

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

April 1-15, 1998

In favour of Heritage Act

(By A Special Correspondent)

A Heritage Act for Tamil Nadu is likely to be recommended to the Government by the Special Heritage Committee formed on the instructions of Chief Secretary K N Nambiar to report on whether a Heritage Act is needed or not for the State. The Committee is likely to recommend that the Act for Tamil Nadu should follow in

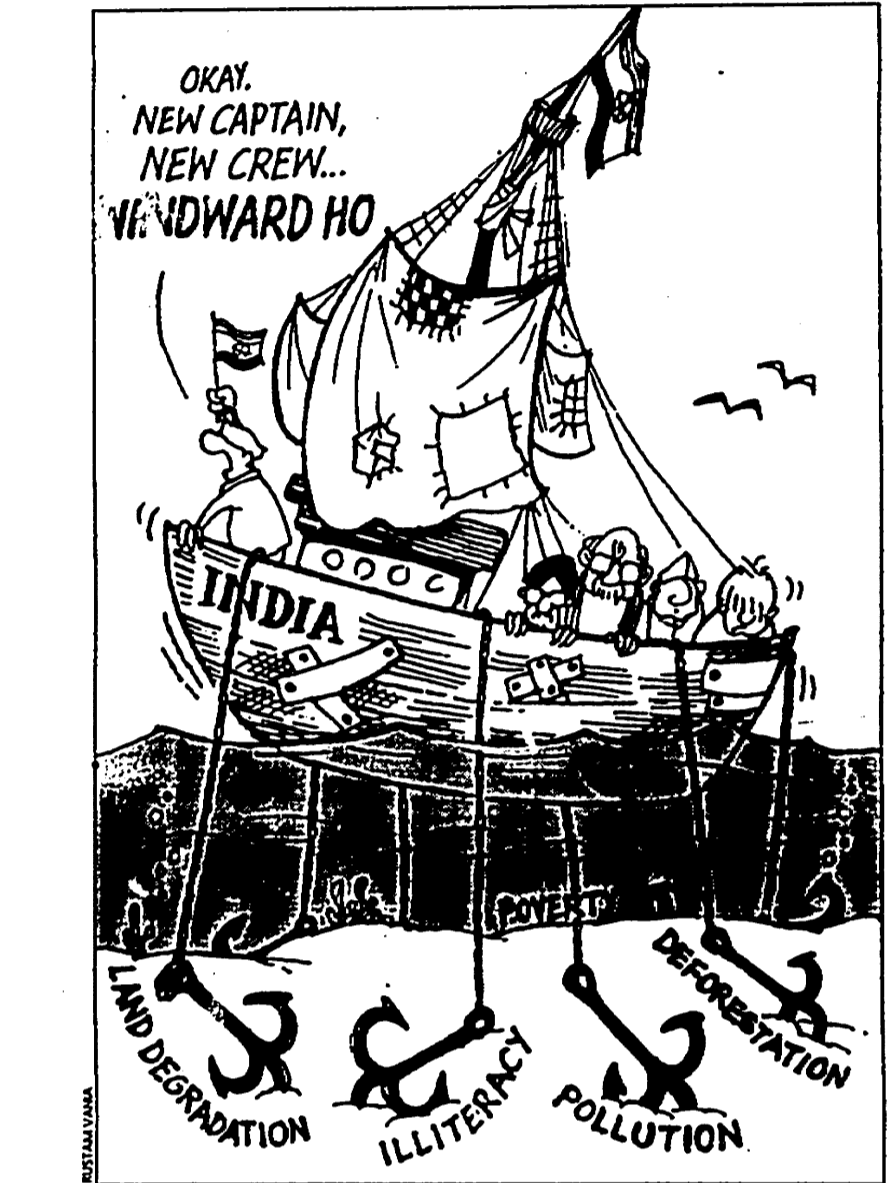
the main the draft act that has been recommended by a National Committee to the Department of Environment, Government of India, which had convened it to draw up a draft that might be acceptable to ALL the States.

The Tamil Nadu Special Heritage Committee is also likely to recommend to Govern-

ment that immediate protective orders be passed in respect of the 38 Heritage Towns already listed by Government, half-a-dozen Heritage Towns and Areas recommended by the Committee, and ALL municipal towns. These orders, if passed, will ensure that the permission of the Special Heritage Committee is sought before any attempts are made to pull down or alter any heritage building or area listed in the Appendices to the recommendations.

These Government orders would, in this context, be purely a temporary measure till a Heritage Act is passed. The Appendices are likely to include upto about 200 Government, Quasi-Government and private buildings, precincts and areas in Chennai as well as many such locations in the listed Heritage Towns and other Corporation areas.

Under the "Draft Regulations for Conservation of Heri-



For those who wonder why Madras Musings ignores the unprincipled politics of ministerial nominations and choosing a Speaker, this cartoon from CSE-Down to Earth Features says it all. — The Editor.



The entrance to the Chandda Prabhoo vegetarian village.

Will this ensure tree cover?

(By A Staff Reporter)

Two lakh saplings are to be planted in Chennai at a cost of Rs.2.77 crore over the next two years.

Will such a scheme produce the desired results? A little more light on where these are to be planted would be welcome. Though, under the scheme, a new DFO post and 10 rangers' posts are to be created, it is pointed out that without proper legal provisions to penalise illegal felling of avenue trees, it would be impossible to preserve the city's tree cover. In fact, the Corporation itself has recently done away with pedestrian footpaths and several existing avenue trees to widen roads.

Meanwhile, tree lovers in the city feel maintaining the existing parks in the city, most of which are in a sad state of neglect, and encouraging the planting of trees on private land would be more effective.

tage Buildings, Precincts and Natural Features in Urban Areas" suggested by the Government of India, each town or area would have its own Heritage Committee which would list buildings, precincts and natural features in each urban area and its environs. These recommendations would be the

(Continued on Page 3)

A VILLAGE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Would you believe it, there is a vegetarian village in Amirim, Israel, where Christians, Jews, and Muslims live in a spirit of harmony and tolerance?! There are many cooperative villages in Israel called Kibbutzes. Each village has a common kitchen. The village in Amirim has a vegetarian kitchen and no other.

Indian delegates to the World Vegetarian Congress held in Israel in 1990 visited this model village and saw its rare experiment in integration. The idea of developing a similar village in India was born. The model village caught the imagination of one of the delegates from Madras, Krishna Chandd Chordia and inspired

him to take the initiative in setting up a vegetarian village near Madras. The foundation for the village was laid in 1990 by Maxwell G Lee, the then Secretary of the International Vegetarian Union.

Madras's vegetarian village, Chandda Prabhoo, Polal, sprang up just beyond Madhavaram on land eighty acres in extent. There are nine hundred residential plots here. It is a self-contained, self-sufficient village with all facilities. Milk is supplied from the dairy farm. Gas supply to the houses comes from a gobar gas plant. Vegetables and fruit are grown using organic manure and not chemical fertilisers. A Jain vidhyashram meets the educa-

tional needs of the children in the village and its neighbourhood. The medical centre provides first aid and emergency maternity care. A full fledged hospital is being planned. To meet spiritual needs, there are two temples— a Jain temple 800 years old and a thousand year old Siva temple.

One of the conditions (and that is really the main condition) is that all the members of families wishing to live in the village should be strict vegetarians for life, irrespective of their religion.

Krishna Chandd Chordia, who holds degrees in Tamil and Jainology, was instrumental in establishing the Department of Jainology at the University of

Madras. As one committed to vegetarianism, his main concern is to spread the vegetarian way of life. Vegetarianism is based on the ethical principle of ahimsa. From the medical and health point of view, vegetarian food minimises the risk factors which account for blood pressure, cholesterol, and stomach disorders.

The vegetarian village named after Chandda Prabhoo, the eighth Tirthankara, is a village with a difference. Situated in sylvan surroundings, it combines the advantages of a village with those of a modern township. Far away from the maddening crowd, the residents live in tune with Nature.

S. Jagadisan

Quietly flow the Cooum discussions

For nearly three decades *The Man From Madras Musings* has been hearing people talking about the Cooum River. During that period, has it been two or three or four consultancies that have looked into the problems caused by the river? Now MMM hears there's another multi-core consultancy being internationally tendered for — yes, as in the case of the earlier ones, yet another international viewpoint is being sought, as if there aren't enough local ones or that there's no local expertise. Apart from this, the various Government agencies have been asked to take a coordinated look at the waterways of the City by this Government. And one of the components of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority's Sustainable Chennai Project too is finding answers to the waterways problems of the City.

As if all this is not enough, the University of Madras has got into the act recently. Both IIT and Anna University have been looking at aspects of the river during the past few years, now the University of Madras's Department of Geography has decided to join in the search as part of its research collaboration with the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Led by Martin Bunch from Waterloo, who is doing his Ph.D. on the Cooum, and Dr. S. Subbiah of the Department's high-tech GIS cell set up with aid from Waterloo — now down to only research collaboration — the Department held yet another workshop on the Cooum recently and is planning a second later in the year to evaluate, present and discuss the findings of its first workshop. Much as MMM appreciates all the words that quietly flowed during the three days of the workshop, he wonders whether anything new was added to all the reams written and the millions of words spoken about the river in the last thirty years (let's forget all that's been written and said in the past, because cleaning up the river was not considered a priority in those less crowded pre-Independence days). In fact, has any river in this country, apart from the Ganga, been discussed more, with less coming out of the discussions, MMM wonders.

It is in this context that MMM wonders what the University of Waterloo and the University of Madras are going to come up with that is new. There was much talk at the workshop about preparing a model of the Cooum, a GIS system — presumably as an all-time base — but MMM can't help but wonder how successful that model is going to be with all the secrecy that envelops information in government departments, one often refusing to share information with the other as was pointed out during the workshop. In fact, one of the major speakers at the workshop, who

uses his engineering as a title and who appeared to be concerned in a big way with the present waterways' initiatives, said during his presentation, while referring to some of the plans of his group, "Of course, I can't tell you about them here". MMM wonders what value any of his inputs were in this context of lack of transparency. Are government departments in India, let's even just say Tamil Nadu, ever going to realise they are not meant to be rivals, that they are meant to work for the COMMON good?

One other thought that struck MMM during the workshop, was the complete lack of reference to the history of the Cooum, even the comparatively recent history of 350 years or so, since the British. There appeared to be no thought about what the Cooum had been like before the creation of the Island, before settlements big and small put down roots on its banks, before the Harbour was built and the sandbar became a major problem. Engineers may not think much of History, but MMM expected better of a sister discipline like Geography. A look at the river's recent history will reveal, MMM is inclined to think, that all its problems are less than 100 years old. In which case, might not there be some answers in that century-old past?

Boosting tourism

A workshop on 'Tourism in Tamil Nadu' and a seminar on 'Destination South India' in which all the tourism authorities from the Southern States participated, were recently held in Madurai and Chennai. Despite what was indicated at the latter, this was not the first time the Southern States' tourist authorities had met in conclave. *The Man From Madras Musings* had sat in on at least two others in the past and found nothing coming out of them. Perhaps the task force now being promised will materialise. But imagine it trying to launch "a holistic campaign for the promotion of South India" on a budget of Rs.25-50 lakh! That might just be enough for the letters that it plans to write to "tour operators, embassies, high commissions and overseas Government of India tourism offices"!

Be that as it may, both discussions appeared to centre on highways and bus permits, fast-food counters and toilets (presumably in motels), lighting and litter, eliminating beggars, training better guides and improving State-run hotels. All these were important without doubt but MMM wonders whether the Tamil Nadu tourist authorities can make this work in just one place, say, Mamallapuram, so that its success can be a model to others. MMM hasn't seen a tourist site slide downhill faster than Mamallapuram. Will the State tourism authorities pull

out all those plans for Mamallapuram that are pigeon-holed, implement them and the ideas expressed at these workshops, and demonstrate at this one place that "we can make tourism work in South India"?

MMM has said this before and now says it again. Tourism will work only when tourists are ensured good accommodation, good hotel and guide services, comfortable travel and, above all, cleanliness and hassle-free arrival, stay and departure. We cannot assure them any of these things.

Falling standards

The Man From Madras Musings is being so negative about all this because over the last few years, even as we build more and more hotel facilities, he's been watching things going downhill faster. The Madurai workshop was presided over by the President of the Madurai Boarding and Lodging Association. It was in the President's home town that *The Man From Madras Musings* recently spent a few hours in a 3-star hotel that had been excellent when he had

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

visited it after its opening three years ago. Today, not only is it unbelievably run down, but its staff seem to have been picked off the streets. At the other end of the spectrum is a newly refurbished five-star metro hotel, where one guest found a cockroach in his *pilau* and another guest, who had left a cake in his room, found it almost polished off before he returned to collect it. A search of the room revealed the gaping hole that appeared to be the rat's doorway.

As serious as the maintenance problem is, the inability to get staff of even moderate calibre is a greater concern. There's a plethora of diploma-granting 'catering' schools and, worse, similar institutions which some of our universities consider good enough to produce hotel staff worthy of degrees! MMM recently met a group of five-star hotel interviewers who'd been doing the rounds of these institutions and the answers they received to their questions were frightening. A hamburger is apparently made with three or four slices of ham, a pizza is a sandwich, a sorbet is an alcoholic beverage, a Peach Melba is a salad, a Russian salad is a soup, Nepal is the capital of Sri Lanka, Canada of Australia, shrimps are molasses and Bordeaux and Champagne are cheeses! They couldn't find one per cent worth of recruitment. And to think the workshop suggests that Plus

Twos be trained as tourist guides now! Can we make things any worse for tourists?!

Boycott hoardings

In the last couple of weeks it has been reported that there are 6000 hoardings in the City, that only 600 of them are authorised, and that the Corporation is planning to tax hoardings. This issue of *Madras Musings* carries yet another letter on the subject of the hoarding menace.

In the midst of all this concern about hoardings, *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to see — because it came from where it did — a quote from a Government officer in one of these stories: "They have effectively ruined the skyline and blocked out heritage buildings". Why heritage buildings alone? Even some of the better architecture of today and much of the greenery as well. This story was headlined "Down with unauthorised hoardings". MMM would rather that line had read, "Down with ALL hoardings"!

It was a newspaper campaign of sorts and court action thereafter that led to the demise of the giant cut-outs of politicians and the even bigger arches. The political parties have by and large honoured the orders. Perhaps it is now time for hoarding-users to stop using hoardings and make this a better-looking city.

The only way we're going to get our skyline back, our buildings on view again and greenery visible would be if industry and other businesses gave the lead and boycotted hoardings in the city. The place for hoardings is on the highways, not defacing a city or hiding its best features. Who's going to take the lead?

In brief

★ The Editor of music magazine *Sruti* recently pointed out something *The Man From Madras Musings* had long noticed. During a trip to the U.S. and Canada, Pattabhi Raman had found that several people he met had read issue after issue of his journal with great interest. But he also found that most of them had read BORROWED copies; few were subscribers! In India, 25 persons reading a copy was a *Sruti* finding and Editor Pattabhi Raman was even prepared to accept that position, considering the local demand for the rupee. But, he wonders, is \$22 a year too much for all those who talk of the fortunes they are earning and saving in the West? MMM has had the same experience in different contexts with all those who headed West, making him think twice about help from such quarters. Perhaps Pattabhi Raman will have to too.

★ The word's out that economic whiz Raja Chelliah, who was much seen in Delhi in the Narasimha Rao-Manmohan Singh days and who was little seen there in the P. Chidambaram days, is once again a presence in Delhi. *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that his current views about Indian industry needing protection might be welcomed by the Government in power, but MMM has also heard that he had expressed concern over the rejection of the SIA-Tata joint venture and the threat to such investors as Coca Cola and Pepsi. With such divergent views, will Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha find his contributions of value?

★ Vijay Mallya is, today, an international tycoon. But the family's business roots are in Madras (McDowell's) and Ban-

galore (UB). It's in Madras too that he forged his links with motor-racing. *The Man From Madras Musings* mentions this background, because both business and motor racing figure in Mallya's latest spot of bother. Mallya is being sued in London by Formula One driver Gerhard Berger who claims he has not been paid the \$750,000 Mallya and UB had promised him on an "oral contract" for sporting the Kingfisher logo on his helmet in 1996 when he was driving for the Benetton team. He states in his suit that Mallya had repeatedly written to him that RBI permission had still not been given for the payment. UB has now countered with a suit filed in Bangalore on the grounds that there is no valid and binding agreement in this case. They also question the validity of the suit filed in Britain by an Austrian living in Monaco against an India-based company. MMM looks forward to the untangling of an intriguing legal tangle.

Business briefs

★ Chennai- and Bangalore-based Macmillan India Ltd., whose origins in India go back a hundred years when Macmillan UK Ltd. opened a branch here in 1898, will soon be 71% owned by HM Publishers, when the British company, which recently increased its Indian stake from 39.98% to 51%, increases it again. What will then happen to its Indian publishing operation, wonders *The Man From Madras Musings*. Its 100 per cent export-oriented typesetting units in Bangalore and Chennai will undoubtedly benefit from the latest technology, not to mention international connections, but what will happen to such publishing ventures and such laudable projects as its translations of Indian language fiction? Only time will tell, but what needs recording now by MMM is that the \$300 million HM Publishers is no longer a British firm; it is owned by Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck GMBH (VGH) of Germany. What's that link going to bring us, wonders MMM.

★ The word's out that economic whiz Raja Chelliah, who was much seen in Delhi in the Narasimha Rao-Manmohan Singh days and who was little seen there in the P. Chidambaram days, is once again a presence in Delhi. *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that his current views about Indian industry needing protection might be welcomed by the Government in power, but MMM has also heard that he had expressed concern over the rejection of the SIA-Tata joint venture and the threat to such investors as Coca Cola and Pepsi. With such divergent views, will Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha find his contributions of value?

MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



What it was like

Mr. Oza wants the Police Band to play once again (MM, February 16) for public benefit. I believe that it was the Corporation Band which played at important venues like public parks, beach etc. a few decades ago. The venues would be announced in the newspapers daily and people used to go to listen to the performance. This band could also be hired for private functions like marriages etc., for a nominal fee. This band was disbanded several years ago. But it is a moot point, whether, in the present day scenario, where there are so many avenues of recreation, like T.V., Cable T.V. etc., the band will have any appreciable patronage. This is not the only loss citizens have suffered in this city.

In the same issue of MM, ornamental street lamp posts were mentioned. In those days, Madras was truly a city catering to aesthetic tastes. Almost all the major arterial roads, like Mount Road, Poona-mallee High Road etc., had excellent well-grown avenue trees, which, alas were ruthlessly cut down in the name of widening of the roads for broader carriageways. Even now, along the East Coast Road, excellent avenue trees are being axed and the feeble, half-hearted attempts to plant and grow new avenue trees has not borne fruit in the face of ever-increasing air pollution and vandalism. Perhaps, if and when new saplings are planted in place of lost trees, the maintenances of these saplings may be entrusted to nearby commercial establishments.

The City used to have water supply twice a day and, without hand pumps, water flowed from the taps! I have seen water coming in the first floor taps in Bells Road, Triplicane 50 years ago. Besides, there were fire hydrants in almost all the streets and the water mains used to be weekly flushed out through these hydrants and the streets cleaned with the water! The streets were also cleared of the garbage twice daily (the incinerators were put to efficient use then), the streets had very good pavements and were free of garbage, presenting a clean, dust-free appearance. But then there was not so much vehicular traffic and the electrically-run trams were non-polluting.

The City's population was not even 15 lakhs and the Police Act was also very strictly enforced with the result that the people were afraid of committing nuisance on the roads. The sidewalks were kept in very good condition and it was a pleasure to walk on them, what with shade-giving avenue trees and the leisurely pace of life around us.

Truly life in Madras was heavenly and enjoyable.

We, old timers, can only lament that future generations will never ever be fortunate to have such a congenial life despite all the promises of 'Singara Chennai'.

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

Public good looks

All public buildings of the Tamil Nadu Government, both in Madras City and elsewhere, should always be kept in good condition, surrounded by greenery. The Chief Minister should consider appointing a special Minister for Environment to look after the beautification of buildings and gardens throughout Tamil Nadu.

C.A. Reddi
57 Rundsalls Road,
Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

Unbiased umpiring

The sporting declaration of Aussie Captain Alan Border was given as the main reason for the thriller tie at Madras in 1986. I was an eye-witness to the second tie in the annals of world cricket. My teammate in the Syndicate Bank RC wanted me to follow him home at tea on the 5th day, but my intuition made me stay on to see the thriller till the end. Umpire Vikram Raju was the hero, with his final verdict, LBW.

C.K. Subramaniam
11/258 Sion (E), Mumbai 400022

Down with hoardings

Readers of MM have highlighted the hoardings blight that plagues our city. Hoardings mar the beauty of the city and we can certainly do without them. It is interesting to note that at present about half the hoardings along a stretch of Anna Salai (opposite *The Hindu* office) are 'vacant'. The promoters of the hoardings have painted their names and phone numbers in big, bold letters, thereby using hoardings to promote the business of hoardings!

A simple way to handle this issue is for advertisers to desist totally from using hoardings to promote their products and services. A glance at various hoardings indicates that it is usually large companies of repute that resort to this practice. Event promoters are probably the biggest culprits in that they do not hesitate to use hoardings to promote even a trivial event lasting a few days. Surely these companies believe in 'Singara Chennai'.

It is sad to note that some of the sponsors of MM are themselves users of hoardings. This includes a newspaper. I wonder what its editorial policy is vis-a-vis hoardings.

B. Gautham
122 Wallajah Road,
Chennai 600 002

Want to muse with MUSINGS?

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

Name

Address

Note: Overseas postage extra. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Gulf: Rs. 375/year. US & Europe: Rs 425/year. Cheques payable to M/s. Lokavani Hall-Mark Press.

Wits' End

Charity begins at home, but it often can degenerate into a big nuisance. While beggars have stopped 'begging' and started 'demanding', even going to the extent of forming an association to fight for their 'rights', efforts to curb this menace seem to have gone abegging!

If it is a predominantly Christian locality, they come in droves on the Sabbath Day at 7.00 a.m. and the 'ritual' goes on till noon. It matters little to them if you are at the dining table or on the telephone or speaking with a guest. You better make a dash to the door and do your 'duty'. Dole out a rupee and a sermon on how you cannot get even a cup of coffee with that amount sometimes follows! Come festival season and the situation becomes so unbearable that many families either shut their doors and windows or go out somewhere to escape the incessant shouts of "Maaa, Maaa".

Many of these mendicants, who include gypsies accompanied by monkeys (some of these simian creatures are trained to steal) are not satisfied with the vitamin 'M'. They

usually insist on sweets (*palakaram*) prepared for the occasion! Who says beggars can't be choosers?!

Then there are those who come like bill collectors with receipt books (bogus, of course) and recommendation letters, claiming that the bearer is either deaf or dumb or both. Try chasing them away and you will hear the

I 'beg' to differ

choicest investives! A magnanimous friend in Anna Nagar who was taken in by these antics parted with a sum of fifty rupees only to find the so-called "brilliant student struggling to pay his school fees" smoking and playing cards at the street corner a short while later!

We cannot forget the fortune-tellers. These 'experts' don't need even to see your palm. One look at your face is

enough for them to rattle off your future. A generous amount results in a little more flattery, while the response, "Please go away" is met with one curse after another. In a matter of two minutes, a "gem of a person, heading towards prosperity" could become a "wretched cheat destined to face a nasty financial upheaval".

Mind you, we are only talking about the 'professionals' who haunt our homes. Enough has been written about the menace at traffic signals and in electric trains.

The grapevine has it that though the government tries to put them into beggars' homes, they are back on the streets again — often while in the homes! Old habits die hard. Sec. 75 of the City Police Act could come in handy, but the department would probably have to use its whole force to deal with the problem.

Help the deserving by all means, but all those who come with a 'begging bowl' may not really be poor. For that matter, they may not even be beggars. Don't get (bowl)ed over. Like my friend in Anna Nagar!

Sanjay Pinto

IN FAVOUR OF HERITAGE ACT

(Continued from Page 1)

subject of public hearings after the list is gazetted. After the hearings, a final list will be gazetted. Once the buildings and areas are listed as protected heritage sites, any plans for the destruction or development of such a site would need the prior permission of the Local Heritage Committee. These heritage sites would be continually monitored by the Local Heritage Committee, particularly during renovation and restoration and for continued maintenance thereafter. As part of its responsibility, the Local Heritage Committee will also arrange for detailed documentation of all such heritage sites.

In the case of private buildings/precincts, suitable Transfer of Development Rights need to be evolved, the national Draft Act makes clear, and these Rights should be an important part of the Tamil Nadu Act, the Special Heritage Committee is likely to suggest to the Government.

It is also likely to be suggested that the Special Heritage Committee already appointed be requested to work with the Government Legal Department in the drafting of new legislation, and that thereafter its role be confined to any modifications or alterations in the legislation. The real power to ensure the success of the legislation in each area would be the Local Heritage Committee.

The 38 Heritage Towns listed by the Tamil Nadu Government are: 1) Kancheepuram, 2) Sriperumbudur, 3) Mallapuram, 4) Tiruttani, 5) Perur, 6) Palani, 7) Sri-vepilliputtur, 8) Kanniyakumari, 9) Kolachel, 10) Padmanabhapuram, 11) Madurai, 12) Nagercoil, 13) Poompuhar, 14) Velankanni, 15) Karaikudi, 16) Bhavani, 17) Avadayarkoil, 18) Chettinad, 19) Chit-tannaval, 20) Tirumayam, 21) Vallinockam, 22) Rameswaram, 23) Tiruchengodu, 24) Marudur, 25) Pichavaram,

26) Chidambaram, 27) Kurinjipadi, 28) Kumbakonam, 29) Thanjavur, 30) Tarangambadi, 31) Tiruvannamalai, 32) Srirangam, 33) Gangai-kondacholapuram, 34) Courtallam, 35) Tirunelveli, 36) Tiruchendur, 37) Marakkanam and 38) Gingee.

Apart from ALL Municipal Corporations, the Special Heritage Committee is expected to suggest that Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Vellore and Vandavasi be added to the list of Heritage Towns and that the Heritage Towns of Chettinad and Karaikudi be looked at in the wider context of the whole Chettinad area comprising 78 villages.

With officialdom showing as much enthusiasm as NGOs in urging a Heritage Act, it is to be hoped that Government is as enthusiastic and that we will see a Heritage Act sooner than later.

**Madras Musings wishes all its readers
A Very Happy Tamil New Year**

A Chennai roadshow

Thousands throng the Marina daily, and there are many thousands more at weekends. My venue, however, is a different one. Give me a good evening and at 6 on the dot I move to the 'Open-to-the-Sky' first floor of my house where I take a seat in a corner, closest to the parapet wall, where my garden chair awaits me. Here my gorgeous exercise in idleness, gazing at the sky above and the road below, lasts some three hours and more.

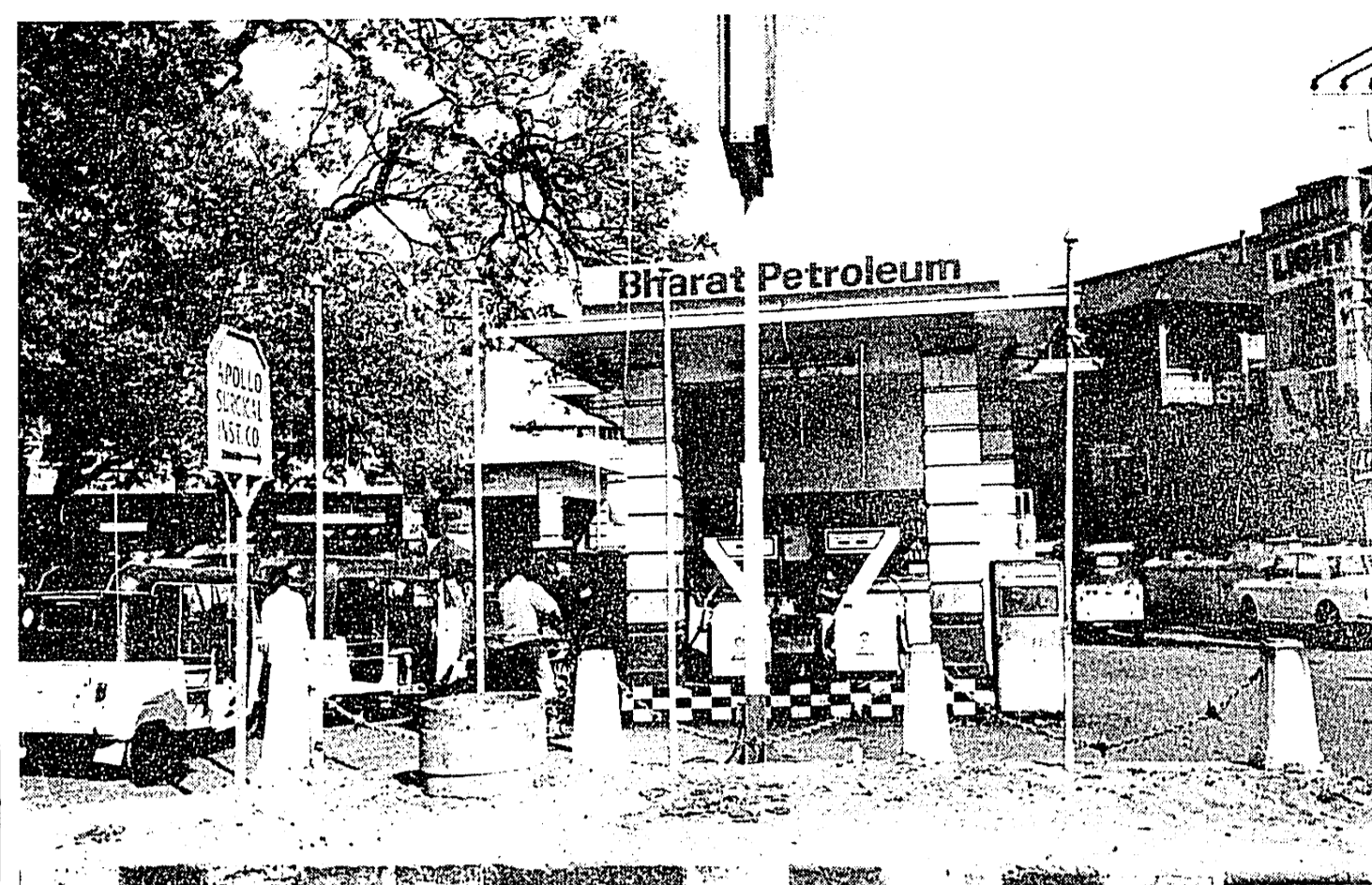
Braced by the occasional breeze, I greatly enjoy a commanding view of Chennai on the move. The varying lifestyles of a growing economy and a fast-changing sociology are what I watch.

gathered at one end of the road leaving quite a bit of it strewn and scattered all along the way as they move on with a "couldn't care-less" nonchalance, water carriers slushing the road with their spill, often-times bringing traffic to a grinding halt, creating a nightmare till the bottleneck is unlocked. These are another part of the scenario.

An array of cars parked on both sides of the road may be a barometer to the prosperity of a super-luxury hotel nearby, but it spells near disaster to the observance of the regulations of the road. The chaos does not end here. I see cars parked at road-end, abutting the departmental stores, caring two hoots if the

main road is unsighted for cars turning into it. Worse, a few cars are parked right in front of the gates of houses, no matter if the residents cannot take out their. Then there are those who park their cars right under 'No Parking' signs and 'Tow Zones, with contemptuous disregard for the rules. The crowning act to which I am a helpless witness, is the monstrosity of chauffeurs and owner-drivers, least bothered that this stretch of the road is fully occupied by cars on either side, quietly and without batting an eyelid, parking their vehicles alongside others on either side of the road, thus creating two rows of cars on each side. Why worry, they possibly feel, if the width of the road is constricted; it is for other vehicles to manoeuvre through the narrowed gap. A bare 50 metres down, the road is clear and there's ample space for comfortable parking, but then, how can the *nouveau riche*, the *parvenus*, walk those extra 50 metres?!

Where are our "friends of the people", the traffic constables and sergeants? They are seen not far away. But they do little to restore order. They keep discreetly away from the cars and their occupants. Car owners of the elite in Chennai seem to have discovered an inherent right to a luxury denied their tribe in every other part of the civilised world and even in many other cities in our country. If Chennaiis take out their cars to reach their shops, banks, restaurants or anywhere else, they must park their vehicles exactly at the destination point, no matter if it blocks



Our OLD is one of the oldest petrol stations in Chennai. This tiny Shell (now Bharat Petroleum) station is a no-frills place next to The Madras Mail complex, even if it has gone in for new dispensers.

A far more spacious place, in fact a giant of a petrol station, is Bharat Petroleum's refurbished 1965 facility on Venkataswamy Road. Particularly striking at night when it is ablaze with light, the high-tech American-style 'bank' has six filling stations, an electronically operated air-tiller — the only one of its kind in South India — and 'Bazaar', a mini-department store with an array of food items and books.

'Bazaar' also offers a variety of ice-creams and soft drinks. But the best part of the new station is the service. Not only is it friendly, each customer being greeted by an attendant, but it is also hospitable, every customer being offered a welcome glass of water in these hot summer days. (Photographs by Rajind N. Christy.)



dense traffic on the main road!

Mention of the ubiquitous autos is reserved to the last, since these mighty men, who rule the road, have the last word in every matter, in their confrontations with the police, the passengers, the pedestrians or other vehicles, to whom they give a fright all the time. Dictating to everyone and yielding to none, they make your heart stop as they weave circles and patterns, a la Dhanraj Pillai, and roar along with impunity.

As part of this daily drama I also watch a few happy-go-lucky guys with heads pushed back and face upwards, pouring their beer into their mouths as they walk along zig-zag, with ragpickers and hirsute riffraff breathing down their necks to pick up the bottles that may fetch some 50-75 paise each. Drunkenness on the road and

close to residential quarters seems to be becoming the order of the day.

Into this mosaic is woven the inevitable romance. Here too class tells. The chosen and privileged cuddling in their limousines seem to be a class apart. Others jostle each other as they stroll along. And still wear a furtive look as they keep looking all around while moving towards a pre-determined destination.

Street brawls, wordy duels and even fistcuffs enliven my daily road-show.

This is what happens on just one road. Mind you, this is one of the better roads of the city, in a good residential locality. No buses ply, no encroachments and no food-peddlers disfigure it. The zealous residents take care to maintain it spick and span, getting it swept and cleaned twice a day and some-

times even more. All this however, comes to nought as evening arrives. For some 6 hours, till 11 p.m. the road seems hijacked by the devils of traffic, haphazard parking, revellers and drunkards. Soon it is a battered road as evening arrives disfiguring it with litter, paper, broken bottles, paper cups and plates, beer cans, leftover snacks and everything else abominable making a mess of it. History, they say, repeats itself. On this hapless road, it repeats itself every day, alternating between an elegant day and a devilish evening.

This is the story of one road, the story of one road show. It cannot be different elsewhere in the city, possibly it is very much worse in several places. What are we doing to alleviate this lawlessness, that mars so much that is beautiful in Chennai.

THE OLD...

...& THE NEW

Nritya Choodamani

Leela Samson, the latest to receive the Nritya Choodamani title awarded annually by the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha of Chennai, has maintained the integrity of the Kalakshetra style even as she has burnished it with her own artistic conceptions. Unlike hundreds of Bharata Natyam dancers who merely reproduce what they have learnt, she has introduced her own insights and inputs to retain the freshness of the dance and earned the right to be called an artist.

According to Leela Venkataraman, dance critic of *The Hindu* and *Smti* based in Delhi, who has witnessed Leela's solo performances and occasional group presentations over the years, this Kalakshetra alumna's dance is characterised by a measured tempo which allows her full room for the play of both *mitta* and *abhinaya*, and is thus different from the fevered presentations of today.

According to C.V. Chandrasekhar, another Kalakshetra alumna who has won encomia for his graceful dancing and his choreography, "Her presentations are highly aesthetic, reflecting the fact she has imbibed much from her mentor, Rukmini Devi stood for aesthetics, elegance, suggestion and subtlety, as well as neatness. Leela is one dancer who has continuously grown through the years and continues to learn and grow even now. She is sensitive as a teacher and choreographer as well. Her writings too reflect this quality."

Although she is a product of Kalakshetra, where Rukmini Devi concentrated on producing dance-dramas, Leela's own preference is for the solo performance. She feels it is the solo dance which brings full scope for the dancer to bring out the beauty of Bharata Natyam and display her skills and imagination. Nevertheless, she has produced group dance presentations from time to time.

* * *

While Leela is the first to acknowledge her debt to Kalakshetra and its high priestess, she almost did not gain admission to the study programme there...

Leela was born in May 1951 in Coonoor. Her father, B.A. Samson, who rose to be a Vice Admiral in the Indian Navy, belonged to the Jewish community in Poona; her mother Leila was a Roman Catholic from Ahmadabad. She was only nine when her parents, who were relocating often, decided she should be enrolled in an academy of arts. Her father's Aide-de-Camp recommended the Besant Theosophical School in

Madras where he had studied. Mother and daughter came to Madras seeking admission in the school and face to face with extremely distinguished and orthodox-looking persons, wearing caste marks. The Western clothing worn by Mrs. Samson and the religious background of Leela led Rukmini Devi to believe that the girl was not suited to receive training in Carnatic music and Bharata Natyam. At that time, youngsters admitted to the school were entitled to learn the arts at Kalakshetra on a part-time basis and were allowed, after completing the VIII Standard, to switch to Kalakshetra on a full-time basis. Rukmini Devi's initial reaction was to turn down the applica-

tion for admission, but she changed her mind when some faculty members, especially S (Periya) Sarada, who had tested Leela's aptitude for the dance, persuaded her that the little girl would be an apt student. According to Leela, her mother, who had been brought up by Irish nuns, had also to make a mental adjustment. She was a liberal-minded woman but personally quite orthodox and the different orthodoxy of the South enveloping Kalakshetra must have given her qualms even as her background had aroused misgivings in Rukmini Devi. Leela believes that her apprehension disappeared when she met and talked to Sankara Menon who charmed her so end.

In the event, Leela justified the faith placed in her promise by S. Sarada, but, interestingly, Rukmini Devi herself never came to terms with Leela's background. Rukmini Devi's reaction was strange considering her theosophical background, her own marriage to a foreigner and particularly considering the fact that Leela had fully imbibed the values cherished at Kalakshetra.

Adding depth to Maya-koothan II's profile are these excerpts from Indu Varma's interview with Leela Samson

Can you recall your early days in Kalakshetra?

I took to Kalakshetra like fish to water. I was happy to be away from the strict army and convent atmosphere and the stern-looking nuns.

Did religion come into any training and did you find it difficult?

A computerised pictorialisation based on a photograph by AVINASH PASRICHA

— Leela Samson

No, never. A little consciousness must have come later on. I could sense an inner change in me, maybe moving away from my mother's approach. But Sankara Menon Sir insisted that I go to church every Sunday morning.

In my case, religion has never come in the way of my dance. There are several dancers I know, even some of my students, who cannot do a Krishna bhajan without some mental conflict. At the other end of the spectrum, I am probably the only person who has taught a Muslim, Mohammad from Bangladesh. (There are a few Muslims learning Bharata Natyam in the South — Editor). I also taught a sardar at the time when the Khalistan movement was going on in Punjab.

When did you take to dancing seriously?

From the eighth standard on, we had to decide whether to shift to Kalakshetra and do all the other subjects like philosophy and Sanskrit along with dancing. I shifted to Kalakshetra and took up dancing full time. There was no leisure, since the other subjects were handled during lunch breaks and so on. There was pressure to complete the whole syllabus and it was tough on us. But at that point of time, it was more the thought of having to give up dancing than actually wanting to be a dancer that made me shift to Kalakshetra.

What did you do after you left Kalakshetra?

I finished the course and left. I went to college in Bombay and joined the Arts course. After I finished my Intermediate, I received a letter from Kalakshetra saying that its troupe was going



that time, Yamini, you had to constantly perform for heads of state and so on. So a very high standard was expected and not even one slip up allowed. Also greater attention was given to other details, like stage decor, lighting and so on, which is not always the case in Chennai.

What did you do in Delhi?

After graduation, I did some teaching in Delhi and then joined the faculty of the Bharatiya Kala Kendra. There they wanted me to start a Bharata Natyam department. It was starting from scratch. I found the atmosphere very difficult, but there was interaction with a lot of top artists from other fields — Kathak, Odissi, Chhau.

You have written a book, haven't you?

Mala, a friend of mine, who is in publishing, wanted me to write a book on dance. I used to write without actually letting it upset my routine, sometimes at night. I worked closely with Avinash Pasricha, who took all the photographs for the book. The book was published with the title *Rhythm in Joy*.

You have been working on the biography of Rukmini Devi, haven't you?

Yes, I wrote it when Sankara Menon Sir was alive. It was ready and there was nothing more to be put into it. He had wanted me to write it without expressing my opinions, and that was how I had written it. But Mala, the publishing executive, felt that it should include my opinions. And while I was working over what I had written, Sankara Menon Sir died, and so I put it aside. I was just disappointed that I could not show it to him, which is sad because I know that he would have wanted me to bring it out. But now, I think that maybe there are some stories that should come out and I think it might as well come from me who was a Kalakshetra person rather than from someone who might give a distorted picture. While none of the people who might be distressed by these stories are around, for the next generation it would simply be the story of a great individual's life.

Any comment on Kalakshetra today?

Though the teachers are very good at what they do, they have had limited exposure otherwise. Athai was a widely travelled person; she would go around the world and come back full of ideas. For instance, when she visited Orissa, she watched their folk dances and brought back a lot of new inputs. There is nobody like that today and the teachers are not educated in a holistic manner. So this is bound to affect the teaching at some time.

— (Courtesy: *Smti*).

Quizzin' with Ram'n'an

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the period March 1st to 16th. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai).

1. What 800-year-old Royal tradition has Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain agreed to do away with?
2. Which Indian diplomat is the UN Secretary General's special envoy to Iraq?
3. According to her will, who has Princess Diana appointed as her sons' guardians?
4. What extraterrestrial traveller was pronounced officially dead recently?
5. What historic march was reenacted exactly on March 12th with 81 youth starting off from Ahmadabad?
6. Who filed a major defamation suit against Rupert Murdoch when the latter's publishing house, HarperCollins, refused to publish his memoirs?
7. Who is the new president of the beleaguered Congress (I)?
8. Which State's Chief Minister stepped down on March 10th after only a term of 12 days?
9. What corporate giant has been indicted by SEBI on charges of 'insider trading'?
10. Which Asian country's ousted First Prime Minister who is also a member of its Royal family, stood trial on March 4th?
11. Which much debated report's final version was given to the Home Secretary on March 7th?
12. Who was unanimously elected as Chief Patron of the Harvard Club of India, a club of Harvard varsity alumni?
13. The inventor of the first turbojet engine used on an aircraft, passed away recently. Who was he?
14. Germany vetoes a new name for the Eurofighter as it was the same as that of an RAF aircraft that had killed thousands during World War II. What was the suggested name?
15. An Indian astronomer, Dr. Arjun Day, and his team have discovered Rd1 recently. In what way is it a watershed discovery?
* * *
16. Name the Chennai police official to whom a letter bomb was addressed?
17. Which city organisation for orphaned children began its Golden Jubilee celebrations on March 10th?
18. Which medical luminary was awarded the Indo-Australian Award for Meritorious Service in Chennai on March 7th?
19. What hi-tech system, designed to help the State police, will have its master database in the city?
20. Name the Chennai-based priest recently elected as the first Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of North Tamil Nadu?

(Answers on page 8)

Dhananjayans to leave Chennai

They head for a dream, BHAASKARA

The dancers V.P. Dhananjayan and Shanta, his wife, plans to leave Madras. In his 60th year, he dreams of going back to his village Payyanoor in Kerala, to create Bhaaskara, an institution that will be Kalakshetra, Dakshinachitra and Rishi Valley all rolled into one. To make his dreams come true, he is asking for old *thravads* as donations to be rebuilt on the ten acres of a red stone hilltop where he intends developing Bhaaskara. The hilltop, with an old Siva temple, overlooks a beautiful valley, and is a truly scenic setting for Bhaaskara.

He recently took some thirty of us from Madras to Payyanoor to formally inaugurate the project. The entire township turned out for the function by the side of the Subrahmanya temple there. Film actress Revathi travelled with us by train and was just another of the gang. Dressed in everyday clothes, she walked all around Payyanoor, spoke to anyone who stopped to speak to her and joked with all of us. We stayed at the old ancestral home of the Dhananjayans and Revathi kept in and out of the kitchen to serve the rest of us who ate like gluttons... She also offered to give three dance programmes to raise funds for Bhaaskara. But it was Dhananjayan who was treated like a movie star at the function.

The inauguration over, he reminisced about how he first came to Kalakshetra as a young boy. His father had met the great Kathakali guru Chandu

Panicker on a train. Panicker was on Rukmini Devi's instructions; on the lookout for young boys to learn Kathakali at Kalakshetra. Dhananjayan's father, a simple man who was struggling to bring up his eight children, offered one of his boys, Dhananjayan, who had shown an interest in poetry and

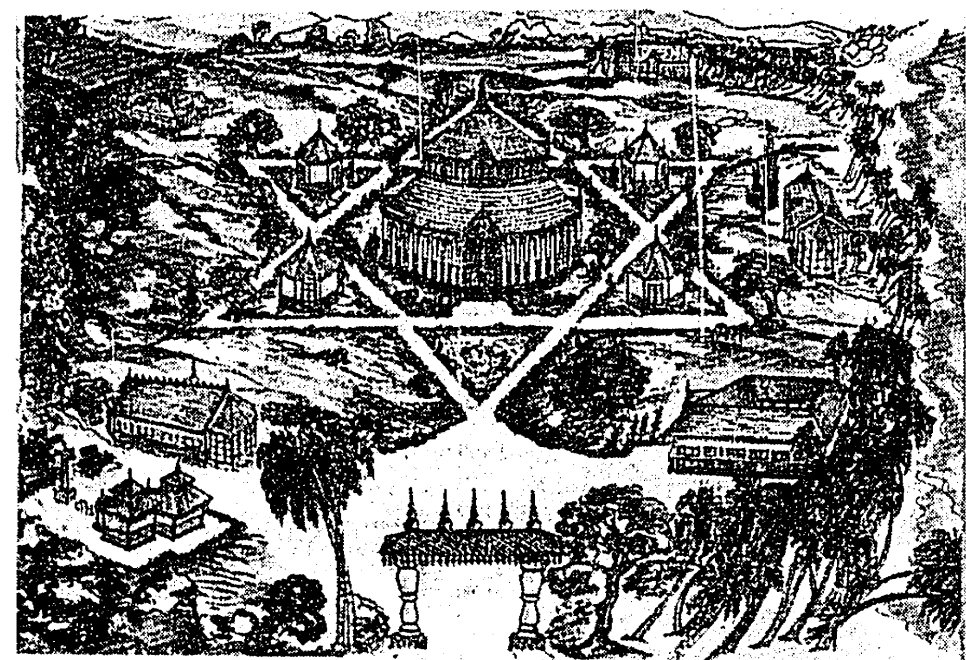


The Dhananjayans. A couple with a dream.

Mahabharatam in Reunion

V.P. & Shanta Dhananjayan have been invited to choreograph episodes from the *Mahabharata* for Association Vaani in Reunion, in connection with the commemoration of the 150th year of abolition of slavery in the island, the 50th year of Indian Independence, and Vaani's 10th anniversary, as well as the celebration of Tamil New Year's day on April 14th.

Reunion is a small island near Mauritius, governed by France. Forty per cent of the population is of Indian origin — descendants of labourers taken to the island in the early 17th and 18th centuries. Most of them claim to be from Tamil Nadu and they have retained some practices from Tamil tradition, like the rituals of fire walking, *kavadi* and animal sacrifices. Strangely, the Hindus among them are called



'Bhaaskara', the Dhananjayans' dream, as seen by their architect-artist.

art or the younger Ramachandran, who had a penchant for acting. Dhananjayan was chosen along with another boy from the same village, Balagopal. Rukmini Devi was excited when she saw the young Dhananjayan. He became a scholarship student in Kalakshetra and a leading man in Rukmini Devi's productions. He was also diligent in learning the art of decor, management and administration. He fell in love with Shanta, a fellow-student, who says she had decided to marry him when she was twelve years old. Together they were graduated from Kalakshetra and emerged to develop Bharathakalanjali, a dance academy which has trained several well known dancers, produced many dance-dramas around the world, and done many collaborative productions in several countries, the latest being the *Mahabharata* production in the Reunion Island. (see below).

'Malabar' and the Muslims 'Arabs'.

The people of Indian origin still practise and perform *Natakam* which they pronounce as *Naatokoom* which seems to be a corrupted and diluted form of *Terukoothu*. The songs they recite sound like old *Terukoothu* songs in Tamil; it is difficult to identify the language from their rendering, since it carries the influence of French and Creole.

The epic *Mahabharata* is their 'bible' and some members of the older generation enact certain episodes from it.

When we were asked to choreograph *Mahabharatam*, I initially thought we could adopt a contemporary approach, but when we made a preliminary trip to Reunion, we found that

they were more interested in a very traditional approach. More, they wanted glittering sets, costumes, and make-up. Shanta has designed the costumes which will be unlike the usual Bharata Natyam dance-drama costumes. And the scenes we had selected for presentation were totally different from what they expected to see. So we had to change our concept and make compromises.

The people in Reunion do not speak or follow Tamil (except for a few settlers from Pondicherry). However, they insisted on this dance-drama being produced in Tamil, with French and Creole narration.

Courtesy: Sruti, V.P. Dhananjayan.

THE MAD, MAD MADRAS SEASON OF 1997-98

The final figures for the Madras music and dance festivals season of 1997-98, spanning the four months starting on November 1, 1997 and concluding on February 28, 1998, are in and they confirm that the madness has grown worse, even if that seemed impossible.

The complete statistics for the full four-month period of the 1997-98 season reveal the following:

- The number of organisations conducting festivals was 64, as against 59 during the 1996-97 season, representing an increase of slightly over 10 per cent.
- The number of festivals conducted was 78, compared to 66 during the previous season, representing an 18.2 per cent increase.

- The total number of music and dance performances was 2035, compared to 1732 during the previous season, representing an increase of 303 performances or 17.5 per cent.
- The number of music performances, including one music ensemble programme, was 1671, compared to 1425 during the previous season, representing an increase of 246 or 17.26 per cent.
- The number of dance performances (solo, duo and group) was 364, compared to 307 during the previous season, representing an increase of 57 performances or 18.6 per cent.

— Courtesy: Sruti, Ram Aslesha.

ELEVEN YEARS AT A GLANCE

In the 1997-98 season, the number of organisations in the fray was more than 3.75 times larger in 1987-88, while the number of music and dance performances was four-and-a-half times bigger.

Year	Duration	MAD! MAD!! MAD!!! MAD!!!!			
		No.	Music	Dance	Total
1987-88	N.A.	17	326	122	448
1988-89	N.A.	21	416	149	565
1989-90	1 Dec - 31 Jan	24	572	205	777
1990-91	1 Dec - 2 Feb	26	615	227	842
1991-92	23 Nov - 8 Feb	31	698	288	986
1992-93	1 Nov - 13 Feb	37	853	284	1137
1993-94	1 Nov - 4 Feb	36	866	258	1124
1994-95	1 Nov - 5 Feb	39	1034	241	1275
1995-96	1 Nov - 21 Feb	49	1283	334	1617
1996-97 (updated)	1 Nov - 28 Feb	59	1425	307	1732
1997-98	1 Nov - 28 Feb	64	1671	364	2035

Source: Reports in Sruti

Sharp turn Would spin have won without it?

That headline has been shamelessly adapted from the best headline *The Corner Flag* had read over the five days of the Chennai Test. In its original it had read 'Sharp turn and Kumble spin India to victory' and had appeared in *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, *The Corner Flag's* favourite paper. But as *The Corner Flag's* headline implies, there would seem to be a basic difference of opinion between this writer and *The Telegraph's* correspondent.

Both, together with several others, agree that the four dismissals by the Indians during the first session on the fifth day were dubious ones. A turning pitch, the ball doing tricks, a horde of close-in fielders appeal-happy, mounting pressure on the field and a baying crowd off it... none of it is conducive to the most calm, collected and cerebral of judgements. So, *The Corner Flag* does not blame umpires Venkataraghavan and Sharp. But in this age of television and close-up cameras,

This whole business of dissent has got *The Corner Flag* all

• By The Corner Flag

judging judgments is inevitable. And in this case all seem to agree that one by Venkataraghavan and one by Sharp appeared erroneous and that in the case of two others by Sharp, there was enough doubt for the batsman to get the benefit. Many — including the Australian Press — also agree that India would have won despite these fortuitous decisions. After all, they say, there was still three hours to go, and that would have been ample time to get the Waugh and five others out. And that's where *The Corner Flag* disagrees.

He was most disappointed with the Indian spinners — particularly Kumble. With Chauhan's action looking curiously jerky and his bowling hardly threatening, Venkataraghavan looked the best of the lot. But even he did not look penetrating. In fact, the bowling of the trio was so innocuous that model batting by Healey and Warne, supported by Test rookie Robertson and the rest of the tail, enabled Australia to take a lead in the first innings that put pressure on India. With about four hours to go in Australia's second, *The Corner Flag* could see that happening all over again with Healey and Warne at the crease. Batting once again as they had done in the first innings, they were certainly proving a cause of concern for *The Corner Flag* and much of the suddenly

Tendulkar's innings was undoubtedly the best of the match. It was a blast, *The*

(Continued on Page 8)



This group of Australians (left) who've made Chennai their temporary home smiled through it all while the group of young Indian fans (on right) beat it up and danced through all five days of the Chennai Test.

A superior type of spectator

It's a different kind of audience — so well behaved and appreciative of the finer points of cricket," remarked my brother Sivaramakrishnan, the former Tamil Nadu opener. "Test match crowds are so much more knowledgeable than the one-day variety, whose sole aim, it seems, is to have a good time, the cricket be damned," he continued warming to the theme that Chepauk draws a good, old-fashioned segment of the population to watch Test matches staged on its turf. "It also produces some wonderfully competitive cricket and, yes, the crowd is distinctly different from its one-day counterpart," agreed Mike Coward, the Australian cricket writer and broadcaster.

Yet another honorary Australian, cricket critic Peter Roebuck of Somerset — he fraternises with the old enemy rather more than the average Englishman, spending six months of the year in the former colony writing for newspapers there — thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Chennai, especially the comforts and friendly ambience of the Madras Cricket Club where he stayed for the duration of the Test match. (After the match, he took a train to Mysore and a breather from the cricket.) Roebuck proved a friendly, amiable visitor, ever willing to talk cricket with the locals. He had a special word or two of encouragement for Rohit Mahendra and Vidyut Sivaramakrishnan, youngsters who bowled to both the Indian and Australian batsmen in the nets. To the sixteen year-old left arm spinner Vidyut, he gave some words of advice on why a good education was as important as bowling, batting and fielding — "What happens if you get knocked down by a bus and can never bowl again?" To which the youngster quickly added: "Yes, and there could be a world war and no cricket for the next five years. At least that's what my mother says." "Mothers! They get it right every time, don't they?" mused Roebuck, and in this great state of mother worshippers, he will find many who will agree with him.

Neil Harvey, the stylish Australian left-hander — he was delighted to meet so many ardent fans of his batting in Chennai 35 years after his retirement from Test cricket —

endorsed the view that the Chepauk Test had brought a superior type of spectator to the ground. Harvey simply detests one-day cricket. He loved every moment of the Test.

Harvey considers Sachin Tendulkar the best batsman in the world. "His thinking is like my thinking on cricket. Just the way I decided to go after Subhash Gupte 40 years ago at Bombay, he decided to attack Shane Warne here." And how!



Standing on the carrier of a bicycle enables a fan on Mount Road watch the Chennai Test on television without having to strain his neck... or his purse

Harvey remembers that a Bombay newspaper had carried a titbit on what Gupte had allegedly said he would do to the Australian batsmen. "I was at the breakfast table at CCL Brabourne Stadium, when my captain Richie Benaud walked up to me and without a word, put a clipping of that newspaper story on my breakfast tray and walked away. I took up the challenge and managed to

knock Gupte's bowling around, getting a hundred in the process. Soon, they dropped him from the team and we were delighted. He was a fine bowler."

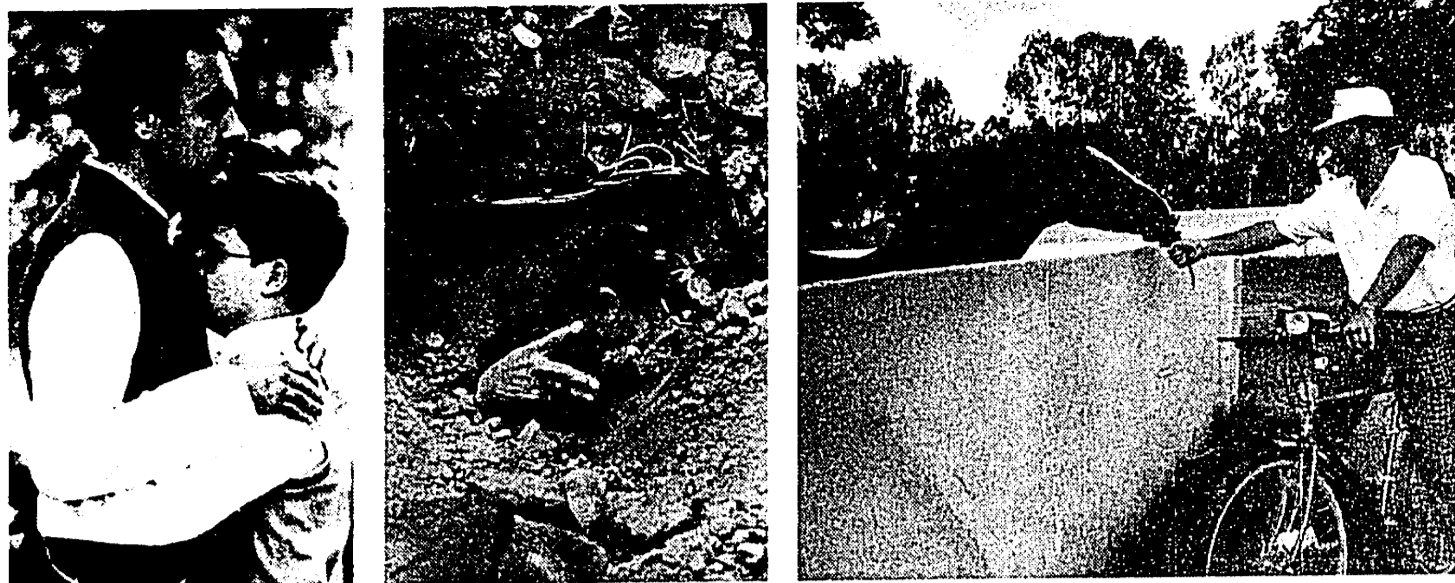
Another pressman I ran into after a long gap was Rajan Bala who in the Seventies loomed large on the Indian cricket scene. He is now a great admirer of Mumbai cricket. "No player who has to take a train from Mulund or Virar to Churchgate every day to practise in the nets would like to fail in a match." This was Bala's 210th Test match as a reporter/critic and from the unending flow of cricket conversation and impromptu calypso songs that poured forth from him late into the night, it was obvious age had not dimmed nor custom staled his love for the game. Some of his comments on some of the players on view were unprintable but uncomfortably close to the bone.

The talking points of the Chennai Test other than Tendulkar's batting were Rajesh Chauhan's bowling action and the umpiring, particularly in the fourth innings. Several spectators were convinced that Chauhan threw the odd ball ("What does it matter when he throws so badly?" remarked one cheeky youngster). The question uppermost in their minds was, why aren't the umpires calling him? As for the umpiring, "That must be Venkat's first mistake in a Test," said a long-time cricket enthusiast and former TNCA office-bearer, referring to one of his dismissals. His neighbour in the stands was quick to point out, "I am sure he has made mistakes before, after all, he is human, but he is a fine umpire, one of the best?"

V. Ramnarayan



"I Warned U the Indians have their Reiffels Pointing at U. The advantage U had U Blewett away here. Hope Ur wounds Heal(y) quickly B4 Eden. Waugh Waugh India!" That's the message of hope and inspiration fans in Chennai had for both teams on the fifth day of the Chennai Test. (All photographs by Rajind N. Christy.)



Exhibits at '50 years of Photo Journalism in Independent India', organised in Chennai at the Alliance Francaise by the magazine Asian Photography. Above left, 'Inconsolable grief' by Debatosh Sengupta, New Delhi, shows Rajiv Gandhi consoling his son Rahul at Indira Gandhi's funeral. Above centre, 'Latur - Nature at her merciless worst' by Ravinder Reddy of Hyderabad needs no explanation. And above right, a picture of Vijay Mallya titled 'Jet-setting Executive', showing him doing the rounds of his Kunigal Stud Farm near Bangalore, a bicycle taking the place of his private jet.



Till April 5: A photo exhibition, '50 years of Photo Journalism in Independent India', has been organised by Asian Photography, the premier photography magazine in the country, in association with Alliance Francaise. The changing face of Indian Photo-Journalism is presented through the striking images of 25 Indian photo-journalists who have chronicled significant events that have become part of history.

The exhibition features dramatic images with new value as well as creative perception, capturing the essence of events, people in the news, the horrors of terrorism, riots, extremism, tragedies and triumphs. The highlights of the exhibition are the pictures captured by Homai Vyarawala, the first Indian women photo-journalist. As a tribute to her immense contribution to photo journalism, the exhibition will display 19 of her pictures taken in the post-Independence era.

Nehru's inaugural Independence Day address, the signing of the Independence accord, crowds congregating at the Red Fort before the unfurling of the National Flag, the last journey of

Mahatma Gandhi (Homai Vyarawala), a triumphant Indira Gandhi clutching her appointment order as Congress President (T.S. Satyan), the aftermath of Bhopal Gas Tragedy (Raghu Rai), fanatical jubilation over the demolition of Babri Masjid (Ravinder Reddy), the Bhagalpur buildings in Bihar (K.M. Kishen), self-immolation in protest against the Mandal Commission report (Raveendran), Rajiv Gandhi's gruesome end (M.A. Parthasarathy), Veerappan's exploits in the jungle (Siva Subramaniam), the Latur earthquake (Ravinder Reddy), the Surat plague (Raveendran), police assault on Dalits in Bihar (K.M. Kishen), 'Ethnic cleansing' by Bodo extremists (Samarendra Sarma), and Stampede at a football match in Eden Gardens (Nikhil Bhattacharya) are some of the striking images among the 79 that will be seen at the exhibition. (At Alliance Francaise, 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.)

Till April 30th: 'India — A Celebration of Independence — Photographs 1947-1997', an exhibition sponsored by the Lalit Kala Akademi, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Mahindra Ford India Limited. (At Lalit Kala Akademi from 11.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. daily.)

April 7-13: 'Wim Wenders as Photographer', an exhibition by the Max Mueller Bhavan and the Alliance Francaise. (At Alliance Francaise, 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.)

Sharp turn

(Continued from Page 7)

Corner Flag might agree with the MTV crowd. Certainly it was as a scientific blaster that he impressed. The power, much of it seemingly effortless, of some of his strokes was almost incredible, his timing superb and footwork extraordinary.

But for all that effectiveness, *The Corner Flag* can't help but feel there's a dash of elegance missing in his batting. The kind of elegance of Vishwanath, the kind Azharuddin only occasionally reveals nowadays, the kind found more often now in Saurav Ganguly is something the purist misses in Tendulkar. The Bombay batsman's batting is all power and eye, coupled with a certain correctness always. But even when he improvises, *The Corner Flag* can't help feeling that there's missing a touch of that flair that would send old-timers — and critics like K N Prabhu and the late N S Ramaswami — into poetic ecstasy. Tendulkar's batting seems just right for the times, when bands, banners and boisterousness need a master blaster who can remain correct at all times.

* * *

The best way to describe Tendulkar's innings would be as "controlled aggression". What is significant about it is that he appears to have planned his knocks from even before his Bombay innings as the means of making Warne a less effective force. Warne may return as a more potent force in innings to come, but there's no getting away from how meticulously Tendulkar planned to take him on. By scruffing the ground outside his leg stump at nets to simulate bowlers' footmarks and then have leg-spinners bowl at him for long stretches round the wicket over several days, Tendulkar prepared for the Mumbai and Chennai charges.

The fact that he played that magnificent first knock against Shane at Brabourne Stadium is not without its ironies. That was where left-hand batting legend Neil Harvey took on the then leading leg-break bowler, Subhash Gupte, and battered him to a state where he was never the same again. Harvey was in Chennai to see Tendulkar hammer Warne. The extroverted Harvey who wears his heart on his sleeve

emoted as Tendulkar returned to the pavilion after his breathtaking innings, "Oh what a knock! I haven't seen anyone bat with such authority since The Don!" *The Corner Flag* is pretty certain that that was an observation born out of more than mere politeness.

* * *

The best ball of the match: The ball that got Dravid in the second innings. It was a Warne strike that reared like a mamba to attack the batsman around shoulder-height. There wasn't a ball like either from Kumble. And that on a helpful pitch. That would seem a matter of concern.

The most unforgettable scene of the match: Robertson bowled, Chauhan on a hat-trick, Azharuddin bringing his fielders in, one by one, till there are NINE of them around the bat and Chauhan and the other less than 22 yards away the moment the ball is bowled, a crowd of 30,000 plus shouting itself hoarse for that ninth wicket as the impromptu bands beat it up... and then, silence, as Reiffel taps the ball away from his wicket, not even providing the opportunity for that "Oooohhh!" that inevitably follows every ball into the cordon if it appears levitated.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The great right of males to succeed to the throne;
2. Prakash Shah;
3. Her brother, Earl Spencer, and her mother;
4. The Pathfinder spacecraft;
5. The Dandi March;
6. Chris Patten, the last Governor-General of Hong Kong;
7. Sonia Gandhi;
8. S.C. Marak of Meghalaya;
9. Hindustan Lever;
10. Prince Norodom Ranariddh of Cambodia;
11. The Jain Report;
12. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma;
- 13.

Hans J. Pabst; 14. *The Typhoon*; 15. It is the most distant object in all creation, some 800 million light years away.

* * *

16. DCP (HQ) Masanamuthu;
17. The Balamandir Kamaraj Trust;
18. Dr. Dayalan Devanesan;
19. Digital finger print processing system;
20. Rev. G. Rajkumar, founder of the St. John's Schools.

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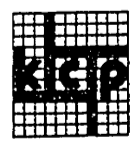
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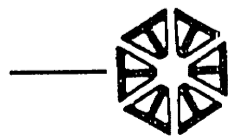
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