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MADRAS MESSAGES

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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● The Namakkal Kavignar Maaligai in Fort St. George when it was first built (above left) and with 'Chola' embellishments in the new Millennium (above right) to make it look more heritage-oriented. And on right is how a refurbished building is maintained.

The sad, sad state of Fort St. George

● by A Special Correspondent

The Government now in power is one that swears by the words, deeds and ideology of the late J. Jayalithaa, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. And she was of the view that Fort St. George was the rightful place from where our State was to be administered. If so, why is the Fort in such a shabby condition with no maintenance of any kind? A recent visit to that historic precinct shows that matters have only taken a turn for the worse in the last two years.

Of course, the Tamil Nadu Government is not the sole occupant/owner of the place. As is well known, the Archaeological Survey, the Army, the Navy, the Legislature and St. Mary's Church are all in occupation of the Fort, apart from the Government. But the last named can surely set an example and also take the initiative in maintenance. That it is not doing so is more than evident from the general shabbiness that prevails. How else can you explain this eight-foot ramp of rubbish that has been built up at the rear of the *Namakkal Kavignar Maligai* (please see accompanying picture)? With such a tower of inflammable material being allowed to accumulate, are we not laying the whole Fort open to a fire disaster? Let's face it, if such an event were to occur, God forbid, it would not be the first heritage precinct to catch fire in our city, owing to neglect.

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State not in Top Three on any parameter

Periodic independent surveys, such as the one published by India Today at the end of last year throw some light on the comparative performances of States – and of interest to us, Tamil Nadu – on the social and economic fronts, but caution is necessary in reading too much into them.

The study covers eleven criteria for ranking States and comparing improvements from 2010-11 to 2015-16. The parameters are: Education, Entrepreneurship, Environment, Inclusive Development, Infrastructure, Law & Order, Tourism, Agriculture, Governance, Economy and Health.

The study divides States broadly as large and small, the latter comprising ten states like Puducherry, Delhi, Goa, Mizoram, and Nagaland. Among the "large" states are the relatively smaller ones in terms of population and territorial expanse, like Kerala and Uttarakhand. This distinction emerges from the fact that such relatively smaller states in the "large" category have cornered

all the first ranks for ten parameters. These States are Himachal, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Telangana. It is interesting to speculate whether compactness has been a critical contributory fac-

tor for ensuring higher governance standards and more effective implementation through greater physical proximity enhancing accountability. Large states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka that account for 46 per cent of the national GDP have not done well in comparison with the relatively smaller of the "large" category.

Out of eleven parameters and 21 competing "large" states, Tamil Nadu has figured in the top half in respect of seven parameters, but has not been able to capture either the first rank or one of the first three

ranks on even one of the parameters. It is not a good sign that it has fallen into the bottom half in respect of education, governance and economy. It is within five ranks only in respect of Infrastructure, Law & Order, and Health.

● by A Staff Reporter

It is surprising that Education has been cited as an aspect in which Tamil Nadu, in this study, has scored a rank as low as 14 out of 21. Earlier studies have shown that the literacy rate in the State is 73.4 per cent in 2011 compared to the national average of 64.6 per cent. Improvement has been recorded on teacher-pupil ratio from one teacher per 28 pupils in 2010-11 to one per 19 in 2012-13, compared to the national ratio of one per 25 pupils. The drop-out rate is low at 1.20 per cent in the primary level and 1.74 per cent at the upper primary level. Tamil Nadu is

known for several original initiatives to motivate completion of school education through free provision of text books, uniform, laptop computers, footwear, bus passes and nutritious noon meals. Education has been receiving steadily increasing funds in the Budget, the share of total expenditure remaining constant at 15 per cent of a rising revenue. While these are material aspects of the system, actual results produced by it, in terms of improvement in mental skills and communication ability, are not in keeping with the efforts put in. The "output" by the Government cannot be faulted, but the "outcome" is disappointing – the two terms representing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of effort. The study's criteria also refer only to quantitative aspects that we have enumerated to show why Tamil Nadu's physical output cannot be considered inadequate. If other States produced more employable pupils than Tamil Nadu it is worth knowing how

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The sad state of the Fort

(Continued from page 1)

But do we want that to happen in the centre of administration of our Government?

If that is the fate of what is under the control of our Executive and the Legislature, what is with the Archaeological Survey is no better. *Clive's Corner*, inaugurated with much fanfare a few years ago, is now mostly locked and when opened reveals a musty room full of peeling plaster.

The last house on Snob's Alley lost some chunks of itself in the rains of last year and the rest remains supported on steel rods. The space to the south of Snob's Alley, from where the casual visitor could walk across to the front ramparts of the Fort, now looks like an equatorial forest, so overgrown it is with vegetation. This was a clean and empty space just a year ago. *Wellesley House* remains a mouldering ruin and it was with some surprise that this correspondent noticed that the Army has begun some construction activity on the debris of the building itself! It is also somewhat of a wonder that the standing half of *Wellesley House*

is still being used as an office! To what purpose is the ASI's sparkling maintenance of its office (*Clive House*) when the rest of what it is supposed to protect is run down so badly?

The Army for its part appears to have redeemed itself somewhat in comparison to the agencies mentioned above. Of course, its *King's Barracks* is as bad as ever but the rest of the buildings that it occupies are very clean and well maintained. The Army has also barricaded the roads surrounding Parade Square to prevent access by Government cars. This has freed up the walking space around the area to an extent. There are also signs of some repair work beginning in a few of the large buildings occupied by the Army. It is to be hoped that these are being taken up in collaboration with the ASI.

Taken overall, the Fort is not in good shape. It is ironic that the present party in power was the one that was keen to get UNESCO certification for the Fort as a heritage precinct. What is happening there now is not likely to ever get us that recognition.

NOT IN TOP THREE ON ANY PARAMETER

(Continued from page 1)

they accomplished it. No information on this is available in the study as published.

In respect of the Economy, the tendency to go overboard on freebies to the neglect of investment in creation of infrastructure and improvement of productive assets could have adversely affected the ranking. Greater attention to infrastructure and social assets would have raised the economy's capacity to generate income streams.

The record of Tamil Nadu on governance, according to this study, is dismally low, at rank 18 out of 21. While we can subjectively experience the falling standards of governance in Tamil Nadu, it is difficult to believe that that it could be as low as depicted – in the bottom, just above Bihar and losing out to Assam and Uttar Pradesh by several ranks. Percentage of women representatives in panchayats, panchayat devolution index, number of e-services for citizens as percentage of total population, number of operational Common Services Centres as percentage of total CSCs and number of e-transactions per 1,000 people are the yardsticks used in the study to

measure governance. Specific comparative data on these have not been furnished.

Apart from lack of specific criteria-wise comparative data, reading too much significance into temporal comparisons and rankings could itself be misleading. Comparison of rankings of each State over an interval has been used to measure the extent of improvement. The limitation is that rise in ranking from the base year does not necessarily imply improvement nor the significance of the extent of that improvement because a given State's ranking changes depending on how other States have fared during the same period. If other States have not done well, for example, a given State's rank could rise without its basic status registering improvement. The substantive score for each criterion for each State alone can show where it has improved or deteriorated and place inter-State comparison in correct perspective.

Occasional publication of studies is no substitute for authentic periodic self-audit surveys by reputed rating agencies, commissioned by the Government, to evaluate progress and beneficial effects of development projects.

In which MMM ages

There comes a time when age suddenly catches up with all of us. And so it has with *The Man from Madras Musings*, who until recently was of the view that he was a young man on the threshold of life. That he was not so came home to him rather brutally, when he, in answer to an invitation, went to inaugurate a literary club at a medical college in the city.

The teachers were effusive in their welcome and several came up and said that they read everything that MMM wrote. He fervently hopes that they will give this particular instalment a miss, by the way. But then they may not and that is one of the risks in writing this column. It may, however, still be a blessing, for chances

Club rolling off their chairs, left his hearers stone cold. It soon sank into MMM that the group had never heard of Austen. He then changed tacks and began mentioning other authors in quick succession – Charlotte Bronte, George Elliot, Charles Dickens, P.G. Wodehouse, Agatha Christie & no, there was not a reaction. What about J.K. Rowling? Though MMM cannot claim to be a fan, she being a top-ranking author of the present generation, he thought she would strike a chord. But no. In desperation MMM turned to the Bard of Avon and asked the students if they had heard of Shakespeare. There was deathly silence. MMM then decided to speak on libraries he had grown up with the British Council, the

dents. It is a task for younger people.

The Chief's book

And so the Chief comes out with yet another book this one on Indian English. *The Man from Madras Musings* is yet to get his copy but he speculates if the following terms will be in it:

Cannot able to – this is a relatively recent addition to English and has not yet made it to the Thesaurus and the Oxford English Dictionary which have over the years absorbed most ungrammatical usage as being perfectly all right. *Cannot able to* is a replacement for *cannot do* or *unable to handle something*.

Blunder Mistake – this

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

are that they may not invite MMM again in case they take umbrage at what follows. That, as Shakespeare said, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. However, let us get on with the story.

MMM was ushered in by beaming office-bearers, teachers and others to a hall full of students, all of whom dutifully clapped. Thereafter, MMM was taken to the stage where, after an introduction full of the usual howlers about him, MMM was asked to speak. This being a club to promote literary tastes in English among the students, MMM had prepared a speech concerning authors whose books he had enjoyed. He could have saved himself the effort and spoken about some lesser-known authors in Swahili, for instance, such being the connect he established with the audience.

There was a certain dull despair about the students that ought to have warned MMM at the very outset. It was clear that they had all been brought together for the sole purpose of satisfying some teacher(s) who had felt that the students needed to improve their English. If only they had told MMM this in advance, he would have thrown in a passage or two on the alphabet and sung a nursery rhyme as well.

Not being so enlightened, MMM embarked on his topic. Around five minutes into the subject, he realised that he was making no impact. Jokes about Jane Austen, for instance, that had had audiences in places such as the Book

Connemara, the National in Calcutta, the Roja Muthiah & no, once again a complete disconnect. It then occurred to MMM that he would have been better off reciting the names of a few shopping malls in the city.

MMM then changed tack and began speaking about Tamil literature. This he thought might ring a bell somewhere in minds clouded by cell phone ringtones. The teachers drew in their collective breath. After all this was a club to promote English literature. Why then was MMM spewing forth on the vernacular? They could have exhale freely, for the students were as unresponsive as ever. MMM speculated on whether he ought to take up Bengali next, but then decided to give up. But to be fair to the boys and girls, some did clap at the mention of Tamil and the necessity for knowing it well.

It was only when MMM sat down that he was received with thunderous applause. This he realised was more by way of thanksgiving for ending the speech quickly, ten minutes ahead of closing time. The vote of thanks was effusive and the teacher who recited it said she looked forward to MMM coming again soon to speak on other aspects of literature. Deciding it was time to shake the dust of the place from his feet, MMM picked up the bouquet of flowers and the fruit hamper and left.

Returning home, MMM decided to look on the positive aspect at least they did not gift him a coffee mug. MMM however has decided he is done with addressing college stu-

means a grievous error, to be distinguished from a smaller error, which of course is a mistake.

Untime – improper time for doing something like knocking on someone's door at midnight (unless the other party was lying awake and waiting). It is also synonymous with inauspicious.

Vex, torture and tension – three perfectly good words of impeccable pedigree. But they have become household terms thanks to their frequent usage in television serials. MMM understands that the accepted frequency of these words in a half hour episode is one every two minutes.

Creech – an Indian crèche

He/She itself – in keeping with ancient Indian wisdom that defines the soul as being inert and genderless, it has become the norm to qualify every person thus. Common usage is *He itself* said this.

Hope so – this is used as a phrase that is synonymous with *think*. It is therefore common to hear sentences such as *He was in bad health. I hope so he is dead*.

Co-Brother – this defines the brother-in-law. Some have however opined that *cobra* may be a better and more telling term. We also have *co-sister*.

Editor's Note: The Chief says he has left four blank pages at the end for such additions to be included. In fact, a phrase he has just realised needs to be in the next edition is *one by two*.

–MMM

• *Remembering the beginnings as*

IE Celebrates its Golden Jubilee

After a couple of years of working as an academic, teaching undergraduate students and studying for another post-graduate degree in political science, I opted for journalism as my profession, appointed myself editor and publisher and launched the transport monthly *Mobile*.

It was a clean slate: I didn't have any knowledge or experience in writing, editing, proof reading, printing, pagination or book production. I spent six months visiting the other metros, trying to study the transport industry. I launched *Mobile* in September 1962. Through the years I learnt the various facets of journalism as also the business of printing and book production.

The experience helped me witness and experience the spectacular changes in printing. I started with the basics by acquiring a letterpress printing press with a few fonts of typefaces and a treadle machine in 1965. Edit matter was composed by hand, using lead types of different fonts and sizes. These were made into pages and printed, two pages at a time, by the treadle – reminiscent of the early stages of Gutenberg's great invention.

When I launched *Industrial Economist* as a business fortnightly in 1968, it demanded much larger volume of type setting to be done every fortnight. I opted to get this done with an established printer who had mechanical composing facilities in the scope of a couple of linotype machines. In this, bars of lead were melted, cast on brass matrices arranged in lines, as slugs. These linotype machines were mechanical marvels for typesetting in quick time, to cast afresh lines easy to handle as slugs. The process lent for easy make-up of pages which were locked into forms and printed in large-sized printing machines. This technology ruled typesetting in newspapers spread across the globe for over a century. Such machines initially were the preserve of a few large manufacturers in the West and were later copied by the Russian and other nations.

In my evolution as a printer I yearned to acquire such a machine. This was available on rupee terms with hire purchase facility offered by NSIC, SFCs and banks. Simultaneously I also applied for import of a

sophisticated printing machine from Polygraph, East Germany, again on rupee terms. These were my first major experiences in importing machines.

It took around three years from 1971 to 1974 to process the import of the printing machine. It was not certain that the machine would be delivered on time and so I went in for an Indian made cylinder printing machine and an old linotype machine. The German machine also arrived. With a term loan from a nationalised bank, I purchased it and commenced operating this. It was a beautiful, high speed machine with excellent quality of printing.

My application for a linotype machine with two magazines and a cutting machine from Russia placed on a Delhi firm, took more than three years to process. Finally on receiving the



● by
S. Viswanathan

arrival notice, I arranged to pay the full value of the machines through a term loan from NSIC and my own contribution and remitted the same to the dealer. For the next several weeks I didn't hear anything from the dealer except acknowledging receipt of the demand draft (thank God!). I dropped in at the dealer's office during my visit to Delhi to attend the annual economic editors' conference organised by the Press Information Bureau.

The dealer very casually informed me that 'my' machine had been delivered to Times of India and that I would have to wait for a few more months for the arrival of the next consignment!

I took up the matter with NSIC but to no avail. I met the Minister of State for Industry, Charanjit Chanana. He was kind in arranging to send a stern warning through the industry ministry. The dealer wouldn't have expected this and hastily offered to supply a four magazine machine that was readily available, at a higher price. I had to sacrifice the cutting machine earlier ordered and opted to buy this higher capacity

machine and paid the difference.

The dealer promised to send this to Chennai in the next couple of weeks. He sent the consignment note on despatching the machine by train. The blessed thing would not reach me for the next eight months. After a long battle with the railways, I managed to locate the wagon stuck at Jabalpur! Finally the machine was delivered in early 1975 – a full ten months after despatch!

Repayments on term loans had already begun with interest statements promptly provided by both NSIC and the bank. So even before the machine commenced operation, loan amounts were bulging.

In early 1975, I organised the formal launch of the linotype machine with sugar baron N. Mahalingam as the chief guest. Economist Press was perhaps the sixth in the metro having such a sophisticated high speed mechanical typesetting facility. I was on cloud nine. The additional investments on other accessories like imported brass matrices from Italy, going for a larger space and larger number of workmen and scouting for orders for printing were all attended to.

A foreman of the press had great taste for the date fruit. He used to stuff his lunch box with cast slugs and sold the precious lead for his favourite dates until one late night, on a surprise visit, I caught him red (lead-) handed and handed him to the police.

Then came the bolt from the blue. A technology revolution swept across the globe: photo typesetting was introduced. This rendered overnight the centuries' old hot metal composing obsolete. I remember The Hindu, which had some 35 linotype machines switching to computerised typesetting and auctioning these old mechanical wonders at throw away prices. A machine that commanded a premium of a lakh of ruples (on a price of Rs. 1.25 lakhs) lost its value overnight and there were no takers! I decided to phase out the printing machine. These included another old linotype machine I purchased due to the delay and uncertainty of the imported one, the Polygraph and Indian machines, treadle. If I took four years to order and set up my

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From India's Digital Archives

– Karthik Bhatt

A look at the Presidency in Gujarati

The book featured in this issue is one of its kind, an overview of the Madras Presidency written in Gujarati.

The Gujaratis were amongst the earliest migrant communities to arrive in the Madras Presidency, their association dating to at least the mid-1500s. Over the course of this period, they have actively contributed to the development of the social, commercial and cultural landscape of the region.

The *Malabar Samachar* weekly, founded in 1925, was the first Gujarati magazine in the Madras Presidency. It was edited and published by Madhavrai Gigabhai Joshi, a businessman who settled in Cochin after retiring from a successful venture in Rangoon. There is no information either on him or as to the trade he was engaged in. Madhavrai took a keen interest in Gujarati literature and wrote a series of articles suggesting several schemes for its promotion, especially for the benefit of Gujaratis living outside Gujarat. He also wrote to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (Gujarati Literary Council) requesting that the schemes be discussed and considered for implementation. However, nothing concrete was to come out of it. But he remained undeterred by the poor response.

One important scheme proposed was to fix a centre annually from among the commercial centres of the country and to commission a work on that region covering in particular its mineral wealth and the consequential potential for growth. Madhavrai took it upon himself to present the first work, *Malabar Pradesh-nu Ruparekha* (An outline of the Malabar Territory), which came out as the first annual number to the subscribers of the *Malabar Samachar*.

The suggestion for a similar book on the Madras Presidency was given by B.G. Anjaria of M/s P.D. Asher and Co. of Tiruppur, well-known cloth merchants. Initially not so keen on the proposal, as he wanted to write a second edition of the book on Malabar, Madhavrai writes that he agreed as he saw the need to win the support of the different sections of Gujaratis who had settled in other parts of the Madras Presidency for business purposes. Thus was born *Madras Ilakanu Digdarshan*.

The book comprises an overview of the Geographical and Trade aspects of the Madras Presidency. The trade section is particularly interesting, given the varied businesses the community had a presence in. In addition to a list of factories, tea and coffee estates, this section contains short sketches of successful Gujarati businessmen of the Presidency. Some well-known names covered in the sketches include that of Gocooladoss Jumnadoss and Co. (cloth merchants, the family behind the creation of the Vallabhacharya Vidya Sabha which manages institutions such as the D. G. Vaishnav College), T. B. Mehta and Sons (diamond merchants), Lalubhai Velchand Desai (one of the earliest Gujarati cycle merchants and after whom a school is named in Bangalore), M/s Surajmals (jewellers) and Khan Bahadur Adam Hajee Mohammad Sait. Also of note is the involvement of the community in charities established and managed by them, such as the Madras Pinjrapole (established 1905) and the South Indian Humanitarian League (1926).

The book, which came out in 1928, was printed in Bhavnagar, at the Gujarati Punch's printing press. It was clearly intended to be the first in a series, as Madhavrai says that thanks to the large volume of material gathered during his research, he had to restrict the book to the above two aspects. There is, however, no information as to whether subsequent volumes saw the light of the day.

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

— SRIRAM V

Erstwhile home now hosts social service

The signage in Tamil on the yellow-coloured concrete block reads *Geraldu Gardens*, while the English one below says Jaret. The correct name is *Jarretts Gardens*. Now reduced to two streets, 1st and 2nd Avenue, with the Guild of Service and the Madras School of Social Work in the middle, this was once the vast garden of a bungalow of that name. And it has a long and interesting history.

The first occupant of this property, at a time when it ran all the way from Casa Major Road, Egmore, to the Coom river behind, was Thomas Jarrett, who according to HD

Loves *Vestiges of Old Madras*, was a civil servant who moved to Madras in 1805 from Bencoolen in Java. He left for England in 1822, where he died in 1837.

Other documents show that Jarrett had several facets to his personality. He was Secretary of the Madras Committee of the Church Mission Society and in that capacity did much to propagate Christianity in this region. He interested himself in particular in the Jewish community in India and became more or less a local representative of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among Jews. He translated St Mathews Gospel into Hebrew and published it at his own cost. Copies were distributed among the Jews of the Malabar region. A publication dating to 1807 also has it that he translated the Gospel into western Malay as well, under the auspices of the College of Fort William, Bengal.

After his time, the property became the residence of Dr. S. M. Stephenson, Superintending Surgeon, Government of Madras. He died at sea in 1834.

By the late 1800s/early 1900s, the whole property had become one of the 99 garden bungalows in the city to be owned by that contractor and builder, Thatikonda Namberumal Chetty. He appears to have lived here briefly before moving on to Crynant in the Chetpet area. It is not clear if it was during his ownership or earlier that Edgar Thurston, of *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* and Government Museum fame, began the Madras Fine Arts Society here. In the late 1800s, exhibitions of paintings under the auspices of that body at *Jarretts Gardens* were a regular feature and one among those whose works were displayed was Raja Ravi Varma. He was also invariably a prize-winner and by the early 1900s had taken a decision not to compete, being happy to just display his works here.

The next illustrious resident of this property was Sir Robert Bailey Clegg. Born in 1865, he had, after graduating from Oxford, qualified for the Indian Civil Service and been posted to Madras. He rose to become First Member, Board of Revenue, and was also Member of the Madras Legislative Council, retiring in 1917. Love writes that the house

in *Jarretts Gardens* was demolished recently, which probably means 1913. However, this does not tally with the fact that Sir Robert Bailey Clegg was in residence till 1918. What is likely is that Namberumal Chetty had brought down the old house and developed a new one on the same site and Sir Robert was a tenant.

Whatever be the case, the property, or at least a significant part of it, was owned by Namberumal Chetty and his family for quite a while, right up to the 1960s. That was when the Guild of Service and its offshoot, the Madras School of Social Work were both hunting for premises of their own. They had till then got along quite well on grace and favour spaces, the Guild being housed at *Philroy*, the residence of its Secretary, Mary Clubwala-Jadhav, in Nungambakkam, and the School, begun in 1952, operating from a small cottage on the premises of the Madras Seva Sadan of Lady Andal Venkatasubba Rao. It is perhaps no coincidence



that both institutions zeroed in on *Jarretts Gardens*, for Namberumal Chetty's grandson, T. Harikrishna, was Treasurer to the Guild. The School, being in urgent need of space, moved in as a tenant into one of the two buildings, even in the 1950s.

Negotiations for purchase began in 1962 and by the end of the year, a price of Rs. 2,75,000 was finalised for 62 grounds (a ground being 2,400 sq ft) of land, together with two old buildings on it. Rs. 75,000 was paid upfront by the Guild and a loan was availed of from the Egmore Benefit Society for the rest. On April 21, 1967, the foundation stone for the new buildings of the Guild was laid by S. R. Venkataraman, the organisations long-term Vice-Chairman. Work then progressed slowly, the Guild being chronically short of funds.

In 1968, the School took over a part of the dues to the Egmore Benefit Society and became an independent owner of part of the

property. It eventually put up its premises there. The Guild continued operating from Mrs. Clubwala-Jadhavs residence even as work on its new premises happened sporadically. But with the golden jubilee of the Guild happening in 1972, there was a spurt in activity. Fund-raising events were held and, through them, money was realised to complete the new buildings in time. These comprised, among other buildings, a meeting hall that was named after a past member Mrs. C. T. Alwar Chetty, wife of one of the scions of the V. Perumal Chetty clan.

The Guild took its time moving in, doing so only in 1975, after Mary Clubwala-Jadhav had passed away. It has since remained there, as has the Madras School of Social Work. Jarrett, the good Christian, would have approved of the fact that his erstwhile home is now a site for social service.

1813 medi-catalogue from Madras

At a time when no *materia medica* – presented as an extensive pharmaceutical resource developed on the principles of Western science – existed in southern India, *Materia Medica of Hindoostan and Artisan's and Agriculturist's Nomenclature* was written by a Madras surgeon, Whitelaw Ainslie, and published in Madras in 1813. An enlarged edition of the same book titled *Materia Medica, or Some Account of those Articles which are Employed by the Hindoos and other Eastern Nations in their Medicine, Arts, and Agriculture; Comprising also Formulae, with Practical Observations, names of Diseases in Various Eastern Languages, and a Copious List of Oriental Books Immediately Connected with General Science, &c.* &c was published by Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green in London as two volumes in 1826.

Ainslie was born in Berwickshire (UK) in 1767. He joined the Madras Medical Establishment after qualifying as a Doctor of Medicine in Scotland. Initially posted as an assistant surgeon in Chingleput, he later worked in Trichinopoly as a superintending surgeon. In 1810, he catalogued the vegetables of India, planning to develop that catalogue as a

medical treatise, which aimed at establishing a relationship among food patterns of Indians, climate, and the diseases that prevailed in India. He submitted this catalogue to the Council at Fort St. George.

He was appointed as the Superintending Surgeon of the Southern Army in Madras in 1814. He resigned the job in 1815 and returned to the UK, where he revised his 1813 *Materia Medica* volume, wrote on cholera in India, a literary piece (*Clemenza or the Tuscan Orphan*, 1822), and another on the introduction of Christianity in India (1835). He was knighted in 1839 in recognition of his revised edition of *Materia Medica of India*. He died in the UK in 1837.

In his catalogue, Ainslie remarks that some of the pulses and grains listed by him would thrive in sheltered situations in southern England, and recommended that experiments should be carried out (i.e. in UK) to grow them. The catalogue includes details under (1) corns and small grains, (2) garden stuffs, (3) large beans and small pulses (many of which have no English names), (4) roots, (5) fruits and nuts, (6) greens and teas, and (7) hot seeds, spices, seasoning agents, and oils. Each

section provides the product's native name, English name, botanical name (wherever known), and general remarks on, for example, value as food material or as material of medical use, and on cultivation.

Ainslie led a committee appointed by the Government of Madras to investigate the causes of the epidemic fever affecting the populations of Coimbatore, Madura, Dindigul, and Tinnevely in the Madras Presidency. The report of this committee refers to malaria, which had been ravaging India for ages. Unknown as 'malaria' during the investigation time of the Ainslie Committee, the illness is referred to as 'epidemic fever' and was treated symptomatically.

The number of deaths in India due to malaria in the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s is estimated at a little more than a million a year. In India alone, around the 1850s, the British Government was using nine tons of quinine annually. The point to be noted here is that Clements Markham brought Cinchona saplings from Peru to India only in 1869 and these saplings were subsequently established in the Government Botanical Garden in the Nilgiris.

Although the chemistry of Cinchona bark was characterised only in the 1820s, the impor-

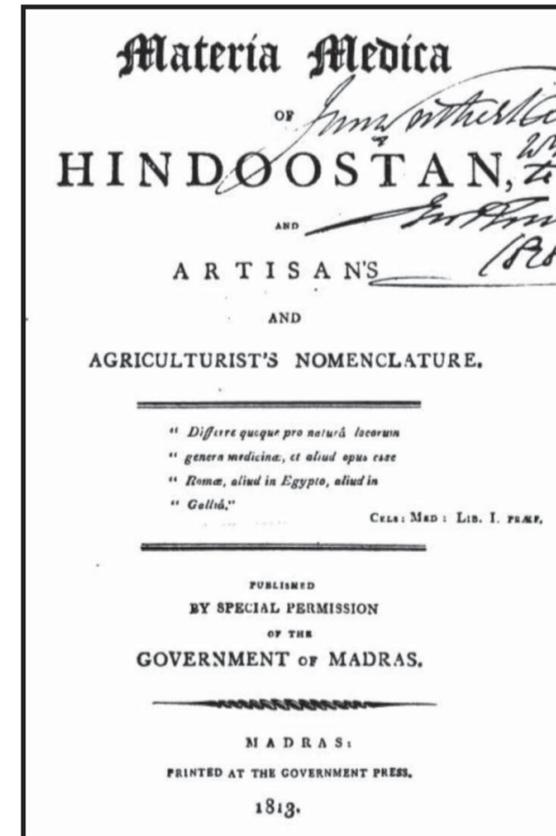
tant, or are brought to it from Asiatic countries, and are to be met with in the Bazars of populous towns; including many Drugs of the Tamool, Arabian, and Persian *Materia Medica*; as also the names given by the Natives to different articles of diet, and other things for the comfort of sick; and the appellations be-

of the Royal Danish Lutheran Mission (also known as the Tranquebar Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Halle). Rottler will be remembered in 18-19th Century Madras for his contributions to the botany of southern India.

Ainslie's volume has an English index, a Tamil index and a Latin index. The first index includes English equivalents wherever available, such as 'spurge' for a member of Euphorbiaceae, 'gingelly oil' for sesame oil (extracted from the seeds of *Sesamum indicum*, Pedaliaceae), and sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*, Convolvulaceae). This index also includes Tamil names of materials referred to in this text, which have been transliterated in Roman script with appropriate diacritical marks to relay the correct diction. The pages captioned the Latin index include biological names as known then.

Section I (Part I of the book) refers to chemical and biological materials that have been referred to in the British *Materia Medica*, but found in Asian countries and used by the Indian (medical) practitioners. It starts with a short description of sulphuric acid (referred as 'Acid, Vitriolic') with its Indian vernacular names mentioned either in transliterated Roman letters or in Tamil letters and its Latin name *Acidum Sulphuricum*. Details of its local production are explained: "by burning 'some' (no

(Continued on page 6)



Wordless
Gopulu



• The late Gopulu during his *Ananda Vikatan* days had a series of wordless jokes that brought about loud laughter. These were brought out as a book, in 2005, and a copy was recently sent to me by Charukesi. We are pleased to publish these cartoons for a new generation of Madrasis.

— THE EDITOR



The high-flying geese visit Madras

How many peaks must a goose fly above
Before it can earn its stripes?
Now, how many days must a goose fly strong
Before it reaches its home?

Yes, how many blizzards must it face
Before it can see the Sun?
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.....

(UTTARA MEDIRATTA & M.O. ANAND WITH PARTIAL CREDIT TO BOB DYLAN)

Yes, the Bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*) is that iconic goose that flies at a world record height of 21,120 feet (6,437m) inter-continently, across the Himalayas, from its breeding ground in the Central Asian countries to reach India, its feeding home, from October to March.

Bar-headed geese, known for their high altitude flights, inge-

niously employ aerodynamic techniques. At higher altitudes, the density of air and, hence, its pressure and temperature, go down, particularly the oxygen-content to hypoxic conditions, posing great problems for flight. But the most adaptive are the dense blood capillaries of the lung and heart and its RBCs with rich haemoglobin, highly absorptive to scant oxygen. On inter-

continental migration, they fly as flocks in inverted 'V'-shaped formations, constantly communicating by honking. Their choice to fly at night, particularly early in the morning, flying up and down as a flock in waves, not at the top of the mountains, but in their shelter with low wind streams, are all highly adaptive. It is a bird not often seen in or

around Chennai. At the end of last year, Chennai naturalists watched six of them flying low on the link road between Kelambakkam and Kovalam, close to Mahabalipuram. In February, just two of them were noticed at the small irrigation tank in the Keelnathur village, in Tiruvannamalai District. But in December 2000, 58 of these geese were recorded foraging in grain fields on Venadu Island, in the Pulicat Lake. However, its feeding grounds in India are grasslands and grainfields adjacent to lakes all over the country. They are more visible in the extreme south, where you can sight them in Koodankulam and Nanguneri in Tirunelveli District, Point Calimere, and Trichy and Ramnad Districts.

This goose is a little larger than our domestic duck and is white or grey-streaked. The chief identifying marks are the two black bars across its nape and broad stripes along the neck.



Bar-headed goose. (Picture courtesy: MNS-Ramanan Padmanabhan.)

During May and June, they breed in large colonies in the high ranges of the mountains in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and also in Ladakh. Three to six, occasionally even eight eggs, are laid in flat nests on the ground or on trees.

In May-June, 2005, a wild migrant population of Bar-headed geese in the Qinghai Lake in China, was noticed to be perishing in large numbers. On investigation, they were found to be infected by a virulent strain of the H5N1 virus, the causative agent for the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), that can

• by Dr. A. Raman
araman@csu.edu.au

tance of Cinchona bark in treating this deadly fever was known throughout the world in the later decades of the 18th Century. Obviously Cinchona bark was imported into India during Ainslie's time in Madras. (Note: William Roxburgh, while stationed at Samulkottah Botanical Garden, found the bark of *Swietenia febrifuga* (Meliaceae) a potent substitute for Cinchona and, thus, a saving on the country's exchequer.) Ainslie's report frequently refers to using Cinchona bark in the treatment of the epidemic fever.

The 1813 edition of *Materia Medica* (about a quarter of the revised edition) printed at the Government Press, Madras, in 1813 outlined the purpose of the book:

"A catalogue, and an account, of such Medicines of the British *Materia Medica*, as are either the produce of Hindoos-

stowed on those materials which are employed in arts and manufactures: to which added, in the Tamool, Telingoo, Dukhanie, English, and Latin Languages, another and numerous Catalogue of the various productions of the Vegetable kingdom, which as used as food by the inhabitants of these provinces; and concluding with an Appendix, in which are contained the titles of Diseases in Tamool, Dukhanie, Telingoo, and English; together with a list of Malabar, Persian, Arabic, and Sanscrit medical work; a table of Doses and Weights, with the various forms of Prescriptions, &c. in use amongst the Indians."

Ainslie dedicated this work to Johann Peter Rottler for his help in determining plants of India. Rottler (1749-1836), an Alsatian Lutheran Mission preacher and medical doctor, came to India following Johann Gerhard König



(Quizmaster V.V. Ramanan's questions are from February 1 to 15. Questions 11 to 20 relate to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Name the Jnanpith recipient and Kannada litterateur who has been elected President of the Sahitya Akademi?
2. According to a recent report by New World Wealth, which Indian city with a total wealth of \$950 billion is the 12th richest city globally?
3. Name the most powerful rocket in use today that lifted off on February 6 with a Tesla Roadster as its payload.
4. Which once-in-12-years religious ceremony was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind on February 9?
5. What in the world of business is CriSidEx that was launched on Feb. 3 by the Finance Minister?
6. Of the two defence industrial production corridors mentioned in the Union Budget 2018, the first will link which two major south Indian cities?
7. India won which World title for the fourth time on Feb. 3 at Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui, in New Zealand?
8. Name the new book written by Prime Minister Modi to inspire youth and help them face difficult situations like examinations with fresh and new energy.
9. Which tech giant has launched a public initiative "#SecurityCheckKiya" to create awareness around Internet safety and to protect young and first-time web users from account hijacking?
10. Which CEO of a global major has been appointed as the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board's first independent female director?

* * *

11. What famous eatery used to be located at the spot where the TTDC headquarters on Wallajah Road now stands?
12. The Tamil name of which natural feature near Chennai translates to 'forest of the rooted fruit'?
13. What were the terminal points of the east-west line of the Madras Tramways that was functional till 1953?
14. Which mosque in Triplicane was constructed by Anwaruddin Muhammed Khan, Nawab of the Carnatic in the 18th century?
15. Which famous club's second home was at Branson Bagh opposite the Church Park School?
16. What do the initials DG stand for in the name of the DG Vaishnav College?
17. Which popular joint in Besant Nagar was started by Daljeet Singh who achieved fame as one of Rajini's bodyguards/aides in *Baasha*?
18. In the earlier currency system of Madras, 10 *kaasus* made up what?
19. Which famous Tamil orator started an institution called Podhunilaik Kazhagam whose motto was 'Ondre Kulam, Oruvanae Devan'?
20. People having vision problems worship which temple's deity in Myslapore?

(Answers on page 8)

Two pages looking at books

A guide to the way we speak

The "issueless" couple – who could they be? If you are thinking it is domestic partners with no marital woes of any sort, you'd be so wrong. In the Indian context, the word "issueless" is a stand-in for "childless". Sometimes though, the word family could refer to just the wife, minus the kids. You could ask a man, "How is the missus/Mrs.?" or "How is the family?" and it would mean the same thing. If the response is the wife, or another family member, is "serious," it means they are ill, possibly at death's door. Be prepared to commiserate. Like some insurance policy, the person can soon "expire" or be "no more."

If all of this has left you unfazed, chances are you are already familiar with the nuances of Indian English, which is a different beast from British Standard English or its American counterpart. But, as always, we could all do with a little more *gyan*, or information. This is where S. Muthiah's *Words in Indian English – A Guide to En-*

glish Communication in South Asia promises to come in handy. It turns out, it is not just spoken English which is rife with Indianisms. Even headlines of English newspapers in India have words which don't always make sense to readers unfamiliar with the local language. *What to do!*

● by Vijaysree Venkatraman
v.vijaysree@gmail.com

Here's how the book was born in the first place: On a flight from Madras to Bangalore, the author had heard fellow passengers, Americans, struggle to decipher terms in *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express*. What is a *rail roko* or a state-wide *bandh* to a foreign traveler? In 1991, the veteran journalist came out with a book which could help foreigners and locals alike understand terms

that have found their way into our periodicals. Now, the book gets a much-needed update. The first entry of the new edition reads *Aadhar*: The Universal Identity Number of an Individual in India. (Or that without which an Indian citizen cannot officially exist even if Yama, the God of Death, is not

planning to come get him just yet.)

Naturally, some words in Indian English pertain to local food and drink. Soon enough you will know your *sambar* (a thin lentil-based curry) from your *sambol* (a pungent relish with a rice meal). But don't be surprised if nutritionists here advise you to eat a lot of grams, short for protein-rich lentils. Green gram, for in-

stance, refers to *moong* beans; *besan* is the flour of Bengal gram. Don't let the term Bombay Duck fool you – it is salted fish eaten on India's West Coast. (While we are on the topic of ducks which are not birds: A cricketer can be out for duck, or without having scored any runs, which would be tragic for his fans.) You may be put off by "dust tea", a term for tea made from the thick dust left over after packaging leaf tea. In the hands of a good tea vendor, the *chaiwala*, even this can transform into a halfway decent beverage.

Tell an American you are from Madras and chances are they will talk about *bleeding madras*, the plaid-patterned fabric. "The fabric was born in colonial India," *The New York Times* says, "a marriage of Scottish tartans and traditional Madras cottons, and popularised in the United States in the 1930s by the Hathaway Shirt Company." The colours of the shirt or dress, made from vegetable dyes, would bleed and change with each wash, which was part of its appeal.

If you are an outsider in India you might as well come to terms with *Rahukalam*, 90 minutes of each day of the week, which is considered inauspicious for any new venture, be it a rocket launch or a trip to the local bazaar. Or the dangerous new breed of people *Rakshaks*, defenders of political dogma of one kind or the other, moral police in short. Different from *Rakshasa* or Demon. The media also took to referring to demonetisation as De-Mon. There are also new acronyms that pertain to other old devil, taxes: G.S.T., the Goods and Services Tax; T.D.S, Tax Deducted at Source; and PAN or Permanent Account Number.

But let's come back to pleasanter things. If a flower seller at the bazaar pesters you to make a "boni/bowny," they are asking you to make the first purchase of the day and bring them luck. Don't be a *kanjus*; just do the needful. In official correspondence, this expression "doing the needful" suggests that the other, who is no intellectual slouch or *buddhu*, knows what needs to be done in the situation and doesn't need step-by-step instruction. The phrase has gone around the globe thanks to call centres and India-based tech companies. As has the befuddling "kindly revert back". Thanking you in advance (TIA).

There are times when it can all be "too much." If a word,

A flood of stories

The catalyst for good fiction has often been the trials and tribulations of humanity. In recent times, the Chennai floods of 2015 awakened in its residents not only the spirit of benevolence, but their creativity too. *After the Floods*, an anthology of short stories by 21 bloggers from The Chennai Bloggers Club, is a tribute to Chennai and the spirit of Chennai.

We were all privy to the numerous acts of heroism and the coming together of people to help one another in the crisis that lasted for nearly a week. Thanks to Social Media, people were able to connect and network to hear these stories as they happened and to reach out to those stranded in the floods. The sheer spirit of ordinary people helped the city in extraordinary ways. Unlikely alliances and friendships have been the common thread of stories that emerged from the great flooding of Chennai. This an-

thology documents and extrapolates experiences by the bloggers themselves. Though the mainspring of these stories is one, the interpretations are many.

The bloggers have taken different threads of experience to weave their own stories. Some have used the floods as a backdrop for dropping long-held prejudices of classes and castes. Kavipriya writes about a young woman residing in a North Madras locality that is looked at with disdain by her beau. In the end, her house comes to their rescue in the story 'Chennai 600013'. A few stories touch upon the NRI angle. In 'An Untold Legacy' by Nandhini Chandrasekaran, it is the prejudice of a young girl towards her mother's Chennai roots that comes in the way of understanding her strength.

Other stories reflect commonly felt differences between the haves and the have-nots. The Chennai floods acts as a

great leveller. Fortunes are turned and the have-nots end up as benefactors to some of the elite! This phenomena is perfectly illustrated in the story, 'The High Rise' by Clement Williams, where the maid's son comes bearing nourishment for the child of the stranded master.

Some bloggers have touched upon the enormous environmental errors that led to the disaster and question whether we have really learned from the earlier mistakes. The very first story in the anthology, 'Her' by Satesh Dipak Fernando is a metaphysical fairy tale. The Queen 'Madras' chooses 'MATERIALISM' as her consort only to court an unbearable disaster. In the 'Rain Maker', author Sriram Acharya imagines quite realistically man playing God.

Others have highlighted the personal sacrifices of unsung

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued on page 7)

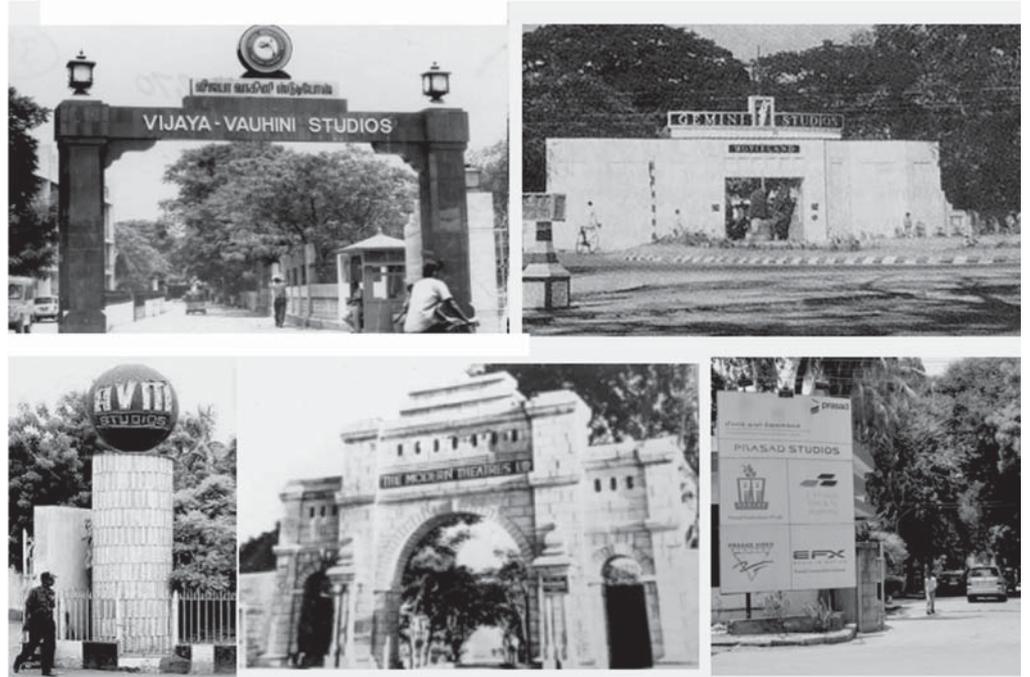
Studying the output of Madras studios

According to eminent film historians Theodore Baskaran and 'Film News' Anandan, the total number of Tamil films starting from the first Tamil talkie, *Kalidas*, released in 1931 (the same year as *Alam Ara*), predictably runs into four figures. Such a phenomenal output spread over so many years called for its rich and complex history to be well documented. However, a sustained and scholarly study of such a history has not seen the light of day due to the enormity of the task and the challenges associated with data collection and the availability of archival material.

A book that comes reasonably close, *Madras Studios – Narrative, Genre and Ideology in Tamil Cinema*, written by Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai and brought out by Sage Publications, is now available. The author's primary objective is to fill the void and study the most eventful period in the history of the Madras studios when they produced their landmark and seminal films. An understanding of the history of the studios, and a detailed description of

their major films, sheds light on the complex intersection of the cultural, economic and political factors which shaped the studios and their owners and the type of productions they were interested in.

After careful consideration of the studio productions in Madras, with regard to their critical and box office reception and their lasting impact on the Tamil film industry – both in terms of their significance as essential links to an earlier history of Tamil cinema and as prototypes which prefigure the specifics of Tamil cinema in later decades – the author has defined the period from 1937 to 1957 as the most significant



growth, development and popularity of Indian cinema is well-known. The huge output of popular and highly acclaimed films in the Tamil language is inarguably the most influential

Ganesan was paid a meagre Rs 250 a month for his famous role in *Parasakthi* or that S.S. Vasan, showing rare enterprise as a boy, commenced his career through the VPP – Value Payable by Post – business.

In the course of detailing the working of the five major studios, Pillai focuses on some major classics and so we have long but fascinating chapters on *Uthama Puthiran*, *Manthiri Kumari*, *Parasakthi*, *Avvaiyar*, *Pathala Bhairavi* and *Missiamma* besides interesting notes on *Andha Naal*, *Chandralekha*, *Uyamdha Manithan* and *Soodhu Kavvum*, the biggest hit of 2013. Yes, in his concluding chapters Pillai notes that traces of the studio system and its continuing influence in terms of narratives and genres can still be seen in Tamil cinema of today, particularly in the films made during the last decade. Thus there are many references to the movies made even in the 21st Century, making the book up-to-date. Many rare and well produced pictures add immense value to the book.

The close relationship between politics and cinema in

Madras has been well documented and Pillai takes care not only to mention this but also give fresh details, particularly with reference to the Dravidian movement and its influence on Tamil cinema. The major roles played in diverse ways by the likes of C.N. Annadurai, M. Karunanidhi and M.G. Ramachandran make for compelling reading.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book centres in the stories of the studio heads and how they came about establishing their businesses after initial struggles. T.R. Sundaram of Modern Theatres, S.S. Vasan of Gemini Studios, A.V. Meiyappa Chettiar of AVM studios, L.V. Prasad of Prasad Studios and Nagi Reddy of Vijaya-Vauhini are all portrayed as larger than life figures but with a human touch. There are some dull passages because of the author's emphasis on facts and figures, but the interesting bits more than make up for this.

Overall, *Madras Studios* is a must read for anyone associated with or interested in Tamil films.

● by Partab Ramchand

one. Historically too these two decades are crucial, since they enable a consideration of Tamil cinema during British rule, World War II and in earlier independent India.

The contribution of the Tamil film industry to the

after Hindi, in terms of scale of production and reception. Indeed, many leading Hindi film stars have spoken about the high level of professionalism in film-making in Madras (now Chennai) and have readily come over to appear in movies made in the city. Numerous box office hits and highly acclaimed Hindi films have been produced in the southern metropolis.

Much of this lofty reputation stems from the studio system in Madras which modeled itself on the famed studio system of Hollywood in the 1930s to 1950s. The five major studios were Modern Theatres, AVM, Gemini, Prasad and Vijay-Vauhini. Through the years, some of the most commercially popular and critically acclaimed films have been made in these studios.

Pillai is well qualified to write this book. An assistant professor in English and the media and information departments at Michigan State University, he is a graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India and an accomplished documentarian. His research areas include the history, theory and production of documentaries and experimental films and specifically Tamil cinema and its complex relationship with Hollywood,

Given this background, it comes as no surprise that *Madras Studios* comes across as a well-researched work. It is also full of interesting details, anecdotes and quotes of all those involved, from studio heads to actors, from screen writers to technicians. For example not many may know that Sivaji

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Guide to the way we speak

(Continued from page 6)

phrase or expression is a head scratcher, ask around and get to the bottom of it. Don't get all pedantic – as long as no rules of grammar are broken, it is no big deal. Smile, jot down new terms in the "additional words" sec-

tion in the book. Some of the words you collect could well stand the test of time and become part of the lexicon; you'll laugh over some of them after they pass into disuse. Surely, it can't get "more better" than that.

MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

To reach out to as many readers as possible who share our keen interest in Madras that is Chennai, and in response to requests from many well-wishers – especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late – for an online edition. *Madras Musings* is now on the web at www.madrasmusings.com

– THE EDITOR

IE's Golden Jubilee

(Continued from page 7)

Russian lino, it took ten years to dispose of it.

I graduated to the next stage of typesetting, through an electronic typewriter.

Here again the course was rough and painful. The dealer of the imported Swedish machine took the money in advance and promised to return it the moment my bank cleared the term loan and sent the cheque. But he resiled on this promise and magnanimously retained both! I was away at that time on a visit to the US on an invitation un-

der the International Visitors' programme for economic journalists.

It took quite a battle for my wife and 12 year old son to make several visits to the office of the dealer and the threat of a legal action to get back the money.

We were getting into the next stage of photo typesetting and then to desktop publishing. In quick succession we went through the stages of typesetting though an XT, 286, 386, 486 and their improved versions, year after year, upgrading

the PCs and software for page make up, scanning, colour separation and entering the world of CorelDraw, Aldus PageMaker, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, et al.

It indeed was a magnificent process of learning to keep up with the frenetic pace of technology development. It was not easy though to upgrade constantly the computers and allied facilities of software, of recruiting and training staff with competence and arranging for the needed finances. (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*.)

Dates for Your Diary

March 7-11: Ugadi Utsav. The five-day long Ugadi celebrations will bring to life the culture of Andhra Pradesh with the traditional Lambadi and Madhuri dance forms by the Abhinaya Sudha Kala Varadi from Telengana (at DakshinaChitra).

March 8-13: Watercolour landscape paintings from distant and varied countries by artist A. Murugesan (at Lalit Kala Akademi.)



March 10: Heart of Matter, monologues by women (at InKo Centre, Chennai).

March 15-April 30: Checks and Stripes – The versatile classic of Tamil Nadu. The exhibition will give an insight on the story of Real Madras Handkerchief. The exhibition opens with a seminar on the topic on March 15th (at DakshinaChitra).

Till Mar. 28: Vasantha Vizha. Step out of the classroom and enter the world of art & craft at DakshinaChitra.

Till March 31: Infinity – the paintings of Reji Joseph (at DakshinaChitra).

* * *

DakshinaChitra Workshops Children

March 10: Decoupage. Resource person: Lakshmi (at DakshinaChitra)

Contact: Lakshmi: 984177779

* * *

Art Workshop

March 11: Flower Veni. Resource person: Lalitha

Medi catalogue from Madras

(Continued from page 5)

mass mentioned) sulphur with a small portion of saltpetre [KNO₃] in a strong earthen vessel." Ainslie adds, "... nearly in the same manner that we do," implying the similarity in the production of sulphuric acid then in Britain.

His annotation on camphor from page 7 is an example of the details he supplies under each item he has listed. This section includes the biological name of camphor source, viz. *Laurus camphora* (now *Cinnamomum camphora*) (Lauraceae), which he indicates as growing wild in Japan. He refers to what was diagnosed by Indian physicians as *Kistnah Doshum* and equates it to Typhus fever¹.

¹ Typhus fever, the most common waterborne disease recognised in the 17th Century, was caused by microbial contamination from human faeces. Symptoms include high fever, weakness, headache, lack of appetite, stomach pains, and flat, pinkish spotty rashes. Typhus fever and Typhoid were differentiated in 1837. Edward Jenner presented a detailed comparison of the two diseases based on clinical and post-mortem appearances in 1850. Typhoid fever is caused by various strains of *Salmonella*, while Typhus is caused by various species of *Rickettsia*.

(To be concluded)

March 17-18: Kalamkari (Figurative style). Resource person: Vijaya Kumar

* * *

Ceramic Workshop

March 10: Glazed mural painting on tile
Contact Potrasan: 9840672154

A FLOOD OF STORIES

(Continued from page 7)

heroes from the larger than life youth. In 'Gangs of Namma Chennai' by Kishor Lakshminarayanan, the ageing father of an NRI holds the fort in his little community. The anxiety of NRIs with their loved ones gone incommunicado will strike a chord with many Chennai families. Stories describing the horrors of the flood leave no doubt that the authors have indeed waded the waters.

Romance is the surprise element in some of the stories. That romantic love is the staple of Tamil cinema is evident in some stories which have found a way of using the floods as a suitable backdrop. There is also a story or two with a fantasy element involving time travel. Relationships between parent and child, the old and the young have been skillfully explored in some stories. 'Strongest Storms Give out the Most Beautiful Rainbows' by

Pavithra Swaminathan shows a typically entitled spoilt teenager mature into a wise young woman over a night of floods.

Dahlesque twists are seen in a couple of stories. 'Lucky Who' by Karthik Pasupathy Ramachandran, is a mischievous tale of a time travelling ascetic who lands in water logged Chennai only to show two erstwhile rivals in romance that fate works in mysterious ways. The story of 'The Two Old Men' by Bragadeesh Prasanna is reminiscent of an earthy Tamil story with humour and a pinch of pathos.

Though the stories are in English, the voices are definitely Chennai. There is no particular effort to craft the language and in many places seem a direct rendering of our brand of spoken English. Even the tone of some of the stories are refreshingly honest to the culture it springs from. What the stories lack in clarity more than make up by enthusiasm and originality. Something to do with the nature of blogging.

– Rashrei Vyas

Answers to Quiz

1. Chandrashekhara Kambar, 2. Mumbai, 3. Falcon Heavy, 4. Mahamastakabhisheka of Lord Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola, 5. India's first sentiment index for micro and small enterprises (MSEs), 6. Chennai and Bengaluru, 7. ICC Under-19 cricket World Cup, 8. 'Exam Warriors', 9. Google, 10. Indra Nooyi

* * *

11. Annapurna Cafeteria, 12. Pazhaverkadu (Pulicat), 13. Central and Roxy in Purasawalkam, 14. Masjid-o-Anwari, 15. Madras Club, 16. Dwarakadoss Govardhandoss, 17. Cozee, 18. Dudhoo (dhuttu), 19. Maraimalai Adigal, 20. Velleeswarar temple.

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