

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

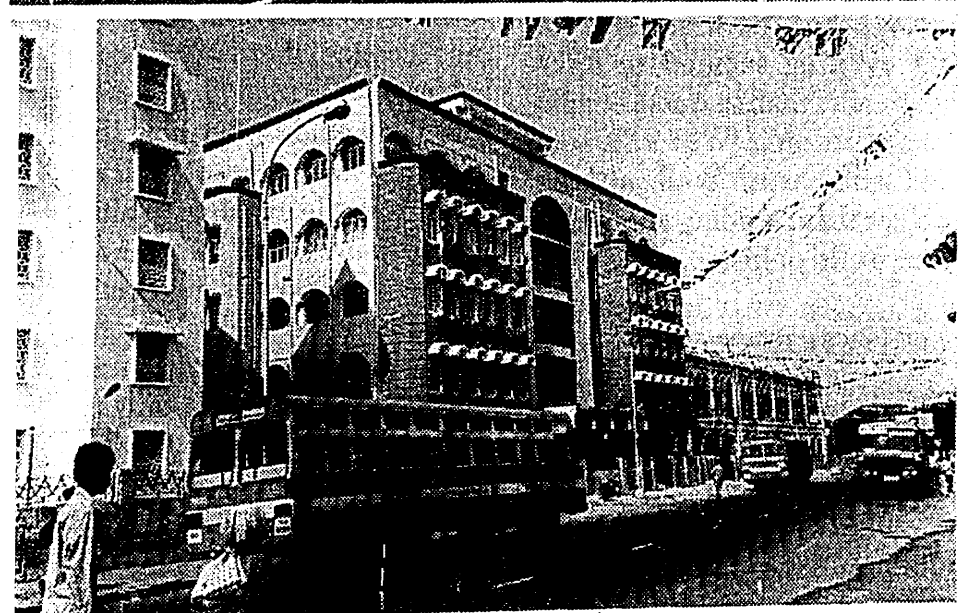
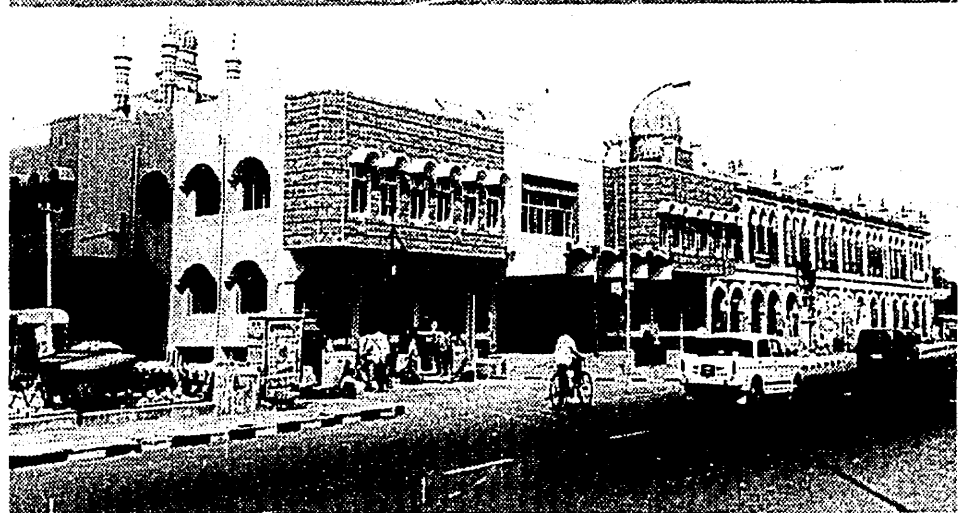
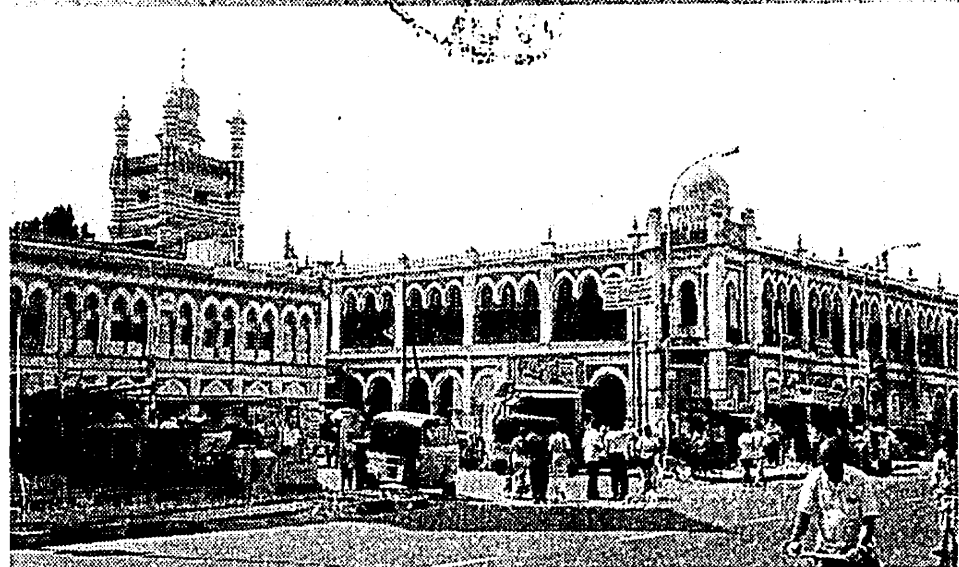
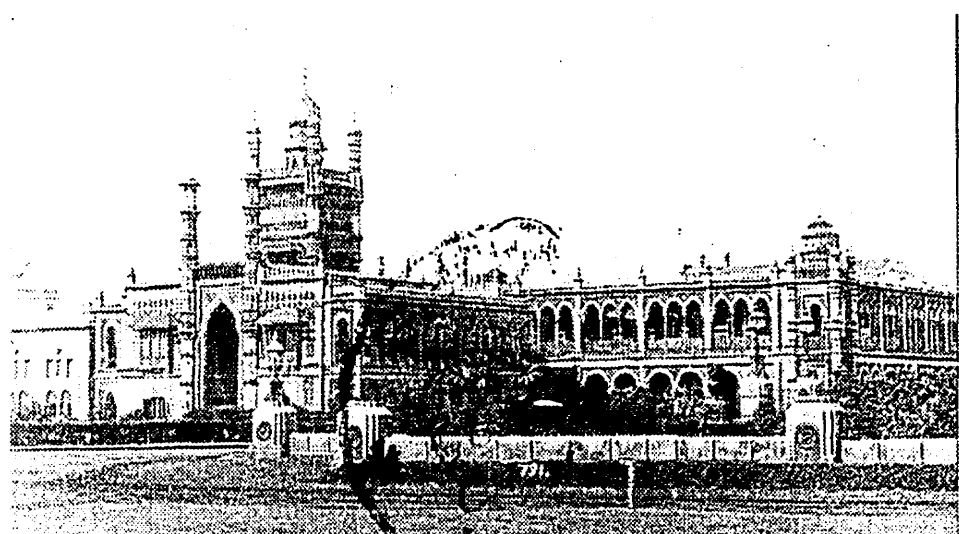
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FREE ISSUE

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INSIDE

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Do we need flyovers?

(By The Editor)

We don't, *Madras Musings* is quite certain. And so are several experts *Madras Musings* has heard or spoken to. But Dr. N.S. Srinivasan of the Traffic Advisory Forum says we need flyovers to solve the City's traffic problems — and so 23 flyovers we will have in the next five years, perhaps the largest density of flyovers INSIDE any city in the world. If only those so intent on flyovers had attended a workshop on traffic held at the Max Mueller Bhavan last year, they might not be quite as convinced by Dr. Srinivasan's faith in these monstrosities. *The Man From Madras Musings* reported this seminar in our October 16, 1998 issue and that report reflected the consensus: Flyovers are not the need, road discipline is.

The city is being so intensively dug up, trees that are its pride are being cut down, earth and other debris is being piled all over the place, that Chennai is, in fact, beginning to look like a war-ravaged settlement. And all this is to help raise those flyovers. But do flyovers a Singara Chennai make? We feel that these rise-and-swoop monsters will only deface further a city being ruined by

There are easier ways to get traffic moving

(By A Staff Reporter)

A senior Police Officer, Karuna Sagar, recently wrote to the Press that better vehicular flow could be achieved by the following methods. Others added slight variations. In all, this would be a cheaper way to bring order out of chaos that flyovers provided disciplined use of the roads is ensured

- Better traffic engineering techniques, such as intersection and road widening techniques, more one-way streets, exclusive lanes like bus and cycle lanes, pavements for pedestrians ONLY and, above all, SYNCHRONISED SIGNALS ensuring green corridors. Imagine a metropolis not having synchronised signals after all these years of engineering advances in traffic control!
- Public transport facilities must be increased and improved, even if it means privatisation of a part of the service to attract car- and two-wheeler users. Rational links must be established with the suburban railway service and MRTS, whose trains would need to have a couple of 'Shatabdi' coaches for those seeking more comfort at a price and whose stations would have parking arrangements. Group transport schemes (car pools) should also be encouraged.
- School and working hours need to be better arranged, by staggering times and holidays and reducing working days by advocating slightly longer working days (Forget the 8-hour working day, but encourage the five-day week!).
- "Restraint measures aimed at discouraging vehicle use through restrictive controls". This would involve parking restrictions, steep parking charges at parking lots (particularly to) and increasing road taxes considerably to pay a fair price for road space and its use.

Dr. Srinivasan and the Corporation might well say all this is included in the overall Traffic Plan. But then, why isn't priority being given to these less costly measures instead of to prioritising the most expensive and most (horribly) visible component of the Plan?

indiscriminate highrise, glass plate and steel.

We have as our centre-page spread (pages 6, 7 and 8) today

a feature detailing the pros and cons of the Flyover Plan. The pros promise that the flyovers

(Continued on Page 8)

THE OLD...

What vandalism is being inflicted on the city's heritage in the name of progress and development! *Madras Musings* considers what has been done in a corner of the Chepauk Palace grounds the worst deilement of heritage in the city.

That Palace, built in the 18th Century, was a landmark on the Marina (our first picture) till well into the 20th Century. Few even in post-Independence India realised the significance of that superb construction by Paul Benfield. That it was the first Indo-Saracenic building to be built in the country, a hundred years before this form of architecture received official recognition, when men like Mant and Chisholm and Irwin and Jacob and Stephens built the magnificent official buildings and palaces of the 19th Century, and 150 years before Lutyens and Baker took the architectural form to its culmination in New Delhi. In that context, apart from its historical one, the Palace should have been declared an archaeological monument and been cared for by the Archaeological Survey of India a long time ago. But what the British failed to do, free India didn't too.

With heritage concerns being comparatively new phenomena in India (they are only a little older worldwide), there was no hue and cry when Ezhilagam and other buildings were built to hide the Palace

...& THE NEW

from the Marina in the 1960s. Soon, unsanctioned but minor development began to hide the sides of the Palace too, but much of it still remained visible (our second picture).

Our OLD today is the third picture from the top and shows a Department of Agriculture building that came up a couple of years ago, hiding much of the side view. Our NEW is of additional floors that have been added to that building — and Chepauk Palace has been effectively hidden on three sides. You have to go to the back to get any sort of view of this building that is a vital part of the architectural history of India.

It is to prevent such ill-conceived construction — and permission for it — that the Heritage Act is desperately needed. The longer the delay, the sooner even what view is left of Chepauk Palace might vanish. Bentinck's Building, Spencer's, Moore Market, Clive Battery, Standard Chartered, Panagal Building, My Lady's Park... the list is long of the bits of heritage that have vanished, but the loss of none of them can be compared to what's being done to Chepauk Palace, which the CMDA itself has in its brief list named as a heritage building. (Picture on top from VINTAGE VIGNETTES' collection, the rest by RAJIND N. CHRISTY.)

Will they become white elephants?

Dr. N.S. Srinivasan of the Traffic Advisory Forum, who appears to be some sort of final authority on traffic management in the City, proudly claims the flyovers going up in several locations in the City as the 'babies' of his Chennai Traffic Action Plan. Many other authorities in and out of Chennai see most of them turning out to be white elephants and worse, likely to cause more problems than provide solutions.

Dr. Srinivasan, however, insists that his Plan was drawn up only after several workshops he had held and after he had received answers from hundreds of people to a questionnaire, he had sent out. But *The Man From Madras Musings*, who attended several of these workshops and also answered the questionnaire does not recall the question of 50 or 23 or 10 flyovers ever coming up. Which makes it difficult to figure out how Dr. Srinivasan felt the consensus warranted them. But even if there was a consensus wanting them — which certainly was not the case, as MMM recalls it — those present at those discussions did not include those most likely to be affected by the flyovers now planned.

How is it that once flyovers were decided on, there was no discussion involving the residents and occupants of buildings in the areas where these flyovers are to come up? Aren't their views important, wonders MMM. Do planners like Dr. Srinivasan and implementers like the Corporation always know what's best for the citizens of the City? In fact, MMM hears that even the Metropolitan Transport Corporation is not exactly enthusiastic about the idea. Its officials even seem rather concerned that the flyovers may hamper some services. They are concerned about the narrow streets many buses may have to negotiate, the shifting of bus stops to positions bus-users might not relish, and one-way systems and right-turn bans that may affect the running of an efficient service (and when all is said and done, MTC services are amongst the most efficient in the country). MMM knows that the citizens living or working near the flyovers-to-be were not consulted about the building of a flyover in their area, but was even the MTC consulted specifically about what was planned for each of the first 19 locations?

Alice experiences

It was like Alice in Wonderland that *The Man From Madras Musings* felt over the last two or three weeks, wandering into a world that he little knew and understood less. No wonder T.T. Vasu, President of the Music Academy, burst out laughing and wondered, "Have you lost your way?" when MMM entered the Mini Hall for a memorial meeting in honour of the late Lord Yehudi Menuhin.

MMM could have said that he had come to hear what might be said about Menuhin's contributions to both Jewish and Arab causes, but *Frontline* Editor N. Ram made only a passing reference to this and concentrated on the tape of the Beethoven Concerto by Menuhin that he had thoughtfully brought and opened the meeting with. So MMM was left to listen to music lovers' stories about themselves.

And they were not in short supply. Particularly as Lalgudi Jayaraman (whose Trust organised the meeting) had successfully managed to get three other leading violin *vidvans* — T.N. Krishnan, M.S. Gopalakrishnan and V.V. Subramanyam — on stage with him in a first time ever experience. In fact, Jayaraman had stated that he had invited 100 Carnatic violinists for the occasion and was sorry that they all hadn't turn up. If they had...! But that would have been another story. The story here was that the four made sure the audience knew how the "humble", "simple" Menuhin had enthused over their "unfamiliar music with a familiar instrument" to audiences in both India and the West; in fact, 'V.V.', MMM learnt, was 'Violin Virtuoso' in Menuhin's view and the others were similarly honoured. Pity the only Indian Carnatic musician to have played with Menuhin, recorded with him and appeared on TV with him, L. Subramaniam, could not make it to the meeting. Maybe MMM would have heard more about Menuhin from him. Semmangudi, fortunately, had a tale to tell about Menuhin; how he agreed to play in the Trivandrum Palace only if there was no mike, no fans and the doors were closed. It was heavenly, remembered Semmangudi.

C.V. Narasimhan remembered organising a Menuhin, Ravi Shankar and Hepzibah (Menuhin's piano-playing sister) concert on Human Rights Day 1967 at the United Nations. Ram recalled Menuhin's biography by his wife Diana as the record of a "truly great love story". And B.K.S. Iyengar, the great yoga teacher, who taught Menuhin yoga for 15 years, sent a message describing Menuhin as "my oldest yoga student". There was a special bond between them, for in the Apartheid era Menuhin cancelled a concert in South Africa because the organisers would not invite Iyengar to it.

Vasu the restless kept looking at his watch, MMM wondered why the American and British diplomatic representatives were not there to add their two words (Menuhin was an American who became British in 1985) and the highlight of the evening was a *shanthi sloka*: 'Lead Kindly Light'. As we left, MMM remarked, "A pity with all that talent on stage they didn't play". And Vasu shot back, "You would then have been the first to leave; but this'll let you be snappy, won't it?"

Sangam simplicity

The next venue *The Man From Madras Musings* found himself out of place in was the Bank of Madurai Board Room. Yet what better place to host a talk on 'angam poetry'! Especially when the Bank and its Chairman, Raj Thiagarajan, have Madurai connections and the guru was Dr. Samuel Sudananda, also from Madurai, where he heads the American College.

The sheets of Sangam poetry certainly seemed as simple as Dr. Sam promised they'd be — provided you had an adequate Tamil vocabulary. Many a corporate invitee appeared to know what it was all about and P. Lakshmanan and Suresh Krishna and Thiagarajan himself were up there making contributions. MMM was quite content to listen to Dr. Sam's explanation, then read the translation passed around and then work it all out. It was quite simple after that: MMM was even ready to ask Thiagarajan whether 'courtesan' might not be better than A.K. Ramanujam's 'concubine' in terms of Dr. Sam's almost embarrassed explanation of the Tamil *katharparathai*.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

But the best part of a Sunday morning in Wonderland was to discover that Sangam poetry really did have something for everyone, as Dr. Sam had promised. For *Madras Musings* readers it had this verse:

What She Said

Shall I charge like a bull
against this sleepy town,
or try beating it with sticks,
or cry wailing
till it is filled with cries
of Ah's and Oh's?
It knows nothing, and sleeps
through all my agony, my sleep-
lessness,
and the swirls of this swaying
south wind.
O what shall I do
to this dump of a town!

Auvaiyar
Kur 28

Did Dr. Sam, a heritage enthusiast who is trying to have the century-old buildings of American College restored, sense what we're up against in trying to save our towns? And sensed by AUVAIYAR! Oh, no, there were several Auvaiyars, and this is not the one you know, he said.

Being stress-free

The Man From Madras Musings Alice in Wonderland existence continued with a presence at the launch at a Printing Technologists' Forum meeting of

a book that urged you to *SPIRITUALISE to Lead a Stress-Free Life*. The spiritual world is as far from MMM's prosaic down-to-earth one as the Sangam and Carnatic worlds. But the author MMM could not refuse to felicitate was a person whom he has known for over 25 years, collaborating together closely in a world far removed from these, the world of printing and, in particular, print education.

In all those years, V.S. Krishnamurthy had never indicated any interest in the spiritual or in spiritual leaders. He may have appeared the epitome of being stress-free, but MMM never put it down to any spiritual leanings. So when MMM discovered that the former Principal of the Regional School of Printing, and the founder of the first degree course in Printing Technology in the country, at Anna University, had always been in close touch with the spiritual, he was truly surprised. Like almost everyone else who knows VSK.

But then VSK always had a habit of surprising everyone. In his 60s he surprised everyone by accepting the challenge Dr. V.C. Kulandaiswamy gave him, to set up, despite lacking an engineering background, that pioneering engineering course. At 70, he pulled another surprise, going to Hyderabad to set up a large modern press, without ever having worked long in a printing press. And in his 70s, he pulled his latest surprise, turning general author and at 75 releasing his first non-printing title.

It is a book remarkable for the simple language with which he deals with subjects ranging from Anger to Sleep to Zen. But as Dr. Kulandaiswamy said, one or two sweeping statements were rather unfair by rationalists like him. Curious, but the head table on that evening seemed to have rather more than its quota of mild rationalists on it. Will VSK succeed with them? Well, at least he's got them reading about this other world of his.

Point counterpoint

Back to a more manageable world came *The Man From Madras Musings* after those three excursions in Wonderland. At the Bookpoint, Orient Longman's bookshop, Ashokamitran was once again felicitated on winning the Sahitya Akademi Award.

This time the felicitation was launched with a learned critique by an earnest professor who seemed to treat the audience like a classroom. Sa Kandasamy, fellow author, followed, saying briefly that it couldn't have happened to a better person, and Ashokamitran, in his trademark low-key, softspoken style, almost indicated 'let's get on with the film'.

The highlight of the evening was the documentary produced by Kandasamy on Ashokamitran.

It may have been a bit overlong — with the introduction of scenes from films made from his books — but it demonstrated, as counterpoint to the introductory lecture, that the softspoken, almost off-hand approach to narrating how he does it is much more attention-catching than all the scholarly earnestness. Ashokamitran's stories are simple, even if they do convey complex ideas. His trademark is simplicity in writing, in narration or in discussing the story with readers. He is the quintessential warm and friendly next door neighbour. *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders whether there is need for such scholarly dissertations on such genuine simplicity that records as it is the world going round.

Short of target

There couldn't have been a better cause for the proceeds of the Tennis Memorabilia Auction that Vijay Amritraj conducted at a gala evening at the Park Sheraton. The glitter was there, but traditional Chennai Society was short in attendance. Instead, there was a new glitterati and the revelation that the world of tennis today is also the world of high fashion in which tennis stars must be seen with glamorous models who seem a world removed from India. All this would have been high fun, if the auction had been exciting and the target exceeded. But last year's three lakhs was nowhere near in sight this year.

Vijay did his best. He had a splendid stage presence and a patter straight out of American double entendre, he wowed many in the crowd, particularly a young Black American matron who carried on a running verbal exchange with him, and he worked the bids with all his heart. But there was the recession, there were too few bidders — *The Man From Madras Musings* would say no more than twenty — and, worst of all, it was too late in the evening. Waiting for the 'tennis stars' to come and to discover who was not coming had taken its toll as parched throats were washed down and hungry stomachs were only too well snack-fed. Inevitably lethargy took over — and only Rs.2.40 lakh was bid for seven tennis items and two surprises: one, partnering Vijay for a set against Miss India and one of the visiting players and, the other, a week's training at the Nick Bollettieri's Academy in Florida. As for chirpy Ms. Glacier, she did at last manage to catch Vijay's eye with one bid.

None of our own

When Major Vinod Krishna took time off from giving the Hindi commentaries during that major tennis event that was so heavily hyped in the City, he addressed the Chennai chapter of the Public

(Continued on Page 8)



Sir Archibald Nye, then the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, and former Governor of Madras, opened on March 12, 1950 the new premises of the regional centre of the British Council. Sir Archibald and Lady Nye are seen with Mr. C.R. Hiscocks, Regional Representative of the British Council.

The library Nye opened

Here is another angle to the piece on 'Nye — and the Raj'. The British Council Library in Madras, as it was known then, which is entering its 50th year of service, was inaugurated on March 12, 1950 by Sir Archibald Nye. I send you a photograph published in *The Indian Express* about 50 years ago.

K. Viswanathan
5/3 Musiri Subramaniam Road
Mylapore
Chennai 600 004

Editor's Note: That photograph of the inauguration had accompanied a feature in the *Express* in 1975 to mark the Library's silver jubilee. The real bonanza we received from reader Viswanathan was the article by N.S. Ramaswami, as felicitous a bit of writing as you'll find anywhere. We take pleasure in publishing below excerpts from it.

'This is a personal essay. There is no egoism in it, for books are personal matters. There have been occasions when, rather foolishly, I have been proud of my little collection of books. It is proper to say with Southey, "My days among the dead are past", but not very wise to be haughty about an as-

semblage of some four thousand books. Like everyone in Madras who has had anything to do with books, I have, over the years, owed a great debt of gratitude to the British Council Library. There is a collection one can be legitimately proud of.

The library is celebrating its silver jubilee and candour compels the admission that the British Council Library is what Macaulay said of Boswell's life in a racing metaphor. "Eclipse is first, the rest nowhere."

This pre-eminence it derives in part from its very nature. I am one of those who have lived longer years under the King-Emperor in London than under the President in India. The warp and woof of my intellectual personality (everybody has one) has been British books. It began with Burke and Gardiner. These are the earliest books I can remember. Burke was, and still is, in *World's Classics*, and Gardiner in "The Wayfarer's Library" of Dent's. It was, strangely enough from the Irishman that I learnt of the greatness of India and Hinduism, and it was from the Londoner 'ist that I learnt how tenderly and gracefully the language could be used.

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Snaky stories

The subject of snakes (A history of Indian Ophiology — MM, March 16th) is so vast that volumes can be written on it — and have been. There's just a point or two I'd like to touch on here.

Serpents have fascinated man since time immemorial. This fascination springs from his innate fear of these creatures and the mysterious ways in which they live. Since there was no sure cure for snake poison, a bite by this creature usually resulted in death. The treatment for snake bites before the advent of serum therapy was either crude or superstitious. Snake charmers carried the root of a herb known as *siria nangai*. They asserted that if the snakes they handled bit them, all they had to do was to chew a

member of Loyola College, Madras. He loved snakes so much that he always carried a couple of them in the roomy folds of his frock. He even went to bed with a python coiled close to him for warmth. Understandably, other faculty members were wary and avoided him. But, he did not mind and was happy in the company of his ophidian friends. Schools and colleges sought him out for lectures on snakes. He came with a few live specimens for demonstration. He encouraged the members of the audience to feel his wards to prove that they were neither slimy nor dirty, as were thought. He also dispelled certain false beliefs about snakes.

In an earlier era, the environs of Chennai used to host a variety of snakes. Cobra, viper and krait were some among the poisonous, while sarai, grass and water snakes were among the nonpoisonous variety. Since then, human settlements have encroached on open grounds and lakes in and around Chennai. Also all the waterways have been polluted beyond recognition. With these, the amphibian and rodent population, which formed the diet of snakes, disappeared. And with that the snakes have also gone.

Snakes have an important place in Hindu mythology. According to it, the world is supposed to rest on the head of the mighty snake Vasuki. Lord Vishnu is said to rest on the coils of a thousand headed snake. Lord Siva sports a number of snakes on his body as ornaments. No wonder, the snake is revered as a divine creature! Snake charmers also reinforce this belief with their tricks and stories. Childless couples are encouraged to propitiate "Nagaraja", the king of snakes, to get his divine blessings. They are also encouraged to feed milk to cobras. But cobras cannot drink liquids! The snake charmer poses as if he is pouring milk down its throat, but all the time he is throwing the milk outside.

Snakes do not have ears and cannot hear any sound. They can only pick up ground vibrations and follow moving objects with their eyes. But the snake charmer makes you believe that it is dancing to the tune of his pipe.

There is also a belief that a wounded cobra maintains a grudge and will attack the family of the offender for generations. Film-makers encourage this myth, confusing gullible viewers. Another belief is that if a cobra is killed, it must be cremated completely. Otherwise any part uncharred would revive to become a live cobra and attack the offender!

M. Sethuraman

Readers' Responses

Indian history. Here, over the years, I have read some delectable works like Major Fontenelle's story of his part in the Carnatic wars. (This book is somewhat like Alice's Cheshire Cat. It is lost to view for many months and then suddenly it appears. It does not stay in its place for long. It does seem to be very popular with readers). I have read Lady Sale's story of the Afghan wars and, more recently, Mr. Michael Edwards' "Glorious Sahibs" and J. Morris' "Pax Britannica".

From the detective fiction shelves I have refreshed my soul with frequent draughts of Dorothy Sayers. More respectably, I have drunk deep of the fountain that is Anthony Trollope. All the old Trollopes (I have about forty of them. Many are ragged and tattered, but the eye of proprietorial indulgence overlooks these defects) were small *World's Classics*....

It would be too long to give an account of the delightful books I have read in this library. For a few weeks I studied the shelves with the care of an author who is represented on them. It speaks to the sagacity of the library that, as I was told on unimpeachable authority, it ordered a number of additional copies to meet the demand...

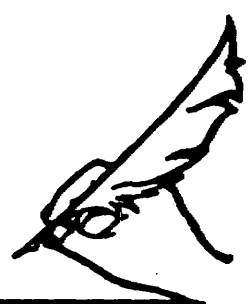
Another Reader's Response and 'Our Readers Write' appear on Page 4.

The British Council Library is a superb collection of books, dispensed to the public with care and efficiency by a devoted staff under the charge of Mrs. Suseela Kumar, the Librarian, who occupies an honoured place in the world of librarianship. I know that she has written a number of authoritative books. The library is

cast in her mould, a quiet efficiency...

Editor's Note: NSR would today find the library rather changed with the 'noxious' stuff dominant, being in great demand by students who read only to pass examinations, and with hardly anything of Fontenelle or Sayers or others of their ilk.

OUR READERS WRITE



Maintenance a must

It is gratifying that steps are at least being taken to refurbish *Vivekananda House* (Ice House). This is a step in the right direction, but in order to preserve its pristininity, not only the structure but also the environs should be maintained and kept scrupulously clean.

R.K. Sridharan
2, East Circular Road
Santhomé
Chennai 600 028.

Self-created crisis?

It is indeed surprising to see the State Electricity Minister announce that there will be load shedding in urban and rural Tamil Nadu due to "a current crisis". That this crisis is self-created is being conveniently overlooked.

Several thousand hoardings in the city of Chennai waste precious electricity to advertise through the night. At the Gemini flyover alone, there are at least 50 such neon lights and spotlights on throughout the night. The same is true in several other parts of the city, as well as other urban centres in the State. Why this colossal wastage of electricity cannot be stopped is a mystery.

Further, since some of these hoardings are on private domestic property or private buildings, they are only charged domestic rates for the electricity consumption, though their activity is clearly commercial. Still worse, many of these hoardings are on land belonging to, or given to, educational institutions, including premier colleges and schools of our city, where electricity consumption is even further subsidised. Therefore, the Government, as the service provider, is actually providing subsidised electricity for advertisers to waste, and making the citizen pay for it. Why should not electricity supply to hoardings and neon lights be completely prohibited?

Several other hoardings, especially those on pavements, conveniently draw their electric-

ity from nearby streetlights or electricity poles. Why has the TNEB not taken any steps to minimise this blatant theft of electricity?

Terming the current situation of "crisis" is merely deflecting responsibility and it exposes the inability of the Government to comprehend and effectively tackle these issues. The Electricity Minister will do well to review this current indulgence to hoarding contractors.

Bharath Jairaj
Citizen Consumer and Civic
Action Group (CAG)
6, 2nd Cross Street, Karpagam
Gardens,
Chennai 600 020.

Editor's Note: Apart from hoardings, there is all that electricity wasted in decorating shops and venues of celebration. Why not stop all that?

The Vasu properties

Kilpauk and the Movies (MM, April 1) was incomplete without mention of T. Vasu Naidu and his beautiful residence and garden 'Devan Solai' on Landon's Road, where his grandson, the writer T.N. Murari, resides. Almost every week the Newton sound recording van was in our garden.

M.S. Subbulakshmi, the then up and coming actress rendering the famous 'Brindavanathil Kannan Valandan' in the film 'Meera', was pictured here with our cow wandering around. 'Shakunthala' — again with M.S. and Mathuram — had a scene with Dushyantha driving his chariot along our garage driveway. The chariot used to be left in our porch at night. My sister and I thought we were princesses when we sat in that chariot (made beautifully of papier mache).

Mathuram, N.S.K., Pulimute et al were regulars in our garden. The opposite house and garden were also used for shooting. A European used to reside there with his butler (whose sons became officers later).

The next building was used to house Netaji, who came so far South

Carry on, offenders

'Respect for the law...' by R.K. Sreekumara Menon (MM, April 1st) has prompted me to add the following:

Upto 1970, the Madras City Police were taking serious note of nuisance committed on roads and pathways, encroachments, pavement vendors, stray cattle, one-way traffic and 'no parking' violations. It was the practice then that every morning a police van would do a round of the city and pick up those, young and old, who eased themselves on the roads and pavements. They would be directly taken to the Magistrate's Courts and fined. It was the practice in those days in the Magistrate's Courts to call the nuisance cases and petty cases at the beginning of the day's work. Slowly, the attitude of the police has changed and they have forgotten that it is also their duty to prevent such acts.

According to the following Sections of the Madras City Police Act, 1888, whoever in any public place commits any of the following offences shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Rs.250 or to imprisonment which may extend to three months.

Section	Office
71(vii)	Driving etc., animal or vehicle on a foot way; whoever leads any animal or drives, drags or parks any vehicle upon any foot way or fastens any animal so that it can stand across or upon any foot way.
71(x)	Whoever cleans or exposes for show, hire or

sales any animal or vehicle or makes or repairs any part of any vehicle except in case of accident, where repair on the spot is necessary, or.....

71(xi) Obstructing thoroughfare; whoever causes any vehicle to remain or stand longer than may be necessary for loading or unloading, except at places appointed for the purpose by the Commissioner or fastens any horse or other animal so as to cause obstruction or in any way wilfully obstructs or causes obstruction to the free passage of any thoroughfare.

73 Penalty for committing nuisance in public place: whoever in or by the side of or near to any public place wilfully and indecently exposes his person, or commits nuisance by easing himself and whoever having the care or custody of any child under seven years of age omits or prevents such child from committing a nuisance as aforesaid shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Rs.50.

In the past, the City Police showed an interest in maintaining the decency, health and safety of the city and its residents. Nowadays, due to a whole range of new duties they are not in a position to concentrate on the above aspects and enforce the above provisions.

Once, Chennai was predominantly occupied by native Madras. Being the sons of the soil they felt obliged to abide by these regulations and keep the city clean, healthy and safe. But due to overcrowding by outsiders, who are mainly in the city to earn a living, the above rules have become mere formalities. The people who come to the city from the rural areas do not consider the above acts seriously. Moreover, many police personnel and Government officers are from the villages too and, hence, they too do not care about the prevention of these offences.

Nowadays it is common to see people riding or driving vehicles in the wrong direction in one-way roads, to see people disobeying traffic signs, disobeying safety rules. It is a common sight to see lorry drivers plying in 'No Lorry' zones. All in the presence of police personnel. They know that they will be charged that only if they stop. So they ignore the police and carry on.

The police and civic authorities do not show any interest in removing encroachments on the pavements. It has become a rule that the weaker sections of society can occupy and use any public place freely.

If the policy force is rid of certain corrupt and unruly elements and energetic, patriotic and alert personnel are enrolled and motivated to maintain perfect law, order and decency in Metropolitan Madras with the earlier vigour of the police, only then will the city be a real metropolis.

S. Suresh Kumar

after the Partition (1946).

My grandmother later sold the property to Joseph Thaliath Jr., who produced films under the banner of *Citadel*.

Both houses were our property. Grandfather was responsible for Landon's Road — which divided both properties.

Nalini Ramakrishna
36, Harley's Road
Kilpauk, Chennai 600 010.

Calling a spade...

One of the pages I like best is Short 'N' Snappy where MMM really calls a spade a spade. The April 1st issue is a case in point.

MMM has neither praised the car plant inaugural show nor has he criticised it. He has just reported facts as they are (or were) and how disappointing the show was. Not a single other columnist has done this. It was just praises, praises all the way. So one naturally tends to discount such press release journalism in other publications. I sincerely wish there were more writers like MMM and publications like *Madras Musings*.

V. Chandrashekhar
B-12/4, 25th Cross Street
Besant Nagar
Chennai 600 090.

A stretch of stretch

It is heartening to note that the IMRTS is progressing by leaps and bounds to reach St. Thomas Mount faster from Luz Corner. But the route takes a turn beyond TTTI and goes to Velachery. A stretch of the Buckingham Canal banks from that point upto Lattice Bridge has been terribly ill-used by private and public parties, all their refuse being dumped day in and day out. The stretch that emanates from this neglected land is intolerable. Though the road adjacent is being swept, nothing is done to clean this noxious place.

NV Pundarikanthan
21, VR Nagar
Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

Unnecessary hoardings

Re the hoarding that hides a building, *Vivekananda Illam* (MM, April 1), perhaps out of politeness and gratitude, Rajind N Christy has 'overlooked' a point. But I, being a crass individual, cannot resist.

The hoarding features one of the sponsors of MM!

The irony is the 'product' concerned is a veritable institution in its own right in Madras and certainly does not face the intense

competition that we're witnessing in many consumer products like soap and tooth paste, making me wonder at the necessity for the use of hoardings (seen in many places in the city) by this venerable company. Call it the irony of ironies if you will.

Other than shedding a few tears, and perhaps praying, what can we, the readers of MM who are indebted to the sponsors for making this fine journal absolutely free of cost, do?

B. Gautham
122, Wallajah Road
Chennai 600 002.

No ship, no plane?

Tourists especially from rural areas, visit Chennai in large numbers to see places of tourist importance, but they are disappointed when they cannot see a ship or an aeroplane up close. The Tourist Development Corporation should try, with the co-operation of the authorities, to make this possible. Even a special ship in the harbour and an aeroplane at the airport would help. An entrance fee could be collected for maintenance.

K.S. Sadhashivan
30, New Hospital Road
Gobichettipalayam
Tamil Nadu 638 452.

A birdwatcher's view of

Birdwatching in Tamil Nadu

The new birdwatcher in Tamil Nadu is at a disadvantage. A book of birds has been brought out in Tamil, but it is merely a translation of Salim Ali's *Common Birds* and does not pertain to the birds actually seen in the State. The illustrations are also not good enough to help in identification. Birdwatchers in Tamil Nadu find it very difficult to get information from the locals because of the poor awareness. So a bird book in Tamil, with very good illustrations, is sorely needed to popularise birdwatching and conservation.

No book, however, can be as good as seeing the real thing, especially in cases where there is difficulty in identification or confusion with similar species. The Tamil Nadu Forest Department should hold camps regularly in different places with the help of knowledgeable naturalists for the benefit of birdwatchers, particularly newcomers, to familiarise them with Tamil Nadu's birdlife.

The Midwinter waterfowl census is conducted every year in December-January. This is the time when amateur birdwatchers all over the country try to make an estimate of the wetland birds in their regions. The counts help in creating awareness and in bringing together birdwatchers of different regions. In Tamil Nadu, the Madras Naturalists' Society has been co-ordinating the counts. Initially, people were very enthusiastic, but in the last couple of years this has been on the wane.

Tamil Nadu is very rich in wetlands, estuaries and exten-

sive shallow lakes used by waders and ducks. The problems facing birdwatchers is that the tanks are so large that identification of birds is impossible without a 20-60x telescope and very few people have them.

Many of the water tanks are



Night Heron



Brahminy Duck

(All photographs by P. Ramanan)



Cattle Egret



Dart or Snake Bird

conservation efforts in Tamil Nadu?

There's the Redfaced Malkoha, said to be found in the Western Ghats near Madurai. It also occurs in Sri Lanka but may already be locally extinct in Tamil Nadu and India.

A species which has been reduced to a few thousands is



Spoonbilled pelicans

the Spotbilled Pelican. It breeds in Andhra Pradesh at Nelapattu across the border from Tamil Nadu, and Koon-dakkulam in Tirunelveli Dr. near Nanguneri. The birds breeding in Koon-dakkulam are protected by the villagers and are dependent on the village tank for their nesting trees and on nearby tanks for food. The water levels in these tanks are determined by the water released from a nearby dam. There is much that an amateur can do here just by visiting the place on weekends and keeping regular records.

The Dart or Snake Bird is another species which is said to be decreasing in numbers, but is found in appreciable numbers in Tamil Nadu and does breed in our bird sanctuaries.

Amateur birdwatchers all over Tamil Nadu can collect significant information regarding the habits of birds. It is not only most waders which are migrant but also local birds like the Tree Pie, Little Brown Dove and Crow. Only some species may be seen in your neighbourhood during certain periods of the year. At other times they may be seen elsewhere. I have in my locality a partially albino House Crow which I have noticed only in the winter for the past four years. In a nearby scrub jungle, Little Brown Doves are in higher numbers from July to January. If there is a proper networking of birdwatchers all over Tamil Nadu much can be achieved.

A few birds have been noticed in Tamil Nadu only rarely. For instance, the Bay Owl (once in Top Slip), the Frogmouth, the Ashy Minivet and the Emerald Cuckoo, to name a few. It may be that many of these birds are regular in some places but due to the lack of knowledgeable bird-watchers they are not recognised as such in different places.

The limit of migration of many species of ducks in Tamil Nadu in different years is not known. The Barheaded Goose, the Brahminy Duck, the Gadwell, the Redcrested Pochard and the Wigeon all winter in South India, but it is only in some years that they have been reported in Tamil Nadu.

Birds would adopt a new habitat to breed if conditions are favourable with respect to food and security. The Simpson Estate in Sembium is one such place where thousands breed round the year. Initially, in the '70s, there were only a few hundred Night Herons. There may be other places in Tamil Nadu where such heronries, as yet unreported, exist.

The common Cattle Egret, even though seen in breeding plumage all over Tamil Nadu, is not found to nest in any of the established sanctuaries.

The cuckoos choose a favourable host species to lay

(Continued on Page 8)

Disheartening picture

It was so disheartening to see that photograph of a pony in such a dreadful predicament (MM, April 1st).

I would have appreciated if you spared some time there to give us more information about how that pony was rescued. It is such a horrible sight that it will make even a heartless man run for some help.

I think it is not such a photograph to be published to cherish old Madras. Of course, you wanted to highlight the shortening of pavements without giving adequate space for easy moving about in the pavements.

I hope at least this photograph will alert the authorities concerned.

V. Elangovan
28, Karimnagar Street
Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

Rajind N Christy responds:

This pony came galloping on to the busy Kamarajar Salai, from a nearby makeshift stable put up close to the Slum Clearance Board. It ran helter-skelter and nearly crashed into vehicles passing by. Thoroughly frightened, it tried entering the Laity Willingdon campus, but, unable to jump over the wall, backtracked, slipped and crashed into the narrow railings near the *Vivekananda House* gate. It remained in that cramped space for about 25 minutes with bleeding injuries. A message was sent for the master of the horse. But one Good Samaritan helped the horse to its feet. He claimed that horses cannot lie down and if they are forced into such a position they cannot get up without help. Is he right?

AT THE RECEIVING END

Consumers are vital to tackling problems of hunger and food security

A number of international organisations are working towards beefing up food security by creating awareness among consumers. The availability of quality and nutritious food at an affordable price to all is being insisted on.

The Consumers International's (CI) India Consumer Protection Programme has launched a campaign the Consumer Action Plan, to highlight consumer concerns and support initiatives like securing "access to food" as a basic right.

Although a majority of India's population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities, a sizeable chunk of it is still undernourished because 'nutritious

food is inaccessible or, more important, due to very low or sometimes lack of purchasing power. In such a scenario, the responsibilities of the Centre are far from over. Some governmental efforts, like the setting up of the public distribution system, have arrested the threat of widespread famine and death. But a lot remains undone.

In fact, the emphasis should not only be on the people's right to affordable, safe and nutritious food, but on a more integrated programme that would include access to safe drinking water, sanitation, basic health care and primary education. The Consumer Action Plan is expected to do just that — increase consumer

prime agricultural land, capital and research and development away from staple food crops.

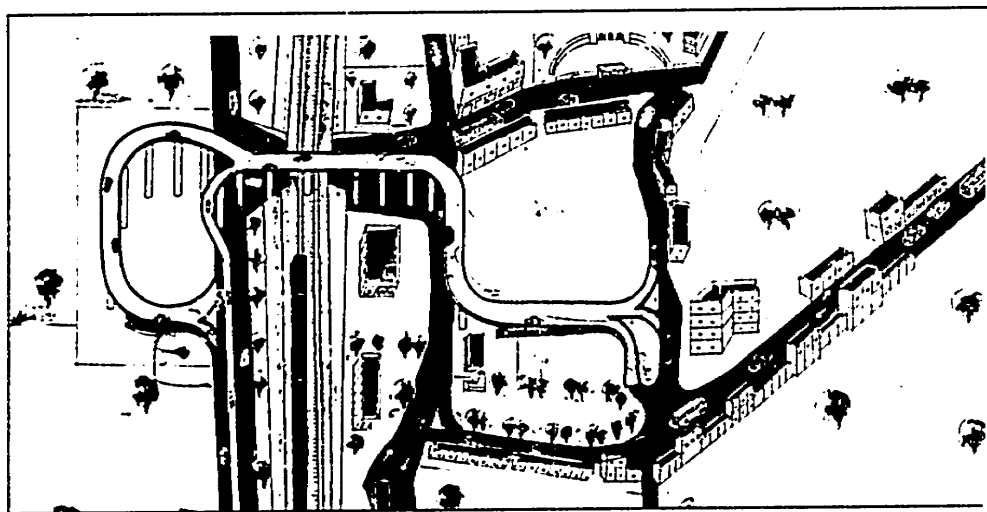
The threat of turning such lands over to other uses such as industrial estates, tourist and recreational facilities, commercial and residential properties, and agroforestry jeopardises food security. Bio-prospecting, intellectual property rights and patents pose direct threats to the utilisation and development of seeds, and genetic resources by farmers.

The pressing need for productivity and pest control is increasing reliance on external inputs like chemicals, which in turn threaten the health of farmers. In addition, toxic traces in the food

chain can have grave economic consequences for consumers whose health could be impaired permanently.

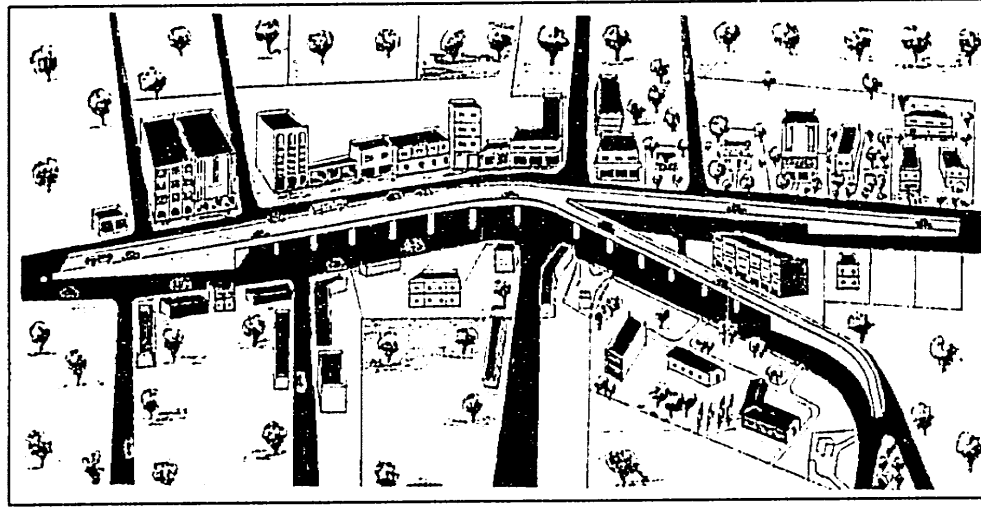
Moreover, transnational corporations are penetrating local agricultural markets and governments can do little to discipline them. But active consumer support can effectively moderate their practices. Consumers could for instance, support agricultural produce obtained by employing sustainable agricultural technologies. They can lobby for organic agriculture. On the whole, a consumer shift to locally-produced food can strengthen food security — (CSE — Down to Earth Features).

Autar Nehru



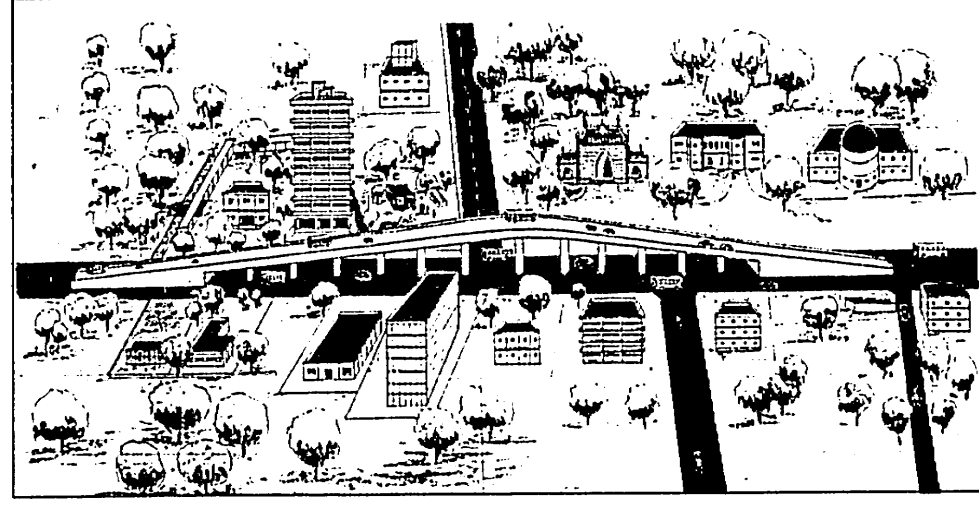
Above Perambur Subway and near Perambur Railway Station.

Two-way as well as one way.
815m long, 16m, 13m, 5.5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 21 Crore.



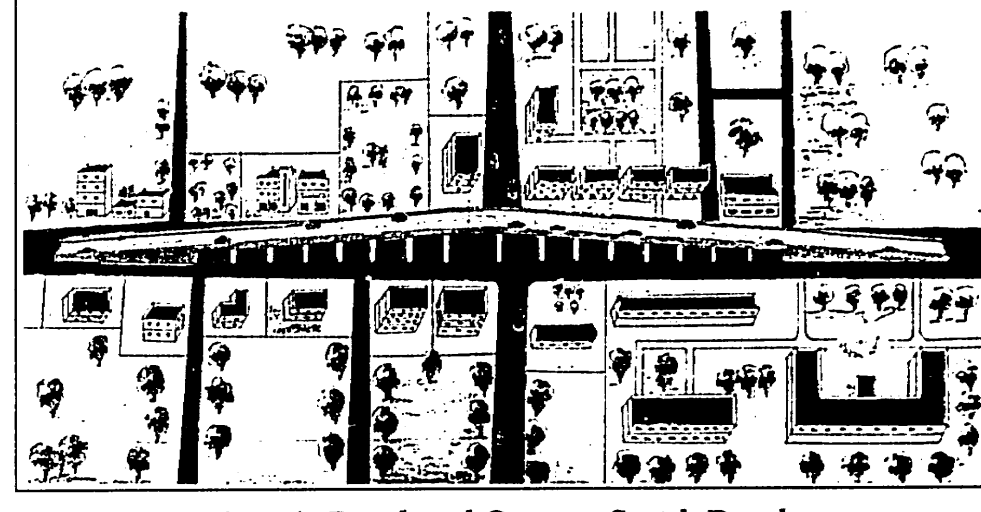
Purasawalkam High Road, Hunter's Road and Jeremiah Road.

Two-way as well as one-way.
507m long, 8.5m, 5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 12 Crore.



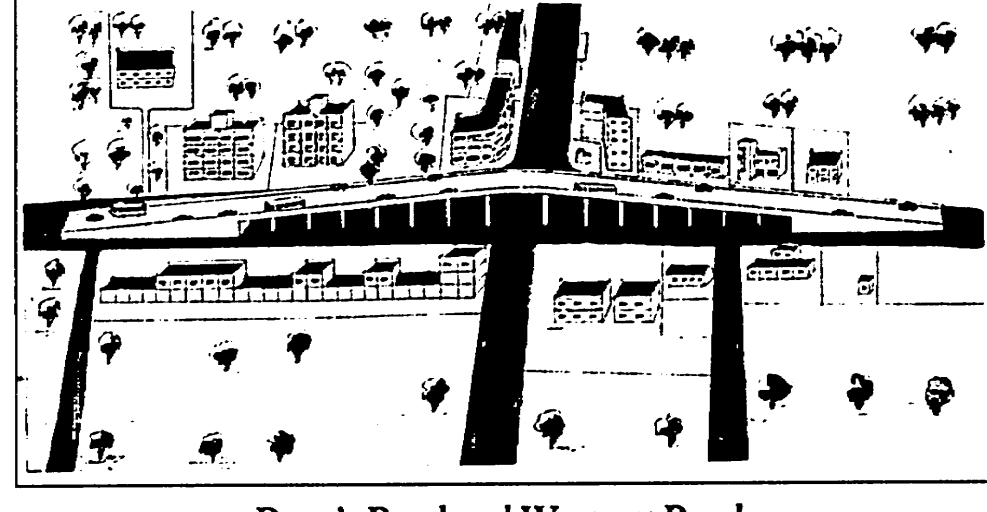
Pantheon Road.

Two-way.
291m long, 8.5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 8.5 Crore.



Peter's Road and Conran Smith Road.

Two-way.
330m long, 8.5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 8.5 Crore.



Peter's Road and Westcott Road.

Two-way.
301m long, 8.5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 8.5 Crore.

Those flyovers: pros and cons

Chennai is to get 23 flyovers (including the Perambur flyover) over a three-year period. Of these, 19 have already been announced, ten to be built in first phase, nine in the second. The other four are slated for the third phase. Chennai's citizens are in two minds over this initiative.

"It's a bottom to top approach to the whole problem," said Dr. N.S. Srinivasan, Traffic Advisory Forum, commenting on what many think is his 'baby'. "Unlike other developmental activities of the government, the public participation is more in the current scheme of things. For the first time in the country, a Rs.366.05 crore Action Plan, prepared by a citizens' group (120 persons from different walks of life) has been accorded sanction in toto and is being taken up for implementation."

The Action Plan was the outcome of a workshop organised in Chennai where representatives from the public and officials of various departments/agencies participated. A questionnaire was also sent to over 500 people. The problem areas were identified through this process. The entire cost (of around Rs.5 lakh) was met by corporate contributions (mainly Ashok Leyland) and not by the Corporation.

The Action Plan envisages five types of improvements for the Chennai traffic — traffic management schemes (Rs.5.1 crore), road intersections' improvement (Rs.21.2 crore), pedestrian facilities (Rs.8.45 crore), traffic regulation and control (Rs.6.3 crore) and road improvements (Rs.325 crore). All these are planned to be implemented in two phases with Phase I involving an expenditure of Rs.164.95 crore. Construction of flyovers comes under the last segment and it envisages a total outlay of Rs.193 crore (Rs.49 crore plus Rs.144 crore). The

• by
K. Sridhar

other major expenditure under this head is for building grade separators at railway level crossings (Rs.78 crore). Though around 50 places were identified for construction of flyovers initially, only those projects which needed immediate attention were included in the Action Plan, Dr. Srinivasan stated.

But are these flyovers the ultimate solution for the city's traffic problems? According to G. Dattatri, the former Chief Town Planner, these flyovers are only a short-term solution for a perma-

nent problem. It is also not a cheap solution. At best, these can reduce waiting time at intersections only. "What's the use, unless you improve the whole road?" he asked. Most of our arterial roads are encroached on, at least on their pavements, no proper cycle track is provided, and the absence of bus bays staggers the traffic-flow at many places, he pointed out. Should these problems be addressed simultaneously, then there could be a real improvement in the city's traffic condition, he felt. Dattatri referred to the narrow width of the service road on the Bala Mandir side of the Anna Flyover. Similar is the case of the service roads in Anna Salai. While the main road is maintained well, little care is paid to the service lanes. The stretch has become nobody's baby and parking has become a big problem here, he pointed out.

Taking a quick look at the plans for the first ten flyovers and talking to persons in their vicinity, this is the picture I came away with.

A person working in Royapettah High Road said, "We have been witnessing a steady growth in Radhakrishnan Salai over the years. With regular VIP movements in this section, it is



At half a dozen sites in the City, this is the scene as work gets underway on the first ten flyovers.

better to have an uninterrupted flow of traffic, lest there be a bottleneck in peak hours." But is the RH Road wide enough to have an 8.0 m wide flyover on it? Yes, say the Corporation officials. "There would still be a 4 m sidewalk left either side for smooth flow of traffic on the surface road," said one official.

The flyover at the Music Academy junction is the least significant in terms of traffic volume-capacity ratio. To be built on Radhakrishnan Salai itself, it is intended to facilitate uninterrupted vehicular movements in both directions. An employee of a company nearby said that though the idea of building a flyover is welcome, building it here rather than over a needy area like the Panagal Park and Arcot Road junctions is a little surprising. "The road is so wide here that the real need for a flyover is limited," he added. Did political considerations prompt

the building of a flyover at this point, in the first phase itself, many I spoke to wondered.

The flyover at the Alwarpet junction, however, seemed to be much sought. This flyover is planned to enable road users to skip two traffic signals. This junction must be one of the very few busy intersections in the city where two signals are working within a span of 50 metres. The traffic constable on duty at the junction heaved a sigh of relief when I mentioned the project. More than anyone else, he seemed to be looking forward to the date of completion.

One of the most congested areas being tackled in the first phase is the Doveton junction. This flyover would be bifurcated into two arms to meet the needs of current traffic regulations. But the business community here is quite depressed over the pace of activities. Said one shopowner in the area: "Just for replacing a half

kilometre length of waterline, the Corporation has taken more than three months and the job is yet to be finished. Now comes the new flyover project. While the idea of building a bridge here is welcome, the Corporation should ensure timely completion of the project. Delays affect our livelihoods."

Peter's Road will have the distinction of having two flyovers within a span of one kilometre. One will be at the Sathyam Theatre junction and another at the Royapettah Hospital junction. A resident of the Meer-sahibpet area felt, "The building of a bridge at the Royapettah Hospital junction would add more confusion to the market area. At present, the signal at the junction indirectly helps to regulate the flow of traffic in the market area. If the flyover is completed, the through-traffic from the western side on Peter's Road will only add more traffic

jams in the area." He also felt that the traffic-snarl would extend even beyond the signal at a future date should measures to improve the condition at the market site not be taken in time.

The costliest and the longest flyover in the first lot (excluding the Perambur flyover) would be built at the Adyar-Lattice Bridge Road junction. Another flyover, planned for the Korturpuram Road junction, will allow traffic only from the Raj Bhavan side. Dr. Anantha Rajan of Anna University expressed surprise over the reported decision of allowing only one-way traffic on this stretch. He said that using two-thirds of road space for only one direction of traffic would be against the basic principle of road-usage. According to him, the requirement of a signal in the area even after the flyover is completed should have been avoided to derive maximum mileage from the project. The flyover at this junction would be a unique one in the sense that there is only a T-junction here, not even a four-way junction. Had there been a sideward arm into the Korturpuram road, the plan would have been an improvement, observed many.

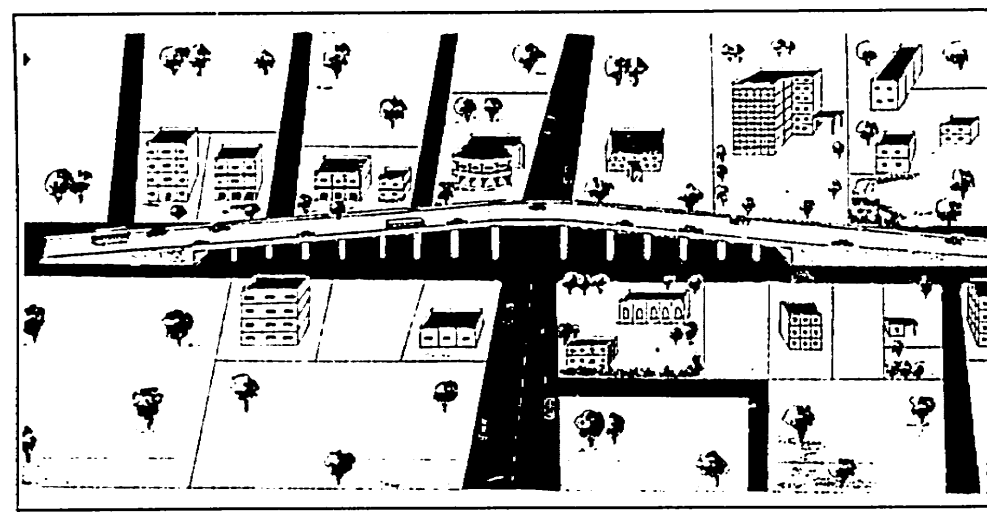
The tenth flyover would be built on Pantheon Road near the Museum.

Scheduled to be completed over a period of 15 months, the three main contractors (Gammon India, ECC [L&T] and NBCI) are already on the job. Relaying of underground cables and pipelines have started at all project-sites. In some cases, like the Sathyam Theatre junction

and Gandhi Mandapam junction, laying of pile foundations is in progress. "Shifting of underground lines usually constitutes 10-15 percent of the total work and would consume around 15 to 20 percent of the total project cost. It is a time-consuming job too," said one Corporation official. But the Corporation is determined to finish the job on time (by May 2000). The Corporation is also on the job of floating tenders for the second batch of flyovers. Calling of bids should be over by May 15th and work would commence by July, it was felt at the Corporation.

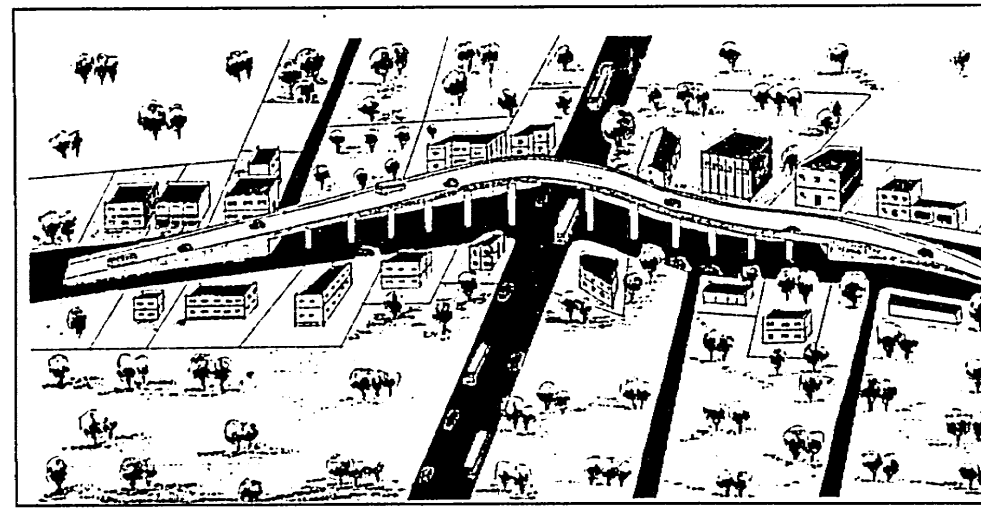
One common suggestion by traffic experts is for the development of hinge areas whereby the city's vehicular congestion could be managed more easily. Dr. Anantha Rajan suggested that industries should be persuaded to move to those areas and the necessary infrastructure provided beforehand so as to encourage ready shifting. The ordinary citizen's daily commute between his residence and his office should be made with least effort, he felt. But in present day circumstances, executives working in Ennore reside in the Tiruvanmiyur/Adyar area and do the entire distance by individual cars adding to the traffic volume. Public transport should be improved and encouraged and, if necessary, private vehicular movements should be restricted in peak hours. Banning of autos and increasing bus-frequencies would considerably improve the city's traffic condition, he felt.

(Also see Page 8)



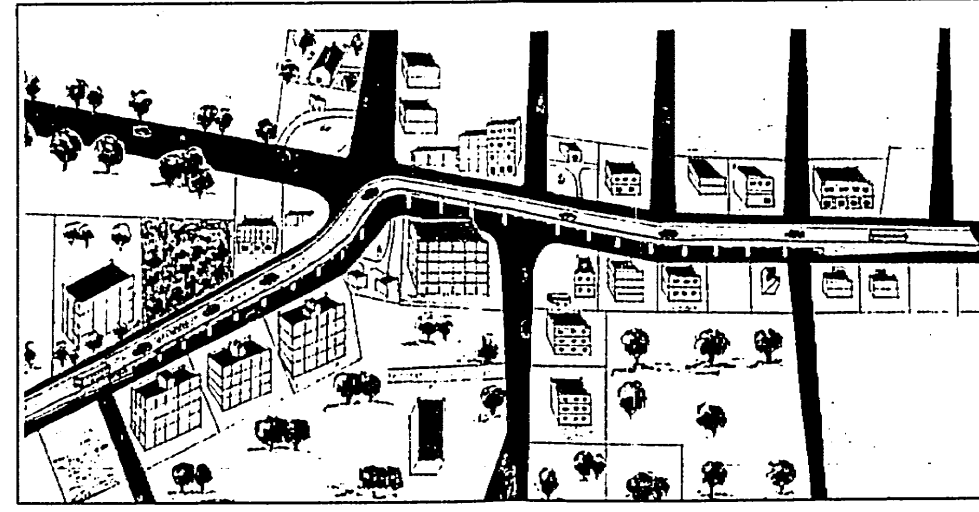
Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai — Music Academy.

Two-way.
340m long, 15.25m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 15 Crore.



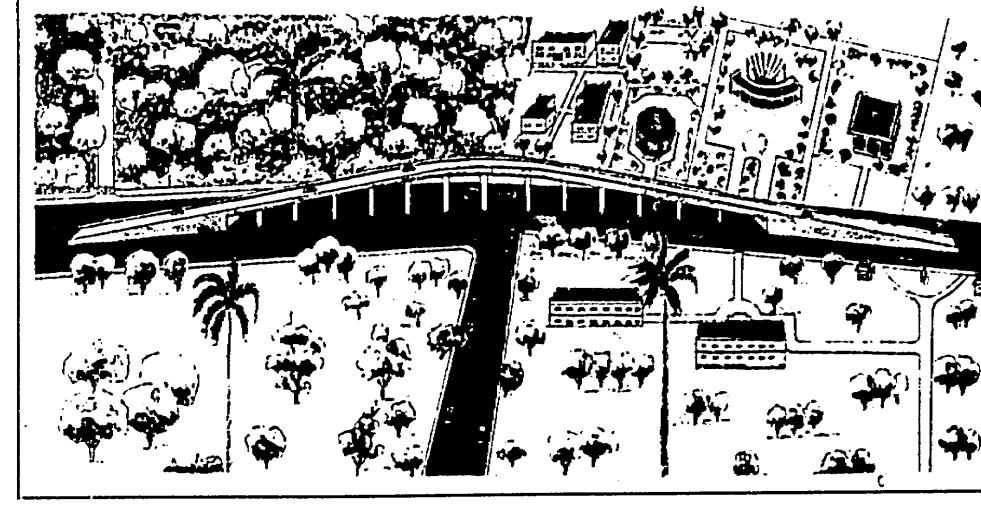
Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai and Royapettah Main Road.

Two-way.
276m long, 8.0m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 8.5 Crore.



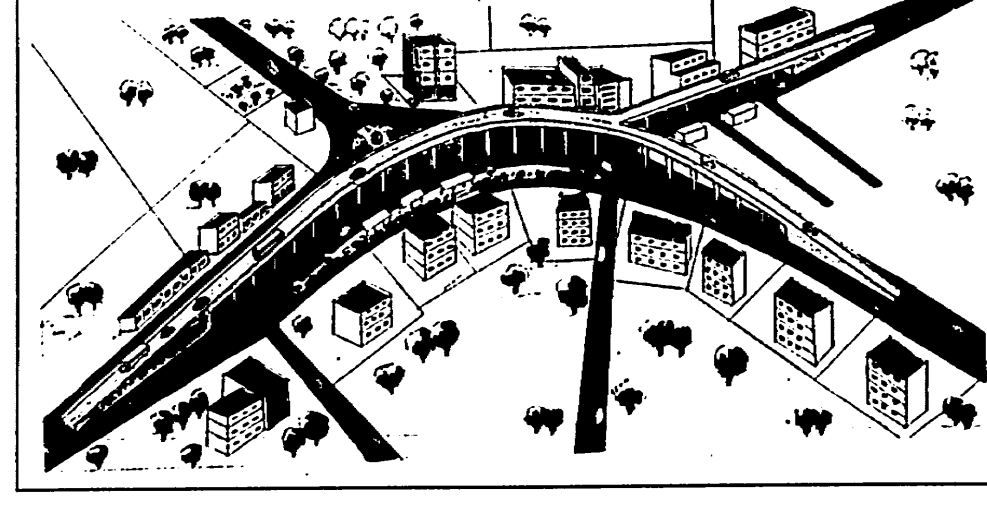
T.T.K. Road and C.P. Ramaswami Iyer Road.

One-way.
502.50m long, 8.0m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 11.00 Crore.



Sardar Patel Road and Gandhi Mandapam Road.

One-way.
311.25m long, 8.5m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 7.0 Crore.



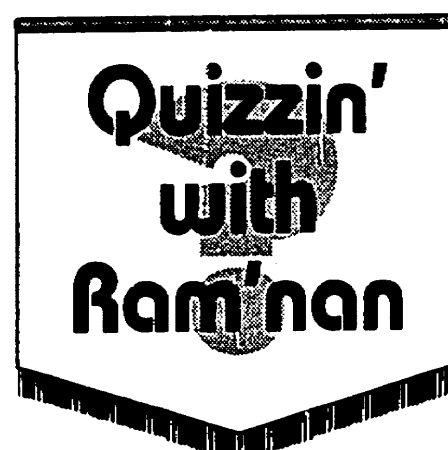
Durgabai Deshmukh Road, Sardar Patel Road and Lattice Bridge Road.

One-way.
712.25m long, 8.5m, 5.0m wide.
Approximate cost Rs. 15.50 Crore.

Why they were selected

Road Intersection	Existing Capacity (p.c.u/h)	Existing Volume (p.c.u/h)	Volume/Capacity	Efficiency rate after flyover
FIRST BATCH				
Adyar-LB Road	4000	4865	1.22	0.75
Alwarpet Junction	3600	7859	2.18	0.55
Cancer Institute	4500	6028	1.34	0.45
Doveton	4500	7581	1.68	0.55
Museum	2500	5382	2.15	0.80
Music Academy	5000	5461	1.09	0.55
Royapettah HR	4000	6853	1.71	0.60
Royapettah Hospital	4000	6261	1.56	0.55
Sathyam Theatre	3600	5051	1.40	0.60
SECOND BATCH				
Basin Bridge Road	4000	6268	1.57	0.65
Broadway/Prakasam Road Jn.	3000	4986	1.66	0.60
Greenway's Road	3600	6166	1.71	0.75
Kelly's	2750	5681	2.07	0.67
Kodambakkam Bridge	4500	9610	2.14	Near unity
Konnur High Road	3000	5120	1.71	0.65
Turnbull's Road	3600	8424	2.34	0.70
Usman Road/Doraiswamy Bridge	6000	11603	1.93	0.75
Vani Mahal/GN Chetty Road	5500	12350	2.47	Near unity

PCU = passenger car units; one bus/truck is taken as 3 PCUs; a motor cycle/cycle is taken as a half PCU.



(Quizmaster V.V. RAMAN'S question are from the period April 1 to 15. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Who is the new national chess champion for men?
2. Which national edifice's golden jubilee celebrations were observed in the capital on April 1st?
3. From where was Insat-2E, the last of the series, launched on April 3rd?
4. Which former Asian Premier has been sentenced to five years in jail for corruption?
5. Which team took its maiden honours in the country's oldest hockey tournament, the Beighton Cup?
6. 'Dr. Death', or 'Euthanasia Guru', was finally convicted his fifth trial after assisting nearly 130 suicides in the U.S. What is his name?
7. Name the legendary nadaswaram vidwan from Srirangam who passed away on April 13th?
8. Which religious order's tercentenary celebrations were observed on Baisakhi day?
9. Who regained the coveted U.S. Masters golf title in Augusta recently?
10. Name the three Indians who figured in the recently announced Cricket Hall of Fame.
11. An Indian business legend and the Chairman Emeritus of the Escorts Group passed away recently. Name him.
12. Which Indian siblings are the richest Asians in Britain?
13. Where is the Government going to set up a military academy, on the lines of the NDA, to turn out Junior Commissioned Officers?
14. Name the patriarch of Malayalam fiction, and author of the famous *Chemmeen*, who passed away recently.
15. Apart from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which three South Asian countries took part in the 'Milan '99' naval exercises near the Andamans recently?

16. In which public place in the Metro was a ramp, initiated by Vidya Sagar (formerly Spastics Society of India), inaugurated to create a disabled-friendly environment?
17. Where in the city was the eleventh centralised computerised train reservation centre opened on April 4th?
18. Panithulikkul Oru Paarkadal, a collection of 52 Tamil articles became the first Tamil book to be launched as a CD-ROM. Who is the Chennai-based author?
19. Who took the singles honours at the finest tennis show, in India, the Gold Flake Open, at the Nungambakkam Stadium on April 11th?
20. Where was a 2-1/2 acres MTC Bus terminus opened on April 4th?

(Answers on Page 9)

Do we need flyovers?

(Continued from Page 1)

will solve the city's traffic problems for the next 15 years. We question that, but even if they do, what happens in less than a generation? Do we build second- and third-storey flyovers, or would we have dispersed the vehicle-owning population and convinced them to travel into Chennai only by public transport? And if we are successful in that, why would we need the flyovers then?

Rather late in the day, even senior police officials are going on record that there are more innovative ways of solving the traffic problem rather than with expensive flyovers. But even they do not stress the issue of road discipline enough. Yet Dr. Srinivasan should be the first to admit that his Mount Road four-lane scheme, despite its easily rectifiable drawbacks, has the fastest flow of traffic in the city because there is some semblance of discipline maintained. That discipline was inculcated by saturating the road with police in the early days to enforce discipline — and the awareness then created in this fashion, of sticking to your lane, has lingered on. Even though the scheme is getting frayed at the edges, it is still a better stretch of road to travel on than any other in the city. If only it had been extended to Kathipara Junction, there would have been at least one road in Chennai that worked.

Enforcing such discipline elsewhere in Chennai with the present police strength can only remain a dream. But why not recruit a new force, a suffi-

ciently large number of traffic wardens, to man the major thoroughfares? If they are tough of character, educated and then trained and supported by traffic magistrates on each major road, they'll soon get road awareness into road-users — and at a cost less than the Rs.200 crore flyover scheme. Say you recruit a thousand or so traffic wardens on contract and pay around a lakh a year to each, because you are looking at educated personnel, and a hundred or so magistrates, you are looking at Rs.10-15 crore a year and in 15 years that will be about the same cost as the flyovers with the added advantage of getting in return road-users who have become disciplined through the discipline of tough fines and licence endorsements. Curiously, at all the workshops Dr. Srinivasan held, getting tough with road users to create discipline was never discussed; in fact, the whole subject of discipline was a non-subject, almost as if everyone had thrown up their hands in resignation on this issue. But the rod is the only solution which, we feel, will work after having spared road-users these past 15 years. (Also see page 4.)

Without discipline, even the Flyover Plan will not work, we feel. It's not too late to take a look at much of it again. But compulsion to stick to the plan, certainly several of the flyovers among the first ten are not really needed. The two flyovers on Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai, the two on Peter's Road and the one facing Gandhi Mandapam Road are certainly 'luxuries' and seem to have a greater VIP

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

(Continued from Page 2)

Relations Society of India on how he and his public relations team at ONGC had "communicated during a crisis", namely, the recent oil rig fire at Bombay High. A good deal of transparency helped the story get fair treatment, Krishna demonstrated. A lively Q & A session followed.

The question that caught *The Man From Madras Musings'* attention was: "Why doesn't India have its own Red Adair?" Indeed, whenever there is a major oilfield blaze, help from abroad is sought, with several companies, mainly American, bidding. All Indian oilfields have trained firefighting crews and there is even a specially trained central force, Khanna replied. But for the big ones, we need experts from abroad

who have years of experience fighting such blazes the year round. No Indian team would get that experience if it only depended on the misfortunes of Oil India and ONGC. Not too many appeared to buy that argument.

Business briefs

★ With all but its English and Hindi editions in trouble, *India Today*, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, is looking for buyers for its vernacular editions. In fact, MMM hears that its Tamil edition has already passed into a software company's hands. If that company succeeds with a major banking deal it is negotiating, it should be cash-rich enough to sustain the magazine for a long time to come.

★ India, it is reported, has over three million HIV-positive people, the largest number in the world. A large number of them are long-distance truck drivers, who reduce their tension on the highways with casual sex. Ashok Leyland, *The Man From Madras Musings* has long been aware, has, at its model driving school for truck drivers in Namakkal, STD and AIDS awareness as part of the

curriculum. Now MMM hears it has trained — under a British High Commission initiative — 56 volunteers in the Hosur factory to talk convoy drivers out of "high risk life habits". Convoy drivers, those who drive those new open trucks long distances on controlled speeds, are probably the most stressed drivers on Indian roads.

MMM

BIRDWATCHING IN TAMIL NADU

(Continued from Page 5)

their eggs. These eggs may have patterns similar to those of the hosts even though not necessarily so. We know very little about these birds in South India. Birdwatching with a genuine interest in understanding Na-

ture's creation could provide many answers through dedicated study and observation, but more than the results, the joy they derive from it would be its own reward.

— (Courtesy: Blackbuck, A. Rajaram)

Flyovers

CONS

These flyovers are only a short-term solution

Future expansion difficult (like enlarging the width of the flyover)

Signals are not eliminated totally by these flyovers

Cycle tracks are not provided for in the flyovers

Northern parts of city sidelined, as most of the flyovers are in South Chennai

Political consideration is very much visible in selection of sites

The Corporation is notorious for not completing jobs on time

Roads should be improved (bereft of any potholes etc)

Bus bays are not planned

Inculcating road discipline is the need of the hour

PROS

Can cater to the city's traffic needs for a minimum of 15 years. Given the existing constraints (like land acquisition etc), this is the best option

Sufficient space left for expansion. Moreover link bridges (connecting perpendicular roads at intersections through link bridges) are possible at a future date

In all cases, cross merger is avoided and signals are there only to provide sideward alignment of vehicles

Wherever space is available, they would be earmarked

Flyovers in North Chennai are being taken up in the second phase, as building them entails more traffic diversions

Traffic data disproves the theory. At best, the difficult ones (in design and cost) are scheduled for a later stage.

This time, stiff penalties are proposed (on a daily basis) for any delay in the scheduled completion of the project.

Sufficient amounts are earmarked for them in the Action Plan

The Action Plan has taken care of possible sites for creating bus bays

Already talks are on with select corporates to assist in financing a massive education campaign on road usage, particularly for those who violate traffic rules.

Nagoor's Newtone in Claybrook

(Continued from last fortnight)

Nagoor was a man of drive and had made up his mind never to work for others again. He was determined to set up his own studio.

Nagoor had known the superstar M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar well in Karaikudi. Bhagavathar had many rich Nagarathar friends and he often visited the town to give classical Carnatic music concerts and spend some time with his friends. Besides he had a relation, Mamundi Achari, a successful goldsmith of Karaikudi. Bhagavathar (who befored to the community) was fond of jewellery and wore his diamond ear-studs, gold chains, cufflinks, shirt-buttons, bracelet and much else feating diamonds of gold! Nagoor came to know Bhagavathar through to Mamundi Achari and he designed jewellery for Bhagavathar. Impressed with Nagoor's book, Bhagavathar had told Nagoor to approach him any time he wanted an entry to the movies.

Nagoor discussed his studio project with Bannerjee and Dinshaw Therani. They were willing to go along with him. Nagoor next wrote to Bhagavathar then shooting in Calcutta, telling him about his studio project and invited him to join him. Bhagavathar asked Nagoor to meet him on his return.

● by Rantor Guy

Nagoor received him at Central Station and took the screen idol in a grand procession to his modest house in a narrow street in Chetput. Unmanageable crowds followed Bhagavathar, who was now more than ever impressed with Nagoor and his organisational talents and skills! He agreed to join the studio project and gave

Sound of music for Karnad

(By A Staff Reporter)

Garish Karnad, winner of this year's Jnanpith and Kalidas Samman Awards, candidly states he learnt his theatre with the Madras Players. And so it was in the fitness of things that the Madras Players congratulated him recently at the British Council with a special performance of selections from his plays.

At the cast party afterwards, they presented him with a memento that was not only unique but also thoughtful. It was a CD of the original music from the Madras Players' production of Garish Karnad's *Hayavadana*.

The sleeve note read:

"This 1972 recording is from the first English production of *Hayavadana* staged by The Madras Players at the Museum Theatre, Madras. Direction was by Lakshmi and Yamuna. The songs, beautifully integrated within the play, are in Kannada, with music composed by B.V. Karanth, and performed live by, among others, Smt. Anasuya Devi, Hyma Ramakrishna, Seetha Ratnakar, P.C. Ramakrishna & S. Ramachandrar. Concept for the melody (Track 5) as curtain music (over-ture) was by Mohan Narayanan with orchestration by Raja, a



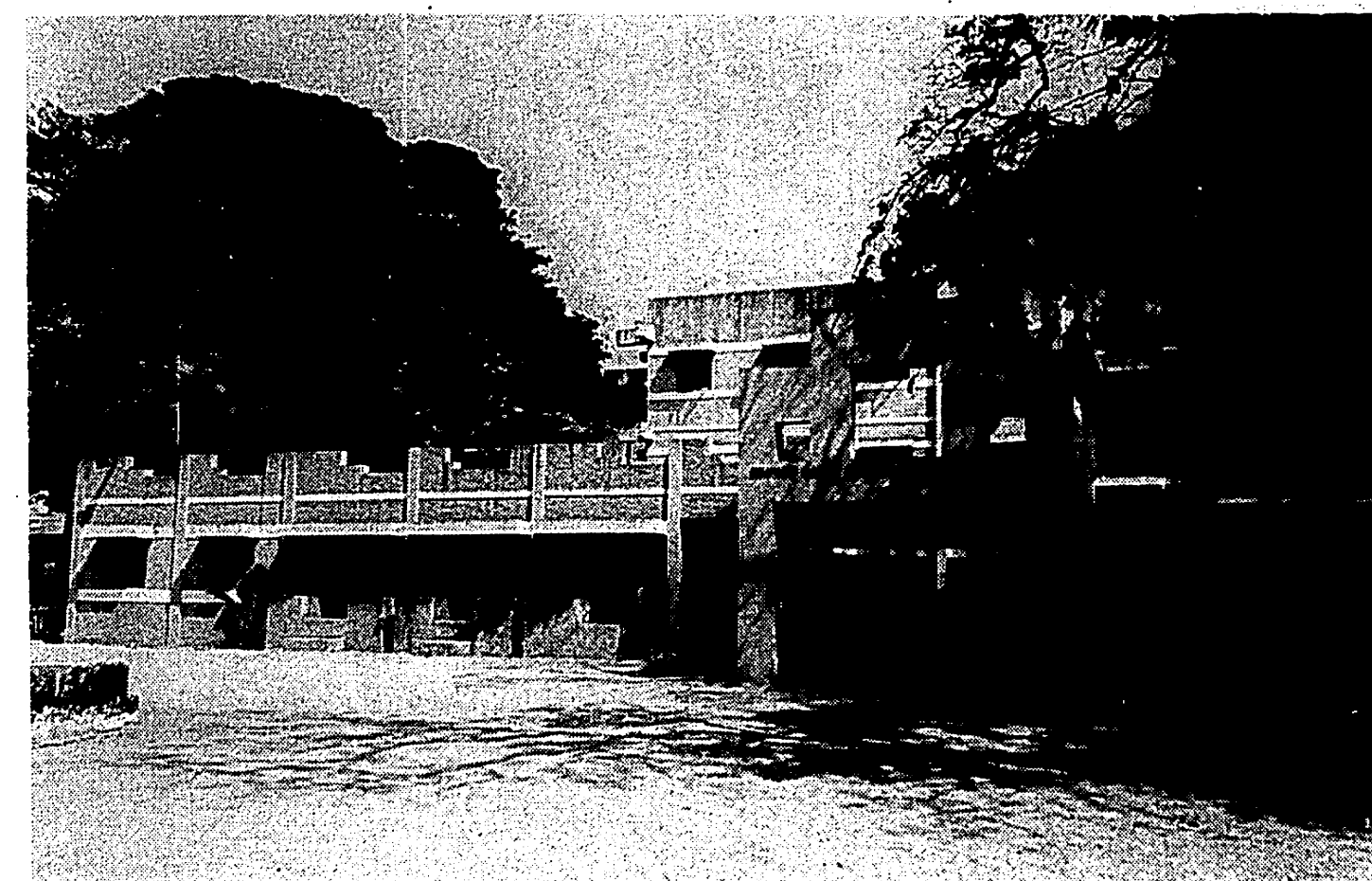
Garish Karnad

then struggling young musician, who later on as Ilayaraja has become a household name in film music.

Garish Karnad's association with The Madras Players dates back to the mid-'60s. He is the recipient of this year's Jnanpith and Kalidas Samman awards.

This CD release on 7th April 1999 is to mark the special performance of scenes from Garish Karnad's plays by The Madras Players (Theatre Club) at the British Council, Chennai.

The CD was done by Mohan Narayanan, who has done similar "rejuvenation" work, as he calls it, with the old 78 rpm shellac records of Musiri and Veena Dhanammal — invaluable archival material.



Rajaji Vidyashram where Claybrook once was.

Nagoor a long list of his rich friends in Chettinad who would invest in the venture. Nagoor visited Chettinad and, accompanied by Mamundi Achari, met naming of Bhagavathar's friends. Soon Nagoor found money coming his way fast and he promoted a limited company in Madras. Bhagavathar, Nagoor, Jiten Bannerjee, Dinshaw K. Tehrani, R. Ramanathan Chettair, a Nagarathar interested in film technology, and some other rich Chettiar became directors of the new company, with Ramanathan Chettiar as Managing Director.

Some of the directors wanted the studio to be named 'Cosmopolitan' after the famed

club on Mount Road! But Bhagavathar was not agreeable. "That is a place where rich men gather to have fun... Ours is a place of work and worship," he remarked. Jiten Bannerjee then suggested another name, 'Newtone', which he had seen in a British film technique magazine.

Thus, in 1937, was born Newtone Studio in Kilpauk at Claybrook. According to Nagoor there was a small and not so active studio named 'Ajanta' with a primitive film lab already there. An early Telugu film with a contemporary theme and story line (known as 'socials' in India), *Prema Vijayam* (1935) had been shot here.

Y.V. Rao's Tamil film *Swarnalatha* (1937) was the first film to be produced here. The studio became a great success and for many years it was the top studio in South India, with hundreds of films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Sinhala being shot in it. Demand for studio was so great that shooting was done at nights too. Many producers offered Nagoor, Bannerjee and Tehrani cash inducements to favour them, Nagoor told this writer when he was taping Nagoor to a National Film Archives of India Oral Film History project.

(Concluded)

The disappearance of the devadasi

(Continued from last fortnight)

N. Pattabhi Raman

The stigma attached to the *devadasi* profession and the pressures brought on by the movement to abolish the system were why there were few takers among the *dasis* for a career in dance after the leading dancers of the renaissance period retired or passed away. This was a period in which musicians as well, regardless of caste, had low social standing.

The *devadasis* and *nattuvanar*, classified as backward castes, began utilising opportunities for education and careers in other fields opened up to them.

B.M. Sundaram

The *nattuvanar* considered themselves superior in caste status. The *gurunukulam* tradition possibly helped to produce excellence, but could be exploited — and often was — by the *nattuvanar*. He would control and keep in line a talented and ambitious student by promoting another: it was he who re-

ceived requests to present dance performances and hence the dancer-student was under his thumb. The then prevailing formula for dividing the fees received for dance performances left him with the major share and the dancer actually was paid a pittance. The circumstances made dancing progressively unattractive to the *devadasis*.

Many women and men of the Isai Velala community entered the cinema field.

N. Pattabhi Raman

While numerous persons belonging to other communities (Brahmin and other) entered the arena of dance, they did not drive the *devadasis* from the field. With their deep-

rootedness in dance, talented *devadasis* could have, if they wished, continued to secure access and success, but mostly they decided to abandon the field.

The harking back to the *Natya Sashtra* that became fashionable mainly reflected the desire to emphasise the ancient roots of the dance, though in some cases it later took on aspects of self-aggrandisement. It did not, in any case, represent an attempt to 'brahminise' the dance that once was identified almost exclusively with the *devadasis*. (Courtesy: *Snati*.)

(To be concluded next fortnight)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Tamil Nadu's K. Sasikiran; 2. The Supreme Court; 3. Kourou in French Guyana; 4. Benazir Bhutto; 5. Punjab and Sind Bank, Jalandhar; 6. Dr. Jack Kervokian; 7. Sheikh Chinna Moulana; 8. The Khalsa; 9. Jose Maria Olazabal of Spain; 10. Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and Bishen Singh Bedi; 11. H.P. Nanda; 12. The Hindujas; 13. Anandpur Sahib in Punjab; 14. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai; 15. Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand.
16. The Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Centre at Kotturpuram; 17. (Mylapore); 18. Dr. I. Ravi Arumugam, IPS; 19. Byron Black of Zimbabwe; 20. Saidapet (by the Teacher's Training College).

Fifty years of fine cricket

One of the premier cricket teams of Chennai, Alwarpet Cricket Club, is this year celebrating its 50th year in the First Division of the TNCA league. At a well-attended function on the TNCA lawns recently, the Club honoured some of its stalwarts and brought together three generations of cricketers.

A fine gesture of the club was the honouring of golden oldies A G Ram Singh, M J Gopalan and P S Ramachandran. All three had figured in the inaugural Ranji Trophy match in 1934. All three had contributed to the club's cricket in the early days, by way of coaching and guidance; according to founder-secretary V A Parthasarathy — VAP to everyone — who has battled against odds to run the club in the face of increasing corporatisation of the game in the city and elsewhere. N Ram made some perceptive observations on the state of the game, while lauding the achievement of running a private club for more than half a century.

Touching tributes were paid to the enormous contribution made by the late R Ratnam of the TVS group to Alwarpet Cricket Club, in particular, and cricket in general. VAP also thanked R Dinesh of TVS Madurai for the support he extended to the team. He also announced that N Sankar was the new president of the club and its future sponsor. Others remembered were Prof. A E Subramaniam, and a number of former patrons, players and captains who are no longer with us — S Parthasarathi (Papa) of

The Hindu family, A G Kirpal Singh, N Balasubramaniam, G Ramanathan, A R Sridhar, S Nataraj and others who brought glory to the team.

The biggest applause of the evening was reserved for Satvinder Singh, who turned out for the club for more than two decades non-stop and P Mukund who led Alwarpet three years in a row to triumph in the TNCA league, winning the Palayampatti Shield.

As someone who played for Alwarpet for several seasons, it was an occasion for me to remember the sterling deeds of some of my team-mates. I was associated with Satvinder in two century or near-century partnership. On both occasions, my own contribution in terms

● by
V. Ramnarayan

of runs was small, while Satvinder played some unforgettable cricket. I also remembered my brother Sivaramakrishnan's outstanding batting displays and intelligent, if somewhat unlucky, captaincy, as I did Bharath Kumar's imaginative leadership which led us to triumph in The Hindu Trophy and the MCC Trophy. Srikanth's breathtaking 127 in an MCC Trophy match against State Bank of India was the conversation piece when some of us old timers exchanged notes. The elegance of left-handed P Ramesh, the all-round ability of Mukund and the consistency of left arm spinner S Vasudevan were recalled by many. So were the ex-

ploits of Old Reliables Manohar, Naidu Anjiah, Nedumaran, Harjinder Singh, our explosive wicket-keeper batsman Venkatasubramaniam, the wonderfully talented R Madhavan, the brilliant cricketing eccentric M O Parthasarathi. How happy we were to watch the progress of young L Sivaramakrishnan, W V Raman and M Venkataramana, Test players all, just as we were all thrilled beyond words when Srikanth played that power packed innings in the World Cup final in 1983.

The golden jubilee was made memorable by a limited overs tournament for over-40 players sponsored by HCL Limited. While the sponsor's team, full of sprightly young players well below 45, won the tournament, with some superlative cricket, it was the ancient among the over-40s who brought the tournament alive. V V Kumar showed that he could still land the ball on a perfect length six times out of six. 69-year old V Sridhar bowled his quota of six overs with the new ball in both the matches he played. He even made me run some quick singles and twos — at 51, that was a bit tough on me — and chased the ball enthusiastically all over the ground. He was given a standing ovation as he led Alwarpet Cricket Club off the field, after their loss to HCL in the semifinal. Bharath Reddy indulged in some lusty hitting but his team Chemplast lost to HCL in the final, which was played under lights at Chepauk.

If Alwarpet is one of the oldest clubs in the first division, several teams in the lower division



K. Narayanaswami Aiyer seen in 1961

A champion of yesteryear

It was time for the Gold Flake Tennis Tournament again.... and my thoughts went back to the many tennis stars Madras has produced: the Krishnans and the Amritrajs the most notable of them. Memory also went back to the tennis stalwarts of previous years, like T.B. Balagopal, T.K. Ramanathan, and C. Ramaswami. However, hardly anyone today mentions one of the earlier greats of Madras and South Indian tennis — K. Narayanaswami Aiyer. Obviously because only a few of us living today remember him and his enormous contribution to the game.

Born exactly 110 years ago (as I write, on April 2nd), Narayanaswami took to tennis at a very early age, and at a time when not too many Indians played the game. When just 15 years old and still in school, he won the prestigious Madras Christian College Tennis Prize in 1904 — a feat emulated only many years later by Ramanathan Krishnan when, as a schoolboy, he won the Loyola College Stanley Cup in

the early 1950s. In 1907, when only 18, Narayanaswami went on to win the South Indian Athletic Association's Lawn Tennis Tournament, beating a whole field of Englishmen. In those days, there were apparently no All-India Tennis tournaments, and hence the S.I.A.A. championship was the best that tennis players in the South could aspire for. For some years thereafter, 'Tennis' Narayanaswami (as he was called by his contemporaries) led the Madras Law College and took it to the top rings of intercollegiate tennis, including

a couple of inter-collegiate championships.

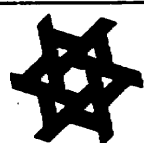
Narayanaswami played the game in a dhoti, and wore his hair in the traditional kudumi. Somewhat portly of build, he was not a fast mover. His forte, instead, was what was referred to in those days as the 'half-court game', where he stood in the middle of the court and controlled the game through deft volleys and half-volleys executed with great finesse.

Narayanaswami gave up serious competitive tennis soon after losing in the South Indian championships to T.B. Balagopal in 1927. The last recorded win he had was the Suguna Vilas Sabha's Handicap Singles Tournament in 1926 at the age of 37. He continued to play club tennis till the mid-40s, and it was a treat watching him, even in his declining years, for the elegance of his shots and their pinpoint accuracy. He passed away in 1966.

N. Gopalakrishnan

have survived the onslaught of professional cricket. Madras Aryans are celebrating their centenary and Mambalam Mosquitoes, recently promoted

to the Second Division, and Mylapore Recreation Club have been around for more than 50 years. More power to private clubs!



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