Brindavan, singing and dancing *Dasarpadas*. The next year she

(Continued on Page 7)

The legends Of yesterday's dance and today's music

The Swarna Samaroh organised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi provided an opportunity to music and dance lovers in New Delhi to listen to top-notch Carnatic musicians, both vocalists and instrumentalists, and those who over the years have danced the South Indian forms exquisitely.

The first Carnatic music recital featured maestro M Balamuralikrishna on Independence Day at the Red Fort. In keeping with the spirit of the programme Balamurali rendered *Vandey mataram*, one of his compositions in Telugu. The next day, violin maestro M S Gopalakrishnan and his daughter Narmada selected for popular pieces and combined well in the items.

Flute maestro N Ramani treated his large audience to respectful and meditative music. *Kambhoji* was the major raga in his recital on the third evening. Following him, violin virtuoso L Subramaniam impressed the audience with his display of dexterity and range in tempo.

U Srinivas, the young mandolin maestro, performed at the University campus in North Delhi. Although the venue was out of the way, the hall was almost full, the audience cutting across regional affiliations, and showing the appeal of the unique instrument in the hands of a wizard. And Srinivas did not disappoint them.

K V Narayanaswamy's vocal recital was a very satisfying musical experience. He excelled in the rendering of *Akshayalinga vibho* in *Sankarabharanam*. His performance reflected five decades of rich musical experience. His wife, Padma Narayanaswamy, provided vocal support.

Mani Krishnaswami's vocal recital was marked by its strict conformity to tradition. She also rendered two patriotic songs — *Subrahmanya Bharati's Vandey mataram* and *Devi Bharata Janani* composed by Dr V Raghavan. The spirit of patriotism was found in the vocal recital of Madurai T V Seshagopalan. He rendered *Subrahmanya Bharati's* song *Bharata desamenu in kriti* format. He also sang *Endaiyuntayum*, another song by Bharati.

True to the spirit of the Samaroh, Seshagopalan intelligently chose the opening line of dance were in front of Tulasi Brindavan, singing and dancing *Dasarpadas*. The next year she

ment of the RTP in Kalyani raga. After developing it for some time he switched to the opening line of Subrahmanya Bharati's Tamil song '*Parukalley nalla naadi*' which conveyed a similar sentiment. It was a case of national integration through music as Seshagopalan went on to render the *pallavi* line conveying the same meaning in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu in different ragas.

The last concert in the Carnatic idiom was the violin recital by maestro Lalgudi G Jayaraman playing in tandem with his son G J R Krishnan and daughter J Vijayalakshmi. This was the grand finale of the Swarna Samaroh in Delhi. The Lalgudi trio played for more

● Adapted from reports in *Sruti* on a New Delhi happening

than two hours regaling a packed, cosmopolitan audience. Vijayalakshmi's exposition of *Abhogi* raga came in for special acclaim.

The Akademi also gave the living legends of dance the rare opportunity to perform on one stage. It was a rare performance, "flawless, perfect, imaginative and heartening," according to SUNIL KOTHARI, who reported in *Sruti*:

These legends, who spent their lives performing, making us aware of our cultural legacy in those days when the art of dance was labelled (in south India) as *nautch*, worthy of practice by women of ill-fame only, were given the honour of dancing together by the Sangeet Natak Akademi and created history.

Shanta Rao, Mrinalini Sarabhai and M K Saroja, clubbed together on one evening, evoked a golden era of Bharata Natyam. Theirs were some of the greatest gurus — Meenakshisundaram Pillai of Pandanallur and Kattumannarkoil Muthukumara Pillai — and they re-created the old glory and grandeur that their gurus had taught.

Age came in the way of that grande dame Shanta Rao. It showed in her physical inability to execute the difficult *tanavarnam* which she performed in her own individual style — unusual, something we

had not seen for a very long time and had almost forgotten. She could have created an impact with a brief number, an *abhinaya* in place of the challenge she took upon herself. But none could have convinced her not to perform the *tanavarnam*, for she has been an individualistic dancer and cares two hoots for anyone who comments on her.

In contrast, Mrinalini Sarabhai, with her slim figure draped in an exquisite saree, performed with elan and grace. She intelligently wove in old numbers, selecting what could be best for the evening. The old style was evident; and she lived up to her reputation of being a legend.

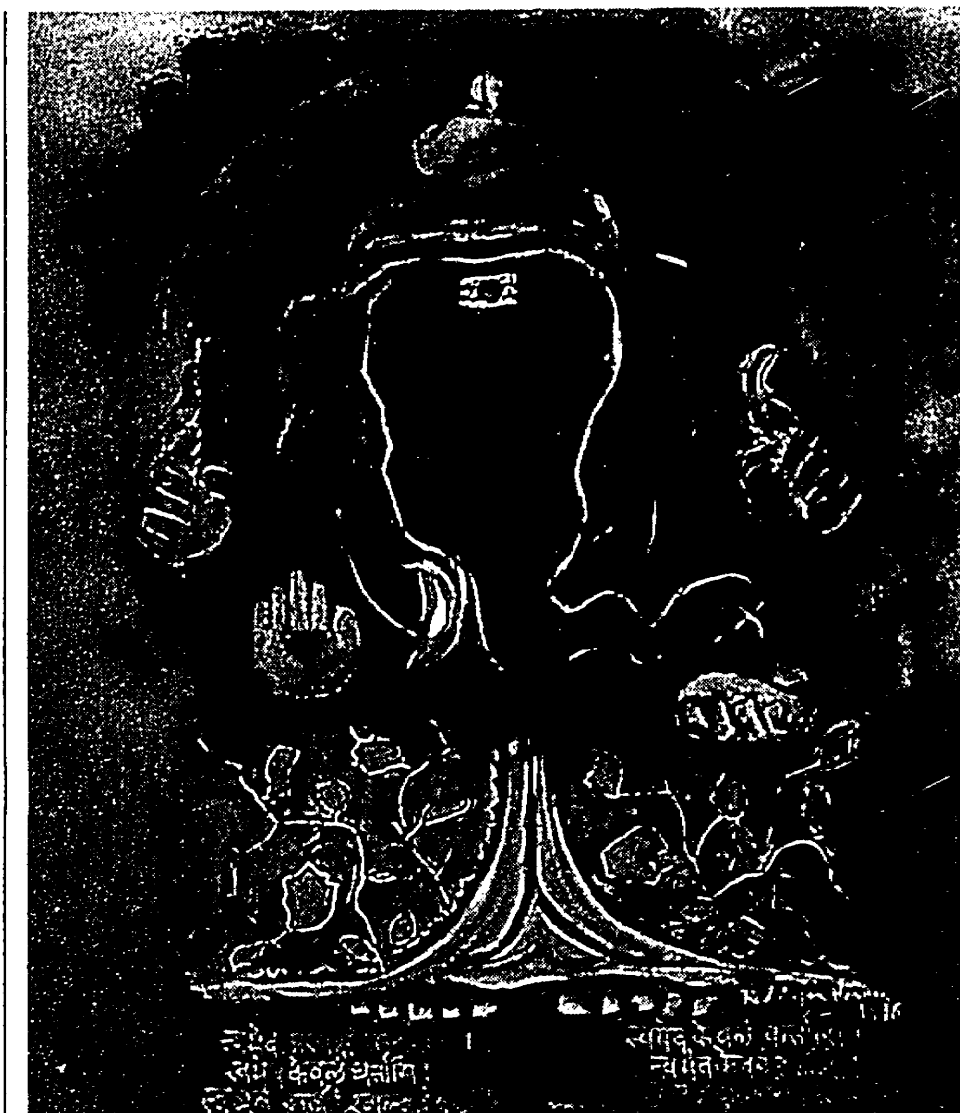
Enhancing the impact created by her, M K Saroja dwelt on expressive numbers. Petite, slim, not trying to hide her age, her inner beauty glowing, she went down in history with a memorable performance. There were many in the audience whose eyes were moist with tears.

Vijayanthimala too rose to great heights, looking stunningly beautiful at her age, attired in an exquisite costume and ornaments, evoking images of a bronze goddess and performing in a style with which most of us are quite familiar — the Pandanallur *bani* as passed on by Kittappa Pillai, descendant of the Tanjavur Quartet. Those who saw her perform that evening will surely recall for years the vision they saw of unparalleled beauty both in the physical form and in the dance, where "the dancer and the dance became one". Sitara Devi told the audience after presenting flowers to her, how as a slip of a girl of 15, Vijayantimala had danced in the film *Bahar* and had captivated the hearts of one and all. She also underlined the fact that a dancer has to take care of her instrument — the body, which is the vehicle of dance.

Yamini Krishnamurthi, despite her *avoids* and heavy figure, danced with abandon and fire to create an impact. Although her figure no longer evokes those magnificent images of the past, the spirit and the energy, the power and total involvement leave you wonderstruck. Her performance defied her age, making her critics eat out of her hand and revealing the glorious

architectonic form of Bharata Natyam. Kamala, known variously before and after Independence as Baby Kamala, Kamala Laxman and now Kamala Lakshminarayanan, living in New York, made a rare appearance. She has extraordinary energy but seems to live in a time-warp — she has been away for a long time and her dance has that dated quality. She too attempted to prove something which age does not permit a dancer to do and the cognoscenti wished she had selected numbers that better suited her age and energy.

Both Kamala and Shanta Rao did not agree for video recording or interviews for the SNA archives. A pity, because they could have left something for the archives. They and the others had played a crucial role in the revival of classical dance, in asserting our own identity and pride through our indigenous arts. But except for a few, none of them seemed to be aware of the role they played that week in what the historians call 'nation building activity'.



One of M. Redappa Naidu's best-known works.

A brief term at the 'Open Art University'

Sixteen of India's leading artists participated in a unique event where they demonstrated, in different areas in the Taj Coromandel and the Taj Connemara, how they worked. Art lovers had, for the first time, an opportunity not only to view their works of art, but also at the same time understand the dynamics behind the canvas — know the artist and his temperament, learn about the distinctive language being used, the technique, the symbols and the various other elements which are part of the creative process. It was indeed an Open University to watch them at work.

The contemporary Indian painters who participated and were present for nearly a week included Achuthan Kudallur, K.M. Adimoolam, Alok Bhattacharya, Amitabh Sengupta, Arpana Caur, R.B. Bhaskaran, Devraj Dakoju, Diraj Choudhary, Jatin Das, Sachida Nagdev, Paritosh Sen, K.S. Rao, M. Redappa Naidu, V. Solanki, Surendra Nair, Surya Prakash and Yusuf Arakkal. Their work was later on view at the new art gallery, Artworld.

The event was sponsored by the Taj group of Hotels, the ABN Amro Bank and Tulsyan NEC.

architectonic form of Bharata Natyam.

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Her most recent award has been the title of 'Sapthagiri Sangeetha Vidwan Mani', given by the Thyagaraja Festival Committee, Tirupathi. She was in 1995 appointed Senior Teaching Associate of Indian Studies, Colgate University, U.S.A. and is a Non-Resident Professor there. In 1987, she had choreographed the *Ramayana* as a ballet there and it was described in the press as "a Tanjore painting come alive".

FIFTY YEARS OF DANCING

(Continued from Page 6)

The Music Academy, Madras in 1974 was the first dance programme to be telecast live by Doordarshan Kendra, Madras.

She received the Nritya Choodamani title given by the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in 1979 and the 'Kalaimamani' Award of the Tamil Nadu State Academy in 1980.

In 1985 she received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. She was awarded the Padmasri in 1988.

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Teaming up to save the Adyar

Concerned about the reduction in fauna and flora in and alongside the Adyar River and the inability to hold an international regatta, leave alone train for one, the Madras Naturalists' Society and the Madras Boat Club teamed together recently to convene a meeting of all those worried about the sorry state of the Adyar River. The consensus was that all concerned should form a team and write to the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority's Sustainable Chennai Project, which has identified resurrection of the waterways as one of its priorities, offering to monitor the river and come up with a proposal for a demonstration project to rejuvenate a stretch of the Adyar.

Describing its problems, the Madras Boat Club stated: The Madras Boat Club (MBC), one of the first rowing clubs in the country, with a history of more than 150 years, has in the past produced a lot of national and international medal winners among both men and women categories. The high point was a team of MBC girls, representing India, winning the Silver at the Asian Games in China in 1990, in the coxless fours event.

International races in this Olympic discipline are held over a distance of 2000 metres, but the only 2000 metres course in India is in Chandigarh, which was developed for the Delhi Asian Games. Due to non-availability of proper water more 2000m courses cannot be developed. And so, national rowing

in India is held over a distance of 1000m. But Chennai is not even able to offer that.

Due to silting and pollution the only racing distance the MBC can now offer is a mere 500m! MBC, which was one of the main centres of rowing in the country in the past, is now unable to hold any regattas due to this reason. Training for national and international competition has also become a problem due to these same reasons. No wonder rowing in Chennai is in a sorry state.

● By A Special Correspondent

Various efforts have been made by the Club to improve the rowing conditions. An effort to use mechanical dredgers, with help from Hindustan Motors' Terex Division, was unsuccessful, with these machines sinking and getting stuck in the soft river bed before reaching the course. The club has also attempted manual dredging, but these have proved to be short-term measures and not feasible.

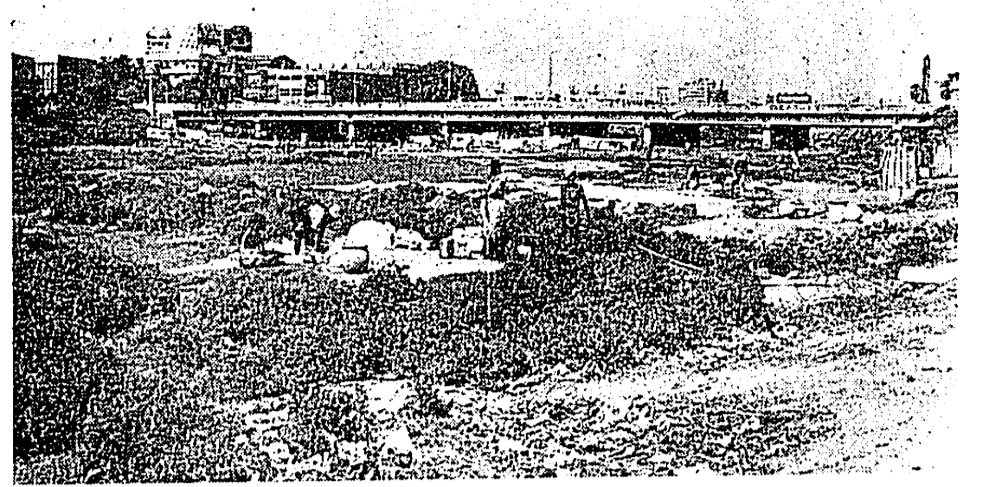
The Madras Naturalists' Society pointed out that surveys it had conducted indicated diminishing fauna in this valuable ecological habitat and stated that birdwatching offered little reward by way of sightings these days. Fishermen who had once earned a living from the river, now found it offering them little bounty. Others

pointed out that this important environmental asset was proving to be a disaster for those living on its banks. The overpowering smell and pollution has made normal life difficult. While, if Chennai is the 'Mosquito Capital of India', it is entirely due its ill-kept waterways, 80 per cent of the malaria cases in Chennai were in areas close to the waterways, it was pointed out. And the Adyar was fast becoming worse than the rest, it was stated.

The meeting hoped that apart from the conveners, Exnora, its Naturalists' Club, WAMP, World Wild Life Fund, Consumer Action Group, INTACH, the Anna University Alumni Club, the Madras Club, the Gandhinagar Club, the Theosophical Society, the residents' associations of those living in the Adyar River area and others would not only support the letter to the CMDA's SCP but would also help draw up the plans for the demonstration project if the CMDA-SCP reacts favourably to the offer. The offer envisages spending Rs.2-3 lakh to develop a total plan for a 5 km stretch of the Adyar/River from Nandanam to the sea.

The objectives of the Plan would be:

- To create an efficient carrier of floods during the Northeast Monsoon.
- To protect the bio-diversity of the Adyar estuary, which is home to a broad spectrum of marine life as well as other flora and fauna.



A stretch of the Adyar River. (Photograph from Madras - Its Past and Its Present.)

- To get the Adyar estuary, a natural habitat for birds and a haven for migratory birds, declared a sanctuary.
- To put Chennai on the international map again as a venue for rowing and create a boating and fishing environment in the river.
- To change an unhealthy environment due to pollution and vector generation into a clean lung and recreation space.

And to ensure this, the plan would offer suggestions as to how the following could be done:

- Preventing sewage overflows into the river from Metro water treatment, pumping and collection systems and in the Buckingham Canal.
- Desilting of the middle stretch, particularly on either side of the Boat Club
- Creation of mechanisms for regular tidal flow at the mouth
- Regulating land use and building and other activities and providing proper sanitation for tenement and hutment areas
- Transforming the Elphinstone bridge into a bird-watching gallery.

These proposals will be supported by data from a close monitoring of the river by the various groups.

The 25km long Adyar River rises near the Chembarambakkam Tank and benefits from its overflows. About 8 km of the river is within Corporation limits. The river derives its name from *adai* = block and *aar* = river, a name that reflects a centuries old sand bar that blocks its exit into the Bay of Bengal as well as its regular silting. It is not a perennial river with a clear channel, but much of it can be deepened to ensure year-round water. Once, Quibble Island (now being fast built on) was indeed an island.

Answers to Quiz

1. Gerald Fischer, a former German diplomat; 2. Arundhati Roy won the Booker Prize; 3. Instant or single-digit lotteries; 4. 'Vennira Aada'i' Nirmala; 5. He was the world's shortest man, at 56 cms; 6. S. Nijalingappa; 7. The Insat 2D; 8. Chitta Basu; 9. She is the most complete T-Rex fossil ever excavated; 10. Abhijit Kunte; 11. Ali Naqvi and Azhar Mahmood; 12. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines; 13. The planet Saturn. It will reach there in 11 years; 14. John Denver; 15. He contended that the figure of nearly 2000 killed, as mentioned in a plaque, was not correct and that it included the injured also;

* * *

16. Apollo Hospitals and Viji; 17. The Taj Coromandel; 18. The Tamil Nadu-Dr. Ambedkar Law University; 19. A well-equipped motor launch to help patrol the port's vicinity; 20. At the V.H.S. in Adyar.

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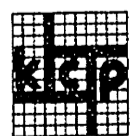


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